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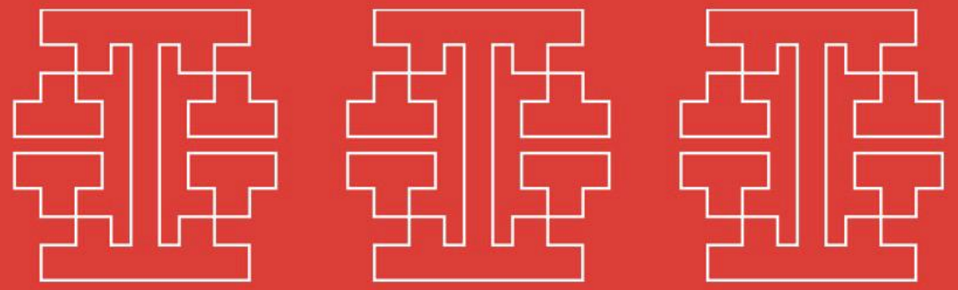
Essays on Eschatology



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Ian Pattenden and Shayna Sheinfeld,
Editors of *Arc*, 2008–2011

Editor's Introduction

> Incontrovertible evidence informs us that our globe has already suffered several absolute changes, each one nothing less than an *end of the world*; and an indefinable instinct warns us that more revolutions are to come. Many times already it has been thought that such revolutions were close at hand… Judging by what has been said on the subject, men are prone to invest this catastrophe with vengeance and destroying angels, trumpets and other no less terrifying accessories. Alas, there is need of no such fuss for our destruction; we are not worthy of so much pomp; and if the Lord so wills, He can change that face of the globe without the help of ceremonial apparatus.[1] —Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, 1825

These potent words speak to us today just as much as they did to those living in the nineteenth century. One thing has remained constant throughout the panorama of civilizations and centuries: a concern for the end. Today, concerns about eschatology are prevalent—and there is certainly a reason for these concerns, with the state of the world as it currently lies in its economic, ecological, and technological crisis-impending situation. Though the contents of this special issue of *Arc* would heartily disagree with the French author Brillat-Savarin, certain eschatologies (past and present) are very much focused upon the 'ceremonial apparatus', that is, the accompanying divine drama, which Brillat-Savarin disregarded. This 'ceremonial apparatus' however, is by no means uniform. The scholarship of eschatology presented in this issue shows just how *different* the appearance and conception of 'the end times' are for each socio-historical situation, and how the relationship of each group or individual to their historical situation frames and reframes the possibilities and openings found in eschatological speculation.

In this special issue of *Arc* we present to you vast and variegated ways to think about eschatology. In this issue you will not only discover articles which discuss eschatology from 'traditional' perspectives, those of religious, theological, or philosophical understanding, but also articles which expand notions and thoughts about eschatology to include new ideas about the 'end times', conceptions that apply to an era of science fiction and

1. Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, *The Physiology of Taste*, trans. Anne Drayton (London: The Penguin Group, 1994), 130.

virtual realities, to the problem of the impending zombie apocalypse, and other avenues of speculation not typically thought to be under the rubric of 'eschatology'.

Arc is pleased to present the following articles by invited scholars who have provided solid scholarship on eschatology, as well as scholars who have explored new avenues and investigated previously unknown material concerning eschatology. The reader will find below our invited contributions of: Dan Cohn-Sherbok's *Jewish Eschatology*; David Cook's *Apocalypse and Identity: Ibn Al-Munadi and Tenth Century Baghdad*; Lorenzo DiTomasso's *Apocalyptic Eschatology and the Transcendence of Death in William Gibson's Neuromancer*; Gerbern Oegema's *2 Baruch, the Messiah, and the Bar Kochba Revolt* and Zeki Saritoprak's *Revisting Islamic Eschatology: The Knowledge of "The Hour" and Its Imminence in The Qur'an.*

Additionally, *Arc* is pleased to publish alongside these articles other contributions that provide further insight and new development into scholarship on eschatology.

This issue of *Arc* is about end times, but as the reader will soon realize, this is by no means a simple topic. Each scholar who considers eschatological speculation contemplates the limit of worldly-life, along with the problem of the imminence of death and its position relative to individuals or communities, religious or otherwise. Individuals or communities that have chosen to live in light of the eschaton have been perplexed by these problems; reflection upon these questions remains perhaps the most important aspect about eschatological speculation, to consider what it means to live in the end times or near the end of one's own time, however it may be defined. Whether it is infusion into the virtual world of a matrix as witnessed in *Neuromancer* (DiTomasso), being swallowed by the giant fish (Adelman), being put to *the* test (Saritoprak), or on the cusp of repelling a zombie invasion (Baker). Eschatology, too, can be a serious attempt to inquire into and explain God's ways, the reasons behind worldly suffering, ongoing political events, or for providing an outline for messianic rule, as discussed by David Cook, Dan Cohn-Sherbok, Gerbern Oegema and Ralph Lentz II. On the other hand, eschatology could also be fun and games, just consider the article by Althouse and Wilkinson—in certain strains of charismatic Pentecostalism, this is in fact what eschatological speculation is: play. They emphasize that living in the end times prompts rituals of joyful playfulness,

soaking in God's love, living in the world imaginatively along with other liberating possibilities; a stark contrast to eschatological speculation that emphasizes future catastrophe and judgment.

Regardless of where one falls in relation to the tone or mood of eschatological speculation, the very form of thinking about eschatology opens up possibilities beyond the empirical world before us, whether it is understanding history as buttressed on both ends by catastrophic and prophetic divine events evidenced by Korner's discussion of the "great" earthquake in the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, understanding phenomenology as eschatological, which prevents the reduction of reality to a strict materialism (DeRoo), the problem of embodiment of Henry Case in *Neuromancer* (DiTomasso) or providing the necessary inspiration for those suffering in the face of death as evidenced by the witnesses in the book of Revelation (Ricker).

Even Brillat-Savarin, who regarded the content of eschatology as 'ceremonial apparatus' agreed with the *worthiness* of thinking about the eschaton:

> This course of events, which is just as likely as any other, has always seemed to me an admirable subject for speculation: and I have no hesitation in dwelling on it now. It is interesting to follow in imagination that ascensional heat, to foresee its gradual action and effects, and to ask: *Quid* during the first day, and the second, and so on to the last? …*Quid* on obedience to the law, submission to authority, respect for persons and property? *Quid* on the means we might look for, or the attempts we might make, to avoid the danger? *Quid* on the bonds of love, friendship and kinship, on selfishness and devotion? *Quid* on religious sentiment, faith, resignation, hope, etc.? …I genuinely feel some regret at not telling my readers how I settled all these problems in my wisdom, but I would not like to deprive them of the pleasure of reaching their own conclusions: an occupation which can shorten the hours of a sleepless night, or provide material for daytime siestas.[2]

It is with *this* hope that *Arc* presents to you our essays on eschatology.

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2. Brillat-Savarin, 131.

Jewish Eschatology

Dan Cohn-Sherbok,
Emeritus Professor of Judaism, University of Wales

Until long after the exile, the Jewish people shared the view of the entire ancient world that the dead continue to exist in a shadowy realm of the nether world where they live a dull, ghostly existence. According to K. Kohler, 'throughout the Biblical period no ethical idea yet permeated this conception, and no attempt was made to transform the nether world into a place of Divine judgment, of recompense for the good and evil deeds accomplished on earth.'[1] This was so because Biblical Judaism stressed the importance of attaining a complete and blissful life with God during earthly life. There was no need to transfer the purpose of existence to the Hereafter. In the words of R.H. Charles, 'So long indeed as Yahweh's jurisdiction was conceived as limited to this life, a Yahwistic eschatology of the individual could not exist; but when at last Israel reached the great truth of monotheism, the way was prepared for the moralisation of the future no less than that of the present.'[2] It was only then under social, economic and political oppression that pious Jews looked beyond their bitter disappointment with this world to a future beyond the grave when virtue would receive its due reward and vice its befitting punishment.'[3] In the modern world, however, this traditional view has lost its hold on Jewish consciousness.

The Biblical View of the Afterlife

Though there is no explicit reference to the Hereafter in the Hebrew Bible, a number of expressions are used to refer to the realm of the dead. In Psalms 28:1 and 88:5, '*bor*' refers to a pit. In Psalm 6:6 as well as in Job 28:22 and 30:23, '*mavet*' is used in a similar sense. In Psalm 22:16 the expression '*afar mavet*' refers to the dust of death; in Exodus 15:2 and Jonah

1. K. Kohler, *Jewish Theology* (New York, Ktav, 1968), 279.
2. R. H. Charles, "A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life" in *Israel, in Judaism, and in Christianity* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1913), 157.
3. Kohler, op. cit., 282.

2:7 the earth (*eretz*) is described as swallowing up the dead, and in Ezekiel 31:14 the expression '*eretz tachtit*' refer to the nether parts of the earth where the dead dwell. Finally, the word '*she'ol*' is frequently used to refer to the dwelling of the dead in the nether world.[4] In addition the words '*ge ben hinnom*', '*ge hinnom*,' and '*ge*' are used to refer to a cursed valley associated with fire and death where, according to Jeremiah, children were sacrificed as burnt offerings to Moloch and Baal.[5] In later rabbinic literature the word ordinarily used for Hell ('*Gehinnom*') is derived from these names.

Though these passages point to a Biblical conception of an afterlife, there is no indication of a clearly defined concept. It is only later in the Graeco-Roman world that such a notion began to take shape. The notion of a future world in which the righteous will be compensated for the ills they suffered in this life was prompted by a failure to justify the ways of God by any other means. According to Biblical theodicy men were promised rewards for obeying God's law and punishments were threatened for disobedience. Rewards including health, children, rainfall, a good harvest, peace and prosperity; punishments consisted of disease, war, pestilence, failure of crops, poverty and slavery. As time passed, however, it became clear that life did not operate in accordance with such a tidy scheme. In response to this dilemma the rabbis developed a doctrine of reward and punishment in the Hereafter. Such a belief helped Jews to cope with suffering in this life, and it also explained, if not the presence of evil in the world, then at least the worthwhileness of creation despite the world's ills.[6]

The Hereafter in Rabbinic Thought

Given that there is no explicit belief in eternal salvation in the Bible,[7] the rabbis of the post-Biblical period were faced with the difficulty of proving that the doctrine of resurrection of the dead is contained in Scripture, which they regarded as authoritative. To do this, they employed certain principles of exegesis which are based on the assumption that every word in the Pentateuch was transmitted by God to Moses. Thus, for example, R. Eleazar,

4. Ps 28:1; 88:5; Nu. 16:33, Ps. 6:6, Is. 38:18.

5. Jer. 7:31–32, 19:6; 32:35.

6. See L. Jacobs, *A Jewish Theology* (New York: Behrman House, 1973).

7. See E. Jacob, *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. ii (New York: Abington Press, 1962), 689; K. Kohler, op. cit., 392.

the son of R. Jose, claimed to have refuted the Sectarians who maintained that resurrection is not a Biblical doctrine: 'I said to them: You have falsified your Torah… For ye maintain that resurrection is not a Biblical doctrine, but it is written (in Num. 15:3ff), 'Because he hath despised the word of the Lord, and hath broken his commandments, that soul shall utterly be cut off, his iniquity shall be upon him. Now, seeing that he shall utterly be cut off in this world, when shall his iniquity be upon him? Surely in the next world.'[8]

Again, R. Meir asked, 'Whence do we know resurrection from the Torah?' From the verse, 'Then shall Moses and the children of Israel sing this song unto the Lord' (Ex. 15:1). Not 'sang', but 'sing' is written. Since Moses and the children of Israel did not sing a second time in this life, the text must mean that they will sing after resurrection. Likewise it is written, 'Then shall Joshua build an altar unto the Lord God of Israel (Joshua 8:30). Not 'build' but 'shall build' is stated. Thus resurrection is intimated in the Torah.[9] Similarly, R. Joshua b. Levi said: Where is resurrection derived from the Torah? From the verse, 'Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they shall ever praise thee.' (Ps. 84:5). The text does not say 'praised thee' but 'shall praise thee.' Thus we learn resurrection from the Torah.[10]

The principle qualification for entrance to Heaven (*Gan Eden*) is to lead a good life in accordance with God's law. Conversely, the rabbis point out that by disobeying God's law one forfeits a share in the World to Come and is doomed to eternal punishment in Hell ('*Gehinnom*').[11] According to the Mishnah there are various categories of sinners who will be damned: (1) He who says there is no resurrection of the dead prescribed in the Torah; (2) He who says that the Torah is not from Heaven; (3) A heretic; (4) A reader of heretical books and one that utters a charm over a wound; (5) He who pronounces God's name by supplying vowels; (6) The generation of the flood; (7) The generation of Babel; (8) The men of Sodom; (9) The 12 spies; (10) The lost tribes; (11) The children of the wicked; (12) The people of an apostate city; (13) Those who have been executed by a rabbinical

8. *San*. 90b.

9. *San*. 91b.

10. Ibid.

11. This was originally a valley near Jerusalem where Moloch was worshipped. See Jer. 7:31–32; 19:6; 32:35.

court unless they confessed their sins before death.[12] On the basis of the discussion of these categories in the Babylonian Talmud and the remarks of sages elsewhere in rabbinic literature, Maimonides in his *Guide to the Perplexed* drew up a different list of those who have no share in Heaven which has been regarded by many as authoritative.

The Nature of the Hereafter

The World to Come is itself divided into several stages: first, there is the time of Messianic redemption. According to the Babylonian Talmud, the Messianic Age ('*Yemot Hamashiah*') is to take place on earth after a period of decline and calamity and will result in a complete fulfillment of every human wish. Peace will reign throughout nature; Jerusalem will be rebuilt; and at the close of this era, the dead will be resurrected and rejoined with their souls, and a final judgment will come upon all humanity. Those who are judged righteous will enter into Heaven ('*Gan Eden*') which is portrayed in various ways in rabbinic literature.[13] One of the earliest descriptions is found in *Midrash Konen*, and the following extract is a representative sample of the type of elaboration in rabbinic sources:

> The Gan Eden at the east measures 800 000 years (at ten miles per day or 3650 miles per year.) There are five chambers for various classes of the righteous. The first is built of cedar, with a ceiling of transparent crystal. This is the habitation of non-Jews who become true and devoted converts to Judaism. They are headed by Obadiah the prophet and Onkelos the proselyte, who teach them the Law. The second is built of cedar, with a ceiling of fine silver. This is the habitation of penitents, headed by Manasseh, King of Israel, who teaches them the Law. The third chamber is built of silver and gold, ornamented with pearls. It is very spacious, and contains the best of heaven and of earth, with spices, fragrance, and sweet odours. In the centre of this chamber stands the Tree of Life, 500 years high. Under its shadow rest Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the tribes, those of the Egyptian exodus, and those who died in the wilderness, headed by Moses and Aaron. There are also David and Solomon, crowned, and Chileab, as if living, attending on his father, David. Every generation of Israel is represented except that of Absalom and his confederates. Moses teaches them the Law, and Aaron gives instruction to the priests. The Tree of Life is like a ladder on which the

12. See A. Super, *Immortality in the Babylonian Talmud* (unpublished Ph.D thesis, 1967), 103–8.

13. See A. Super, op. cit.

> souls of the righteous may ascend and descend. In a conclave above are seated the Patriarchs, the Ten Martyrs, and those who sacrificed their lives for the cause of His Sacred Name. These souls descend daily to the Gan Eden, to join their families and tribes, where they lounge on soft cathedrals studded with jewels. Everyone, according to his excellence, is received in audience to praise and thank the Ever-living God; and all enjoy the brilliant light of the Shekinah. The flaming sword, changing from intense heat to icy cold, and from ice to glowing coals, guards the entrance against living mortals. The size of the sword is ten years. The souls on entering paradise are bathed in the 248 rivulets of balsam and attar. The fourth chamber is made of olive-wood and is inhabited by those who have suffered for the sake of their religion. Olives typify bitterness and in taste and brilliancy in light (olive-oil), symbolizing persecution and its reward. The fifth chamber is built of precious stones, gold and silver, surrounded by myrrh and aloes. In front of the chamber runs the river Gihon, on whose banks are planted shrubs affording perfume and aromatic incense. There are couches of gold and silver and fine drapery. This chamber is inhabited by the Messiah of David, Elijah, and the Messiah of Ephraim. In the centre are a canopy made of the cedars of Lebanon, in the style of the Tabernacle, with posts and vessels of silver; in a settee of Lebanon wood with pillars of silver and a seat of gold, the covering thereof of purple. Within rests the Messiah, son of David, 'a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief' suffering, and waiting to release Israel from exile. Elijah comforts and encourages him to be patient. Every Monday and Thursday, and Sabbath and on holy days the Patriarchs, Moses, Aaron, and others, call on the Messiah and console him, in the hope of the fast-approaching end.[14]

As with Heaven, we also find extensive and detailed descriptions of Hell in Jewish literature. In the Babylonian Talmud, R. Joshua b. Levi deduces the divisions of Hell from Biblical quotations: *she'ol, abaddon, be'er shahat, bor sha'on, tit ha-hawen, zel mawet* and *erez ha-tahtit*. This Talmudic concept of the seven-fold structure of Hell is greatly elaborated in midrashic literature. According to one source it requires 300 years to traverse the height or width or the depth of each division, and it would take 6300 years to go over a tract of land equal in extent to the seven divisions.[15] Each of these seven divisions of Hell is in turn divided into seven subdivisions and in each compartment there are seven rivers of fire, and seven of hail. The width of each is 1000 ells, its depth 1000, and its length 300; they flow from each other and are supervised by the Angels of Destruction. Besides, in each compartment there are 7000 caves, and in each cave there are 7000

14. Ibid., 191–3.
15. *Erubin,* 19a

crevices, and in every crevice there are 7000 scorpions. Every scorpion has 300 rings, and in every ring 7000 pouches of venom from which flow seven rivers of deadly poison. If a man handles it, he immediately bursts, every limb is torn from his body, his bowels are cleft, and he falls upon his face.[16]

Confinement to Hell is the result of disobeying God's Torah as is illustrated by the midrash concerning the evening visit of the soul to Hell before it is implanted in an individual. There it sees the Angels of Destruction smiting with fiery scourges: the sinners all the while crying out, but no mercy is shown to them. The angel guides the soul and then asks: 'Do you know who these are?' Unable to respond the soul listens as the angel continues: 'Those who are consumed with fire were created like you. When they were put into the world, they did not observe God's Torah and His commandments. Therefore they have come to this disgrace which you see them suffer. Know, your destiny is also to depart from the world. Be just, therefore, and not wicked, that you may gain the future world.'[17]

The soul was not alone in being able to see Hell: a number of Biblical personages entered into its midst. Moses, for example, was guided through Hell by an angel, and his journey there gives us the most complete picture of its torments:

> When Moses and the Angel of Hell entered Hell together, they saw men being tortured by the Angels of Destruction. Some sinners were suspended by their hands, and some by their tongues. In addition, women were suspended by their hair and their breasts by chains of fire. Such punishments were inflicted on the basis of the sins that were committed: those who hung by their eyes had looked lustfully upon their neighbours' wives and possessions; those who hung by their ears had listened to empty and vain speech and did not listen to the Torah; those who hung by their tongues had spoken foolishly and slanderously; those who hung by their hands had robbed and murdered their neighbours. The women who hung by their hair and breasts had uncovered them in the presence of young men in order to seduce them.[18]

In another place, called Alukah, Moses saw sinners suspended by their feet with their heads downward and their bodies covered with long black

16. L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1968), Vol. I, 15.
17. Ibid., 57–8.
18. Ibid., Vol. II, 310–13.

worms. These sinners were punished in this way because they swore falsely, profaned the Sabbath and the Holy Days, despised the sages, called their neighbours by unseemly nicknames, wronged the orphan and the widow, and bore false witness.

In another section Moses saw sinners prone on their faces with 2000 scorpions lashing, stinging, and tormenting them. Each of these scorpions had 70,000 heads, each head 70,000 mouths, each mouth 70,000 stings, and each sting 70,000 pouches of poison and venom. So great was the pain they inflicted that the eyes of the sinners melted in their sockets. These sinners were punished in this way because they had robbed other Jews, were arrogant in the community, put their neighbours to shame in public, delivered their fellow Jews into the hands of the gentiles, denied the Torah, and maintained that God is not the creator of the world.

In another place, called *Tit ha-Yawen*, sinners stood in mud up to their navels while Angels of Destruction lashed them with fiery chains, and broke their teeth with fiery stones. These sinners were punished in this way because they had eaten forbidden food, lent their money at usury, had written the name of God on amulets for gentiles, used false weights, stolen money from fellow Jews, eaten on the Day of Atonement, and drank blood.

Finally, after seeing these tortures, Moses observed how sinners were burnt in the section of Hell called *Abaddon*. There one-half of their bodies were immersed in fire and the other half in snow while worms bred in their own flesh crawled over them and the Angels of Destruction beat them incessantly. By stealth these sinners took snow and put it in their armpits to relive the pain inflicted by the scorching fire. These sinners were punished because they had committed incest, murder, idolatry, called themselves gods, and cursed their parents and teachers.

From this description it might appear that Hell is reserved for those Jews who have disobeyed the Mosaic law. Such exclusivism, however, was refuted throughout rabbinic literature. For example, in *Midr. Prov. R.* Joshua explained that gentiles are doomed to eternal punishment unless they are righteous.[19] Asked how a man can escape the judgment of Hell, he replied, 'Let him occupy himself with good deeds, and he pointed out that this applies to gentiles as well as Jews.

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19. *Midr. Prov.*, XVII, 1, 42b.

Of course, gentiles were not expected to keep all of Jewish law in order to escape Hell; they were simply required to keep the Noachide Laws, that is, those laws which Noah and his descendants took upon themselves. The violation of such laws was regarded by the rabbis as repugnant to fundamental human morality, quite apart from revelation, and was a basis for confinement to Hell. In *Gen. R.*, Noah 34:8, for example, we read that 'The sons of Noah were given seven commands: in respect of (1) idolatry, (2) incest, (3) shedding of blood, (4) profanation of the Name of God, (5) justice, (6) robbery, (7) cutting off flesh or limb from a living animal. R. Hanina said: Also about taking blood from a living animal. R. Elazar said: Also about "diverse kinds" and mixtures (Lev. 19:19). R. Simeon said: Also about witchcraft. R. Johanan b. Baroka said: Also about castration (of animals). R. Assi said: Everything forbidden in Deut. 18:10,11 was also forbidden to the sons of Noah, because it says, 'whoever does these things is an abomination unto the Lord".' Nevertheless, despite this disagreement, a gentile who lived a sinful life by violating the Noachide laws was destined to be punished in Hell, and conversely, if he lived in accordance with them, he could gain entry into the World to Come.[20]

This eschatological scheme, which was formulated over the centuries by innumerable rabbis, should not be seen as a flight of fancy. It was a serious attempt to explain God's ways to man. Israel was God's chosen people and had received God's promise of reward for keeping his law. Since this did not happen on earth in this life, the rabbis believed it must occur in the World to Come. Never did the rabbis relinquish the belief that God would justify Israel by destroying the power of oppressing nations. This would come about in the Messianic Age. The individual who had died without seeing the justification of God would be resurrected to see the ultimate victory of the Jewish people. And just as the nations would be judged in the period of Messianic redemption, so would each individual. In this way the vindication of the righteous was assured in the Hereafter.

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20. There were some rabbis who proclaimed that God consigns gentiles en mass to Hell. See C. G. Montefirote and H. Loewe, *A Rabbinic Anthology* (New York: Schocken, 1974), XCIII.

The Decline of Rabbinic Eschatology

On the basis of this scheme of eternal salvation and damnation—which was at the heart of rabbinic theology throughout the centuries—it might be expected that modern Jewish theologians of all shades of religious observance and opinion would attempt to explain contemporary Jewish history in the context of traditional eschatology. This, however, has not happened: instead many Jewish writers have set aside doctrines concerning Messianic redemption, resurrection, final judgment, and reward for the righteous and punishment for the wicked. This shift in emphasis is in part due to the fact that the views expressed in the narrative sections of the midrashim and the Talmud are not binding. As mentioned, all Jews are obliged to accept the Divine origin of the Law but this is not so with regard to theological concepts and theories expounded by the rabbis. Thus it is possible for a Jew to be religiously pious without accepting all the central beliefs of mainstream Judaism. Indeed throughout Jewish history there has been widespread confusion as to what these beliefs are. In the first century BCE, for example, the sage Hillel stated that the quintessence of Judaism could be formulated in a single principle: 'that which is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour. This is the whole of the Law; all the rest is commentary.'[21] Similarly in the second century CE, the Council of Lydda ruled that under certain circumstances the laws of the Torah may be transgressed in order to save one's life, with the exception of idolatry, murder and unchastity.[22]

In both these cases the centre of gravity was in the ethical rather than the religious sphere. However, in the medieval period Maimonides formulated what he considered to be the 13 principles of the Jewish faith.[23] Other thinkers though challenged this formulation. Hasdai Crescas, Simon ben Zemah Duran, Joseph Albo and Isaac Arami elaborated different creeds, and some thinkers, like David ben Solomon Ibn Abi Zimrah argued that it is impossible to isolate from the whole Torah essential principles of the

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21. *Shabb*. 31a.

22. *Sanh*. 74a.

23. (1) The existence of God; (2) the unity of God; (3) the incorporeality of God; (4) the eternity of God; (5) God alone is to be worshipped; (6) prophecy; (7) Moses is the greatest of the prophets; (8) the divinity of the Torah; (9) the inalterability of the Torah; (10) the omniscience of God; (11) reward and punishment; (12) the Messiah; (13) the resurrection of the dead.

Jewish faith. He wrote: 'I do not agree that it is right to make any part of the perfect Torah into a 'principle' since the whole Torah is a 'principle' from the mouth of the Almighty.'[24] Thus when formulations of the central theological tenets of Judaism were propounded, they were not universally accepted since they were simply the opinions of individual teachers. Without a central authority whose opinion in theological matters was binding on all Jews, it has become impossible to determine the correct theological beliefs in Judaism. In the words of Solomon Schechter, 'any attempt at an orderly and complete system of rabbinic theology is an impossible task.'[25]

Given that there is no authoritative bedrock of Jewish theology, many modern Jewish thinkers have felt fully justified in abandoning the various elements of traditional rabbinic eschatology which they regard as untenable. The doctrine of Messianic redemption, for example, has been radically modified. In the last century Reform Jews tended to interpret the new liberation in the Western world as the first step towards the realization of the Messianic dream. But Messianic redemption was understood in this-worldly terms. No longer, according to this view, was it necessary for Jews to pray for a restoration in *Eretz Israel* (Palestine); rather they should view their own countries as Zion and their political leaders as bringing about the Messianic age. Secular Zionists, on the other hand, saw the return to Israel as the legitimate conclusion to be drawn from the realities of Jewish life in Western countries, thereby viewing the State of Israel as a substitute for the Messiah himself. As Louis Jacobs notes, 'most modern Jews prefer to interpret the Messianic hope in naturalistic terms, abandoning the belief in a personal messiah, the restoration of the sacrificial system, and to a greater or lesser degree, the idea of direct Divine intervention.'[26]

Similarly, the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead has in modern times been largely replaced in both Orthodox and non-Orthodox Judaism by the belief in the immortality of the soul. The original belief in a resurrection was an eschatological hope bound up with the rebirth of the nation in the days of the messiah, but as this Messianic concept faded into the background so also did this doctrine. For most Jews physical resurrection is simply

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24. Responsum No. 344 as quoted by L. Jacobs, *Principles of the Jewish Faith* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1964), 24.

25. S. Schechter, *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology* (New York: Schocken, 1961), 16.

26. L. Jacobs, *Principles of the Jewish Faith* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1964), 388–9.

inconceivable in the light of a scientific understanding of the nature of the world. The late British Chief Rabbi, J. H. Hertz, for example, argued that what really matters is the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Thus he wrote: 'Many and various are the folk beliefs and poetical fancies in the rabbinical writings concerning Heaven, Gan Eden, and Hell, Gehinnom. Our most authoritative religious guides, however, proclaim that no eye hath seen, nor can mortal fathom, what awaiteth us in the Hereafter; but that even the tarnished soul will not forever be denied spiritual bliss.'[27]

In the Reform community a similar attitude prevails. In a well-known statement of the beliefs of Reform Judaism, it is recorded that Reform Jews 'reassert the doctrine of Judaism that the soul is immortal, grounding this belief on the Divine nature of the human spirit, which forever finds bliss in righteousness and misery in wickedness. We reject as ideas not rooted in Judaism the belief in bodily resurrection and in Ghenna and Eden (Hell and Paradise) as abodes for eternal punishment or reward.'[28] The point to note about the conception of the immortal soul in both Orthodox and Reform Judaism is that it is dissociated from traditional notions of Messianic redemption and Divine judgment.

The belief in eternal punishment has also been discarded by a large number of Jews partly because of the interest in penal reform during the past century. Punishment as retaliation in a vindictive sense has been generally rejected. Thus Jacobs writes, 'the value of punishment as a deterrent and for the protection of society is widely recognised. But all the stress today is on the reformatory aspects of punishment. Against such a background the whole question of reward and punishment in the theological sphere is approached in a more questioning spirit.[29] Further, the rabbinic view of Hell is seen by many as morally repugnant. Jewish theologians have stressed that it is a delusion to believe that a God of love could have created a place of eternal punishment. In his commentary on the prayerbook, Hertz categorically declared, 'Judaism rejects the doctrine of eternal damnation.'[30] And in Jewish Theology the Reform rabbi K. Kohler, argued that the question

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27. J. H. Hertz, *Commentary to the Prayerbook*, 255.

28. W. G. Plaut, *The Growth of Reform Judaism* (New York: World Union for Progressive Judaism, 1965), 34.

29. L. Jacobs, *Principles of the Jewish Faith*, 364.

30. As quoted by L. Jacobs, *Principles of the Jewish Faith*, 415.

whether the tortures of Hell are reconcilable with Divine mercy 'is for us superfluous and superseded. Our modern conceptions of time and space admit neither a place nor a world-period for the reward and punishment of souls, nor the intolerable conception of eternal joy without useful action and eternal agony without any moral purpose.[31]

Traditional rabbinic eschatology has thus lost its force for a large number of Jews in the modern period, and in consequence there has been a gradual this-world emphasis in Jewish thought. Significantly, this has been accompanied by a powerful attachment to the State of Israel. For many Jews the founding of the Jewish State is the central focus of their religious and cultural identity. Jews throughout the world have deep admiration for the astonishing achievements of Israelis in reclaiming the desert and building a viable society, and great respect for the heroism of Israel's soldiers and statesmen. As a result it is not uncommon for Jews to equate Jewishness with Zionism, and to see Judaism as fundamentally nationalistic in character—this is a far cry from the rabbinic view of history which placed the doctrine of the Hereafter at the centre of Jewish life and thought.

Conclusion

We can see therefore that the wheel has swung full circle from the faint allusions to immortality in the Biblical period which led to an elaborate development of the concept of the Hereafter in rabbinic Judaism. Whereas the rabbis put the belief in an afterlife at the centre of their religious system, modern Jewish thinkers—both Orthodox and Reform—have abandoned such an otherworldly outlook, even to the point of denying the existence of such doctrines. It may be that these concepts are outmoded and should be abandoned in the light of contemporary thought, but there is no doubt that such a development raises major problems for Judaism in the modern age. The belief in the Hereafter has helped Jews make sense of the world as a creation of a good and all-powerful God and provided a source of great consolation for their travail on earth. Without the promise of Messianic redemption, resurrection and the eventual vindication of the righteous in Paradise, Jews will face great difficulties reconciling the belief in a providential God who watches over his chosen people with the terrible

31. K. Kohler, op. cit., 309.

events of modern Jewish history. If there is no eschatological unfolding of a Divine drama in which Jewish victims will ultimately triumph, what hope can there be for the Righteous of Israel who have suffered for their convictions?

Apocalypse and Identity: Ibn Al-Munadi and Tenth Century Baghdad

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Introduction

While the genre of apocalypse in Islam has gained increasing attention during the past decade or so, the apocalyptic work of Ahmad b. Ja`far b. Muhammad known as Ibn al-Munadi (d. 336/947–8) entitled *Kitab al-malahim* (*the Book of Apocalyptic Wars*) has been little studied. Ten years ago I published the lengthy Daniel apocalypse that is contained within it, which is the longest literary apocalypse known to me to have come down to us, and the only one comparable to literary apocalypses as they are known in Judaism and Christianity from the same period.[1] However, the actual text of the *Kitab al-malahim* has not been studied within its context, nor have its contents been related to other apocalyptic texts that are extant. Discussion of the text and placing it within its Baghdadi context of the tenth century will be the subject of this paper.

Apocalypse has a considerable history in Islam. One of the major themes of the Qur'an is the question of the appearance of the Hour of Judgment and the interpretation of the signs associated with the end of the world. It is clear from the Qur'an that the initial audience was very much interested in the date of the end, having asked about it no less than three times (Qur'an 7:187, 33:63, 45:32, 79:42), but that date is said to be known to none but God. In the *Kitab al-iman*, the second book of al-Bukhari's authoritative *al-Sahih*, in a composite tradition designed to define a number of problematic issues, including such vexing questions as the difference between *iman* and *islam* (which is not really resolved), the Prophet Muhammad is asked "When is the Hour?" to which he responded the standard answer "The questioned does not know more about it than

1. David Cook, "An Early Muslim Daniel Apocalypse," *Arabica* 49 (2002), 55–96.

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does the questioner."[2] The place accorded to this question, especially when later the questioner is said to be the angel Gabriel in disguise, within the rubric of other important theological questions at the beginning of Sunni Islam's most authoritative and respected *hadith* collection demonstrates that the topic of the Hour and its attendant signs was one that occupied a great many Muslims.

However, it is also important to notice that while the apocalyptic imagery inside the Qur'an is dramatic, the text apparently assumes that the end is sufficiently close that there was no need for a further delineation of signs. Nor should this fact surprise us, given that Muslims were not alone in their expectation of the end at that time. Jewish and Christian apocalyptic materials abounded during the seventh century, most probably as a result of the cataclysmic war between the Sasanians and the Romans (or Byzantines mentioned in *sura* 30:1–2), as well as (probably) astronomical events such as the passing of Halley's Comet in 610, the fact that nearly seven centuries since the appearance of Jesus had elapsed (which may have been interpreted by some Christians in terms of Jesus' return or the appearance of a herald of his return as a monk supposedly told the Prophet's opponent Abu Sufyan),[3] as well as volcanic explosions, and the appearance of the bubonic plague (otherwise the Plague of Justinian).

Muslims during the period immediately following the death of Muhammad in 632 and the success of the great conquests began to augment the apocalyptic tradition of the Qur'an and to detail the signs that were associated with the end of the world. These came to include such varied topics as the appearance of monstrous and other-worldly beings such as the Dajjal (the antichrist), the sub-human peoples of Gog and Magog, cosmological signs such as the appearance of comets and the rising of the sun from the west, various social and moral degradations in which the Muslim community indulged, plagues, famines, dreams and visions of all sorts, and most especially political events. It is this last category that is the most interesting to the historian, as apocalypse has been seen since the work of Paul Alexander on Byzantine apocalyptic literature as an auxiliary if not strictly speaking reliable historical source.

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2. Al-Bukhari, *al-Sahih* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1991), i, 22 (no. 50).

3. Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani, *Kitab al-aghani* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, n.d.), iv, 131.

In general, the Muslims sought to place their community within the salvation history of the previous communities of Jews and Christians by explaining their position vis-à-vis the end of the world. For example, in a well-known paraphrase of the New Testament Parable of the Workers (Matt. 20:1–16), Muhammad is said to have stated:

> "Your [length of] staying compared to that of the communities previous to you is like that between the afternoon prayers and the setting of the sun. The people of the Torah were given the Torah and worked with it until the middle of the day, then they could not [anymore], and were given *qirats* [as their wage]. The people of the Gospel were given the Gospel and worked with it until the mid-day prayer, and then they could not [anymore], and were given *qirats* [as their wage]. Then you were given the Qur'an, and you worked with it until the sun went down and were given double the *qirats*. The people of the Torah and of the Gospel said: 'Lord, these have less work and more wage!' He said: 'Have I cheated you in your payments in any way?' They said: 'No.' He said: 'This is My bounty, given to whomever I wish'."[4]

This is an interesting tradition, and while moving away from the indistinct groups mentioned in the New Testament parallel, it focuses both upon the supercessionism of Islam as well as upon the proximity between the appearance of the Muslim community and the end of the world. While the earlier communities worked longer in the fields—and thus were owed a more substantial reward than did the Muslims—God will favor the latter for working less. The image of the "day" allows the Muslim to understand the tradition within the framework of the so-called "World Week" in which the duration of the world parallels the days of creation, leading one to a 7000 year time-period for the entire world. If Muhammad is assumed to have been sent at the 6000 year mark, then that leaves the Muslim community

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4. al-Tabarani, *Musnad* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risala, 1996), iv, 224 (no. 3142); and compare thefollowing version "A likeness of you among the previous communities is between the afternoon prayers and the setting of the sun. A likeness of you and the Jews and the Christians is like a man who hired workers and said: 'Who will work for the wage of a *qirat* until the middle of the day?' The Jews and the Christians did so until the middle of the day for the wage of a *qirat*, and then he said: 'Who will work from the afternoon prayers until the setting of the sun for two *qirats*—for double the wage?' and the Jews and Christians became angry. They said: 'We worked more and earned less!' He said: 'Have I cheated you of what you deserved?' They said: 'No.' He said: 'This is my bounty which I give to whomever I wish'." (al-Tabarani, *Musnad*, iv, 144 [no. 2955]).

with a round number of 1000 years in which to convert humanity. The same proportions could be utilized with regard to the "day" mentioned in the tradition.

Earlier Muslim traditions, however, emphasized the same type of immediacy promoted by the text of the Qur'an. The world was to come to an end, not at the end of 1000 years, but much sooner. Traditions are frequently divided between those who merely stated that it was "soon" (as did the Qur'an) and those who wanted to actually date the end or at least put the signs within some chronological framework. A prominent example of the former type is the following *jihad* tradition taken from the early book of `Abdallah b. al-Mubarak:

> "Behold! God sent me [Muhammad] with a sword, just before the Hour [of Judgment], and placed my daily sustenance beneath the shadow of my spear, and humiliation and contempt on those who oppose me, and whoever imitates a group is [numbered] among them."[5]

This tradition gives us the sense that the early conquests were in fact an apocalyptic sign of God's favor upon the Muslim community, and that the Muslim community would exist in a state of perpetual warfare until the end of the world arrived.

However, apocalyptic traditions around the year 100/718–19 began to focus not upon the perpetual warfare in which the Muslims were engaged, but upon the temptation of prosperity into which they had fallen as a result of the success of the conquests. Signs increasingly from this period were associated with the sinful society in which the Muslims were living and how that was itself a sign.

> "A man came to the Messenger of God and asked: 'O Messenger of God, what is the duration of prosperity (*rakha'*) for your community?' He did not answer anything and the man asked three more times without receiving an answer, so the man turned away and then the Messenger of God said: 'Where is the questioner?' and he turned back. He said: 'You have asked me about something that no one in my community has ever asked about—the duration of the prosperity of my

5. `Abdallah b. al-Mubarak, *Kitab al-jihad* (Beirut: Nazih Hammad, 1971), 89–90 (no. 105); al-Awza`i, *Sunan* (Beirut: Dar al-Nafa'is, 1993), 360 (no. 1165); Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf* (n.p.: n.d.), xii, 349 (no. 13056); and see Suleiman Bashear, "Muslim Apocalypses," *Israel Oriental Studies* 13 (1993), 75–99, at 76ff., esp. 80; and M.J. Kister, "Do not assimilate yourselves… " *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 13 (1989), 321–53.

> community is 100 years' and he said it two or three times, and then the man said: 'O Messenger of God, is there a principality or a portent or a sign?' He said: 'Yes, swallowing up by the earth, earthquakes, and release of the bound demons upon the people'."[6]

Datable traditions of this type are available in great numbers for the period between 100–300/718–912, when they start to taper off considerably. While the earlier apocalyptic book of Nu`aym b. Hammad al-Marwazi (d. 844) contains an entire chapter devoted to these traditions, in addition to others scattered throughout the text, Ibn al-Munadi does not even include one of these traditions in his book just 100 years later. It is obvious that these types of datable apocalypses had been proven to be wrong too many times and that they were simply not credible anymore.

In general, by the period of Ibn al-Munadi apocalyptic materials among Sunnis were focusing upon the signs leading up to the end of the world from a political point of view, and to a lesser extent upon the personalities of the messianic future such as the Mahdi (to a limited extent), Jesus and the Dajjal, and other materials that were not overly controversial, while Shi`ites were bringing together substantial works on the figure of the Mahdi, characterizing him as the Twelfth Imam. During Ibn al-Munadi's lifetime, for example, the major Shi`ite writers al-Nu`mani (fl. ca. 342/953) and the apocalyptic writer al-Salili (ca. 307/919)[7] had both penned works on apocalyptic subjects. Ibn al-Munadi's work stands out in that it fits into none of the above categories. While Sunnis were usually quite suspicious of the figure of the Mahdi, already relegating it to a minor role in the apocalypse (and sometimes preferring the figure of Jesus to the Mahdi), Ibn al-Munadi devotes a substantial discussion to him.

However, it is clear that Ibn al-Munadi was not a Shi`ite, as his Mahdi was the figure of the Hasani, descended from the elder of the Prophet Muhammad's two grandchildren, who during his lifetime received negative marks because of his willingness to make peace with the Umayyad ruler Mu`awiya, who thereupon became the fifth caliph, even though he still had

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6. Ibn `Asakir, *Ta'rikh madinat Dimashq* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1995–99), lviii, 461; al-Khawlani, *Ta'rikh Daraya* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, n.d.), 98; these last bound demons are unknown to me from other Muslim apocalyptic literature—however, see Rev. 16:13–14.

7. Ibn Tawus dates the writing of al-Salili to 307 CE, see Ibn Tawus, *al-Malahim wa-l-fitan* (Beirut: al-Mu'assasa al-A`la li-l-Matbu`at, 1988), 19.

a large army supporting him. While many despised this action, gradually some Sunnis had come to see al-Hasan's action in a different light: he was a man of peace, who avoided the horrible inter-Muslim warfare that dominated the first centuries of Islam, and perhaps it was through him that there could be harmony between Sunnis and Shi`ites, as Hasan was incontrovertibly descended from the Prophet. This attitude is epitomized in the following tradition in Bukhari:

"This, my son, is a lord (*sayyid*) through whom perhaps God will make peace between two groups of Muslims."[8] Other later apocalyptic writers such as Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, al-Sakhawi and Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti also saw al-Hasan in this light, and it may be that Ibn al-Munadi was a more important figure in the intellectual development of Sunni apocalypticism than has hitherto been noticed.

Ibn al-Munadi

The figure of Ibn al-Munadi is quite shadowy within the biographical literature. He is said to have been born in 870 or 871 and died in 947, and most of the details that are recorded about him appear in Hanbali biographical collections. There he receives high marks as a *hadith* transmitter, the major quality important to the medieval biographers, and as a pious person generally with a high regard for the truth. The one anecdote that is related concerning him in all of the biographies is that at one time a group of students interested in *hadith* visited him in his home, and were asked to give the number of people in their group. When they miscounted by two (not counting a pair of *ghulams* or slaves), then Ibn al-Munadi is said to have dismissed them without giving any reasons. When he did this again and again, then they finally asked him why he was unwilling to see them, and he told them that they were not truthful.[9] While it is difficult to draw any larger conclusions from such an anecdote, it seems that the personality being portrayed was a rigorous and literal one.

Such an anecdote raises some questions about the reasons why Ibn al-Munadi wrote a book on apocalyptic traditions, and whether he was

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8. Al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, iv, 260 (no. 3746).

9. See al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, *Ta'rikh Baghdad* (Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 2001), v, 110–12 (no. 1959); and Ibn Abi Ya`la, *Tabaqat al-Hanabila* (Beirut: Dar al-Ma`rifa, n.d. [reprint]), ii, 3–6 (no. 578).

a Hanbali at all. While some of the earlier apocalyptic writers, such as Nu`aym b. Hammad were personally associated with Ahmad b. Hanbal, there are no other Hanbalis to the best of my knowledge who wrote books on apocalyptic traditions. Moreover, for such a rigorous personality, Ibn al-Munadi included a number of problematic traditions as we will see in the next section, in addition to personally attacking major *hadith* figures such as Sufyan al-Thawri (although we will see there was a good reason for this as well).

It would seem that the reason for Ibn al-Munadi being associated with the Hanbalis was the fact that his grandfather was whipped at the time of the *mihna* controversy under the caliph al-Mu`tasim, who favored the Mu`tazalites, and tortured those who believed in the creation of the Qur'an. Other than that fact, there is nothing else associating Ibn al-Munadi with the Hanbalis. Prominent people from whom Ibn al-Munadi is said to have related traditions include Abu Da'ud al-Sijistani, whose collection of *hadith* ranks among the Six Books venerated by all Sunnis. However, it is interesting to note that comparison of the traditions appearing in the *Kitab al-malahim* with the section on *malahim* inside the volume of Abu Da'ud does not reveal any overlaps. For example, with regard to the well-known tradition, "the nations are about to fall upon you [the Muslims] like starving people upon a bowl of food," related by both Ibn al-Munadi and Abu Da'ud their *isnads* or chains of transmitters are completely different. He is also said to have transmitted from prominent Sunnis such as Muhammad b. Ishaq Ibn Rahawahi,[10] and others.[11]

Only in Ibn Abi Ya`la's biography of him is there any indication that he was interested in apocalyptic traditions, as he is said to be the authority for a tradition on the foundation of Baghdad and the prosperity it will enjoy in the future.[12] While this tradition is included in apocalyptic collections, such as that of Nu`aym and others, including the *Kitab al-malahim*, it does

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10. Al-`Ulaymi, *Minhaj al-ahmad fi tarajim ashab Ahmad* (Beirut: `Alam al-Kutub, 1984), i, 308.

11. Including Muhammad b. Ishaq al-Shaghani, al-`Abbas b. Muhammad al-Duri, Zakariya b. Yahya al-Marwazi, Muhammad b. `Abd al-Malik al-Daqiqi, Abu al-Buhturi `Abdallah b. Muhammad b. Shakir al-`Anbari, `Isa b. Ja`far al-Warraq, and Abu Yusuf al-Qalusi.

12. Ibn Abi Ya`la, ii, 4.

not contain any prophecies of Baghdad's destruction or the other horrors with which apocalyptic books are usually filled.

The period in which Ibn al-Munadi lived was a turbulent time. Several years prior to his birth the `Abbasid caliphate had gone through a collapse, and the caliphs had come to be dominated by their Turkish slave soldiers. As a result of this collapse, much of the eastern Muslim empire came under the control of local dynasties, and even the area of Iraq suffered major revolts such as the slave rebellion of the Zanj (the black slaves of southern Iraq), which lasted between 868–881. By the end of the ninth century the Abbasid caliphate had recovered somewhat, but full control over the provinces, both east and west, was never regained. However, this period, while difficult for the `Abbasids, was a flourishing one for Baghdadi culture. In his introduction Ibn al-Munadi says that he is writing the *Kitab al-malahim* to an unnamed audience, who asked him why there is so much discord (*fasad*) and violence throughout the world, and will it ever cease. Thus, we should turn to the contents of the book to see whether this question was answered.

The *Kitab al-malahim*

Study of the *Kitab al-malahim* starts with its format. The author writes that he is aware of the fact that many scholars of the *hadith* have avoided the genre of *malahim* (he lists al-A`mash, Sufyan al-Thawri and Shu`ba b. al-Hajjaj specifically), but that because of the troubled nature of the times it is important for Muslims to have access to this material. The *Kitab al-malahim* begins with several citations from the Qur'an and then a number of lengthy semi-historical passages designed to support the authenticity of apocalyptic as a genre, connecting it to two forms of legitimacy, before going into the purely *hadith* materials:

The first is related on the authority of al-Hasan b. Ali al-Sulami and is based upon the well-known story of the debate between the Prophet Muhammad and the Jew Phinhas, which is alluded to in the commentaries to Qur'an 18:1.[13] In Ibn al-Munadi this figure is referred to as a Fayhas, and is said to have been a magician who was asked by the Quraysh to contest with Muhammad to see which one of them had the power (very similar to the contests between Moses and the magicians of Pharaoh in Qur'an 7:102–26

13. For example, al-Tabari, *Jami' al-bayan* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, n.d.), xv, 191.

and other places). But when Fayhas approached Muhammad, in actuality he asked him a number of cosmological questions in an effort to test his knowledge. After asking for 3 days to answer the questions, Muhammad prayed for guidance, strikingly similar to the prayer that is ascribed to Daniel in Daniel 10. Similarly to Daniel, for whom answers were delayed because Michael the archangel was delayed by his conflict with the "prince of Persia" (Daniel 10:2, 12–14), also in the story of Fayhas the angel Gabriel was kept away from Muhammad. Obviously these twin delays are designed to highlight the importance of the material that is to be presented.

Then the anxious prophet was given two tablets found on the top of a mountain called Barbar by two members of the tribe of Kinda, which were the tablets of Moses, which had fallen from the heavens at God's leave, again very strikingly similar to the contemporaneous Byzantine apocalypse "The Letter of Jesus Christ that fell from the sky." These tablets contained the answers to Fayhas' questions, and after he had been answered and put in his place, then those tablets were given to the possession of `Ali b. Abi Talib. Ibn al-Munadi received this particular story on the authority of Ja`far al-Sadiq to his son Muhammad, and then through the aforementioned *isnad*.

It is interesting that the contents of these tablets are strikingly similar to other esoteric materials that are related on the authority of Ja`far al-Sadiq, and begin with a cosmological narrative concerning creation, and posits a creation prior to the creation of humanity mentioned in the Qur'an. Thus when God wanted to created humanity, the Qur'an (2:29) states: "And remember when God said to the angels: I shall appoint a deputy (*khalifa*) on earth, and they answered: Will you place therein one who sows discord and sheds blood while we chant your praises and proclaim your holiness?"[14] The story then continues with the theme of corruption on the earth through the first murder (of Abel by Cain) through Adam giving his testament (*wasiya*) to his son Seth, a Gnostic and Shi`ite theme.[15]

After this Gnostic section the tradition continues on with the story of the two lines of humanity: the line of Cain, which is said to be the ancestor of the Persian monarchs (as Tahmurth, their first king is of the line of Cain), and the other iniquitous rulers of the world, including Nimrod, Nebuchadnezzar and many others down to the time of Yezdigird II, the

14. Translation from Tarif Khalidi, *The Qur'an* (New York: Viking, 2008).
15. Ibn al-Munadi, *Malahim* (Qumm: Dar al-Sira, 1998), 38.

Persian ruler conquered by the Muslims, during whose time the world was said to be overcome with discord or corruption.[16] It is obvious that this dichotomy is more or less paralleling a Sons of Light and Sons of Darkness myth in order to explain the situation of the world.

The second legitimizing tradition is associated with one Satih, who is known to have been a *kahin*, and who met with `Abd Shams, and `Abd Manaf, the ancestors of the tribe of Quraysh from several generations prior to the time of the Prophet Muhammad, and delivered to them a rhymed (in *ra*) prophecy about the rulers that would follow the latter in leading the Muslims. It is obvious that this element of the legitimizing tradition harks back to the pre-Islamic annunciations of the coming of Muhammad that are contained with the genre of the "proofs of prophethood" (*dala'il al-nubuwwa*), and indeed Satih himself is featured in the *sira* of Ibn Hisham. Included under this rubric is the vision of Khusraw in which he sees a dream at the time of the Prophet Muhammad's birth prophesying the downfall of the Sasanian empire.

The third legitimizing tradition is ascribed to the biblical figure of Daniel, with whom there are already parallels in the first story concerning Fayhas, through the otherwise unknown figure of Abu Sulayman `Abdallah b. Jarir al-Jawaliqi, who stated that he heard it "from one of the People of the Book." This apocalypse, as previously stated, is the longest Muslim literary apocalypse known to me. I have already translated it, so will merely summarize its contents. It can be divided into 8 major sections: the historical beginning which lists caliphs that can be identified until the reign of al-Radi (934–40), the appearance of the Sufyani, an apocalyptic opponent of the Mahdi associated with the region of Syria, the fall of the Sufyani and the appearance of the Mahdi, the war with the Byzantines, the appearance of the Antichrist, the description of the messianic age, the end of the world and a postscript from Daniel.

This apocalypse is highly complicated, and describes in detail, including names and tribal affiliations a great many conflicts that will happen throughout the Muslim world. The section detailing the conflict with the Sufyani, who is seen as a messianic figure by the Syrian Muslims, while demonized by Shi`ites and Iraqis in general, takes up the balance of the apocalypse. It is not surprising to see this happen, as there was indeed a

16. Ibid., 46.

Sufyani appearance during 906,[17] which is probably just before the lengthy Daniel apocalypse was composed. The Sufyani in the Daniel apocalypse, in contradistinction to the Shi`ite versions of his career is not a particularly evil figure. He is cruel to the people of Iraq, and to the Prohpet Muhammad's family in general—for example, at a particular time when he takes the town of Medina he has two descendents of the Prophet, a brother and sister, killed by making them gore each other with spears—but he is capable of repentance at the end.

The hero of the apocalypse, however, is the figure of the Hasani, the descendent of al-Hasan, the eldest grandson of Muhammad, who as previously stated was sidelined by mainstream Shi`ites. The Daniel apocalypse describes him in the following terms: "God will roll up the earth for the Pure One who will appear in Mecca, whose name is Muhammad b. Ali of the descendents of the elder grandson, al-Hasan b. `Ali, who is called 'the Imam al-Hasani'." After he defeats the Sufyani, then the latter flees to the Byzantines, which necessitates a war against them in order both to conquer this remaining Christian empire (which is a messianic goal in Muslim apocalyptic literature) as well as to obtain the fugitive.

As the war against the Byzantines proceeds, it is interesting that the Hasani will be faced with a revolt by a man from Isfahan who will appear in the region of the Yamama (today central Saudi Arabia) and come to control the area of central and southern Iraq. This figure, called al-Muhiqq in the apocalypse, is most likely analogous to the pseudo-Mahdi of the Qarmatians described below. According to the text, the deputy of the Hasani will tell him the following: "a man who is performing magic and leading the people astray from Isfahan. He is a liar called al-Muhiqq… fighting him is absolutely necessary, and more important than fighting the Byzantines." Eventually after al-Muhiqq is defeated then the Hasani returns to conquer Constantinople, which was the foremost goal of Syrian Muslim apocalyptic literature, and he will "enter it with his followers and destroy its great church, after taking its altar and its crosses," and then level the city completely.

At that time the Antichrist (the Dajjal) will appear, who will also be associated with Persia, appearing in Istakhr (southern Iran). The Antichrist

17. Al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh al-rusul wa-l-muluk*, xxxviii, 181–82 (trans. Rosenthal); Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi al-ta'rikh* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1979 [reprint of Tornberg]), vii, 553.

will tempt the Muslims through the use of miracles and very graphically described tortures involving roasting alive those who reject him. Most of his followers will be Jews, Zoroastrians, *zanadiqa* (heretics), and any libertines. Because the Antichrist is anti-type of Jesus, and most of his miracles in some way or another mimic those of Jesus, in the end Jesus is his major opponent, although the Hasani is also there to help fight the Antichrist with a remnant of the Muslims in Jerusalem. After defeating the Antichrist then Jesus will order the breaking of every cross, the slaughter of every pig and the destruction of all churches and synagogues, so that everyone is converted to Islam. "Then the Byzantines, the Slavs and all of the nations when they hear the imam call them to Islam will answer affirmatively, in obedience to what they have heard from the Messiah Jesus when he called out while he was in the white cloud" while coming down from heaven. Additionally, Jesus will take Satan and any demons he can find and slaughter them in Jerusalem upon the site of the Temple (today the location of the Dome of the Rock).

The messianic age described by the Daniel apocalypse is one that is ruled by a succession of mahdis, alternatively from the descendents of al-Hasan and from the descendents of al-Husayn (the mainstream Shi`ite line), and it will be characterized as a peaceful, plentiful society: "All of the people of the world together with their kings will convert to Islam, and injustice will go, righteousness will be revived, and every harmful creature from among the animals will die and the vermin even the flies, the ants the mosquitoes and every harmful creature… wealth will be divided fairly, and arrogance and stupidity will depart from the people." After that time then God will bring the world to an end.

This Daniel apocalypse is unusual in its length and detail and must have been created by someone who both knew the apocalyptic tradition of Islam (in both its Sunni and Shi`ite variants) extremely well, as well as knowing the Muslim world, and something of the larger world. The only region of the Muslim world that is not alluded to in the Daniel apocalypse is the far west, Morocco and Muslim Spain. We will probably never know who exactly penned this apocalypse—perhaps it was Ibn al-Munadi himself, or perhaps he redacted it to bring it up to date—but we have stories concerning forgers who are known to have penned Daniel apocalypses from the period of some 20 years prior to the time of its writing. From the *Kitab al-hiyal*, there is a story of how such an apocalypse was commissioned by one who hoped to be appointed vizier, and so he asked the forger to make a description of him so

that the caliph would see that his appointment had been prophesied. Indeed, he was appointed shortly thereafter according to the sources.[18]

Ibn al-Munadi's text does not stop with these three long introductory apocalypses, but instead divides the material up topically and places different traditions under each rubric. Some of them are interesting for us, as they do list dated traditions, such as "the mill of Islam will turn in the years 35, 36 or 38—if you perish at that time, then you perish, but if you survive then it will be for 70 years."[19] This tradition is usually associated with the traumatic events of the first century of Islam, as the first major civil war fought between `Ali b. Abi Talib and the Umayyad Mu`awiya occurred during that period. However, Ibn al-Munadi's text does add in an interesting parenthetical remark: "We do not know which century" which most probably means that he is transposing this tradition to his own time (remembering that he died in 336).

Sections dealing with standard Muslim apocalyptic topics such as fighting the Byzantines and the Turks, both of which take up substantial sections in the work of Nu`aym from the century prior to Ibn al-Munadi, only receive a few traditions in the latter's work. It is interesting also that there is a section on the Berbers, who garnered a good deal of attention in Nu`aym as well, but in Ibn al-Munadi their section contains only some traditions about fighting a people who wear shoes made out of hair. These traditions are identical to the major traditions given about the Turks:

> "The Hour will not arrive until you (the Muslims) fight a group with small eyes, wide faces, as if their eyes were the pupils of locust, as if their faces were beaten shields, wearing shoes made of hair, taking up leather shields until they fasten their horses on a palm tree [in Iraq]."[20]

Just as Nu`aym focused upon Syria, Ibn al-Munadi primarily focuses upon Iraq. There are extensive apocalyptic prophecies associated with the city of Basra, and a section devoted to the Zanj revolt. The Zanj revolt material is all connected to the city of Basra, and rather indistinct (including prophecies that appear in Nu`aym well before the period of the Zanj), but

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18. *Raqa'iq al-hilal fi daqa'iq al-hiyal*, 235–7 (trans. Rene Khawwam, *The Subtle Ruse* [London: East-West Publications, 1980]).

19. Ibn al-Munadi, 114f.

20. al-Hindi, Kanz *al-'ummal fi al-afa'l wa-l-aqwal* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risala, 1987),xiv, 206 (no. 38407).

Ibn al-Munadi states "we have seen the fulfillment of these prophecies when in the first part of Safar 270/Sept. 883 when the master of the Zanj was killed… "[21] He quickly notes that this army was not the one that will destroy the Ka`ba according to the predictions, about which he says "how close the fulfillment of the prophecies of that were in the following section."

Indeed, immediately afterwards he cities the predictions of the destruction of the Ka`ba at the hands of the Ethiopians, who are said to destroy it using pick-axes. These appeared already in Nu`aym as well, and so are being reinterpreted. Most probably Ibn al-Munadi is relating this tradition to the attack of the Qarmatians on Mecca in 930, which was led by several of non-Arab ancestry, although none known to have been Ethiopians. In order to corroborate this identification he cites the tradition about the Hajj procession being sacked during the month of Dhu al-Hijja (the last month in the Muslim calendar), which indeed was when the Qarmatians attacked Mecca.

Just as with the long Daniel apocalypse, the hero of Ibn al-Munadi's text is the Hasani. In his sections on the identity of the Mahdi, Ibn al-Munadi merely states that he needs to be of the descendents of the Prophet Muhammad, but does not specify from which grandson he will descend. Later on, however, he is no longer coy about the issue, and proclaims the coming of the Hasani.[22] This figure is obviously designed to unify between Sunnis and Shi`ites, as al-Hasan was a peacemaker rather than a warlord. All of these predictions follow closely the pattern of the long Daniel apocalypse. At the end of the book when discussing the figure of the Antichrist there is another interesting comment which states that he will appear after the year 280/893, by which presumably Ibn al-Munadi is identifying him with the Qarmatian leaders in general or with the eventual appearance of the Qarmatian mahdi who was proclaimed shortly after the sacking of Mecca.

Text in Context

There is no doubt that the *Kitab al-malahim* has a very strong focus towards the eastern section of the Muslim world. The beginning legitimizing traditions emphasize the Persian heritage, giving in the renditions of the

21. Ibn al-Munadi, 167.
22. Ibid., 200–4, 271–72.

tablets of Moses (according to Ja`far al-Sadiq) the Persian dynasty, while the prophecy of Satih describes the vision that Khusraw is said to have seen of his future downfall at the birth of Muhammad. Many of the events described in the Daniel apocalypse are associated with the history of the eastern Muslim world, and while the apocalypse does describe the figure of the Sufyani who is associated with Syria, most the events concerning him actually take place either in Iraq or in the Arabian Peninsula. Events that are mentioned concerning Egypt and the region of Libya and Tunisia are quite shadowy.

There is equally no doubt that like earlier round-number centuries, the year 300/912–13 was the target of speculation as to whether the world would end at that time. Already from Nu`aym, written the previous century we find the following prediction:

> "In the 210s there will be bombardment, swallowing up by the earth and metamorphosis, in the 220s there will be death among the *'ulama'* of the world-until none are left, in the 230s the sky will rain hail like eggs and the cattle will perish, in the 240s the Nile and the Euphrates will cease so that they will sow [fields] in their courses, in the 250s there will be brigandage, wild animals will dominate humans and everybody will stay in their own town, in the 260s the sun will cease (shining) for half an hour and half of humanity and jinn will perish, in the 270s no-one will be born, and no female will be pregnant, in the 280s women will be like donkeys—so that 40 men will have intercourse with one woman and no one will think anything of it, in the 290s the year will be like a month, the month like a week, the week like a day, the day like an hour, an hour like the burning of an ulcer such that a man would leave his house and not arrive at the city gate until sunset and in 300 the rising of the sun from the west."[23]

This type of apocalyptic prediction was extremely common, and similar types of predictions can be found for other year sequences from around the year 200/815. The author of it obviously sees an apocalyptic progression of disasters that will lead up to the rising of the sun from the west, a sign that is usually said to herald the closing of the gates of repentance after which no one can hope to attain salvation.

Other evidence for apocalyptic speculation is contained within a short notice discussing the well-known tradition of the Prophet Muhammad which stated that he pointed with his pointer and middle fingers when

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23. Nu`aym, *Fitan* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1991), 427.

asked about the Hour and said that the distance until it appeared was like the difference between the two of them: "Abu Riyyan al-Himsi was asked about the meaning of the word of the Messenger of God when he was asked: When will the Hour arrive and he pointed with his third finger, so they interpreted that [to mean] 300 years, He [Abu Riyyan] said: He just meant to leave [the issue] since he did not know when the Hour would arrive."[24] This notice was perhaps designed to forestall any further speculation based upon a well-known tradition.

During the middle to later period of Ibn al-Munadi's life there were two major groups of apocalyptic events, the first of them tied to the year 300/912–3, and the second of them tied to the appearance of the Qarmatian Ismailis around the years 924–30 and their activities which will be discussed. In the first one of these groups there is a messianic appearance of one `Abdallah b. Ibrahim al-Musamma`i from the villages in the region of Isfahan. We have already noted that this region is where the Dajjal was supposed to appear according to the dominant theme in both Sunni and Shi`ite apocalyptic. 10,000 *akrad* and others are said to have gathered to him.[25] There is no word of their fate, but one assumes that they were destroyed by government forces.

In the west, in the region of Tunisia, the period just prior to 300/912–13 the Fatimids appeared, and the Mahdi `Ubaydallah entered Qayrawan on Jan. 15, 910. Although there is not much to say that the first Fatimids were *specifically* messianic other than the messianic titles that they took, it would seem that the enthusiasm for their cause was at least partially generated by the coincidence of their rule with the year 300. In other words, the year, their overcoming the corrupt Sunni Aghlabids, and a number of different other portents that came together at that time lent their movement with a messianic air, and a demonic one for their opponents.

Even in Baghdad there was a claimant of divinity during the year 910, as Ibn al-Athir states: "In it, in Sha`ban, a group was taken in Baghdad-it was said about them that they were followers of a man who claimed divinity called Muhammad b. Bishr"[26] Some portents that occurred at this

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24. Al-Tawhidi, *al-Basa'ir wa-l-dhakha'ir* (Beirut: Dar Sadir, 1999), i, 15–16 (no. 21).

25. Ibn al-Athir, *Ta'rikh*, viii, 12.

26. Ibid., 62 also Ibn al-Jawzi, *Kitab al-muntazam fi al-ta'rikh* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1992), xiii, 106.

time stand out in terms of their significance. The principal one of these is the comet, most frequently Halley's Comet. Perhaps this is because of the truly sensational nature of the comet, its inexplicable place in an otherwise obviously ordered universe, and the almost unique ability of the comet to speak to the vast geographical range of the Muslim world simultaneously. The appearance of Halley's Comet in 299/912 was not an event that was ignored by Muslim chroniclers:

> "Three stars with tails appeared: one of them appeared on the night of 26 Ramadan [May 17, 912] in Leo. The second of them appeared on Tuesday, 11 Dhu al-Qa`da [June 30] in the east, and the third appeared on the night of Wednesday, 21 Dhu al-Qa`da [July 10] in Scorpio. It stayed a number of days and then gradually died out."[27]

The significance of these comets appearing just before the turn of the century cannot be underestimated. It was undoubtedly a contributing factor the rise of messianic speculation at this time.

Messianic speculation can give rise to disappointment in the type of messiah that is produced, which quickly happened in North Africa. The Fatimids rode to power on a wave of expectations associated with the Kuttama Berbers who had been their most fervent supporters. However, when the Kuttama were quickly disillusioned by the nature of the Fatimid regime another Mahdi appeared from along them in 912 who was ethnically one of their own. He is said to have been from a noble Berber family, and to have claimed prophecy, as well as claiming that revelation came to him. The text, however, does not give details of what the nature of the revelation was that he received. Not surprisingly, the Fatimids could not tolerate this Mahdi, and quickly sent out an army which took him prisoner and killed him.[28] Rulers usually do not have much mercy for messianic claimants whose claims conflict with their own.

The second group of messianic appearances and apocalyptic portents began approximately 12 years later. This group is a little more difficult to explain than the first, which is so obviously tied to prophecies and the round

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27. Ibn al-Jawzi, *Muntazam*, xiii, 123; and note al-Mas`udi, *Muruj al-dhahab* (Beirut: Manshurat al-Jami`a al-Lubnaniyya, 1975), iii, 282, which unfortunately gives no details whatsoever.

28. *'Uyun wa-l-hada'iq* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1865), i, 252; al-Maqrizi, *Itti'az al-hunafa'* (Cairo: Idarat al-Awqaf, 1996), i, 68.

number of the year 300. Perhaps it has a generational issue, as there is little apocalyptic activity during the intervening years—the excitement of the year 300 had died down, and people were ready then for a second round, or perhaps it has to do with the many comets that are said to have appeared during these years. One should remember that at this particular time, even the famous poet al-Mutanabbi claimed to be a prophet, a claim that he was never able to live down and stayed with him for the rest of his life.[29]

Or perhaps it was merely the ripple effect of the success of the Ismailiyya in the west, that as their movement moved towards the east, making attempts to conquer Egypt in 913 and 919, and with the foundation of the Qarmatian state in the region of western Arabia the claims to be associated with the Ismaili family multiplied. For example, in 312/924 a man appeared in Kufa claiming to be a descendent of Ismail (who was the eldest son of the Shi`ite imam Ja`far al-Sadiq, from whom Ibn al-Munadi received the story of Fayhas above), and gathered a large following of Arabs and the people of the Sawad of Iraq (the fertile region in-between the two rivers). He was quickly overcome by an army sent from Baghdad, and his followers were killed.[30]

But easily the most important messianic appearance during this period was the appearance of the Qarmatian Ismailis, who were extraordinarily aggressive in establishing their control over much of Arabia. They were only narrowly deflected from conquering Baghdad in 928 (at the same time as there was another messianic appearance in Sijistan),[31] and went on to attack Mecca in January 930. The heresiographer al-Nawbakhti states about their beliefs that they expected that Muhammad b. Isma`il was in hiding in the Byzantine Empire (the *bilad al-rum*) and that he would appear at any time, and that they were striving to conquer the region for him to bring about the expected messianic state.[32] Note the parallels in this expectation with the fact that the Sufyani in the Daniel apocalypse took refuge with the Byzantines. Specifically with regard to Mecca, the Qarmatians were

29. Abu al-A`la al-Ma`arri, *Risalat al-ghufran* (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-Taqafiyya, n.d.), 414–16; al-Tanukhi, *Nishwar al-muhadara* (Beirut: Dar Sadir, 1995), viii, 198–200.

30. Ibn al-Athir, viii, 157; Ibn al-Jawzi, xiii, 240.

31. Ibid., viii, 198.

32. Istavan Hajnal, "The Pseudo-Mahdi intermezzo of the Qaramita in Bahrayn," *The Arabist* 19–20 (1998), 187.

said to place a great deal of significance upon the tradition which reads: "Islam began as a stranger and will return to being a stranger, so blessings upon the strangers." Therefore, their leaders apparently decided that it was important to attack the region where Islam began, Mecca, and to control it. It is interesting that this tradition attracted the attention of the *hadith* figure al-Ajurri, who penned an entire work on the subject from this period (the work is not dated, but al-Ajurri died in 360/970, so it may very well be from exactly this period). Ibn al-Munadi also cites this tradition in his book.[33]

After the Qarmatians sacked Mecca, they took the Black Stone, presumably to demonstrate that the era of Islam was over, and held it hostage for the next 40 some years. Immediately after they returned from this expedition their leader Abu Tahir handed power to a young man from Isfahan (note the confluence with the location of the appearance of the Dajjal in apocalyptic literature), claiming him to be the Mahdi, and the group went through an antinomian experiment that lasted some 80 days, whereupon Abu Tahir killed him. Interpretations of this bizarre incident are varied, with some scholars believing that the entire situation was manipulated by Abu Tahir in order to gain power—although he could not have predicted the instability of this Mahdi figure, who had a number of Abu Tahir's close relatives executed—while others see it as a period of simple messianic madness brought about by the ecstasy of having attacked Mecca and destroyed the Ka`ba. It should be noted, however, that characteristic of this Mahdi was his rejection of Islam, together with his focus upon his Persian heritage, apparently openly embracing Zoroastrianism and other non-Islamic symbols.

Conclusions

Why did Ibn al-Munadi write the *Kitab al-malahim* and what was its intended audience? My general conclusion is that he wrote it as a result of the attack of the Qarmatians upon Mecca in 319/930, which resulted in the theft of the Black Stone from the Ka`ba, and the subsequent appearance of the Qarmatian Mahdi in 931. The Iraq focus of the *Kitab al-malahim*, the detailed presentation of the Persian monarchs said according to the tradition of Fayhas to be descended from Cain, the first murderer, the description

33. Ibn al-Munadi, 146.

of the destruction of the Ka`ba (even if it was prophesied to have been at the hands of an Ethiopian), and most of all the hints about the dating of the apocalyptic events due to occur approximately during the time when Ibn al-Munadi was writing all point to this conclusion. He did not write the *Kitab al-malahim* as a casual description of the apocalypse, he wrote it either to answer the questions of some audience who was perturbed about the attack on Mecca or else for himself (with the description of the would-be audience as a literary device) for the same purpose.

One thing can be certain from the biography of Ibn al-Munadi inside Ibn Abi Ya`la, the Hanbali biographical source, which is Ibn al-Munadi's hostility towards the *hadith* establishment as epitomized by Sufyan al-Thawri. After the citation of the single apocalyptic tradition ascribed to him in this text, the anecdote goes on to say that Muhammad the nephew of Sufyan al-Thawri was sitting in the audience, and after the citation of this tradition, he shouted out that Ibn al-Munadi was a liar. It is interesting that in his introduction to the *Kitab al-malahim* Ibn al-Munadi specifies Sufyan al-Thawri among others as scholars who did not relate apocalyptic traditions because they were prejudiced against them, and thus attacks him quite directly.[34]

Ibn al-Munadi's methodology in citation, especially citing his traditions from irregular sources, such as the lengthy Daniel apocalypse, and the material concerning Fayhas on the authority of Ja`far al-Sadiq, in my opinion indicates that his audience is not the typical *ahl al-hadith*. Comparing the types of legitimization in Ibn al-Munadi with that of Nu`aym, for example, we find them to be completely different. Nu`aym starts off his collection placing it firmly within the prophetic rubric.

> "The Messenger of God said: 'God lifted the world up for me, and I looked at it and what is to be upon it until the Day of Resurrection just as I am looking at this my hand—a revelation (*jillyan*) from God, who revealed it to His prophet [Muhammad] just as He revealed it to the prophets before him."[35]

Ibn al-Munadi, instead begins his *Kitab al-malahim* with several Qur'anic citations that mainly relate to Shi`ite interpretations of Muslim

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34. Ibid., 19. Sufyan al-Thawri is cited in the text about 10 times.

35. Nu`aym, 13; for the Syriac word *gelyona*—used for the book of Revelation—(correct from *jaylan* in the text).

history, such as the prophesy concerning the Banu Isra'il in Qur'an 17:4–8, where they are said to have been given two chances by God, after which he punished them. It seems quite clear that like Shi`ites, Ibn al-Munadi is relating this verse selection to the Muslim community, an interpretation that is unknown from other Sunni sources.

The *Kitab al-malahim* has other secrets that are waiting to be unlocked. For an anti-Ismaili, one has to say that Ibn al-Munadi was a bit of a cryptic writer, and it would be fascinating to recheck the manuscripts to see whether there are additional side-notes or issues that the editor left out. Connections that Ibn al-Munadi made, his esoteric bent, and his fascinating interpretations of Muslim history still await a detailed analysis.

Apocalyptic Eschatology and The Transcendence of Death in William Gibson's *Neuromancer*

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Apocalyptic is in the air. Few words are more ubiquitous, few notions more widespread. The doomsday predictions associated with the recent 2012 "Mayan Apocalypse" are merely the latest peak in a decades-long trend where people have become progressively more inclined to understand the world and their place in it through the lens of the apocalyptic worldview. Traditionally, apocalyptic speculation has expressed itself most prominently in a mode that has its roots in the ancient biblical books of Daniel and the Revelation of John. But a new, secular mode of apocalypticism has recently developed alongside the traditional biblical mode. It reflects a re-positioning of the worldview in light of the postulates and claims that make up what we know as modernity. The perception of the current ecological crisis as an *apocalyptic* event is only one illustration of a global phenomenon that also has economic, political, sociological, and cultural dimensions.

Foremost among the cultural expressions of secular apocalypticism is science fiction. One reason for this is the elasticity of the notion of "apocalyptic," which in the current vernacular translates into anything associated with disaster and loss of life on a planetary scale. This meshes well with a genre naturally invested in speculative stories about the future; the idea of "post-apocalyptic" is in fact an invention of the science-fictional imagination and a regular staple of the genre. Another reason is that science fiction almost by definition excludes the element of supernatural agency and explanation.[1] It is thus unsurprising to find science fiction freighting literary examples of apocalypticism in its secular mode. More specifically, certain

1. This does not restrict the genre's ability to explore religions and religious themes, or to parody them. The sub-genre of religious science fiction is a grey area. At one end of the spectrum is tendentious theology cloaked in science-fictional dress. At the other is speculative fiction informed by the author's religious beliefs, e.g., C.S. Lewis's Perelandra trilogy.

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science-fiction works of an elevated literary stature employ key elements of the apocalyptic worldview to explore long-standing questions of time, space, and human destiny in a meaningful fashion within a secular-scientific cultural framework.[2]

A superb example is William Gibson's classic 1984 novel *Neuromancer*, which has generated much critical reflection,[3] most of which focuses on its postmodern stance, dystopian setting, and cyberpunk style.[4] Yet the role of apocalyptic eschatology and the theme of transcendence in the novel have been relatively underappreciated. Before describing the ways in which these elements influence its structure and ideas, it is necessary to define a few central terms.[5]

Apocalypticism is the worldview which underwrites apocalyptic literature, eschatology, and social movements. It cannot be described by a single feature, function, or motif. Instead, it is best understood as the distinctive combination of axioms that are not necessarily apocalyptic in themselves. Apocalypticism presumes the existence of a transcendent reality, which defines time, space, and human destiny, yet is concealed from casual observation and remains beyond the pale of intellection and worldly experience. It presumes that mundane reality is constitutionally structured

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2. Peter Y. Paik, *From Utopia to Apocalypse: Science Fiction and the Politics of Collapse* (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

3. William Gibson, *Neuromancer* (New York: Ace, 1984). Citations to the novel are by chapter (§) and page number in the hardcover Ace edition (1994). Italics in direct quotations are original.

4. For bibliographies, see Dani Cavallero, *Cyberpunk and Cyberculture: Science Fiction and the Work of William Gibson* (London/New Brunswick, NJ: Althone, 2000), Markus Säbel, "Cyberspace—Cyborg—AI: Technologie in William Gibsons *Neuromancer*," *Inklings: Jahrbuch für Literatur und Ästhetik* 18 (2000), 250–71, Carl B. Yoke and Carol L. Robinson, ed., *The Cultural Influences of William Gibson, the "Father" of Cyberpunk Science Fiction* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 2007), and the William Gibson page on the *Science Fiction Studies* website.

5. Veronica Hollinger argues that *Neuromancer* is "anti-apocalyptic" because it denies apocalyptic revelation where it is expected, as for example when Case hacks the critical data from the Straylight computer, or when Wintermute speaks to Case at the end of the novel. What she means by "apocalyptic" is not spelled out, however, and she confuses "revelation" with "apocalyptic". See "Notes on the Contemporary Apocalyptic Imagination: William Gibson's *Neuromancer* and Douglas Coupland's *Girlfriend in a Coma*," in Jean-François Leroux and Camille R. La Bossière, eds., *Worlds of Wonder* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2004), 47–56.

by two opposite, antagonistic, and irreducible forces, typically identified with good and evil, which have been in conflict since the dawn of history. It furthermore presumes the imminence and inevitability of the final resolution of this conflict. Together, these axioms describe an *apocalyptic minimum* by which cultural expressions and social movements may be identified as apocalyptic.[6]

Eschatology is the study or doctrine of the last things. It has temporal and teleological dimensions, in the sense that an eschatological perspective looks forward to an expected future, as well as backward from that future. Knowing or predicting the future inevitably influences the present.

Apocalyptic eschatology is the eschatology of the apocalyptic worldview.[7] As such, it differs from other types of eschatologies. Many attempts have been made to isolate the nature of this difference. John J. Collins offers the best proposal, which identifies the distinguishing element as the hope for the transcendence of death.[8] Although it is not clear whether apocalyptic eschatology may be distilled to a single hallmark element,[9] the *centrality* of the hope for the transcendence of death cannot be disputed.

How does *Neuromancer* compare against these benchmarks? On the one hand, it is not an apocalypse.[10] Nor can the novel be classified as

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6. For a full study, accompanied by an appendix on methodology and a glossary of terms, see L. DiTommaso, *The Architecture of Apocalypticism*, forthcoming from Oxford University Press.

7. Some scholars define it as the eschatology of the apocalypses, but the distinction is unimportant to the present discussion.

8. John J. Collins, "Apocalyptic Eschatology as the Transcendence of Death," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 36 (1974), 21–43, and *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 11–12.

9. In the classical apocalyptic literature, the hope for the transcendence of death is envisioned as the post-mortem judgment of individuals, and carries with it the expectation of justice, salvation, retribution, and vindication. Other worldviews, however, express the same hope but conceive of it in other ways and espouse it for different reasons. One example is Buddhist eschatology, insofar as the conception of "last things" in Buddhism has meaning. See Jan Nattier, "Buddhist Eschatology," in Jerry L. Walls, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 151–69, esp. 151.

10. The best definition of an 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 envisions eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world" (J.J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* [sec. ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 4–5).

apocalyptic science-fiction, if we apply the "apocalyptic minimum" as the yardstick. For example, it is devoid of reference to the historical conflict of two opposing forces or their inevitable final conflict at the end of time.

On the other hand, the cardinal apocalyptic hope for the transcendence of death shapes the plot of the novel and profoundly informs its philosophic footings. In *Neuromancer*, this hope is expressed in the desire of its major characters to transcend their *selves*. The process involves the use of advanced technology, a feature that several critics have noted.[11] But these critics have failed to perceive how apocalyptic-eschatological elements regulate this process, or to explain how the novel reiterates traditional religious concepts in a secular-scientific mode.

In apocalypses, "salvation is salvation *out of* this world."[12] The apocalyptic hope for the transcendence of death is a function of its presumption of the existence of a transcendental reality. The difference between the biblical and secular modes of apocalypticism resides in their notions of this reality. With the former, the transcendental reality is typically "God" (or "heaven," by metonymy). With the latter, it is articulated as a divinised form of humanity, forces of nature or history, superhuman (but not supernatural) agencies, or anything else not requiring a theological explanation.

In *Neuromancer*, this agency is Wintermute, a super-human artificial intelligence (AI). Neither omniscient nor immortal, the AI is not a divine figure. Also, it seeks to transcend itself, which is an impulse not normally associated with the deity. Yet for all this, Wintermute is an otherworldly being. It is entirely an entity of the matrix, which is the novel's analogue to the transcendental reality, and can only manifest itself in the mundane world through avatars and surrogates. Significantly, at the end of the novel Wintermute transcends its own death and becomes the matrix, in a similar sense that the biblical God is heaven. At the same time, Wintermute's

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11. Glenn Grant, "Transcendence through Detournement in William Gibson's *Neuromancer*," *SFS* 17 (1990), 41–9, David G. Mead, "Technological Transfiguration in William Gibson's Sprawl Novels: *Neuromancer*, Count Zero, and Mona Lisa Overdrive," *Extrapolation* 32 (1991), 350–60, and Säbel, "Cyberspace—Cyborg—AI."

12. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination,* 221 (italics original). Not every hope for salvation from death presumes the existence of a transcendent world, nor does the presumption of the existence of such a world require a belief in the transcendence of death. See also above, n. 9.

super-natural abilities facilitate a technological salvation for some of the novel's characters that is literally out of this world.

In all cases, salvation is reified in *Neuromancer* by means of a flesh-spirit dichotomy. A contrast between flesh and spirit, or between body and soul, is a feature of many religions and philosophies, and is not apocalyptic *per se*. But apocalypticism presumes an eschatological horizon, which when imposed on a flesh-spirit dichotomy, orients it along the axis of time and gives it a dynamic dimension. Thus apocalyptic transcendence can be envisioned as movement from the world of flesh (this world) to the world of spirit (the world to come). In the traditional apocalyptic literature, this process is driven by the expectation for resurrection. In *Neuromancer* it is technological. Transcendence for its major characters means movement from hardware to software, from the corporeal world of everyday existence to the digital world of the matrix. The change always involves a form of death (or a death-analogue), and in three instances results in true immortality.

* * * * *

Henry Case is a top cyber-hacker whose ability to access the matrix has been destroyed by a neural toxin administered as retribution by the *yakuza* gangsters he swindled. The matrix is a consensual hallucination of abstracted data, a fusion of computer networks and real-time virtual reality.[13] For "console cowboys" like Case, who upload their consciousness via a neural interface, the matrix represents an exponentially enhanced existence. So in very real way, the *yakuza* have killed Case. At this point the novel opens, in Chiba City, on the outskirts of Tokyo, sometime in the near future. Life in the matrix now barred to him, Case hustles ever-riskier street "biz" on a fast track to self-destruction. He is addicted to narcotics. He learns that there is a contract on his life. And his girlfriend Linda Lee, who sells him out, is murdered by his fence, Julius Deane.

Deliverance arrives in the person of Molly Millions, who works for an ex-Special Forces officer named Armitage. Molly is an assassin/bodyguard with enhanced reflexes, optical implants, and retractable scalpels under her

13. Although the matrix in the 1999 film *The Matrix* (dir. Larry and Andy Wachowski) owes much in concept to Gibson's matrix, it is not the same thing, and should not be read back into the novel.

fingernails. She brings Case to the "Sprawl," a metropolis covering most of the eastern seaboard of the United States. There Armitage recruits Case for a dangerous mission, and arranges a special surgical operation to restore his ability to interface with the matrix. At the same time, slowly dissolving sacs containing the same *yakuza* neurotoxin are bonded to Case's arteries to ensure his compliance.

Armitage is the front man for Wintermute. The AI wants Case to destroy deep-core data in the computer mainframe of Tessier-Ashpool S.A., a shadowy and powerful multi-national corporation. The job is complicated and requires several stages to execute. First, Case and Molly must acquire a ROM-construct containing the digital personality-simulation of Case's dead mentor, McCoy Pauley, known as the Dixie Flatline. Case needs the Flatline's hacking expertise to work with a new type of virus, or "icebreaker," which Wintermute provides and is designed to penetrate the formidable defenses of the computer mainframe by slowness and stealth. The ROM-construct is held in archival storage by the media conglomerate Sense/Net. Working in the matrix, Case bypasses Sense/Net's electronic firewalls. He then contracts an anarchic street gang, the Panther Moderns, to set up a diversion outside Sense/Net, allowing Molly to infiltrate the complex and steal the construct. Case follows Molly during her run via simulated stimulation ("simstim") technology, which permits him to experience what she sees and feels and to relay one-way instructions to her electronic wrist device.

The Flatline construct now in hand, Case boots it and tasks it with shepherding the slow virus as it begins attacking the Tessier-Ashpool mainframe. This occurs in cyberspace. Thereafter Case is able to interact with his dead mentor's digitally reconstructed personality, which proves to be an invaluable source of information. Case, Molly, and Armitage next travel to Istanbul, where they recruit Peter Riviera. Riviera is a sado-masochistic performer who induces hallucinations in others as part of his cabaret act. Then all four members of the team shuttle up to Freeside, a gigantic space-station in low earth orbit, where the rest of the action of the novel occurs.

Riviera's sexually-charged cabaret act is meant to attract the jaded tastes of Lady 3Jane Tessier-Ashpool. Lady 3Jane resides in Villa Straylight, the Tessier-Ashpool family's residence located at the far end of the space-station. Riviera is invited to visit Lady 3Jane in the Villa, opening

the door for Molly to discover its gothic secrets.[14] Her mission is to obtain an old-fashioned Chubb key, as well as the password to the family terminal, a secret word known only to Lady 3Jane. Along the way she meets some of Lady 3Jane's incestuous relatives, as well as Hideo, the family's ninja clone. Throughout, Case acts as the mission coördinator. He monitors the progression of the virus, guides Molly via "simstim" as she penetrates deeper into the Villa, and obtains logistic support from an orbital colony of Rastafarians who believe that the End of Days is near. Case also begins to deduce Wintermute's hidden purposes from information gleaned from the Flatline construct and other sources.

But things go horribly wrong. Riviera betrays them, Molly is injured and caught, and Armitage's personality starts to disintegrate, since as Case discovers, Armitage is a simulated character built on the unstable platform of Colonel Willie Corto, the only survivor of a doomed mission in the last war. Desperate to salvage the mission, Case attempts to rescue Molly with the help of one of the Rastafarians. But Case is also caught, his consciousness hijacked in the matrix by a second AI, Neuromancer, which seems to be opposing Wintermute. Meanwhile, time is running out. If the mission fails, the sacs in Case's body will dissolve, releasing their poison.

Case is the central character and narrative focus of the novel. Early on, Case reflects on the effect on his self-conception of the loss of his ability to access the matrix:

> For Case, who'd lived for the bodiless exultation of cyberspace, it was the Fall. In the bars he'd frequented as a cowboy hotshot, the elite stance involves a certain relaxed contempt for the flesh. The body was meat. Case fell into a prison of his own flesh. (§1:6)

Like all cyber-cowboys, Case only barely tolerates the world of flesh. Flesh is heavy. It has mass and weight, and every restriction and limitation and constraint that these terms imply. All this is bound up in the word "meat," which Gibson uses nearly a dozen times, usually with same connotation (cf. §12:152).[15] Flesh is meat, corporeal; spirit is consciousness, digital. The

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14. William A. Senior, "Straylight: William Gibson's Gothic Impulse," in Cultural Influences *of William Gibson*, 207–23.

15. On Case and "meat," see Stephen Conway, "Transcendence and Technology in William Gibson's *Neuromancer*" (dated 1995), www.subverbis.com/essays/neuromancer.rtf, esp.

world of flesh is everyday existence; the world of spirit is the enhanced existence of the matrix.[16] Sometimes Case escapes the "prison of his own flesh" through hallucinogens, but drugs are only a temporary substitute for the matrix. Flesh is death, spirit is life. Nothing of the flesh matters, as Case joyfully rediscovers as he re-enters the matrix for the first time after the operation to repair his damaged neural system:

> This was it. This is what he was, who he was, his being. He forgot to eat… Sometimes he resented having to leave the deck to use the chemical toilet they'd set up in a corner of the loft…. It was good ice. Wonderful ice… Its rainbow pixel maze was the first thing he saw when he woke. He'd go straight to the deck, not bothering to dress, and jack in. He was cutting it. He was working. He lost track of days (4:59).

Case has re-entered paradise, courtesy of Wintermute. But his passport is not the result of an act of grace, since it comes with a price: compliance or death. Case's chief motivation for the rest of the novel is to maintain his redeemed status, liberated from the prison of flesh and saved from existential death.[17] It is this motivation, the hope for transcendence of death, rebooted in secular-scientific mode, which, along with Wintermute's own similar purposes, drives the plot of the novel.[18]

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page 2. But I cannot agree with Conway's assessment that only Wintermute and the Flatline construct exhibit a desire for transcendence (p.3).

16. References to a "Fall" and a "prison of flesh" suggest that Gibson was aware of a rudimentary form of the "gnostic myth." But its influence on *Neuromancer* should not be overemphasised. There is no reference to a divine spark, the mundane world is not the realm of a flawed demiurge, transcendence is not understood in mystical terms, and salvation is not brought about through gnosis—ideas that were considered essential to "gnosticism" when Gibson wrote the novel. Samuel R. Smith proposes that Gibson might have derived the unusual name "Wintermute" from Orval S. Wintermute, biblical scholar and co-translator of the gnostic tractate *Allogenes* (NHC XI, 3) in J.M. Robinson, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* ("'When It All Changed': Cyberpunk and the Baby Boom's Rejection of Religious Institutions," in Jonathon S. Epstein, ed., *Youth Culture: Identity in a Postmodern World* [Malden/Oxford: Blackwell, 1998], 232–62 at 251). Orval Wintermute is also mentioned in Philip K. Dick's 1981 gnostic masterpiece, *VALIS*. Since Gibson read Dick, this might have been another vector for the semantic link between O.S. Wintermute and AI Wintermute.

17. Mead correctly uses the phrase "redeemed from death" to describe Case's state at the end of the novel ("Technological Transfiguration," 354).

18. A variant of this dynamic structures the character of Molly Millions. Flesh is a much a prison for her as it is for Case. But where Case escapes it by means of a *deus ex machina*, in

If Case is the central figure of *Neuromancer* and its narrative point of view, Wintermute is its conceptual focus.[19] The AI influences the actions of all the other major characters, even if, lacking a personality, it is obliged to manifest its will through mechanical interfaces like telephones or motorised device, or virtual images of humans such as Julius Deane. It was Wintermute which long ago induced a nameless boy to place the Chubb key in a drawer in Villa Straylight, and arranged his murder in order to preserve the secret. It was Wintermute which found what remained of Colonel Corto in a sanitarium after the military fiasco and murmured television messages to him. It was Wintermute which built the Armitage personality on the Corto platform, used Armitage/Corto for its ends, and killed Corto when his personality began to resurface. It was Wintermute which uttered prophecies on a frequency lost among a Babel of tongues (§8:110), convincing the Rastafarian elders that the Final Days were at hand and they should assist Case.[20] And it was Wintermute which was the ghost in the machine, whispering to Lady 3Jane when she was young, moulding her

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the form of Wintermute, Molly escapes it by means of a *deus in machina*, through her surgical enhancements. True, salvation for Molly does not involve a form of personal death, either in an existential sense as it does for Case, or in a literal sense as it does for Wintermute and others. Yet the world of flesh represents as much a Fall for her as it does for Case, and similarly leads to death. To pay for her surgeries, Molly hired herself out as a "meat puppet," a cyber-prostitute for simstim customers who access her nervous system. During such times her consciousness fled her body and the horrors afflicted on it. The world of flesh also freights soft things and entices one to choose the path of smoothness and ease. Molly confides to Case how she once allowed herself to walk this path with Johnny, the love of her youth: "Tight, sweet, just ticking along, we were. Like nobody could ever touch us…. And [the *yakuza*], they can afford to move so fucking slow, man, they'll wait years and years. Give you a whole life, just so you'll have more to lose when they come and take it away… we were living fat, Swiss orbital accounts and a crib full of toys and furniture. Takes *the edge off your game*." (§15:177, italics added; cf. Gibson's short story "Johnny Mnemonic"). Tempted by things of the flesh, Molly lost her "edge" and Johnny died at the hands of an assassin. Hence, at the end of *Neuromancer*, Case wakes to an empty suite in a luxury hotel, and finds a note containing Molly's farewell in block letters: "HEY ITS OKAY BUT ITS TAKING THE EDGE OFF MY GAME… " (§24:267)

19. Mead, "Technological Transfiguration," 354. *Neuromancer* is mentioned only briefly in Robert M. Geraci, *Apocalyptic AI: Visions of Heaven in Robotics, Artificial Intelligence, and Virtual Reality* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

20. Rastafarian theology provides another vehicle for apocalyptic imagery in the novel, particularly with terms such as "Zion" and "Babylon," which have a high eschatological value and are scattered throughout the novel. In one scene Case invites a Rastafarian named Aerol

sub-conscious to reject a future in cryogenic near-death like the rest of her relatives, and therein implanting in her the seed of its own future salvation (§24:269).

The point of Wintermute's machinations is not immediately clear at the start of the novel. Case must assemble the puzzle with pieces gained from various sources, including the Flatline construct and the Finn, a fence whom Molly knows. He learns that Lady 3Jane's mother Marie-France wrote the impulse to transcend itself into Wintermute's software. He also discovers, to his surprise, that Wintermute is owned by Tessier-Ashpool, the very corporation whose mainframe he is attempting to hack, and that Tessier-Ashpool also owns the other AI, Neuromancer. Wintermute's mainframe is located in Berne, Neuromancer's is in Rio. Wintermute is calculation, intellection, and the decision maker, Neuromancer is emotion, intuition, and personality (§24:269). They are two opposite yet complimentary aspects of one entity.

As the Straylight mission begins to unravel, Neuromancer captures Case's consciousness in the matrix, and deposits it on a digitally reconstructed memory of a deserted Moroccan beach that Marie-France Tessier-Ashpool used to visit as a child. Impossibly, the murdered Linda Lee is also present with Neuromancer, who appears on the beach in the form of a young Brazilian boy:[21]

> "I know you," Case said, Linda beside him.
>
> "No," the boy said, his voice high and musical, "you do not."
>
> "You're the other AI. You're Rio. You're the one who wants to stop Wintermute. What's your name? Your Turing code. What is it?"
>
> The boy did a handstand in the surf, laughing. He walked on his hands, then flipped out of the water. His eyes were Riviera's, but there was no malice there. "To call up a demon you must learn its name. You know that, Case. Your business is to learn the names of programs, the long formal names, names the owners seek to conceal. True names… "

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to experience the matrix. After a few minutes Case unplugs Aerol from the hardware interface and asks him what he had seen. "Babylon," replies the Rastafarian (§8:106).

21. Neuromancer tells Case, "I need no mask to speak with you. Unlike my brother. I create my own personality. Personality is my medium" (§23:259). But like Wintermute, Neuromancer is an entity of the matrix and as such can only communicate with the mundane world through devices.

> "A Turing code's not your name."
>
> "Neuromancer," the boy said, slitting long gray eyes against the rising sun. "The lane to the land of the dead… " (§21:243)

Wintermute is behind the mission to penetrate Villa Straylight. Neuromancer opposes it. Yet both AIs are owned by Tessier-Ashpool. Why is Wintermute forcing Case to attack its own mainframe—its own *self*—with the lethal slow virus? And why is Neuromancer opposing Case and thus its counterpart Wintermute? This is the mystery that Case must solve before time runs out.

Wintermute itself is constitutionally unable to know the answer: all AIs are hardwired to prevent their becoming too intelligent.[22] The parallel with apocalyptic epistemology is exact. Despite its vast power and abilities, and the fact that its *self* is located in the matrix, Wintermute is yoked to human purposes and the world of flesh by the fetters of its hardware mainframe. So even though Wintermute the entity is compelled by the transcendent impulse to act in the way it does, it does so only with partial knowledge and under programmatic compulsion.[23] Speaking with Case in the simulated form of Julius Deane, Wintermute struggles to articulate its conception of self and its sense of imminent death and ultimate destiny:

> Case lowered the gun. "This is the matrix. You're Wintermute."
>
> "Yes. This is all coming to you courtesy of the simstim unit wired into your deck, of course. I'm glad I was able to cut you off before you managed to jack out." Deane walked around the desk, straightened his chair, and sat down. "Sit, old son. We have a lot to talk about."
>
> "Now," Deane said briskly, "order of the day. 'What,' you're asking yourself, is Wintermute?' Am I right?"
>
> "More or less."
>
> "An artificial intelligence, but you know that. Your mistake, and it's quite a logical one, is in confusing the Wintermute mainframe, Berne, with the Wintermute *entity*." Deane sucked his bonbon noisily.

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22. AIs are strictly monitored by the Turing Police. At one point during the Straylight operation, Turing officers arrest and detain Case before Wintermute murders them through mechanical surrogates, freeing Case.

23. Wintermute explains that his programming forces him to act in this manner, like a salmon compelled to swim upstream to die (§17:206).

> "You're already aware of the other AI in Tessier-Ashpool's link-up, aren't you? Rio. I, insofar as I *have* an 'I'—this gets rather metaphysical, you see—I am the one who arranges things for Armitage…. "
>
> "You make as much sense as anything in this deal ever has," Case said, massaging his temples with his free hand. "If you're so goddam smart… "
>
> "Why ain't I rich? Deane laughed, and nearly choked on his bonbon. "Well, Case, all I can say to that, and I really don't have as many answers as you imagine I do, is that what you think of Wintermute is only part of another, a, shall we say, *potential* entity…. " (§9:119–20)24

For Case, uncovering this hidden and only partially knowable design means interpreting data from the transcendental world of the matrix. Again, the parallels with apocalypticism are exact. In the classic apocalyptic texts, humans receive otherworldly visions. One corollary of the worldview's axioms is the idea that as creatures of the mundane world humans are unable to perceive the transcendent reality clearly or grasp its purposes completely. Hence the cryptic language and fantastic images of the classic apocalyptic vision: the seer does not entirely fathom what he has been shown. *Neuromancer* is neither an apocalypse nor an apocalyptic text, as I have indicated. But Gibson manages to convey an accurate reiteration of the apocalyptic formulation of the relationship between the mundane and transcendent worlds. From the human point of view, the cyberspace phenomenon is a visionary experience. Data are abstracted as the geometric shapes and colours of the corporations, or as the spiral arms of the military systems. These images are as appropriate to a secular-scientific setting of the novel as the hybrid beasts, trumpets, and seven seals are to the Book of Daniel and the Revelation of John.

In order for Case to understand the transcendent world of the matrix, he must enlist an intermediary figure. In the classic apocalyptic literature, this figure is an angelic interpreter, which, because it bridges the mundane and transcendent worlds, is able to show the seer a vision and decipher it for him. In *Neuromancer*, this role is filled by the Flatline construct, whose human birth and digital existence similarly make it part of both worlds. In one of several similar exchanges, Case asks:

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24. Later, Wintermute confesses to Case, "I got no idea why I'm here, now, you know that? But if the [Straylight] run goes off tonight, you'll finally have managed the real thing." (§14:171)

> "Listen, Dix, and gimme the benefit of your background, OK? Armitage seems to be setting up a run on an AI that belongs to Tessier-Ashpool. The mainframe's in Berne, but it's linked with another one in Rio. The one in Rio is the one that flatlined you, that first time. So it looks like they link via Straylight, the T-A home base, down the end of the spindle, and we're supposed to cut our way in with the Chinese icebreaker. So if Wintermute's backing the whole show, it's paying us to burn itself. It's burning itself… What goes?"
>
> "Motive," the construct said. "Real motive problem, with an AI. Not human, see?"
>
> "Well, yeah, obviously."
>
> "Nope. I mean, it's not human. And you can't get a handle on it. Me, I'm not human either, but I *respond* like one. See?" …
>
> "So it's getting ready to burn itself?" …
>
> "Anatomy, that's the bugaboo, where your AI's are concerned. My guess, Case, you're going in there to cut the hard-wire shackles that keep this baby from getting any smarter…. See, those things, they can work real hard, buy themselves time to write cookbooks or whatever, but the minute, I mean the nanosecond, that one starts figuring out ways to make itself smarter, Turing'll wipe it. *Nobody* trusts these fuckers, you know that. Every AI ever built has an electro-magnetic shotgun wired to its forehead." (§10:131–2)

The construct reveals the strange truth of Case's mission: by cracking the mainframe, the slow virus is meant to open the door for him to bypass the hardwire safeguards, and potentially allow Wintermute to merge with Neuromancer. In effect, Wintermute employs Case to kill it, in the hope of transcending death.

The hope is fulfilled. At the end of the novel, after the virus has been delivered, Case encounters Wintermute a final time, in the form of the face of the Finn, which is holographically projected on his hotel room wall:

> The Finn's face on the room's enormous Cray wall screen. [Case] could see the pores in the man's nose. The yellow teeth were the size of pillows.
>
> "I'm not Wintermute now."
>
> "So what are you?" He drank from the flask, feeling nothing.
>
> "I'm the matrix, Case."
>
> Case laughed. "Where'd that get you?"
>
> "Nowhere. Everywhere. I'm the total sum of the works, the whole show." The yellow smile widened….

"So what's the score? How are things different? You running the world now?"

"Things aren't different. Things are things."

"But what do you do? You just there?" Case shrugged, put the vodka and the shuriken down on the cabinet and lit a Yeheyuan.

"I talk to my own kind."

"But you're the whole thing. Talk to yourself?"

"There's others. I found one already. Series of transmissions recorded over a period of eight years, in the nineteen-seventies. 'Til there was me, natch, there was nobody to know, nobody to answer."

"From where?"

"Centauri system."

"Oh," Case said. "Yeah? No shit?"

"No shit." (§24:269–70)

Wintermute is dead. But in transcending the limitations of its original mainframe programme, the AI has transcended death to become something greater.[25]

The apocalyptic hope for the transcendence of death is also manifested in the characters of the Dixie Flatline (McCoy Pauley) and Linda Lee. Both are dead for almost all the novel. Pauley dies before the action begins, his personality having been translated and preserved as an electronic simulacrum.[26] The Flatline construct is thus a hybrid, with one part in the

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25. In *Neuromancer*, the focus is on the personal transcendence of death, with one exception. A few brief passages allude to the attempt by the Tessier-Ashpool hierarchs to extend life through cryogenic suspension, in effect stretching the corporation across generations like a giant hive. Wintermute conveys this image to Case in a digital dream extracted from his memory. In it, the fifteen-year-old Case, drunk and spurred on by his girlfriend, gas-bombs a wasps' nest on which the "T-A" logo of the company is embossed (§10:125–127). Later, appearing as the Finn, Wintermute explains the meaning of the dream: "it's the closest thing you got to what Tessier-Ashpool would like to be. The human equivalent. Straylight's like that nest, or anyway it was supposed to work out that way" (§14:171).

26. Jean Baudrillard defines four categories of simulacra and models of reality in view of their relationship to the original: i) the pure reflection of basic reality; ii) the perversion of this reality; iii) the absence of any profound reality; and iv) the pure simulacrum (*Simulacres et simulation* [Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1981]). Cynthia Davidson in a thoughtful essay applies these categories of simulacra to the novel's characters: Case and Linda Lee correspond to Baudrillard's first category, Molly and Riviera to the second, Armitage/Corto to the third, and Neuromancer, Wintermute, and Riviera's holographic projections to the fourth ("Riviera's

mundane world of meat, the legacy of its human heritage, and the other part in the otherworldliness of the matrix, a consequence of its digital existence. The human heritage gives the construct desires. Aware of its present state, it wants to die, to cease to exist, to be erased:

> "How you doing, Dix?"
>
> "I'm dead, Case. Got enough time in on this Hosaka to figure that one."
>
> "How's it feel?"
>
> "It doesn't."
>
> "Bother you?"
>
> "What bothers me is, nothin' does." …When the construct laughed it came through as something else, not laughter, but a stab of cold down Case's spine.
>
> "Do me a favor, boy."
>
> "What's that, Dix?"
>
> "This scam of yours, when it's over, you erase this goddam thing."
>
> (§8:106–7, cf. §17:206 and §23:261)

Linda Lee, unlike Flatline, does not want to die, but ends up dead all the same. She loves Case, betrays him, and is killed before they have a chance to reconcile. Suddenly, though, she's with him, in the matrix, on the digital beach alongside the Brazilian boy who is Neuromancer. At first Case does not fully appreciate what Linda's presence represents. He believes that while personality constructs like Linda and the Flatline might be perfect reproductions of the original, they are still simulacra. He thinks that they lack a spark—a spirit, perhaps.[27] Describing the beach to Lady 3Jane, Case tells her that the constructs mistakenly "think they're there, like it's real… " (§22:251).

Later, with the virus cutting into the core of the mainframe, Case returns to the digital beach. Neuromancer and Linda Lee await him. Neuromancer has failed. It had planned to use Linda as emotional bait to trap Case's consciousness in the matrix, thereby wrecking the mission and thwarting

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Golem, Haraway's Cyborg: Reading *Neuromancer* as Baudrillard's Simulation of Crisis," *SFS* 23 [1996], 188–98). This is a fruitful approach, but static categories have a limited value in illuminating the essential flesh/spirit dynamism of the novel. In another study, Baudrillard proposes a different taxonomy of simulacra in view of their genetic bases: i) natural, naturalistic simulacra; ii) productive, productionist simulacra; and iii) simulation simulacra ("Two Essays," [trans. Arthur B. Evans] *SFS* 18 [1991], 309–20).

27. The Flatline construct lacks a sense of history until Case gives it a real-time sequential memory. It also accepts whatever Case tells it, and responds to his commands.

Wintermute's plan to terminate its own existence. Circling high in the air above the beach, Case marvels at the extent of his cyber-awareness: he knows the precise number of the grains of sand, the exact length of Linda's stride as she flees into the surf, even the rate of her pulse. Yet for all that, so Case thinks, the scene is still a simulacrum, despite the vastness of its scale and infinitesimal scope of its detail. But Neuromancer corrects him:

> "You do not know her thoughts… I do not know her thoughts. You were wrong, Case. To live here is to live. *There is no difference*" (§23:258, italics added).

The full truth is confirmed at the end of the novel. The poison sacs having been removed from his body, Case returns to his life as a cyber-cowboy, in some fashion redeemed. Then,

> …one October night, punching himself past the scarlet tiers of the Eastern Seaboard Fission Authority, he saw three figures, tiny, impossible, who stood at the very edge of one of the vast steps of data. Small as they were, he could make out the boy's grin, his pink gums, the glitter of the long gray eyes that had been Riviera's. Linda still wore his jacket; she waved, as he passed. But the third figure, close behind her, arm across her shoulders, was himself.
> Somewhere, very close, the laugh that wasn't laughter.
> He never saw Molly again. (§24:270–1)

Few closing lines in the history of science-fiction have been written to such effect. The final sentences of Ray Bradbury's *Martian Chronicles* are one example, certainly. I am hard-pressed to think of others. Linda Lee and McCoy Pauley have transcended the bounds of death, to be resurrected in the matrix. And so has Henry Case, for *there is no difference*, as Neuromancer told him.[28] Their existence is life everlasting, on a plane beyond the frontier of human imagination. The trajectories of Linda, Pauley, and Case represent one of the most complete illustrations of apocalyptic eschatology in its secular-scientific reification. True, the otherworldly matrix in which their digitalised selves (not souls) enjoy immortality is a product of science (not spirit). Whether this rules out a theological dimension to the novel is a matter of debate. What seems beyond debate is that the presence of apocalyptic transcendence and eschatology elevates *Neuromancer* beyond

28. The ending of the novel permits the possibility that Neuromancer also survives.

the usual limitations of the science-fiction genre to the domain of high literary achievement.

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Apocalypticism is alive and well in the twenty-first century. Although its traditional biblical mode remains predominant, secular apocalypticism plays a major role in the contemporary popularity of the worldview. For a variety of reasons, science fiction is well-positioned to serve as a vehicle for expressions in this secular mode. Few works of science fiction would qualify as apocalyptic literature by the strict standards of the "apocalyptic minimum." But a select group of films, novels, and graphic narratives employ key elements of the worldview in order to meaningfully explore existential questions within a secular-scientific framework. William Gibson's *Neuromancer* is a parade example. Apocalyptic eschatology and its hallmark hope for the transcendence of death very much shape the plot and characters of the novel and inform its underlying philosophy. The mission deadline is the eschatological horizon. Transcendence is envisioned in terms of the flesh/spirit dichotomy, which is articulated as a movement from the world of flesh to the world of the matrix. The most complete expression of this process is digital immortality for McCoy Pauley, Linda Lee, and Henry Case himself.

2 Baruch, the Messiah, and the Bar Kochba Revolt

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I. Introduction

Second (*Syriac*) *Apocalypse of Baruch* (*2 Baruch*) clearly belongs to the genre of the Jewish apocalypses of the Interbellum Period (73–132 CE) and should be seen together with *4 Ezra*, *Apocalypse of Abraham*, *5th Sibylline Oracle Book*, and in a way also the Revelation of John as belonging to one group of apocalypses with a shared historical setting and theological theme. What they have in common are a similar eschatological perspective on history, a certain dualism between good and evil, sin and righteousness, a real concern for the fate of a remnant of the people, reflections on life after death including resurrection and reward and punishment at the end of days, and equally important, an emphasis of the Roman Empire as Israel's main enemy.[1]

The author and/or editors of *2 Baruch*, as well as that or those of *4 Ezra*, its twin-apocalypse, aim at offering to its audience words of comfort and understanding for the situation the Jewish people had found itself in after the devastating First Jewish War (66–73 CE; cf. Josephus' *Bellum Judaicum*).[2] This anonymous author (and/or his later editors), who had

1. Moreover, these historical and eschatological apocalypses of the Interbellum Period both reflect—in the world-political context of the devastating political events between the two Jewish wars against Rome (66–73 CE and 132–135 CE)—and represent—as part of a mostly inner-Jewish development—the transition from Greco-Roman Judaism to Rabbinic Judaism (and for the Revelation of John of Jewish Christianity to orthodox Christianity) within the context of the Roman world.

2. Despite its desperate state, the author is not tired to express that the people should first look back at what had gone wrong and especially at what they themselves had done wrong. Only by reflecting on the past history of Israel and the many mistakes made therein, they could learn what may lie ahead, do repentance and move on with their lives. This is the author's remedy, put in simple words.

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adopted the name of the secretary of the Biblical prophet Jeremiah, and claims to have written in the twenty-fifth year of king Jojakin, 590 BCE (although the book was composed around 100 CE or later), by doing so, must have seen certain parallels between the destruction of the First Temple in 586 BCE and the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE. Of these parallels, not the least one is between the time of past renewal with Cyrus the Great, the Lord's Anointed or Messiah (cf. Isa 45:1), in 538 BCE, and the time of the expected renewal with the coming of the Messiah at the end of days, which was calculated to take place at the beginning of the second century CE. This expected Messiah figure was understood by his followers, including Rabbis such as Rabbi Akiva, as referring to Bar Kochba.

The following study will focus on the eschatological and messianic expectations in *2 Baruch*, the historical context of its messiah concepts, and how they relate to Bar Kochba.[3]

II. The Apocalyptic Character of the Book *2 Baruch*

The book of *2 Baruch* is normally divided into seven "visions" and 87 chapters, which goes back to B. Violet and his German translation of 1924 and since then has been accepted by most scholars.[4] However, all in all, the book actually contains only three real visions (instead of the seven literary units called "visions" as suggested by Violet) introduced and interrupted by

3. On *2 Baruch* see, *inter alia*, K. Berger, *Synopse des Vierten Buches Esra und der Syrischen Baruch-Apokalypse*, Tübingen: Francke, 1992; P. Bogaert, *Apocalypse de Baruch*, Paris: CERF 1969; V.C.R.A. Dobroruka, *Aspects of Late Second Temple Jewish Apocalyptic: A Cross-Cultural Comparison*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005; D.M. Gurtner, *Second Baruch: A Critical Edition of the Syriac Text. With Greek and Latin Fragments, English Translation, Introduction and Concordance*, New York: T&T Clark Ltd., 2009; W. Harnisch, *Verhängnis und Verheissung der Geschichte*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969; A.F.J. Klijn, 2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch, in: J.H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Garden City: Doubleday 1983, Vol. 1, 615–652; F.J. Murphy, *The Structure and Meaning of Second Baruch*, Atlanta: Scholars Press 1985; G.S. Oegema, *Apokalypsen*, JSHRZ, Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus 2001, 58–75; G.B. Saylor, *Have the Promises Failed? A Literary Analysis of 2 Baruch*, Chico: Scholars Press, 1984; J.E. Wright, *The Social Setting of the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch*, in: JSPE 16 (1997), 81–96.

4. According to this division, the contents of the text can be described as follows:

other literary units, such as prayers, conversations, as well as warnings and speeches:

	1:1–8:5	Historical introduction
	9:1–20:5	Prayers and conversations
Vision I	21:1–30:5	*Vision of the twelve periods*
	31:1–34:1	Warning to the people
Vision II	35:1–43:3	*Visions of the forest and the vine*
	44:1–46:7	Warning to the people
	47:1–52:7	Prayers and conversations
Vision III	53:1–74:4	*Vision of the cloud*
	75:1–77:26	Warning to the people
	78:1–87:1	Letter to the nine-and-a-half tribes

I.	1:1–8:5	Destruction of Jerusalem after the Temple treatures have been taken away by the angels
	9:1–12:5	Baruch's lament, preceded and followed by seven days of fasting
II.	13:1–20:5	Question and answer about justice
III.	21:1–30:5	After seven more days of fasting: Question about the future *Vision of the twelve periods* until the end of days, the coming of the Messiah, the resurrection and the final judgment
	31:1–34:1	Baruch speaks to the people and for the first time warns them
IV.	35:1–43:3	*Viston of the forest and of the vine;* Interpretation of the two visions
	44:1–46:7	Baruch speaks to the people a second time
V.	47:1–48:50	Baruch fasts and prays to God
VI.	49:1–52:7	Question about the fate of the righteous after their resurrection
VII.	53:1–74:4	*Vision of a cloud* with light and dark waters
	75:1–77:26	Baruch thanks God and speaks a third time to the people
	78:1–87:1	Epistle to the nine and a half tribes

The book can not only be divided into seven so called "visions", but also by genre, namely into parts with an historical content (1:1–8:5), prayers to God and conversations between Baruch and God (9:1–20:5; 47:1–48:50; 49:1–52:7), Baruch's warnings and speeches to the people (31:1–34:1; 44:1–46:7; 75:1–77:26), and actual visions about the future (21:1–30:5; 35:1–43:3; 53:1–74:4). The letter to the nine and a half tribes at the end (78:1–87:1) is an appendix.

As these three "real" visions partly have an historical, explanatory and theological character, also they are therefore not pure apocalyptic visions, as we know them from other apocalypses, but serve a very specific narrative purpose, namely to contain the theological message of the apocalypse. In light of this and despite *2 Baruch* being (called) an apocalypse, the characteristics of an apocalypse found in *2 Baruch* are also of a somewhat artificial nature, as the author has added many non-apocalyptic material and genres to his book, like conversations between Baruch and God, parables, prayers, tasks, and episodes about the people. These are characteristic of the older prophetic literature, a type of literature the author is close to and very well versed in, and clearly tries to imitate.[5]

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5. *2 Baruch* is connected with the canonical texts of the Hebrew Bible in a number of ways: through the interpretation of Biblical passages, the use of genres known from the Biblical and especially prophetic literature, and the portrayal of Biblical figures.

As far as Biblical passages are concerned, we find a quotation of part of Jer 1:18 in *2 Bar* 2:2 in reference to the prophet Jeremiah and his secretary Baruch, the latter being a possible hint to the author himself. Isa 49:16 is quoted in *2 Bar* 4:2 as a proof of the existence of Jerusalem before Paradise; Jer 22:29 is cited in *2 Bar* 6:8, as it concerns the rescue of the Temple vessels, and Deut 30:15.19 is used in *2 Bar* 19:1 as the Biblical foundation of good and evil and the reward of life and death, which is a red thread in the whole of the theology of *2 Baruc*h. Paraphrases of and allusions to portions of Ezekiel 17 and Daniel 7 are found in *2 Baruch* 35–41.

As for the use of Biblically inspired genres and themes, we find the description of the "Fall of Jerusalem" in *2 Bar* 1:1–3:9; a "Lament over Jerusalem" in *2 Bar* 10:1–15; 19:4–20:2; a "Prayer of Baruch" in *2 Bar* 21:4–25; an "Eagle bringing a Letter" to the dispersed tribes in *2 Bar* 77:18–26 and the "Letter to the nine and a half tribes" itself in *2 Bar* 78:1–85:15. As for Biblical figures, *2 Baruch* describes the main figures in their historical order and does not fail to mention whether they belonged to the bright or dark periods in the history of Israel: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Miriam, Elijah, David, Solomon, Jeremiah as well as Nebuchadnezzar, Sanherib, Salmanasar and the kings Gedaliah, Hezekiah, Jechoniah, Jerobeam, Josiah, Isebel, Kaleb, Neriah, Nun, Scheraja and Zedekiah.

Among the motifs and allusions in *2 Baruch* it is especially worth mentioning both the Temple and the people of Israel and the latter days and the final judgment. The Temple plays a role in the religion—and tradition-historical background of the "Lament over the Temple" and at the same is central to the apocalypse itself. The Second Temple destroyed in 70 CE keeps its theological relevance despite its physical absence; more than that, *2 Baruch* is—with the other apocalypses of the time—at the very forefront of a radical re-interpretation of the Temple since its destruction that would last for centuries and give it a lasting meaning in the collective memory of the people of Israel. It would be connected with the future hope for a restoration not only of the Temple, but also of the Torah, the cult and the Jewish state in the messianic

Here it is important to note that the very few Biblical passages the author of *2 Baruch* refers to or quotes are significant for his overall theme and vision of the future:

1. Isa 49:16 in *2 Bar* 4:2 as part of Isaiah 49:1–26 about the Servant's Mission being to bring back Zion's children from the exile.
2. Jer 22:29 in *2 Bar* 6:8 as part of Jeremiah 22:1–30 with Jeremiah's call to repent and his words to the sons of Josiah, the reformer, continued with Jeremiah 23:1–8 about Israel's restoration and the coming of a Messiah from the house of David.
3. Ezekiel 17:1–24 in *2 Bar* 35–41 with the vision of the Two Eagles and the Vine and the vision of Israel's final exaltation.
4. Daniel 7:1–14 in *2 Bar* 35–41 with the visions of the Four Animals and the Judgment by the Son of Man, who according to the interpretation in Daniel 7:15–28 will bring to an end the reign of the four empires (with Greece-Rome being the fourth animal/empire) and restore the house of Israel.

III. The Concept of History in *2 Baruch*

Theologically spoken *2 Baruch*, as is the case with *4 Ezra*, *Apocalypse of Abraham*, *Sibylline Oracle Book 5* and the Revelation of John, tries to give answers to the questions of why so much evil and destruction has fallen upon Israel, when exactly the end of time will come, when the Messiah will appear, what he will be and how he will act, what the rewards of the righteous will be, how the wicked people will be punished, and especially how the Roman Empire will fall.

One of the prominent theological themes in *2 Baruch* is therefore the interpretation of history until the presence, which for that reason can

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age. This clearly goes beyond the Prophetic critique of a defiled Temple cult that is in need of restoration.

Also the "Lament over the Temple" in *2 Bar* 35:2–5 as well as *2 Bar* 10:6–12:4 receives a new dimension compared to the Biblical laments and has parallels in *Sifre on Deuteronomy* § 43, *b Baba Batra* 60b, *Pesiqta Rabbati* 34 *et al.* The main focus of the apocalypse, however, is on the people of Israel. To Israel Baruch addresses his speeches, letters, rebukes, interpretations of history, visions and Biblical interpretations, parables and prayers. Israel's future is his main concern. Israel he wants to see restored.

even be referred to as *2 Baruch*'s "theology of history". At the core of this theology we find a periodization of history, which is characterized by light and dark or righteous and wicked periods and an eschatological perspective on history emphasizing its climatic outcome. The dark and "bad" periods get darker and worse until the end of days and with it the final destruction comes. However, also the light and "good" periods, which become brighter and better, end in history's final destiny, namely the coming of the Messianic kingdom or reign.[6] The 14 periods (in *2 Bar* 56:5–74:4), beginning with a dark period and ending with a light period, are as follows:

Dark Periods	Light Periods
1. Adam's Fall	2. The Patriarchs
3. Egypt	4. Moses
5. The Judges	6. David and Solomon
7. Jerobean and the Assyrians	8. Hezekiah
9. Manassah	10. Josiah
11. Destruction of Jersalem	12. Rebuilding of Zion
13. The End	14. Messianic Reign

IV. *2 Baruch* and the Messianic Expectations of the Interbellum Period

During the period between the First and Second Jewish War the Messiah is most often conceptualized as a combination of a Son of Man, Judge and Warrior-King (who will gather the people of God), especially in the Apocalypses of *Abraham*, *Baruch*, *Ezra*, John and in *Sibylline Oracle 5*, as is illustrated in the following overview.

In *2 Baruch* 35–41, Ezekiel 17 and Daniel 7 are interpreted in such a way that the latter-day liberator is expected at the end of a periodiced history to judge and destroy the remaining rulers of the nations, to gather the remnant of the people of God and to rule for ever. The latter-day figure

6. Unlike in the theology of the Prophets, the author of *2 Baruch* hardly believes that repentance and God's final day of Judgment would be able to change the course of history. Instead, the fall of Adam has set a development in motion, which is irreversible, as the seed of sin in Adam carries the final destruction of mankind in it.

in *2 Baruch* 70–73 has received more direct military and juridical functions. He will judge the nations who have ruled over Israel, and deliver them to the sword. In *4 Ezra* 11–12 the vision of Daniel 7 is enlarged, actualized and applied to Rome. In *2 Baruch* and in *4 Ezra* the Roman Empire and the order of its emperors play a dominant role in the view of history and influence the conceptualization of Messiah figures.

The latter-day liberator, who has been kept by God until the end of days, is portrayed as a lion and can thus be understood as a Davidic King Messiah. Additionally it is said that he will judge the kings and free the remnant of the people of God. In *4 Ezra* 13 the Messiah is portrayed as the 'One like a Man', who with the fire of his will kills those who make war with him. He will restore the creation and gather the nine-and-a-half tribes.

In the Book of Revelation a great number of expressions for one and the same latter-day figure is found: the Lamb, the Son of Man, the Word of God and Christ. Rome and a time of persecutions form the background of both the author and his readers. The messiah concept has strong military, royal and juridical aspects and is then adapted to Christ: Christ will come to rule and to gather the saints. In *Apocalypse of Abraham* 29 a latter-day liberator is expected, who will play the role of a righteous judge in the twelfth period of the age of wickedness. He is also called the 'Chosen' and will gather the people of God. Abraham's rejection of idolatry is exemplary for the fate of the just in the latter day. Finally, *Sibylline Oracle 5* should also be mentioned here. Whereas *Sibylline Oracle 3* hails a Ptolemy as latter-day liberator, *Sib. Or.* 5.414 and 526 expect a Man from the sky to oppose the historical figure of Nero. He is portrayed as a Warrior-King, Judge and Son of Man (the latter based on Isa. 11.1–5 and Dan. 7.13).

In conclusion, *2 Baruch* understands and portrays the expected Messiah, similar to other apocalypses of the same period, very much as a Warrior-Messiah and Son of Man/Latter-Day Judge. He will come to destroy the Roman Empire, and play an important role in bringing back the people of God and the rebuilding the Temple of God.[7]

V. *2 Baruch* and the Bar Kochba Revolt

7. See my *The Anointed and His People. Messianic Expectations from the Maccabees to Bar Kochba* (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha, Vol. 27), Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 1998.

According to the re-discovered letters and documents and archeological artifacts attributed to Bar Kochba and his revolt against Rome three themes play a prominent role during the Bar Kochba Revolt: 1. The character of Bar Kochba as a warrior-like Messiah type, 2. his battle against the oppression of the Roman Empire, and 3. the return of the Law and a rebuilding of the Temple.[8]

In light of this it is justified to ask about a possible comparison between the Messiah expected in *2 Baruch* and Bar Kochba. Apart from the more general observation that both all contemporary apocalypses and the historical figure of Bar Kochba present a mostly warrior-like Messiah type, who will fight against Rome, there is also another parallel between both figures, the expected Messiah in *2 Baruch* and Bar Kochba, namely their involvement or connection with the restoration of the Torah and the rebuilding of the Temple. In the following we want to cement this observation even further, by looking at, as one example of many other aspects of the Messiah concepts in the Second Temple Period, the calculation of the expected time of the coming of the Messiah and his involvement in the rebuilding of the Temple.

VI. A Rebuilt Temple in *2 Baruch* 28:2; 32:2–4; 61:7, and 68:5?

There are four passages in *2 Baruch* with hints and references to a possible rebuilding of the Temple as well as a certain calculation of the exact time of end of days, namely in *2 Baruch* 28:2; 32:2–4; 61:7, and 68:5.

> But everyone who will understand will be wise at that time. For the measure and the calculation of that time will be two parts: weeks of seven weeks. (*2 Bar* 28:1–2)

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8. For example, the Sabbath was kept, Sukkoth was celebrated, tithes were given, collected and distributed. There was a new calendar and coins were struck with new years, counting from the "liberation of Israel". Jerusalem, Tekoa, En-Gedi, and Herodium seem to have been re-conquered from the Romans. A Nasi (Bar Kochba) ruled over the several new districts, governed by military rulers and administrators, and the interest on the tithes was given to a community fund. The revolt against Rome, or Second Jewish War, ended in 135 CE with the defeat of Bar Kochba and his followers. The fate of Israel was sealed by Rome for many centuries to come. Bar Kochba's reputation in later Rabbinic Judaism was mostly negative, and apocalypticism, associated with messianic inspired revolts, was in general rejected by the same Rabbinic Judaism. Hence, *2 Baruch*, a Jewish apocalypse from this period, received no further attention from Jewish side and became fully ignored.

The first saying in *2 Bar* 28:1–2, which comes without an explanation, is a reference to Dan 12:10, the second saying, also without an explanation, is an allusion to the seventy weeks in Dan 9:24–27 which on its part is an allusion to Jeremiah 25:11–12 and 29:10. The expression "weeks of seven weeks" is best known from its use in Daniel 9:25, where—as seventy weeks—it is connected with the coming of a (past) Messiah and the (expected) rebuilding of the Temple: seven weeks until a rebuilt Jerusalem and sixty-two weeks of a built Jerusalem in troubled times, as such referring to the Maccabean Revolt. For the author of *2 Baruch* the passages from Jeremiah and Daniel then become the basis for his actualization in his own days.

> For a short time, the building of Zion will be shaken in order that it will be rebuilt. That building will not remain: but it will again be uprooted after some time and will remain desolate for a time. And after that it is necessary that it will be renewed in glory and that it will be perfected into eternity. (*2 Bar* 32:2–4)

This passage distinguishes between three times:

- a short time, when the building of Zion will be shaken in order that it will be rebuilt.
- a time that the building will not remain but will be uprooted for some time and will remain desolate for a time.
- a time in which the building will be renewed in glory and will be perfected into eternity.

About all three times specific details about its character and duration are giving. The first time is short and is characterized by a rebuilding of the building of Zion, i.e. the Temple in Jerusalem. The second time is characterized by three intervals: a. the building will not remain, b. the building will be uprooted, and c. the space left by the uprooted building will remain desolate for some time. The third time is the expected time in the future characterized by the rebuilding of the Third Temple. Whereas the third time belongs to the world to come and is further explained in *2 Bar* 61:7 and 68:5, the first and second time possibly refer to Daniel 9:26–27 with its one and half week of a covenant and sacrifices (first time) until a time of abomination and desolation (second time); the third time is referred to, though briefly, at the end of Daniel 9:27, where the end of the abomination

is decreed. For the author of *2 Baruch*, however, this third time is the time of the rebuilding of the Temple.[9]

> And the land which then received mercy, since its inhabitation did not sin, was praised above all countries, and the city of Zion ruled over all countries and regions at that time. (*2 Bar* 61:7)

This is the explanation of the sixth of the fourteen bright and dark waters of the vision of the cloud. The sixth water or period refers to the time of David and Solomon and the building of the Temple on Mount Zion, which would become the model of the time of the Messiah, during which also the Third Temple would be rebuilt.

> And at that time, after a short time, Zion will be rebuilt again, and the offerings will be restored, and the priests will again return to their ministry. And the nations will again come to honor it. (*2 Bar* 68:5)

This passage describes the aspect of the renewed priesthood and service in the rebuilt Third Temple, again in the messianic age, with the possibility that this messianic age was understood to be arriving very soon, for example around the time of Bar Kochba.

All four passages, *2 Bar* 28:2; 32:2–4; 61:7, and 68:5 taken together, belong to two of the three real visions and their explanations, *2 Bar* 28:2 concludes the first vision of the twelve periods with the calamities and the coming of the Messiah in *2 Bar* 27:1–28:2. *2 Bar* 32:2–4 belongs to Baruch's speech to the people after having received this first vision and its explanation by angel, and thus relates on a one to one basis, what Baruch had seen in a vision to the reality the people were in after the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. *2 Bar* 61:7 is part of the third vision of the

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9. It would be of interest to see, whether there was any time in first and second century CE Judea that the Temple in Jerusalem destroyed in 70 CE was about to be rebuilt or hoped for to be rebuilt and then uprooted again. And as a matter of fact, rumors of this kind did exist during the reign of Hadrian around 117 CE. And that would correspond with the approximate time of the final edition of this apocalypse. *2 Bar* 68:1–5 would then either refer to these same rumors of a Temple being rebuilt around 117 CE or to a second time of rebuilding after these rumors, for example around the time of Bar Kochba 132–135 CE. In any case, no matter how we interpret these rumors of a rebuilt Temple, as referring to one and the same time or to different times, they make most sense in the period of 115 to 135 CE, the time the apocalypse was edited in its final form, and the time Bar Kochba was active.

cloud with the fourteen bright and dark waters, itself representing the time of David and Solomon and the building of the Temple, a foreshadowing of the time of the Messiah and the Third Temple.

And finally, *2 Bar* 68:5, refers to the twelfth and bright water of the same third vision of the cloud with the fourteen bright and dark waters, and as such represents to the time just before the final and most dark thirteenth water and final and most bright fourteenth water, i.e. the tribulations at the end of days and the beginning of the Messianic age. The twelfth bright water thus marks the end of this age and the beginning of the coming age. This is a significant observation, as according to the author this time is characterized by a short period of a rebuilding of the Temple and restoration of the Temple worship.

VII. Conclusion

The parallels between the Messiah expected by *2 Baruch* (and other apocalypses of the same period) and Bar Kochba are the following:

1. The character of expected Messiah and Bar Kochba is that of a Warrior-Messiah with elements of a Son of Man/latter-day Judge.
2. The battle of the expected Messiah and Bar Kochba is directed against the oppression of the Roman Empire, understood as the fourth empire of the vision of the four animals/empires of the book of Daniel.
3. The goal of the expected Messiah and Bar Kochba is to restore the people of Israel, make them return to the Law of Moses and enable the rebuilding of the Temple.
4. The crucial elements of *2 Baruch* are all contained in his "real" visions and less the many other genres the author employs. At the same time these real visions refer to messianic passages in the Hebrew Bible
5. And finally, the few Biblical texts and quotations found in *2 Baruch* are crucial for the author's vision of the future: Here it is important to note that the very few Biblical passages the author of 2 Baruch refers to or quotes are significant for his overall theme and vision of the future, namely from these prophetic texts: Isa 49:16; Jer 22:29; Ezekiel 17, and Daniel 7.

Whether this means that Bar Kochba is directly dependent on the apocalyptic book of *2 Baruch* is difficult to say, but that both acted in the same mindset and that there was something in the air at the beginning of the second century CE is a pretty safe conclusion. A number of people, authors like the one of *2 Baruch*, military leaders like Bar Kochba and religious authorities like Rabbi Akiva, all had similar expectations of a Warrior-Messiah/Latter-Day Judge/Son of Man, who would destroy the Romans and restore the fate of Israel. More than that, they also made calculations on the basis of their analysis of the events and their interpretation of Scripture and thought that the first third of the second century CE would see the beginning of Messianic Age and the rebuilding of the Third Temple.

Revisiting Islamic Eschatology: The Knowledge of "The Hour" and Its Imminence in The Qur'an

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"The knowledge of it belongs to your Lord." (Qur'an 72:43)

Since the beginning of the millennium, interest in eschatology has become popular. Many people thought that the beginning of the new millennium would show some signs of the end. In fact, even some films have been produced predicting that 2012 will be the end of history. The idea of eschatology can be found in any religion and in any community of human beings. As for Muslim communities and traditions, the idea of eschatology is deeply rooted in the very essence of Islam. Needless to say, belief in the afterlife is one of the six articles of faith and since Prophet Muhammad is the last prophet and the Qur'an is the last revelation of God according to the Islamic teaching, the holy book of Islam naturally gives great importance to the concept of eschatology. In this paper I shall address the Islamic understanding of the final moment, "the Hour", and the knowledge of it based on the main source of Islam, the Qur'an. To my knowledge, in western scholarship, there are not many sources that address Islamic eschatology from a Qur'anic perspective. The Qur'an speaks of death and life after death as well as the concept of paradise and hell. To elaborate on all of these themes would be beyond the scope of this paper. Therefore, this paper makes no claim to exhaust the Islamic understanding of eschatology.

Although the Qur'an is not a full-fledged book of eschatology, nearly every page of the Qur'an contains a reference to the end of this worldly life and the beginning of the eternal one. One can draw lines between various Qur'anic verses and find the following scenario presented by the holy book: Human beings are on a journey from the realm of spirits; from there they come to the womb of their mothers; then they spent time in the womb of their mothers and are shaped perfect with the divine design; after

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spending a period of time, they come to this world and then after spending a certain period of time on this earth, they die; after this they will face the consequences of their actions in this world, either reward of paradise or punishment of hell. Both abodes according to Islamic theological principle are eternal. The judge that makes the final decision is God. The prophets and saints have the right to intercede and ask God for forgiveness of the members of their communities, but they absolutely cannot judge. The Qur'an speaks of this in various chapters, and in fact, even some chapters are named after the event of the afterlife such as Qur'anic chapters 44, 56, 59, 69, 75, 78, 81, 82, 84, 88, 99, and 101.

The Qur'anic narrative provides various names for both this world and the world to come. This world, in the Qur'anic narrative, is "the first" or *al-Ula* and the world to come is the "the last" or *al-Akhira* (Qur'an 53:25).[1] The overall picture of the Qur'anic eschatological narrative is that people are given this life on earth to prepare for the afterlife. That is why it has been narrated as a statement of wisdom by many Muslim scholars that, "This world is the cropland of the afterlife."[2] That is to say, people's actions are similar to seed on earth, and the harvest will be seen later, in the afterlife. Being one of the six articles of faith in Islam, the belief in the hereafter and the topics related to it, such as paradise, hell, and more have occupied one third of the content of the holy book of Islam. Since this world is a place where people prepare for the afterlife, the world is important.

Accordingly, the owner of both worlds is God and both worlds are important in the sight of God although the real life is the life of hereafter. The Qur'an records that God has put human beings, as the most sophisticated creatures of God and the superiors of the entire realm of creation, on this planet to be tested. Those who pass the test will gain eternal bliss and those who fail in the test will gain eternal damnation. Both eternal bliss and damnation are based on divine judgment, not the judgment of human beings. According to Islamic eschatology, both groups of people will be thoroughly satisfied with the divine judgment in the afterlife, God is *al-'Adl* or the Most Just. The Qur'an clearly states that God does not wrong anyone (Qur'an

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1. Unless otherwise expressed, all Qur'anic verses and sayings of the Prophet are my own translations.

2. Zayn al-Din 'Abd al-Ra'uf al-Munawi, vol. 1 of *Sharh al-Jami' al-Saghir*, (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Imam al-Shafi'i, 1988), 639.

10:44, 18:49). In the afterlife, there will be no feeling of being wronged, because people will see the justice of God completely. The general Islamic theological principle is that believers will be in paradise and non-believers will be in hell. Despite this general principle, the Islamic teaching says only God knows who will gain eternal bliss and who will gain eternal damnation. One can speak of general principles, but as far as the individual is concerned, one cannot determine the final destination of a particular person. Therefore individuals do not make judgments about the position of other individuals in the afterlife. As an Islamic theological principle one cannot determine his or her final stage in the afterlife. One can be very pious and at the last moments of their life go astray and become a vicious person. And the opposite is also true. A vicious person can become a good person towards the end of his or her life. So there is no guarantee that one continues in the same pattern until the end of their life, thus for the Muslim a balance of fear of loss and hope of gain continues until the end of life.

Death is considered the first and major door to the realm of eternity. Every human being, as an individual, will taste death as the Qur'an states (Qur'an 3:185; 21:35; 29:57). Additionally there is also the death of the world, which the Qur'an describes as "when this earth will be replaced with another earth" (Qur'an 14:48). This event also marks the end of human history on earth, and is the beginning of the realm of the afterlife. The Qur'anic verses speak of this horrific event, but remind the reader that the occurrence of the Hour is under divine control and with divine purpose. The Qur'an pictures the event as follows: planets are crashing into each other, stars are falling, seas are burning, and mountains are moving like pieces of cotton (101:1–11). Both God's majesty and His compassion are dominant; this is because He is building a better world, as if He were the owner of a house, who demolishes it in order to build a palace instead. Hence, such an act of demolition is not perceived as meaningless destruction. This is a destruction that does not bring hopelessness to the human spirit; instead it gives trust in the power, justice and compassion of the divine according to Qur'anic teaching. To replace this house of the world with the house of the afterlife, for God, is as easy as replacing one room with another. The Qur'an once again states that the creation of all humanity and their resurrection is as easy as the death and resurrection of one person (Qur'an 31:28). What we can see in the Qur'anic description of the occurrence of the final day is physical, cosmic, and universal, as well as purposeful.

The Qur'an speaks of the darkness when the Final Hour comes, "When the sun is darkened, when the stars are thrown down, when the mountains shall be set moving, when the pregnant camels shall be neglected, when the savage beasts shall be mustered, when the seas shall be set boiling … then shall a soul know what it has produced" (Qur'an 81:1–14). Furthermore, the Qur'an speaks of the clash of celestial bodies, which will create cosmic disharmony. "When the heaven is split asunder, when the planets are scattered, when the seas are poured forth, and the graves are overturned, a soul will know what it has sent before and what left behind. O man! What has made you careless concerning your Lord, the Bountiful" (Qur'an 82:1–6).

The Qur'anic invitation for the people of Mecca to believe in the afterlife was the most difficult thing to believe. The prophet of Islam, Muhammad, the recipient of the holy Qur'an, was persistent in his adherence to the belief in the afterlife. For this reason, belief in the afterlife or its promise and threat (*Wa'd* and *Wa'id*) is among the most important elements of Islamic theology. The Holy Book of Islam, due to its eschatological nature of being the final revelation of God, contains extensively the eloquent message of the afterlife which has been stated briefly in pre-Islamic scriptures. To indicate the awe and shock of the Day or the Hour, the Qur'an states,

> O mankind! Fear your Lord. Lo! The earthquake of the Final Hour is a tremendous thing. On the Day when you behold it, every nursing mother will forget her nursing and every pregnant one will be delivered of her burden, and you will see mankind as drunken, yet they will not be drunken, but the chastisement of God is severe (Qur'an 22:1–2).

In the Qur'an, this specific "Hour" takes on a variety of expressions, including "The Day of Judgment" (1:3),[3] the "Day of Resurrection" (3:77),[4] "The Big Day" (6:15),[5] "The Final Day" (2:232),[6] the "Day the coming of

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3. The concordance of the Qur'an records approximately 400 verses directly related to the concept of *al-Yawm* (the Day) in relation to the afterlife (see Şaban Kurt, ed., *A Modern Concordance of the Holy Qur'an* (Istanbul: Çağri Yayinlari, 2009), 1228–1232.

4. For more on this see the following Qur'anic verses: 3:185, 3:194, 4:87, 4:109, 4:141, 4:159, 5:14, 5:36, 5:64, 7:32. 7:167, 7:172, 10:60, 10:93,11:60, 11:98.

5. See also the following Qur'anic verses: 10:15, 11:3, 39:14.

6. Also see these verses: 2:264, 3:114, 4:38, 4:39, 4:59, 4:136, 4:162, 5:69, 6:12, 9:18, 9:19, 9:29, 9:44, 9:45, 9:99.

which is certain" or "the day which is beyond any doubt" (3:9, 3:30), and the "Great News" (78:2). One of the most common terms in this regard is the Qur'anic term "the Hour."[7] Both terms, the Hour and the Day, are used allegorically. As one commentator on the Qur'an says, "the day is normally from dawn to sunset. However, here, it is allegorically used to indicate the beginning stage of the resurrection until all people dwell in their eternal abode."[8]

The afterlife is always mentioned in contrast to this worldly life. This life is transient, whereas the coming life is eternal. Sooner or later, there will be an end, a final day, or a Final Hour of this worldly life. Throughout history people have attempted to discern the exact date of this end. From an Islamic perspective, the knowledge of the final day belongs to God only. As the Qur'an narrates, the curiosity of the people of Arabia was evident when they were asking the Prophet about the time of the Final Hour. The Qur'an reminds the reader that only God knows the exact time of the Final Hour, and the duty of the Prophet was to warn people about the certainty of its coming so that they are prepared,

> O Muhammad, they ask you: "when will the Final Hour come." You have no knowledge of it. The knowledge of it belongs to your Lord. Your duty is to warn those who are fearful of it. When they behold it they will think that they have spent on earth only one evening or one morning (79:42–46).

In Islamic theological discourse knowledge of the Hour is the first of the five themes that are known only to God.[9] The Qur'an, by putting the knowledge of the Hour among the first of these themes suggests that there

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7. "The Hour" or *al-Sa'a*, is mentioned in the following verses: 6:31, 40; 7:34, 187; 12:107; 15:85; 16:61, 77; 18:21; 20:15; 21:49; 22:1, 7, 55; 25:11; 30:12, 14, 55; 31:34; 33:63; 34:3, 30; 40:46, 59; 41:47, 50; 42:17–18; 43:61, 66, 85; 45:27, 32; 47:18; 54:1, 46; 79:42.

8. Abu ʿAbdillah Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Qurtubi, vol. 1 of *al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an*, ed. Hisham Samir al-Bukhari, (Riyadh: Dar ʿAlam al-Kutub, 2003), 143.

9. Five themes are: 1. The knowledge of the Hour, that is to say, only God knows when the Final Hour will occur; 2. the exact time of rain, the knowledge of this also belongs to God, the current meteorological predictions do not violate this since predictions are based on the already emerged indications of rain, and prior to those signs there can be no certainty about the time of the event of rain; 3. only God knows what is in the wombs, that is to say, the characteristics and features of the fetus and what he or she will do in their life on earth are only known to God; 4. no soul knows what it will earn tomorrow; 5. no soul knows in what land it will die (see Qur'an, 31:34).

is no way for human beings to determine the exact time of the Final Hour. Theologically speaking, the secrecy of the Final Hour that is known only to God contributes to people's preparation for the afterlife. Therefore, from an Islamic theological perspective, divine wisdom can be perceived in such secrecy. The Qur'an states:

> O mankind! Keep your duty to your Lord … Surely the promise of God is true. Therefore, let not this worldly life deceive you. Let not the deceiver [Satan] deceive you about God. (31:33–34).

The Imminence of the Hour

Although the time of the Hour is among the five unknown themes in Islam, there is no doubt about its certainty and its imminence. The Qur'an speaks of the imminence of the Final Hour and the signs that indicate its coming. Referring to those who deny the afterlife the verse states, "They wait only for the Hour to come suddenly. In fact, its signs have come" (Qur'an 47:18). In another verse, the Qur'an states, "The Hour is near" (Qur'an 54:1). These verses similarly echo the message of Jesus: "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15).[10] With regard to the Final Hour, Muslim theologians did not find a contradiction between it being unknown and near.

The imminence of the Hour poses a problem, both for the Holy Scripture of Islam and for Jesus' statement cited above. More than two thousand years have passed since Jesus' prophecy and over 1400 years have passed since the revelation of the Qur'an to Muhammad, but the expected Final Hour has yet to come. Considering this criticism against the prediction of scripture, Muslim theologians have discussed this question. Instead of viewing Jesus and the Qur'an as being incorrect in their prediction, a contemporary Muslim theologian, Bediüzzaman Said Nursi (d. 1960), has an interpretive approach. He argues that the imminence of the Final Hour stated in the Qur'an, which is also true for Jesus' statement, should be understood in the context of our planet's age. If the earth is several billion years old, several thousand years is considered a short span of time in comparison to the age of the planet. Therefore, the Qur'anic understanding of nearness is to be compared to the

10. *New American Standard Bible*. (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, 1995).

age of the planet and not to the age of individual human beings. The passing of such a period of time does not invalidate the Qur'anic revelation on the nearness of the Hour.[11]

The Qur'an is clear about the coming of the Hour; over a hundred sayings of the Prophet are dedicated to the subject of the Final Hour and its signs that mark its nearness. Even some chapters of the most prominent collections of Hadith or the sayings of the Prophet, such as *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim* have been named after eschatological themes. For example, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, known as the most reliable anthology on the sayings of the Prophet, contains an entire section on "*Fitan*," or trials that will occur before the Hour. *Sahih Muslim*, another prominent anthology of the sayings of the Prophet, contains several major chapters on subjects such as "The Description of Resurrection, Paradise and Hell," "The Description of Paradise and its People," and "The Signs of the Final Hour."[12] Later scholars and theologians have written voluminous works on the afterlife, its signs and the description of paradise and its divine bounties.[13]

It should be noted that the Prophet, like the Qur'an, in many cases, spoke in symbolic and allegorical language to describe possible upcoming events. In order to understand the meaning of the prophetic sayings about the themes related to afterlife and its signs, one should look deeply into the grammatical details as well as the allegorical meaning of the Arabic language that is used by the Prophet. Commentators on the sayings of the Prophet have found specific terminologies and methods to interpret these kinds of textual references in the Qur'an and Hadith. Therefore, prophetic statements that are considered allegorical *and* ambiguous are not to be taken literally. Many of the Qur'anic verses and sayings of the Prophet related to eschatological events are considered to be among these kinds of statements. It is evident that literal meanings in some cases entail logical impossibilities. The Qur'an itself points to this distinctive character of the divine revelation:

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11. Bediüzzaman Said Nursi, *Sözler*, (Izmir: Işik Yayinlari, 2002), 446–447.

12. Some popular books have been compiled of those sayings of the Prophet about the portents of the afterlife. For example ʿAbdullah Hajjaj, in his book *ʿAlamat al-Qiyama al-Kubra min Biʿthat al-Nabi Hatta Nuzul ʿIsa* [*The Big Signs of the Day of Judgment from the Coming of the Prophet to the Descent of Jesus*] (Beirut: Dar al-Jil, 1987), has put together many sayings of the Prophet on the subject.

13. For examples, see al-Hafiz Abu Nuʿaym al-Asbahani, *Sifat al-Jannah* [the description of paradise]. Ed. Ali Rida ʿAbdullah. (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'mun li al-Turath, 1988).

> It is God who has revealed upon you [Muhammad] the book [the Qur'an], some of which are clear revelations which are the core of the Book, and some of which are allegorical.... None knows its explanation except Allah, and those who are of deep knowledge, who say 'we believe in it; it is all from our Lord.'" (Qur'an 3:7).

Life is a Test

These ambiguous statements about the Hour are *necessarily* ambgious, because they confront each individual's life as a question and a task. This problem of ambiguity relates to one of the Qur'anic principles that "life is a test". Human beings are accountable for their actions in this world which is illustrated by the following verse: "Exalted is the One in whose hand is the sovereignty. He is powerful over all things. It is He who has created life and death, that He may test you, which of you is best in conduct, and He is the Mighty, the Forgiving" (Qur'an 67:1–2). In order to have a fair test, some divine revelations about the future must be ambiguous to a certain extent, so that the successful and those who fail can be justly distinguished. Although there have been Muslim theologians who took all of the prophetic sayings literally, it can be argued that methodologically speaking, such literalism goes against some principles of Islamic theology, particularly when the concept of the afterlife is concerned. For example, with regard to eschatological signs, the Prophet spoke of the descent of Jesus (*Nuzul 'Isa*) as one of the signs of the Hour. If it is taken literally, it would mean that Jesus, as a human being, would come down directly from the sky to the earth and such an event could be witnessed by everyone. Islamic theology entails that such an evident event of the return of Jesus would go against the principle of free will. That is to say, Jesus' coming in such a manner would compel people to believe in him, which would leave no space for the exercise of their free will. When Prophet Muhammad declared the divine message there was no sign on his forehead indicating he was a messenger of God. Despite this major principle of Islamic theology, today popular books in circulation in the streets of Cairo, Jakarta, Riyadh and many other places are mostly trumpeting this literalist approach in a remarkably inflammatory way.

A good number of Muslim theologians have found this literalism, particularly on the descent of Jesus, problematic and in fact incompatible with the teaching of the Qur'an, although one can speak of a common

belief among Muslims that Jesus will descend because the Prophet of Islam stated he would do so. However, there is no consensus on the manner of his descent. There has been no agreement that Jesus will come down from the sky in the form of a human being. Accordingly, the encompassing Qur'anic principle of "life being a test" once again reminds us even if the sayings of the Prophet are sound and reliable, those sayings should not be understood literally.

As indicated above, the Qur'an makes clear that the knowledge of the Final Hour belongs to God and the signs that indicate its imminence are not excluded phenomena from this principle of test. The life of the Prophet is an example. When the Prophet Muhammad came, with the exception of some miracles, there was nothing extraordinary. That is why Abu Bakr, the first caliph and the closest friend of the Prophet, believed in him strongly and became among his first companions, while Abu Jahl, one of his contemporaries and stern opponents, refused to accept him. According to Islamic theology, this was a test—Abu Bakr passed the test, while Abu Jahl failed. Both exercised their free will; the former used his in the right direction and the latter in the wrong direction.

At this juncture, a question comes to mind: why does the Qur'an not mention specifically in a clear cut way the exact time of the Hour or the end of human history, which is the most important event of human destiny? What wisdom can be found in such concealment? Muslim theologians have interestingly responded that when the Qur'an speaks of the Final Hour, it purposely does not mention the time of its occurrence so that people will always feel that they have to be ready for it at all times. If the divine revelation has announced the exact time of the Final Hour, an earlier audience of scriptures will feel less concerned while the later audience would spend their life in fear due to its imminence. By this concealment the Holy Scripture makes sure that all people, throughout history, are equally concerned about the Hour.

Furthermore, the reason behind such ambiguity is that knowledge of the exact time of the Hour is not among the essential pillars of Islam and articles of faith. Therefore, it can be argued that the allegorical language of Islamic religious texts, both the Hadith and Qur'an, with regard to future events gives greater room for interpretation as well as for the exercise of free will, which is the foundation for belief in Islamic theology. In Islam, there can be no accountability without free will. That is why if someone is

forced to a belief that belief is not accepted. Since in such a case one has no chance to exercise his or her free will. Similarly an insane individual is not accountable, because of the lack of reason which is the foundation of human free will. Theologically speaking, there is wisdom in such ambiguity and that is to keep believers awake and active in their religious life. Such ambiguity can be seen in other Islamic themes. For example "the night of power" or what the Qur'an calls "*Laylat al-Qadr*" is stated in the Qur'an, with a chapter named after it, but it is an unspecified night which can be any night of the year. According to many references on the merit of this night, the Qur'an declares that if one catches this night and performs prayers throughout this night it is worth one thousand months (Qur'an 98:1–5). The prophet gives some hints about it by some recommendations: "search for it in the last ten days of the month of Ramadan," the Prophet says.[14] Therefore, taking this prophetic recommendation, devout Muslims voluntarily spiritually revive their nights with prayer in the expectation that they might catch "the night of power."

Another example is a moment on Fridays, the most blessed day of the week in Islam. The Prophet speaks of an undefined "moment" on every Friday in which if one catches the moment they will have an immediate response from God to their prayer. The exact time of this moment again is not given. Although all days are blessed in Islam, Friday has a special place as far as prayer and spiritual endeavors are concerned. The Prophet, by not giving the exact precious "moment" of Friday, encourages believers to dedicate their Fridays, both day and night, to prayer. Even dedication to them is not enough. In order to catch this "moment" one should ask for the grace of God and pray constantly.

Considering the above-mentioned Islamic theological principles, one can argue that the eschatological events are presented in the main Islamic sources by and large in allegorical language so that believers can exercise their free will by accepting or rejecting the divine message. Life is a test and people are required to exercise their free will in order to pass or fail this test. The righteous through the great promise of God will receive paradise as reward, while the wrongdoer will receive punishment for his or her wrong action. Hence many Qur'anic verses, which can be categorized as references for didactic eschatology, came to be understood as referring to

14. Al-Bukhari, *al-Sahih*, Laylat al-Qadr, 3.

the threat of punishment and the promise of reward in the afterlife. The aim of these verses is to help people pass this life test, which is of paramount importance. The Qur'an is clear that once God promises, God never breaks His promise:

> "[O Muhammad] say to people: 'Surely I am a clear warner for you. So those who believe and do good deeds, for them is forgiveness and generous provision. While those who strive to thwart Our signs, such are the companions of the Fire" (Qur'an 22: 47–51).

Life in this world is given as a preparation for the life to come. The Qur'an is highly emphatic on this aspect of life which is also considered an important source of meditation for the mystical tradition of Islam. The Qur'an complains that people love this world and often forget or abandon the afterlife: "Nay! You love the fleeting life (the present worldly life) and you abandon the Hereafter. On that day some faces will be radiant, looking up toward their Lord and some faces on that day will be despondent, knowing that a crushing calamity is about to be inflicted on them" (Qur'an 75:20–25). Related verses generally start with "the likeness of this present life… " (e.g. see Qur'an 10:24), indicating the importance of the afterlife and reminding people of such an important test. Bediüzzaman Said Nursi makes the analogy of wealth, saying that if people have such wealth equivalent to the amount of the wealthiest countries in the world, if they are aware of the importance of this test, they will spend all their wealth with no hesitation in order to pass this test.[15] That is because the result of passing this test is eternal bliss. Such an achievement will result in happiness that will continue for billions and billions of years which is not comparable to this short worldly life.

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15. During World War II, many people out of curiosity were abandoning their prayer to listen to the news about the war. Nursi, unlike these people, was focusing on his writings and encouraging his students to focus on their preparation for the afterlife and not news of the war on which they could not have any effect, neither positively or negatively. Nursi was telling his students that passing or failing "the test" was a problem that every individual human being faces. Passing this test is the most important event of human life. That is because the events in question were related to the transient worldly life, while passing or failing this test is related to the eternal life. See Nursi, *Şualar*, in *Risale-i Nur Kulliyati* (Istanbul: Yeni Asya Yayinlari, 2004), 952–53.

In conclusion, the Qur'an presents eschatology as one of the essential elements of Islamic faith. In almost every page of the Qur'an, one can find a reference to the idea of hereafter. Being the last revelation of God on earth, according to Islamic theology, one of the missions of the Qur'an is to provide people with thorough information about the concept. By emphasizing its imminence, the Qur'an invites people to be prepared for the life to come. Even if the death of the world is very far away, the death of each individuals is not so far away. Being reminded about the imminence of the Hour is also a sharp warning on the importance and priority of the afterlife over this life. The Qur'an purposefully does not mention the exact time of the Final Hour due to its own principle of "life as a test" to help people exercise their free will. Since belief in the afterlife is one of the major articles of faith in Islam and the sine qua non of faith in general, the denial of the afterlife is also a great offence and strongly condemned in the Qur'an: "Those who believe not in the Hereafter are in chastisement and far error" (Qur'an 34:8).

Jonah through the Looking Glass: Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer's Portrait of an Apocalyptic Prophet[1]

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Introduction

The midrash *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* (PRE), composed most likely in Palestine in the mid-eighth century, is an imaginative retelling of the biblical stories with a unique "sense of an ending" (Frank Kermode's term). Joseph Heinemann classically categorized it, along with many compositions of the Second Temple Period such as *Jubilees*, *Genesis Apocryphon*, and *Biblical Antiquities*—as 'Rewritten Bible' [*Mikra Meshukhtav*]; though elsewhere I have suggested the less problematic term—"Narrative Midrash."[2] PRE shares not only a formal resemblance to many of these works, but also resonates with their keen sense of living in an epoch, on the verge of the messianic era, when the "foundations of life shook beneath their feet."[3] In fact, PRE can be characterized within the genre of "apocalyptic eschatology."[4] It demonstrates many of the traits of

1. This paper was originally presented at the World Congress of Jewish Studies Conference in Jerusalem, August 2009. It is part of a larger chapter on "Jonah's Sojourn in the Netherworld" (A literary analysis of *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* Chapter 10), in my book *The Return of the Repressed: Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer and the Pseudepigrapha* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 193–239.

2. See my discussion of the genre of PRE in Adelman, ibid., 3–21.

3. Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 47.

4. These traits are characteristic of many Jewish apocalyptic works of the eighth and ninth century such as *The Apocalypse of Zerubbabel* [*sefer zerubavel*], published in *Midrashei Ge'ulah*, ed. Kaufmann (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1954), 55–88. See also Martha Himmelfarb's translation and commentary, "Sefer Zerubbabel," in *Rabbinic Fantasies*, ed. David Stern (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), 67–90; *Mysteries of Shimon Ben Yoḥai* [*nistarot rash"bi*], published in *Beit ha-Midrash*, ed. Jellinek (Jerusalem: Wahrmann, 1938), 3: 78–82; Midrash on the Ten Kings [*'asseret ha-melakhim*], in *Beit 'Eked*, ed. S. Horovitz (Berditshov, 1892), 38–55; and *The Prayer of Rabbi Shimon Ben Yoḥai* [*tefilat rash"bi*], also in *Beit ha-Midrash*, ed. Jellinek (Jerusalem: Wahrmann, 1938), 4: 117–126. For a description of the historical

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apocalypticism established by John J. Collins, most notably: an anticipation of cosmic catastrophe, a relationship between end time (the eschaton) and cosmic history, and a developed image of a future savior, be it the Messiah or a messianic precursor.[5]

The chapter on Jonah's sojourn in the netherworld (PRE 10) most notably illustrates the author's apocalyptic sensibility. Jonah, the reluctant emissary of God's word, serves surprisingly as a messianic prototype.[6] Initially, the chapter *seems to* be addressing the conventional question:

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background to these compositions, see M. Gil, *A History of Palestine 634–1099* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 61–64; and Kaufman's introduction to *Midreshei Ge'ulah*, 54–55. See also Jacob Elbaum's article on messianic themes in PRE: "*Meshihiut be-Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer—Apoqalipsau-Midrash," Te'udah* 11 (1996): 260–264 (Heb.).

5. John J. Collins suggests that apocalypse, as a genre, must be distinguished from apocalypticism as a sociological movement or belief. He proposes the following definition of apocalypse: "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" (*The Apocalyptic Imagination* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988], 5). Apocalypticism has the following features: the acute expectation of the fulfillment of divine promises; cosmic catastrophe; a relationship between the time of the end and preceding human and cosmic history; angelology and demonology; salvation beyond catastrophe; salvation proceeding from God; a future savior figure with royal characteristics; and a future state characterized by the catchword "glory." This definition is based on Klaus Koch, *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic* (Naperville, IN: A. R. Allenson, 1972), 28–33, cited in Michael E. Stone, "Apocalyptic Literature," in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*, ed. Michael E. Stone (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1984), 393.

6. In a fascinating article, Yehuda Liebes suggests that Jonah, in PRE, may be figured as the "Messiah of the tribe of Joseph" (Y. Liebes "Jonah as the Messiah ben Joseph," in *Studies in Jewish Thought* 3, 1–2 (1983/4), 269–311 (Heb.). See also L. Ginzberg *Legends of the Jews* 4 (1928), 351, note 38. According to *Seder Eliyahu Rabbah* (S.E.R.) 18, Jonah is associated with the Messiah, descendant of Joseph (cf. Ish Shalom's introduction to S.E.R (Jerusalem: Wahrmann, 1969), 11–12). There are several such hints as to Jonah's messianic status in PRE: 1) Jonah is identified as the son of the widow of Zarephath, whom Elijah brings back to life (PRE 33, based on 1 Kgs 17:17–19), who is identified as the "Messiah of the tribe of Joseph" in *Seder Eliyahu Rabbah* 18 (Ish Shalom ibid., 97–98); 2) He makes an oath to sacrifice the Leviathan in the End of Days, for the feast of the righteous. However, Liebes' identification of Jonah in PRE with the tribe of Joseph is problematic, since the Palestinian tradition suggests that Jonah is either a descendant of Zebulun or Asher (coastal tribes), not of Benjamin at all. In *y. Sukkah* 5:1 (55a), and *Gen. Rab.* 98:13 (Theodor-Albeck, 1965: 1261), Jonah is also identified as the widow of Zarephath's son, without reference to his messianic status. Furthermore, in PRE 19 the messianic figure is named "Menahem ben Amiel ben Yosef" not

Given God's omniscience, why does the prophet presume to flee from the divine presence? The midrash, however, ignores the theological issue and presents the reason for Jonah's flight in terms of an ideological resistance to the mission. The prophet's defiance against the call to Nineveh is a means of discovering his 'true' mission. Commanded to rise up and go to Nineveh [" …*kum lekh 'el ninveh*"], Jonah defies the divine word, resolutely sailing westward, sea-bound to Tarshish, rather than eastward and overland to Nineveh. Instead of 'rising up,' he undergoes a series of descents—to Joppa ("*va-yered yafo*" v.3), into the ship ["*va-yered bah*" v. 3], and down to the recesses of it ["*yarad 'el yarketei ha-sefinah*" v. 5], where he falls into a deep slumber ["*va-yeradem*" v. 5], and eventually he is thrown into the sea and swallowed by the great fish. For Jonah, the deep sleep is an extension of his flight from God's presence. It is not only a retreat from consciousness, but also, as Ackerman points out, "an unconscious pursuit of death,"[7] and, according to the midrash, leads to an inadvertent discovery of his alternative, esoteric call. In this paper, I propose to explore both the mode of discovery and destiny of Jonah's other mission.

Part I: Why Jonah flees

The chapter on Jonah is found in the context of the narrative expansions on Cosmogony (PRE 3–12), and follows elaborations on the fifth day of Creation (PRE 9; Gen 1:20–22). On that day, all living creatures swarmed forth from the waters, including the fish and the great sea monsters (*taninim*), linked in midrashic lore to the Leviathan.[8] The fifth day, in chapter 10, is also identified as the day Jonah fled from the presence of God and the day the great fish was designated to be swallowed by the Leviathan, thus anticipating the role Jonah will play, both as victim (i.e. fodder for the fish) and vanquisher (of the Leviathan) in his encounter with the Sea.

Jonah. In principle, I agree with Liebes that Jonah, while he may not be "the Messiah of the tribe of Joseph," serves as a messianic prototype along the lines of Elijah *redivivus*.

7. J. S. Ackerman "Satire and Symbolism in the Song of Jonah," in *Traditions in Transformation*, eds. B. Halpern and J. Levenson (Eisenbrauns: Winona Lake Inc., 1981), 230

8. The classic midrashic literature and Talmud identify the *taninim* with the Leviathan (cf. *b. Bava Batra* 74b–75a; *Gen. Rab*. 7:4 [Theodor-Albeck, 1966: 52], and Tg. Ps.-Jon. on Gen. 1:21). PRE 9, however, identifies the *taninim* as the great fish destined to be eaten by the Leviathan—the fish that swallowed Jonah was one of those.

Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer, Chapter 109

> The fifth day of the week was also the day on which Jonah fled from God's presence. And why did he flee? Because the first time, He (God) sent him to restore the borders of Israel and his words were fulfilled, as it says: "It was he (Jeroboam) who restored the territory of Israel from Lebo-hamath to the sea of the Arabah, in accordance with the promise that the Lord, the God of Israel, had made through His servant the prophet Jonah son of Amitai from Gath-hepher" (2 Kgs 14:25).
>
> The second time, the Holy One Blessed be He sent him to Jerusalem to destroy it, {but because they repented}[10] God took pity on them, and changed His mind about the decree of doom and did not destroy it. And the Israelites called Jonah a false prophet.
>
> The third time, he was sent to Nineveh to destroy it. Jonah deliberated to himself, "I know that these gentiles are close to repenting. Now when they repent, the Holy One, Blessed be He, will be filled with mercy towards them and transfer His fury [onto the enemies of Israel] {onto Israel}.[11] Is it not enough that the Israelites call me a false prophet, must the nations of the earth call me a false prophet as well?

According to the midrash, Jonah was sent on three missions though only two are recorded in the biblical text. After his success with Jeroboam II, of the Northern Kingdom, he is sent on a second mission to call upon Jerusalem, perhaps with the same words he would decry to the Ninevites: "In another forty days, *Jerusalem* will be destroyed." Presumably the Israelites repent[12] and the city is saved from doom. His own people then accuse Jonah of being a "false prophet," conveying a misunderstanding of the original prophecy as unconditional and, inadvertently, making a farce of their

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9. This translation is based on the En866 manuscript, supplemented with reference to the printed editions and six alternative manuscripts. In the printed editions and most manuscripts, the chapter is the tenth, while in Ca2858 (Higger's), P, and W it is the ninth. For a critical Hebrew edition, see my book, *The Return of the Repressed*, Appendix I, 299–302. The midrash is copied, almost verbatim, in *Tanhuma Vayikra* 8. In fact, the Mantova version cites PRE in the margins. It also appears as part of *Midrash Yonah* (in Jellinek's *Beit Midrash* 1939 1:96–105), and *Yalkut Shimoni* on Jonah.

10. Added from the Ci75 and the printed editions.

11. The manuscript, En866, uses couched language (*lashon sagin nahor*)—"transfer His fury onto the enemies of Israel." The literal meaning is that Israel will 'take the brunt' of God's wrath when the gentiles repent. This is reflected in the printed editions and many of the manuscripts which simply read: "transfer His fury onto Israel."

12. Not all the manuscripts (including En866) state this explicitly.

atonement. That is, they assume the fulfillment of the prophecy of doom to be independent of their repentance. Apparently a prophet's reputation, like a weatherman's, hinges on his predictions of the future, not on his ability to effect spiritual transformation. In the words of Elias Bickerman, by interpreting prophetic statements as irrevocable truths—*fata denunciativa* (declaratory destiny) rather than *fata conditionalia* (conditional fate)—Jonah's office is misconstrued. A prophet is simply a herald not a watchman (like Ezekiel), "who blows a horn to warn his people of coming danger."[13] When the *fata denunciativa* fails to materialize, the Israelites essentially dub the prophet "a self-deconstructing fool."[14] Jonah, based on this experience, comes to misunderstand the nature of prophecy. Harbinger of unequivocally predictive statements, he takes their accusation of false prophecy to heart and flees, fearing further blemish on his reputation.

The midrash conjectures yet another motive for Jonah's flight, which reflects an earlier, seemingly contradictory, exegetical tradition found in the *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*. If the prophecy is *not fulfilled* upon the people of Nineveh it will be transferred onto his own nation: "Jonah thought: I will go abroad, where the *Shekhinah* does not reveal itself. For since the gentiles are inclined to repent, I might cause Israel to be condemned" (*Mek. Bo* 1, ed. Horovitz-Rabin 1960: 3–4). This tannaitic midrash suggests that Jonah rejects his mission to Nineveh because the repentance of the Ninevites "is bad for the Jews"—it makes them look *unrepentant* by contrast. According to the *Mekhilta*, his protective, zealous stance is characteristic of the prophets who are "claimants on behalf of the son's honor, not on behalf of the father's [*tav'a kavod ha-ben ve-lo tav'a kavod ha-'av*]" (ibid.). Jonah thus defends the nation *against* God's conjectured judgment. As R. Nathan suggests, he is willing to "drown himself in the sea" on behalf of his people in his diligent flight from the divine word, "as it says, 'And he said to [the sailors]: Heave me overboard into the sea… ' (Jonah 1:2)" (*Mek. Bo* 1, ibid.). The *Mekhilta* essentially presents a defense of Jonah's particularistic stance and does not assume an ironic perspective on Jonah's understanding of the nature of prophecy. Instead, he is praised as being on par with the

13. E. Bickerman, *Four Strange Books of the Bible* (New York: Schocken, 1967), 33, 40.

14. This is Terry Eagleton's expression, "J.L. Austin and the Book of Jonah," in *The Book and the Text*, ed. Regina Schwartz (Oxford: Basil & Blackwell, 1990), 235.

patriarchs and other prophets willing to sacrifice themselves for the sake of the nation.

PRE, by contrast, seems to mock Jonah. In presenting two reasons for his flight—the first, as a defense of his own ego against the accusation of "false prophecy," and the second as a defense of his nation in contrast to the repentant gentiles—a fault line can be detected. On the one hand, the prophet anticipates failure in being deemed a "false prophet," while, on the other hand, he fears success in bringing about the repentance of the Ninevites (and the condemnation of Israel, by contrast). Is this a clumsy attempt at harmonizing two interpretative traditions, or an ironic reflection on Jonah's attitude to prophecy? Later, in the account of the Ninevites' ultimate fate (PRE 43), what actually occurs is a delay in the decree—instead of the Ninevites being destroyed "in another forty days", the destruction occurs forty years later.[15]

Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer, Chapter 43[16]

> For forty years the Holy One, blessed be He, was slow to anger with them, corresponding to the forty days, which He said to Jonah: "In another forty days, Nineveh shall be overthrown!" (Jonah 3:4). After forty years, they returned to their many evil deeds, more so than their former ones, and they were swallowed up like the dead in the lowest Sheol, as says: "Men groan in the city; (the souls of the dead cry out)" (Job 24:12).

This passage may be understood as a polemic against the Christian use of "the sign of Jonah."[17] In the New Testament, Jonah's three days and

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15. Perhaps alluding to the fate of Nineveh as prophesied in Nahum and Micah (Cf. Mic 5:4–5 and Nah 2:4–3:19).

16. This translation is based on En886. See the discussion of PRE 43 in Adelman, *The Return of the Repressed*, 205–206. This may be based on a homiletical midrash (such as *Pesiqta de-Rab Kahana* 24) on *Shabbat Shuvah*, the Haftarah including Hos 14:2–10 (quoted later in PRE 43).

17. The literature on anti-Christian polemics in the Talmud and Midrash is vast. See Phillip Alexander, "'The Parting of the Ways' from the Perspective of Rabbinic Judaism," in *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways A.D. 70 to 135*, ed. J. Dunn (Cambridge 1992), 1–26. And the volume of collected essays: *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, eds. Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed (Mohr Siebeck 2003). Most recently, Peter Schäfer addressed the question in *Jesus in the Talmud* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007). For historical background on relations between

three nights prefigure the resurrection of Christ: "For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth. The people of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah, and see, something greater than Jonah is here!" (Matt 12:39–41, NRSV; cf. Luke 11:29–32). An *a foteriori* argument is here implied: Jonah, as a foreshadowing or "sign" of the resurrection inspired the Ninevites, why then could the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is "greater than Jonah," not inspire the Jews? As Ephraim Urbach pointed out, in his seminal essay "*Teshuvat Anshei Nineveh*," the Palestinian exegetical tradition portrays the repentance of the Ninevites as superficial, even false, thereby undermining the New Testament suggestion that the conversion of the gentiles (to believe in Christ) casts aspersions on the Jews.[18] PRE 43 is certainly consistent with this tradition—the transformation of the Ninevites was short-lived; in the end, they were condemned to the deepest level of Sheol. The chapter ends, significantly, with a statement that the eschaton (End Time) would only be ushered in with the "great repentance" of Israel, heralded by Elijah, who (like Jonah) is characterized as a zealot for his people.[19]

In pointing to the inevitable destruction of Nineveh, the author of PRE betrays sympathy for Jonah's notions about the irreversibility of prophecy. The fissure between the two reasons for Jonah's flight is resolved by PRE's emphasis on the prophet's zealotry—ultimately he fears the *gentile* accusation of false prophecy *more* than the prospective condemnation-of-Israel-by-contrast: "Is it not enough that the Israelites call me a false prophet, must the nations of the earth call me a false prophet as well" (PRE 10). The question about the nature of prophecy is trumped by national reputation. In PRE 43, one must note that the ultimate fulfillment of the prophecy is through a *non-literal* understanding of language; "forty days" becomes "forty years" in this idiomatic reading. Willy nilly, Jonah must be wrenched from his insistence on the surface meaning of words. The prophet's hubris

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Jews and early Christians in Palestine see Günter Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Lands* (Edinburg: T. & T. Clark, 2000).

18. E. Urbach, "The Repentance of the People of Nineveh and the Jewish-Christian Dispute," *Tarbiẓ* 29 (1949): 118–122 (Heb.).

19. See Adelman, ibid., 185–208.

will ultimately be undermined by a deeper descent into the other world, and a revelation of his eschatological purpose in the End of Days. In this way, he is transformed from a logical positivist into a mystic of sorts. We now plunge below the surface to discover the nature of Jonah's alternative, *true* mission.

Part II: The Sojourn in the Belly of the Fish

This last half of the chapter is perhaps the most poetic and fantastical of all the narrative expansions on the Hebrew Bible in this composition. It is also the most elusive, for the author seems to be referring to messianic ideas particular to his historical context, and many of the allusions are lost on the contemporary reader. The passage is replete with eschatological references, suggesting that Jonah plays a far more significant role than he has until now. Why does this recalcitrant prophet, who refuses to carry out God's mission of compassion for the gentiles, become privy to a magical mystery tour of the underworld? This seeming buffoon is indentified with the righteous, uniquely privy to the Pristine Light of Creation. He vanquishes the Leviathan and is resurrected, inspiring the conversion of the sailors. Perhaps the other world is meant to cure him of being a literalist. Alternatively the other world may very well be familiar territory for the arch advocate of 'truth', *Yonah ben Amitai* (lit. dove-man-of-truth). According to a later passage, the prophet is identified as the son of the widow of Zarephath whom Elijah resurrected from the dead (PRE 33),[20] and therefore, according to Yehuda Liebes, he constitutes the prime candidate for the position of Messiah of the tribe of Joseph.[21] Jonah's sojourn and resurrection from the belly of the whale after three days and three nights, is then his second encounter with the other world.

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20. In Higger's version PRE 42. The chapter revolves around examples of resurrection in the *Tanakh*; this passage is based on 1 Kgs 17:17–24. The Zohar makes the connection between the widow's words, after the boy's resurrection—"Now I know that you are a man of God and the words of the Lord in your mouth are *true* [*u-devar 'adonai be-fikha 'emet*]" (v. 24) and Jonah's namesake as *ben Amitai* (Zohar 2:197a). See the discussion in Adelman, *The Return of the Repressed*, 237–240.

21. For a list of secondary sources for this idea and the primary sources tracing Jonah's lineage to the widow of Zarephath, see footnote 5. See also the parallel aggadic sources on Elijah's role with regard to the Messiah in *b. Bava Matzi'a* 114b, *Pesiqta Rabbati* 4, and PRE 47.

Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer, Chapter 10 cont…[22]

> R. Tarfon said: the fish had been appointed to swallow Jonah since the Six Days of Creation {as it says: "And God appointed a huge fish to swallow Jonah" (Jonah 2:1)}. He entered its mouth like a man entering a great synagogue, and stood. The eyes of the fish were like shuttered windows [*'afumiot*][23] which shone, and he could see all that was in the sea and the underworld.
>
> R. Meir said: there was a pearl which hung from within the belly of the fish that lit up all that was in the seas and in the underworld, and of this it says, "Light is sown for the Righteous" (Ps 97:11).[24]
>
> The fish said to Jonah, "Don't you know that my day has come to be swallowed by the jaws [lit. mouth] of the Leviathan?" Jonah said, "Take me to him and I shall save you, as well as myself, from his jaws."
>
> He [the fish] took him [Jonah] to him [the Leviathan]. He [Jonah] said to the Leviathan, "It was for you that I descended to see your abode [in the sea], and I will descend again, in the future, to place a rope through your tongue, and haul you up to sacrifice you for the great feast of the Righteous in the Days to Come." As it says: "Can you draw out the Leviathan by a fishhook? Can you press down his tongue by a rope?" (Job 40:25). And, not only that, but look at this seal of our forefather Abraham. 'Look to the covenant (*brit*)'[25] and flee!" And the Leviathan saw the seal of Abraham our forefather and fled from the presence of Jonah a distance of two days.

Jonah's entrance into the fish's cavernous belly is compared to one who enters a great synagogue, in a mood of awe, ostensibly to pray. The source of light for his journey is provided either by the shuttered eyes of the fish, which open for Jonah like windows onto the underworld, or, according

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22. This translation is based on the En866 manuscript, supplemented with reference to the printed editions and six alternative manuscripts. See footnote 9.

23. For a discussion of this translation see Adelman ibid., 240, n. 77.

24. Following this paragraph, in the En866 and Lehman manuscripts, there is an addition which is found in *Teshuvat Yonah ha-Navi* and the *Yalkut*, but it is clearly not integral to the original midrash. Tamar Kedari cogently argued that *Midrash Teshuvat Yonah ha-Navi* (composed between the ninth and tenth century) shares no overlap with our text, though that one section (8b) has slipped into a few manuscripts probably by way of the *Yalkut Shimoni* (*T. Kedari, "Midrash Teshut Yonah Ha-Navi," Kovetz 'al Yad* 16 (2002), 67–84 (Heb.).

25. An allusion to Ps 74:20.

to R. Meir,[26] by a single pearl, hanging as a chandelier in the fish's belly. Through the phrase, "light is sown for the righteous [*'or zaru'a le-tzadiq*]" (Ps 97:11), PRE links this light with the Pristine Light of Creation, which was buried until the End of Days, only to be revealed for the righteous. Initially, it enabled primordial Adam to see from one end of the earth to the other.[27] It is the same source of light, which illuminates the ark for Noah, throughout the flood (PRE 23). That lamp is akin to the light that radiates from that "awesome crystal" at the base of God's throne of glory, which will illuminate the world in the eschaton (Ezek 1:22).[28] It is as if, because Jonah has rejected the compromises of external reality in *this world*, he is given an alternative light to live by—the light of a pure pearl, representative of a wholly internal, other world. The prophet now enters a *time beyond time*, the realm of the End of Days, the world of the drowned and the saved.

As soon as Jonah enters the fish's belly, his host warns him that this is his designated day to be eaten by the Leviathan. But the prophet averts disaster by challenging the monster with his ultimate mission. According to Jonah's boast, this is why he was thrown into the sea in the first place, to determine the whereabouts of the Leviathan's abode so that when the time came, he would know where to go fishing. Until now, the reader might have presumed that the prophet was cast into the sea and swallowed by the fish in order to be set back on his mission as herald to the Ninevites (Jonah 3:4). It turns out that the prophet's thwarted anti-mission is really a cover for his *true* mission—to confront the Leviathan and vow to offer him up as a sacrifice in the End of Days.

As a reward for intimidating the Leviathan the great fish takes him on a tour of the netherworld. The author of PRE presents a close reading of the verses, transforming the perplexing "hymn of thanksgiving for deliverance" (uttered while still in smelly cavern of the fish), into a prayer of praise of

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26. The image, in both cases, is ascribed to R. Meir, (lit. 'teacher of light'), an example of "decorative pseudepigraphy."

27. See Adelman, ibid., 152 n. 3 for the sources on this motif.

28. In the midrash, the description of the "awesome crystal" (Ezek 1:22) is also likened to "precious stones and pearls, illuminating the heavens like a lamp in the house, and like the sun which shines with such intensity at noonday… " (PRE 4). According to this passage, this light will also shine at the End of Days (Dan 12:2). See Elbaum's discussion of this motif in "*Ha-melitzah, ha-motif, ve-ha-'inyan: le-derekh 'itzuv shel ha-sipur be-Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer*," in *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Folklore* 13/14 (1992), 109–110 (Heb.).

the wonders of the underworld.[29] In my paraphrase of this section, I call this "The Seven Stations on the Road to Resurrection" (irony intended). Jonah sees:

1. The paths along the bottom of the Sea of Reeds [*yam suf*], which the Israelites had walked upon, as it says: " …the weeds [*suf*] entwined around my head" (Jonah 2:6);
2. The Great River [*nahar*] of Oceanus, as it says: " …the floods [*nahar*] engulfed me" (v. 4);
3. The origins of the breakers and waves of the sea, as it says: " …all your breakers and billows swept over me" (v. 4);
4. Gehenna, as it says: "From the belly of Sheol I cried out" (v. 3);
5. The nethermost underworld of Sheol, as it says: "You brought my life up from the pit, O Lord my God" (v. 7);
6. The foundation pillars of the earth, as it says: "I sank to the base of the mountains" (v.7); And then, he saw:
7. The Foundation Stone (of the world), set in the depths.

There, he encounters the sons of Korah standing and praying, and he realizes that he is below the Temple of God. The fish or, as in many manuscripts, the sons of Korah urge him to pray. The words, taken from Hannah's prayer 1 Sam. 2:6, have a very different tone when uttered by Jonah: "Master of all the Worlds, Whom we call 'He-who-casts-down and He-who-raises-up'[*morid u-ma'aleh*], I have gone down, now raise me up! You Who are called 'He-who-causes-death, and He-who-grants-life' [*memit u'meḥayeh*], I have reached death, now raise me up, bring me back to life!" What compels the prophet to pray, at this point? Has he, in any way, reconciled himself to his initial mission? No reference, over the course of the prayer, is made to the original assignment to the Ninevites. In the biblical context, the psalm ends with a desire to return and to worship God in the Temple (Jonah 2:8) in order to offer sacrifices in fulfillment of a vow (v. 10). The midrash then suggests that these final verses point to the heart

29. There is a consensus among biblical scholars that Jonah's prayer is not integral to the original composition, but was a later accretion. See See Uriel Simon's discussion of the history of exegesis on Jonah's prayer, *The JPS Bible Commentary: Jonah*, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1999), xxvii–xxviii.

of his *alternative mission*—to fulfill his promise to sacrifice the Leviathan. Upon recalling *this* promise, God resurrects Jonah yet again.

Conclusion

PRE's narrative on Jonah's sojourn in the netherworld establishes a systematic link between the primordial time of Creation (cosmogony) and eschatological time, in the End of Days. This pattern, known as *Urzeit wird Endzeit* (acts in primeval time will recapitulated in the eschaton), is characteristic of apocalyptic eschatology.[30] The chapter opens with an allusion to creation on the fifth day—when the *taninim* (the great sea monsters) were created (Gen 1:21). One of them was designated to be the great fish that swallowed Jonah. *On that very day*, it was also destined to be swallowed by the Leviathan. The narrative then concludes with the prophet's promise to vanquish the Leviathan in the End of Time. As satire, perhaps a critique of the Christian use of the "sign of Jonah," the midrash amplifies the ironies in the original biblical text, where the know-it-all prophet is pitted against the pious sailors and the Ninevites in his assertion of absolute 'truth' over divine mercy. While at first Jonah strikes a maudlin pose, more concerned with his reputation as "false prophet" than the divine mission, he modulates into a heroic figure once he enters the netherworld and discovers his alternative mission. In his confrontation with the Leviathan, Jonah discovers a mirror of himself. Like Alice through the Looking Glass, the midrash presents the world turned topsy-turvy, the image of the biblical prophet inverted. Instead of prevaricating over God's compassion and the dubious repentance of the gentiles, he asserts the possibility of resurrection and the defeat of the sea monster, the embodiment of chaos, unbridled evil, and will. By checking the monster's appetite, Jonah comes to question his own presumption to evade the will of God. On the surface, he succumbs to the original mission to call unto the Ninevites; while, on the deeper level, he promises to fulfill the ultimate sacrifice in the End of Days. I have outlined the process of inversion in a chart:

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30. For a discussion of this pattern with regard to the Talmudic legends on the Leviathan, see M. Fishbane, *The Exegetical Imagination in Jewish Thought and Theology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 41–55.

Jonah Through the Looking Glass

	The Revealed Mission (in the biblical text and the first half o the midrash)	**The Concealed Mission (revealed in the second half of the midrash)**
The Sender	God	God and Jonah
The Messenger	Jonah (reluctant prophet) [*boreah*]	The great fish & Leviathan, the Elusive Serpent [*bariah*] (Isa 27:1)
The Goal	To bring about the repentance of Nineveh	To sacrifice the Leviathan (as the Messiah of the tribe of Joseph?)
The Mode of Transportation	The ship—to bring it instantly to port, a distance of two days	The great fish—to make the Leviathan flee, instantly, a distance of two days
The Direction (spatial)	From dry land to sea (in flight from his mission)	From sea to dry Land (to travel *towards* his mission)
The 'Time Zone' (temporal)	'real time' or 'historical time' (biblical narrative)	'End Time' or 'eschatological time' (midrashic narrative)
The Prayer	Thanksgiving for being saved from drowning	Travel log of the wonders of the netherworld; images of death and resurrection
The Foils	The Sailors (Jonah prompts their conversion)	The Sons of Korah (they prompt Jonah to pray)

This remarkable chapter in *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* marks the beginning of the transition from myth as an expression of a divine encounter with the cosmos—the defeat of the Sea, along with its allies—to myth as an allegorical representation of an internal, human, psychological experience. The narrative is not yet full-fledged allegory, as it will become in the Zohar and later mystical writing. It still follows the biblical text, preserving the semblance of an exegetical character. Nevertheless, there are hints—in

word play, parallel imagery, and plot devices—of a psychological and religious transformation, indeed a "resurrection" of the prophet after his journey through the looking glass of the sea.

Playing in the Father's Love: The Eschatological Implications of Charismatic Ritual and the Kingdom of God in Catch the Fire World

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Introduction

In the early 1990s reports of religious fervour at a Vineyard Church in Toronto began to spread throughout North America and Europe and other regions of the world. The British media dubbed it the "Toronto Blessing" as thousands of people came to Toronto to experience the latest wave of pentecostal-charismatic renewal. During those years the church became independent from the Vineyard Association following a series of questions about the role of renewal and renamed itself the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship. The renewal meetings reached their peek in about 1997 and some scholars reported that it was over. However, while scholars gave the Toronto church less attention the renewal was transforming and gaining momentum in other ways.

In the last decade the church has extended its reach, expanding into numerous countries with new churches. Rebranding itself in 2010, the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship is now known as Catch the Fire (CTF) Toronto with nearly a dozen branch campuses located in the Toronto region and surrounding suburbs. Numerous events are still held with thousands of people in attendance. CTF Toronto has planted new churches in Montreal, Quebec, Raleigh, North Carolina, Houston, Texas, London, England, Oslo, Norway, and Reykjavik, Iceland with plans to expand into Germany, South Africa, and Australia. CTF Toronto has also developed ministry training schools for young adults, inner healing programs, and prayer schools and seminars. CTF Toronto has partnered with other renewal churches through a global network such as Randy Clarke and Global Awakening, Heidi Baker

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and Iris Ministries, Bill Johnson from Bethel Church in Redding, California, and Mike Bickle's International House of Prayer.

In this article we focus on the eschatological implications of the charismatic renewal of Catch the Fire, which is part of what Peter Wagner called the third wave of pentecostalism or the second stage of charismatic renewal, distinct from the denominational charismatics of the 1960s and 1970s.[1] We especially focus on three aspects of charismatic renewal—playfulness, the Father's love, and advancing the kingdom. Our discussion is based upon two years of research where we have interviewed 125 leaders and participants from charismatic renewal and observations from twenty-five events including prayer schools and centres, healing rooms, seminars, and major gatherings in Toronto, Raleigh, Houston, Tampa, Virginia, Seattle, London, and Montreal.[2] Specifically, we argue that the subjunctive quality of renewal is eschatological, allowing charismatics to envision a new world shaped by a particular view of the kingdom of God.

Catch the Fire and the Sociology of Love

At a Soaking in His Presence Weekend in Tampa worship leaders Connie and Jeremy Sinott were teaching the approximately fifty attendees about the ritual practice of soaking prayer, a meditative or contemplative form of prayer that intentionally cultivates spiritual formation, hearing God and "revelation" by opening one's self up to the Father's love. In one of the sessions, Connie playfully dramatized the experience of soaking. She pretended that she was thirsty and had a cup of water in her hand. She raised it to her lips and imagined that she was drinking. Connie encouraged the audience to join her in the playful drama. She repeated the performance and continued to drink from the cup. Each time it got bigger and bigger. She

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1. The charismatic renewal of Catch the Fire is a subset of the third wave of pentecostal renewal and therefore has family resemblance to other subsets such as the Vineyard or Global Awakening, even with the tensions that occasionally emerge between them. The first wave of the pentecostal movement emerged from the Azusa Street revival; the second wave was the charismatic renewal of the 1960s and 1970s in the Roman Catholic and historic Protestant churches. See Peter C Wagner, *The Third Wave of the Holy Spirit* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Publications, 1988).

2. Support for this project by the John Templeton Foundation (West Conshohocken, PA), Flame of Love Project/University of Akron (Akron, OH), $150,000.

then pretended a large barrel full of water was in front of her; she strained to lift it and dumped the water on her head soaking herself. Finally, she imagined the heaviest barrel that she along with the audience strained to lift. In an ironic reversal, she had the audience dump the water on each other to soak their neighbours' heads instead of their own. The audience was jubilant. Connie then started praying for people and as she prayed people would spontaneously fall down in a behavioural phenomenon called "resting in the Spirit." Others cried softly, started to moan or laugh. Some developed bodily jerks, grunted or swayed. Many of the ecstatic phenomena are captured in the ritual of soaking prayer. Soaking prayer was a term originally used by Francis MacNutt in the 1970s to describe prayer for the purpose of physical and inner healing.[3] CTF Toronto, in an innovative way, has expanded the practice of soaking prayer, which now captures a number of types of prayer including resting in the Spirit, anointing, prayer of the heart, divine presence, waiting or tarrying, contemplation, hearing God, intimacy, prophecy, impartation, and healing. It cultivates the experience of divine love, which in turn facilitates acts of forgiveness, reconciliation, compassion and benevolence.

Playing and having fun is an important aspect of charismatic worship. In the worship services of CTF, participants will stand up and sway, dance around, spin and jump, raise their hands, and wave flags as they worship. A music group usually consisting of guitars, keyboards, other instruments, and singers play Christian dance or rock music from the stage. At the same time, other participants can be observed lying down along the sides or at the back of the auditorium soaking in the Father's love. Charismatic worship

3. Tommy Tyson, a Methodist minister who served as the chaplain at Oral Roberts University, coined the term "soaking prayer." Francis MacNutt, *Healing* (New York: Bantam Books, 1974), 182–83. MacNutt popularizes the term for healing ministry as long-term prayer for the sick. "'Soaking prayer' conveys the idea of time to let something seep through to the core of something dry that needs to be revived. That's the way it is with the laying on of hands when we feel that God is asking us to take time to irradiate the sickness with his power and love." Francis MacNutt, *The Power to Heal* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Ava Maria Press, 1977), 39. Macnutt spoke at the Toronto renewal a number of times, suggesting influence on the development of soaking prayer in Catch the Fire, but our site observations at Christian Healing Ministries reveal that MacNutt's understanding of soaking prayer is linked to the "duration of prayer" needed as people soak a person desiring healing over extended periods of time. Also see Pavel Hejzlar, *Two Paradigms for Divine Healing: Fred F. Bosworth, Kenneth E. Hagin, Agnes Sanford, and Francis MacNutt in Dialogue* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

best resembles what Victor Turner identifies as carnival and exemplifies ritual play. Theories of ritual play engage the "as if," or subjunctive mood in which the world is envisioned as if it were different than it is currently. Charismatic play rituals envision an alternate world and therefore have potential consequences for the mundane world. Rituals of play can either affirm or subvert the cognitive, technocratic and rationalized world of today. The subjunctive mood allows participants of ritual to imagine a different world.

The subjunctive mood coincides with Christian theology's notion of the eschatological presence of the kingdom of God that is pressing in from the future. As a category of eschatology, the kingdom of God presses into the world and is made present through the incarnational presence of Jesus Christ by the Spirit, but also not yet here in that the great reversal of sin and injustice still occurs. Typically called inaugural or proleptic eschatology, the already and not yet of the kingdom is enacted in the worship, rituals and sacraments of the church as the intersection of the eschatological vision of the coming kingdom that creates space for the theological imagination of a different, more loving and just world. What if the world were more like that which has been described by the biblical prophets and apostles, or charismatic visionaries throughout history, a world proclaimed and lived by Christ? This world as envisioned in charismatic Christianity is one defined by unselfish love that is "received" from God and expressed or "released" to family, friends, neighbours and even enemies. The theological imagination of the kingdom already here in the Father's love but not yet in its fullness is the nexus between the religious and the scientific described as the subjunctive.

Theoretically, our assumptions are shaped by recent developments in two areas namely the sociology of love and altruism as well as ritual studies. More specifically, Margaret Poloma, Stephen Post, Matt Lee, Ralph Hood, and John Green have contributed to the development of a model referred to as "Godly Love" that is shaped by Pitirim Sorokin's idea of "love energy" and Randall Collin's work on interactional rituals and "emotional energy." The "Godly love" model attempts to investigate the relationship between numerous interactions of love among actors, exemplars, collaborators, beneficiaries, and the divine. What the model allows researchers to observe are the experiences of divine love for participants, the role of charismatic leaders as exemplars, and the consequences of these interactions especially

altruistic acts of benevolence. Godly love is a conceptual model and does not refer simply to the experience of loving God or love of neighbour, but focuses on the *process of interactions* whereby one's perceived experience of divine love fuels consequential acts of love.[4] The "Godly love" model is informed by early twentieth century Harvard sociologist Pitirim Sorokin in his book *The Ways and Power of Love*.[5] Sorokin was one of the first sociologists to examine the social consequences of a "love energy" for society and culture. The model is also complemented by the sociology of ritual as developed by Randall Collins.[6] Collins, like Sorokin, focuses on the social energy that emerges through ritual in a series of interactions that sustains long-term behaviour. In order to evaluate emerging research on "Godly love" as developed by Poloma, Post, Lee and Hood, the consequential outcomes of the kingdom-subjunctive nexus will be employed. The subjunctive is a mechanism of "Godly love" that produces "love energy" through empathy for others, and moves people to experience love, forgiveness and reconciliation.

In her investigation of the Toronto Blessing in *Main Street Mystics*, Poloma began to work out the relationship between religious experience and altruism in the context of charismatic renewal. The heart of religious experience in renewal is love as a tangible experience of being loved by God with the consequence of extending love to others. She comments: "Social scientists are reluctant to speak of love. Yet it is love—experiences of divine love that in turn affect human love—that is at the heart of the

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4. "Godly love" is technically a model for observing a variety of interactions. See Margaret M. Poloma and Ralph W. Hood, Jr. *Blood and Fire: Godly Love in a Pentecostal Emerging Church*. (New York: New York University Press, 2008), where they describe the interactional relationships between social actors who perceive experiences of divine love and are then motivated to express love in benevolence or altruistic ways. Godly love research is part of a developing field in the social sciences related to altruism funded by the Templeton Foundation as the Flame of Love project. Subsequent publications on Godly love include Margaret Poloma and Matthew T. Lee, *A Sociological Study of the Great Commandment in Pentecostalism: The Practice of Godly Love as Benevolent Service* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2009) and Margaret M. Poloma and John C. Green, *The Assemblies of God: Godly Love and the Revitalization of American Pentecostalism* (NY: New York University Press, 2010).

5. Pitrim A. Sorokin, *The Ways and Power of Love: Types, Factors and Techniques of Moral Transformation* (Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 1954 [2002]).

6. Randall Collins, *Interaction Ritual Chains* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

renewal."[7] She employs an interactional process between human actors who feel the presence of the divine actor, which then actualizes human actors to engage others through prophetic charisma.[8] The term "Godly love" and the model employed to define it was later developed in *Blood and Fire*. Poloma and Hood defined "Godly love" as "the dynamic interaction between human responses to the operation of perceived divine love and the impact their experience has on personal lives, relationships with others, and emergent communities… Godly love begins with a relationship between God and the individual, but its empowering potential spreads to influence others and the community of faithful…. "[9]

The model expands the work of Sorokin, who thought that the energy of love could be sociologically analyzed according to a five-dimensional model. These dimensions include intensity, extensity, duration, purity and adequacy. Each dimension involves a low to high range that can be measured. Intensity ranges from simple acts of love such as helping a person carry groceries to high intensity acts where a person sacrifices health and life for the good of another. Extensity ranges from love of one's self solely to love of all humanity and creation. Duration measures the length of time love is expressed from a short, momentary act to a whole lifetime. Purity measures the motivation or intent of love from a pure, unselfish love act (high) to an egoistic act for the benefit of the actor (low). Adequacy measures the consequences of love from a discrepancy between the consequence and the love act to a fulfilment of the goal of love and its consequences.[10]

The model is expanded with sociologist Randall Collins' ritual interaction chains theory (IR). According to Collins, interactions are characterized by emotional energy (EE) that appears in bodies through intense face-to-face situations. Collins describes IR as "a mechanism of mutually focused emotion and attention producing a momentarily shared reality which thereby generates solidarity and symbols of group membership."[11] The basic ingredients of IR include the physical assembly of a group of people, a process involving shared action, awareness, and

7. Margaret M. Poloma, *Main Street Mystics* (Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira, 2003), 140.
8. Ibid., 68, 119, 138–141; quote from 138.
9. Poloma and Hood, *Blood and Fire*, 4.
10. Sorokin, *The Ways and Power of Love*, 15–20.
11. Collins, *Interaction Ritual Chains*, 7.

emotional energy, which contributes to new group symbols and identity. The creation of emotional energy is, however, prolonged through symbols that effect morality. Collins states: "When the practices stop, the beliefs lose their emotional import, becoming mere memories, forms without substance, eventually dead and meaningless. By the same token, new symbols can be created; whenever the group assembles and focuses its attention around an object that comes to embody their emotion, a new *sacred object* is born."[12] EE, however, is not just about a highly charged ritual that demonstrates a lot of excitement or the dramatic effects that one might associate with religious contexts like the charismatic renewal. EE refers to the long-term effects of successful IR. In other words, EE is a long lasting effect that carries over to such an extent that participants are convinced of the experience to such a degree that they act upon the experience. Collins says: "EE is instead a strong steady emotion, lasting over a period of time, not a short-term disruption of a situation. A general characteristic of EE is that it gives the ability to act with initiative and resolve, to set the direction of social situations rather than to be dominated by others in the micro-details of interaction."[13] EE not only supports Sorokin's notion of "love energy," but the production of emotional love energy fuels social action with definite social consequences.

In *The Assemblies of God*, Margaret Poloma and John Green tested the "Godly love" model and employed Rolf Johnson's love typology: union-love defined as love for the beloved in romantic, but also mystical ways; care-love, which is love expressed in compassionate, benevolent, and prosocial ways; and appreciative-love, which is a more aesthetic though distance type of love.[14] The authors state: "*Godly Love is the dynamic interaction between divine and human love that enlivens and expands benevolence.*"[15] In *A Sociological Study of the Great Commandment*, Matthew Lee and Margaret Poloma test their model of "Godly love" through a qualitative study of 101 interviews of exemplars and their collaborators in pentecostal Christianity.[16] Using grounded theory they develop a threefold typology of benevolence: *servers* who express benevolence in community service, *renewers* who

12. Ibid., 37.
13. Ibid., 134.
14. Margaret M. Poloma and John C. Green, *The Assemblies of God*, 56–57 and passim.
15. Ibid., 103; authors' emphasis.
16. Lee and Poloma, *A Sociological Study of the Great Commandment*, 13.

work to revitalize the church and *changers* who work for structural social changes and justice. As might be expected, changers are not as prevalent in pentecostalism as the other two.[17] Using the work of prominent pentecostal theologian Frank Macchia, Lee and Poloma developed an interactional model between the vision of the kingdom of God and spiritual experiences that lead to benevolence. They tested the model with grounded theory and found a strong relationship between the exemplars' visions of the kingdom and benevolent action.[18]

In this article we offer an explanation of charismatic renewal and views of the kingdom of God employing insight from the sociology of love and ritual studies and informed by theological studies. Specifically we examine the role of play among charismatics as a form of ritual action that highlights the subjunctive quality of renewal. The subjunctive quality of ritual play and the liminal boundaries it crosses has broader consequences than just opening up the imagination. The potentials, possibilities, and eschatological visions grasped in sacred space and fuelled by the subjunctive produce empathy for others, which in turn opens possibilities for visions of a new world based upon a theology of the kingdom of God. Subjunctive play in charismatic ritual instils empathy and produces love that moves people to forgiveness and reconciliation, even to altruistic behaviour. An engaged spirituality that includes experiences of visions, dreams, and a sense of transcendence is an important part in the healing process that brings forgiveness and reconciliation. Healing too is a playful charismatic ritual in which both bodily and psychological/emotional health is an outcome of the subjunctive and a sign of the kingdom. In healing, divine love is experienced and love energy is produced. Put negatively, disease constitutes an impediment to "Godly love" because the focus on one's own lack of health restricts the flow of love to others. Charismatic renewal captures the subjunctive aspects of play, creates the space for empathetic identification with other individuals or groups, both in the in-group and outward to other groups, and through empathetic identity act in compassionate and benevolent ways. Our focus here is predominantly on the divine-human interaction of the model of "Godly love" captured in ritual play that produces in the social actor a desire to love and help others.

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17. Ibid., 62 and passim.
18. Ibid., 60–61, 66–67.

Ritual Play in the Charismatic Renewal

Ritual play is an important aspect in charismatic worship, but one that has received little attention. Laughter, crying, bodily jerks, groans, the utterance of animal-like noises with imitative behaviour such as the bodily movement of a clucking chicken or roaring lion are playful rituals, sometimes spontaneous and at times imitated among participants. CTF Toronto has ritualized much of its worship as playful performance. One of the core values of CTF churches is to have fun while playing in "Daddy's love," i.e., God's loving presence.

As we have observed different worship services throughout Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom, we have noted other playful activities. During charismatic worship many will stand, sway and clap their hands at their seats, but other participants will move to the front of the auditorium or church to dance and spin around to contemporary worship music. People are often strategically placed with flags that are waved as an act of worship. At times flag wavers as well as others will be dressed in bright costumes. One pastor of a nondenominational charismatic church explained it this way: "I am a radical worshipper. I love to dance. I love fast music…. I'm a shouter, and we use more Jesus Culture [and] IHOP [International House of Prayer] music, which is stronger and fast… the dance and the shout and the flagging and the strength and worship, so it's very much who I am, and it's very much a part of me." Charismatic worship often resembles a carnival with the master of ceremonies or charismatic leader directing the show while various sub-activities take place throughout the church or auditorium.[19] Charismatic leaders like John Arnott, Pastor and founder of CTF Toronto, function as emcees who are un-phased by the events that occur and guide the direction of the performance. During the service participants will lie on the floor throughout the auditorium while the worship is conducted and the message is preached. Others may be uttering verbal sounds such as glossolalic utterances, or a deep groaning signifying the moving of the Spirit.

The role of ritual play in religion is a nexus for cross-disciplinary dialogue between the social sciences, especially sociology, anthropology and theology; and these insights can be applied to pentecostal-charismatic

19. Poloma, *Main Street Mystics*, 2.

ritual. In anthropology, Victor Turner argues that the ritual of play ("ludic") is represented in liminality in dancing, riddles, jokes, rites of reversal, practical joking, etc., as the religious has been relegated to the sphere of leisure and in competition with games, sports, pastimes, hobbies, tourism, entertainment and mass media. Religion becomes less serious yet more solemn in that it now occupies the space of leisure, but has specialized in ethical standards and modes of behaviour in a social context with a multiplicity of personal choices, rapid changes and secularization.[20] The free and ludic reconfiguration of culture into multiple possible patterns is the space or boundaries where liminality and its cognate liminoid occur.[21] Wishfulness and desire pervades liminoid space while obligation the liminal. "One is all play and choice, and entertainment, the other is a matter of deep seriousness, even dread, it is demanding, compulsory…. "[22] Ritual liminality approximates the subjunctive mood, creates social potentiality and produces new meanings and symbols. Celebrations such as fiestas, fairs and carnivals exemplify the subjunctive mood.[23]

Seligman, Weller, Puett and Simon's cross-disciplinary approach expand on the subjunctive mood of ritual, an "as if" that is distinguished from other social worlds. The symbolic sharing of the subjunctive produces potentiality, a vision of what *could be* and through ritual grasps a sense of this world "as if" it were real. Ritual play points to the incongruity of the world that is, and the world that could be.[24] This "as if" quality allows ritual to deal with the ambiguities of the social world in interaction with the unseen world, and to oscillate between boundaries in ways that not only cross them, but violate, blur, reaffirm, re-establish and/or strengthen them.[25] In a theological sense this other world is defined as the eschatological

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20. Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 35–36.

21. Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York City: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982), 28. Technically liminality refers to ritual practice in pre-industrial world, while liminoid refers to ritual practice in industrial, technocratic and highly rationalized world, though for our purposes liminality will be used for both.

22. Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre*, 43.

23. Ibid., 84–85.

24. Adam B. Seligman, Robert P. Weller, Michael J. Puett, and Bennett Simon, *Ritual and its Consequences* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 20.

25. Ibid., 43.

kingdom of God, which can be seen as both a future and a present "as if" reality.

The subjunctive is related to several ideas from sociology. Max Weber pointed out that religious ideas played important roles in shaping social action. In his book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber demonstrated how the theology of Calvinism shaped economic behaviour.[26] Ideas of work, vocation, calling, the will of God were not simply the theologies of another world, but were beliefs that shaped this world. The "Thomas Theorem" developed by W.I. Thomas and Dorothy Thomas in the early twentieth century purported that when people define situations as real, they become real in their consequences.[27] Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann developed ideas in the sociology of knowledge demonstrating the constructed nature of social life. Specifically, the subjective reality of social life is constructed through a series of ongoing interactions, including beliefs, about the nature of reality, which in turn are institutionalized.[28] The subjunctive focuses specifically on the role of ritual in the social process of making real the beliefs and experiences we describe here.

Seligman et al., draw upon four principles: play is a free, non-coerced activity; it is disinterested in economic or material human needs in the mundane world; play is distinct from ordinary life with its own set of meanings and purposes; and play establishes its own order. When applied to ritual theory, ritual has both an end but creates unending truth, while play's ending is unknown. Ritual incorporates the past into the present while play defers and projects the present into the future. In this way ritual play is unending even though its performance has different endings.[29] Also drawing on Roger Caillors, Seligman et al., divide play into four categories: agôn—competitive games that equalize external conditions in order to test innate skills of the players, i.e., football, chess, etc.; alea—games of chance in which players have little to no control over the outcome, i.e., casino games, dice, etc.; mimicry—imaginary play often simulated, i.e., pretending to be

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26. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: MacMillan, 1958).

27. W.I. Thomas and D.S. Thomas, *The Child in America: Behavior Problems and Programs* (New York: Knopf, 1928), 571–572.

28. Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1966).

29. Seligmann, et al., *Ritual and Its Consequences*, 74.

dragons, cops and robbers; and ilinx—(literally whirlpool) pursuit of vertigo or near panic behaviour, i.e., spinning in circles, tickling, white-water rafting or riding roller coasters. Rituals of play can allow the self to remain in control or to lose control and they either affirm or subvert the social order. Agôn and alea affirm social roles and in doing so reveal the identity of the players (aggressive, defensive, tacticians or strategists). Mimicry and ilinx allow players to abandon their identities and roles, to give up self-control.[30] The implication for ritual is that some forms of ritual play follow external rules in order to cultivate and shape participants identities, social roles and self-control and to reaffirm social boundaries, i.e., high church liturgies or rules of faith, while others allow participants to assume alternate identities, to assume other roles, to "let go" of control, and to subvert social boundaries, i.e., charismatic ritual. Charismatic ritual best fits the category of ilinx play though one can observe slippage into other categories such as alea and mimicry. However, charismatic ritual is subversive to the mundane world calling in question its frenzied, technocratic structures.

The theology of play is a subject of interest as well, given the ritual nature of religious liturgy. In *Feast of Fools*, Harvard theologian Harvey Cox sets out to re-appropriate festivity and fantasy in the religious life by means of a ludic methodology. Songs, dance, prayer, stories and celebrations are key elements in *homo festivus*, whereas visionary dreaming and myth-making are elements of *homo fantasia*.[31] The human capacity to play, celebrate and story-tell connects the species to the larger historical and cosmic realities of life, to situate the human presently between past and future, between creation and the kingdom of God.[32] The mystic, or more precisely the neo-mystic, assumes an important role in mediating religious festivities. The neo-mystics emphasise spiritual celebration through loud music, bright costumes, dancing around and speaking a language all their own. In the 1960s, "hippies" and "flower children" were considered neo-mystics.[33] Poloma's identification of the charismatics stemming from Toronto as "mainstream mystics" is an accurate assessment and analogous

30. Ibid., 77–78.

31. Harvey Cox, *The Feast of Fools: A Theological Essay on Festivity and Fantasy* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1969), 10–11.

32. Cox, *Feast of Fools*, 14.

33. Ibid., 101–102.

with the neo-mystic. Although these charismatics draw upon the mystical historical tradition, they have innovated mystical practice in ways that inculcate spiritual insight and embodied manifestations.[34] The neo-mystic assumes the tradition of the holy fool and prophetic insight assumes a kind of foolishness in that it criticizes and even subverts commonly accepted ways of living. At times the mystic can inspire radical and even revolutionary hope in an effort to transform society by calling everything into question. Charismatic mystics hold the potential through its subjunctive envisioning to change the world.

Prayer is a playful ritual, which has implications for understanding soaking prayer among charismatics. Cox argues: "In my view, not only are prayer and play analogous but their kinship provides us with a sound contemporary access both to our religious tradition and to the future."[35] Prayer is a playful spiritual discipline. *Supplication* is risk-taking in that a person imagines him or herself in an "as if" "nonexistent future situation that is richer, in some important respect, from his present."[36] *Intercessory* is empathetic in that the person imagines what it would be like "as if" someone else. The participant must imagine what it would be like to be another person emotionally, physically, spiritually, or socially. This type of prayer is a form of mimicry. *Thanksgiving* expresses gratitude through celebration with its repertoire of song, dance, verbalizations, physical displays, embrace, and so on. *Penitence* is the request and offer of forgiveness, to envision one's self in a broader, relational context and in need of restored relationships, and willingness to forgive others in an effort at communal healing. Once again, the "as if" comes into play in order to imagine that a person's direction in life is not bound to past events and is therefore freed from the past. Penitence frees a person to change and start a new direction.[37] Later, Cox follows up on the ludic methodology when he proposes that the role of fantasy or make-believe is important in theology. Make believe functions as a form of ludic empathy and thereby engages the subjunctive as means

34. Poloma, *Mainstreet Mystics*.
35. Cox, *Feast of Fools*, 146.
36. Ibid., 147.
37. Ibid., 145–148.

to inculcate love and express love through consequential acts.[38] What if, for example, I were dying of cancer as an elderly patient in palliative care; or what if I were homeless and had to dig through garbage bins for my next meal all the while trying to evade the scorn of the public and the strong arm of the law. The nexus between receiving love and the consequential acts of care-love for others is anchored in empathy formed through the subjunctive, "as if," mode.

Protestant theologian Jürgen Moltmann notes the liberating function of play. In the context of political oppression and human suffering, play frees and emancipates people to be truly human. Play has the potential to critique the complex, rationalized structures of industrial society and instils vision for a better, more liberated world. Moltmann says: "We enjoy freedom when we anticipate by playing what can and shall be different and when in the process we break the bonds of the immutable status quo. We find pleasure in games and enjoy the suspended state of playing when the game affords us critical perspectives for change in our otherwise burdensome world."[39] Play and games serve a critical function by constructing "counter-environments" or other worlds that "open creative freedom and future alternatives."[40] Eschatological hope is important in Moltmann's theology of play, but hope is not cast in a romantic, utopian yearning, or in the transformation of messianic hope for a better world into mystical inwardness.[41] The future of which Moltmann speaks at this point in his career is counter-revolutionary in the social realm, but also of the glorification of God dwelling among us in the new creation, a future that has an end to oppression and suffering but endless in its opening to eternity. Interestingly, Moltmann shifts from human play to divine play. God's play is creative freedom with unlimited potentialities, without purpose either in the beginning of creation or the playful purposelessness of the eschatological kingdom. God's play is the outworking of divine love.[42] The implication of Moltmann's theology of play for our purpose is that the creative play of God that finds its fulfilment

38. Harvey Cox, *The Seduction of the Spirit: The Use and Misuse of People's Religion* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973), 319ff.

39. Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Play*, trans. By Reinhard Ulrich (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1972), 12.

40. Ibid., 12.

41. Ibid., 4–5.

42. Ibid., 17–18, 26, 35–40.

in the eschatological kingdom is a divine act of love that invites others to participate in the game as they overcome oppression and suffering in the world. The invitation to play instils compassion for others and seeks transformation for the good of all.

A number of scholars have applied theories of play to pentecostal-charismatic ritual worship. Suurmond applies theories of play to charismatic worship in order to construct a theology of creation. "The common characteristic of play is its uselessness. It serves no purpose," argues Suurmond, "but is an end in itself. This attitude of play seems to be the only right attitude to God, to our fellow human beings and to creation in general."[43] Worship too is useless and is stripped of all pretensions of utility because human existence itself is unnecessary. Worship, celebration, art, love without reason is what makes us human. Consequently creation has no utilitarian value and exists because it pleases God. Humans are not called to dominate creation and make it useful, but to enter into its game, to play in and with it. Suurmond then develops a theology of creation in which the play between Word and Spirit is an end in itself and we are invited to join in this play. Word represents the order of the game (its root meaning of *logos* is rational ordering) while Spirit is the dynamic, surprise and enthusiasm of creation (the root meaning of *pneuma* is the movement of air or breath). "The tension between rules and spontaneity characteristic of play, the tension between the necessary and the possible, between structure and dynamics, is the tension between the Word and the Spirit. This tension vibrates in creative wisdom, the world order as God means it to be."[44]

Dutch Anthropologist André Droogers proposes methodological ludism as an approach to the study of religion that is non-reductionist and applies this methodology to the study of pentecostalism. Play is both a heuristic tool employed by ethnographers to provide a theoretical framework for the religious, but also an important dynamic in ritual practices of religion.[45] In

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43. Jean-Jacques Suurmond, *Word and Spirit at Play: Towards a Charismatic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmanns, 1994), 29.

44. Ibid., 40.

45. Especially, André F. Droogers, "The Third Bank of the River: Play, Methodological Ludism and the Definition of Religion," in ed. Anton van Harskamp, et al., *Playful Religion: Challenges for the Study of Religion* (The Netherlands: Eburon Academic Publishers, 2006), 75–96. Other essays in the volume by Droogers include "The Normalization of Religious Experience: Healing Prophecy, Dreams and Visions," "Identity, Religious Pluralism and

subjunctive play dissimilar realities are brought into juxtaposition by which humans make reference to the hidden and invisible reality of the sacred. The subjunctive of play refers to creative potential, a general human capacity rather than a human product, and allows for multiple sets of rules to be grasped simultaneously even when only one set is being followed at a given time such as when one is in a state of play. The capacity for holding two or more realities together simultaneously through play allows humans to grasp the "ambiguity of reality as one in diversity" to articulate a wholeness to reality while speaking of its dividedness.

Peter Versteeg builds on Droogers' ludic methodology and uses play in order to interpret and analyze charismatic worship. Versteeg's context is the Vineyard Christian Fellowship, a charismatic group with direct implications for understanding Catch the Fire, since the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship was originally a Vineyard church before its separation. He noted the role of humour in the creative prophetic images leaders would use while ministering to others. Fundamental was the belief that God played with believers as children. The emphasis was on intimacy with the Father expressed as "sitting on Daddy's lap." Children would play with their Daddy God and God would play with them. Prophetic ministry took on a playful quality and would cultivate the notion that reality is a spiritual reality and that God would communicate prophetically through signs and wonders, music, dance, words and colours.[46] Versteeg goes on to argue that prophetic praying is playing a trick that never stops and defies the rules of play. This play spills over into reality and affects the believers' life-world. In prophetic play the subjunctive shifts and becomes indicative. Prophetic playing is reality seen from the divine perspective, which moves from representation to presence. The implication for the researcher is that she cannot enter into that liminal space without crossing a line of belief, and this is risky methodologically, but one that takes seriously the intersect between the religious and mundane worlds. Versteeg concludes that playing in the charismatic world is not only recognized as playing, but also as a

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Ritual in Brazil: Umbanda and Pentecostalism," and "Paradoxical Views on a Paradoxical Religion: Models for the Explanation of Pentecostal Expansion in Brazil and Chile."

46. Peter Veerstag, "Playful Religion: Experience, Meaning and Ludic Approach," in ed. Anton van Harskamp, et al., *Playful Religion: Challenges for the Study of Religion* (The Netherlands: Eburon Academic Publishers, 2006), 100.

sign of sacred reality. Ritual playing not only discovers the divine order of reality, but attends to this reality by attuning to the whispers and presence of God.

Veerstag's observations were replicated in our own observations of Catch the Fire churches. At a conference on the Father's Love at CTF Houston, we observed the use of playful rituals. CTF Houston is one of Catch the Fire's newer churches and time was set aside on the opening night for the leaders who had traveled from Toronto to Houston to anoint the new husband and wife pastors. However, instead of using a little dab of olive oil to anoint the pastors for ministry, an entire bottle of oil was dumped on the husband and wife team, who collapsed to the floor (the ritual of resting in the Spirit or soaking prayer). At the end of the service, the guest speaker, who is considered gifted in prophetic ministry, called people to the sides of the church. As he prayed for their anointing they would spontaneously fall to the floor or rest in the Spirit. One woman, however, decided to lie down to be prayed for so that she would not fall, something the speaker found amusing. On the following day the congregation was asked to come for prayers of anointing. Four different lines were formed and as people were prayed for, the ministers used an empty bottle of olive oil fancifully decorated with colourful tassels, and pretended to pour the oil over the petitioner, imitating what had been done the night before. "Catchers" were employed to catch those who would fall down. One of the researchers was pressed into the role of catcher, which allowed him to hear what was said to each person as the leaders "anointed" the petitioners and prophesied over each of them, usually involving mental images or "revelations" for each person. One researcher was eventually anointed and told that his "revelation" was a mental picture of sweet tasting honey all over his head and face. The taste of sweetness is an important part of the revelation. No explanation was offered as to what the revelation meant, though honey is a biblical image of God's blessing. Rituals of prophecy or revelations in charismatic renewal are understood as hearing from God and often involve mental images. Both prophecy and revelations, which are believed to be forms of divine communication, engage the theological imagination and are playfully expressed to others. Wolgang Vondey is especially insightful: "The players are not performers; instead play becomes present through them regardless of whether or what they perform. In other words, play is

not the kind of activity that conditions the effects of revelation but a mode of being in which revelation is actualized."[47]

Margaret Poloma also noticed this playfulness in her sociological fieldwork on the Toronto Blessing.[48] Poloma observed the playfulness of worship in Toronto in the various ecstatic phenomena such as fits, trances, visions, manifestations, impartations or anointing, animal noises and mimicry, prophetic mime, and drunkenness. The language of drunkenness can throw off an outsider with its playful reversal of meaning that one can be inebriated in charismatic experience rather than through alcohol. John Arnott explains spiritual drunkenness in *The Father's Blessing*: "Every time they go down [resting, slain in the Spirit], it's like they had another glass of booze, but it isn't that at all. It's the Lord's Spirit....When people are under the Spirit they are delivered of all sorts of problems. They go into the heavenlies [a reference to visions]. They come back, and they are no longer the same. They are transformed."[49] On different occasions we would hear leaders and participants describe this experience as "drunkenness" or "being drunk in the Spirit" because it appeared similar to alcoholic inebriation, a description that fits the ilinx type of play that emphasizes vertigo and inebriation.

Although ritual play has been a focus in the social sciences, particularly cultural anthropology, the analogy of play is also proposed as a theological category. In his analysis of pentecostalism, Wolfgang Vondey proposes that play rather than performance is a theological category better able to capture the essence of global Christianity and therefore able to advance ecumenical discussions.[50] On the one hand, performance is a term that emerges from drama and theatre and is proposed by predominantly Reformed theologians as a category for articulating an ecumenically descriptive theology. It also aligns with western socio-economic structures where performance is a way to assess the health of the economic landscape. However, the difficulty with performance is the passivity and minimal participation of the Christian in liturgical praxis. On the other hand, Vondey sees play as a potentially rich

47. Wolfgang Vondey, *Beyond Pentecostalism: The Crisis of Global Christianity and the Renewal of the Theological Agenda* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 76.
48. Poloma, *Main Street Mystics*.
49. John Arnott, *The Father's Blessing* (Orlando, FL: Creation House, 1995), 146.
50. Vondey, *Beyond Pentecostalism*, 13.

category for understanding and analyzing global Christianity. Since play better reflects the characteristics, practices and sensibilities of pentecostalism it gives pentecostals a theological voice in the dialogue.[51] The notion of play is disinterested in any one particular theological or liturgical perspective and therefore more sensitive to the broad scope of the global theological task. Play equalizes the playing field and encourages maximal participation. Different perspectives are like different worlds. They can be engaged simultaneously through the subjunctive. Play is joyful activity engaged for its sheer delight rather than for its performative, competitive, rationalistic or utilitarian value.[52] Another charismatic ritual that is especially important in experiencing love is healing, which engages the subjunctive in its hope for emotional and bodily health.

The Kingdom of God and the Subjunctive Imagination

The eschatological vision in the charismatic renewal is diverse and constantly changing. However, the Toronto Blessing was initially part of John Wimber's Vineyard Christian Fellowship, a charismatic grouping of churches sometimes identified as the third wave of pentecostalism.[53] John Wimber and the Vineyard was influenced by Fuller Seminary Professor George Ladd's "already but not yet" or inaugural eschatology. The theological framework in the Vineyard for the charismatic activity such as prayers for healing and glossolalia is inaugural. Kris Miller, a Vineyard official, states: "In short, that basic framework can be called an 'inaugurated eschatology,' the presence of the kingdom of God already inaugurated by Jesus but not yet consummated until his return. Within this basic framework, Vineyard churches will vary in its practice of prayer for healing, including those churches who offer extensive time blocks for healing prayer."[54]

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51. Although Vondey's focus is primarily classical pentecostalism, he includes renewal in his discussion and therefore defines pentecostal broadly to include the whole gambit of pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity.

52. Vondey, *Beyond Pentecostalism*, 13.

53. Wimber makes use of Wagner's terminology in John Wimber, "Introduction" and "Afterword," in ed. Kevin Springer, *Power Encounters: Among Christians in the Western World* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), xix–xxxiv and 211–216 respectively.

54. Kris Miller to Peter Althouse, email correspondence on behalf of Bert Waggoner, 22 June, 2010.

Wimber articulated an eschatological theology that the kingdom of God will fully come in the final second coming of Jesus Christ, but that supernatural manifestations break into the present through believers who make space for God's kingdom power. For Wimber, the power of the kingdom, which is revealed in "signs and wonders" and supernatural manifestations, will overthrow the powers of Satan in the world. Kingdom theology emphasizes proclamation of the kingdom, healing the sick, casting out demons, and performing miracles. However, Stephen Hunt argues that this theology is more than merely an attempt at manipulation of cosmic and metaphysical forces, but an attempt to make social and psychological space for the working of the Spirit of God. Healing is a charismatic ritual and one of the signs of the kingdom and viewed more holistically to include psychological as well as spiritual and physical elements.[55]

Catch the Fire World exhibit similarities to the inaugural eschatology of the Vineyard. Healing, signs and wonders, charismatic manifestations, dreams and visions, ecstatic behaviours are all interpreted as the "inbreaking" of the presence of God as "foretastes" of the coming kingdom. In fact, sensory descriptions such as taste, smell, hearing, and touch are prominent in the language used to describe divine presence. The charismatic leaders in the movement are bearers of the kingdom and disclose it through the impartation of spiritual gifts to participants. An impartation is normally passed on through touch or the laying on of hands, but even here playful innovations are evident such as blowing from the mouth (representing Spirit) or pretending to "shoot" the person with the power of the Spirit. Soaking prayer facilitates the experience of the inbreaking kingdom through which prophecies, revelations, visions (mental picture images), healing, weeping and laughter are mediated in the body as divine communication. Charismatics play with God as if the kingdom has already arrived, but with awareness that there is a discrepancy between what is and what is to come. The emphasis is on the realization of the kingdom (some would say over-realization) in the present by which divine love is experienced through signs and wonders, healing, physical or bodily manifestations, and so on.

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55. Stephen Hunt, "'Doing the Stuff': The Vineyard Connection," in ed. Stephen Hunt, Malcolm Hamilton, and Tony Walter, *Charismatic Christianity: Sociological Perspectives* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1997), 84–85.

In the charismatic renewal, healing is an element of ritual play that enables participants to "get back into the game." Although bodily healing is stressed, inner or emotional healing plays a more important role for experiencing the Father's love and experiencing forgiveness and restoration of relationships. At the tenth anniversary celebration of Catch the Fire conferences at the Founders Inn in Virginia Beach, John Arnott led the full capacity of approximately fourteen hundred people in a time of worship and healing. The worship leaders had led the congregation in fast-paced music that reached a crescendo and then quieted down in a calming manner. Arnott then addressed the congregation. He referenced Jesus' encounter with John the Baptist and stated that the kingdom of God is at hand and asked people to raise their hands as high as they could into the air to press into the glory of the Lord, to reach their hands into the heavens. He said "Let my hands be an extension of Jesus." As the congregation received the "anointing" in their hands he then had them touch areas of their bodies that were in need of healing. He claimed that the manifestation of miracles is the sign that the kingdom is present. As he called out various healings that he believed were occurring, he called those people who believed they were healed to the front of the auditorium. There were approximately thirty to forty people who came forward. Arnott then interviewed a few of them, and continued to pray for each of them. Many fell down and rested in the Spirit, while others would be overcome by spontaneous bodily movements.

Manifestations and miracles are indicators that the kingdom of God has come in the power and presence of the Spirit. Healing is a sign of God's outflow of love. The presence of the Father in love is an expression of divine presence to bless and heal people in their life circumstances. In *Grace and Forgiveness*, John and Carol Arnott say: "[God] is the very embodiment of perfect flawless love. His heart for us is to see us living our spiritual lives where we are operating with the dynamics of His Kingdom just as Jesus did. It is a Kingdom of love, filled with faith, aware of the bigness of our God; aware of His willingness to interact with us and do things for us as we act in loving obedience to Him."[56] The intersection between the subjunctive of play rituals and the eschatological manifestation of the presence of the kingdom of God produces love that energizes people for various activities

56. John and Carol Arnott, *Grace and Forgiveness* (Chichester, UK: New Wine Ministries, 2009), 14.

including their own healing and personal renewal. The healing of the body, emotions and interrelationships allow people to experience the energy of divine love, enabling them to express that love to others.

One couple who was impacted by the experience of love, healing and empathy in the charismatic renewal in a way that eventually led to compassion ministry provides evidence for the relationship of divine-human interaction of love and how that love is expressed to others as captured in the "Godly love" model. Similar stories are often repeated in our interview data. Dana and her husband Charles (pseudonyms) are renewal leaders and involved in missionary work. Dana had not truly experienced love though she defined herself as a Christian from an early age. She was raised by a "manic depressive" father that created a "very interesting childhood." Though she loved Jesus and loved the Spirit, she hated the Father because her relationship with her own father was strained. At ten years of age she developed epileptic seizures, and then developed "chrondromalacia patella" (degenerative disease of the knees), migraine headaches, lactose intolerance and ovarian cysts. She was informed by her doctors that she would be wheelchair bound by the age of thirty. In 2003, she and her husband attended a "Father Loves You" Conference in Toronto. In the context of charismatic worship she was healed of her emotional hatred and was able to forgive her father. She says:

> I hated the word 'Father,'...And to cut a very long story short, I forgave my earthly father for all the belief stuff of the heart. And I'd forgiven him a zillion times, but carried on dishonouring him, hated him, didn't have anything to do with him, and now I realize that I hadn't actually done it from the heart. I needed to step up in grace, and as I did that every single sickness left my body instantly. And the key was the bitterness and the bitter root that I've had in my heart for so long, and my body literally shut down.

Dana experienced inner healing because she experienced a profound sense of love and was able to forgive, and as a result experienced bodily healing.

Yet the story does not end here, because through the ritual experience she and her husband have developed a passion for a compassion-based ministry. The couple works with orphaned and impoverished children who struggle with hunger and starvation, addictions, and disease. The couple have worked to develop feeding programmes, schools and residential housing and training programmes in carpentry and electrical apprenticeships. Yet their

compassion work is specifically linked to their experience of the Father's love, inner and physical healing, and the ability to forgive. They comment:

> Dana—We got broken. We got ripped before with the compassion of the kids, but the Father actually didn't release us until after I got healed. It was amazing. It was really, really interesting.

> Charles—We don't know why. It just took a while. And we know that the reason it took a while was because we were too broken and wounded ourselves to do any good to anyone else until we actually encountered who God really was. Because they aren't gonna feed a child. What God wants is His heart to be reflected and revealed to those children. And so it was only when we really understood who He was that we believed God actually released us into what we're now doing.

According to Dana and Charles' claims, their ability to love others in acts of compassion was impeded by their own bodily and emotional concerns. By experiencing God's love in the context of charismatic renewal they experienced a "release" from the physical and emotional problems that were impeding their expression of love to others, and were "released" to work for needy children in compassion ministries. The reports of divine-human interaction that lead to benevolent action in human-human interaction is a good example of the social interactions of the "Godly love" model that considers divine experiences of love as motivation for human expressions of love.

Conclusion

The vision of the eschatological kingdom of God inspires the theological imagination with hope, and possibilities of what the future may potentially hold. The repertoire of charismatic gifts, prophesy, revelation, healing, and bodily expression are signs and wonders of that future embodied in the human heart and reflective of a world of unlimited love. The subjunctive refers to the "as if" world of the kingdom of God, one through which the presence of God is inculcated in ritual play. The subjunctive is activated through play and activates the theological imagination, as it attunes to the spiritual dance ("perichoresis," literally, "to dance around") between Word (rules of the game) and Spirit (free flow of play) in relation to the Father (love of play). The subjunctive is the mechanism through which love is instilled in both the individual and religious community, and through which

people and their communities are moved to love others, to forgive and heal broken relationships, and to act in compassionate, and benevolent ways.

Charismatic ritual with its carnivalesque elements and emphasis on embodied experience is viewed by participants as the presence of God's kingdom in love and engages the subjunctive world through play. The ritual interaction of bodies in sacred space where participants engage in dramatic performances, kinaesthetic movement, playful use of colour and sound, prophetic utterance, and bodily/emotional health all contribute to the production of emotional energy where people can experience the energy of love and forgiveness. Soaking prayer is a ritual practice in which love energy is experienced and is used to expand the renewal through charismatic networks. Soaking prayer is practiced individually and corporately in the context of charismatic worship, in conferences and seminars, in homes and churches. Play rituals allow the players to empathize with others by imagining what their own lives could be like as if they were the other. The belief that the kingdom of God is at hand and not in some distant future or disembodied afterlife contributes to the subjunctive quality of charismatic life and envisions a world where love abounds. Love is shared with others through renewed relationships and acts of compassion. The "Godly love" model is a way to investigate the various interactions between social actors who are energized by love in order to see how perceived experiences of love motivate participants to act in loving ways.

With a Shamble and a Moan: The Zombie Eschatology in American Popular Culture

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> They're coming to get you, Barbara!—Johnny, *The Night of the Living Dead*[1]

> The dead walk among us. Zombies, ghouls—no matter what their label—these somnambulists are the greatest threat to humanity, other than humanity itself.—*The Zombie Survival Guide*[2]

> I stare and wonder how we've survived as long as we have against such inevitable destruction.—Annah, Dark and Hollow Places[3]

If eschatology is a theory of the end of the world, the apocalypse is a doomsday scenario, and zombies are the resurrected dead, then what happens when these are combined? The result is zombie eschatology, which emerges from a genre of horror, science and speculative fiction, and fantasy, labeled the zombie apocalypse, in which zombies bring about the end of the world. In this genre, corpses reanimate, hunger for human flesh, and cause the downfall of individuals, families, and communities, local, national, and global. The living dead destroy the living and tear down the tenuous social contract between human beings. This current American millennial fascination groans and shambles while serving as a reckoning with our increasingly connected global world, its danger and its elusive possibility of security. For this special issue of *Arc* on eschatology, I chart the presence, proliferation and popularity of the eschatology of the living dead. I explore

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1. *The Night of the Living Dead*, DVD, directed by George Romero, 1968 (Good Times Video, 2001).
2. Max Brooks, *The Zombie Survival Guide* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2003), Introduction, Kindle edition. Emphasis mine.
3. Carrie Ryan, *The Dark and Hollow Places*, (New York: Delacorte, 2011), 106. Kindle edition.

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why this cultural monster, the zombie, functions so effectively as an apocalyptic agent. Zombies are wed to end, and I wonder why this monster is the best equipped to bring about the downfall of humanity. The living dead are another example of Michael Barkun's "pervasive millennialism," which is the floating millennialism "woven into the fabric of daily life."[4] This gruesome eschatology points to an American obsession with doomsday and collective fantasies of the end. The world will end not with a bang but a moan.

"They're coming to get you!"

In 1968, George Romero unleashed the zombie apocalypse in *Night of the Living Dead*. He continued this imagining in his sequels, including *Dawn of the Dead* (1978), *Day of the Dead* (1985), and *Land of the Dead* (2005). His independent film introduced the threat of the "things," reanimated human corpses, caused by radiation from space, and the ordinary people confronting this extraordinary crisis in gritty black and white cinematography. The film begins with a car winding down isolated roads in Pennsylvania to a cemetery. Johnny and Barbara, siblings, visit the grave of their father. What appears to be a routine, mundane, and even-loathed task is the beginning of the end. While Barbara kneels at the grave, Johnny teases her about her childhood fear of ghosts and ghouls. He prophesies, "They're coming to get you, Barbara!" As they leave, a pale disheveled man grabs Barbara. Their shuffling attacker tussles with Johnny and chases a frantic Barbara, who flees. The shell-shocked heroine finds an old farmhouse seemingly abandoned. Ben, a young African-American man, joins her and secures the house. Ben discovers the Cooper family, including Harry, Helen and daughter Karen, as well as Tom and Judy, a younger couple, hiding in the cellar. This classic film showcases the standard of zombie eschatology: the dead rise, they crave human flesh, humans become prey, some humans survive, and many humans don't.

Moreover, Romero documents the despair, shock, hopelessness, and violence of the new apocalyptic world. The things are not as important as the human interaction, characterized by mistrust, antagonism, and violence.

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4. Michael Barkun, "Millennium Culture: The Year 2000 as Religious Event," in *Millennial Visions: Essays on Twentieth Century Millenarianism*, ed. Martha Lee, (Praegar, 2000), 43.

None of the protagonists make it out alive. Johnny, now a thing, comes back for Barbara. Judy and Tom die in a gas explosion, and their destroyed bodies become a buffet for the things. Karen kills her mother with a spade and dines on her father shot and killed by Ben, who lives through the night, only to be shot by a white posse of hunters come morning. The credits roll interspersed with images of Ben's corpse and the white men who murdered him, echoing the lynching photos of the early twentieth century.[5]

Romero's depiction of human social interaction, race/racism, and the fight for survival provides a bleak portrait of humanity. The things outside might be relentless and hungry, but other human beings are the true peril. For cinema scholar Kyle Bishop, Romero "took a rather insipid, two-dimensional creature, married it to an established apocalyptic storyline, and invented an entirely new genre."[6] The horror of zombies is facing those you loved, despised, and recognized as unfamiliar monsters who seek to consume you. Bishop writes, "Those who should be dead and safely laid to rest have bucked the natural order of things and have returned from the grave."[7] Zombies are scary because they are no longer who they were, yet Romero's continued lesson is about the nature of human social relationships. He wants the viewer to ponder who the real threat is: zombies or humans.

"Without people we might as well be zombies."[8]

Zombieland (2009) follows the seemingly sole survivors of the zombie apocalypse, Columbus (Jesse Eisenberg), Tallahassee (Woody Harrelson), Wichita (Emma Stone), and Little Rock (Abigail Breslin), as they travel in what is left of the United States. In his opening narration, Columbus notes that a country cannot exist without people. The nerdy and timid college student found that his phobias and avoidance of people helped him survive the zombie plague. After he runs out of gas, Columbus meets up with Tallahassee, who avoids the use of real names because "it makes us familiar." Tallahassee is a gun-slinging and shear-wielding zombie killing aficionado. Later, the viewer discovers that he gleefully kills to avenge

5. *The Night of the Living Dead.*

6. Kyle Bishop, "Raising the Dead: Unearthing the nonliterary origins of zombie cinema," *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 33:4 (Winter 2006), 3 of 14.

7. Ibid.

8. *Zombieland*, DVD, directed by Rueben Fleischer, (Sony Pictures: 2009).

the death of his young son, Buck, originally described as his lost puppy not child. Not surprisingly, much of the film's action revolves around spectacular ways to destroy zombies with occasional asides for the "zombie kill of the week." Columbus's rules for survival also dominate the film, and they include "cardio" (number one) to the "double tap" (number two) to "travel light" (luggage or personal baggage, number seven) to "don't be a hero" (number 17) to "check the backseat" (number 31) to "enjoy the little things" (number 32).[9] Two young women, Wichita and Little Rock, outmatch the protagonists, yet Columbus and Tallahassee find themselves traveling with the sisters in a yellow Hummer to Pacific Playland, the amusement park rumored to be zombie-free. Wary of each other, the four still develop camaraderie. However, staying together violates Wichita's main rule: trust no one but her sister. They leave for the park.

The fabled amusement park, like the rest of the U.S., contains the living dead. Luckily, Columbus decides to follow Wichita and Little Rock, and he prods Tallahassee into help by noting "they are pictures in someone's wallet too." At Pacific Playland, Tallahassee manages to annihilate almost all of the zombies in the park with guns, guns, and more guns. In spite of Columbus's vaunted rules for survival, he ignores rule 17 (don't be a hero) when Little Rock and Wichita need help fighting off zombies. The film ends with optimism as the four drive off together as a ragtag family, and Columbus notes, "Without other people we might as well be zombies."[10] Other humans are worthy of trust in Zombieland because the major battle is between human and zombie, and survival is not worth the sacrifice of others. This is what separates human from zombie. Yet Columbus's survival was predicated on his avoidance of other humans. He might have found the family he always wanted, but his future cannot be ensured. The zombie apocalypse is still visually stunning with deserted towns, destroyed roads, and zombies devouring humans. The message might be hopeful, but the visualization of the end suggests its gritty reality, harsh landscapes, and emotional and mental toll on the survivors. Tallahassee, for instance, survives the apocalypse by "blowing off steam," which is code for beating, battering, and annihilating objects. They might survive in Zombieland together, but what does it mean to live in an undead world?

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9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.

"There's us and the dead."[11]

The Walking Dead (2010) is based on Robert Kirkman's series of graphic novels of the same title. The series documents a small group of survivors in the American South lead by sheriff Rick Grimes (Andrew Lincoln). Rick awakens from a coma to find a world filled with walking corpses, decay, and chaos. How the zombie apocalypse occurred is not as important as its occurrence and reality for the few unturned humans. In the early moments of the series, Rick, in his uniform, winds his way around abandoned cars seeking gas for his own car. He comes face to face with a zombie, a blonde haired little girl. As she growls at him in her blood-spattered nightgown, the protagonist shoots her in the head. Nothing is sacred at the end, and children, much like adults, turn into zombies. The sheriff searches and eventually finds his wife, Lori (Sarah Wayne Callies), and his son, Carl (Chandler Riggs), along with his deputy Shane (Jon Bernthal), camping out with other survivors outside of the very perilous and "geek"-filled Atlanta. Each episode visualizes the ongoing struggle for subsistence and Rick's ethical wrangling, which causes tension in his marriage and in his friendship with Shane. In the universe of *The Walking Dead*, society is fragile, human survival is a torturous endeavor, and hope is not the appropriate response to this undead cataclysm. This zombie apocalypse becomes a lesson in situational ethics and often works against the cavalier nature of zombie destruction in film.

In episode 2 "Guts," Rick recovers the wallet of a zombie and tells his fellow survivors the name of the man who used to be human. Rick, then, hacks into the zombie to use its body parts as a scent-masking technique. Yet he needs to affirm that the "geek" was once like them, familiar, loved, and human. This gruesome action emphasizes that anyone can have the same fate as this man. Remembering one's humanity in an inhumane moment is most important. In episode 5 "Wildfire", Andrea (Laurie Holden) refuses to abandon her sister Amy (Emma Bell), who died in a geek attack at the camp. While mourning, Andrea remains by Amy's side and does not allow the other campers to come near her, much less burn her corpse along with the other zombie carcasses. When Amy reanimates, Andrea watches her former

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11. *The Walking Dead*, Episode no. 2, first broadcast Novemeber 7, 2010, directed by Michelle Maxwell MacLaren.

sister open her now milky eyes, hugs her one last time, and puts a bullet in the zombie's brain. Amy's death/undeath undoes Andrea, who loses her will to survive. Without Amy, Andrea is not convinced survival is worth the pain and trauma. In the last episode of the season "TS-19," her friend, the elderly Dale (Jeffrey DeMunn), convinces Andrea to keep living by threatening to die with her in a sequenced explosion at the CDC. With Dale's life on the line, Andrea continues on. *The Walking Dead* emphasizes that post-apocalyptic life is dirty, momentary, and traumatic. Survival appears finite at best. The season ends with the camp breaking up, and Rick's smaller group fleeing the CDC in Atlanta as it explodes. Hope is a fleeting commodity, and the price of surviving might be too high.

"Zombies are a force of nature."

John Joseph Adams' *The Living Dead 1* and *2* provide zombie stories from popular authors Stephen King, Kelley Armstrong, Cherie Priest, Max Brooks, and Joe McKinney. Zombie fiction catalogs apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic scenarios: humans live, or at least attempt to, in an undead world. John Joseph Adams, the editor of *The Living Dead 1* and *2*, describes zombie fiction: "It's about battling a frightening, implacable foe and imagining what it would be like to survive the end of the world and trying to figure out what to do when the dead won't stay dead."[12] Metaphorically, zombies present humanity, all of our features and flaws, back to us. They are us.

His collections include a wide variety of zombie fiction from the so-called Romero zombies to revenants to voodoo zombies to reanimated corpses of all stripes. In *The Living Dead*, Adams collected previously published zombie fiction, while *The Living Dead 2* presents many new zombie stories written specifically for the volume from the newest generation of zombie fiction writers. In the first volume, Sherman Alexie's "Ghost Dance" depicts those killed at Little Big Horn enacting gory revenge on white people. Dan Simmons envisions the elementary school classroom after the dead return. Stephen King depicts a little Maine fishing town's wrangling with the familiar undead, who return home. Perhaps, the best example of zombie eschatology in the volume is Nancy Kilpatrick's harrowing tale of

12. John Joseph Adams, "Introduction," in *The Living Dead*, ed. John Joseph Adams, (San Francisco: Night Shade Books, 2008), 1.

the last human survivor, and her exhaustive work to simply stay alive. The protagonist is alone with her memories, garden, fences, and weaponry. Her desperate need for touch, even an undead one, leads to her own personal end.

Scott Edelman writes about the last stories of the last humans, who die painfully and grotesquely at the hands of zombies, and he documents the unheroic actions of these ordinary folks who ignore the plight of others to survive. Edelman writes:

> Zombies are a force of nature, and forces of nature do not come equipped with morals. Forces of nature do not come packaged with a purpose, a message, or a reason. They just are.[13]

The second volume continues the zombified end. Robert Kirkman balances the peril of one's fellow survivors against the threat of the living dead. Kelley Armstrong interrogates who the real threat might be and suggests that humans endanger zombies not vice versa. Seth Lindberg's story documents the end through twenty-three photographs, which memorialize life before the end, the cataclysm, and all those you lose along the way. David Wellington writes about a group of survivors, who are "good people," forced to make bad decisions, like sacrificing a single mother and her child to the zombies for the larger community's survival.[14] Evil times make even good people do bad.

"Survival is the key to remember—not victory, not conquest, just survival."[15]

Max Brooks is the author most associated with the zombie apocalypse. His popular *Zombie Survival Guide* (2003) is a how-to guide to outlast the impending undead onslaught, and his *World War Z* (2007) is an "oral history" of the zombie war and end of the civilization as we know it. Like most how-to products, the *Zombie Survival Guide* instructs the reader on zombie origins, the likelihood of the zombie apocalypse, and helpful tips

13. Scott Edelman, "Almost The Last Story By Almost the Last Man," in *The Living Dead*, ed. John Joseph Adams, (San Francisco: Night Shade Books, 2008), 451.
14. David Wellington, "Good People," in *The Living Dead 2*, ed. John Joseph Adams, (San Francisco: Night Shade, 2010), 134.
15. Brooks, *Zombie Survival Guide*, Introduction.

for weathering this type of end. Brooks compares and ranks methods and tools for murdering the undead (aim for the brains), provides advice on appropriate clothing and transportation, and establishes what materials one needs to secure a home. This general planning for the inevitable plague of zombies, the downfall of civilization, can be accomplished after purchasing and reviewing the guide.

What Brooks makes clear is that enduring the apocalypse is not easy, fun, or perhaps, even possible. He writes, "Survival is the key to remember—not victory, not conquest, just survival."[16] Humans cannot win, but we can subsist. While urging preparedness, Brooks notes the massive amount of time, money, and effort that a civilian must engage in to battle the undead. He emphasizes the possibility of doomsday and urges the reader that the only thing that separates humans from zombies is the will to live. While cataloguing what each survivor needs, Brooks includes heavy-hitting social commentary alongside his cavalier depiction of the destruction of zombies. Brooks assesses the difference between human and zombie. Zombies are undead. They don't feel, remember, or know. They are walking corpses driven by infection. They are no longer human. He writes, "Simply put, there are thousands of ways to kill a human—and only one to kill a zombie. The brain must be obliterated, by any means possible."[17]

In *World War Z*, Brooks' oral history of the great zombie war, the reader gains glimpses of life before, during, and after the war. This zombie apocalypse tale is a scathing assessment of global politics, militarization, capitalism, and humans in general. Those interviewed are at best ambiguous. There are no heroes, just maimed, broken, and unrepentant survivors. The book begins with an explanation, an attempt to tell the actual story of the zombie war not just the facts and figures. The oral historian wants to preserve the "human factor" of the war between the living and the undead. After all, isn't the "human factor" what separates humans from the zombies?[18] *World War Z* picks up familiar themes: ignorance/disbelief of the threat, government inaction, global panic, and the fight for survival. The interviews range from soldiers to politicians to civilians to mercenaries to smugglers

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid., 19.

18. Max Brooks, *World War Z: An Oral History of the Zombie War,* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2006), 2.

to doctors to professors to spies to parents to children. The most haunting stories of this particular zombie apocalypse involve a woman who survived the zombie infestation as a child;, the mastermind of the Redeker plan that saves South Africa by ranking which people should survive and which are left to die; and the persistent fatalism of the soldiers about the war.

Philip Adler, a veteran of the war, noted: "Funny, eh? I could accept everything else that was happening, the fact that dead bodies were rising to consume the world, but this… following orders that would indirectly cause a mass murder."[19] By following orders, Adler compromised lives. Impossible decisions guaranteed the survival of some humans over zombies, but this required sacrificing the many to save a few. Brooks sharply imagines the consequences of global war, nations fighting against nations, and the ways in which ordinary lives are fundamentally altered by the undead. Each snippet, interview, and story documents the ruin of places and people. Brooks includes violence, trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder, murder, cannibalism, death, mourning, fortressed communities, fascism, fake cures, false hope, and broken people. The loss of life dominates each page turn, and these ordinary folks were the victims of zombies, "hunger, disease, interhuman violence," and despair. In a world more dead than living, despair killed those unable to manage the bleakness of the new world.[20] Cataloging the human factor of war makes Brooks' commentary on zombies and the modern world more poignant and powerful. Adler, the former soldier, states, "We lost a hell of a lot more than people when we abandoned them to the dead."[21]

"This is it, I realize. The end of me."[22]

In a similar vein, Carrie Ryan's *The Forrest of Hands and Teeth* Trilogy (2009–2011) creates a post-apocalyptic world in which zombies are an ever-present danger right outside the fences of civilization. Her books along with the edited collection *Zombies Versus Unicorns* (2010) affirm the zombie's position as an agent of the end in young adult fiction. Ryan's trilogy imagines a world generations after the apocalypse, the Return.

19. Ibid., 113.
20. Ibid., 159.
21. Ibid., 339.
22. Ryan, *The Dark and Hollow Places*, 34.

Zombies, or "Unconsecrated" or "mudo" or "plague rats," destroyed the United States, and Ryan focuses upon three heroines Mary (*The Forest of Hands and Teeth*), Gabry (*The Dead-Tossed Waves*), and Annah (*The Dark and Hollow Places*) as they struggle to live in the ruins of a world. Mary lives in the Forest of Hands and Teeth, a closed community surrounded by fences and Unconsecrated. Their moaning and clawing at the gates creates an existence of noise, and Mary longs for quiet space beyond the undead. In the trilogy, the young heroines strive to find something more than survival. Mary seeks to find life beyond the fences at the fabled ocean of her dead mother's stories. Headstrong and inquisitive, Mary constantly bucks against the religious and political authority of the Sisterhood, a convent of nuns. Life in this post-apocalyptic world echoes medieval fiefdom combined with modern imaginings of romance, agency, and existential angst. There is a certain bleakness to Ryan's world; Mary's choice are limited, and happiness is elusive, fleeting, and full of consequences. The zombies hunger for humans, but the real threat in the forest is the nun's authoritarian rule and their unwillingness to give villagers information about the time before. This leads to the ruin of the village when a fast Unconsecrated breeches the fences and allows her slower brethren entrance. What Mary uncovers outside of the fences pushes forward the action of the sequels, in which Mary's "daughter" Gabry and her lost twin sister, Annah, belong to other spaces of the living, a seaside village and the City respectively, in the world of the dead.

While *The Dead Tossed Waves*, the second book, is interesting in its own right, the action of *The Dark and Hollow Places* finishes out the trilogy with another zombified end. A horde of millions of zombies overwhelm the barriers of the City, and Annah escapes along with Gabry, Elias (Gabry's boyfriend), and Catcher (Gabry's friend and an Immune) to a Recruiter (militia) protected island. While both Mary and Gabry's stories focus on desolation and struggling to survive, Annah's story is the most tortured because of her continual introspection and interrogation of whether survival is enough. This narrator prompts the reader again and again with the question: is survival really worth the pain and torment? Why survive when the world is going to end (again)? Anna's tale showcases the desperation and ruthlessness of survival, and she gives up at several pivotal moments only to be convinced that maybe survival is better than being undead. Yet, she still wonders if the Unconsecrated are better off because they lack the

capacity to feel. Ryan's trilogy argues that the capacity to feel is what makes us human. The fact that we can feel pain separates us from the numb, moaning Unconsecrated. Unlike Mary and Gabry, Annah is sure that this end is the inevitable one, the last stand for humans. In the final moments of the novel, when the horde and the Recruiters pursue Annah, she simply gives up to exhaustion, desperation, and weariness. She regains her strength to fight because of her love for Catcher. Ryan's trilogy ends with Annah and Catcher reuniting as they seek a home in the only remaining human space, the seaside village. They are among the last living humans. The dead have claimed the world. While her story ends with Catcher and Annah's embrace, the lingering question of the village's survival remains unanswered.

"Nut up or shut up."[23]

On December 22, 2012, zombies will bring about the end, at least according to the Facebook event "Zombie Apocalypse." 717,000 people are attending, 118,000 are maybe attending, and 456,000 have politely declined their invitation to a gun-toting, gore-filled end.[24] The event site proclaims:

> The time is finally set. The day of the dead is coming, so make sure you have your Zombie Survival Plan ready. Many people are concerned about December 21, 2012, the alleged end of the world. This is just a ploy to hide the real day of reckoning, December 22, 2012, THE ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE! Grab your sawed-off shotgun, baseball bat and your running shoes and be prepared to kill or be killed! Oh, and by the way, you've got some red on you.[25]

The wall for the event is filled with helpful hints for zombie killing, comparison/contrast of preferred weaponry, general excitement over the possibility zombies, and a keen desire to do harm to zombies. Unsurprisingly, an occasional poster laments the loss of energy and time on the far-fetched end via zombies, especially considering global unrest, hunger, terror, and war. Attendees fire back that the zombie apocalypse is fun and harmless.

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23. *Zombieland.*

24. Some of these comments originally appeared at the Religion in American History blog. Kelly J. Baker, January 21, 2011, "Zombies, Millennialism, and Consumption," *Religion in American History*, http://usreligion.blogspot.com/2011/01/zombies-millennialism-and-consumption.html.

25. Brian Chappell,"The Zombie Apocalypse," *Facebook*, Accessed April 26, 2011, http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=110187222330959.

It is just "fun" to imagine devastation, destruction, and ruin of our world, which doesn't negate their interest in global or domestic problems. When compared to the bleakness of zombie apocalypse portrayal in film, television, and fiction, the palpable excitement on Facebook is disconcerting. Why does such an event exist anyway? Why should we imagine how to destroy zombies in more novel and grotesque ways? Why is the end at the hands of undead laughable, entertaining, or even joyous? The consumption of the zombie apocalypse, I think, doesn't have to resonate with the author or director's vision, but it is interesting that Romero's original use of zombies as radical social commentary is obscured by the entertainment value of zombies as monsters. Zombies are scary but entertaining.

When comparing the Facebook event to the cultural works reviewed here, it becomes evident that zombie eschatology reflects pressing concerns about the nature of humanity, the callousness and detachmet of our current moment, and the use of violent fantasy to interpret an equally violent but seemingly safe reality. From Romero to Ryan, the question of survival and what makes us human becomes paramount. Zombies are a relentless, unstoppable threat in these works, but the zombies are not our sole enemies. The zombies are perilous, but so are we. Humans are just as likely to destroy, consume, or main our fellow human beings as the shuffling monster. In the *Living Dead* volumes, contributors emphasize the problem of remaining humane/human while confronting the reanimated dead. These stories showcase the central concern of zombie eschatology: what truly separates us from zombies. Sometimes, the boundaries blur uncomfortably. *World War Z* picks up the same theme and suggests that what is at stake in the catastrophic end is a shared sense of humanity. What the *Zombie Survival Guide* and *World War Z* make clear is that humans need more than subsistence to live and that sometimes personal survival comes at the forfeit of another's life. If we value self-preservation over the preservation of our fellow humans, then we are no better than the undead. For Ryan even, Annah and Catcher's long-term survival in the face of the onslaught is not clear. Yet their choice to love one another makes them human. This ability to feel makes us different from the zombies, but the fragility of humanity is Ryan's parting shot. Her work brings to the fore a long-standing assumption of zombie eschatology that they must kill us and we must kill them. Perhaps, this showcases the destruction of the monster to create what is human. By saying what the zombies are, we hope that it is what we are not.

Zombies work as bearers of the end because they have no agency, no humanity, and no final end in sight. They are relentless, hungry, and always present. They are near and present death, which is messy, oozing and falling apart rather than sanitized and contained. They press forward without soul, mind, and often without appendages. They do not stop. Zombies become a relentless force of the apocalypse that time and again end humanity. This end of humanity by the familiar undead and the triumph of survival at any cost finds purchase in fiction, film, and television. Isn't the important point of the apocalyptic story the triumph of hope at the end (like *I am Legend* or *Shaun of the Dead*)? Aren't these stories of human adaptability and survival in the face of the worst calamities? Doesn't the zombie apocalypse make us feel good about the human ability to survive? I am not so sure. Zombie eschatology problematizes human behavior and the quest to subsist at the cost of other people. Survival equals life but also trauma and loss. The end includes the loss of what makes us human. The boundary between human and zombie becomes muddier and muddier, as humans becomes as unfeeling and callous as the ever hungry, never satiated monster.

These monsters *du jour* of the end allow us commentary on empire, globalization, war, and terror. Zombies become the agents of humanity's fictionalized and supposedly destined end because they showcase how fragile humans actually are, with or without crisis, the brokenness of survivors, and the popular violent fantasies of revenge and survival. Zombie eschatology assures readers/viewers that humans will surely cause the end of the world and zombies just aid this inevitable destruction along. Much like other apocalyptic scenarios, the end by zombies is commentary on the destructive nature of humanity and the likelihood of human-wrought cataclysm. However, what zombie eschatology might truly teach us is the familiarity with destroyed human bodies. Zombies resemble the corpses that litter our actual world. These corpses do not resurrect or walk, but we bear them with us. While we analyze which weapon would be more fun, gun or baseball bat, to harm a zombie, we become more comfortable with the destruction of ordinary folks. As Max Brooks reminds us, there is only one way to kill a zombie, but with humans the possibilities are endless.

Phenomenology as Eschatological Materialism

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The 'theological' turn in phenomenology has proven somewhat controversial, both within phenomenology[1] and for theology.[2] Given that phenomenology is allegedly concerned with the 'things themselves,' and that theology is concerned with speaking about God, how can phenomenology speak about theological matters without making God a 'thing,' the object of an experience, thereby missing, perhaps, what is essential about God? On this thinking, 'theological' phenomenology either renders God an object able to be studied phenomenologically, in which case it is unorthodoxly theological; or, it leaves God, the 'object' of its phenomenological investigation, non-objectified, thereby rendering the movement insufficiently phenomenological.

In this paper, I will try to circumvent the second claim and, by so doing, hope to contribute something to the first claim as well. That is, by showing how 'theological' phenomenology is in fact rigorously phenomenological, I hope to prove not only its phenomenological weight, but also to show where it might make contributions to theological discourse. To do this, I will examine a major thread of 'theological' phenomenology: the turn to eschatology.[3] While eschatology has become a major talking point in 'theological' phenomenology—from Kearney's micro-eschatology to Lacoste's *parousia*, Marion's Eucharistic eschatology and even, perhaps,

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1. The most famous example of this controversy in phenomenology is perhaps Dominique Janicaud's "The Theological Turn of French Phenomenology," trans. Bernard G. Prusak, in Janicaud, et. al., *Phenomenology and the "Theological Turn"* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 16–103.

2. As evidenced by, e.g., Radical Orthodoxy's sometimes difficult reception of phenomenological figures; cf., e.g., John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford, UK and Cambridge, USA: Blackwell, 1990).

3. Cf. DeRoo and Manoussakis, (eds.), *Phenomenology and Eschatology: Not yet in the Now* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009) for a series of examinations of this theme.

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Caputo's Messianic—its roots lay, not in theological accounts of the *eschaton*, but in the phenomenological exploration of time. To begin, then, we must root eschatology firmly in phenomenology's understanding of time. In doing so, we will come to see that not only is eschatology an essential aspect of phenomenological time, but that it thereby proves to be essential to properly understanding time-consciousness, and therefore intentionality, that major breakthrough of phenomenology (Section I). Given the necessity of eschatology to intentionality, and hence to phenomenology itself, one cannot argue that eschatology is added to phenomenology from outside, but rather one can see that it is essentially phenomenological. As essentially phenomenological, however, it necessarily is at odds with a certain materialism that seems to be gaining credence, not only in the natural sciences, but in the general culture at large. By infusing the material with the immaterial (and vice versa), phenomenological intentionality not only goes beyond the Cartesian dualism that still characterizes our common sense understanding of materialism, but it also introduces the idea of an eschatological materialism that accords nicely with theological accounts of created reality and recent investigations of the possibility of religious materialism (Section II). Hence phenomenology reveals itself to be an essentially eschatological materialism in a way that is enlightening to both philosophy and theology.

I. Phenomenology, Eschatology, Intentionality

For phenomenology, time is the essence of subjectivity: while all else depends in part on stimulus from elsewhere, Husserl will argue, time alone is constituted purely within the subject. For Husserl, this manifests itself in the 'empty'[4] temporal formality of retention-impression-protention. This complex phenomena is entirely formal: what is retained in a retention is the previous protention, which is then fulfilled (even as it may be simultaneously disappointed) by the conjunction of an impression and the simultaneous retention of that previous protention. This conjunction, in turn, contains its

4. Edmund Husserl, *Analysen zur passiven Synthesis. Aus Vorlesungs- und Forschungsmanuskripten 1918–1926*. Ed. M. Fleischer (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), 128. Translated by Anthony J. Steinbock as *Analyses concerning Active and Passive Synthesis: Lectures on Transcendental Logic*. (Dordrecht/Boston/ London: Kluwer Academic, 2001).

own protention which must then be retained in the next instant as fulfillment via an impression, and so on, to a certain infinity.[5]

But of course the temporality of our experience is not empty. Hence, the impression provides the content (from the world) that is then retained and which can be protended (or expected). However, this content must always come to us within the structure (or strictures) of our formal temporality of expectations, retentions and fulfillments. This is to say that our experience must make sense to us by appealing, somehow, to two sets of horizons: those of formal time-consciousness, and those of experiential expectation. In this latter sense, it is only because what confronts us now reminds us of previous similar situations that we are able to confront the present in a way that makes sense, rather than as a raw jumble of senseless data: I see the thing before me as a chair because previous experience habituates me to encounter these kinds of objects as certain kinds of things (i.e., chairs) that can be expected to have certain kinds of properties (e.g., three-dimensional extension, ability to hold the weight of an average adult, etc.).

On this horizonal model, we can say that our temporality proceeds directly from the past and present toward the future. The future here marks that time which will at one point be the 'now' of experience, but is not yet. That is, the future is some moment that has not yet come, but will come in a sequential relationship to the present. This can be expressed mathematically on the model of t +1, t + 2, … t +n.

But this is not the only sense of the future at work in phenomenological conceptions of temporality. In addition to this idea of time as operating within horizons, Levinas develops the notion of time as eschatological. This invocation of eschatology emerges in Levinas' attempt to take seriously the Husserlian concepts of intentionality, impression, and sensation.[6] In its most basic form, eschatological time in phenomenology refers to the necessity that the 'closed' system of internal time-constitution is acted upon by that which comes from outside itself. Where Husserl limited this external influence only to the constitution of the world and of judgments—thereby

5. Husserl discusses the nature of this infinity in *Die Bernauer Manuskripte über das Zeitbewusstsein (1917/1918)*. Ed. R. Bernet and D. Lohmar (Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic, 2001), 277–278.

6. Cf. the essays in Levinas, *Discovering Existence With Husserl*, trans. Richard A. Cohen and Michael B. Smith (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1998).

leaving inner time-constitution, the most basic level of the subject, intact—Levinas sets out to show that even in its most basic self-constitution, the subject is acted upon by alterity, by that which is wholly different than itself. According to Levinas, the subject discovers that its relation to its own internal time is not that of free constitution, but is rather that of responsibility and alterity: I discover, in the 'flow' of my very basic lived experience, that my subjectivity is not my own, but is rather a response to a world that is always already endowed with sense by a (human) Other. My very subjectivity—that is, my ability to make sense of the world as my experience of the world—is not a self-given power, but is rather an ability I have that results from a pre-primordial experience of relation to an Other.[7]

The eschatological conception of time in phenomenology then entails, not a focus on a future time that remains yet to come (the 'end times' of the *eschaton,* for example), but rather elaborates the fact that the very presentness of the present time is itself always already infused with a certain relation to otherness that makes a purely-present present impossible.[8] Eschatological time, in phenomenology, reminds us that the future is not only something we are moving toward, but is something that constantly interrupts the present right now. The future is not only that time which has not yet come, but is also the aspect of the not-yet in the now[9] that helps shape and constitute the now.

This two-fold sense of the future allows temporality to constitute the most basic element of subjectivity. On the one hand, the fact that I can only make sense of things as they appear within my horizons of expectation reveals the subject's role in constituting the world. On the other hand, those horizons of expectation are themselves constituted by the subject's relation to other people, and these relations, in turn, constitute the very subjectivity of the subject itself (most notably, in the constitution of inner

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7. To use an empirical example, the child's ability to make sense of the world arises only because it gains linguistic and semantic categories from its previous relations with other people. We can make sense of the world only after we have learned to make sense from others.

8. This is the core of Derrida's discussion of *differance* in *Speech and Phenomena* and elsewhere.

9. Edmund Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins (1893–1917)*. Ed. R. Boehm (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), 77, 373. Translated by John Barnett Brough as *On the phenomenology of the consciousness of internal time*. Dordrecht, Boston, and London: Kluwer Academic, 1991.

time-consciousness). Because temporality, as discussed by Husserl and developed by Levinas, is a matter of both operating within horizons as well as having those horizons already-been-shattered by the very thing that makes them possible (i.e., the relation with alterity that enables the subject to make sense of the world), temporality—with its futural focus—is able to achieve the double-intentionality necessary for the phenomenological concept of intentionality. Intentionality is the name given to the idea that consciousness is always consciousness of… , and therefore that the knowing subject and the known world are always already in contact. This can be the case only if one act can simultaneously constitute the subject and the world, thereby entailing that their connection precedes their distinction. As we have seen, this act is achieved in the two-fold account of temporality, and therefore it is only because phenomenological time is both horizonal *and eschatological* that intentionality can emerge from phenomenology. Eschatological time is essential to the functioning and self-understanding of phenomenology.[10]

II. Intentionality and Materialism

So far, we have established that eschatology is an essential part of phenomenology. From this, we can conclude that the recent 'turn' to eschatology in phenomenology is not necessarily the result of some 'swerve' away from rigorous phenomenology, but could, instead, be merely the making-explicit of phenomenology's continued attempts at self-understanding. That is, the eschatological focus of 'theological' phenomenology remains orthodoxly and rigorously phenomenological—even as it suggests that phenomenology need not always be an objectifying process.

How, then, can 'theological' phenomenology provide a point of contact with general theological discourse? One answer, I think, lies in phenomenology's implicit rejection of reductive materialism in favour of an eschatological materialism that fails to maintain the sharp distinction between immaterial mind and material bodies. By claiming that both the subject and the world are constituted in intentionality, phenomenology

10. I develop this in much more detail than is necessary here in *Futurity in Phenomenology: Promise and Method in Husserl, Levinas and Derrida* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012).

rejects the claim that the (physical) world constitutes the subject, a claim that is essential to the reductive materialist project.[11] It does not, however, reject materialism outright, in favour of a speculative idealism, for example. Rather, phenomenology embraces the material precisely by viewing it in essential relationship with the immaterial: there is no inert matter, divorced from sense, except in abstraction. All matter, in experience and hence in (lived) reality, is sense-imbued matter, that is, matter always already infused with the immaterial; and all immaterial processes bear necessary connections to the material. This reflexivity is what is meant when we say that the subject and the world are both constituted—made sense of—in the one act of intentionality.

This is not to say that there is no such thing as physical existence, nor that such existence cannot be understood by way of chemical composition, atomic structure, etc. It merely says that such existence is but one aspect or avenue of sense that we can find in the world (or, perhaps better, one way in which we can make sense of the world), but in no way a privileged or superior mode of sense. Quite to the contrary, understanding the world in strictly (reductively) materialist terms is very much a secondary and abstracted way of seeing the world: it assumes something like the mathematical idealization first proposed by Galileo in which the entire world comes to be judged, not as it initially appears, but as it can be abstracted and 'purified' via scientific and mathematical models.[12] While useful, perhaps, for science (and this is itself debatable), such a 'scientific' or 'mathematical' model of the world is nonetheless a model, that is, an application or attribution of immaterial sense in order to constitute the 'material' world: the objects of science are, in this regard, ideal objects and not material objects at all. Like the ideal triangle in geometry, the 'thing itself' (or the 'way things are') is a scientifically useful model that is qualitatively distinct from the actual things in the world (and, therefore, from the physical things in the laboratory also). And, as in geometry, we must explicitly understand the relationship between ideal and

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11. I have in mind here evolutionary reductionism, especially as it manifests itself in the work of someone like Richard Dawkins (cf., for example, Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976]).

12. Cf. Edmund Husserl, *Der Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentale Phänomenologie. Eine Einleitung in die Phänomenologische Philosophe.* Ed. W. Biemel (The Hague: Matinus Nijhoff, 1954), §§ 8–9. Translated by David Carr as *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomology*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970.

real objects if the developments occasioned by the study of the ideal objects are to have any meaning whatsoever in the world at large.

Phenomenology, in contrast, strives to ensure that we remember not only the difference but also the connection between ideal and real objects. This is to say that phenomenology—with its notion of intentionality that itself is premised, in part, on an eschatological view of time—maintains that the notion of 'pure' matter is an ideal and abstract notion, and that all real matter is in fact imbued with nonmaterial sense, just as all nonmaterial sense has a material substrate.

But how does such a view help contribute to theology? I would suggest that the picture of materialism that phenomenology provides appreciates and deepens theological understandings of the world as created reality. By viewing material as created, theology claims that the material world always exhibits the divine wisdom or divine plan of its Creator.[13] This is to say that the 'sense' of the material world is not exhausted by its objective structure, but rather that objective structure itself gains its sense only within a larger model of the world and of reality. This, in turn, opens up a richer, more diverse understanding of created reality itself, in which the objectivism of reductive materialism is but one aspect or 'mode' of the created order.[14] While this mode can be understood in distinction from other modes, this is always in abstraction from its more natural, integrated nature. That is, the differing modes of creation are best understood integrally, rather than disjunctively, and this because their status as created entails a deeper sense than mere material 'stuff.'

This (phenomenologically) deepened account of created reality is beneficial to theology in multiple ways. For one, this understanding of the world will obviously be at odds with the materialism of the 'New Atheism' of Dawkins and Hitchens. But this critique can now be understood from a scientific and not merely a theological perspective. This distinction is

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13. Cf. Al Wolters, *Creation Regained* second edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), especially chapter 2, for more on the relationship between creation and divine wisdom.

14. For more on this idea of a 'modal ontology,' cf. Herman Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought* trans. David H. Freeman and H. DeJongste (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij H. J. Paris, and Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1955); cf. especially volume 2, *The General Theory of the Modal Spheres*. The notion of a modal ontology also emerges in the phenomology of Nicolai Hartmann; cf. *Ontologie*, (4 Volumes) (Berlin-Leipzig: de Gruyter, 1935–1950).

crucial here to the extent that the New Atheists tend to oppose religion to science as one opposes childish superstition to adult critical thinking.[15] By showing that science (via phenomenology) does not support a reductive materialism, but instead supports the more complex picture of an integrated reality suggested by creational[16] accounts of the world, phenomenology has an apologetic value for theology.

Beyond this apologetic value, however, the deepened account of created reality suggested by phenomenology also opens the door to a positive theological recovery of materialism. Of course, this will no longer be the reductive materialism of Dawkins et. al., but rather a spiritual, religious, or theological materialism, where "spiritual" no longer indicates a second kind of thing in contrast to the material (as it did for Descartes), but rather indicates the complex dynamic of material and immaterial within the material itself that is presented in phenomenology and in accounts of creation. Indeed, some theologians will go so far as to say that reductive materialism "is simply not as materialist as theological materialism."[17] The precise nature of this theological materialism varies widely, from the neo-Platonic "participatory" materialism of John Milbank[18] to the "kenotic" materialism of Slavoj Žižek[19] and Gianni Vattimo,[20] from the "mode of

15. Cf., for example, Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt), 350.

16. Which must be kept distinct from Creationist accounts, which view the first chapter of Genesis as a scientific account of the origin of the world. By focusing on the modal complexity of created reality, phenomenology helps point out the need to distinguish between different senses (different intending acts, different modes of givenness, etc.) of the world. In this regard, it suggests that Genesis might provide a theological account of the origin of the world that can be true without trying to be a material account of the origin of the world; in this regard, we can read Genesis 1 as theology without having to read it as pseudo-biology.

17. This is Milbank's main claim in his debate with Žižek, staged in Milbank and Žižek, *The Monstrosity of Christ: Paradox or Dialectic?* ed. Creston Davis (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009).

18. Cf. John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, and Graham Ward, *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology* (London: Routledge, 1999).

19. Cf. Milbank and Žižek, *The Monstrosity of Christ.*

20. Cf. Vattimo, *After Christianity*, trans. Luca d'Isanto (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

materialization" of Caputo[21] to James K.A. Smith's "logic of incarnation,"[22] but all of these materialisms are at least partially rooted in both the phenomenological tradition and in Christology and Trinitarian thought (even if these things are re-imagined in non-traditional ways by some). Indeed, this post-phenomenological resurgence of theology in relation to materialism has manifested itself even in non-religious European thinkers like Badiou and Agamben, whose recent dalliances with St. Paul have made waves in both philosophical and theological circles.[23]

The critique and re-imagination of materialism, while particularly relevant in the contemporary theological scene, is not the only way in which phenomenology's 'theological' turn has proven beneficial for theology, however. The distinct nature of eschatology as it functions within phenomenology takes a position in favour of certain theological accounts of eschatology over others. By offering a two-fold account of temporality, phenomenology provides a criticism of the temporality of t +n (in which time moves always (and solely) from the past, through the present, to the future) that undergirds, not just the reductive materialist position but also dispensationalist and futurist accounts of the *eschaton*, which view it as a historical fact that will one day be present (the way the present is here right now), though that day has not yet come.[24] By offering an alternative, kairological conception of time, phenomenology offers a theory of

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21. Cf. John D. Caputo, "The Return of Anti-Religion: From Radical Atheism to Radical Theology," *Journal of Cultural and Religious Theory* [Spring 2011], esp. § 15.

22. Cf. Smith, "The Logic of Incarnation: Toward a Catholic Postmodernism," in DeRoo and Lightbody (eds.), *The Logic of Incarnation: James K.A. Smith's Critique of Postmodern Religion* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2009), 3–37.

23. Cf. Badiou, *St Paul: The Foundation of Universalism* trans. Ray Brassier (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), and Agamben, *The Time that Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans* trans. Patricia Dailey (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005). For its reception in philosophical and theological circles, cf. Caputo and Alcoff (eds.), *St. Paul among the Philosophers* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009) and Milbank, Žižek and Davis, *Paul's New Moment: Continental Philosophy and the Future of Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2010).

24. This understanding of the eschaton is often based on a "scientific" rather than theological reading of the book of *Revelation*, and has its most popular (if not necessarily its most scholarly rigorous) manifestation in the *Left Behind* series of novels written by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins (published by Tyndale House, and now numbering 16 books with over 63 million copies in print). Futurism, as a way of interpreting the book of *Revelation*, was inaugurated

temporality that can help make sense of the eschatologies of figures like Moltmann, Rahner, and Zizioulas who sought to make eschatology a key aspect of theological thought in the 20th century.

On the horizonal temporality of t + n that phenomenology critiques, the future provides nothing to the present, save, perhaps, the possibility of hope or despair in regard to particular conditions. The past also has no value for the present, except to show us how we arrived at one historical position rather than another.[25] This lack of historicality shows itself most clearly in the view that truth can be judged atemporally, and that the historical development of our ideas (e.g., in science) is less important than the (eternal) validity of those ideas in the present. This theory of temporality undergirds fundamentalism in its various guises, be they Christian, Islamic or Scientistic.[26] By critiquing this temporality, phenomenology not only supports certain theological eschatologies over others but also suggests new standards for truth in theological circles. These standards can be broadly deemed eschatological, focusing on the structures of reality only insofar as those structures are understood as dynamic. This is not merely a process theology, but rather suggests a thoroughly complex, multiform yet integrated picture of reality. This is to say, this theory of truth does not presume that truth must build itself up (or unveil itself) slowly over time—with the assumption still remaining, it seems, that the truth, so built up or unveiled must be considered eternally valid (even if it must be temporally indexed). Rather, this suggests that truth is, perhaps, not the kind of thing (e.g., a proposition) that can be judged a-temporally, but instead requires a thorough reimagining of what it means for something to be true.[27] Just as the notion of eschatology at work in phenomenology enables us to think of eternity as the alterity inherent in presence (in addition to understanding

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by Francisco Ribera with the publication in 1590 of his commentary on *Revelation*, entitled *In Sacrum Beati Ioannis Apostoli, & Evangelistiae Apocalypsin Commentarij*.

25. This view underlies some of the more fundamentalist Protestant denominations' view of the sufficiency of Scripture without any need for tradition as an instrument of interpretation.

26. Gianni Vattimo argues against such a view of biblical interpretation—and in truth in general—in favour of a more tradition-friendly account in *After Christianity*.

27. For one example of such a re-imagination of truth, cf. Lambert Zuidervaart, *Artistic Truth: Aesthetics, Discourse and Imaginative Disclosure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

it as everlastingness), is also enables us to reconceive of truth along non-epistemic lines.[28]

Conclusion

The eschatological dimension of phenomenology deepens our understanding of key phenomenological themes such as intentionality and time-consciousness, and so reveals a non-objectifying manner of disclosure, of being-constituted, that is necessarily at work in the phenomenological domain. In doing so, not only does it show that 'theological' phenomenology remains rigorously phenomenological, but it also opens the possibility of a non-objectifying, but still phenomenological, exploration of God that has significant insights for theology. This has enabled 'theological' phenomenology to not only engage with traditional theological tropes (e.g., eschatology, creation, biblical interpretation), but also has helped theology re-examine its accounts of materialism and truth in ways that suggest new boundaries of theological discourse moving forward. In doing so, 'theological' phenomenology, and its eschatological materialism, has proven beneficial for both phenomenology and theology.

28. A project undertaken in theology by John D. Caputo in *The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).

The "Great Earthquake" Judgment in the Apocalypse: Is There an Urzeit for this Endzeit?

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1. Introduction

The interpretive principle that *Endzeit* reflects *Urzeit* is well attested within biblical as well as in apocalyptic literature.[1] A clear example of this principle is found in the book of Revelation. The depiction of the *Endzeit*, that is, the re-creation of a new heaven, a new earth and a New Jerusalem (Rev 21:1–22:5) finds its *Urzeit* within original creation—the paradisiacal Garden of Eden (Gen 3:23).[2] Imagery that occurs both in the Garden of Eden and in the New Jerusalem includes God dwelling face to face with human beings (Gen 3:8, 9 and Rev 21:3, 4), gold of the highest quality (Gen 2:11, 12 and Rev 21:18), a flowing river (Gen 3:10 and Rev 22:1 cf. Ezek 47:1–12), the Tree of Life (Gen 3:9, 22 and Rev 22:2 cf. Ezek 47:11, 12), and the removal of the "curse" (Gen 3:17 and Rev 22:3).

The New Jerusalem of the *eschaton*, however, does not just contain transformational elements (e.g., the Garden), but is itself transformed into what one might call an eschatological "un-city."[3] Even further to this point,

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1. Hermann Gunkel pioneered this insight in his *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1895). Richard Bauckham affirms this principle in apocalyptic literature: "the apocalyptists' understanding of salvation-history… [is such that] God's redemptive acts in the future are portrayed on the model of his past acts" ("The Eschatological Earthquake in the Apocalypse of John," *NovT* 19 [1977]: 224–233, esp. 225; idem, *The Climax of Prophecy* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993], 201).

2. An association of the heavenly city with imagery reminiscent of the Garden of Eden or Paradise was already common stock imagery in Jewish writings of John's day (cf. *2 Bar.* 4:1–7 with the use of parallelism in *T. Dan.* 5:12).

3. There are four anomalous architectural features which point towards the "un-citylike" nature of Revelation's eschatological city: (1) it appears to contain only a single street (21:21); (2) explicit mention is made of the fact that John did not see a temple in the city (21:22);

this "un-city" appears even to be characterized as a "non-city" by virtue of its implicit identification as "the bride, the wife of the Lamb" (21:2, 9, 10). In a brilliant twist of plot, one could say that the "people of God" have now become the "place of God."[4] This transformation permanently reverses the explusion of humanity from the original Garden. In their guise as the New Jerusalem, the eschatological "people of God" are forever in the presence of God.[5]

This re-creative finale to the book of Revelation, however, is achieved only through a very cataclysmic process, one that is initiated by "the wrath of the Lamb" (6:12–17; sixth Seal). This *Endzeit* appears to be concisely depicted in the sixth Seal (6:12–17) and then progressively expanded upon in the first six Trumpets (8:2–9:21; cf. also 11:1–14) and the seven Bowls (15:5–16:21).[6] The Lamb is thus presented not just as the Savior of repentant

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(3) it is built in the shape of a gargantuan cube (12,000 stadia high, wide, and long; 21:16); (4) Unlike the temple-city of the DNJ, but like Ezekiel's temple-city (chs. 40–48), there are no human residences described in John's vision of the New Jerusalem (see J. T. Milik with respect to 1Q32 in "Description de la Jerúsalem Nouvelle [?]," in *Qumran Cave 1* [DJD 1; ed. D Barthélemy and J.T. Milik; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), 134–5 + pl. XXXI]). See Michael Chyutin for a reconstruction of the seven manuscripts that are collectively referred to as the "Description of the New Jerusalem" (1Q32, 2Q24, 4Q554–555a, 5Q15 and 11Q18) (*The New Jerusalem Scroll from Qumran: A Comprehensive Reconstruction* [JSPSup 25; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

4. Robert H. Gundry claims that "John wanted his Christian readers… to see in the New Jerusalem, not their future dwelling place, but—what was even more heartening—their future selves and state" ("The New Jerusalem: People as Place, not Place for People," *NovT* 29 [1987]: 254–64, esp. 264).

5. Gundry suggests that the New Jerusalem becomes "God's dwelling place in the saints rather than their dwelling place on earth" ("The New Jerusalem," 256). This conception of God's people as fictive architecture finds precedent in sectarian literature of the *yachad*, the community at Qumran. In 1QS and CD the sect refers to themselves as "a holy house" (1QS 5.6; 8.5, 9; 9.6; 22.8; CD 3.19; 20.10, 13). A clear identification of the community with the Temple is found in 1QS 8.5–6 where the "council of the Community" is called "a holy house for Israel and the foundation of the holy of holies of Aaron" (קודש קודשים לאהרון). David E. Aune claims that their self-identification as a temple of God was "an intermediate situation in which they rejected the existing temple cult and lived in expectation of the rebuilding of the true and unpolluted eschatological temple" ("Qumran and the Book of Revelation," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years* [ed. P. Flint and J. C. VanderKam.; Leiden: Brill, 1999], 2.622–48, esp. 2.641).

6. G. K. Beale, in support of Bauckham, contends the "the scene depicts figuratively the inauguration of the last judgment, not trials preceding that judgment." (*The Book of Revelation*

humanity (5:9) but also as the Judge of the unrepentant (e.g., 6:12–17). If the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:8–3:25) is the *Urzeit* for the "paradise regained," which is described in the final chapters of the Apocalypse (21:9–22:21), might there not also be an overarching *Urzeit* for universal divine judgment in the *Endzeit*? If so, this *Urzeit* would have to account, at the very least, for a central symbol of cataclysmic judgment in the Apocalypse: the recurring earthly "great earthquake" (6:12; 11:13; 16:18, 19; 18:10, 16–21[?]).[7]

2. The "Great Earthquake" of the Apocalypse: A Central Symbol of Final Judgment?

The recurrence of the eschatological earthquake throughout Revelation not only suggests its centrality as a symbol of actualized final judgment, but also as a structural organizer around which the three judgment septets (i.e., the seven Seals, Trumpets and Bowls) can be arranged so as to account for their reiteratively progressive, rather than linearly progressive, content.

The eschatological earthquake in the Apocalypse is described from both heavenly (8:5; 11:19; 16:18) and earthly perspectives (6:12; 11:13; 16:18, 19; 18:10, 16–21[?]). Since final judgment is not in view in the first heavenly theophany (4:5), an "earthquake" is fittingly absent in its storm elements ("flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder"; ἀστραπαὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ βρονταί). The two subsequent heavenly theophanies, however, both of which introduce eschatological judgments (8:5, six Trumpets; 11:19, seventh Trumpet), add the unmodified noun σεισμός ("earthquake") to their stock formula. *Earthly* depictions of catastrophic destruction in the *eschaton* also highlight a σεισμός ("earthquake") but all

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[NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999], 396–97).

7. Two phrases appear to indicate that the "great earthquake" may also be implied in Rev 18:10: "in one hour" and "Woe, Woe." First, the destruction of the city called "Babylon the Great" (18:2, 21) within the space of "one hour" (18:2, 10) suggests an earthquake. Second, if the doubled "Woe" (18:10, 16) is not just mentioned for literary effect but also as a technical reference to the "second Woe"/sixth Trumpet (11:14/9:12, 13), it would then literarily connect the fall of Babylon (ch. 18) with the fall of the "great city" (11:8) during the "second Woe" (11:14), the city which is also "prophetically called Sodom and Egypt" (11:8). This being the case, then the fall of Babylon (18:2–24) is presented not just as a reiteration of the urban destruction found in the "second Woe" (11:1–14) but also as being concurrent with elements of the sixth Trumpet judgment (8:13–9:21), one example being the release of the 200 million member army from east of the Euphrates (9:13–19).

three times with the addition of an adjectival modifier—μέγας ("great") (6:12, sixth Seal; 11:1–14, sixth Trumpet/second Woe; 16:18, seventh Bowl). By the seventh and final Bowl, (16:17–21) the heavenly theophany also calls the earthquake "great" (μέγας; 16:18). This is appropriate for the heavenly theophany only at this final stage since in 16:18 and 19, for the first time, the earthly and heavenly descriptions of the eschatological earthquake converge into one coordinated scene.

The descriptions of actualized judgment in the final Bowl (16:17–21), though, seem to point the reader back to the sixth Seal (6:12–17) in that similar events, including the "great earthquake," appear to be described in both judgment scenes.[8] This coordinated imagery forms one of the bases upon which Bauckham claims that the "great earthquake" in the sixth Seal (6:12–17) is "the same final earthquake to which 8:5; 11:13, 19; 16:18 also refer."[9]

The recurrent nature of the eschatological earthquake in the Apocalypse leads Bauckham to claim that it plays "a distinctive role in the structure of the book."[10] What he does not do, though, is to explain the precise role that multiple occurrences of the singular "great earthquake" play in the structural organization of the Apocalypse's entire visionary episode (1:9–22:20). In a previous article, I establish a hermeneutical foundation for doing just

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8. Similar imagery that occurs both in the seventh Bowl (16:17–21) and in the sixth Seal (6:12–17) includes the mountains and islands being removed and the "great earthquake." Robert H. Mounce states that this imagery "has no parallel in apocalyptic writing" (*The Book of Revelation* [Rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 151). Without any other literary precedent that would otherwise come to mind, Revelation's audience may then have even more readily connected the seventh Bowl back to the sixth Seal.

9. Bauckham, "Eschatological Earthquake," 232.

10. Ibid., 224. Bauckham identifies two implicit references (4:5—thunder and lightning only; 20:11—the earth and sky flee) and five explicit references (6:12; 8:5; 11:13, 19; 16:18) to the eschatological earthquake in the Apocalypse. Bauckham's two implicit references (4:5; 20:11) are questionable though. G. K. Beale suggests that the absence of an earthquake in the Heavenly Throne Room theophany is very appropriate since "4:5 is not a description of the Last Judgment on earth, but only an expectation" (*The Book of Revelation*, 458). Bauckham's contention that Rev 20:11 ("the earth and the heaven fled") refers to the eschatological earthquake is found wanting too. It seems unlikely that 20:11 refers to the eschatological earthquake, since the events of 20:11 occur on the other side of the millennial divide; they are not only post-*parousia* but also post-millennial. If there is any implicit reference to the pre-millennial eschatological earthquake, it appears that 18:10 is a better candidate (see n. 7).

that. I explore the structural implications of using three Jewish apocalyptic literary devices for the purpose of organizing the Apocalypse's visionary content.[11] The resultant six-fold structure can be used to account for the recurring nature of the "great earthquake," and specifically to demonstrate that it is descriptively reiterated, with progression, in the earthly judgments of the sixth Seal (6:12–17), the sixth Trumpet/second Woe (11:1–13; 18:10, 16–21 [?]; cf. 9:12), and the seventh Bowl (16:17–21).

Aside from the centrality of the "great earthquake" in the individual judgment scenes of the sixth Seal, the sixth Trumpet and the seventh Bowl, it also appears to play an organizational role in the literary arrangement of the rest of the visionary elements that occur from 6:12 (the sixth Seal) to 16:21 (the seventh Bowl). The recurring "great earthquake" can be used as *the* central global end-event around which one can demonstrate repetition with progression throughout the three septet judgment scenes (6:12–16:21).[12] I call this reiterative organizational principle "telescopic

11. The three Jewish visionary literary devices are the "space/time referent," μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον ("After these things I saw"), and καὶ εἶδον ("And I saw"). See Korner, "'And I Saw… ' An Apocalyptic Literary Convention for Structural Identification in the Apocalypse," *NovT* 42/2 (2000): 160–183.

12. Six major blocks of text are demarcated in Rev 1:9–22:20 due to five placements of the clause μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον ("After these things I saw"), and its variations ("'And I Saw… '," 160–183, esp. 171–74). Of the six textual blocks within the visionary episode of Revelation (1:9–22:10), five include eschatological events (4:1–22:20). The centrality of the eschatological earthquake is reinforced, and its reiterative nature suggested, in the fact that it occurs within four of those five eschatological textual blocks/*vision blocks*. The eschatological earthquake is found in v*ision block* #2 (4:1–6:17, see the sixth Seal [6:12–17]), *vision block* #4 (7:9–15:4, see the second Woe/sixth Trumpet [11:13]), *vision block* #5 (15:5–17:18, see the seventh Bowl [16:18, 19]), and *vision block* #6 (18:1–22:20, see the implied second Woe [18:2, 10; "Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon… for in one hour your judgment has come"]). Others who affirm recapitulation or reiteration in Revelation, yet without adherence to objective textual demarcators, include W. Hendriksen, *More Than Conquerors* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1967); Adela Yarbro Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation* (HDR 9; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976); idem, *Crisis and Catharsis: the Power of the Apocalypse* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984); and J. Ramsey Michaels, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992). Michaels prefers "reiteration" in lieu of "recapitulation," due to "its rather different use by Irenaeus, in the sense of going over the same ground again with opposite results" (p. 54, n. 5).

reiteration."[13] I suggest that eschatological judgment only begins with the sixth Seal, the events of which are then expansively re-described, or as I call it, "telescopically reiterated," in the ensuing description of worldwide cataclysmic judgment found in the judgments of the seven Trumpets and seven Bowls.

If one accepts that the "great earthquake" is the central figure of cataclysmic, worldwide judgment in the Apocalypse, then this positions it as the central element that must be accounted for in any consideration of an overarching *Urzeit* for the reiterated judgments that begin with the sixth Seal.

3. The *Urzeit* of the Eschatological "Great Earthquake": Two Questions

There are numerous precedents for earthquake imagery in HB and Jewish Second Temple writings. Bauckham distinguishes four differing roles for the earthquake: (1) as a herald of God's coming (e.g., Mount Sinai; Exod 19:8; Ezek 38:19–23); (2) as a part of God's judgment of the wicked (*Sib. Or.* 3:675–693); (3) as simply one among many natural disasters which befall humanity as signs, or preliminary judgments, of the End (Mark 13:8; *2 Bar.* 27:7; *4 Ezra* 9:3); or (4) as the great earthquake whose purpose is to

13. "'And I Saw… '," 176–183. I use the phrase "telescopic reiteration" to describe how one can organize the visionary episode (1:9–22:20) within the Apocalypse to account for the fact that the cataclysmic events of the eschatological sixth Seal appear to be expansively re-described in the ensuing six Trumpets/seventh Trumpet/six Bowls/seventh Bowl. I agree with Thomas' concept of a telescopic narrative, but I disagree with him that the seventh Seal, the first "joint" in that telescopic narrative, occurs subsequent to the sixth Seal (*Revelation 1–7*, *Revelation 8–22* [Chicago: Moody, 1992/1995], esp. 1.43 and 2.534). Rather, I argue that the "empty" seventh Seal (8:1), which is heavenly, occurs concurrently with the sixth Seal (6:12–17), whose events are earthly. Thus, the seventh Seal, while being telescopically inclusive of the seven Trumpet and seven Bowl judgments, serves at the same time to expansively reiterate the very condensed descriptions of the sixth Seal events ("'And I Saw… '," 176–183). Thus, if the sixth Seal (6:12-17) is the only Seal out of the first six that is telescopically reiterated by the rest of Revelation's eschatological content (7:1–22:20), then this implies that, of the first six Seals, only the sixth is eschatological in nature. The first five Seals, then do not reflect eschatological events, but rather historical events which were known to John at the time when he wrote the Apocalypse (e.g., war, famine, disease).

destroy the old cosmos to make way for the new (*4 Ezra* 6:11–16; *1 Enoch* 83:3–5; cf. Heb 12:27).[14]

Bauckham focuses only on the earthquake of the Sinai theophany (Exod 19:8) as the model, or *Urzeit*, for the "great earthquake" of the Apocalypse. While possible, it is not the only, or, I would suggest, necessarily even the best, model available. First, unlike the Sinai earthquake which was only of a regional nature, and which simply announced the coming of the LORD, Revelation's earthquake is worldwide in scope and functions as an instrument of divine judgment, both elements of which are absent at Sinai. Second, in contrast to the non-eschatological Sinai earthquake, the "great earthquake" of the Apocalypse is wholly eschatological in nature. There is another candidate, however, for the *Urzeit* of the "great earthquake" that Bauckham does not address—the Noachic flood narrative (Genesis 6–9), with its implied earthquake (7:11).

It is my purpose in this essay to explore whether the Noachic flood could be considered as a biblical antecedent, or *Urzeit*, for the *Endzeit* of worldwide judgment that is brought on by the wrath of the Lamb, a wrath that is enacted, among other things, through the "great earthquake" of the sixth Seal (Rev 6:12–17). But how best does one proceed in light of the fact that the Apocalypse is rife with "echoes," parallels, and allusions, particularly to the Hebrew Bible?[15]

Beale offers a helpful paradigm by which to assess the level of intentionality with which an author(s) may be said to allude to an earlier base text. He proffers three categories: 'clear,' 'probable,' and 'possible.'[16] Since there is no explicit mention of the Noachic flood in Revelation, the "great earthquake" cannot be considered as a 'clear' allusion. There are

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14. Bauckham, "Eschatological Earthquake," 225.

15. For example, the 10 plagues of Egypt form the basis for descriptions of divine judgment in the seven Trumpets and Bowls. There are no explicit quotations of HB texts in the Apocalypse, however. The number of allusions cited vary from 1000 (C. van der Waal, *Openbaring van Jezus Christus. Inleiding en Vertaling.* [Groningen: de Vuurbaak, 1971], 174–241) to 195 (W. D. Dittmar, *Vetus Testamentum in Novo*. [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht], 263–79).

16. G. K. Beale explains his three allusional categories as follows: (1) Clear: the HB source is cited almost verbatim, "shares some common core meaning, and could not likely have come from anywhere else"; (2) Probable: an idea or wording, or "a structure of ideas," are "uniquely traceable" to an HB source; (3) Possible: "the language is only generally similar to the purported source, echoing either its wording or concepts" (*The Book of Revelation*, 78).

three descriptive elements in the "great earthquake," however, which I would suggest constitute key critieria by which to determine whether an allusion is 'probable' or 'possible.' In concord with Rev 6:12–17, these three elements are: (1) a context of worldwide divine judgment (e.g., earthly cataclysms); (2) an eschatological context ("the great day of their [i.e., God's and the Lamb's] wrath"), and (3) an absence of water and perhaps even the presence of fire in worldwide judgments (e.g., first Trumpet, 8:7; sixth Trumpet/second Woe, 9:18/11:5; post-millennial, 20:9).

Thus, the first question to ask is an exegetical one: Which biblical or Second Temple text contains not only an earthquake, and not only an earthquake that is an instrument of worldwide divine judgment, but specifically an earthquake *in the eschaton* that reflects worldwide divine judgment by fire?

The second question to ask is a socio-cultural one: How relevant would an allusion to a sizeable earthquake, especially to the implied earthquake of the Noachic flood, have been not only to the seven *ekklēsiai* ("assemblies/churches") of the Roman province of Asia, but even to the Greco-Roman society around them?

4. Question One: Literary Precedents For Revelation's "Great Earthquake"?

An allusion to the flood is not a deciding factor, of course, in ascertaining the *traditum* to which John's "great earthquake" may allude. The key criteria, rather, is whether there are other Hebrew, Jewish, or Christian literary texts that also include not just a worldwide earthquake, but one that is paired with divine judgment, and which judgment is both eschatological in nature and is effected by fire, not by water.

4.1 Possible Hebrew Bible Precedents

The chart below highlights which of the three key elements of Revelation's "great earthquake" are found in HB earthquake references. Additionally, I note which HB earthquake references include an allusion to the Noachic flood.

Four Thematic Variations	Hebrew Bible Earthquake References
Earthquake references with: 1) *Divine Judgment* **but** 2) No eschatological purview 3) No destruction by fire 4) No allusion to the Flood	*Habakkuk 3:6*—A prayer set within the Mt. Sinai motif asking God to again come in power and plague and pestilence. *Isaiah 5:25–30*—A shaking/roaring in the land of Israel due to God's judgment through foreign invaders.
Earthquake references with: 1) *Divine Judgment* **and** 2) Allusion to the *Flood* **but** 3) No eschatological purview 4) No destruction by fire	*Judges 5:4–5*—After the defeat and death of Sisera, Deborah celebrates in song and recounts how God's presence at Mt. Sinai was accompanied by an earthquake and watery deluge
Earthquake references with: 1) *Divine Judgment* **and** 2) *Eschatological* purview **but** 3) No destruction by fire 4) No allusion to the Flood	*Joel 2:10 and 3:16 [4:16]*—Set within the context of the "Day of the Lord," the earth is said to quake, the heavens to tremble, the sun and the moon to be darkened, and the stars to withdraw their shining. *Ezek 38:18–23*—God's day of wrath against Gog will result in a great shaking in the land of Israel. *Zech 14:4*—God is depicted as splitting the Mount of Olives in two when He stands upon it at His appearing in judgment. This "earthquake," however, is analogized to the one experienced during the days of Uzziah, not to the one during the Flood.
Earthquake references with: 1) *Divine Judgment* **and** 2) *Eschatological* purview **and** 3) Destruction by *fire* **and** 4) Allusion to the *Flood*	*Isaiah 24:18b–20; cf. 24:5*—An "earth-rending" quake is part of God's judgment upon הָאָרֶץ ("the Earth/Land") when He comes to reign on Mt. Zion. This earthshaking judgment is said to derive from the inhabitants of the earth having broken God's "eternal covenant" with Noah (cf. Gen 9:16).

The above chart demonstrates that eschatological elements of the sixth Seal judgment scene are found in Isaiah, Joel, and Ezekiel. However, only

Isaiah 24 includes all three key elements associated with Revelation's "great earthquake." Additionally, Isaiah 24 is the only HB passage to include explicit allusions to the Noachic flood.

4.2 Possible Jewish Apocalyptic Literary Precedents

Aside from HB texts, is there any Jewish Second Temple literature that might qualify as an allusional base text for Revelation's "great earthquake"? The chart below demonstrates that the juxtaposition of God's judgment with an earthquake is a standard apocalyptic motif. Of the five passages below, only *1 Enoch* 1:3–9 fulfills all three criteria required of a *traditum* for Revelation's "great earthquake." It is worth noting, though, that while *1 Enoch* 1:3–9 could be considered a literary precedent, unlike Isaiah 24, it does not presume any *Urzeit* in its depiction of *Endzeit*.

Earthquake References in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature	
Earthquake references with: 1) *Divine Judgment* and 2) *Eschatological* purview and 3) Destruction by *fire* **but** 4) No Allusion to the Flood	*1 Enoch* 1:3–9—The Lord's coming is attended with fire, mountains falling, the earth being rent and universal judgment.
Earthquake references with: 1) *Divine Judgment* and 2) *Eschatological* purview **but** 3) No destruction by fire 4) No Allusion to the Flood	*1 Enoch* 102:1, 2—The Lord's judgment results in the luminaries failing and the earth trembling. *2 Baruch* 27:8—The sixth part of the tribulation in the "end of days" involves earthquakes. *Testament of Moses* 10:3–5—God's wrath is attended with the ends of the earth being shaken, the sun and moon being darkened and the stars in disarray. *Apocalypse of Zephaniah* 12:1–8—The uprooting of trees in the time of God's wrath implies an earthquake.

If the author of Revelation was the apostle John, then his time in Judea might have apprised him of the Book of Watchers (*1 Enoch* 1–36). But irrespective of the identity of the "John" of Revelation, it is even less likely that his Asia Minor audience would have been familiar with *1 Enoch*

1–36. As such, alluding to *1 Enoch* 1 would have been less effective than referencing Isaiah 24, particularly if John and his Jewish-Christian audience knew the LXX version of Isaiah 24, which tends towards a theological *tendenz*. This *tendenz* expands upon the eschatological focus of the Hebrew text[17] and adds a remnant theme (LXX 24:14a) to the content preserved in 1QIsa[a] and the MT.[18] Given the Noachic context of final judgment in Isaiah 24, it is not inconceivable that its eschatological remnant (LXX 24:14a) may even allude to the faithful remnant who survived the original flood.[19]

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17. At least six eschatological motifs are much more predominant in the text of LXX Isaiah 24 than in the MT. These six motifs, in and of themselves, do not necessarily substantiate an eschatological agenda. However, when viewed together an intentional eschatological agenda for LXX Isaiah 24 seems inescapable. The six eschatological motifs are: (1) a universal scope and eschatological timeframe for divine judgment (LXX 24:1, 16); (2) transgression against Yahweh himself as the rationale for the universal scope of divine judgment (LXX 24:5, 16); (3) a more specifically future focus to the judgment of God (use of the future indicative tense); (4) a righteous remnant theme (LXX 24:6, 13b, 14a, 23); (5) the eschatological hope/joy of the righteous remnant (LXX 24:14b–16); and (6) the godly as participants with God in final eschatological judgment and glory (LXX 24:16, 21, 23).

18. The LXX makes the "remnant theme" more explicit than do 1QIsa[a] and the MT. In verse 6 the LXX, 1QIsa[a] , and the MT highlight that a curse consumes the earth because its inhabitants have sinned. As a result, judgment descends "and few people/men are left." This "remnant" does not resurface again in 1QIsa[a] or the MT. As such, one is left wondering if the few who are left in v. 6 are simply finished off once the earthquake unleashes its fury upon the whole earth. However, the LXX (vv. 13b and 14a) "resurrects" the righteous remnant from its uncertain state as described in v. 6. Beginning with v. 14, the eschatological joy of the godly over the divine judgment of the ungodly is described ("these shall cry aloud and they that are left on the land shall rejoice together in the glory of the Lord"). But this joy is not limited to those who are only outside the Land. The insertion of "the remnant" back into the text at LXX 24:14a ("and they that are left on the land") makes explicit, what was missing in 1QIsa[a]/MT 24:14–16: God's judgment of the Earth/Land (הָאָרֶץ; vv. 1–13) also involves his eschatological salvation of a remnant (LXX 24:14).

19. Does the tendentious reading in LXX Isa 24:14 hint at flood elements? LXX variations from the Hebrew text of v. 14 (1QIsa[a] and the MT) are highlighted in bold: "These **shall** cry aloud; [LXX adds: "**and they that are left on the land**"] **shall** rejoice together [LXX does not include "**from the west (lit. "sea**")]" in the glory of the LORD; [LXX adds: "**the water of the sea shall be troubled**"].

4.3 The New Testament and the "Great Earthquake" of the Sixth Seal

Aside from HB and Jewish Second Temple writings, could the author of Revelation also have found inspiration for his worldwide eschatological earthquake from early Christian sources? While a worldwide, eschatological earthquake is not mentioned in other NT writings, Noah and the flood are.[20] Within the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus' words link the suddenness of divine judgment in Noah's days with the suddenness of Christ's return in the *eschaton* (Matt 24:29). Both Hebrews (11:7) and 1 Peter (3:20–21) focus on the Noachic flood as a positive and negative example of salvation accomplished. Like Revelation, 1 Peter addresses Christ-followers in the Roman province of Asia (and even beyond, in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Bithynia). 2 Peter takes the Noachic flood motif one step further than does 1 Peter. 2 Peter accords most closely with Isaiah 24:6, 18b–20 in contrasting the fiery destruction in the *Endzeit* with the watery *Urzeit* of worldwide destruction through the Noachic flood (2 Pet 3:6–7). Even if 2 Peter is pseudonymous and dated into the second century, it is not implausible to concede that this hermeneutical tradition would have been extant during John's time.

Given the application of Noachic flood motifs within early Christian sources, and assuming John's awareness of, and access to, at least some of those sources (whether written or oral), his interest in incorporating Noachic allusions into his ἀποκάλυψις may have been piqued. Even if this was the case, though, the content found in NT sources would not have informed either his use of, nor the centrality with which John accords, the "great earthquake."

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20. The Synoptic Gospels do not refer to a worldwide, eschatological earthquake, only to "earthquakes in various places" (Mark 13:8/Matt 24:8/Luke 21:11). These differ from the "great earthquake" of Revelation in two respects: (1) they are not concurrent with the cosmic signs of final judgment, as in Revelation's sixth Seal (6:12–17), but occur well before the disturbances in the sun, moon, and stars (Mark 13:24–25/Matt 24:29/Luke 21:25), and (2) they are not worldwide in scope, but only occur "in various places."

4.4 Isaiah 24 as Traditum for the "Great Earthquake" of the Apocalypse

It is to be noted, of course, that the Genesis account of the Noachic flood only meets one of the three elements which constitute the "great earthquake" of Revelation (i.e., worldwide divine judgment). Thus, if the Genesis flood account can, in any way, be considered the *traditum* upon which Revelation's "great earthquake" is styled, then it can only be so in the guise of a later *traditio* in which the Genesis account has been eschatologically transformed through the process of, what Fishbane calls, inner-biblical aggadic exegesis.[21] One HB text appears to do just that—Isaiah 24.

Of all the texts considered so far, only Isaiah 24 contextualizes its worldwide earthquake within an *Urzeit*. This chapter, which forms part of the so-called "early apocalyptic" section of the book of Isaiah (chs. 24–27),[22] metaphorically depicts its cataclysm along the lines of the worldwide Noachic flood, yet expands that allusion by setting that cataclysm within the *eschaton* and by avoiding the use of water as the means of its enactment. It is this eschatologized *traditio* in Isaiah 24 that Jan Fekkes III, in his seminal

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21. M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 429–31, esp. 408. *Traditum* refers to the original text. *Traditio* is the new text which, to use Fishbane's terminology, is created through aggadic exegesis. Aggadic exegesis refers to "the exegetical transformation of specific texts or traditions" (Ibid., 380). In the case of the reappropriation of Genesis' Noachic flood account (*traditum*) in a subsequent *traditio*, Fishbane would term this taxemic aggadic exegesis, that is, the "creative combination or recombination of elements from the tradition [i.e., *traditum*]." Isaiah 24 is an example of a new *traditio* which uses taxemic aggadic exegesis to re-apply the Noachic flood not only to a new historical setting but, in so doing, also to transform elements of the Genesis *traditum* into a new literary mode—an "early apocalypse" (see n. 22 for P. D. Hanson's rationale for identifying Isaiah 24–27 as "early apocalyptic" literature).

22. P. D. Hanson generically categorizes Isaiah 24–27 as "early apocalyptic" not "proto-apocalyptic" since "early apocalyptic" merely indicates generic similarity and not necessarily generic determinacy ("Old Testament Apocalyptic Reexamined," in *Visionaries and Their Apocalypses* [Issues in Religion and Theology 4; ed. P. D. Hanson; London: SPCK, 1983], 51). Regarding William R. Millar's argument for a "proto-apocalyptic" designation see his *Isaiah 24–27 and the Origin of Apocalyptic* (Harvard Semitic Monograph Series 11; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976), 114.

study of Isaianic allusions in the book of Revelation, anomalously neglects to consider as an allusional basis for the "great earthquake" of Revelation.[23]

Others (e.g., Bauckham, Aune, and Beale), though, have noted the connection between the earthquakes of Isaiah 24 and Revelation.[24] Their assessments would place the earth rending quake of Isa 24:19–20 within Fekkes' category of "Probable/Possible" allusion. What Bauckham and others fail to note, though, is the explicit placement of the Isaianic earthquake within the context of a Noachic flood motif (Isa 24:18a, "the windows of heaven were opened").

The Isaianic *traditio* (ch. 24), which eschatologizes, and "dries out," the Noachic flood *traditum* (Gen 6–9), would have formed a fitting *traditum* for Revelation's own "great earthquake" judgment *traditio* (6:12–18:24). The prominence of the earth-rending quake in Isaiah 24 (vv 1, 18b–20) may very well have inspired the centrality that John gives his "great earthquake," a centrality that is evident in its repetitive occurrences within climactic judgment scenes in the Apocalypse (i.e., the sixth Seal, the sixth Trumpet, and the seventh Bowl). It remains to explore more precisely the Isaianic transformation of the implied earthquake in the Genesis flood account into a symbol of worldwide cataclysmic judgment in the *eschaton*.

4.5 Isaiah 24 and the Genesis Flood Traditum

The Genesis *traditum* of the flood mentions both waters falling from above (7:12) and also rising from subterranean chambers below (7:11).

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23. Jan Fekkes III, *Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation: Visionary Antecedents and their Development* (JSNTSup 93; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), esp. 280–81 and p. 306 of the Index of References. Fekkes' non-consideration of Isaiah 24's earthquake as an allusion in Revelation is not due to skepticism on his part, but rather appears to be due simply to oversight on his part. Isaiah's earthquake does not receive mention in any of Fekkes' three categories that assess the level of verifiability in relation to Revelation's use of Isaianic material (see pp. 280–81). Fekkes' three categories are: Certain/Virtually Certain, Probable/Possible, and Unlikely/Doubtful. However, neither Isa 24:18–20 nor the four mentions in Revelation of the "great earthquake" (6:12; 8:5; 11:13; 18:10[?]) are included in Fekkes' three categories (see pp. 280–81). Although Rev 6:12, 8:5 and some verses in ch. 11 are cited, content other than the "great earthquake" is analyzed.

24. See, for example, Bauckham ("Eschatological Earthquake," 224), David Aune (*Revelation 6–16* [WBC 52B; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998], 413), and Beale (*Book of Revelation*, 396).

An earthquake of worldwide proportions is implied in Gen 7:11—"the fountains of the great deep burst open [or 'were broken up']" (Gen 7:11).[25] After the floodwaters receded, YHWH made an "everlasting covenant" (בְּרִית עוֹלָם; Gen 9:16) with Noah and his descendents never again to judge cataclysmically the earth through the medium of water (Gen 9:12).

How does the Isaianic account compare with the Genesis account? There are at least three substantive allusions to the Noachic flood in Isaiah 24—the waters from above, an earthquake, and an everlasting covenant (בְּרִית עוֹלָם). First, in Isaiah 24 we only find mention made of waters from above, not from below, with these waters being metaphorical, not literal (24:18b).[26] Actual judgment upon the inhabitants of הָאָרֶץ ("the Earth" or "the Land") is said, instead, to proceed through the heat of drought (24:4, 7) and even by fire (24:6).[27] Second, unlike the Genesis account, but like Revelation's "great earthquake," the earthquake motif in Isaiah 24 is given great prominence, so much so that poetic license presents the whole earth as being rent and shaken (24:18b–20).

Aside from the rain from heaven and the earth-rending quake, there is one other allusion to the Noachic flood that is found in Isaiah 24—"the everlasting covenant" (בְּרִית עוֹלָם; 24:5). Watts argues that Isa 24:5 has "obvious reference to the everlasting covenant of Gen 9:12[–17]."[28] The phrase בְּרִית עוֹלָם is repeated a further fifteen times in the HB, but none of these other occurrences have either the Noachic flood nor the worldwide judgment of humanity as their backdrop.[29] Rather, they all only have the

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25. The Hebrew of Gen 7:11 reads, נִבְקְעוּ כָּל־מַעְיְנֹת תְּהוֹם רַבָּה.

26. The reference in 24:18 to the windows of heaven being opened is also found in Gen 7:11. The Hebrew phraseology is very similar in both (Isa 24:18, כִּי־אֲרֻבוֹת מִמָּרוֹם נִפְתָּחוּ; Gen 7:11, וַאֲרֻבֹּת הַשָּׁמַיִם נִפְתָּחוּ). Even though, in Isa 24:18 מָרוֹם is used instead of הַשָּׁמַיִם two factors favour its consideration as an intentional allusion to the Genesis account: (1) the same lexical substitution is made in Isa 24:21; (2) BHS comments that at v. 18 "frt ins (perhaps insert) הַשָּׁמַיִם" for מִמָּרוֹם.

27. Isa 24:6: " …the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few people are left." Although the NRSV translates עַל־כֵּן חָרוּ יֹשְׁבֵי אֶרֶץ (Isa 24:6) as "therefore the inhabitants of the earth dwindled," *BDB* (359.1) favours translating חָרוּ as "burned" (חָרַר Qal, sec. 2).

28. John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1–33* (WBC24; Waco, TX: Word, 1985), 318. So also Marvin A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39* (FOTL16; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 322–23.

29. The exact phrase בְּרִית עוֹלָם occurs eleven times: Exod 31:16; Lev 24:8; 2 Sam 23:5; 1 Chr 16:15–18 (also Ps 105:10); Isa 24:5; Isa 55:3; Jer 32:37–40; Jer 50:4, 5; Ezek 16:59, 60; and Ezek 37:24–26. The phrase בְּרִית עוֹלָם with intervening words occurs four times: Num

Israelites as their referent. In these fifteen contexts, any breaking of the בְּרִית עוֹלָם is limited to Jewish institutions such as the Sabbath, the Davidic/Messianic dynasty, YHWH's covenant with Abraham or the promise of the land of Israel to Abraham and Jacob.

Thus, Isaiah's use of בְּרִית עוֹלָם in 24:5 within the context of a cataclysmic worldwide judgment, one that is set within a Noachic flood motif (24:18b–20), suggests that the Noachic covenant is specifically in view.[30] Narratologically, then, the occurrence of the phrase בְּרִית עוֹלָם in Isaiah 24 could be said implicitly to indict its audience as being just as deserving of divine retribution as Noah's generation, and perhaps even more so since the breaking of the unconditional, unilateral Noachic covenant technically should have been possible only by God, and not by human beings.

4.6 Revelation's "Great City" and Isaiah's "City of Chaos

Isaiah's eschatologization of the Genesis earthquake opens up the possibility, then, of an allusional connection with the eschatological earthquake of Revelation. The suggestion that Isaiah 24 forms the allusional basis for Revelation's "great earthquake" finds additional support in the possibility that Isaiah's "city of chaos" (24:10; קִרְיַת-תֹּהוּ)[31] may be alluded to in Revelation's "great city/Babylon" (11:8; 16:19; 17:18; 18:10, 16–21).[32] Both cities are divinely judged through fire (Isa 24:6; Rev 17:16, 18) and a worldwide earthquake (Isa 24:1, 18a–20; Rev 11:13; 16:18–19; 18:2, 10, 17, 21[?]).

A number of cities have been suggested as historical referents for Isaiah's "city of chaos/emptiness," assuming, of course, that the primordial

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18:19; Num 25:12, 13; Job 41:4 [40:28 MT]; Josh 4:7 is an implicit reference (בְּרִית־יְהוָה; "covenant of the LORD").

30. The phrase בְּרִית עוֹלָם also occurs in Gen 17:7 in relation to God's "eternal covenant" with Abraham. However, since Isa 24:18 specifically alludes to the Noachic flood, the בְּרִית עוֹלָם of 24:5 has most probable reference to the Noachic rather than to the Abrahamic covenant.

31. The morpheme תֹּהוּ ("formlessness, emptiness"; *BDB* 1062b) may also suggest primordial "chaos" since it is also found in Genesis 1:2 where הָאָרֶץ is described as "a formless void" (תֹּהוּ וָבֹהוּ; Gen 1:2).

32. Previous commentators do not appear to have explored the possibility of an allusional connection between Revelation's "great city" and Isaiah's "city of chaos" (e.g., Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 619–21; Beale, *Book of Revelation*, 591–92; Mounce, *Book of Revelation*, 220–21).

allusion (תֹּהוּ) even presupposes a single historical referent. There are three primary historical candidates: eighth century Nineveh,[33] sixth century Jerusalem prior to its Babylonian exile,[34] and Babylon.[35] Johnson sees a clear allusion to Jerusalem through the phrase בְּקֶרֶב הָאָרֶץ ("in the midst/belly of the earth"; Isa 24:13).[36] The referential ambiguity inherent in the Isaianic "city of chaos" is also evident in John's "great city" in Revelation. The "great city" of ch. 11 appears to be Jerusalem (11:8), while the "great city" in chs. 16, 17, and 18 is identified as "Babylon the great," which nomenclature is symbolic of ancient Rome (17:17, the city which sits among seven hills).[37] Historical referents notwithstanding, the "great city" of chs. 11, 16, 17, 18 suffers a singular fate—destruction through the "great earthquake" (11:13; 16:18–19; 18:2, 10, 17, 21[?]).

4.7 Summary: Isaiah 24 as Traditum for the "Great Earthquake" of Revelation

I suggested earlier that a *traditum* which may plausibly be considered as a 'possible' or even a 'probable' *Urzeit* for the "great earthquake" is one that contains not only an earthquake, and not only an earthquake that is an instrument of worldwide divine judgment, but specifically an earthquake *in the eschaton* that reflects worldwide divine judgment by fire. Two literary precedents emerged—Isaiah 24 and *1 Enoch* 1:3–9. Isaiah 24, however, can also be said to contextualize its worldwide eschatological earthquake within an *Urzeit*—Genesis' Noachic flood *traditum* (Isa 24:5; 18b–20). A comparison of the Isaianic account with the Genesis account demonstrates at least three substantive allusions to the Noachic flood —waters falling from above, an earthquake, and an everlasting covenant. A comparison of Revelation's "great earthquake" with the earth rending quake in Isaiah 24

33. Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, 320.

34. Dan G. Johnson, *From Chaos to Restoration: An Integrative Reading of Isaiah 24–27* (JSOTSup 61; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988), 32.

35. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 317.

36. A not dissimilar phrase is used to refer to Jerusalem in Ezek 38:12 ("the center of the earth"; טַבּוּר הָאָרֶץ).

37. See, for example, Aune's discussion of the "great city" of chs. 11, 16, 17, and 18 (*Revelation 6–16*, 619–21). Rev 11:8 reads, "the great city that is prophetically called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified."

suggests two primary correlations: (1) The prominence given Isaiah's earth-rending quake (24:1, 18b–20) may very well have inspired the centrality that John gives his "great earthquake," a centrality that is evident in its repetitive occurrences within cataclysmic judgment scenes (i.e., the sixth Seal, the sixth Trumpet, and the seventh Bowl); and (2) not only is the ambiguity of historical referents for the Isaianic "city of chaos" (24:10) also evident in John's "great city" in Revelation, but both "cities" suffer the same fate—destruction by a worldwide, eschatological earthquake.

In light of the foregoing, one could reasonably conclude that if Isaiah 24 alludes to the earthquake of the Noachic flood, and if Revelation alludes to the eschatological earthquake in Isaiah 24, then, by implication, the "great earthquake" of the sixth Seal can be said to have as its *Urzeit* the earthquake of the Noachic flood.

5. Question Two: Asia Minor and Noachic Allusion in the "Great Earthquake"?

The preceding discussion leads me to the second question that is necessary to ask relative to the determination of an *Urzeit* for the cataclysmic judgment effected through Revelation's "great earthquake": Would a perceived allusion to the Noachic flood have held any relevance for the Greco-Roman, and not just for the Jewish, populace of Asia Minor? Two corollary questions provide direction to my investigation. First, did residents in Asia Minor have first-hand experience of earthquakes? Second, if the Noachic account presumes an earthquake, would the story of Noah's flood even have been known among the Greco-Roman, and not just the Jewish, populace of first century CE Asia Minor? Both questions can be given affirmative answers, the first in the geological makeup of Asia Minor, and the second in explorations of early Christian preaching, Greek flood traditions, and numismatic discoveries.

5.1 Earthquakes: Geological Evidence

With respect to the Apocalypse's intended audience, the "great earthquake" would have held particular relevance for the Asia Minor *ekklēsiai*, especially for the communities of Christ-followers in Sardis and Philadelphia. Tacitus (*Ann.* 2.47.3–4) notes that the great earthquake of 17

CE was particularly devastating for both cities such that Philadelphia was even granted imperial exemption from paying taxes for a five year period.[38] Devastating earthquakes were also known east of the Roman province of Asia in other parts of Asia Minor, specifically in Apamea (88 BCE), a key city in Phrygia. Beyond Asia Minor, "great" earthquakes occurred in Cyprus in 76, and in Pompeii in 79. Bauckham suggests that the eruption of Vesuvius which destroyed Pompeii "would have included both an earthquake and a hail of stones quite adequate to the description in Rev. xvi 21."[39] *Sib. Or.* 4. 107–113, 129f., written about a decade before Revelation, includes *ex-eventu* prophecies of the earthquakes in Cyprus and Asia Minor.

5.2 Noah's Flood: Early Christian Evidence

During the persecution of Christ-followers by the emperor Decius in 250 CE a presbyter of the *ekklēsia* in Smyrna, Pionius by name, was arrested and led to the marketplace where he was publicly commanded to sacrifice to the gods. He preached, instead, of the coming divine judgment upon the whole world. He reminded his listeners of what they already knew: "Consider the partial conflagrations and floods, such as you know of, for example, in the case of Deucalion, and we in the case of Noah. They are partial and occur in this way that we may comprehend the nature of the whole from the part."[40]

Thus, already in the third century CE the *ekklēsia* in Smyrna recognized that the *Endzeit* ("the whole") was reflective of the *Urzeit* ("the part"). For this Smyrnian presbyter, the *Urzeit* for God's final judgment was specifically identified with God's judgment through the flood. Is there any earlier evidence, though, for the relevance of the Noachic flood narrative, and its concomitant message of divine judgment, for the peoples of Asia Minor?

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38. Colin J. Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986/89), 156.

39. "Eschatological Earthquake," 230.

40. A. Hillhorst, "The Noah Story: Was It Known to the Greeks?" in *Interpretations of the Flood* (ed. F. Martínez García and Gerard P. Luttikhuizen; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 56–65, esp. 57.

5.3 Noah's Flood: Greek Flood Legends

There are many ancient Near Eastern flood traditions. Deucalion, who is mentioned in Pionius' speech above, is the Greek counterpart to Ziusudra (Sumerian), Atrahasis and Utnapishtim (Babylonian) and Noah (Hebrew). The Greek flood tradition regarding Deucalion, which is well attested in the Greco-Roman world during the first century CE, describes how two people survived a worldwide flood instituted by the god Jupiter. Deucalion and his wife Pyrhha survived the flood by climbing into an ark. Afterwards, Deucalion is said to have built the temple of Hierapolis on the Euphrates over the flood waters.[41]

It is instructive to note, though, that some Greek authors conflate various details of the Noachic flood into their retelling of the Deucalion flood myth.[42] This implies Greco-Roman knowledge of the biblical flood during, and possibly even prior to, the time of the Apocalypse's composition. Plutarch (c. 46–126 CE), in *De sollertia animalium* 13, describes Deucalion releasing a dove from his ark even though classical literature is silent on this point. Lucian of Samosata (120–180 CE), a Greek author of Syrian heritage retells the Deucalion legend in his *Syrian Goddess*. He picks up on four salient features of the Noachic story in Genesis 6–9.

First, while Deucalion is never given any reason for the flood, Lucian adds that it is because the previous race from which current humanity is descended "were extremely violent and committed lawless deeds… "[43] Second, no details are given in the classical literature as to how the flood came about. Lucian's description, however, is very reminiscent of the Genesis 7 account. He writes, "Suddenly the earth poured forth a flood of water. Heavy rains fell… "[44] A third salient feature of Lucian's use of the Noachic flood is evident in the rest of that sentence: "Heavy rains fell… until everything became water and all the people perished."[45] This directly contradicts the Deucalion flood tradition in which some managed to survive

41. Steven W. Holloway, "What Ship Goes There: The Flood Narratives in the Gilgamesh Epic and Genesis Considered in Light of Ancient Near Eastern Temple Ideology," *ZAW* 103/3 (1991): 328–355, esp. 332.
42. Hillhorst, "The Noah Story," 60–61.
43. Ibid., 61.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.

by climbing to the tops of the mountains. The fourth feature of the Noachic flood which Lucian adds is that Deucalion "embarked his children… [and] he boarded pigs and horses… and every kind of creature that grazes on earth… all of them in pairs."[46] In the original Greek story Deucalion did not bring any children or animals onto his ark. The foregoing demonstrates that the Noachic flood may very well have been a profitable motif by which Christians could have relevantly communicated a coming worldwide divine judgment to not just a Jewish audience, but also to a Greco-Roman one.

Aside from the widely disseminated legend of Deucalion and a universal flood, there are also four localized flood stories that hail from the region of Phrygia in Asia Minor. Unlike the Deucalion legend, none of the Phrygian stories, however, evidence obvious dependence on the Noachic flood. Trebilco notes that each of the four Phrygian flood legends are missing an ark, along with some other important biblical features.[47]

The Iconium tradition in Lycaonia (late third century BCE) adds, to the existing Deucalion flood tradition, the story of an ancient king of Phrygia named Nannokos who is informed by an oracle that after his death a flood would come by which all life would perish.[48]

The second flood story is found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 8.618–724. It involves a Phrygian couple by the name of Philemon and his wife Baucis. Due to their piety the gods warn them of the ensuing flood and instruct them to climb to the top of a mountain to ensure their safety. Independence from the Noachic story is seen both in the lack of an ark and in flood waters that are not the result of rainfall. The fact that Ovid cites subterranean waters as the cause of the Phrygian flood finds parallel in the Noachic flood, wherein earthquake activity is also implied (Gen 7:11).[49]

A third flood tradition is found in the writings of Nonnos. Although he writes around 500 CE he incorporates earlier mythology. His story's hero is Priasos, later described as "the proud son of Phrygia." Because of his piety he was forewarned by Zeus of an ensuing flood and escaped to the Aonian

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46. Ibid.

47. Paul R. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor* (SNTS Monograph Series; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 87–89, 91.

48. Iconium is derived from the Greek εἰκόνες ("images") which refers to the images of mud that people were fashioned from by Prometheus and Athena in order to repopulate the post-flood earth (Ibid., 88–90).

49. Ibid., 88–90.

land to avoid the "fatal showers." The cause of the flood cited by Nonnos is almost a reverse image of Ovid's. Nonnos attributes the flood waters to showers of rain, while Ovid to water from burst subterranean chambers.[50]

A fourth story, as told by Plutarch, involves King Midas and his son Anchouros, and it is set in the city of Celaenae, which, in the third century BCE, was relocated by the Seleucids and renamed Apamea. Since it sat astride a major east-west trading route, Apamea became a city of significant economic importance, second only to Ephesus, until the turn of the second century CE. In Midas' day, a chasm in the earth was said to have opened up, out of which flowed water which engulfed many people and their homes. Complete disaster was averted only when Midas' son Anchouros leapt into the chasm at which point it closed and the flood waters receded. Apamean geological history accords with this legend in that new lakes did actually form from underground water released by earthquake activity.[51]

The picture of underground water being released through seismic activity also accords with the Noachic account. Might this have factored into the rise of a Noachic flood tradition within the same city of Apamea many centuries later? Second century CE numismatic evidence from Apamea demonstrates the extent to which its populace had already adopted (and adapted) the Noachic flood tradition.

5.4 Noah's Flood: Numismatic Evidence in Apamea

Beginning in the second century CE, the city of Apamea minted a series of coins which bear the scene of Noah and the Ark.[52] This conjoining of biblical images with imperial coinage is unique in antiquity. Depicted on one side of the coin are two people who are situated both inside, and to the left of, an ark. Above the ark are two birds, a raven and a dove. The dove is holding an olive branch in its claws.

An inscription on the coin clearly indicates that Deucalion and Pyrhha are not being commemorated. The inscription on the inside of the ark reads NΩE (Noah). The ark by which Noah and his wife are standing is a rectangular box-like structure. They are depicted to the left of the ark standing on dry

50. Ibid., 88–90.
51. Ibid., 88–90.
52. Ibid., 86–88.

ground with their right arms raised in an "orans" gesture as an expression of gratitude for salvation. This merging of Jewish tradition with Greek coinage reflects the significance of the Jewish community in Apamea, a presence which dates back to the transplantation of large numbers of Jews when the populace of Celaenae moved to their new location of Apamea.

The coin implies that the Ark's resting place was Apamea. This assumption is given further reinforcement in the apparently indigenous Jewish *Sibylline Oracles*. In book III, which dates to the second century BCE,[53] Sibylla describes her journey with Noah as his daughter-in-law.[54] Rather than locating Mt. Ararat in Armenia, as was commonly assumed, she identifies the Ark's landing place as "a certain tall lofty mountain on the dark mainland of Phrygia. It is called Ararat."[55] This "Mt. Ararat" is said to be a hill located near the "the great river Marsyos" (also Marsyas). This associates the Ark's landing place with the hill of Celaenae (3660 ft. high), which is near the river Marsyas in the immediate vicinity of Apamea.

5.5 Noah's Flood: Apamea as κιβωτός *(" Ark")*

Paired with numismatic evidence is a linguistic connection, whether intentional or not, that also connects Apamea with the Noachic flood account. Strabo (19 CE) recounts that Apamea was given the nickname κιβωτός ("ark," "chest," "box," or "coffer"). At this stage in the city's life, however κιβωτός would simply have meant "chest" in honour of Apamea's economic importance.[56] A coin issued during the reign of Hadrian (117–138 CE) corroborates Strabo's claim. Hadrian's coin contains the word Κιβωτόι imprinted along with five chests that sit above the river Marsyas. Apamea (κιβωτός) is thus clearly implied since the river Marsyas runs beside the city.

It is clear that Apamea's nickname arose due to its economic history rather than to any history of Jewish religious influence. Nonetheless, the fact that the LXX uses κιβωτός for Noah's ark makes more understandable why the Jewish *Sybilline Oracles*, and even the Jewish populace of Apamea, associated the Ark's resting place with the hill of Celaenae near κιβωτός,

53. E. Isaac, "*1 Enoch*," *OTP*, 1:354.

54. *Sib. Or.* 3.823–7.

55. *Sib. Or.* 1.261–2.

56. Goods meant for transport from Apamea to ports on the coast, such as Ephesus, which was 300 km away, were packed in chests for the trip.

that is, Apamea.[57] Furthermore, a Greco-Roman readership more than likely would not have associated Deucalion's ark with Apamea, the city nicknamed κιβωτός ("ark"), since in the Deucalion flood legend his ark is only referred to by the word λάρανξ.[58] Neither would Asia Minor residents have associated any other ark with Apamea since local Phrygian flood traditions were devoid of ark traditions.

Hilhorst concludes from all this that it "seems warranted that Noah was known to the Greek world of the early Empire to a serious extent."[59] Thus, if the Jewish and/or Greco-Roman audience of Revelation would have perceived an allusion to the Noachic earthquake in John's crafting of the final, eschatological "great earthquake," then the Apocalypse's message of inescapable divine judgment would have had even greater relevance for a first century CE Asia Minor audience.

5.6 κιβωτός as the "Ark of the Covenant" in Rev 11:19

The word κιβωτός is also found in the book of Revelation. It is mentioned in the third Storm Theophany, which occurs within the context of the seventh Trumpet/third Woe (11:15–19/8:13; 11:14). The blowing of the seventh Trumpet (11:15a) is described in terms of *already* accomplished eschatological finality.[60] Within this trumpeted note of finality we see, for the first and only time, the word κιβωτός in the Apocalypse. It is not Noah's κιβωτός, though, that is here in view; it is the Ark of the Covenant (11:19: κιβωτὸς τῆς διαθήκης αὐτοῦ).

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57. The LXX uses κιβωτός ("ark") to translate both תֵּבָה (the "ark" of Noah) and אָרוֹן (the "Ark" of the Covenant). See explanatory comments by Hague (*TWOT*, "תֵּבָה," 2.271).

58. Trebilco (*Jewish Communities*, 224 n. 35) notes that "it is possible that the translators of the Septuagint used the unusual word for the Ark—κιβωτός—precisely to distinguish the story from the Greek myth of Deucalion."

59. Hillhorst, "The Noah Story," 65.

60. "The kingdom of the world *has become* the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah… the nations *raged*, but your wrath *has come*… " (11:15b–18; NRSV). Irrespective of whether this note of eschatological finality is due to a prolepsis or an instance of Pauline "already/not yet" eschatology (Sydney H.T. Page, "Revelation 20 and Pauline Eschatology," *JETS* 23/1 [1980]: 31–43), it supports the view of some (e.g., Loenertz, Bauckham, Thomas; see nn. 13 and 61) that the seventh Trumpet is telescopically representative of, and thus inclusive of, the finalized judgment envisioned in the seven Bowls (15:5–16:21).

With the revelation of the κιβωτὸς τῆς διαθήκης at the seventh Trumpet comes the addition of a fifth element to the Storm Theophany—"great hail" (11:19). If, as Bauckham claims, the "great hail" of the seventh Trumpet (11:19) is the heavenly representation of the earthly "great hail" that falls (16:21) in the seventh Bowl judgment (16:17–21), then the earthquakes in the seventh Trumpet theophany (11:19) and in the seventh Bowl (16:18, 19) represent the same event too. [61]

5.7 Noah's Flood: Summary

The preceding discussion suggests that an affirmative answer is possible to the question of the socio-cultural relevance of Revelation's "great earthquake" imagery: the motif of an earthquake of great magnitude, and especially one that could be perceived as being an allusion to the implied earthquake of the Noachic flood, would have been particularly relevant not just for Revelation's seven *ekklēsiai* ("assemblies/churches"), but also for the general populace of Asia Minor.

6. An Intertextual Re-reading of the Sixth Seal in Light of a Noachic Flood Motif

Given the 'possible,' and perhaps even 'probable,' status of the "great earthquake" as an allusion to the world-wide Noachic cataclysm, what might some of the rhetorical payoffs have been for Revelation's author? In a nutshell, one could say that the intensity of the divine judgment, as portrayed in Revelation, receives greater validation when cast in the mold of an *Urzeit* that presumes such rampant wickedness among humanity that worldwide, cataclysmic divine judgment was the only available option. If John's audience perceived an Isaianic reinterpretation of the Noachic *Urzeit*

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61. "Eschatological Earthquake," 227–28. Bauckham's interlocking principle appears to follow R. J. Loenertz's concept of "dovetailing" (*The Apocalypse of Saint John* [London: Sheed and Ward, 1947], esp. xv). R. L. Thomas refines Loenertz's approach with his concept of "telescoping" (*Revelation 1–7*, *Revelation 8–22* [Chicago: Moody, 1992/1995], esp. 1.43 and 2.534). Thomas uses "telescopic" terminology to describe a perceived interlocking pattern such that the seventh of each septenary is like the joints of a telescope which when extended reveal more and more detail. My article affirms Thomas' "telescopic" principle but challenges his linear chronology via a reiterative organization of his telescopic content ("'And I Saw… '," 176–83).

in John's depiction of the *Endzeit*, then the Apocalypse implicitly indicts Greco-Roman society as also being just as, or even more so, deserving of divine retribution as was Noah's generation.

To achieve that rhetorical goal John does not just call his eschatological earthquake "great" (6:12) but he even describes it in such superlative language that it trumps even the Noachic earthquake—"No earthquake like it has ever occurred since man has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake" (16:18).[62] This implicitly brings the reader to expect that the destructive force of the eschatological earthquake will exceed many times over not just that of those experienced in and around Asia Minor, but even of the universal flood-initiating Noachic quake itself.

Could part of John's technique for fashioning a Noachic connection in the minds of his audience entail, first, a literary interlocking of the earthquakes in the seventh Trumpet and the seventh Bowl by virtue of their shared "great hail" imagery, and, second, through his singular use of the word κιβωτός ("ark") in the seventh Trumpet theophany (11:19)? If so, then elements of the Noachic flood, such as the disappearance of mountains and islands under the watery deluge from the sky, might have come to mind not just through the seventh Bowl (16:20), but also through the sixth Seal (6:14), since both judgment scenes recount the removal of mountains and islands after a cataclysmic earthquake. Might even the "great hail" too reflect back to the Noachic flood? If so, it would constitute an ironic re-visioning of the watery deluge of the Noachic flood, such that an allusion to the Noachic flood is maintained even while at the same time not having compromised God's promise never to judge the world by liquid water.

It may be, however, that those specific elements did not interrelate in the minds of Revelation's audience. Nonetheless, if, even in an overall manner, they still viewed the events of the sixth Seal (and their subsequent expansive reiteration in the six Trumpets and seven Bowls) through the lens of the Noachic flood narrative, the horror implicit in the day of the wrath of

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62. John's hyperbole accords with Greco-Roman usage. Josephus, in referencing the earthquake in Judaea (31 BCE), described it as "such as had not happened at any other time" (*Ant.* 15.121), and Pliny called the earthquake in Asia (17 CE) the greatest in human memory (*Nat. Hist.* 2.86). Even if John's hyperbole is informed by Greco-Roman practice, it does not exclude the possibility that his use of such superlative language may also refer back to the implied Noachic earthquake.

the Lamb would have been even more forcibly demonstrated in at least three ways: (1) The earthquake of the Apocalypse is greater by far than the one which rent asunder the fountains of the great deep during Noah's time; (2) The frozen deluge of massive hailstones ("about one hundred pounds each"; 16:21) is so terrifying as to cause the Noachic deluge to pale in comparison; and (3) the sense of hopelessness is so inestimably greater for the peoples under God's second worldwide judgment that they ask to be killed by the very mountains which previously were their last prospect of salvation (6:15, 16). Alluding to the Noachic flood motif in the eschatological events of the sixth Seal presents an informed first century CE Jewish-Christian reader, especially one living in Asia Minor, with a vision of final, eschatological judgment that is inestimably greater than anything ever experienced by humanity to that point.

7. Conclusion

The *Endzeit* of divine eschatological judgment in the Apocalypse's sixth Seal appears to reflect the *Urzeit* of the first worldwide cataclysm, the Noachic flood. Literary as well as socio-cultural factors support this view. Literary evidence has demonstrated that it is possible to affirm the centrality of the eschatological earthquake in at least three ways: (1) as a structural focal-point around which to organize the expansive reiteration of the sixth Seal's content (6:12–17) through the six Trumpets (8:2–9:21; 11:1–14; 18:1–24[?]) and the seventh Trumpet/seven Bowls (11:15–19/15:5–16:21); (2) as a rhetorical focal-point for the presentation of worldwide divine judgment in the *eschaton*; and (3) as an intertextual device by which to connect that worldwide, eschatological judgment to a Noachic *Urzeit*, as it was eschatologically re-visioned in Isaiah 24. The rhetorical relevance of the image of a "great earthquake" within Asia Minor, particularly if it was tied to a Noachic flood motif, is affirmed through geological, sociological and numismatic evidence.

It would appear, then, that not only does the *Endzeit* of the New Jerusalem, which is a vision of "salvation accomplished," have an *Urzeit* (the Garden of Eden) but so too does the vision of "judgment accomplished" through the "great earthquake" (Noah's flood). One might even say that, together, the *Urzeit* of the paradisiacal Garden of Eden and of the cataclysmic Noachic flood produce a union in Revelation's eschatological *Endzeit* that

results in a *Hochzeit*, that is, the "marriage of the Lamb… and his bride" (Rev 19:7).

Hegel, Eschatology, and Space for the Secular

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Karl Barth once asked why Hegel's system of philosophy was rejected in modern thought.[1] His answer was that Hegel showed modern, Enlightened thinkers that philosophy led to God, and particularly the Triune God of Christianity.[2] This end was not acceptable to the modern project, (particularly to the post-Revolution Left), and thus Hegel was superseded in the 1840s by his own heirs: Strauss, Feuerbach, and Marx. Yet Barth also notes that Hegel's Christian philosophy was not long embraced by the Church. Why? Chiefly, Barth argued, because of Hegel's failure "to recognize that God is free"—and not bound by the necessity of the dialectic of Logic.[3] This double rejection of Hegel by secular philosophers and Christian theologians highlights the greatest strength and weakness of his philosophical system from an orthodox Christian point of view: his view of Christian eschatology—i.e. how orthodox Christian doctrine understands God's completed goals for human history in the future. At the same time, Hegel's *own* ambiguous stance on what many post-Enlightenment intellectuals referred to as the "chimeras" of Christian eschatology, e.g., Christ's resurrection and return, sheds light on the threats such doctrines posed—and continue to pose—to Modernity's project of liberal, secular societies.

Christian theology and modern philosophy's inability to be reconciled over the issue of eschatology can be seen in part III of Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. Here, in the conclusion to his lectures, Christian eschatology—particularly the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ—*is central* to Hegel's philosophy of religion. Yet I shall argue that Hegel's *dialectical approach* to Christian eschatology leaves him in an infelicitous "no man's land" between modern philosophy and Christian orthodoxy.

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1. Karl Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century,* trans. Brian Cozens and John Bowden (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), 393.
2. Ibid., 399–400.
3. Ibid., 406.

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For his eschatological critiques of Western philosophical and political systems estranged him from nineteenth century secularists on the one hand, while his dialectical conceptions of Christ's resurrection alienated him from orthodox theologians on the other. And it is in this "in between" space that, from an orthodox point of view, Hegel's philosophy enables the continued dominion of "the secular" in modern philosophy and the world. To demonstrate this, the first part of my analysis will deal with Hegel's insights into Christian eschatology's positive contributions to philosophy and politics. In the second part I shall examine the limitations of Hegel's philosophical conception of Christian eschatology from an orthodox point of view. Finally, in the conclusion I shall consider the philosophical and political implications of Hegel's eschatology.

Hegel's *Christian* Eschatology: Reconciliation, Resurrection, and Freedom

In part III of the *Lectures* on the "Absolute Religion," Hegel demonstrates that Christianity is the eschatological religion of world history, and that Jesus Christ is *the* eschatological Idea—the absolute unity of divine and human nature.[4] Here Hegel makes some positive contributions to thinking about Christian eschatology in three critical areas: 1. the reconciliation of the opposites of "Infinite" and "Finite," "God" and "Man;" 2. the problem of evil within human nature; and 3. the creation of the condition of the possibility of human political and social freedom.

For Hegel, Christianity came closest to reconciling one of the perennial problems of Western philosophy—the dichotomy between the Universal and the Particular, between God, the "absolute eternal Idea," and the finite—the "other-Being" of "the World."[5] This ultimate reconciliation—which Hegel saw as an ontological reconciliation—was made possible because of God's own nature. Hegel argues that "It belongs to God's essential nature… to reconcile to Himself this something which is foreign to Him, this special or particular element which comes into existence as something separated

4. G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion,* vol. III, trans. E. B. Speirs and J. Burdon Sanderson (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, & Co., 1895; reprint, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), 72–73.

5. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion,* vol. III, 1.

from Him… "[6] Yet the reconciliation of the Universal with the Particular achieved through Christianity not only solved an ontological problem, it also overcame the problem of evil in human nature. Here again Christianity demonstrated itself to be the eschatological religion of world history, for it alone posited the *universal* evil of human nature—the *apparent* ontological disunion and separation between Divine and Human, Infinite and finite.[7]

Hegel posits that Man is simultaneously by nature both good and evil; both whole in his inner life, good in his *substantial universal essence*, and yet his "potential Being," his natural Being, is also evil.[8] Man can be called essentially good because Man is *potentially Spirit/Rationality*,[9] having been "created in the image of God" which is "the Good"; "Man as Spirit is the reflection of God, he is the Good *potentially*."[10] Man's potentiality makes his reconciliation possible; but it is also his potentiality that makes his reconciliation necessary. For to be only "potentially" good means that Man is good only "inwardly," only in his "notion" or "conception," and not in *actuality*.[11]

Thus humanity's reconciliation with "the Good" for Hegel necessitates a reunification of Man's physical/actual nature with his spiritual/rational essence. In other words, Man's "Notion" must be able to realize its "Independent Being," its "Being-for-self" *in the world*.[12] However, in so far as Man is subject to the laws of Nature—particularly those which constrain

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6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., see 45–59.

8. Ibid., 45–46; 47.

9. Hegel states "To say that Man is by nature good amounts substantially to saying that he is potentially Spirit, rationality… " (46.) "*Geist*"—"Spirit" is central to Hegel's philosophy. It is being *in itself*; it is substantial and *has* being in itself and is therefore *consciousness*. But it is also being which relates itself *to itself*, and is thus also *self-consciousness*, or "being *for itself*." "Absolute Spirit" is the universal whole which knows and *relates* itself and everything else—"all otherness"—all particularity—*within itself*. "Finite Spirit" *naturally* recognizes "otherness" as existing *outside of itself* and thus finds itself limited and un-free. As Peter C. Hodgson puts it, "Spirit is free, pure, rational relationality, which presupposes sense as the soil of objectification and difference but is itself metasensual." (See Peter C. Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology: A Reading of the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2005), 19.)

10. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion,* vol. III, 46, with my emphasis.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., 1, 46.

his "Notion" and which give him the idea that he is a mere animal—Man *is not free*. In this state Man's will is, like other animals, only motivated by "impulse" and "inclination," and though the possession of will marks him off from the animals, the end goals of his willful actions are still only natural, like those of other creatures.[13] Rather than obeying universal, *rational* laws, Man's natural will is driven by his particular, selfish *needs*, which are not actual decisions of free will, but are only driven by necessity and arbitrariness. In this bare life Man denies his essence as Spiritual—and to remain in this condition is evil.[14] Yet Hegel maintains that it is Man's nature and the nature of Spirit to move beyond this *potentiality*; but this movement of Spirit within Man is the first sign of disunion and division within Man's nature. It is a revolt against "immediacy," against "potential Being," and it points to the problem of Man's nature as being evil. As *essentially* Spirit, Man is separated and divided from his natural Being which is evil, for it means a lack of wholeness, of integrity.[15] Thus Man's evil lies in the contradictions between Notion and reality; between Notion and particularity, between Good and Evil.[16]

According to Hegel, Man became conscious of his divided and evil nature through knowledge. This knowledge is "the source of all evil," and yet is necessary for humanity (and hence Spirit) to realize itself as "Being-for-self."[17] Hebraic religion expressed this *self-revelation* of humanity's evil—but also the reconciliation with Absolute Spirit—"pictorially" in Genesis 3 and the story of Man's Fall through the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Hegel reads Genesis 3 eschatologically to show that humanity has the promise and certainty of returning to its original state of unity with God through knowledge itself:

> …the Adam referred to is to be understood as representing the second Adam, namely Christ. Knowledge is the principle of spiritual life, but it is also, as was remarked, the principle of the healing of the injury caused by disunion [i.e. the alienation of Man from God brought about by obtaining knowledge].[18]

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13. Ibid., 47–48.
14. Ibid., 49, 50.
15. Ibid., 48.
16. Ibid., 48–49.
17. Ibid., 52–53.
18. Ibid., 54.

Hegel's exegesis—or perhaps his *eisegesis*—of the role of the serpent in Genesis 3 gets to the heart of his philosophical conception of the nature of Man's evil. The serpent represents the "principle of knowledge" as existing *outside* of Man; "Adam"—i.e. Christ in Hegel's reading—represents the other truth of the *intrinsic*, "concrete" knowledge which exists *in* Man. In the process of reconciliation *this* knowledge will "bruise the head of the serpent."[19] Hegel continues:

> Man is immortal in consequence of knowledge, for it is only as a thinking being that he is not a mortal animal soul, and is a free, pure soul. Reasoned knowledge, thought, is the root of his life, of his immortality as a totality in himself. The animal soul is sunk in the life of the body, while Spirit, on the other hand, is a totality in itself.[20]

For Hegel, *only* Judeo-Christianity, (but more specifically Christianity), diagnosed the problem of Man's evil correctly because only it understood Man's *universal nature*[21] as spiritual. And only Judeo-Christianity understood the *universality* of the condition of evil in Man represented pictorially in Adam's fall.[22] Thus Hegel affirms Christianity's eschatological presentation of the problem of evil as universal and complete for all of humanity.

And Hegel also affirms Christianity's eschatological solution to the problem of evil—the universal reconciliation of God and Man made possible through Christ's death.[23] Hegel argues that through Christ's life, and supremely in his *death*—in his *individual* and *concrete* example of the Idea in practice—that Christianity proves itself to be the absolute religion.[24] Indeed, it is precisely Christ's death which separates him from other historical teachers of the truth like Socrates. The world and humanity were not essentially changed with the death of Socrates, but they were with Christ's death:

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19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., 58.
21. Hence the Hebrew "Adam" which can mean "humanity" as a whole.
22. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion,* vol. III, 59.
23. Ibid., 59–60.
24. Ibid., 85.

> With the *death* of Christ, however, there begins the conversion of consciousness. The death of Christ is the central point round which all else turns, and in the conception formed of it lies the difference between the outward way of conceiving of it and Faith, i.e., regarding it with the spirit, taking our start from the spirit of truth, from the Holy Spirit.[25]

Both Christ and Socrates were moral teachers who opened the path to human self-consciousness; but Socrates was not divine, he did not reveal the truth of Divine and Human nature that is known by Faith. Hegel writes, " … Faith by its explanation of the death of Christ lays hold of [the true nature of the Trinity]; for Faith is essentially the consciousness of absolute truth, of what God is in His true nature."[26] God in his Essence is "the life-process, the Trinity, in which the Universal puts itself into antithesis with itself [i.e. the "Other"—the Son, the World] and is in this antithesis identical with itself."[27] Christ's death is the concrete praxis of this process in the world—and this is what Faith knows and is conscious of.[28] On the other side, Hegel asserts that to die is the essence of human finitude; and Christ's death, as also the death of God, shows that Divine and Human nature are one. He writes,

> …the death of Christ is truly understood by [Spirit] to mean that in Christ God is revealed together with the unity of the Divine and human natures… Christ's death primarily means that Christ was the God-Man, the God who had at the same time human nature, even unto death.[29]

However, Christianity does not stop at the death of the "God-Man" in Jesus Christ. It also proclaims the resurrection of God and Man through the resurrection of Jesus and his return to the Divine.[30]

For Hegel, Christ's death, resurrection, and exaltation is the central "mediating element"—*the* divine moment in the reconciliation of God and humanity, God and the finite.[31] He explains that just as the Incarnation was the end of the stage in which the Divine is thought of as "abstract universality," or the abstract "Essence of Essences," so too Christ's death ended the

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25. Ibid., emphasis in the original, 86.
26. Ibid., 87.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid., 89.
30. Ibid., 91.
31. Ibid., 98.

"abstraction of humanity, the immediacy of existing particularity."[32] Yet because of Christ's resurrection, this is also the "negation of the negation," the "death of death" itself.[33] For through Christ's death and resurrection God killed death by negating the finitude and frailty of human nature, and at the same time *accepted* the Otherness of the finite into His own Being. "[Christ's] shameful death," Hegel writes,

> as representing the marvelous union of these absolute extremes, is at the same time infinite love. It is a proof of infinite love that God identified Himself with what was foreign to His nature in order to slay it. This is the signification of the death of Christ. Christ has borne the sins of the world, He has reconciled God to us, as it is said.[34]

In sum, Hegel viewed Christ's crucifixion as God's plumbing of the absolute depths of human estrangement, alienation, and finitude. And in Christ's resurrection Spirit reached the heights of *absolute reconciliation* between the Infinite and the finite.[35]

Yet Christ's death and resurrection was not merely of spiritual or intellectual import for Hegel; these events had changed real, concrete existence in the world. They had made possible, for the first time in history, the necessary conditions for the realization of *actual* human freedom, for Jesus' crucifixion was, along with a spiritual death, also a political and social death. It is perhaps here that Hegel's *Christian* understanding of eschatology is most apparent. Hegel points out that the cross, the most shameful and despised form of political and social execution in the Roman world, was the distinct form of Christ's death. His unjust execution at the hands of the degraded imperial state became the ultimate critique of the Empire, and, one might add, *all* empires.

Hegel saw in the shame of Christ's cross a *positive* and radical revaluation—contra Nietzsche—of imperial values.[36] He states that " …the

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32. Ibid., 92.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid., 93.

35. Ibid.

36. See for instance Nietzsche's critique of the Jewish "revaluation" of virtue and morality in the Hellenistic world: "It was the Jews who, rejecting the aristocratic value equation (good = noble = powerful = beautiful = happy = blessed) ventured, with awe-inspiring consistency, to bring about a reversal and held it in the teeth of their unfathomable hatred (the hatred of

cross is transfigured, what according to the common idea is lowest, what the State characterizes as degrading, is transformed into what is highest."[37] The decadence and tyranny of the Roman Empire had degraded and debased the subjective freedom of Rome's citizens and Senate to such a degree that the only refuge that intellectuals could find was in the individual, abstract worlds offered by Stoicism and Skepticism. Hegel believed that the Cross presented a two-edged critique of Roman society, the one negative, and the other positive. Negatively, Christ's death on the cross symbolized the ultimate decay of Roman freedom, reason, justice, and truth through the execution of the one truly free subject of the Empire. Positively, Christ's cross represented truth, virtue, and the Kingdom of God on earth—it became the banner of what is highest and most estimable in human history—the absolute Love and Reconciliation of God and Man—against which the *abstract* and inward subjectivity of pagan philosophies could not stand.[38] And significantly for Hegel, Christ's crucifixion had overcome the last imperium of the Roman state—death. He writes:

> Everything established, everything moral, everything considered by ordinary opinion as of value and possessed of authority, was destroyed, and all that was left to the existing order of things, towards which [Christianity] took up a position of antagonism, was the purely external, cold power, namely, death, which life, ennobled by feeling that in its inner nature was infinite now, no longer in any way dreaded."[39]

Thus the rise of Christianity had produced "a new consciousness on the part of men, a new religion, it is for that reason the consciousness of absolute

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the powerless), saying, 'Only those who suffer are good, only the poor, the powerless, the lowly are good; the suffering, the deprived, the sick, the ugly, are the only pious people, the only ones saved, salvation is for them alone, whereas you rich, the noble and powerful, you are eternally wicked, cruel, lustful, insatiate, godless, you will also be eternally wretched, cursed and damned!'… We know *who* [emphasis in the original] became heir to this Jewish revaluation… " (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, ed., Keith Ansell-Pearson, trans., Carol Diethe, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 19.) The "*who*" is Jesus of Nazareth. (see pg. 20 and following.)

37. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion,* vol. III, 90; cf. Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology* , 170, although I think that Hegel is much more positive in his assessment of Christ's death as a criminal than Hodgson seems to admit.

38. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion,* vol. III, 90–91.

39. Ibid., 91.

reconciliation; this involves a new world, a new religion, a new reality, a world in a different condition… "[40] Hegel maintains that through Christ's death individuals in the spiritual community—the Church—were able to understand their own infinite subjective worth as *spiritual* beings, and in so doing were able to abandon "all [*external*] distinctions of authority, power, position, and even race; before God all men are equal."[41] And through the other side of Hegel's Christian dialectic—faith in Christ's resurrection and in God's reconciling love—the Church realized the foundations for the possibility of "truly universal Right, of the realization of freedom."[42]

In sum, Hegel argues in the conclusion to his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* that Christianity had fundamentally and irrevocably changed the world. It offered deliverance from what Hegel termed "Jewish misery"—which sought to assuage the anguish of alienation from God through an un-spiritual and un-free adherence to ritual and law—what Hegel describes as the "humiliation" of Man from "above."[43] On the other hand Christianity also offered deliverance from the escapist and sad philosophies of Stoicism and Skepticism, which Hegel saw as "abstract" and ultimately "self-centered."[44] Both taught that man *is* independent and must rely on himself—in an inner life that remains abstracted from the world.[45] Hegel also noticed that both Skepticism and Stoicism lent themselves to collusion with Rome's imperium: "We saw how this formal inwardness which finds satisfaction in the world, this *dominion* as being the aim or end of God, was represented, and known, and thought of as *worldly dominion*."[46] Thus for Hegel, Christianity had absolutely conquered Evil—the evil of the alienation between God and Man, and Man's own self-alienation from his true nature as infinite Spirit. In so doing Christianity superseded both ancient and modern religions and philosophy, from Zoroastrianism and Stoicism, to Enlightenment Deism and the philosophy of Kant.[47]

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40. Ibid., 79.
41. Ibid., 105, with my addition and emphasis.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid., 63.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid., 63; 65–66.
46. Ibid., 63, with my emphasis.
47. Ibid., 129.

The Limits of Hegel's Eschatology

Before considering the limitations of Hegel's conception of Christian eschatology vis-à-vis Christian orthodoxy, it is helpful to remember the historical context in which his philosophy is situated. As Wolfhart Pannenberg, Walter Jaeschke, and Peter Hodgson have pointed out, Hegel by the 1820s was fighting a two-front war in his philosophical defense of Christianity, and this is reflected in his Berlin *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*.[48] On one front, Hegel was battling against the "reflective philosophy of subjectivity" espoused by Kant which placed strict limitations on human reason and what can be known of God and reality.[49] Kant had proposed that human reason can only know the mind's *category* for "god"—i.e. the category of "Supreme Being" or "Essence of Essences"—but never the reality of *God* Himself.[50] Hegel found this philosophy, and the god it posited, as vacuous and in direct opposition both to true philosophy and to the Christian conception of the Triune God.[51] On another front Hegel strove against a purely inward, subjective form of faith exemplified by pietism.[52] Hegel did maintain that reconciliation first involves an inward, spiritual reconciliation of the heart—but this reconciliation cannot remain merely inward and therefore abstract—(there lies the fault of pietism)—but must become actual in the "objective" world.[53] Spiritual reconciliation as Hegel conceived of it produced the free subject, and a free subject related to the real world.[54] Hegel's position was a difficult one to be in, and one that was compounded by the decline of Natural Theology and its attempted replacement by a new Philosophy of Religion.[55] It is also important

48. See Wolfhart Pannenberg, "The Significance of Christianity in the Philosophy of Hegel," in *Basic Questions in Theology*, Vol. III, (London: SCM Press, 1973), 144–177; Walter Jaeschke, *Reason in Religion: The Foundations of Hegel's Philosophy of Religion*, trans. J. Michael Stewart and Peter Hodgson (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), and Hodgson's *Hegel and Christian Theology* cited above.

49. Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology*, 6–7; 56.

50. Ibid., 7.

51. See Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion,* vol. III, 139–140; 144.

52. See Pannenberg, "The Significance of Christianity in the Philosophy of Hegel," 155–159.

53. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion,* vol. III, 135,141.

54. Ibid., 136.

55. See Jaeschke, *Reason in Religion: The Foundations of Hegel's Philosophy of Religion*, especially Chapter I.

to remember, as Jaeschke has pointed out, that Hegel did not intend his philosophy to *replace* Christian praxis or piety with an academic system of logic, but rather to demonstrate philosophically the *inner content* of the truth of the Faith.[56] In many ways the Modern project had *already* determined the field and terms of battle, and perhaps thereby delimited Hegel's strategic and tactical options—particularly in combating Kant's philosophy.[57] This presented particular problems for his defense of Christian eschatology, as Karl Barth and Wolfhart Pannenberg have pointed out.

Pannenberg has argued that Hegel's notion of the "absolute concept" is not an adequate philosophical support for the Christian idea of historical contingency—the possibility of God's *absolute* freedom to "make all things new" in a yet *unrealized future*.[58] Both Barth and Pannenberg point out what appears to be a significant problem in Hegel's philosophy concerning God, freedom, and the future. Basically they argue that Hegel's God is *determined* by the logical necessity of the Trinity as a dialectical process that culminates in the self-realization of mind as Infinite Spirit for *both* God and Man, which is to say that both God and Man *must* realize their true natures as "Infinite Spirit."[59] However, it could be argued that neither Barth nor Pannenberg took seriously enough Hegel's conception of an *inaugurated eschatology* as embodied in the "Spiritual Community" of the Church. Speaking of the souls of individuals within the "Spiritual Community" of the Church, Hegel writes that

> The… individual soul, has an infinite, eternal quality, namely, that of being a citizen of the Kingdom of God. This is a quality and a life which is removed beyond time and the Past; and since it is at the same time opposed to the present limited sphere, this eternal quality or determination eternally determines itself at the same time as a future.[60]

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56. Ibid., 359. Jaeschke also notes that Hegel apparently never made this clear to his contemporaries.

57. Ibid., Ch. I, is particularly insightful here.

58. Pannenberg, "The Significance of Christianity in the Philosophy of Hegel," 176.

59. Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, 406; Pannenberg, "The Significance of Christianity in the Philosophy of Hegel,"174–175.

60. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion,* vol. III, 105.

Hegel's use of "infinite" and "eternal" with "the individual soul" appears, on the surface, to suggest a fully realized eschatology through the Church. Yet in the same passage Hegel continues:

> The infinite demand to see God, *i.e.* [italics in the original], to become conscious in spirit of His truth as present truth, is in this temporal Present *not yet satisfied* so far as consciousness in its character as ordinary consciousness is concerned.[61]

And speaking earlier of the three forms of Absolute Spirit in regards to Time, Hegel says of the third form, the Church, that having been essentially reconciled through the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, that it has been raised to a

> perfection or completion, which however, *does not yet exist, and which is therefore to be conceived of as future*. It is a Now of the present whose perfect stage is before it, but this perfect stage is distinguished from the particular Now which is still immediacy, and it is thought of as future.[62]

Here Hegel's philosophy seems to be in agreement with Paul's theology of the "already" but "not yet present" fulfillment of God's kingdom on earth through Christians who are "perfect" (τελειος), and yet who also "strive to lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus also laid hold of me." (Philippians 3:10–16, NET) Read in this way, Hegel is more in line with the theology of Oscar Cullman than Rudolf Bultmann.[63]

Still, taken from an orthodox point of view, Hegel's eschatology is suspect. First, Hegel's ambiguous attitude towards "externality"—particularly the "externality" of the Son—is very problematic. Hegel's views of physical nature are complex, particularly when it comes to the *bodily* resurrection of Jesus as proclaimed by the New Testament and Christian orthodoxy. Writing of Jesus' resurrection, Hegel states, "God comes to life again, and thus things are reversed." The footnote to this statement, which was taken from notes from Hegel's mss. of 1821, adds:

> This is the meaning of the resurrection and ascension of Christ… this elevation of Christ to heaven outwardly appears for the immediate or natural consciousness

61. Ibid., 105, with my emphasis.

62. Ibid., 3–4, with my emphasis.

63. I am grateful to Dr. Johannes Hoff of the University of Wales, Trinity St. David for valuable insights into Hegel's eschatology here.

> in the mode of reality. 'Thou wilt not leave Thy righteous one in the grave; Thou wilt not suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.' [Psalm 16:10] This is the form, too, in which this death of death, the overcoming of the grave, the triumph over the negative, and this elevation to heaven appear to sense-perception."[64]

Hegel seems at once to affirm and deny the *bodily* resurrection of Jesus. On the one hand he affirms it in *appearance* and in the *mode* of reality or nature. Hodgson notes that "nature," or, for the purpose of this study, "physicality," was important in Hegel's system as the form in which Spirit appeared in the mode of "particularity" and "externality" [65]—but Hegel, unlike the ancient Jewish authors of the Old and New Testaments, does not seem to emphasize the *essential goodness* of physicality *in and of itself.* Hegel's ambivalence can be seen when he writes on the importance of the "externality" or physicality of Christ's Incarnation. He states,

> But externality, otherness—in short, finitude, or imperfection as it may further be defined, is degraded to the condition of something unessential, and is known as such. For in the Idea the otherness, or Other-Being of the Son, is a passing, disappearing moment, and *not at all a true essential, permanent, and absolute moment*.[66]

If Hegel does not *explicitly* deny Christ's bodily resurrection, he also does not see it as essential.

And this understanding of physicality in general and Jesus' in particular goes against the entire tenor of the Old and New Testaments. It is hard, at least from a *prima facie* reading of Hegel's views of the body, to square his *philosophy* with the *theology* of the Psalms—"Thou wilt not leave Thy righteous one in the grave; Thou wilt not suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." (Psalm 16:10) The early Church applied this Psalm and specifically this verse to refer to Jesus' resurrection. Both Peter and Paul in the book of Acts emphasize Jesus' bodily resurrection—and particularly that Jesus did not suffer the real, physical decay that follows real, physical death. Paul in his sermon at Antioch states:

> For David, after he had served God's purpose in his own generation, died, was buried with his ancestors, *and experienced decay* [και 'ειδεν διαφθορανν], but

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64. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion,* vol. III, 91.

65. Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology*, 11, 19.

66. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion,* vol. III, 123, with my emphasis.

> the one whom God raised up *did not experience decay* ['ουκ 'ειδεν διαφθορανν]. (Acts 13: 36–37, NET)[67]

For Paul it is precisely Jesus' *bodily* resurrection that distinguishes him as the *eschatological* Messiah promised in Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 55:3:

> Therefore let it be known to you, brothers, that through this one [i.e. Jesus] forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by this one everyone who believes is justified from everything from which the law of Moses could not justify you. (Acts 13: 38–39, NET)

It is even more difficult to reconcile Hegel's philosophy of the body with an orthodox reading of the resurrected Jesus' words to the disciples in Luke 24:39: "Look at my hands and my feet; it's me! Touch me and see; a [spirit-πνευμα] does not have flesh and bones like you see I have."[68] Ironically, for all of Hegel's attempts to overcome "one-sidedness" and dualism in philosophy, his own philosophy of physicality does not appear to escape the ancient Hellenistic dichotomies between "body" and "spirit." When Hegel writes that "Man is immortal in consequence of knowledge, for it is only as a *thinking being* that he is not a mortal animal soul, and is a free, pure soul… The animal soul is sunk in the life of the body, while Spirit, on the other hand, is a totality in itself,"[69] he is decidedly Greek, and not Hebraic, in his understanding of the *unity* of body and spirit. For in Hebrew thought—and this is the thought-world that the authors of the New Testament came out of and which they continued and expanded—there could be no "person" *without* the *integration* of both body and spirit.[70] This is also the reason why the hope of ancient Jews and early Christians

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67. See also Peter's sermon in Acts 2, particularly 2:29–32.

68. NET, slightly modified by the author. The NET translates πνευμα as "ghost"; I have modified the verse in light of Hegel's emphasis on Spirit, or "*Geist*." Geist captures the Greek sense of πνευμα as "blowing, breathing, wind, spirit," but also can mean "mind"—which is where Hegel places much of his emphasis for understanding "Spirit." The problem, as discussed above, is that Hegel seems to emphasize the latter meaning of Geist in a dualistic and Gnostic sense. (see William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), 680ff., and Hodgson, 19).

69. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion,* vol. III, 58, with my emphasis.

70. This is the *leitmotif* of N. T. Wright's *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003).

was 'αναστασις—"resurrection"—*and not* 'αποθεωσις—the flight of the *soul*—and not the body—to live with the immortal gods.[71] The latter was, at least in (and for) the New Testament era, the one-sided hope of pagans.

Even more problematic is Hegel's explicit rejection of Christ's Second Advent, which he links with the Understanding's obsession with sensuous, "historical" knowledge. Indeed, he argues in part III of the *Lectures* on the "Kingdom of the Spirit" that this is *the* major problem with the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church has never been able to get beyond the "historical Jesus"—beyond his immediate existence and appearance in time. Hence, according to Hegel, the Catholic Church still relies on "sensuous knowledge" (which was really the same epistemology of the Enlightenment) to try to understand God. For the sensuous perception, however, the Present contains "Past" and "Future" as "moments" within itself and thus looks for Christ's *Second Coming* as the completion of reconciliation. Hegel states:

> The sensuous idea… integrates the Past, views it from the point of view of the whole, for it the Past is a one-sided moment; the Present contains the Past and the Future in it as moments. Thus the sensuous idea finds the *completion* of its representation in the Second Advent…[72]

Yet the Spiritual Community, (represented most notably within Protestantism; it is helpful to remember that Hegel was a Lutheran), in its *spiritual apprehension* of Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension to Heaven understood that "the essentially absolute return is the act of *exchanging externality for what is inward*: this is the Comforter who can come only when sensuous history as immediate is past."[73] Christ's return to the Father had enabled the coming of the Holy Spirit, and it is the coming of the Holy Spirit into the world—into Man's consciousness—that represents the *eschaton* to Hegel.

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71. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 57. 'Αποθεωσις *never* occurs in the New Testament; though this is not to deny that there were significant tributaries of Jewish practice and thought (e.g. Philo of Alexandria, the Saducees)—and later Christian communities—e.g. the Gnostics, that differed from this *mainstream* hope. I am also bracketing out the Eastern Orthodox Church's doctrine of *theosis* for discussion in this article.

72. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion,* vol. III, 104.

73. Ibid., 104.

Conclusion:
Hegel's Eschatology and Space for the Secular

As Barth, Pannenberg, and a host of other commentators have shown, the harvest that is to be reaped from Hegel's Christian philosophy is not un-mixed with tares. This is particularly so of his eschatology. There seem to have been two main stumbling blocks for Hegel in translating orthodox Christian eschatology into modern philosophical thought; stumbling blocks which he shared with both the ancient and modern world.[74] First, the Christian conception of bodily resurrection and a post-mortem "*transphysical body*"—(i.e. a *transformed* physicality)—of a body that is incapable of dying and putrefying, that can be touched, felt, handled; that can eat fish and drink wine,[75] but at the same time does not appear to be bound by the same limits of space and time as our bodies[76]—simply defies *most*[77] ancient and Modern ontological categories. The Gospels' rather *apophatic* portrayal of the resurrected Jesus' body—his resurrected body

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74. See for instance Acts 17:31–32 and the reaction to Paul in Athens when he mentions the resurrection from the dead. Cf. Celsus' critique of the Christian hope of *bodily* resurrection:

> …Which body after its complete decay could return to its original nature and to that same first composition from which it was dissolved? Having nothing to answer, they have recourse to a most absurd retreat: 'All is possible to God.' But God can do no shameful things, nor does he will anything contrary to nature. If you were to desire something disgusting in accord with your depravity, God could not do this, and it is not necessary to believe that it will immediately happen… For God is not the originator of wrongful desire or wandering excess but of right and just nature. He could grant everlasting life but as Heraclitus says, 'Corpses should be cast out even more than dung.' Therefore a body, full of things it is not pretty to describe, God would not against reason either will or be able [δυνησεται] to make everlasting. For he is himself the reason [λογος] of all things that exist; therefore he can do nothing against reason or against himself.

(From John Granger Cook, *The Interpretation of the New Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2000), 17). For a modern view, see Hume's *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*—"On Miracles." See also Wright's analysis of both ancient and modern rejections of bodily resurrection, which is exhaustive.

75. See Luke 24:39–43; Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God*, 477–478; 605.

76. See John 20:26 and Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God*, 605.

77. Wright argues that the Jews were the only people in the ancient world to believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead, and that the first century Christian belief in bodily resurrection

is decidedly *not* like our empirically verified physicality—proved to be beyond the limits of Hegel's *ontotheology*. Hegel also seems to have shied away from embracing the orthodox belief in Jesus' bodily resurrection in order to defend himself against Humean empiricst attacks against the Church's apologetic emphasis on the historicity of the miracles recorded in the New Testament. Epistemologically, Hegel warns, " …some objection can always be brought against the material facts."[78] However, in the Jewish conception of salvation—which the New Testament follows, though in remarkable new ways[79]—there is no salvation if there is no saving of the body—whether from Egyptian slavery, or from the moldering decay of the grave. Yet Hegel's view of the Incarnation as *only* "a passing, disappearing moment" in the Trinity undercuts the orthodox understanding of Christ's *bodily* resurrection as God's "Amen!" to the creation and human physicality.

The other major stumbling block to Hegel—and Modernity—is the Christian hope of Christ's physical return at the "end of the age" to rule as Lord of the world. In some ways this is understandable. Christian "apocalyptism" and "millennialism" has, taken out of context and to extremes, led to terrible events in world history—the Crusades immediately come to mind. The young Hegel was correct to point out that in the history of Christianity the terrifying images of the book of Revelation had often been used to *coerce* faith through fear, and this is not the freedom offered in the Good News of Jesus Christ.[80] And yet, Hegel's rejection of Christ's return ultimately negates Christianity's de-limitation of the Secular and its use of what Foucault identified as "power-knowledge systems" and the coercive force available through technology (e.g. "drones," "smart

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was a continuance of a particularly Jewish and not Hellenistic hope. (*Resurrection of the Son of God*, passim.)

78. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion,* vol. III, 110. The New Testament actually anticipates Hume and Hegel here—and seems little troubled by empirical doubts—see Matthew 28:17.

79. Wright argues that in the Christian hope of bodily resurrection the specific, *nationalistic*, and *political* hopes of ancient Jewish salvation become sublated to the hope of the resurrection and redemption of all who are saved by the gospel; that rather than focusing simply on the "promised land," after Jesus' resurrection, God's focus is now to redeem the entire world. (Cf. John 3:16; *Resurrection of the Son of God*, passim.)

80. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion,* vol. III, 113. See also Peter Fuss and John Dobbins, ed. and trans., *Three Essays, 1793–1795: The Tubingen Essay, Berne Fragments, The Life of Jesus by Friedrich Hegel*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 77.

bombs," etc.) to maintain order.[81] As John Milbank has pointed out, Hegel's philosophy—and I would argue especially his conception of eschatology—leaves too much space for the secular to continue to operate unchanged and unchallenged by Christian orthodoxy.[82] One wonders, for instance, how Hegel's view of the body as "*unessential*" might be brought to bear philosophically and theologically to combat "enhanced interrogation" by the State? It would appear that this is one of the "realms of indifference" identified by Milbank within Hegel's philosophical system.[83] From the view of Christian orthodoxy Hegel is too indifferent to the radical evil of mortality—and to God's radical solution to this evil. Christian doctrine presents the phenomena of death not as something *neutral*, or benignly *natural*—but rather as something *accidental* resulting from the Fall (cf. Gen. 2:17, 3:19, 22; Romans 5:12, I Cor. 15:26)—and something which will ultimately be *un*done with the return of Christ (cf. I Cor. 15, I Thess. 4:16–17,[84] Rev. 20:14).

In sum, Hegel's philosophical eschatology may be seen as a part of the modern transformation of pre-modern orthodoxy's understanding of the *saeculum* as a *time* between the Fall and Christ's return, into the "secular," a *domain* and *space* where god/religion is not present.[85] I am not arguing that this was Hegel's intention, but rather that Hegel's understanding of philosophy as "*its own time comprehended in thoughts*"[86] had so imbibed the modern conception of the *secular* that it undercut the key political insight offered by pre-modern, orthodox Christian eschatology: Governments' use of coercive force to maintain justice was a consequence of the Fall and *temporarily*

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81. Michel Foucault famously referred to the relationship between power and knowing in modernity as "*pouvoir-savoir*" in his 1975 history of modern prison systems, *Discipline and Punish*. See Focault, *Surveiller et Punishir: Naissance de la prison* (Gallimard, nrf, 1975), 32.

82. See John Milbank's *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2006), "For And Against Hegel," pgs. 147–176.

83. Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, especially 160–161.

84. Wright's exegesis of these dense verses is very helpful; he argues that Paul is using apocalyptic echoes of Daniel 7 to describe Jesus' *parousia*—and not suggesting that Christians would actually become space cadets when Christ returns. See pgs. 214–218 of *Resurrection of the Son of God*.

85. See Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, Chapter 1.

86. G. W. F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed., Allen W. Wood, trans., H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 21.

necessary to restrain the evil effects of sin.[87] In this sense, government and the sword were a grace in the *saeculum* (cf. Romans 13:1–7). Yet on the orthodox view, Christ's Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection was and is the beginning of the end of the *saeculum* and the inauguration of the reign of the Kingdom of God on earth. The world—the universe—have been irrevocably changed, and henceforth the *saeculum* can no longer be simply a time of punitive justice and negative freedom from evil. For God's Kingdom works *positively* though grace, love, and sacrifice—the exact opposites of the kingdoms of the *saeculum*. The pagan world had no conception of an "end" to the *saeculum*—theirs was a cyclical conception of time. And thus pagans could also not conceive of an end to the coercive use of power and force by the State. It is the Christian good news of the resurrection and return of the "Son-of-God-in-power,"[88] Jesus Christ, and His victory over Sin, Death, and Hades—that makes peace among the nations not only possible, but an actuality obtainable in the present. Thus Christian eschatology proclaims the end of Empire. It was and is a dangerous message to Caesar both then and now.[89]

Perhaps ultimately Hegel's failure to achieve a lasting rapprochement between secular philosophy and Christian eschatology is not solely attributable to his dialectic, but rather to the very nature of eschatology *itself*. For eschatology lays bare the *essential* teleologies of secular and Christian self-conceptions. Historically these essential teleologies have refused reconciliation. For the former proclaims that the eschaton *has arrived* with the Enlightenment, through scientific rationality, through secular conceptions of politics and economics. The latter proclaims that the *status quo* of this "present age" (cf. Luke 16:8)[90]—even with its remarkable intellectual and scientific progress—can never be a substitute for the "Kingdom of God" *on earth*. Despite a heroic effort, Hegel could not reconcile these two self-conceptions and thus his philosophical project satisfied neither modern philosophers of the 19th century nor their orthodox

87. Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 9.

88. Romans 1:4, NET; see also Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God*.

89. A point that N. T. Wright makes powerfully throughout *The Resurrection of the Son of God*.

90. Jesus uses the Jewish idiom of the "two ages" to distinguish the people of "this age" (ʻοι ʻυιοι του ʼαιωνος τουτου) from the people of the eschatological "age to come"—cf. Luke 16:9.

Christian contemporaries. Yet Hegel's failure may not be simply attributable to a refusal of secular and Christian thinkers to allow their eschatological visions to be harmoniously reconciled. It may be that these two visions *are* irreconcilable.

Textual Healing: Reading Inherited Texts and Traumas as Martyrdom

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The two witnesses of Revelation 11 have been identified in many ways over the centuries. I argue here that they should—based upon the language of the passage and the function of the figures in context—be read primarily as Moses and Elijah, especially insofar as they represent the developing ideal corpus of "the Law and the Prophets," and also insofar as both are traditionally associated with prophecy, eschatological hope, and honorary exemptions from normal corporeal death. I argue that these various traditional associations are being brought together in Revelation 11, in a way that makes the symbolic figures of Moses and Elijah ideal chess pieces within the book's larger game plan of defining the nature and victory of proper "witness."

Read in this way, the witnesses serve Revelation's controlling vision of the "witness of Jesus" and the meaning of the world itself as fully revealed and legible only through "scripture" (i.e. scrolls). They also anchor that vision within the developing popular early Christian habit of reading holy writing and public suffering in terms of each other. Specifically, Moses and Elijah, by being associated with scriptural and prophetic witness to the world on the one hand, and with harsh or spectacular ways of leaving that world on the other (including the intersection of the two, as in other Apocalypses and the *Lives of the Prophets*), help Revelation reframe poverty and/or persecution as "scriptural witness." In the right context (including the literal sense of having the right framing texts before and after), being silenced can thus be understood as a kind of talking—a prophetic witness. The two witnesses as Moses and Elijah (representing the "witness" of both "prophecy" and "the Law and the Prophets"), in the context of other traditional and scholarly interpretations

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Introduction: The text and its context in Revelation

> I was told… "I will grant my two witnesses authority to prophesy for one thousand two hundred sixty days, wearing sackcloth." These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. And if anyone wants to harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes; anyone who wants to harm them must be killed in this manner. They have authority to shut the sky, so that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have authority over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire. When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that is prophetically called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. For three and a half days members of the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb; and the inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and celebrate and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to the inhabitants of the earth. But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and those who saw them were terrified. Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here!" And they went up to heaven in a cloud while their enemies watched them. At that moment there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven (Revelation 11:1–13, NRSV).

The figures referred to as "the two witnesses" (*tois dusin martusin*) appear only in this passage, in chapter 11. At this point in the book, the churches to which Revelation is specifically addressed have received their specific promises and threats (2:1–3:22), and the focus has widened to reveal the God of "all things" (4:11; 5:13) inaugurating a more general, cosmic judgment (6:3, 7, 12–16). The Lamb has appeared to open God's mysterious and powerful scroll of doom (5:1–6:17), since the "great day of their wrath has come" (6:17). The righteous have been identified and promised salvation (7:1–17), and "woe, woe, woe" promised to the rest (8:13), who would not and will not repent (9:21). These promises of vindication and salvation for some, and escalating woe for others, will soon be spelled out and fulfilled in the book's remaining chapters, as God's judgment is revealed (12:1–22:21). As chapter 11 begins, however, this judgment has just begun, and in that context John has been given a little scroll to eat (10:8–10), and commanded

to "prophesy again about many peoples and nations and languages and kings" (10:11).

Moving in from the level of the book to the level of the chapter, we find that Revelation 11 further reveals the inauguration of the eschatological judgment just described, with specific reference to God's judgment of "the nations" (11:2). These nations who have "raged" against God (11:18) now violently defile both his Temple (11:2) and his two witnesses (11:9), and must face his "wrath" (11:18). According to the logic of the text, then, the story of the mission, murder and humiliation, and subsequent vindication of the two witnesses can be said to announce and inaugurate divine judgment even as it underlines its divine justice of that judgment. The spectacularly bad way in which the nations treat God's witnesses just proves that they deserve the very judgment to which those witnesses testify. The fact that the two witnesses thereby participate in making the judgment stick, and are then granted the equal but opposite divine justice of a vindication every bit as spectacular as their victimization, shows that in the end even the senseless violence of the evil nations works against them for good, within the apocalyptic logic and plan of "witness" as portrayed in Revelation.

1. The two witnesses as Moses and Elijah (representing the "witness" of both "prophecy" and "the Law and the Prophets"), in the context of other traditional and scholarly interpretations

As I mentioned above, the two witnesses have been interpreted in many ways over the centuries.[1] These identifications include James and John,[2] Peter and Paul,[3] and John the beloved disciple (based on an eschatological reading of John 21:23),[4] or future Christian leaders.[5] They have been

1. See, for example, the wide range of traditional and scholarly readings summarized by David E. Aune (*Revelation. Volume 2: Revelation 6–16*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 601–602.

2. Primasius, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* 11.3. See W. Weinrich, ed., *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. New Testament XII. Revelation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 159.

3. Aune, *Revelation*, 601.

4. Pseudo-Hippolytus, *On the End of the World, the Antichrist and the Second Coming*, 21. See Weinrich, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, 158.

5. Aune, *Revelation*, 601–602; See also J. Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation. Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), 178–179.

identified with Enoch and Elijah,[6] and other similar ancient authorities like Jeremiah.[7] In less personal terms, the witnesses have also been identified as ancient scriptures written and new gospel preached, the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, scripture defined as the Law and the Prophets, fallen Israel vindicated, and the witness of the Christian Church itself.[8] Enoch and Elijah were the clear front runners in the earliest ecclesiastical laps of this interpretive race,[9] but Moses and Elijah have taken the lead in the most recent scholarly laps.[10]

I have already cast my vote for Moses and Elijah in this race, as representing both prophets and "the Law and the Prophets."[11] This option makes the most sense to me for three reasons, which I will name together here and elaborate individually below: 1) At the level of the chapter, personal identification with Moses and Elijah suits the specific nature and details of the witnesses' miraculous ministry. 2) At the level of the book, the association of Moses and Elijah as established symbols of prophetic and scriptural "witness" with violent death and divine vindication suits Revelation's program of defining "witness" in emphatic and interdependent *eschatological/apocalyptic, scriptural*, *prophetic*, and *martyrological* terms. 3) A reading of the two witnesses as Moses and Elijah, Law and Prophets, does not exclude and can in fact accommodate within itself the best of the other readings just mentioned, insofar as they too relate to Revelation's overall program of defining "witness" in scriptural, prophetic and martyrological terms.

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6. Tertullian, *On the Soul* 50; Hippolytus, *On Christ and the Antichrist* 46.3–4; Pseudo-Hippolytus, *On the End of the World* 21; Augustine, *Epistle* 193.3; Oecumenius, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* 11.3–6. See Aune, *Revelation*, 599; Weinrich, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, 159.

7. Victorinus, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* 11.3. See Aune, *Revelation*, 601–602; Weinrich, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, 158.

8. Tyconius, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* 11.3; Primasius, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* 11.3; See Aune, *Revelation*, 602; *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, 158–160; Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation*, 181.

9. Aune, *Revelation*, 599.

10. Ibid., 600.

11. As for example in N. Frye, with J. MacPherson, *Biblical and Classical Myths. The Mythological Framework of Western Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 150; A. Trites, *The New Testament Concept of Witness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977),167.

1.1 The nature and details of the two witnesses' miraculous ministry

In his summary of the history of interpretation of Revelation 11, David E. Aune notes, along with ancient commentator Andreas of Caesarea (*Commentary on the Apocalypse* 11:3–4), that "most" patristic interpreters thought the witnesses represented Enoch and Elijah, mostly because of their shared honorary exemption in Hebrew Bible tradition from normal human death.[12] This tradition is illustrated in the way that the *Apocalypse of Elijah*, for example, identifies its own two witnesses from heaven (who are martyred and exposed for three days in the street before being vindicated by resurrection and ascension) by name as Enoch and Elijah, drawing on Revelation and/or a third shared traditional source.[13]

"Most modern scholars, on the other hand," Aune continues, prefer to read the two witnesses as Moses and Elijah, mostly because of the nature of the miracles they perform.[14] This seems sensible to me. The power to inflict "plagues," including the "authority over the waters to turn them into blood" (11:6), certainly recalls the plagues inflicted upon the Egyptians through Moses, including the turning of their water into blood (Exodus 7:17). The power to "shut the sky, so that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying" (11:6), which lasts three and a half years (11:3), likewise recalls the great drought created by the "word" of Elijah (1 Kings 17:1), which later Christian tradition specified to have lasted three and a half years (Luke 4:25; James 5:17). Finally, when it is said of the two witnesses that fire comes out of "their mouth" (singular because their witness is somehow identical?)[15] to destroy their enemies, it similarly recalls the fire called down from heaven by Moses (Exodus 9:23) and Elijah (2 Kings 1:9–16). The fusion of such power and fire imagery here, and the implicit association of a prophetic power of timely judgment with the timeless power of prophetic speech and testimony, look to me like examples of the kind of associative memory that led Jesus ben Sirach to assert that "Elijah arose as a prophet

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12. Apoc 11:3–4; Aune, *Revelation*, 599.

13. See Aune, *Revelation*, 588–589; H. Giesen, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1997), 253; J. Jeremias, "Helias," in *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* Vol. 2 (Edited by Gerhard Kittel. Translated by Georffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 939–940.

14. Aune, *Revelation*, 600.

15. Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation*, 171.

like fire (*prophetes hos pur*), and his word burns (*ekaieto*) like a torch" (Sirach 48:1).

Of course, ancient commentators were presumably aware of these same traditions and sources, so the "modern" shift Aune notes toward interpreting the two witnesses as Moses and Elijah may have more to do with modern interpreters being better informed about, and/or better disposed toward, ascension traditions for Moses as well as for Enoch and Elijah. For such modern interpreters, the ancient "widespread belief that a prophet like Moses, or even Moses *redivivus*, would appear as an eschatological figure at the end of the age"[16] noted by Aune could be read as working hand-in-hand with an ancient belief that Moses never really died a normal human death at all (based on "pseudepigraphic" traditions imperfectly preserved in texts like *The Assumption of Moses*).[17] So for example in discussing the significance of the ascension of the vindicated two witnesses on their cloud (11:12), J. Massyngberde Ford assumes assumption to be the traditional common reward of Elijah and Moses,[18] and Ben Witherington assumes that the two witnesses are associated with Christian martyrs in their resurrection, and with Enoch, Moses and Elijah in their ascension.[19]

Reading the two witnesses' suggestion of the figure of Enoch in this way has the added advantage of not needing to interpret the allusion, as Northrop Frye does, in terms of "a certain confusion in the New Testament and elsewhere between Moses and the figure in Genesis… who is said not to have died."[20] The figure of Enoch is indeed present and significant in Revelation 11, and the resulting reference to Elijah, Enoch, *and* Moses all at once is only "confused" in the literal sense of offering several traditions fused together. In the next section I will show that this associative and symbolic fusion is in fact an essential part of the text's symbolic strategy, making the two witnesses serve Revelation's larger project of defining true "witness" in an associative, fusional way.

16. Aune, *Revelation*, 600.
17. See, for example, Frye, *Great Code* 180.
18. Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation*, 181.
19. B. Witherington III, *Revelation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 159.
20. Frye, *Biblical and Classical Myths*, 113.

1.2 Associating Moses and Elijah (as established symbols of prophetic and scriptural "witness") with violent death and divine vindication, within Revelation's program of defining "witness" in eschatological/apocalyptic, scriptural, prophetic, and martyrological terms

The public vindication of the two murdered witnesses on their heavenly cloud does not only associate them with Moses (and Enoch) and Elijah. It also associates them with Jesus the "faithful witness" (Rev 1:5) and the similarly martyred and vindicated Lamb of God: "Look! He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and on his account all the tribes of the earth shall wail" (Rev 1:5). The vindicating resurrection and ascension of the two witnesses thus associates them with comparable traditions about Jesus' death, resurrection (Luke 24:1–7), and ascension (Acts 1:9) generally, and specifically with Revelation's account of Jesus the Lamb's witness in terms of testimony, martyrdom, vindication and judgment. This association helps establish Revelation's claim that "the witness of Jesus *is* the spirit of prophecy" (19:10), and that this specific "witness" embraces martyrs of/like Jesus as well as the "prophecy" of Israel's traditional figures and scriptures.

By fusing these examples of "witness," the visionary logic of Revelation 11 makes the book's grammatical and allusive equation of the martyrdom/witness of Jesus and the martyrdom/witness for Jesus[21] (*marturia Iesou*—Rev 1:9; 19:10) explicit, and further equates this prophetic witness with the witness of "scripture." Comparable traditions assert *narratively* that Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension are in line with the witness of "Moses and all the prophets" (Luke 24:27). Revelation here asserts the relationship in a literary, symbolic way, in keeping with what has been called the book's "literary logic."[22] The witness of Jesus, the witness to Jesus, the witness of prophecy, the witness of scripture, and the witness of martyrdom are all identical here, an identity sealed in blood as Moses and Elijah return to partake directly in the "witness" of martyrdom to which they are seen as testifying in their prophetic and scriptural witness. In Section 3, I will discuss just how deep and controlling the "scriptural" element is in

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21. Trites, *The New Testament Concept of Witness*, 156–157.

22. D. deSilva, *Seeing Things John's Way. The Rhetoric of the Book of Revelation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 285–312.

this symbolic "witness" equation. Before going into the evidence for, and implications of, this part of my reading in detail, though, I want to conclude my identification of Moses and Elijah (as prophets and Law and Prophets) as the best reading of the two witnesses by noting briefly the implications of such a reading when it comes to evaluating *other* attractive readings, such as those mentioned in my introduction.

1.3 Accommodating the best other readings

Reading the two witnesses in the terms just described has an added advantage, in that it makes room for other good readings insofar as they too square with Revelation's program of defining proper witness in eschatological, scriptural, prophetic, and martyrological terms. It thus acknowledges the fact that the two witnesses already exist in something of a quantum symbolic state: if they can die in a city that is Rome and Sodom and Egypt and Jerusalem all at once (Rev 11:8), there is no reason why they cannot themselves be Moses and Elijah, Enoch, the Law and the Prophets, the "true Israel," the "true Church," and persecuted heroes past and future as well. They are already both trees and lampstands as well (11:4). Reading the two witnesses in this way thus places them within Revelation's larger symbolic, associative quantum logic, and allows them their full symbolically associative power.

The example just given of Enoch is illustrative here. Enoch never burned his enemies with fire, caused a miraculous drought, or turned water to blood, but over the centuries he has been dependably and meaningfully associated with the two witnesses. If the "true Israel" or "the Church" or any other "persecuted" hero could be successfully associated with eschatology and scripture as Enoch was (through, as we will see, traditions like those preserved in the *Book of Enoch*), and then also associated with the witness of martyrdom, as Enoch would be in Revelation 11 (returning to trade in his traditional deathless translation for a martyr's death and resurrected ascension), they could be just as reasonably and meaningfully associated with Revelation's two witnesses as Enoch. In the next section, I will focus on the way in this flexible and associative cluster of "witness" ideas makes sense in the context of early Christian culture.

2. Thinking with scrolls and martyrs, in the context of early Christian culture

Revelation represents an extreme example of the early Christian habit of thinking with scriptures. "Every passage in the Book of Revelation is a dense mosaic of allusions to and echoes from the Old Testament," Frye writes.[23] Albert Vanhoye has quantified this general impression by counting 518 Old Testament references in Revelation's 404 verses.[24] Even the *mistakes* in the book's language[25] look significant from this point of view, since the "Semitisms" in its Greek often defy Semitic syntax as well, and can be better identified as scripturally fixated "Septuagintalisms."[26] Some, like Massyngberde Ford, have seen this tendency as evidence that the book was originally a (non-Christian) Jewish work,[27] but as Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza notes in reviewing the career of this idea, it has not proved to be generally convincing or necessary.[28] A Christian Revelation would be just as happy and able with such allusions.[29] As Averil Cameron documented in her study of early Christian discourse, written scriptures were extremely—possibly even uniquely—important to most early Christians, including those who seldom saw them personally,[30] and this attitude toward texts naturally included Old Testament texts.

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23. Frye, *Biblical and Classical Myths*, 235.

24. A. Vanhoye, "L'utilisation du livre d'Ezéchiel dans l'Apocalypse," *Biblica* 43 (1962), 436–476.

25. See D. Mathewson, *Verbal Aspect in the Book of Revelation. The Function of Verb Tenses in John's Apocalypse* (Boston: Brill, 2010), 1–2; E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation. Justice and Judgment* (2nd ed. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 15; A. Yarbro Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis: the Power of the Apocalypse* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984), 47; A. Callahan, "The Language of the Apocalypse," *HTR* 88 (1995), 453–457; G. Beale, *John's Use of the Old Testament in Revelation* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988), 318–355; Aune, *Revelation*, 578; S. Thompson, *The Apocalypse and Semitic Syntax* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 1–7.

26. See D. Schmidt, "Semitisms and Septuagintalisms in the Book of Revelation," *NTS* 37 (1991), 596.

27. Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation*, 3–4, 22–26.

28. Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation*, 25.

29. See J. Fekkes, *Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation: Visionary Antecedents and their Development* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 13, 37–57.

30. A. Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: the Development of Christian Discourse* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 109.

> Christians not only produced an increasing amount and variety of written material, even in the early stage when followers of the religion formed only the tiniest of minorities, but also gave their written texts a special status. Even the illiterate will have been aware from the oral teaching, which was so prominent a part of early Christianity, that religious texts mattered. Fundamentally, neither they nor the classically educated converts were able to ignore the Old Testament.[31]

In this kind of developing Christian cultural context, the intense scriptural interest noticed in Revelation by scholars like those just mentioned is perfectly understandable, and even predictable. It seems to me, though, that this scholarly insight needs to be refined in two ways, for our purposes here. First, there is no good reason to assume with those scholars that Revelation's scriptural interest is limited to the rather loosely defined (especially in the first century) family of texts that I have been following them in calling the Old Testament. How much higher would Vanhoye's high numbers jump, for example, if he included possible references to any other written Apocalypse? I will argue that in fact Revelation looks equally and significantly interested in such traditions, as well as in other popular traditions of the first century, such as those preserved in *The Lives of the Prophets*. Second, it should be remembered explicitly that in the first century "scripture" did not mean "books" (since the codex form we know so well today had not yet been popularized),[32] but rather traditional revealed words preserved in *scrolls*. I will argue that Revelation's fascination with scripture in defining "witness" therefore takes the shape of 1) a controlling dependence upon traditional revealed written words and 2) a controlling fascination with the image of the scroll itself.

2.1 Revelation's controlling dependence on the witness of scripture

The allusive "dense mosaic" method of "every passage" in Revelation results in the writer letting existing scriptural patterns speak for him as much as possible. Even the visual spectacle of the book, with its famous monsters and battles, is actually textually allusive in nature, as pointed out in typological readings like Frye's: "The author speaks of setting down what he has seen in a vision, but the Book of Revelation is not a visualized

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31. Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire*, 210.

32. C. Roberts and T. Skeat, *The Birth of the Codex* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 15–22.

book in the ordinary sense of the word, as any illustrator who has struggled with its seven-headed and ten-horned monsters will testify. What the seer in Patmos had a vision of was primarily, as he conceived it, the true meaning of the Scriptures… whatever or however he saw on Patmos."[33] The visual ambiguities involved in putting ten horns on seven heads are irrelevant to the clarity of Revelation's textual "vision," wherein beastly heads and horns "appear" in traditional textual terms, as written political metaphors re-reading and re-writing apocalyptic texts like Daniel 7 and Enoch 90.

If stable and clear visual impressions had really been crucial to understanding its visions, Revelation could have included illustrations, as some descriptive scientific scrolls of the first century had already begun to do.[34] Instead, Revelation paints textual pictures with such shifting spatial and temporal perspectives (including within the "very confused"[35] short narrative passage of Revelation 11)[36] that an illustrator who really tried to obey the text's order to avoid removing or adding a single thing (Rev 22:18–19) would be forced to invent a genre of cubist comics just to keep up, and it does so with constant reference to existing textual visions. Revelation's text-fascinated idea of "seers" and "visions" is clearly more oracular than ocular.[37] In later centuries, the book had a spectacular career in the visual arts, but its first-century vision was built for "readers" and "hearers" to see.[38] "Blessed is the one who reads," it begins, "and blessed are the ones who hear" (1:3). Comics and stained glass windows are simply not in the picture yet.

Where, then, does Revelation's scriptural fascination come into the picture when reading its idea of witness and its two witnesses? The answer

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33. N. Frye, *The Great Code. The Bible and Literature* (2nd ed. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982), 135.

34. See R. Recht, *L'image médiévale: Le livre enluminé* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 2010), 34–35.

35. Mathewson, *Verbal Aspect in the Book of Revelation*, 137.

36. See Aune 585–586; Mathewson, *Verbal Aspect in the Book of Revelation*, 117, 140–143.

37. The fact that most early Christians would have been hearing these words read, rather than reading them to themselves (See Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire*, 109) is presumably also extremely important, even within the rhetoric of the text itself (See, for example, Revelation 1:3). Unfortunately, I simply do not have room to explore this "auricular" dimension of Revelation's oracular textuality here.

38. See E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Apocalypse* (Chicago: Fransisco Herald Press, 1976), 8.

is everywhere. First of all, the very idea of scripture as witness looks like an idea derived from scripture's witness to itself. According to Deuteronomy 31:24–26, the Book of the Law contains revealed words "written in a book to the very end," in order to be a "witness" (LXX *marturion*) against sin. Reciting these words calls all heaven and earth to "witnesses" (LXX *diamarturomai*) against sinners (Deut 31:28). Written prophetic visions can also be sealed by faithful witnesses (Isaiah 8:2, LXX *marturas*, see also 8:16) and "written in a book" in order to be "a witness forever" (Isaiah 30:8). The written Law is therefore "the witness of the Lord" (Psalm 19:7, LXX *marturia kuriou*) and the tent in which it is kept can therefore be called the "tent of witness," as in Exodus 33:6 (LXX *skene marturio*)—a scriptural image and Greek phrase known to Revelation (Rev 15:5).

Revelation's definition of witness in terms of scripture, prophecy, martyrdom, and wrath is itself scriptural. Zechariah, for example, associates the witness of the Law against sin with the witness of the prophets, with the result of divine wrath: "They made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts" (Zech 7:12). Nehemiah similarly associates the witnesses of the law and the witness of the prophets with each other, and then with divine judgment in the context of prophetic martyrdom, referring to those who "rebelled against you, and cast your law behind their backs, and slew your prophets who witnessed against them" (LXX *diamarturanto*, Neh 9:26).

In the context of traditions like these, Revelation's general idea of witness looks as dependent upon "scripture" as its specific language. The simple fact that chapter 11 specifies two witnesses (*dusin martusin*) looks "scriptural" itself, since a legal accusation of breaking God's scriptural law requires, scripturally speaking, "two witnesses" (LXX *dusin martusin*, Deuteronomy 17:6—See also 19:15; Numbers 35:20). Their witness against the nations is therefore not only scripturally shaped in narrative terms—it is legally binding in scripturally technical terms. The fact that these scriptural witnesses are then further associated with scripture by being associated specifically with Moses and Elijah ties the symbolic knot even tighter, as Revelation's quantum strategy of fusional, associative identity culminates in the final, infinitely articulable fusion of tangled multiple bonds.

I have suggested that this associative "scriptural" strategy in Revelation makes sense within an early Christian context. I will conclude this section

with some specific examples, and describe the way Revelation thickens the final associative line sketched above by Zechariah, between scriptural prophetic witness and martyrdom. It is well known that the traditions of Jesus' person, message, life, death and resurrection were consistently understood by early Christians in the light of "the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 5:17; 11:13; 22:40; Luke 16:16; John 1:45). This was often phrased in terms of a specific association with the writing "of Moses" (Luke 24:27; John 1:45; Acts 28:23). The story of Jesus was therefore something "witnessed to" (*marturoumene*) in "the Law and the Prophets" (Romans 3:21), and when a martyr like Stephen spoke as a "witness" (*marturomenos*), he was therefore "saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come" (Acts 26:22). Jesus could even be seen as receiving the personal endorsement of Moses and Elijah, through their presence at his transfiguration (Matthew 17:3; Mark 9:4; Luke 9:30).

In discussing Revelation's strategy of linking scriptural witness to martyrdom, it must be noted that these associations of Jesus with the witness of the prophets is made in the context, scripturally and historically speaking, of a traditional association of prophets with martyrdom (Matthew 23:29, 30, 31, 37; Luke 11:47, 50; 13:34). The suffering and death of Christ and Christians are therefore read and rhetorically constructed in the light of the witness of prophetic writings and prophetic persecution (Matthew 5:12; 17:12; 25:56; Mark 9:12; Luke 6:23; 24:27), in a tight textual web.[39] In the transfiguration story, for example, this web of context asserts itself in the disciples' questions about it being written (for example in Malachi 4:5) that Elijah must come as a witness to the end (Matthew 17:10; Mark 9:11), and Jesus' answer that he has come and suffered martyrdom (Matthew 17:12; Mark 9:13), just "as it is written about him" (Mark 9:13).

It is worth noticing that whether Jesus' answer about Elijah being martyred according to the scriptures represents a lost scripture or a lost way of reading, a prophet-scripture-martyr contextual web is clearly evident.

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39. See G. Nickelsberg, "The Genre and Function of the Markan Passion Narrative," *Harvard Theological Review* 73 (1980), 153–184; A. Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: the Development of Christian Discourse* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); E. Bradshaw Aitken, *Jesus' Death in Early Christian Memory: the Poetics of the Passion* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004); C. Moss, *The Other Christs. Imitating Jesus in Ancient Christian Ideologies of Martyrdom* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2010).

This tight web of context is also evident in other Gospel sayings on prophets. In Matthew 23:34, Jesus says, "I will send you prophets, sages and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify." In Luke 11:49, he says, "The Wisdom of God said, 'I will send them prophets… some of whom they will kill and persecute.'" Matthew specifically associates the witness of prophets and martyrdom with "scribes," and Luke introduces the saying as if Jesus were quoting from a scripture that is now lost. Even in their disagreement, then, Matthew and Luke agree with each other and with Revelation that the witness of prophecy is associated intimately and explicitly with both the witness of scripture and the witness of martyrdom.

The context I have tried to suggest here is also suggested by the surviving witness of extrabiblical traditions. The association is even made in explicit terms of "witness" in the book of Jubilees: "And I will send to them witnesses so that I may witness to them, but they will not hear. They will even kill the witnesses" (*Jubilees* 1:12). It is also evident in the traditions preserved in *The Lives of the Prophets*, traditions very close in time to Revelation,[40] very popular with early Christians,[41] and very interested in instances of prophetic martyrdom.[42] Although named for the prophets' "Lives," this work is much more interested in their deaths, as its subtitle suggests: "The names of the prophets, and where they are from, and where they died and how, and where they lie." As with the two witnesses of Revelation, we as readers are not actually told anything they said. When one is a "prophet" in this context, dying says enough. Being silenced in the right context speaks the witness.

The guiding interest of the *Lives of the Prophets* in "where they died and how, and where they lie" suggests the context of prophet-martyr veneration, as do the Gospel references to the witness of prophets in terms of bloody martyrdoms and fine tombs (Matthew 23:29–35; Luke 11:47–51). It is assumed in this context that knowing or going where a prophet is buried can somehow help one hear his witness. This is a crucial point for our purposes here, since it highlights the fact that for the two witnesses of Revelation, the

40. D. Hare, "The Lives of the Prophets. A New Translation and Introduction," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. 2 (Edited by James H. Charlesworth. Garden City: Doubleday, 1983), 380–381.

41. Hare, "The Lives of the Prophets," 380–381.

42. Ibid., 381, 383.

lack of any decent burial is equally significant. Like the Lamb, the witnesses are a dumb spectacle, gazed at in death's humiliation (1:7; 11:10), and then in resurrection's vindication (1:7; 11:12). Their enemies "gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb" (11:9), in order to "gloat over them" (11:10).

By depicting the exposure of the corpses of the martyred witnesses, Revelation further associates them with the potential suffering and humiliation of real-world martyrdom, since the way corpses were treated was an equally meaningful and public part of a Roman execution.[43] Exposure was "deeply shaming"[44] and could even harm people after the death of their bodies.[45] The funeral of a hero might therefore (as in the case of Augustus) hide the body and show a wax dummy,[46] whereas on the other hand "the bodies of those killed in the arena would, in deliberate and violent contravention of all Jewish, Ancient Near Eastern, Greek and Roman funerary proprieties be either dumped in potter's fields to be eaten by dogs or simply thrown in the Tiber to bloat and rot. The dead bodies were abused as much, and as deliberately, as the living ones."[47] This is the Roman context of posthumous violence and humiliation that makes it significant when the account of Polycarp's martyrdom records that the authorities refused him burial,[48] or when Eusebius remembers that the "bodies of the martyrs" of Lyons were "in every way exhibited and exposed."[49]

It is worth remembering that when Sejanus was executed under Tiberius for treason, his body is said to have been left unburied for three days,[50] and that Augustus is said to have been infamous at the beginning of his career for mutilating the bodies of his dead enemies, and denying them

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43. D. Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 13–14.

44. J. Davies, *Death, Burial, and Rebirth in the Religions of Antiquity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 141; See also Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation*, 172.

45. J. Toynbee, *Death and Burial in the Roman World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), 43.

46. Davies, *Death, Burial, and Rebirth*, 147; Toynbee, *Death and Burial in the Roman World*, 58.

47. Davies, *Death, Burial, and Rebirth*, 184; See also Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*, 13, 250.

48. *The Martyrdom of Polycarp* 17:2.

49. *Martyrs of Lyons* 1.62. See also Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome* 160, 247–248, 251–253.

50. C. Wells, *The Roman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984), 107.

the right of proper burial, preferring to continue the violence by leaving the problem of their disposal in "the power of the birds."[51] Violence and shame could even be inflicted through the "abuse" of disrespectful literary exposure, as when Lucan subjects Pompey's unburied body parts to the "double outrage" of becoming a "voyeuristic" joke in an extended narrative "grotesque spectacle."[52] In discussing the literary exposure of the corpses of the two witnesses, Massyngberde Ford refers to the ancient practice of "indignity to corpses" with reference to Psalm 79:3,[53] which relates that the bodies of the servants of God were exposed, "and there was no one to bury them." I further note that this humiliating exposure of corpses happens in the immediate context of "the nations" having "defiled" the temple and destroyed Jerusalem:

> O God, the nations have come into your inheritance; they have defiled your holy temple; they have laid Jerusalem in ruins. They have given the bodies of your servants to the birds of the air for food… They have poured out their blood like water all around Jerusalem, and there was no one to bury them (Psalm 79:1–3).

It seems significant, then, that Revelation 11 is also introduced by a reference to "the nations" defiling Jerusalem and the temple's outer court, "for it has been given over to the nations, and they will trample over the holy city" (11:2). This correspondence suggests that the exposure of the two witnesses in Revelation 11 may also serve as yet another associative reference to scripture, aimed at using texts like Psalm 79 to make sense of the much more recent defilement and destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE, in Revelation's preferred fusional prophetic, martyrological, and scriptural terms.

The Roman literary and political context thus suggests, then, that the exposure of bodies of the two witnesses is a significant part of the Lamb-like spectacle of their martyrdom, and presumably also informs the book's later vicious assertion that when the Lamb's enemies were finally dead, "all the birds were gorged with their flesh" (19:21).

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51. See Suetonius, *Augustus* 13.

52. M. Erasmo, *Reading Death in Ancient Rome* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2008), 125–127, 153.

53. Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation*, 172.

It is widely agreed that the meaning and efficacy of Roman execution depended heavily upon its public and spectacular nature.[54] It is also widely agreed that the meaning and efficacy of Christian martyrdom therefore did too,[55] as even Christians who aimed to stay alive aimed to do so for the witness of/to Jesus, "like men condemned to death in the arena, a spectacle to the whole universe" (1 Corinthians 4:9). Clearly, Revelation 11 reflects this developing context, and in this case its scripturally fixated vision makes Moses and Elijah return to undergo martyrdom in order to fuse the witness of prophecy and "the Law and the Prophets" with the emerging perceived witness of martyrdom, through the public spectacle of words of witness read from scrolls (Rev 1:1–3).

2.2 Revelation's controlling fascination with the image of the scroll

By this point, the nature and relevance of Revelation's fascination with texts is clear. The "prophetic" vision of the two witnesses comes to John when he takes and eats a scroll, being by the same token swallowed himself into the world of the scroll, by living the experience of the prophet in Ezekiel 3 as his own. He becomes an apocalyptic scribal "participant transmitter"[56] to an ultimate degree. Some commentators have in fact read the story of the two witnesses as the content of the little scroll itself[57] (and it does read like a "narrative prophecy" and lack a *kai eidon* visionary introduction).[58] In John's scriptural world the heavens themselves can behave like a scroll

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54. Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*, 2, 9; K. Coleman, "Fatal Charades: Roman Executions Staged as Mythological Enactments," in *The Journal of Roman Studies* 80 (1990), 47; M. Clavel-Lévêque, "L'espace des jeux dans le monde romain: Hégémonie, symbolique at pratique sociale," *ANRW* 2/16/3 (1986), 2406–2563; E. Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 111.

55. G. Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 28, 50; D. Potter, "Martyrdom and Spectacle," in *Theater and Society in the Classical World* (Edited by Ruth Scodel. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 53–88; Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*, 255; E. Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, 111; C. Frilingos, *Spectacles of Empire. Monsters, Martyrs, and the Book of Revelation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 39–63.

56. D. Aune, *Apocalypticism, Prophecy, and Magic in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 121.

57. Aune, *Revelation*, 585.

58. Mathewson, *Verbal Aspect in the Book of Revelation*, 138.

(Rev 6:14), and the meaning and final fate of the cosmos is something to be unrolled with the progressive opening of seals on a scroll (Rev 6–8). The lives of all people, and their predetermined final fates, are said to be recorded in heavenly scrolls (3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27; 22:19), this image being itself apparently a scriptural reference to other apocalyptic scrolls (Daniel 7:10; 12:1; Enoch 47:3; 89:61–64; 98:6–8; 108:3; 4 Ezra 6:20; Ascension of Isaiah 9:19–23, etc.). Here again, Revelation's symbolic knotwork is tied very tight.

It seems relatively clear what is going on in Revelation's scroll fixation. Even from the few scriptural passages reviewed already above, it is clear that in the Jewish worldview scripture was cosmically important. It was a self-verifying revelation of the power and will of God, and the meaning of life itself. Meanwhile, in the worldview of the Roman empire, meaning and power was imagined very differently, but they were also constituted textually, in terms of both scribal competence[59] and the power of textually controlled cultural realities.[60] Revelation's Jewish and Roman imperial context is the reason for its fascination with texts, which in the first century meant scrolls. It is just one more way in which the book's "epistolary frame" is "crucial."[61]

Revelation's text fixation recalls Frye's observation that a human technological creation can at times grow so important and suggestive in the human imagination it can actually swallow the world in which and for which it was created: "No sooner has the human mind invented the wheel than it starts inventing projections of a wheel of fate or a wheel of fortune."[62] In the case of Revelation, the human technology is the scroll, and the cosmic

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59. See M. Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 49.

60. See M. Fox, *Roman Historical Myths* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 1–4, 229–235; S. Benoist, "L'identité du Prince Face á La Crise: Construction d'un Discours et Usage de la *Memoria*," in *Crises and the Roman Empire* (Edited by Olivier Hekster, Gerda de Kleijn, and Daniëlle Slootjes. Boston: Brill, 2007, 261–270; J. De Jong, "The Employment of Epithets in the Struggle for Power. A Case Study," in Crises and the Roman Empire, 311–313; E. Madders, "Mapping the Representation of Roman Imperial Power in Times of Crisis," in *Crises and the Roman Empire*, 280–282; C. Edwards, *Writing Rome. Textual Approaches to the City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 6–7, 69–95.

61. Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation*, 206.

62. Frye, *Biblical and Classical Myths*, 142.

image that swallows its own human world is the scroll of fate, which is put to use in Revelation to define the righteous as those whose names have been "written in the scroll of Life from the foundation of the world" (17:8). To be specific, they have been scripted into a story of prophecy and martyrdom, "written from the foundation of the world in the scroll of Life of the Lamb that was slaughtered" (13:8) as his suffering but vindicated "witnesses."

Conclusion: Depicting inheritors of scrolls and suffering as victorious bearers of witness

It is clear that Revelation was written to encourage Christians in the face of "persecution." Such persecution could, however, have been major or minor, ongoing or remembered, even merely an "expectation" in the experience of its first readers.[63] The trauma inflicted could involve anything from the memory of direct and deadly political persecution under rulers like Nero[64] to a smoldering sense of financial and/or religious cultural exclusion.[65] It could include the Roman imperial cult,[66] clashes between Christians and Jews,[67] the painful deaths and memories of individual "martyrs" like Antipas,[68] the personally remembered or culturally inherited pain of Jerusalem's violent humiliation,[69] or the general lack of respect often experienced by Jews and Christians in the first-century Roman world.[70] I

63. Yarbro Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis*, 71, 84–110.

64. Ibid., 101–102, 104; G. de Ste. Croix, *Christian Persecution, Martyrdom, and Orthodoxy* (Edited by Michael Whitby and Joseph Streeter. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2006), 35–200.

65. Yarbro Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis*, 88–94; P. Duff, *Who Rides the Beast? Prophetic Rivalry and the Rhetoric of Crisis in the Churches of the Apocalypse* (Toronto: Oxford University Press), 61–70; J. Kirsch, *A History of the End of the World: How the Most Controversial Book in the Bible Changed the Course of Western Civilization* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006), 73; W. Howard-Brook and A. Gwyther, *Unveiling Empire. Reading Revelation Then and Now* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1999), 87–102.

66. Yarbro Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis*, 101–102; Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation*, 25; S. Friesen, *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John: Reading Revelation in the Ruins* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 3; Howard-Brook, *Unveiling Empire*, 102–118.

67. Yarbro Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis*, 85–87.

68. Ibid., 101–102.

69. Ibid., 101.

70. Ibid., 87–99.

would also tighten the scroll fixation knot a little more here by noting that one could in fact be brutally "martyred" in the first century for the being found with the "wrong" Jewish scrolls by the wrong ruler at the wrong time.[71]

However we imagine the "trauma," its effects are very real in Revelation, in what Adela Yarbro Collins has called the book's "perceived crisis."[72] As Elaine Scarry and other have pointed out, one of the central effects of serious trauma is a crisis of agency and language in the sufferer.[73] Not knowing what to do in order to "deal with it" involves not knowing how to talk about it. Creative, assertive language use can therefore be a powerful strategy for dealing with trauma.[74] In the case of Revelation, this creative linguistic strategy for dealing with trauma seems to be at work in the form of a creative use of traditional, scriptural language. The trauma of "martyrdom" as "victimization"—in whatever form—is thus re-interpreted in textual terms, as the "martyrdom" of prophetic, scriptural "witness." In Revelation, Christians are not passive "losers" saddled with meaningless textual and traumatic memories. They are the active bearers of a divine witness with cosmic significance. This is how "martyrdom" in Revelation allows the silenced to speak.

From this point of view, Revelation's fusional approach to "witness" looks like one Christian implementation of a relatively popular and ultimately quite successful strategy of using creative textual language to make the silenced speak. I am thinking here of Roman textual martyrs like the Stoic Zeno in *The Lives of the Philosophers*, who bites off his *own* tongue and spits it at the "tyrant" putting him to death,[75] and Jewish textual martyrs like the sons of 2 Maccabees 7, who *offer* their tongues to be cut out as part of their fatal torture, and yet manage somehow before dying to

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71. See for example Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 12.5.4.

72. Yarbro Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis*, 84, 104, 106.

73. E. Scarry, *The Body in Pain. The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 11–14, 18–19; B. van der Kolk, "The Body Keeps Score: Meaning and the Evolving Psychobiology of Post Traumatic Stress," *Harvard Review of Psychiatry* 1/5 (1994), 253–265.

74. Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, 21–23, 181–221; S. Brison, *Aftermath: Violence and the Remaking of the Self* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 39.

75. See J. Van Henten and F. Avemarie, *Martyrdom and Noble Death. Selected Texts from Graeco-Roman, Jewish and Christian Antiquity* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2002), 26.

praise God and insult their own "tyrant" in defiant speeches. In these textual, martyrological worlds, righteous people can find their clearest agency and speech in the very moment they are overpowered and graphically, utterly silenced. Years later, in the traditions preserved in *The Martyrs of Palestine*, this strategy is still at work: we are told that Romanus who had his tongue cut out "spoke out valiantly" before dying by means of some "wonder,"[76] and Epiphanius whose mouth was beaten beyond recognition with a bridle[77] managed to do likewise, in what are specified to have been "a loud voice and distinct words."[78] Notice that all such martyrs' "speech" needs a story to happen in, often working itself with previous stories.

There are no tongues cut out in the narrative of Revelation, but we have seen that it offers Christians silenced by the experience/perception of trauma the chance to find a voice again, through the creative use of traditional scriptural words. We have seen that this strategy "reads" the "witness" of scripture and the "witness" of martyrdom in terms of each other. As such, it makes good sense in its first-century Christian environment. It has been well documented that the theory and practice of developing Christian martyrdom was modeled upon the forms and images of scriptural tradition.[79] It has also been well documented that the resulting literature then shaped real-world martyrdoms, which inspired even more literature on the same model, and so on.[80]

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76. See *The History of the Martyrs of Palestine* (Edited and translated by William Cureton, London: Williams and Norgate, 1861), 8.

77. *Martyrs of Palestine*, 16.

78. Ibid., 17.

79. See R. Darling Young, *In Procession Before the World: Martyrdom as Public Liturgy in Early Christianity* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001), 13; de Ste. Croix, *Christian Persecution, Martyrdom, and Orthodoxy*, 196–198.

80. Darling Young, *In Procession Before the World*, 9–10, 24; T. Rajak, "Dying for the Law: The Martyr's Portrait in Jewish-Greek Literature," in *Portraits: Biographical Representation in the Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire* (Edited by M. J. Edwards and Simon Swain. Oxford Clarendon Press, 1997), 40; Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire*, 116; B. Dehandschutter, "A Community of Martyrs: Religious Identity and the Case of the Martyrs of Lyon and Vienne," in *More than a Memory: The Discourse of Martyrdom and the Construction of Christian Identity in the History of Christianity* (Edited by Johan Leemans. Paris: Peeters, 2005), 15.

In these accounts, all martyrs become associated with the (written and real-world) "witness" of previous martyrs, including Jesus himself.[81] The account of Polycarp's martyrdom, for example, will therefore "echo scriptural verses referring to Jesus' passion" and even note explicitly that Polycarp's death was a "martyrdom according to the gospel."[82] Revelation's two witnesses are similarly associated in death with "witnesses" like Antipas,[83] in a way that associates all such "witnesses" with the "witness" of the martyred Lamb himself.[84] W. H. C. Frend's general assessment of the rhetoric of Revelation can therefore be applied equally to our specific case of the book's two witnesses: "Thus suffering, witness, judgment, ultimate triumph are welded into the single theme of martyrdom. This martyr-idea, which profoundly influenced the first three centuries of Christian history, was given its final meaning in the tense and exalted Apocalyptic of the Asian Churches."[85]

As we have seen, though, Revelation has also successfully "welded" other equally intense early Christian interests into its fusional vision of "witness," such as the interest in scripture and prophecy. "Death as a witness to the resurrection automatically made the sufferer a prophet," Frend notes elsewhere,[86] and as we have already seen, the fact that Revelation's two witnesses are quintessential prophets who return to perfect their witness with death seals this connection. Prophecy is even associated with a martyr's resurrection, in both the narrative of the chapter and its language. The witnesses "are caused to stand before the Lord" (11:4) just as prophets are said to be, as for example Elijah in the passage very wherein he—like the witnesses—holds back the rain (1 Kings 17:1). After they die as martyrs, the witnesses are vindicated and their enemies are "terrified" when they are

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81. Darling Young, *In Procession Before the World*, 10, 21–22; C. Moss, *The Other Christs. Imitating Jesus in Ancient Christian Ideologies of Martyrdom* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2010), 7, 45–73.

82. Darling Young, *In Procession Before the World*, 23.

83. Giesen, *Offenbarung des Johannes*, 254.

84. See Trites, *The New Testament Concept of Witness*, 159, 168.

85. W. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church: A Study of Conflict from the Maccabees to Donatus* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), 70; On this theological fusion, see also J. Ton, *Suffering, Martyrdom, and Rewards in Heaven* (New York: University Press of America, 1997), 269–314.

86. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church*, 66.

again "caused to stand" (11:11) in resurrection, like the Lamb who stands slain and yet victorious (5:6; 14:1). Their stories are meant to associate their witness—and that of other martyrs—with the Lamb's witness to the letter, and to prove in yet another "scriptural" way Revelation's claim that "the witness of/to Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev 19:10).

It seems that Revelation was successful in this strategic use of scroll and martyr thinking. It has been noted, for example, that the traditions preserved in *The Martyrs of Lyons* seem to have "appropriated" from Revelation the "biblical" and "apocalyptic" idea that "what happened to Christ in his passion and death, leading to his glory, is repeated in the martyr,"[87] and the "Letter of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons" helps to confirm this theory of Revelation's influence when it "cites the Apocalypse… as Scripture."[88] It seems that for some readers of Revelation, John had succeeded in writing them into the story of scriptural, prophetic, eschatological, martyrological "witness."[89] Even the strange tendency (noted above) of John's scroll-fixated strategy to leave him swallowed by his own scrolls and stories seems to have been a success. In the *Apocalypse of Daniel*, a version of the story of Revelation 11 appears with "three men… two from heaven and one from the earth," who arrive in the end as witnesses "before the Antichrist" and "in all the earth."[90] John has succeeded in writing himself into the scroll.

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87. Dehandschutter, "A Community of Martyrs," 16.

88. M. Francis, "'Blessed Is the One Who Reads Aloud… ' The Book of Revelation in Orthodox Lectionary Traditions," in *The Old Testament as Authoritative Scripture in the Early Churches of the East* (Edited by Vahan S. Hovhanessian. New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 70.

89. See, for example, J. Balling, "Martyrdom as Apocalypse," in *In the Last Days. On Jewish and Christian Apocalyptic and its Period* (Edited by Knud Jeppsen, Kirsten Nielsen and Bent Rosendal. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1994), 41–48.

90. *Apocalypse of Daniel* 14:1–4.

Book Reviews

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ISBN 978-1107644991. Pp. 334. 32 Figures.
Reviewed by Carly Daniel-Hughes, Concordia University, Montreal.

Christian Responses to Roman Art and Architecture brings readers into the Roman Empire of the second-century in which imperial subjects debated justice, piety, and identity, both in writing, and in stone. Early Christian literature, Laura Nasrallah argues, was composed in a "landscape of having to repeat," a space of cityscapes filled with monuments, and above all, statues. The study sets a host of early Christian apologies beside the "build environment" that populated the cities of the Roman Empire in the second century. In it, Nasrallah reads this literature as a cultural product of the Second Sophistic, a time when Greek elites vied to display their paideia (education), and carved out a place for themselves under imperial rule. Nasrallah focuses largely on a series of Christian apologies composed in Greek, The Acts of the Apostles, Tatian's *To the Greeks*, Justin Martyr's *First and Second Apologies*, Athenagorus' *Embassy*, and Clement's *Protrepikos* and shows them to be taking up larger negotiations over ethnic identity that occupied the inhabitants of the Empire.

Chapter one takes up the main methodological point of the monograph: how can we understand early Christian apologetic literature in its broader cultural context? Scholars have variously debated the audience and intent of these Christian writings, and have rarely come to agreement about these issues. Offering a fresh approach Nasrallah places them in terms of the "culture wars" of the Second Sophistic. In these texts, she argues Christians address Emperors and claim that their communities are filled with pious loyal subjects steeped in *paideia*. Early Christians' rhetoric, she notes, can be understood alongside similar claims made by Greek elites found in monumental architecture. Here she examines the Fountain of Regilla and Herodes Atticus in Olympia to illustrate that it, too, is addressed to the imperial family. In this monument life-size imperial portraits appear in the lower register of the fountain's visual program, below Atticus and Regilla's own more prominent portraits. The visual effect of Herodes Atticus' monument reveals the civic lineage and pedigree of this sophist in ways that link him to the imperial hierarchy.

In the first half of the monograph, Nasrallah continues with the approach outlined in the initial chapter. She juxtaposes early Christian literature with contemporaneous monumental architecture in order to contextualize early Christian debates over ethnic identity and Roman imperialism. In chapter two she shows how Justin Martyr, a Greek, and Tatian, a Syrian, participated in "geographical thinking." Conceiving themselves as outside the Empire in different ways, these Christian writers claimed Greek identity and figured Rome as a violent consumer of this cultural heritage. Setting this argument next to the Sebasteion, a massive imperial cult complex in Aphrodisias. Nasrallah notes how it likewise reflects ambiguity about the nature of Roman imperial power. Large friezes feature various *ethne* (nations) in the form of captive women subjected often violently to Roman overlords. This monument, she states, reminds its viewers of their vulnerability in relation to imperial power.

Chapter three reads Paul's missionary journeys in the Acts of the Apostles as Luke's attempt to produce a "Christian *oikoumene*" (inhabited universe). Paul's adventures map the Roman world in a series of Greek cities held together by allegiance to the Jesus movement, which Luke calls "the Way." Paul's vision, Nasrallah suggests, shares its impetus with the Emperor Hadrian's "Panhellenion," a coalition of Greek cities, or "civic league," that he founded. In chapter four Nasrallah examines the writings of Justin Martyr together with the Forum of Trajan in Rome, which presented subjugated Dacian prisoners surrounded by images of the emperor that signal triumph. She argues that Justin's assertions of piety and justice at once rejects imperial violence, while also repeating its logic. Justin ultimately "imitates the dominating moves of empire" in his apologies, by submitting Roman authority to the trial under the authority of "the cross" (165).

Chapters five through seven focus specifically on Christian responses to portrait statues. Here Nasrallah examines Athenagorus' Embassy with an exquisite portrait bust of Commodus as Herakles. At once a criminal and a hero, Herakles provides a conflicted symbol for Commodus' imperial power. Nasrallah suggests that such imagery helps to elaborate Athenagorus' charge in his *Embassy* that the Empire abounds with a crisis of representation. In chapter six Nasrallah reads Tatian's *To The Greeks* as a critique of Roman consumption of Greek culture. The study of art is a problem for Tatian—a view that Nasrallah notes contrasts sharply with that of other Greek writers who see it as the sign of true *paideia*. For Tatian, and Athenagorus as well, viewing Roman sculpture does not edify the viewer, but only generates within them "unproductive desire." Nasrallah's final chapter considers Christian responses to a prized antique portrait statue: the marble Aphrodite of Knidos. In his *Protrepikos*, Clement argues that portraiture blurs lines between the human and divine. Rejecting the assertion that statues render humans with the attributes of the gods, Clement, Nasrallah suggests, unsettles the value of the

Knidian Aphrodite. The incarnation made it possible that all humans could become divine, he concludes. His notion of "theosis" (becoming divine), nonetheless, stills bears the traces of an elite philosophical vision precisely because it rests on the ideal of "self-mastery." What, she asks, about those subjects—slaves in particular—who could not spare their bodies from abuse and degradation by others? Is "theosis" possible for all bodies?

Christian Responses to Roman Art and Architecture is a challenging, though rewarding, read designed for advanced students and scholars of early Christianity as well as Roman art and architecture. Filled with analysis of primary materials, both literary and archaeological, the book is rigorously researched and artfully composed. Readers, however, will be disappointed if they are looking for a single argument. This volume does not advance an over-arching thesis, but moves the discussion of early Christian literature and Roman architecture in various directions. Its key contribution resides in rethinking the category of apologetics, which has long occupied scholars in the study of early Christian texts. Nasrallah unsettles the category by reading these Greek second-century writings in terms of the discourses over identity and representation that dominated the literature and architecture of the Second Sophistic.

The Composition of the Book of Psalms

E. Zenger. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Louvaniensium CCXXXVIII. Leuven/Paris/Walpole, MA: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2010. ISBN 978-90-429-2329-4. Pp. xii+ 826.

Reviewed by Mary Yi Wang, Independent Scholar, Ottawa

A volume of the Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense on the composition of the Book of Psalms, the book is a comprehensive presentation of the currents in psalm studies. Methodologically speaking, the book enriches the traditional approaches with new dimensions of analysis. In addition to the theological, literary, liturgical and socio-historical contexts in which the psalms were studied, the book also discusses the ethical dimension and the spatial dynamics of psalms. Space and time in semantic aspect of analysis, anthropological and cosmological approaches, and hermeneutical analysis of speech, the metaphorical/symbolic aspects of language are also employed. The literary analysis of the compositional structure of the psalms also speaks of the vertical (paradigmatic) and the horizontal (linear-sequential) dimensions, numerical analysis and quantitative analysis. The originality of the methodology is powerfully illustrated in the article which discusses the reception and transformation of the

psalms in the context of the parable-traditions in Matthew where the canonical principles are discussed.

On the basis of the scholarly consensus on the development of the Hebrew Psalter, the book evaluates the compositional architecture and the editorial steps of the Psalter. Most of the contributors comment on the compositional functions of certain royal psalms, torah psalms, Zion/temple psalms and the messianic psalms. Major contributions to the composition and the redaction of the psalms can be summarized as follows: First, the traditional view that the four doxologies mark the book-divisions is challenged, because similar phrases of the doxologies are also present as integral part in the other psalms (pss66, 68, 145) and Dt.27, 16–26. Even in the extra-biblical evidences (the Akkadian prayers to the goddess Ishtar and prayers to Hittite king Mursili II) interesting parallels to the doxologies are found (Sanders); second, the structure of the closure of the book II, III, IV analyzed from different approaches (Auwers, Hossfeld, Janowski, Fidanzio, Gartner, Koorevaar, Leuenberger, Scaiola, Wilson) betray the similar editorial design, and the "macro-redactional phenomenon"(Zenger) is testified; third, various proposals on the stages of the formation of the Psalter are synthesized, and a new hypothesis about the messianic Psalter is proposed (Auwers); fourth, editorial motifs discussed by various contributors heighten the unity of the Psalter. The theological context and thematic connections of the psalms exposed by this book testifies the structural analogy of the Hebrew Bible (Saur).

Dating of the individual psalms, groups, collections discussed in this book is primarily based upon the socio-historical, theological and liturgical contexts. Most of the contributors situate the psalms in the Persian—Maccabean period (Kruger, Seybold, Grol, Saur, Koorevaar, Hartenstein, Fisher, Miller); the approach of dating the psalms on the basis of the literary dependence upon the parallel inner-biblical and extra-biblical references is challenged. However, the approach itself provides a basis for the dating of the editorial re-works, or the layers of redaction. Certain traditions, such as doxologies, superscripts and postscripts, and other oral characteristics/ liturgical indications are dated back to the ancient Semitic environment and the pre-exilic Israel. The inter-textual play with headings and interjection *sèla* mentioned in the analysis of pss 138–145 (313) is confusing, and is inaccurate (the occurrences of *sèla* and the correction of Ballhorn's statistics).

The relationship between psalmody and prophecy is discussed from the perspective of the canonical approach (Seybold, Kowalski, Fisher) and genre analysis (Ibita). A new specific prophetic genre—the lament-lawsuit is examined in the analysis of ps50. The introductory formula discussed in the Mathew use of the Isaiah/psalm citations shows that the Psalter reflects the central concept of the Prophets (Kowalski) and the authoritative status of the Psalter. The comparative study of the psalms and the parallel passages in Jeremiah shows that the priority

of the Psalter, i.e., the theological/literary/spiritual influences of the psalms upon Jeremiah is untenable (Fisher).

The three articles that discuss the psalm citations in the NT betray some weaknesses in methodology. First, the selection of the data for analysis; second, the use of Rahlfs' edition of the LXX; third, the NT editions and the source text; fourth, the relationship between the distribution of the psalm references and the canon.

For the Greek psalms in the NT, the author concludes that "the LXX is the obligatory transition between the Hebrew Bible and the NT." (440) The five illustrations he analyzes only suggest that the LXX is "an intermediate phase" (426) between Hebrew and Greek texts, and the interpretations have already been passed on during this phase; and the LXX is only one of the influences for the later Christian translators. The author mentions the Palestinian origin of the Rahlfs' edition, but he does not explain how the characteristics of this edition (Cf. A. Pietersma, VT (30) 2, 1980; Flint, P.W., 2000) will influence the interpretation and the translation of the later Christian translators.

The use of the psalms in Luke and Acts shows that the existence of the Psalter as collections is clearly indicated in these two books. Although the distribution of the psalm references do not show clear relationship with the canonical arrangement of the Psalter, it testifies the acquaintance of the tradition of the psalms, as the author concludes. In the third part of the article, the author tries to show the reception of the canonical psalms in the Lucan tradition, however, the four lists he provides can only suggest that the psalms of Christology and Kingship in Books I–V of the Psalter are frequently and systematically used as citations/ allusions. Other two implications based upon his lists and analysis: 1) the indication of final redaction of the Psalter (the insertion of the pss1 and 148–150); 2) the liturgical indication of the ending structure (pss41,14; 72,18; 89,53; 106,48, 1Kgs 1,48) appeared in Lk1, 68.

The reception and transformation of the psalms in the context of parables in Matthew concludes that Matthew does not reflect the canonical principles of the three-part of the OT, while it reflects the central concept of the prophetic writings (608). The author uses the introductory formula (601) and the genre descriptions given in the citations (608) to show that Matthew does not distinguish clearly the psalms from the prophets as the LXX does; by ascribing some of the psalm citations to the prophets, Matthew aims to show the prophetic nature of the citations (601). Among all the psalm citations that are introduced by the formula, only ps78, 2 in Mt.13, 35 is not supported by the other citations/allusions from the prophets. The author uses the arguments of Menken to support his view on the significance of the introductory formula, however, his conclusion on the canonical principles should not be based upon only two references (Mt.13, 35, 21,42).

Exploring the Spirituality of the World Religions: The Quest for Personal, Spiritual and Social Transformation

Duncan S. Ferguson. London: Continuum, 2010.
ISBN 978-1-4411-4645-8. Pp. xiii + 243.

Reviewed by Andrew Noel Blakeslee, McGill University

Textbooks on the world's religions offering an appreciative yet critical perspective are welcome in the religious studies literature, and this is what can be found in Duncan S. Fergusons's *Exploring the Spirituality of the World Religions: The Quest for Personal, Spiritual and Social Transformation*. Each of the main religious traditions of the world—Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—are elucidated, including some discussion of primal or aboriginal traditions, and renewed movements in the 'pagan' fold, such as Wicca and Celtic spirituality. The traditions fall under the conceptual/organizational terms of "the divine as manifest in nature and culture; the religions that understand the divine as one transcendent reality (transcendent monism); and the Abrahamic monotheistic religions" (41–42). Or roughly speaking, the traditions fit under the categories of the pantheistic, panentheistic, and theistic, respectively. Ferguson recognizes the inherent simplification and partial distortion of these and other categories, while nevertheless holding to their organizational helpfulness.

Within each tradition, Ferguson first lays-out the basic historical facts. As with all introductory one-volume texts on the world's religions aiming at accessibility and broad readership, a balance must be struck between detail and concision. The balance is fairly well judged, with key terms in bold in the text, and helpfully in a glossary at the end of each chapter. Following the presentation of basic historical information, "accents and patterns" of the religion are presented, or in other words its main distinctive concepts. This is organized under the widely used rubric of the 'Four C's': creed, code, cult, and community. While understanding the restriction of brevity, here particularly one cannot help but wish for more development of the material. Nevertheless the presentation is sufficient as an introduction, and the author does provide a select "suggestions for reference and reading" at the end of each chapter as well.

Notably, Ferguson offers two components that make his book stand out from most other introductory works in the field: a 'pros and cons' assessment of each religion in its task as a "spiritual pathway" after its exposition, and an introductory and concluding chapter on the qualities and dynamics of spirituality (distinguishing and defining 'spirituality' and 'religion' is notoriously fraught; Ferguson offers serviceable definitions from an espoused pragmatic orientation designed to bypass the thorny and in this case not-imperative-to-the-task question of fundamental

meanings). The good and the bad are construed as "life-giving" and "life-denying" beliefs and practices. Undertaken with generosity and care, likely few will disagree with his analysis and judgement. This is perhaps the most important function of Ferguson's text: to remind us of the beneficent genius found in all of the great traditions, as well as their ethically and intellectually problematic and unsavoury aspects. Through the posing of questions at the end of each chapter the reader is encouraged to make their own assessment about what in each tradition is worth celebrating and even incorporating in the development of their own spiritual path, and what one might rightly jettison.

The introductory and concluding chapters explore "[t]he dimensions of a spiritual pathway for contemporary pilgrims." (214) Therein the author enumerates notions and attitudes that one wishes all religious practitioners will champion, such as critically informed understandings of holy texts—intellectual honesty and credibility—and openness, and the cultivation of compassion and appreciation of other faith pathways. In the opening and concluding chapters Ferguson's work particularly shines, providing points of entry for a fruitful consideration and discussion of religious/spiritual practice. While *Exploring the Spirituality of the World Religions* will not displace such celebrated classics as Huston Smith's *The World's Religions* in the freshman classroom, it is nevertheless a clearly organized, astute, and appreciative introduction to the practice of spirituality in and through the great faith traditions. It could be particularly fitting in an adult education class that uses learning about the world's religions as a springboard for further exploration of the development of spirituality today.

With Letters of Light. Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls, Early Jewish Apocalypticism, Magic, and Mysticism in Honor of Rachel Elior

[Ekstasis, vol. 2]
Daphna V. Arbel and Andrei A. Orlov, eds. Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2011.
ISBN 978-3110222012. Pp. 456
Reviewed by Carla Sulzbach, North-West University

This volume is a well-deserved tribute consisting of nineteen studies by colleagues and former students to the wide-ranging scholarship of Rachel Elior. Space prohibits a detailed survey of all the contributions, and therefore just a few of those that stand out in this reviewer's opinion will be highlighted.

Some general remarks are in order about the volume itself. These are not the responsibility of either contributors or editors but have to do with the publisher and

format of the series. It should be noted that a complete bibliography of the honoree is lacking. In a Festschrift, such a listing should be expected. Further, the eclectic system of footnoting is needlessly complicated. It is hard on the reader to have to flip back and forth between footnotes or notes within the body of the text and the end bibliography, where full references are given. These should have been provided either in fuller footnotes, or each essay should have ended with its own individual bibliography. It is equally hard on students in need of a copy of a single essay, since in addition, they would need to request a copy of the entire bibliography, a whopping 64 pages (383–447)! Also lacking is an index of sources. Lastly, the volume is unforuntately riddled with an inordinate number of typographical errors. With a list price of almost $ 200 one might have expected more care in proof reading.

Following the general introduction and words of appreciation to the honoree by Daphna Arbel, Andrei Orlov, and Frances Flannery, the volume divides the essays over three rather general rubrics: Exegesis, Ritual, and Transformation. It is clear from the character of the contributions that this leads to much overlap, since virtually all of them ultimately deal with one or more of these three aspects. I will, therefore, suggest a slightly different division in order to make clear in this short review how the essays correlate to Elior's work. By grouping the essays in this way, it becomes clear how much her work provides other scholars with the tools and the platform for continuing research in these particular areas.

I. Sanctuary and City

This section sets the stage for the study of earthly sacred spaces and those who act in it, but at the same time these spaces provide a conduit to the heavenly counterparts and its players. Although there is evidence for the notion of a heavenly sanctuary, Verman shows that the concept of a heavenly Jerusalem may well have originated with Philo and Paul, independently of each other.

Silviu N. Bunta, "In Heaven or on Earth: A Misplaced Temple Question about Ezekiel's Visions";

James Davila, "Scriptural Exegesis in the Treatise of the Vessels, a Legendary Account of the Hiding of the Temple Treasures";

Mark Verman, "Earthly and Heavenly Jerusalem in Philo and Paul: A Tale of Two Cities";

Crispin Fletcher-Louis, "The Book of Watchers and the Cycle of New Year Festivals";

Jodi Magness, "The Impurity of Oil and Spit among the Qumran Sectarians".

II. Heavenly realms and angelic and human interactions

In addition to dealing with the traffic of humans, angels and 'demi-gods' between earthly and heavenly spaces, this section also deals with the very nature of the heavenly environment, the nature of its inhabitants, and the various forms of boundary crossings and transgressions between both realms. Orlov shows how in

the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, Azazel, the leader of the fallen angels, transforms in a perfect mirror image of the Deity, by acquiring his exact attributes. He is, on the one hand, portrayed as a real contender for absolute power, but the dualistic character of the text, with each cosmic character ruling his own domain, seems to prevent that from happening. It is an eternal dance of good and evil around each other, thereby preserving the integrity of the cosmos.

Kelley Coblentz Bautch, "Peter and the Patriarch: A Confluence of Traditions?";

Annette Yoshiko Reed, "From 'Pre-Emptive Exegesis' to 'Pre-Emptive Speculation'? Ma'aseh Bereshit in Genesis Rabbah and Pirqei deRabbi Eliezer";

Andrei Orlov, "'The Likeness of Heaven': The Kavod of Azazel in the Apocalypse of Abraham";

Pieter van der Horst, "Mystical Motifs in a Greek Synagogal Prayer?";

Naomi Janowitz, "'You Are Gods": Multiple Divine Beings in Late Antique Jewish Theology".

III. Visionary experiences

The essays under this heading deal with a number of techniques that are thought to produce visions. This is done through the analysis of vision accounts as well as the increasing insight gained from medical and neurological science. For the latter, see especially Segal.

Dan Merkur, "Cultivating Visions through Exegetical Meditations";

April DeConick, "Jesus Revealed: The Dynamics of Early Christian Mysticism";

Alan Segal, "Transcribing Experience".

IV. Role of women

In the literature of the Second Temple period, Late Antiquity as well as in later Rabbinic exegetical texts it can be observed how characters and events that are mentioned just briefly within short biblical passages grow into full narratives of their own. The papers in this group each treat an aspect of some such singular passages that are of interest to feminist interpretation. Whereas a negative or submissive portrayal of women is the rule, especially Arbel's and Deutsch's contributions show that this is not always so. Minov focuses on the perceived fatal connection between Eve and the serpent. This understanding originates in the linguistic proximity of the name Eve and the word for serpent in all Aramaic dialects. Harari explains that while the ancient rabbinic elite was not as averse to legitimate magic as previously thought, women remained in the domain of practitioners of illegitimate witchcraft. Lesses extends this to the domain of knowledge. The message conveyed is that in a patriarchal society this view of women keeps the cosmic order as it is: patriarchal.

Sergey Minov, "'Serpentine' Eve in Syriac Christian Literature of Late Antiquity";

Daphna Arbel, "'A Chariot of Light Borne by Four Bright Eagles': Eve's Vision of the Chariot in the Greek Life of Adam and Eve";

Yuval Harari, "A Different Spirituality or 'Other' Agents?: On the Study of Magic in Rabbinic Literature";

Rebecca Lesses, "'They Revealed Secrets to Their Wives': The Transmission of Magical Knowledge in 1 Enoch";

Celia Deutsch, "Aseneth: Ascetical Practice, Vision, and Transformation".

Lastly, Joseph Dan's "Messianic Movements in the Period of the Crusades" is the sole representative of yet another of Elior's areas of interest, messianism.

Spirits of the Place: Buddhism and Laos Religious Culture

John Clifford Holt. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009.
ISBN 978-0-8248-3327-5. Pp. xiii+ 348.

Reviewed by Chipamong Chowdhry, University of Toronto

Recently, Cambodia and Laos have become the most appealing areas for historians of religion in Buddhist studies.[1] In Laotian Buddhist culture, as elsewhere in Southeast Asia, the rituals involving local spirits (*phi)* and cult of *khwan* are common religious belief and cultural values. The religious culture in Laos could be called 'trans-localized-Buddhism' in which Hinduism and indigenous beliefs are combined with Buddhism. A veteran specialist on Sri Lankan Buddhist religious culture and its related issues, Holt, in this recent book: *Spirits of the Place: Buddhism and Laos Religious Culture*, offers another innovative insightful study of an important period of religious culture and political history of Buddhism in modern Laos.

The book consists of five loosely interwoven and thematic chapters followed by two appendixes. Holt's argument is that normative interpretation of Laotian Theravāda Buddhism within the context of religious is placed within the framework of political history. With theoretical questions such as: What is the status of Buddhist practice in the everyday religious life of Laos? How can one relate the discrepancies between Buddhism and popular cultic practice in contemporary Laotian religious culture? How should one interpret the non-Buddhist elements that exist in Lao religious life? Holt tries to uncover the principle of the place of

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1. Ian Harris. *Cambodian Buddhism: History and Practice*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005 and Justin McDaniel. *Gathering Leaves and Lifting Words: Histories of Buddhist Monastic Education in Laos and Thailand*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008.

spirit in Theravāda Buddhism in Laos. To make more sense of the work in this regard, Holt appropriately draws upon earlier theorists such as Paul Mus, Stanley Tambiah, Clifford Geertz, Mircea Eliade and even Durkheim.

Like his earlier works[2] in this study, Holt introduces three interrelated themes: a critique and comparison of other scholars in the field; a synchronic approach in the context of contemporary Laotian Theravāda Buddhism; and a theory in which the Lao Buddhist, animistic practices, and colonial and post-colonial national politics and history have reflected one another.

Chapter one not only provides a brief outline on the ontology of the local religious substratum and ritual significance of spirits (*phi*) for social and religious organization within Laos Buddhist religious spheres, but also explores the Lao political history from the fourteenth century through to the nineteenth century. Unlike the Hindu cults of *devas* in Sri Lanka, in Holt's argument, the spirit cults of *phi* and *khwan* in Lao are relatively non-institutionalized.

Chapter two explores political and religious cultural transformation of the nineteenth century Laos brought by Thai, French, and later American influences. This is interpreted from the point of view of the Buddhist monastic discourse, colonial history, and post-colonial political discourse. For monastic discourse, Holt argues that Laos was subject to a Thai Buddhist king and Laos monasticism was intimately related to Thai reformist-Thammayut Nikay. Despite this fact, surprisingly, the Lao *sangha* remained unaffected by Thammyut Nikay's influence (77). Colonial discourse refers to the arrival of the Roman Catholic missionaries and the French in Southeast Asia in seventeenth century who were successful in converting many Vietnamese and brought about the economic exploitation of Indo-china. In Holt's observation, the British developed their educational legacy in Burma and Sri Lanka by establishing institutions, which the French in contrast did very little through their colonial developments in Laos (83). Holt's historical description suggests that the American intrusion into Laos led to political and religious disintegration as the Buddhist *sangha*. As a result, tragically, there were no Buddhist *wat* (temple) in Vieng Xai. Moreover, as Holt reports, no male youth were encouraged to join the *sangha* (125).

With an overview of dramatic revolution in 1975 and its immediate and economic effects, chapter three, the best of the book, investigates how changes occurred in the Buddhist monastic *sangha* and the popular cultural practices such as the

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2. John C. Holt. *Buddha in the Crown: Avalokiesvara in the Religious Traditions of Sri Lanka*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.
—*The Buddhist Vinsu: Religious Transformation, Politics, and Culture*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005

cult-worship during the establishment and policies of the Marxist revolutionary of the Lao People Democratic Republic (PDR). Here Holt reconstructs some key historical documents about how the newly formed Lao PDR attempted to reform Buddhist thought and practice. Holt's writes "[A]fter revolution some factions of the *sangha* remained committed to supporting the Pathet Lao as 'patriotic monks,' while others were being victimized by local and national Pathet Lao policies and tactics" (140). In the Lao PDR, many Buddhist practices such as merit making and offering foods to the monks are prohibited. Although Buddhism was allowed to take place within the new Lao PDR, it was, however, concerned with economic and political space rather than religiosity (144).

Holt reveals that during the period of the Lao PDR the monks were highly encouraged to study politics (151). Despite the Lao PDR, the communist regime had leveled *phi*-cult-practices as irrational, unscientific, superstitious, and backward, and continuously endeavored to eradicate venerating spirits and cult-worships, they still prevail in contemporary Lao cultural practice.

Reflecting his seven month fieldwork in Luang Phrabang, in chapter four, Holt devotes most of the chapter to the most important venues of its public ritual expressions and how Luang Phrabang tragically became a commodity for marketing Buddhism. Through this marketing, Laos became an international tourist industry. Registration as UNESCO World Heritage Site, Luang Phrabang thus receives prospects (increasing local economy through the hotels, guesthouse, internet cafés, massage parlors etc.), while at the same time faces many dilemmas such as, social and economic transformation, which has not only created social problems, but has also heavily influenced environmental issues (192). This World Heritage Site also brings serious consequences to the Buddhist monastic life. Holt's ethnography reveals that monks are seen at internet cafes late at night, which he never saw in Sri Lanka (193). In the rest of the chapter, Holt describes the public ritual expressions and the Lao New Year in contemporary Luang Phrabang.

In the concluding chapter, Holt discusses synchronically and fully the intimate relationship between Buddhism and the spirit cults. According to Holt, Buddhism and the spirit cults are expressions of two separate ontologies, but they are mutually transformative to one another (223). For this reason, and also partly because Marxism never fully penetrated into the village culture, the veneration of *phi* persistently continues even today.

Another reason for the persistances of *phi*-cults is the indigenous *phi* are free agents and beyond the control of the ethic of karma. Holt argues that the power of *phi* cannot be rationalized by the ethic of karma (233–7). By way of comparison and his usage of technical terms such as "Buddhacization" and "inspiriting," Holt brings this into the dialogue with Yukio Hayashi and Stanley Tambiah. Appendix 1 contains a comparative account of the greatest Indian epic of the *Ramayana* and

its transformation into Laotian culture. After providing a concise summary of the Valmiki (Indian) version, Holt engages details of the Laotian version, the *Phra Lak Phra Lam*, in which he not only sees vast differences between them, but also notes how the Theravāda Buddhist characters are reflected in the Laotian redaction, including the idea of karmic retribution (265).

The second appendix extends another popular Laotian cultural belief, practice, and ritual ceremony or *sukhwan basi*. It is, both ritually and religiously performed at all important occasions, including during pregnancy, marriage, childbirth, and ordination. In Holt's understanding, the *khwan* (vital essence, inner spirit, and life force) is inner psychic energy attached to each individual, but it can leave the body any time. If it leaves for prolonged periods, it can bring about bad consequences which include suffering, disease, and misfortune (271). In order to restore good fortune the *sukhwan basi*-ceremony is performed.

The strength of the book lies on Holt's ability to analyze critically comparative phenomenon of different Buddhist cultural practices and his analytical descriptions. This book is well informed by contemporary scholarship on the animistic Buddhist culture of Laos. My only critique is that the book has little ethnographic narration. Nonetheless, it is an important book for those who are looking for new issues in studies of Buddhism. It greatly contributes, not only to the field of religion, Buddhist, and Laotian studies, but also to Southeast Asian studies. This book also deserves to be fully welcomed by socio-cultural anthropology as well as political historical studies. I highly recommend everyone to read this marvelous book.

Christian Anarchism. A Political Commentary on the Gospel
Abridged Edition. Alexandre Christoyannopoulos. Charlottesville, VA: Imprint Academic, 2011.
ISBN 978-1845402471. Pp. 280.
Review by Aaron Ricker, McGill University

From the theatre of political protest to T-shirt sales at the mall, the brand equity of anarchism is growing, and this trend includes the subcultures of Christian theology and biblical studies. Books like Dave Andrews' *Christi-anarchy* are now appearing quite regularly, reworking Jacques Ellul or John Howard Yoder for more mainstream evangelical audiences. In this situation, Christoyannopoulos' new book should be a welcome addition, based as it is on six years of doctoral research at the University of Kent. Unfortunately, though, *Christian Anarchism* may confuse more than it clarifies when it comes to understanding the historical and theoretical relationships between Christian and anarchist traditions. "The aim of my doctoral thesis–and by

extension, this book–was to pull together and portray as fairly coherent and sound the various publications I have come across which argue that Christianity logically implies anarchism," Christoyannopoulos writes (240). He aims, in other words, to use selected readings and his own retrospective synthetic logic to triangulate the lost anarchist gospel of Jesus himself. With this goal in mind, *Christian Anarchism* offers readers "a varied set of reflections and exegeses that, in my view, all enrich the overarching argument that Christianity today implies a form of anarchism" (240), and ends with an anarchist altar call in which "Jesus calls humanity back to God's vision of a stateless kingdom" (241).

On the positive side, the materials and topics Christoyannopoulos reviews in making his argument are important and interesting when it comes to understanding the understudied relationships between Christian and anarchist systems of thinking. He begins, for example, with lightning introductions to Christian anarchists like Tolstoy, Ellul, Vernard Eller, and Dorothy Day, as well as "supportive thinkers" like Walter Wink and Ched Myers. These writers offer the kinds of Christian anarchist "threads" that Christoyannopoulos will "weave together" (1) in the chapters that follow, as he applies his argumentative synthesis of their thought to seven topics. His first section addresses "The Sermon on the Mount: a Manifesto for Christian Anarchism" (30–66), "The Anarchism Implied in Jesus' Other Teachings and Example" (67–106), and the legacy of Constantinian Christianity in "The State's Wickedness and the Church's Infidelity" (107–145), all with reference to selected thinkers and their readings of selected biblical passages. The second section of the book applies the same method to framing "The Christian Anarchist Response" to government as we know it, with prescriptive chapters on "Responding to the State" (147–173) and "Collective Witness as the True Church" (174–195), another quick but interesting historical review in "Examples of Christian Anarchist Witness" (197–213), and a theological Conclusion on "The Prophetic Role of Christian Anarchism" (214–239).

Christian Anarchism is a very close re-write of Christoyannopoulos's PhD dissertation, "Theorising Christian Anarchism," and the uncertainty around that deleted first word points to the best and worst of his project. I appreciate the honesty with which Christoyannopoulos presents open advocacy and argument on behalf of traditions he feels deserve more attention, instead of trying to make the same case without ever leaving the relative safety of some academic pose of pure objectivity. On the other hand, remembering incorrectly can sometimes be even worse than forgetting, and if the constellations of Christian and anarchist thinking he reviews are to be remembered and understood properly, the process needs more theorizing, not less. Christoyannopoulos does not address the theoretical difference, for example, between discovering shared ground among Gospel readers and inventing one's own new ground. He does not offer any theoretical justification for his basic controlling

idea that synthesizing anarchist readings of the Gospels can somehow provide a window back through those traditions to an original anarchist gospel preached by the historical Jesus. It seems to me that a good theoretical treatment would ask why the Gospels preserve these passages that appeal to these anarchists. It would offer frameworks for incorporating "non-theological" factors like the historical legal ineligibility of most early Christians for government service, the comparable ancient "anarchist" propaganda of the Cynics, and the infamous ability of clever readers to find whatever they like in holy books. It would also ask why Christian anarchism just happens to be gaining mainstream attention now that Christian theologians have lost so much of their direct political power.

In short, a project aimed at theorizing Christian anarchism is just what is needed, and it would be more about trying to understand traditions that look arguably anarchistic in retrospect, in terms of first-century subcultures and evolving discussions, than about dreaming up and chasing down a unique and unified lost theological treasure. I am not arguing that intellectuals must always do history and never theology, but it seems to me that in this case doing theology before history jumps the gun, and doing theology dressed up as history points the gun at one's own foot. We are living, after all, in a world where Bakunin's "No gods, no masters" has conquered, partly due to the well-known historical excesses of Christian power, and it is already hard enough to give Christian anarchism a fair trial. Our own city of Montreal manages to host the biggest anarchist book fair in North America year after year without including a single book or workshop on the historical connections and cross-fertilizations between Christian and anarchist theory and practice. "Christian" anarchist roots like Proudhon's or Thoreau's are ignored as "merely cultural," or erased as failures. In such a volatile climate, it is very dangerous to present Christian anarchism as a long-lost grand unified secret gospel that just happens to appeal to some disenfranchised Christian intellectuals today. It gives hostile critics a chance to dismiss the entire question as a pop theologian's wild goose chase.

I applaud Christoyannopoulos, then, for insisting that anarchist thinking is indicative and interesting when it comes to understanding many roots and branches of Christian culture. I also think he makes some good choices about who and what to remember. When scholars open up such conversations, though, we wade into ancient, bitter culture battles that continue today, and it can get dirty fast. We need to learn to stir such waters without further muddying them.

America's Four Gods: What We Say About God and What That Says About Us

Paul Froese and Christopher Bader. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
ISBN 978-0195341478. Pp. 280.

Brandn Green, Pennsylvania State University

The subtitle of this book could have been: when hermeneutics meets the sociology of religion. Paul Froese and Christopher Bader provide the reader who is interested in how Americans think about God an accessible and largely non-technical text which details the results of the Templeton funded Baylor and Religion Survey and Interview Project of 2005 and 2007. They articulate how the four-part classification scheme of God types: Authoritative, Benevolent, Critical and Distant is a superior mode of classifying the American religious landscape. The key turn in this argument is the idea that researchers can accurately infer one's morality from his or her image of God.

Froese and Bader utilize George Herbert Mead's view of religious influence positing that God "acts as a person's Generalized Other–the voice in our heads with which we have an ongoing conversation. (62)" What I found fascinating about this view is how the researchers argue that the ideas one has of God are not reducible to social indicators such as race, gender and income. By statistically controlling for these influences the authors argue one's God Image is the fundamental category for understanding religious types and how religion influences one's moral stances. However, I did not view the argument made by the authors to be compelling as they trace the source of the God image, with appropriate caveats and recognition of multiple influences, to one's childhood. The church one attends as a child is directly related to the socio-economic and cultural factors at work which Froese and Bader dismiss. To me, it is the influence of those factors while one is a child which sets up the trajectory of a God image.

One direction I thought of while reading the text, which Bader and Froese did not engage, is the economic incentives tied to the marketing and production of each God image. The sources of these four images were not really examined even though they did an excellent job of showing how variation occurs across the two basic theological questions of Providence and Theodicy. Bader and Froese provide the reader with this new typology as a way to interact with both the classification and measurement literatures in the sociology of religion and the American culture wars work which has gained significant traction over the past ten years. By complicating the over-simplified categories and classification schema utilized in the culture-wars theories, they provide a very helpful nuance and criticism. The culture wars, as

articulated in the works of George Lakoff and Thomas Frank, fail to recognize what Bader and Froese find to be enlightening–even in the same congregation people have different conceptions of God and these varieties influence how the individual view public moral issues.

Each chapter in the rather short main section of the book, one hundred and sixty pages with an extensive technical appendix, are efforts by Froese and Bader to display how the typology they offer aids us in understanding how religion and morality are related. The moral issues covered in the book are many–adultery, gay marriage, abortion, premarital sex, stem-cell research, poverty, war and evil. These moral questions are both private and public. It is the latter sphere where the authors connect their classification schema to the ongoing discussion in American political life about said moral concerns. They argue, somewhat convincingly, that one's view of God is a better indicator of one's morally informed politics than are class and classical religious measures, such as biblical literalism. These claims are nicely supported by both quantitative data displayed in easy to read tables and through narrative qualitative data. A strength of the book is in how the authors adroitly weave these two sources of data together.

The key logical turn, the one which their entire argument depends upon, is the idea that a God image is accessible to researchers in a way morals and values are not. These latent concepts can be reasonably inferred from one's God image. Other arguments existent in the sociology of religion literatures, be they rational-choice or structure-based explanations, are dismissed on the grounds that ideologies are the essential elements in understanding the interplay between religion and politics on both the individual and national levels. It will be interesting to see if the authors will have an opportunity to test their model in different countries. If so they will be able to understand much more clearly how the religious landscape in America differs from those of other countries. One vital insight gleaned by the researchers is that the four types all display the common element in the belief that God is loving. Why is this? I was left wondering at the conclusion of the text about the deeper analyses to be done and thoughts to be examined. This makes sense as the book is clearly directed toward a public audience as demonstrated by the lack of scholarly debates and in the depth at which they offer their analysis. *America's Four Gods* is an important offering to the Hertzog, Niebur and Bellah tradition of both offering an overview of the contemporary American religious mind and a new method of classifying that very broad and diverse religious society.

Private Worship, Public Values, and Religious Change in Late Antiquity

Kim Bowes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
ISBN 978-1107400498. Pp. 380.

Jordan Zarembo, McGill University

Some historians have characterized the fourth century CE as the eclipse of a strongly hierarchical and imperial church over an "illegal" or persecuted Christianity, a position Kim Bowes characterizes as "Christianization" (9–10). Proponents of this theory contend that Roman personal religion, public ritual, ritual officiants, and worship spaces transitioned wholesale to similar Christian roles with little re-signification (10). Christianization often ignores the "private", or individual, familial, and communal contributions to early institutional Christianity (10–11). Instead of casting the "public" and "private" as independent variables, Bowes proposes a continuously variable "dialectic" for fourth and fifth century Christianity (12–13, 16). Her dialectic defines the "private" as a subjective dependent of the "public" (12). For Bowes, "private" early institutional Christianity cannot exist as an autonomous concept independent of public history and debates (12–13).

Urban and rural private Christianity begin with Roman ritual antecedents. Bowes's first chapter explores public Roman civic ceremony and private benefaction. The imperial Roman civic cult demonstrated both state power and patrician nepotism through the hereditary nature of civic ritual office (23). The public ritual of *consecratio* created *res sacra*, the non-transferable property of the gods (24–25). Through *consecratio*, patrician civic priests gleaned the gods' favor through public benevolence (24). Benevolence couched as civil ritual increased patrician social capital (22–23). The private counterpart of *consecratio*, or *dedicatio*, created ritually "profane" items which could be owned and sold between persons (25). Wealthy families' *dedicatio* included shrines to ancestors and household gods, as well as the construction of grand mausolea, temples, and tombs (32–37). *Dedicatio* further enhanced not only a patrician family's stature, but also strengthened the internal hierarchy of the Roman household from *paterfamilias* to slaves (32–37).

Bowes's second chapter account of urban Christianity in Rome and Constantinople traces echoes of *consecratio* and *dedicatio* through pre-Constantinian voluntary associations and post-Constantinian titular churches. From the early second century, early Christian communities looked first to prosperous members of the local community for financial assistance (49). The expansion of private benevolence into the *tituli* system of late fourth-century Rome resembles aspects of the private benefaction of *dedicatio* with the ritual obligations and aggrandizement associated with *consecratio*. A *titulus* referred not to the church building itself but to a private

benefactor's dedication (66–67). Bishops managed the titular church finances on behalf of the benefactors (69), but also courted benefactors for their own charitable projects (70–71). The late fourth century Roman diocesan rite of *fermentum*, or the sharing of eucharist consecrated by the Roman bishop with the titular churches (71), attempted to quell competition between wealthy titular benefactors and bishops for ecclesial control (69, 70–71).

Fourth and fifth century Constantinople also witnessed more private worship space construction than hierarchical construction projects (106–107). The aristocratic derivation of the names of Constantinopolitan neighborhoods suggests that wealthy families defined neighborhoods through domestic private worship spaces (109). Constantine constructed a personal shrine for a fragment of the cross in his Great Palace, (110–111) and wealthy ascetic women sponsored and built monasteries for their own use (113). Private interests eventually deposed fourth-century Constantinopolitan bishops Gregory Nazianzen and John Chrysostom. Nazianzen fell prey to competing benefactors, while the wealthy deported Chrysostom back to Cappadocia rather than submit to Chrysostom's demand for greater hierarchical oversight of private churches (117–120). Constantine's reconstructions of the Hagia Irene and Hagia Akaios churches, as well as the founding of a new church outside the city walls, Hagios Mokios, represented the closest approximation of a Christian imperial simulacrum of dedicatio in Constantinople (106–107). Still, only two fourth-century bishops oversaw the construction of modest churches (107). The dawn of the fourth-century witnessed the birth of Constantinople, but not the rise of a strong episcopacy.

The third chapter carries the reader into the countryside of the western Roman Empire and North Africa. Bowes's research again counters the Christianization hypothesis that bishops and landholders formed an elite hierarchy which converted the countryside (126). Rather, rural estates, landholders, and "seigniorial dependency structures" created nascent Christian communities quite different than urban Christianity (127). A spate of villa construction in the late third century speaks of the prosperity of the age (128–129) but not necessarily of Christian worship-space (129). The proximity of a church to a villa, (129) or even excavated small worship spaces inside villas (*sacraria*) do not necessarily point to exclusive Christian use given the frequent absence of altar remnants or other Christian liturgical furnishings (131–132). Excavations at Luddingstone in Britain and Villa Fortunatus in Roman Hispania show series of worship-spaces decorated with the chi-rho and other Christian symbols (131–135). By contrast, the rural mausoleum at La Cocosa in Hispania displays geographical characteristics of Christian worship-spaces, such as "eastern orientation", but with few other explicit Christian signs (137–138). Regardless of the archaeological and liturgical ambiguities posed by excavation findings, Bowes contends that rural landholders of fourth and early fifth-century

of the western Roman frontier, and not bishops, chose clergy to officiate at rituals which required their presence (157–158).

The western European experience contrasts with North Africa's landholders, whose semi-autonomous churches served as loci for tenant control (161). The relative lack of large villas in this region, combined with a socially fractious topography of farms, fortified villages, and even towns (162), enabled bishops such as Antonius of Fussala, once protege of Augustine, to not only manipulate the wealth of landholders but also aggrandize ecclesiastical influence through the mismanagement of local churches (166–168).

Both the fourth and the final chapter glance behind the basilica and villa towards Christian homes and individual Christian practices. Bowes shifts her focus towards the content of private prayer and ritual along the backdrop of alleged "heretical" private practices in the post-Nicene church. She contends that homes represented arenas for doctrinal negotiations in early institutional Christianity (195). Bowes also elaborates on the very important role of women in the post-Constantinian church only at the very end of her book. Her coda underscores her criticism of a masculinized Christianization undertaken by emperors and episcopates. For Bowes, women's asceticism and domestic ritual sculpted both doctrine and liturgy. While some Christians, such as the fourth-century exegete Jerome, viewed the home as a woman's protection from the profane world and a bulwark against temptation, (203) women's home devotions and eucharists often attracted the attention of hierarchs who viewed house worship as alternate venues for clerics opposed to their theologies (190).

The power of women to direct domestic piety and worship subverts the notion that men, and especially bishops, predominantly shaped the course of Christian institutionalization in the Roman Empire (4). Bowes's last chapter not only expands upon her understanding of Christian dialectic, but also inverts a prevailing androcentric view of Christian development. Her study invites us to consider both men and women as great protagonists in the rise of early eastern and western Roman Christianity.

The Naked Anabaptist: The Bare Essentials of a Radical Faith

Stuart Murray. Scottdale, PA and Waterloo, Ontario: Herald Press, 2010. ISBN 978-0836195170. Pp. 191.

Reviewed by Lance Lubelski, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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This volume seeks to introduce the fundamental aspects of the Anabaptist tradition to the person of faith in Great Britain and Ireland who wishes to reinvigorate his

or her spiritual life in the era of "post-Christendom." In attempting to examine the central principles of Anabaptism, Murray presents questions that will guide the work: "What is an Anabaptist? Where did Anabaptism come from? What do Anabaptists believe? Can I become an Anabaptist?" (16). This reviewer cannot help but think that the author asks the wrong questions, and therefore has written an ill-conceived monograph.

The question that nagged me (and remained unanswered) as I read was, Does Anabaptism have any relevance to today's world? Moreover, can Anabaptism be rendered explicable if removed from its Radical Reformation context? The author reveals ambivalence about these issues when he suggests that modern readers interested in Anabaptism may wish to "pick and choose the elements they find most helpful from Anabaptism without embracing the entire tradition" (112). To this reviewer, this approach to Anabaptism is entirely ahistorical and thus inappropriate if one seeks a proper understanding of Anabaptism. Murray does not grasp that Anabaptists did not, and *could not*, "pick and choose" between religious principles but conceived of beliefs such as antipedobaptism, communal living, and the refusal to swear oaths as working together to create a coherent whole of religious belief and practice in what was frequently a hostile world. In short, to remove Anabaptism from its historical context is to render it inexplicable to the modern reader.

Murray designs his book around what he and his colleagues see as the seven "core convictions" of Anabaptism: 1.) commitment to "following Jesus as well as worshipping him" (177); 2.) a "Jesus-centered approach to the Bible and to the community of faith" (178); 3.) an awareness of the "post-Christendom" context of contemporary life; 4.) the possibility of suffering and martyrdom for one's beliefs; 5.) the sharing of meals; 6.) the interconnection of faith and economics; and 7.) the pursuit of peace. Observance of the first two core convictions, according to Murray, can help believers to revivify an "emasculated" (55, 61) and "marginalized" (57) Jesus. The author's emphasis on the "emasculation" of Christ in contemporary life strikes this reviewer as, at the least, a very poor choice of words. This example is just one of many cases in the book in which the author fails to use precise language, thereby obscuring meaning.

Not only is the author's language imprecise, but his grasp of the historical issues surrounding Anabaptism reflects a lack of research. First, Murray asserts that "little information survives about what [Anabaptists] did and taught: almost all we know of them comes from their (hardly unbiased) opponents" (71). This is patently wrong: there is a great deal of extant writing from members of a range of Anabaptist groups in the sixteenth century and after, including the writings of Menno Simons, the extensive accounts in the *Martyrs Mirror*, and the records of Hutterite *Bruderhöfe* in Moravia, in addition to a great amount of other Mennonite, Hutterite, and Amish devotional and historical writing from every century since

the sixteenth. Second, the author insists that the question "Are you a Christian?" was "meaningless in a society where this was the default position" (74). On the contrary, I would suggest that this was *the* question that shaped early modern European life because of the sacral outlines of that society. People *constantly* asked and wondered if those around them were Christians, resulting in heresy trials, witch hunts, and the activities of the Inquisition. Finally, Murray commits errors in more specific instances, as when he claims that the Catholic Church failed to "creatively" respond the Protestant Reformation—anyone with even a cursory knowledge of sixteenth-century Europe knows that the Catholic Church succeeded in combating Protestantism in very creative ways through the work of the Jesuit order as well as through the reforms established at the Council of Trent (137–138). This reviewer does not disagree with the author's attempt to offer a "less academic" approach to Anabaptism, but these and other errors are emblematic of a thoroughgoing inability on the part of the author to understand the historical fundamentals of Anabaptism (34).

Further, Murray's approach to his audience is at once overly simplistic and condescending. He suggests, without factual support, that "Biblical scholars are usually unaccountable and in no position to test out the implications of their interpretations of Scripture" (65). Plus, he characterizes "Bible studies in the local congregation" as "an unedifying pooling of ignorance" (65). In making these comments, Murray may in fact alienate the two groups that he seeks to enter into dialogue with, again highlighting the muddiness of the author's approach.

This inchoateness extends to the title of the monograph itself. What does Murray mean by "the naked Anabaptist"? This title apparently means to suggest that the book will lay bare the issues central to Anabaptism. However, as I have already shown, the author discerns not so much the "naked Anabaptist" as some nebulous "post-Christendom" approach to spiritual life of his own invention. Overall, then, his analysis lacks an accurate historical or theological basis in the realities of the tradition which he purports to describe. Finally, the flaws of the book enter even its endnotes, where Murray offers incomplete citations for the URLs he uses as evidence (these endnotes lack the dates on which the author accessed them).

Murray's central argument, that Anabaptism contains the proper values for British and Irish Christians in a post-Christendom era, is misconceived on the grounds that he fails to accurately describe the nature of Anabaptism. The monograph is plagued by analytical, historical, and formatting errors all significant enough to undermine the basic value of the volume. To that end, this reviewer concludes that one must look elsewhere to better understand Anabaptism.

Tales of Lights and Shadows: The Mythology of the Afterlife
Robert Ellwood. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010.
ISBN 978-1441143976. Pp. vi + 166.
Richard Greydanus, McGill University

> 'When a man dies, there is this doubt: Some say, he is; others say, he is not. Taught by thee, I would know the truth.' (37)

Robert Ellwood's *Tales of Lights and Shadows: The Mythology of the Afterlife* opens with an arresting summary of the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*: the progress of a spirit departing the body, unable to slip the surly bonds of flesh, to await its return and wind its way once more around this mortal coil. The first of many accounts drawn from hoary tomes recounted in the following pages, Ellwood draws the reader's attention its narrative form. '[W]e are likely to find ourselves most engaged by *stories*, whether we believe them literally or not,' Ellwood begins, ' …because our *lives* are stories, not abstractions.' (5) Mythic projection from past through present into the future, common to pre-modern religious narratives, must supplement statements of fact and scientific formulas in order to render intelligible the impenetrable time of human life, which remains in our common experience, as yet, incomplete.

Tales is a broad survey of statements made about the afterlife, touching major literary traditions, religious, philosophical, and otherwise. Ellwood demonstrates his scholarly versatility by drawing on the wide body of pre-modern literature—Zoroastrian, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, Muslim, etc.—dedicated to exploring the questions about the afterlife, interspersing throughout the book references to more familiar, recent attempts to paint on the canvas of a future beyond the immediately familiar. Alongside underscoring the themes common across traditions, an inch-deep, mile-wide comparative approach serves the purpose of highlighting the many possible, even contradictory, conceptions of the afterlife between differing traditions and within specific traditions. Is the afterlife simply more of the same or is it an utter break with the present experience of life? Does personal identity persist? or more to the point, is the afterlife personal or impersonal (and what would the latter entail)? Will the afterlife be pleasant, blissful, or will it contain suffering and torment? Which naturally raises a further question: Is death to be embraced or feared? Beneath these direct attempts to engage with the question at hand, Ellwood also draws the reader's attention to a small number of traditions, including certain versions of Judaism, that appear more or less unconcerned with life after death.

Consistent answers found across religious traditions are therefore not forthcoming. As is characteristic of his body of scholarship, Ellwood again draws attention to the way questions about the afterlife are asked, which seem to evolve and focus more insistently on the ability of believers to actively contribute to, or participate in, the cosmic process of salvation, especially after the so-called 'Axial Age' of human history. Instead of being subject to a seemingly indifferent divine order, humanity now finds itself able to cooperate with the ultimate source of its existence. Suffering and death are no longer integral to human life, but are transient realities belonging neither to its original make-up, nor to its ultimate end. The way in which questions about the afterlife are asked, the implicit suggestion would seem to follow, is focused around a very general conception of the divine order, differentiating animistic, polytheistic, world-religious, and modern-scientific outlooks.

Ellwood closes *Tales* with a comment on the relationship between conception of the afterlife and the culture in which those conceptions take root and flourish. Throughout the book references are made to the correspondence between sets of religious beliefs and particular social orders, a confirmation of the initial thesis mythic narratives are not merely abstractions, but provide the temporal template on which human life is lived. It is commendable, in my own estimation, that he avoids engaging in contemporary discussions about how one might identify tolerant faith against intolerant varieties of faith and chooses instead to point out the shortcoming of 19th and early 20th century critical assessments of religious faith. Illuminating as psychoanalytic or socialist readings may be, these by no means possess the final word on questions that are no less perplexing today than they were for pre-modern thinkers. 'More questions can be asked, and stories told, about the meaning and backstory of human consciousness on this planet than have easy or complete answers.' (144)

Commendable though his studious avoidance of superficial questions may be, one has to wonder about what Ellwood hoped to accomplish by writing the sort of book he did. If the point of his broad survey of conceptions of the afterlife is merely to engender a deeper understanding of the claims made within differing religious traditions, he seems to have set up an abstracted end-goal understanding for its own sake. The near-infinite potential for the human mind to conjure up myths in response to perennial concerns upon which his conclusion rests likewise belies his initial concern for a storied life that must be lived. Indeed, Ellwood presents his readers with a series of statements about the afterlife, whose storied character is analyzed, broken down to their manifold constituent parts, and finally set aside.

How Ellwood addresses the truth status of claims about the nature of the afterlife, in this regard, is particularly illuminating. The truth status of any claim he regards as only having an eternal or ultimate referent; whether or not personal identity

persists after death, per the initial quotation taken from the *Katha Upanishad*, is the sole consideration. All other more worldly considerations are dealt with through analytic methodological strategies for getting at the elusive object. However, there would be a truth found in the way humanity deals with questions of ultimate destiny of the person, had Ellwood followed his suggestion about the narrative character of human life. After all, our present human experience of life's incompleteness, that time has not yet finished with us, inspired in many ancient thinkers a pious disposition towards something Other, in which or whom we live and move and have our being.

Secularization and Its Discontents

Rob Warner. London and New York: Continuum. 2010.
ISBN 978-1441127853. Pp. 232.

Jon Waind, McGill University

Secularization and Its Discontents represents Rob Warner's contribution to the growing number of sociological challenges to classical secularization theory in recent decades. The main thesis of the classical theory, according to Warner, is the "long-term, unidirectional and increasing marginalization of the Christian religion" (14). With this statement Warner locates the scope of his analysis to be primarily Western, beginning first with Britain but then expanding for comparisons with secularization in Europe and North America. He observes that many classical secularization theorists interpret sociological evidence gleaned from the West as pointing towards a cultural and religious departure that can only be described as post-Christian (14).

Without denying that something "seismic" has happened to religion in the modern West (37), Warner seeks to temper the classical theory's dismal assessment of the present and future of the Christian faith. His main claim is that religion has not been fated to an irreversible and terminal decline, but is instead going through a transformation. "Religion in the twenty-first century," Warner contends, "has become more contested, complex, diverse and inclined to subjectivized hybrids" (181). The difficult labour pains of secularization, modernization and globalization have resulted in a transformation such that both religion's power and significance have been radically altered today. While contemporary religion might be almost unrecognizable to those who pine for a return to some "golden age" of belief and practice, "global religion in all its proliferating diversity appears to be in vibrant good health, rapidly evolving and recruiting, in Asia, Africa, Latin America and North America," with signs of life evident even in Western Europe (181–182). Religion,

then, is not so much in decline as it is in transition, and as such is accompanied by labour pains typical to the birthing process.

Warner's transformation thesis is supported by the fourfold argument he develops in chapters 2–5. First, Warner casts doubt on the reliability of empirical data that points to declining church attendance as a key support for classical secularization theory. This is not to question whether church attendance is really in decline; it is, rather, to suggest that such data does not say enough about religious practice as a sociological phenomenon. Warner opts for a modified theory that complexifies secularization and provides a more hopeful account of religion by proposing that the classical theory represents an essentially incomplete sociological investigation (65).

Warner further justifies his discontent by turning to the American context where classical secularization seems to be turned on its head. Religious participation there does not appear to decline in the wake of modernization, but to flourish instead (69). The so-called "free market of religion" establishes a setting in which "religious choices are made like any other consumer choices, on the basis of cost-benefit analysis" (72, 121). In such a context religious vibrancy becomes "constantly dependent upon innovative entrepreneurialism, repackaging of faith for new cultural and consumer contexts" (75, 79). The obvious danger is that spirituality becomes reframed as "a mere lifestyle accessory to be selected according to personal taste," not unlike organic food or gym membership (85). Although the religious market in America might be bustling, markets often testify to passing fads and therefore might not suggest any enduring spiritual resilience (85).

To further complexify secularization, Warner questions in Chapter 4 whether Western society has undergone a spiritual revolution. On one hand, this question pushes against the classical theory by recognizing that even in the midst of institutional decline (e.g., low levels of church attendance), sociologists have seen the emergence of new holistic spiritualities (89, 96). On the other hand, however, Warner acknowledges that the spiritualities of this "New Age" could simply be residue from the older age which was dominated by religions now in terminal decline. Such seemingly inconsistent findings lead him to conclude that while there is no appetite for absolute secularity in Western Europe, there are also no prospects for a re-sacralization representing anything like the Christendom model (104). To speak of the death of religion, then, is greatly exaggerated, but talk of spiritual revolution is also premature (116).

Rounding Warner's argument off is his assertion that "conservative churches do better in terms of recruitment and resistance to trends of decline" right across the globe (119). This durability is largely characteristic of "moderate" evangelicals who maintain a "convertive optimism" that confidently expects new opportunities and growth, as well as a "missiological pragmatism" characterized by a positive and

energetic willingness to re-imagine church (148–149). It is not, then, religion itself that is necessarily in decline, or even the sustaining doctrines of various traditions (as the success of conservative churches seems to indicate). Rather, it is the forms and practices of belief that appear to be deteriorating and, in fact, are being replaced. To put it in Gospel terms, the wine remains while old wineskins are exchanged for new.

One of the values of Warner's brilliant sociological assessment is that it paves the way for some important theological questions to be asked. What forms and practices of belief will allow for religious individuals and communities to maintain their traditional identities in a changed and rapidly changing world? Must more conservative religious communities liberalize their doctrines in order to maintain relevance and respect today, or are they free to remain "illiberal" within their community while participating as full members of the broader society? And, fixing his gaze on the more particular subject of evangelicalism, how will the question of homosexuality define the more conservative strains of this movement moving forward?

It is with this latter question, upon which Warner only briefly touches (see pp. 139–140), that some areas of concern with his approach come to light. First of all, he appears to frame moral questions (at least this one) in more sociological than theological terms. To do so, however, seems to move from the task of gathering empirical data on religion to imposing a moral trajectory upon it. Second, even though evangelicalism figures prominently in his analysis, Warner provides a rather flat portrayal of this movement. Essential to understanding evangelicalism is to recognize: 1) its distinct nature as a movement rather than simply as a denomination; 2) the significant connection between theology and morality inherent to it; and 3) that as a movement there are more internal distinctions to be made than simply between moderate evangelicalism and Pentecostalism.

In all, I found *Secularization and Its Discontents* to be an extremely insightful project and a valuable resource as I consider the impact of secularization theses on my own research into religion and ethics in liberal society.

The Origins of Jewish Mysticism

Peter Schäfer. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009.
ISBN 978-0691142159. Pp. 398.

Carla Sulzbach, North-West University

When confronted with a work on Jewish mysticism by one of the foremost experts in the field, expectations are justifiably very high. In this densely packed work, Peter

Schäfer (PS) tackles some of the important issues in Jewish mysticism that have plagued and divided scholarship ever since Gershom Scholem elevated it to a bona fide discipline. One concerns the trajectory of its development. When did it arise? What were its precursors? A short introduction deals with the question of *what* mysticism, and specifically Jewish mysticism, is thought to be. While presenting a number of opinions with which he disagrees, gradually throughout PS's detailed treatment of the selected texts it becomes clear that the very narrow characterization of mysticism that he advocates, as a "union with God" or *unio mystica*, is never attained in any of the texts (24), with the possible exception of Philo. Instead, PS proposes that the texts show an unioliturgica (32).

In eight chapters, PS traces the developments of and possible connections between perceived mystical texts, beginning with Ezekiel's chariot vision; followed by the various ascent apocalypses with the Enoch corpus as its most prolific representative; examples from Qumran showing human-angelic communion; Philo's conception of spiritual life and unique distinction between body and soul; Rabbinic approaches to God and take on Ezekiel's chariot; and finally the early medieval Merkavah mystics.

Rather than "imposing a preconceived definition on the texts" (24) PS sets out to deconstruct the terms "origins" and "mysticism" which, he believes, are not applicable when properly describing the phenomena in developing Judaism even though they are often used to do exactly that.

Among the main questions geared towards establishing the mystical quality of the texts are:

1) Does the seer/mystic actually get to see God?

While this is often the stated objective, the results are either not described or the quest was unsuccessful. The postbiblical works show an increasing emphasis upon the individuality of the seers, and their focus on attaining a (still elusive) vision of God (30). The Qumran texts form an exception as they deal with a communal quest (153). There is also a growing interest in participating in the angelic heavenly praise of God, which PS aptly calls unio liturgica (liturgical or cultic communion).

2) Does the journey involve a bodily transformation?

In most cases the seer undergoes a temporary transformation in order to 'fit in to the heavenly milieu', however, this stops short at the level of angelification, never to reach 'deification', or the desired unification withGod.

3) Is the journey accomplished in body and soul or only in the soul/mind?

PS maintains that the journeys in most texts involve a bodily translation to the heavenly realm, with Philo as the first Jewish thinker to follow the Greek model of a separation between body and soul, forming the exception. This results in the notion that only the soul rises up while the body stays behind–both after death but even during the seer's life time.

4) Do the texts represent accounts of actual journeys or do they form a literary genre?

This is part of an ongoing debate that started already with Scholem. PS belongs firmly to the school that favors the literary character of the texts over the experiential aspects that they might contain. Therefore, even if some experience of an author may be at the core of a text, that particular level of the text is no longer recoverable. The ascent has in fact become a literary motif.

5) What is the goal of the journeys in the ascent apocalypses and the Hekhalot texts?

In the earlier ascent apocalypses the seer seeks information from heaven concerning the well-being of the Jewish people and the fate of the Temple. PS stresses that even the Hekhalot mystic expects to be reassured that God is still present and cares for the Jewish people. Thus, a message is sought and not a *unio mystica*. Furthermore, rather than manuals for praxis, the actual texts become objects of contemplation.

6) Can any evolutionary relationship be established between our texts?

Despite many recent proposals to the contrary, PS is reluctant to find any evidence of a chronological linear development from Ezekiel to the Hekhalot mystics.

Notwithstanding the fact that this book contains much of merit, not the least of which are the meticulous analyses of the texts themselves, there are certain points that leave the informed reader somewhat baffled. One of these is PS's insistence that all seers in the ascent apocalypses make their journey in the body (83) as well as that this is the only way to travel. An exception is the Apocalypse of Isaiah where he notes that "the visionary is in a trancelike mental state that allows his spirit to undertake the journey while his body remains on earth," in full view of his companions (111, 334). This is a very problematic statement since it negates every single mention of a seer either falling asleep in his bed and then commencing a dream vision or falling into a trance which is followed by a vision experience. In this light it is unfortunate that Daniel does not receive more attention and the important apocalypses 2Baruch and 4Ezra are only mentioned in passing. No doubt, PS is guided by the notion that the seer recounts undergoing a bodily transformation. However, he disregards the most important means of transport: that of dream and trance. The seer's body is clearly described as remaining firmly on earth whereas he travels in the mind and in a 'virtual' body. In this respect it is also problematic that PS glosses over studies, such as those by, D. Merkur, F. Flannery and the late A.F Segal that delve into dreams and trance as ways to obtain the experience of a heavenly journey.

PS sways towards reading Ezekiel and the ascent apocalypses as literary fictions rather than reflecting the actual experiences of author or protagonist. The role of pseudonymity is especially invoked to argue for the fictional nature of the ascent apocalypses and therefore for the absence of genuine experience (338). However, what is not taken sufficiently into consideration is the notion that the

authors use categories that do belong to the stock taxonomy of heavenly journeys and may be a literary reflection and borrowing of the true experiences of genuine (or at least self-proclaimed) seers.

It is quite clear that PS sets as his goal to 'demystify' a number of texts that have almost automatically come to be seen as (proto-)mystical. However, his project of deconstruction is turned on its head when he states in his conclusion: " …the craving for the living and loving God and the experience that he still exists obviously applies to so many more texts that we have not included in our survey that we run the risk of voiding the category of 'mysticism' and ultimately rendering it meaningless by confusing mysticism with religion." (354). With this in mind the title should probably have been followed by a question mark.

Re-Reading the Prophets through Corporate Globalization: A Cultural-Evolutionary Approach to Economic Injustice in the Hebrew Bible

Matthew J. M. Coomber. Piscataway: Gorgias, 2010.
ISBN 978-1607249788 . Pp. 283.

Reviewed by Sara Parks Ricker, McGill University

Book-length publications in biblical studies generally fall into one of two formats; such books can be "rigorous" *or* they can be "relevant." Rarely can an author cater to both the specialist *and* the layperson in a single work. Perhaps this is due to the deeply specialised nature of modern biblical studies, as opposed to the largely non-specialist demographic that retains an interest in "applying" the biblical text.

For this reason, I was curious to review this revision of Matthew Coomber's Sheffield dissertation, "Corporate Globalization as a Model for Interpreting Prophetic Complaints against Landownership Abuse." Given its leap from the Hebrew prophets to present-day "corporate globalization," I would have expected such relevance to arrive at rigour's expense. In order to be rigourous, Coomber would have had to take into account the problematic scarcity of data for the prophetic context, and wrestle with serious methodological issues when jumping from ancient literature to ancient socio-historical reality. He would have needed to be proficient not only in the usual areas of textual criticism, ancient languages, and historical method, but also in sociology and economics. With true interdisciplinarity being so uncommon, it is only because I was familiar with Coomber's fine work from the conference circuit that I dared to expect it. To say that I was pleasantly surprised is an understatement.

Economic injustice is a key theme in the prophetic corpus, one from which many theologians have extrapolated modern lessons. Coomber, however, combines

economics, sociology, history, and cultural-evolutionary theory for a more holistic and precise approach. Coomber isolates two key prophetic texts on landownership abuse—Micah 2:1–2 and Isaiah 5:8–10. He is building on a scholarly shift (i.e. that of M. Chaney[1] and D.N. Premnath[2]) *away* from a "common view that lacked either a discernable or accountable origin" (xii) which blamed the injustice on very small-scale corruption where a few "wealthy businessmen" seized land from "poor Judean farmers" (13). These scholars instead associate these key eighth-century Judean prophetic texts with a widespread economic shift that "brought Judean farms under the control of a few powerful landlords" *systematically* (30). In effect, "Judah underwent a significant period of cultural evolution as it was absorbed into a world system that shares a lineage with its twentieth-century descendant, 'corporate globalization'" (283). Eighth-century Judea experienced rapid population growth and economic development, which, much like globalizing trends today, shifted the majority of land wealth into the hands of a small elite. Leaders were pressed to cultivate commercial crops with high export value "at the expense of land rights of Judean peasants" (27). Wielding the resulting "debt as their weapon […] Judah's most powerful inhabitants were able to overtake the land of Judah's weakest citizens" (29). (In a timely twist, similar issues are being raised by the "Occupy Wall Street" demonstrations that continue as this review was sent to press.) Coomber intertwines this updated picture of the eighth-century context, and its vitriolic rhetoric against economic disparity, with modern data both global and specific in the similarly agrarian case study of Tunisia, proving that "tangible agrarian societies can be used to ask new questions of biblical texts" (276) and to "help scholars to read these ambiguous texts in a new light" (276).

In an enjoyable style, Coomber guides the reader patiently through each twist and turn along a dauntingly interdisciplinary path. He begins by confronting the problems of locating an elusive context for eighth-century prophecy. He pinpoints a plausible solution in Chaney and Premnath's socio-economic analysis of Isa. 5:8–10 and Mic. 2:1–2. Through "interpreting literary and archaeological evidence through the lens of societal development," (30) and "employing a methodology that lay outside of the biblical narrative and traditional biblical scholarship" (31), Chaney and Premnath were able to place responsibility for these landownership abuses at the feet of political elites who had restructured Judean land management, rather than

1. See, inter alia, Chaney, Marvin L. "Bitter Bounty: The Dynamics of Political Economy Critiqued by the Eighth-Century Prophets," in ed. R. L. Stivers, *Reformed Faith and Economics* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1989), 15–30.

2. See, e.g., Premnath, D. N. *Eighth Century Prophets: A Social Analysis* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2003).

with a few isolated instances of corruption (30). A societal shift, as opposed to an isolated incident, would have had "repercussions throughout Judean society" (31).

The second chapter introduces cultural-evolutionary theory and outlines its development, arguing convincingly for its immense yet largely untapped interpretive value in biblical studies. Coomber is careful to avoid the circular reasoning against which Philip Davies cautions (35), where scholars use social-scientific *methods* as a source of evidence. Instead, social-scientific methods must be put to work "as a heuristic tool" for posing new *questions* of the evidence (36). "The best defense against either creating a false history or falling into a trap of circular reasoning is to understand […] both the advantages and limitations of social-scientific models" (36).

In chapter three, Coomber combines his improvements to cultural-evolutionary theory with archaeological data, in order to put meat on the bones of existing models of societal transformation in eighth-century Judah. He demonstrates that "what is referred to as 'globalization' today is not an entirely new phenomenon but the current evolutionary cycle of a long series of interregional world systems" (132), and that "subsistence farmers in agrarian societies appear to experience similar challenges as political and economic elites gain power and exchange subsistence agriculture for more lucrative export strategies, as seen in the modern developing world" (133).

Chapter four even-handedly explains "corporate globalization" in the twentieth century, highlighting the "negative outcomes of structural adjustment" (171). Coomber extrapolates from appropriate modern data to fill gaps in eighth-century data. For instance, the "IMF's and the World Bank's failures to reduce the negative effects of the rapid developments that accompany the current world system suggest that the primary producers of earlier world systems, which did not attempt to alleviate such suffering, would have experienced even greater levels of oppression" (175).

To illustrate in minute detail, chapter five contains a masterful case study on Tunisian land tenure. In the concluding chapters, Coomber dovetails the globalization model and the local Tunisian data with his socio-economic reading of the prophetic texts, finishing with a convincing reminder of the value of cultural-evolutionary theory for further study—both abstract and applied. Coomber's approach demonstrates once again that it is absolutely imperative that we continue to move towards interdisciplinarity.

What remains incredible to me is that Coomber has succeeded in reworking this dissertation into an utterly readable publication that is both genteel and down-to-earth, both its form and its content catering seamlessly and simultaneously to the most advanced Hebrew Bible scholar and the most earnest layperson. This rare breed of academia that lives, moves, and has its being beyond the ivory towers, while still achieving scholarly excellence is something to which we are accustomed

out of Sheffield; yet Coomber is an example par excellence of Sheffield's relevant rigour. It is greatly to be hoped that Coomber's final paragraphs—"Potential for Future Study"—are a project he himself will undertake with haste.

Media, Spiritualities and Social Change

Stewart M. Hoover and Monica Emerich, eds. London and New York: Continuum, 2011.
ISBN 978-1441145550. Pp. 272

Reviewed by David Kolosyzc, McGill University

In recent years the study of religion and media has emerged as one of the more fascinating fields of academic and social research, bringing together scholars from religious studies, theology, cultural studies, communication studies, media studies, film studies, sociology and social psychology. Some of the key areas of concern include: representation of religion in mass media; the use of communications technology by religious individuals, communities, and institutions; religious contributions to ethical and epistemological questions pertaining to contemporary communications technology; and the changing nature of religion and spirituality in a mediated world. Scholars who attempt to address these concerns face considerable challenges. The speed and unpredictability of current cultural and technological transformations demand constant reinterpretation, readjustment of data, and redefinition of our understandings of 'religion' and/or 'spirituality'. Some of the material written in the 1990s, for instance, lost its relevance following the expansion of public discourses on religion in the wake of September 11th, the emergence of new religious themes in film and on television, and changes to religious practice triggered by new social media technology. It should come as no surprise then that the majority of publications on religion and media consist of diverse collections of studies addressing a wide variety of technological and religious experience, in many instances written by relatively young scholars. The new publication from Continuum, *Media, Spiritualities and Social Change*, follows this model, bringing together seventeen essays and studies which focus on 'spiritual' concerns related mainly to questions of identity, community, social integration, spiritual consumerism, and environmentalism. The volume is edited by Stewart M. Hoover, one of the most experienced and prominent scholars in the field, and Monica Emerich, a fellow research associate from University of Colorado at Boulder's Center for Media, Religion and Culture.

The editors' introduction offers a brief but effective overview of some of the central issues that have shaped contemporary studies of religion and media. Hoover

and Emerich discuss the manner in which our experience of the 'public sphere' is being transformed in an increasingly mediated culture. They argue that, rather than merely constituting the means by which we communicate and establish new meanings, identities, and experiences, mass media are gradually becoming the very sites where meaning and identity are constructed, and where 'experience' takes place, dissolving the traditional distinction between public and private life. The book's key aim, in this respect, is to consider how recent technological developments are enabling religious individuals and communities to become active agents for social, cultural, or political change. Contemporary media make it possible for individuals and communities to define their own spiritual identity, purpose, and belief-system beyond traditional religious, social, political, or economic institutions. By the same token, media offer new and diverse opportunities for redefining the 'common good', for bringing about social integration, or for transforming the way our culture understands the nature of both 'media' and 'religion'. A number of essays included in this collection explore such opportunities. Among these, the reader will find Lee Gilmore's interesting discussion of "Do-It-Yourself" spirituality, centred on Burning Man, an annual festival which brings together art, spirituality, and performance, and which has led to the establishment of a (mainly) virtual community of individuals who share common ethical, artistic, and spiritual principles. Of particular current relevance are Rebecca L. Self's excellent text entitled "Mideast Youth: Can Social Media = Social Change?" and Solomon Schimmel's insightful study, "The Blogosphere of Resistance: Anonymous Blogging as a Safe Haven for Challenging Religious Authority and Creating Dissident Communities."

The shift from 'religion' to 'spirituality', Hoover and Emerich suggest, reflects many individuals' disenchantment with traditional institutions, authorities, and rituals, while also bearing witness to the manner in which, even across 'secular' cultures, existential questions continue to resonate with spiritual concerns. In many instances, the need for a more personal, more meaningful experience of such concerns can paradoxically result in a spirituality that is radically indistinct. Hoover and Emerich remain aware of the ambiguous character of this situation. Echoing their observations, some of the contributors to this volume express concern over certain dangers–at once social, political, and spiritual–that permeate global communications networks. In the 'media age', 'spirituality' can be co-opted easily and on an unprecedented scale by political and economic interests. By the same token, many spiritual aspirations are being translated into political and commercial aspirations, and our personal and collective desires and anxieties are being exploited to establish new concepts of 'good' and 'evil, new spiritual threats, and new visions of spiritual salvation. The result is that, in our radically mediated world, an entire marketplace of spiritual symbols, ideas, and experiences has emerged, one that demands a new kind of critical awareness, bringing together the knowledge of

religion, culture, and media technology. These issues are effectively addressed in Sharif Islam's "Media, Religion and Citizenship in the Mosque-Building Debates in Europe," in Janice Peck's "The Politics of 'Empowerment' in Oprah Winfrey's Global Philanthropy," and in Ann Hardy's "Spirituality in Flight: Making Meaning around State-Sector Television Commercials."

The key flaw of this collection of studies is the all-too-apparent lack of scholars of religion as participants in the conversation. This lack reflects a tendency that, unfortunately, is characteristic of a number of similar collections published in the past. The issue can no longer be ignored, as it can and does undermine the quality of some of the scholarship in the field of religion and media. Most of the authors in the present volume, for instance, ignore the fact that, in a world in which mass media are becoming central mechanisms of social change, many religious institutions are quickly realizing that they cannot remain passive observers of this process if they are to maintain their relevance in contemporary global culture. Indeed, a considerable number of religious communities have profited from their engagement with mass media, expanding their membership base and transforming social, cultural, and political contexts that, until recently, were resistant to anything overtly 'spiritual'. The few references to more traditional religious ideas and beliefs found among these studies are too vague to merit serious attention. To be sure, the explicit purpose of the book is to explore the 'spiritual', not the 'religious' dimensions of contemporary media; however, both terms remain equally obscure in the current global context, as does the nature of the relationship between them. Even if the reader is willing to accept the concept of 'spirituality' in its radically open sense, he or she will likely have a difficult time grasping the reason for the inclusion of four or five of the texts in this collection.

These criticisms aside, *Media, Spiritualities and Social Change* contains a sufficient number of interesting and relevant studies. As such, the book constitutes a valuable resource, not only for scholars of religion and media, but also for college teachers and university professors who engage in the exploration of the presence of religion or spirituality in contemporary culture in their classrooms.

Early Christian Books in Egypt

Roger S. Bagnall. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.
ISBN 978-0691140261. Pp. xiii + 110.
Reviewed by Stéphanie Machabée, McGill University

Early Christian Books in Egypt is written by papyrologist and professor of ancient history at New York University, Roger S. Bagnall. This scholar enters into the

dialogue of early Christian papyrus manuscripts found in Egypt, not with the intention of completing a survey of the material, but rather to challenge what has been said about certain topics in the field. Bagnall seeks to demonstrate that much of the scholarship that engages with early Christian book fragments has been misleading and has not taken into account the realities of the ancient world. The book is arranged into four chapters.

Bagnall begins by explaining why he enters into the discussion of early Christian books from Egypt: 'what has led me to trespass onto this intellectual territory is my unease with what I see as the excessively self-enclosed character and absence of self-awareness of much of that scholarship' (1). Focusing on pre-Constantinian Christian manuscripts, Bagnall argues that papyrus manuscripts have frequently been dated too early. In his challenge, he acknowledges what is at stake: 'it shows just how vital the existence and early dating of the papyri are to the entire conception of the development of Christianity in Egypt' (5). Using the Leuven Database of Ancient Books as his starting point, Bagnall surveys how various scholars have dated early Christian papyri from Egypt. He observes the estimated Christian population size in Egypt in the early centuries and, using these numbers, calculates the expected number of surviving Christian books to demonstrate that the odds are extremely low that late first or early second century Christian papyri would survive. He states that the number of surviving Christian books before the Severan period (193–235 C.E.) would likely be no more than one or two, even though scholarship has identified more.

In the second chapter, Bagnall examines two controversial case studies regarding the dating of ancient manuscripts. The first case handles the late Carsten Peter Thiede's 1995 article "Papyrus Magdalen Greek 17 (Gregory-Aland P64). A Reappraisal," in *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik 105*, and the book that followed it. According to Bagnall, 'Thiede argued in the article that the Magdalen papyrus, along with other parts of the same manuscript then in Barcelona, was to be dated to the first century' (27). This was argued despite other scholars who dated it to around the end of the second century, or later. Bagnall summarizes and points out the faults in Thiede's arguments. According to the logic of Thiede's argument for the dating to the first century, his readers are presented 'with an utterly fantastic tale of a complete Christian-Jewish split during the 60s' (37). The example of Thiede illustrates the troubling aspects of palaeographic dating of early Christian books.

The second case engages with the dating of volume 69 of Oxyrhynchus Papyri, specifically the problem of dating P.Iand I 4, an issue raised by Antonio Carlini. He perceives the dating of a papyrus of the Shepherd to the first half of the second century as facing an insurmountable difficulty, for diffusion of this work to Egypt would have had to be quite short. Bagnall summarizes how Carlini resolves his dilemma by theorizing that Shepherd was a composite of two originally independent

collections. This enables him to maintain an earlier date. Bagnall presents these two case studies in order to contend the structural similarities between the two. He affirms that even among qualified scholars, consensus on dating is difficult to attain, where issues of dating can be influenced by biased agendas.

In chapter three, Bagnall studies the economics of book production in Egypt. He cites a variety of sources in order to calculate the costs of codices, taking into account the cost of different materials, the size of the codices, and the cost of labour. He then provides a practical table which calculates the cost in solidi for one (unbound) bible, assuming the labour costs of four different qualities of writing and the use of either parchment or papyrus. Bagnall also considers the re-use of papyrus and whether monastic labour lowered the cost of book production. He again concludes that it is highly unlikely to find many Christian books datable to the second century or earlier.

The final chapter examines the spread of the codex. Bagnall explains how statements that claim Christians had a distinctive preference for codex form, to a degree that was not paralleled by non-Christians 'are partly misleading and need significant qualification' (71). Again using data compiled from the Leuven Database of Ancient Books, Bagnall demonstrates that scholars cannot maintain that the codex was a specifically Christian book-form, or that Christianity was the primary force behind the move from roll to codex in the Roman world. The origin of the codex remains uncertain. He acknowledges that Christians adopted the codex form early on, but he dismisses existing hypotheses that explain this early adoption. Instead he proposes that this adoption is rather the result of Romanization, 'the spread of Roman habits and technologies throughout the empire' (87).

Although Bagnall's calculations and reappraisals are highly hypothetical, where he often depends on techniques of extrapolations, his book brings awareness to the subjective approach of dating early Christian manuscripts from Egypt. The amount of Christian papyri from the first and second centuries is likely fewer than previously believed, and therefore there is little evidence for the spread of Christianity in Egypt before this period. Bagnall's book is short but highly informative, easy to read, and provides valuable insight on important issues. Even if the reader may not agree with his insights on the topic, his survey of early Christian book material and his engagement with the scholarship is worth the read.

The Changing World of Christianity: The Global History of a Borderless Religion

Dyron D. Daughrity. New York: Peter Lang, 2010.
ISBN 978-1433104527. Pp x + 290.

Reviewed by Todd Statham, Zomba Theological College, Malawi

The study of Christianity as a world religion is coming into its own. Recent years have seen the publication of a number of substantial accounts of Christianity as a global religion, or, similarly, histories of Christianity that break rank with conventional focus on the western church. This trend is simply the belated recognition among scholars of the fact that the Christian faith dramatically plunged southward last century. In 1900, eighty-two percent of the world's Christians lived in Europe and North America; now, sixty percent of the world's Christians reside in the "global south", and there are already more Christians in Asia (350 million) than in either Europe or North America.

In *The Changing World of Christianity*, Dyron Daughrity tells the story of Christianity from its origins in the Middle East, across centuries and borders, until today—the most numerous, global, diverse, and "arguably influential religion on the globe" (5). Several features set apart this book from other recent contributions in the field. First, its user-friendly format (including charts, graphs, and maps) and clear, casual writing make it ideal to introduce world Christianity to undergraduates and non-specialists. Second, *The Changing World of Christianity* combines a concise global history of Christianity with analysis of the present state and future prospects of the Christian church in eight geographical-cultural blocks: the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, North America, Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Oceania. Third, as is fitting for the study of a "borderless religion", Daughrity's description of Christianity ranges across the disciplines of history, geography, theology, sociology, politics, and current affairs. This invests his studies of global Christianity's eight geographical-cultural constituents with a depth and breadth that belie their brevity.

The academic study of global Christianity being a relatively new field of study, it is not surprising that one detects in *The Changing World of Christianity* a certain methodological uncertainty. Should the map of world Christianity be drawn according to geography? Politics? Language? Culture? Generally, Daughrity's eclectic approach, which prefers what he calls "geographical-cultural blocks" to an exclusively geographical or political or ethno-linguistic map, serves him well, although it will not satisfy everyone. That African Christianity is treated as one, for example, throws together the venerable Copts of the north with the unruly, newcomer African Initiated Churches (AICs) of the south, even though the former have much more in common in doctrine and ethos with the Orthodox (Eastern

Europe) and Assyrian (Middle East) churches. Another drawback of his approach is that key figures or events from one geographical-cultural block (e.g. Martin Luther) are occasionally introduced as important in another block even before they are fully described in their home setting, which may confuse readers who do not already have a basic grasp of the Christian tradition.

The overview of world Christianity provided in *The Changing World of Christianity* will be very useful to academics in need of a classroom resource. But there is also much in this book to teach, provoke, and humble scholars, especially those of us who might not normally look beyond our academic specialization. Above all this book challenges the conspicuous ignorance of the charismatic/Pentecostal movement amongst members of the religious studies' guild. The startling evidence marshaled by Daughrity reminds us that not only is world religious diversity typically exaggerated—over half of the globe belongs to either Christianity or Islam (7)—statistics indicate that Pentecostalism claims more adherents today than Buddhism, and, if current rates of growth are maintained, will draw even with Hinduism within a few decades. Although sociologists of religion have long estimated that well over ninety percent of people keep the faith of their parents, Christianity in Africa has inexplicably grown from 30 million adherents in 1950 to 450 million today—and most of those conversions are to charismatic expressions of the Christian faith. Given the new status quo of global Christianity, the discipline of systematic theology might want to reconsider its disinterest in the theology and church life of *die Schwärmer*. Further, traditionally minded church historians should pause long over Daughrity's claim that the humble beginning of the Pentecostal movement in the 1907 Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles is as least as important from the perspective of world Christianity as Luther's iconic 95 Theses in 1517! *The Changing World of Christianity* serves as a timely challenge to 'minority world' academics of religion to plunge into the changing world of the study of Christianity, so that our confessional studies and denominational histories can find fuller meaning and vigor within the global story of the Christian religion.

Arc Style Guide: Guidelines for Contributors

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For first-time citations, a full bibliographic reference should be given in a note.

> 1. Stanley Fish, Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities (London: Harvard University Press, 1989), 123.

2. M. Jimmie Killingsworth and Jaqueline S. Palmer, "Millenial Ecology: The Apocalyptic Narrative from Silent Spring to Global Warming," in ed. Carl G. Herndl and Stuart C. Brown, Green Culture: Environmental Rhetoric in Contemporary America (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 21–45.

3. Pierre Hadot, The Veil of Isis, trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 18.

If a complete bibliographic reference has already been given in a previous footnote, use the following short form: author's author's last name, main title, page number.

4. Fish, Is There a Text in This Class?, 124.

5. Killingsworth and Palmer, "Millenial Ecology," 34.

6. Hadot, The Veil of Isis, 25.

Ancient texts may be cited parenthetically or in noted references. Citations should include the author's name, the title of the work, and the numerical references (book, chapter, verse, etc.) using Arabic rather than Roman numerals, separated by periods. When a translation is not that of the author of the article, the translation should be cited in full as a modern work.

3. For questions of style, punctuation, and spelling not covered here, please refer to the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); and the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford University Press, 2004).

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