

**PAUL AMONG THE APOCALYPSES?  
AN EVALUATION OF THE 'APOCALYPTIC PAUL' IN THE  
CONTEXT OF JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN APOCALYPTIC  
LITERATURE**

**James P. Davies**

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD  
at the  
University of St Andrews**



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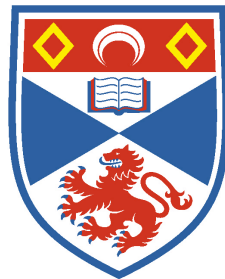
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An evaluation of the ‘apocalyptic Paul’ in the context  
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**James P. Davies**



University of  
St Andrews

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of

PhD

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Submitted on

24<sup>th</sup> October 2014



## *Abstract*

One of the most lively and enduring debates in New Testament studies is the question of the significance of ‘apocalyptic’ thought in Paul. This has recently given birth to a group of scholars, with a common theological genealogy, who share a concern to emphasise the ‘apocalyptic’ nature of Paul’s gospel. Leading figures of this group are J. Louis Martyn, Martinus de Boer, Beverly Gaventa and Douglas Campbell. The work of this group has not been received without criticism, drawing fire from various quarters. However, what is often lacking (on both sides) is detailed engagement with the texts of the Jewish and Christian apocalypses.

This dissertation attempts to evaluate the ‘apocalyptic Paul’ movement through an examination of its major theological emphases in the light of the Jewish apocalypses *1 Enoch*, *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch* and the Christian book of Revelation. Placing Paul in this literary and historical context confirms his place as an apocalyptic thinker, but raises important questions about how this is construed in these recent approaches. Each chapter will address one of four interrelated themes: epistemology, eschatology, cosmology and soteriology. The study intends to suggest that the ‘apocalyptic Paul’ movement is characterised at key points in each area by potentially false dichotomies, strict dualisms which unnecessarily screen out what Paul’s apocalyptic thought affirms.

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I, James Davies, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 80,000 words in length, has been written by me, and that it is the record of work carried out by me or principally by myself in collaboration with others as acknowledged, and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

I was admitted as a research student in February 2011 and as a candidate for the degree of Ph.D. in February 2012; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St Andrews between 2011 and 2014.

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# 1.

## PERPLEXED BY THE ‘APOCALYPTIC PAUL’?

### *Introduction*

One of the most lively and enduring debates in New Testament studies is the question of the significance of ‘apocalyptic’ thought in Paul. This has recently given birth to a group of scholars, with a common theological genealogy, who share a concern to emphasise the ‘apocalyptic’ nature of Paul’s gospel. Leading figures of this group are J. Louis Martyn, Martinus de Boer, Beverly Gaventa and Douglas Campbell. This movement has not been received without criticism, drawing fire from various quarters. However, what is often lacking, on both sides, is detailed engagement with the texts of the Jewish and Christian apocalypses.

This dissertation attempts to evaluate the ‘apocalyptic Paul’ movement through an examination of its major theological moves in the light of the Jewish apocalypses *1 Enoch*, *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch* and the Christian book of Revelation. Placing Paul in this literary and historical context confirms him as an apocalyptic thinker, while raising important questions about how this is construed in these recent approaches. Each chapter will address one of four interrelated themes: epistemology, eschatology, cosmology and soteriology.<sup>1</sup> The study suggests that the ‘apocalyptic Paul’ movement is characterised in each area by problematic dichotomies, strict dualisms which unnecessarily screen out what Paul’s apocalyptic thought affirms.

There is much to commend the ‘apocalyptic Paul’ movement, and much on which this project is in agreement. The present discussion affirms that we must approach Paul’s letters with recognition of his ‘apocalyptic’ way of thinking if the apostle is properly to be understood. Likewise, it affirms the importance of such ‘apocalyptic’ motifs as an epistemology of revealed knowledge, the eschatological doctrine of ‘two ages’, a cosmology characterised by two realms, and a soteriology which emphasises divine victory. This dialogue with the work of the major figures in that movement, from whose work the present project has learned a great deal, should not therefore be seen as an attempt at a full-dress critique.

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<sup>1</sup> For the rationale behind my use of these categories, see below.

However, it is the conviction of this dissertation that each of those affirmations of ‘apocalyptic’ themes in Paul has come with a corresponding denial: revelatory epistemology *therefore not* human wisdom; ‘apocalyptic’ eschatology *therefore not* salvation history; a cosmology of invasion *therefore not* the unveiling of God’s abiding presence; a soteriology of deliverance *therefore not* forensic justification.<sup>2</sup> It is at this point that concerns are raised, highlighting these potential false dichotomies in the ‘apocalyptic Paul’ which result from a failure to engage closely with the apocalypses. In a nutshell, one could say that while this critique affirms what they affirm, it must also question their denials. If the emphasis of the present work seems to fall on the latter, it is, hopefully, the result of friendly critique and an attempt to honour this scholarship.

As this dissertation neared completion, I was given to proofread a partial draft of N. T. Wright’s forthcoming volume *Paul and his Recent Interpreters*.<sup>3</sup> Readers of both works will observe, as I did, an overlap in our arguments. This, as noted in the acknowledgements, is the result of my working closely with Professor Wright over several years and having had many stimulating conversations on these issues. I echo what he says in the preface to that forthcoming volume: it is no longer clear to me which ideas were originally mine, which his, or which emerged from our conversations. Such shared ownership of ideas (if ‘ownership’ is even the right category when talking about ideas) is to be expected, even celebrated, in a well-functioning research department.<sup>4</sup> Rather than go through the somewhat artificial process of inserting references to Wright’s discussion at this late stage of writing, I offer here this comment by way of acknowledgement.

While recognising this shared ground between Wright’s work and the present discussion on the broader issues at stake in the contemporary ‘apocalyptic Paul’, this project has at least three important distinctives. The first is that it attempts to provide detailed exegesis of the relevant Jewish and Christian apocalypses (for which Wright has repeatedly called but which he has not provided) and extended consideration of commentaries and research on these texts. Particularly conspicuous by its absence in some discussions of New Testament apocalyptic is discussion of the book of Revelation,

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<sup>2</sup> This fourfold thematic analysis is, I believe, a useful tool for cutting across the cluster of issues raised by the work of these scholars and has led to the structure of the present argument, as I will explain further below.

<sup>3</sup> London: SPCK, 2015. The section in question was Part II, entitled ‘Re-enter Apocalyptic’.

<sup>4</sup> As is quite normal, in fact, in research projects in the sciences.

which therefore receives due attention at the heart of this dissertation. The second is an engagement with important recent contributions to the ‘apocalyptic Paul’ not discussed by Wright, notably the work of Beverley Gaventa and recent collections of essays edited by her and others.<sup>5</sup> Thirdly, and finally, the present context allows for an approach to the issues from multiple angles. Whereas Wright’s discussion is focussed largely on the question of ‘apocalyptic versus salvation history’ in the context of broader theological battles, the space afforded here allows discussion of this question alongside several other key theological fault lines, each in equal measure, leading (I hope) to a more thoroughgoing and dedicated evaluation of the ‘apocalyptic Paul’. Thus, while the present project supports many of Wright’s conclusions it also expands and deepens this important discussion.

With these preliminary comments, we can now begin to trace some of the historical contours of what has become one of the hottest topics in Pauline study.<sup>6</sup>

### *Paul and apocalyptic in recent study*

Recent scholarship which has described Paul’s thought as ‘apocalyptic’ is too massive to be easily summarised. Others have begun to detail this scholarship and have discovered that a whole book was needed.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless it is important that we begin with a sketch of the theological genealogy which lies behind the contemporary

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<sup>5</sup> E.g. J. B. Davis and D. K. Harink, eds., *Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology: with and beyond J. Louis Martyn* (Eugene: Cascade, 2012) and B. R. Gaventa, ed. *Apocalyptic Paul: Cosmos and Anthropos in Romans 5–8* (Waco: Baylor University, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> As I write this preparations are underway for what promises to be a stimulating extended five-hour session on ‘Paul and the Apocalyptic Imagination’ at the *Society of Biblical Literature* annual meeting in San Diego. Presenting papers will be many of the scholars discussed in this dissertation.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, R. B. Matlock, *Unveiling the Apocalyptic Paul: Paul’s Interpreters and the Rhetoric of Criticism*, JSNTSup (Sheffield: Sheffield University, 1996). Matlock describes how his project, which had intended to do other things too, soon became consumed with the business of examining the history of interpretation of the ‘apocalyptic Paul’ (p. 13–14). For other useful surveys of ‘apocalyptic’ in Paul from Schweitzer to Martyn see R. E. Sturm, “Defining the word ‘apocalyptic’: a problem in biblical criticism,” in *Apocalyptic and the New Testament: Essays in Honour of J. Louis Martyn* (Sheffield: Sheffield University, 1989); M. C. de Boer, *The Defeat of Death: Apocalyptic Eschatology in I Corinthians 15 and Romans 5*, JSNTSup (Sheffield: JSOT, 1988), 21–37 and see now also Part II of N. T. Wright, *Paul and his Recent Interpreters* (London: SPCK, 2015).

conversation about the ‘apocalyptic Paul’ to which this project seeks to contribute. In providing such a sketch we must remain conscious of the necessary limits of the enterprise – we here follow one thread of the history of interpretation, briefly and selectively, in order to highlight some of the important emphases that have helped to shape the current discussion. But it is comforting to note that those others who have told the story of the development of this movement have done so by highlighting much the same lines of thought.<sup>8</sup>

### *Albert Schweitzer*

Most reviews of the history of ‘apocalyptic’ interpretation of Paul are quick to point out that it is with the work of Albert Schweitzer that we must start, since his is claimed to be ‘the first consistent demonstration of Paul’s indebtedness to Jewish apocalyptic eschatology.’<sup>9</sup> For Schweitzer, Pauline interpretation must operate by placing the thought of the apostle within his Jewish context: ‘since Paul lives in the conceptions of the dramatic world-view characteristic of the late-Jewish Eschatology, he is by consequence bound to the logic of that view.’<sup>10</sup> What he thus sought to chart was the way in which a consistent application of this *Weltanschauung* might throw light on problem areas in Paul. He thus took up his programme of ‘thoroughgoing eschatology’,

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<sup>8</sup> It should be noted from the outset that the *Forschungsgeschichte* offered below addresses only one half of the story, charting the development of ‘apocalyptic’ themes in recent Pauline scholarship. Running parallel to this account is a line of discussion on the Jewish and Christian apocalypses themselves which involves Klaus Koch, Paul Hanson, John Collins, Christopher Rowland, Richard Bauckham and others (and of course commentators such as Michael Stone on *4 Ezra*, and George Nickelsburg and Loren Stuckenbruck on *1 Enoch*). It should also be noted, however, that the line of thought described in this chapter, from Schweitzer to Martyn and beyond, has largely developed without much engagement with that other conversation. Rather than include a second parallel literature review I will refer frequently to this work as my discussion develops, hoping to bring the two conversations together in fruitful, though often critical, dialogue.

<sup>9</sup> de Boer, *Defeat of Death*, 23. We might, however, go back slightly further to Johannes Weiss and Wilhelm Bousset (see the brief discussion in Sturm, “Defining the word ‘apocalyptic’”, 26, and citations therein).

<sup>10</sup> ‘Da Paulus in den Vorstellungen der dramatischen Weltanschauung der spätjüdischen Eschatologie lebt, ist er der damit gegebenen Logik unterworfen’ A. Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (London: A&C Black, 1931), 11.

for which he had argued in his earlier work on Jesus<sup>11</sup> and which he now extended and applied to Paul. The close connections between the two works, despite their chronological separation due to illness and missionary travel, are pointed out by Schweitzer himself in the preface to *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*. Given a choice between ‘either a purely eschatological or a purely Hellenistic explanation of [Paul’s] teaching’ Schweitzer says, ‘I take the former alternative throughout. It assumes the complete agreement of the teaching of Paul with that of Jesus.’<sup>12</sup> Thus he places ‘Paul’s mystical doctrine of Being-in-Christ’<sup>13</sup> squarely within the context of the worldview of (what he called) ‘late-Jewish eschatology’ rather than explaining it as the result of Hellenisation.

It is important to note that, in this later work on Paul, Schweitzer prefers to speak of *Mystik* or *spätjüdischen Eschatologie* rather than *Apokalyptik* when characterising the heart of the apostle’s thought, but this must not be overplayed given Schweitzer’s clear conceptual connection between eschatology and apocalyptic.<sup>14</sup> For Schweitzer, the defining characteristic of ‘apocalyptic’ was its imminent eschatology, and the distinctive character of Pauline mysticism is only understood in that Jewish apocalyptic context. The burden of Schweitzer’s song in *Mysticism* is thus to examine the characteristics of this Pauline mysticism against the backdrop of Jewish thought, highlighting three main features in the process: the place of angelic/cosmic powers, the imminent end of this world and arrival of the next, and (at the heart of it all) the question of redemption as Being-in-Christ. These three themes (we might call them *cosmological*, *eschatological*, and *soteriological*) are inextricably connected in Schweitzer’s thought.

It is the latter, the mystical doctrine of ‘Being-in-Christ’ which is the ‘prime enigma of the Pauline teaching’<sup>15</sup> and which forms the heart of Schweitzer’s argument, the ‘main crater’ within which the doctrine of justification by faith is merely a

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<sup>11</sup> e.g. in *Eine Skizze des Lebens Jesu* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1901) and *The Quest of the Historical Jesus (ET of Von Reimarus zu Wrede.)* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1906). See the discussion and references in Sturm, “Defining the word ‘apocalyptic’”, 27.

<sup>12</sup> Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, viii.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, ix.

<sup>14</sup> Matlock observes that the term ‘vanishes completely’ in *Mystik* but immediately cautions against pressing this terminological point too far. See Matlock, *Unveiling the Apocalyptic Paul*, 47 n44.

<sup>15</sup> Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 3.

*Nebenkrater*.<sup>16</sup> Paul, for Schweitzer, distinguishes between God-mysticism ('Gottesmystik') and Christ-mysticism ('Christusmystik') and never collapses the latter into the former.<sup>17</sup> This, he argues, is greatly significant for Pauline theology and, when placed in the proper interpretative framework, offers a clue to the character of Paul's mystical/apocalyptic thought. For Schweitzer, God-mysticism is not possible as long as the world is conditioned by the struggles of angelic powers. Only once Christ has achieved final victory over those powers, the last of which is death itself, will such union with God be possible. It is in union with Christ that the believer shares in this hope. The distinctive character of Pauline mysticism is, therefore, necessarily dramatic and eschatological: God-mysticism and Christ-mysticism are successive phases of this drama. As Schweitzer summarises it:

Being-in-God is for Paul impossible so long as the angelic beings still possess some kind of power over man. Once Christ has, in the progress of the Messianic Kingdom, overcome them and has destroyed death as the last enemy, He will Himself give back His now unneeded power to God 'in order that God may be all in all' (1 Cor. xv. 26–28). Then only will there be a being-in-God.

Paul does thus recognise a God-mysticism [Gottesmystik]; but it is not in being contemporaneously with the Christ-mysticism [Christusmystik]. The presuppositions of his world-view make it impossible that they should co-exist, or that one should necessitate the other. They are chronologically successive, Christ-mysticism holding the field until God-mysticism becomes possible.

The peculiarity that the mysticism of Paul is only a mysticism of being-in-Christ, and not a mysticism of being-in-God, has thus its foundation in the fact that it originally had its place in an eschatological world-view [einer eschatologischen Weltanschauung].<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 225.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 4–5.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 12–13.

Thus the mystical doctrine of Being-in-Christ, and redemption through participation in his death and resurrection, is inextricably connected to his eschatological and cosmological worldview. The eschaton has commenced in the death and resurrection of Christ and by sharing in that new creation through mystical union with Christ believers are caught up in the present dramatic ‘struggle with angelic powers’<sup>19</sup> characteristic of the time before the final victory of Christ and the establishment of the Messianic kingdom. ‘The redemption which the believer experiences,’ Schweitzer argues ‘is therefore not a mere transaction arranged between himself, God, and Christ, but a world-event in which he has a share. It is impossible to form a right conception of the view of redemption held by the Early Christians without taking into account that it was cosmically conditioned.’<sup>20</sup> This, for Schweitzer, is not a Paul of modern piety or of Hellenistic philosophy but the Paul of history, intelligible only within the context of the Jewish eschatological worldview.

There are some important differences between Schweitzer’s emphases and later ‘apocalyptic’ interpretations of Paul.<sup>21</sup> But it is nevertheless fair to begin with him since, in tracing the cosmological, eschatological and soteriological contours of Pauline mysticism in the manner outlined above, he set the agenda for the development of those contours in subsequent discussion.

### *Rudolf Bultmann*

Schweitzer’s focus on the hermeneutical imperative of the cosmic dimension of redemption in Paul received an almost immediate response from Rudolf Bultmann, who was already influential in German scholarship when *Mysticism* was published in 1931. Bultmann, like Schweitzer, acknowledged that the framework of Jesus’ (and Paul’s) thought was apocalyptic in character,<sup>22</sup> something which was easily discerned by examination of ‘the mythical view of the world which the New Testament

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>21</sup> Indeed Matlock asks whether such interpretations are guilty of ‘a certain haste to claim Schweitzer for one’s own’ (Matlock, *Unveiling the Apocalyptic Paul*, 48). Matlock has in mind here the reception of Schweitzer found in Käsemann and Beker, to whom I will shortly turn.

<sup>22</sup> R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1952), 4.



presupposes'.<sup>23</sup> The language of a three-tiered cosmology, angelic and demonic powers, two eschatological *aeons*, the defeat of the powers in the death of Christ, and the coming resurrection of the dead are, for Bultmann, all the tell-tale signs of a worldview shaped by Jewish apocalypses. Bultmann's departure from Schweitzer's 'cosmically conditioned' interpretation was his approach to interpreting this apocalyptic mythological language in the contemporary world. This, of course, is at the heart of his famous programme of 'demythologisation', summarised as follows:

All this is the language of mythology, and the origin of the various themes can be easily traced in the contemporary mythology of Jewish Apocalyptic and in the redemption myths of Gnosticism. To this extent *the kerygma is incredible to modern man, for his is convinced that the mythical view of the world is obsolete*. We are therefore bound to ask whether, when we preach the Gospel to-day, we expect our converts to accept not only the Gospel message, but also the mythical view of the world in which it is set. If not, does the New Testament embody a truth which is quite independent of its mythical setting? If it does, theology must undertake the task of stripping the Kerygma from its mythical framework, of 'demythologising' it.<sup>24</sup>

For Bultmann, the rejection of 'the cosmology of a pre-scientific age'<sup>25</sup> was an imperative for any modern interpretation of the Bible. 'It is impossible,' he famously claimed, 'to use electric light and the wireless and to avail ourselves of modern medical and surgical discoveries, and at the same time to believe in the New Testament world of spirits and miracles.'<sup>26</sup> Moreover, a further imperative for demythologisation came from modern human self-understanding. 'Modern man...' Bultmann argued, 'is not, as the New Testament regards him, the victim of a strange dichotomy which exposes him to the interference of powers outside himself.'<sup>27</sup> Such a belief was for Bultmann incompatible with modern biology and psychology and is what science would call

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<sup>23</sup> R. Bultmann, *Kerygma and Myth* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), 2. This edited volume originally appeared in English in 1953 and opens by reprinting the earlier seminal essay, 'New Testament and Mythology' (1941), which first outlined Bultmann's interpretative programme.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 (emphasis original).

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

schizophrenia. Thus modern cosmology and anthropology are problematic for acceptance of the New Testament's mythical worldview.

His solution was not the rejection of apocalyptic language but its demythologisation. By separating out the substance of the New Testament's message from its historically-conditioned form, the apocalyptic language of Jesus and Paul could be made useful to the modern world. In this task, Bultmann found support from Heideggerian existentialism, which he considered congenial to the sort of interpretation invited by the nature of New Testament myth, the purpose of which 'is not to present an objective picture of the world as it is, but to express man's understanding of himself in the world in which he lives. Myth should be interpreted not cosmologically, but anthropologically, or better still, existentially.'<sup>28</sup> As such, cosmic powers become a way of understanding the challenge of authentic human existence; the urgency of apocalyptic eschatology is redefined as the urgency of present (individual, existential) decision; faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus as self-illumination, and so on. In this way, Bultmann believed, 'the eschatology of Jewish apocalyptic' could be 'emancipated from its accompanying mythology.'<sup>29</sup> In thus setting out the debate in terms of the 'cosmological' versus the 'anthropological' in Paul, Bultmann clarified the battle lines between himself and Schweitzer.<sup>30</sup>

### *Ernst Käsemann*

In what has been characterised as something of a 'palace revolt',<sup>31</sup> a significant challenge to Bultmann came from one of his own students. Ernst Käsemann's response to his teacher was 'primary in expressing a contrary view that affirms a positive and crucial significance for apocalyptic'<sup>32</sup> and it has been said that 'apocalyptic interpretation of Paul does not properly begin until Ernst Käsemann announces his verdict, with Paul as chief witness, that "apocalyptic" is the beginning of Christian

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>30</sup> It was a distinction with ramifications for a large number of Pauline *topoi*. See Matlock, *Unveiling the Apocalyptic Paul*, 126–7 for a summary. In Sturm's rather negative assessment, 'Bultmann's consistent existentializing of the gospel inhibits for decades (especially in Germany) further historical research into apocalyptic on its own terms' (Sturm, "Defining the word 'apocalyptic'", 28).

<sup>31</sup> Matlock, *Unveiling the Apocalyptic Paul*, 129.

<sup>32</sup> Sturm, "Defining the word 'apocalyptic'", 29.

theology.<sup>33</sup> While such grand assessments are arguably guilty of overstatement it is certainly the case that no debate so characterises the contemporary ‘apocalyptic’ approach to Paul as that between Käsemann and Bultmann.<sup>34</sup>

Contending that Bultmann’s ‘anthropological’ approach had forced Paul into an anachronistic modern framework, Käsemann sought to recover Schweitzer’s ‘cosmological’ reading of the apostle, under the banner of ‘apocalyptic’.<sup>35</sup> For Käsemann, Bultmann’s search for an authentic Christian kerygma was hampered by its refusal to take seriously the historical imperative of allowing the early Christian writers to speak on their own terms: ‘the earliest Christian theology,’ he argued, ‘cannot adequately be interpreted from an existentialist starting-point, if decisive weight is to be given to its fundamental understanding of itself.’<sup>36</sup>

In responding to Bultmann, however, Käsemann by no means simply restated Schweitzer’s position. For Schweitzer, this historical task resulted in locating the centre of Paul’s thought in the doctrine of Being-in-Christ as he found it in the apostle’s Jewish apocalyptic background. For Käsemann that same background led him to reassert the centrality of justification, and an interpretation of δικαιοσύνη τοῦ θεοῦ not according to an individual’s standing but as ‘a power which brings salvation to pass’<sup>37</sup> whereby God recaptures the world for himself. As such, when Käsemann famously proclaimed that ‘apocalyptic was the mother of all Christian theology’<sup>38</sup> what he had in

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<sup>33</sup> Matlock, *Unveiling the Apocalyptic Paul*, 129.

<sup>34</sup> Any survey of the recent literature on ‘apocalyptic’ in Paul will reveal the omnipresence of the Käsemann-Bultmann debate, whether implicitly or explicitly. See, for example, M. C. de Boer, “Paul’s Mythologizing Program in Romans 5–8,” in *Apocalyptic Paul: cosmos and anthropos in Romans 5–8*, ed. B. R. Gaventa (Waco: Baylor University, 2013), 3–7; Davis and Harink, *Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology*, 31–6; D. A. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God: an Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 188–9.

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, his discussion of Bultmann in E. Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today* (London: SCM, 1969), 14–16. An example of a German scholar who takes on board Käsemann’s anti-individualist arguments while taking Bultmann’s side in the debate over ‘Kosmologie oder Anthropologie’ is J. Baumgarten, *Paulus und die Apokalyptik: Die Auslegung apokalyptischer Überlieferungen in den echten Paulusbriefen* (Neukirchener: Neukirchener Verlag, 1975), 1–7.

<sup>36</sup> E. Käsemann, “On the Subject of Primitive Christian Apocalyptic,” in *New Testament Questions of Today* (London: SCM, 1969), 117.

<sup>37</sup> E. Käsemann, “‘The Righteousness of God’ in Paul,” in *New Testament Questions of Today* (London: SCM, 1969), 181.

<sup>38</sup> Käsemann, “The Beginnings of Christian Theology”, 102.

mind was an apocalyptic oriented around the twin poles of the imminent parousia and ‘Christ’s seizure of power as the Cosmocrator’.<sup>39</sup> It was this ‘cosmological-apocalyptic’ Paul which Käsemann employed to reverse Bultmann’s demythologised and individualised (mis)appropriation of apocalyptic mythology.<sup>40</sup>

Käsemann thus forced a choice between two camps. On one side was Bultmann and his ‘anthropological’ theology of individualism, decisionism, and existential transaction. On the other was Käsemann (partly following Schweitzer<sup>41</sup>) and his ‘cosmological’ theology of corporate and cosmic deliverance, bearing the name ‘apocalyptic’. This was not, however, to drive a wedge between anthropology and cosmology/apocalyptic. On the contrary, for Käsemann ‘anthropology must then *eo ipso* be cosmology’<sup>42</sup> since the human being is not an individual but is always caught up in the battle for cosmic lordship raging between God and his enemies. ‘Anthropology,’ for Käsemann, ‘is cosmology *in concreto*.’<sup>43</sup> The following characteristic passage unpacks this dramatic statement in relation to Käsemann’s understanding of ‘apocalyptic’ in Paul.

The apocalyptic question ‘To whom does the sovereignty of the world belong?’ stands behind the Resurrection theology of the apostle, as behind his parenesis which centres round the call to obedience in the body. Apocalyptic even underlies the particular shape of Pauline anthropology... Man for Paul is never just on his own. He is always a specific piece of world and therefore becomes what in the last resort he is by determination from outside, i.e., by the power which takes possession of him and the lordship to which he surrenders himself. His life is from the beginning a stake in the confrontation between God and the principalities of this world. In other words, it mirrors the cosmic contention for the lordship of the world and is its concretion. As such man’s life can only be understood apocalyptically.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Käsemann, *New Testament Questions*, 14.

<sup>40</sup> cf. the similar discussion in de Boer, “Paul’s Mythologizing Program”, 5–7.

<sup>41</sup> recalling Schweitzer’s dichotomy between redemption as ‘transaction’ and ‘world-event’ (again see Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 54).

<sup>42</sup> E. Käsemann, “On Paul’s Anthropology,” in *Perspectives on Paul* (London: SCM, 1969), 23.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>44</sup> Käsemann, “Primitive Christian Apocalyptic”, 135–6.

Käsemann's 'cosmological' appropriation of apocalyptic should not, however, be understood merely as a response to Bultmann's 'anthropological' approach. He had a second important target in the shape of Krister Stendahl's focus on *Heilsgeschichte*.<sup>45</sup> It is important to be clear that what Käsemann argued against is not the phrase itself or even (properly defined) the concept of 'salvation history'. As Käsemann puts it 'it is impossible to understand the bible in general or Paul in particular without the perspective of salvation history'<sup>46</sup> a theme which 'forms the horizon of Pauline theology.'<sup>47</sup> Any assessment of this theme must, however, contend with the fact that Paul's indisputable emphasis on salvation history is nevertheless 'deeply paradoxical.'<sup>48</sup> Käsemann affirms an approach to salvation history which maintains the paradox of asserting both the continuity of history and the eschatological inbreaking of God. Such an affirmation of the concrete place and time of divine action must be maintained, he argues, as a corrective to the (Bultmannian) turn to individualism and existentialism.<sup>49</sup> As such it is wrong to see here a blanket condemnation of salvation history in Käsemann's dispute with Stendahl. What Käsemann challenges, rather, is an approach to salvation history (which he saw in Stendahl, Cullmann and others) characterised by 'an *immanent evolutionary process* whose meaning can be grasped on earth, or which we can control and calculate.'<sup>50</sup>

Käsemann's own historical context is important here, as he freely admits in a 'personal reminiscence.'<sup>51</sup> The kind of immanent evolutionary process against which he guards is that which lay at the heart of the rise of Nazism. In this theological context, it was the doctrine of justification which 'immunized [him] deeply against a conception of salvation history which broke in on us in secularised and political form with the Third Reich and its ideology'.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, as one of Germany's 'burnt children',<sup>53</sup> for

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<sup>45</sup> though as Wright argues (in Wright, *Interpreters*, ad loc) Käsemann's real target was probably Cullmann. Cf. in this connection the references to Cullmann in E. Käsemann, "Justification and Salvation History in the Epistle to the Romans," in *Perspectives on Paul* (London: SCM, 1971), 61, 63.

<sup>46</sup> Käsemann, "Justification and Salvation History", 63.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>49</sup> See, e.g., the discussion in *ibid.*, 69.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 63 (emphasis mine).

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

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 64. See also, e.g., N. T. Wright, "A New Tübingen School? Ernst Käsemann and his Significance," *Themelios* 7(1982): 6–16, 7–8; Matlock, *Unveiling the Apocalyptic Paul*, 218.

Käsemann an ‘apocalyptic’ Paul who asserts the imminent expectation of an invasive act of God against the powers of this world is the antidote to salvation history as immanent evolutionary process. This he considered inimical to a theology of the cross, to be countered with his understanding of ‘apocalyptic’ as imminent divine invasion.<sup>54</sup>

### *J. Christiaan Beker*

Owing in many ways a debt to Käsemann, another interpreter of Paul for whom the ‘apocalyptic’ worldview was central to understanding the apostle is J. Christiaan Beker. Writing in his 1980 seminal work *Paul the Apostle: the Triumph of God in Life and Thought*, Beker examines the contingency and coherence of Paul’s letters and argues that ‘only a consistent apocalyptic interpretation of Paul’s thought is able to demonstrate its fundamental coherence.’<sup>55</sup> The Bultmannian project of attempting to separate out the substance of the gospel from its apocalyptic form was a doomed enterprise since the two are inseparable: the coherence of the Pauline gospel is ‘unthinkable apart from apocalyptic’.<sup>56</sup> For Beker, apocalyptic was not an incidental or obsolete husk but was the ‘texture of Paul’s thought’ and ‘the heart of Paul’s gospel.’<sup>57</sup>

As Beker develops this central thesis he argues that the coherent centre of the apostle’s thought is to be found in an appreciation of the way ‘Paul’s apocalyptic gospel is constituted by certain apocalyptic components that he derives from his Jewish apocalyptic world’ but also ‘radically modifies because of his encounter with Christ.’<sup>58</sup> It should be made clear that Beker is here referring to the Second Temple literary phenomenon of Jewish apocalyptic.<sup>59</sup> From that literature, Beker argues, Paul takes four

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<sup>53</sup> Käsemann, “Justification and Salvation History”, 64.

<sup>54</sup> This is a term which takes on immense significance in Martyn, to whom I will shortly turn.

<sup>55</sup> J. C. Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 143.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 181, cf. 16–19.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>58</sup> J. C. Beker, *Paul’s Apocalyptic Gospel: the coming triumph of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 30.

<sup>59</sup> Given his insistence on the importance of the Jewish apocalyptic literature it is remarkable that exegesis of that primary literature is almost completely absent from Beker’s endeavours to define apocalyptic thought, a major failing of his otherwise impressive work. Instead, Beker bases his definition on the work of Koch and Vielhauer (see Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 135–6). In the central chapter of *Paul the Apostle* (pp. 135–181), despite his insistence on the appreciation of Paul’s apocalyptic worldview, Beker makes only the briefest of mention of the apocalypses (*4 Ez./2 Bar.* at p. 145; *2 Bar.* 49—51 at p.

key components — *vindication, universalism, dualism and imminence* — and modifies them in the light of the cross and resurrection of Jesus.

Building on Käsemann's earlier work on δικαιοσύνη τοῦ θεοῦ, Beker understands *vindication* as the triumph of God's sovereignty conceived within 'a salvation-historical scheme' whereby 'the Covenant-God of Israel has confirmed and renewed his promises of salvation to Israel and to the nations.'<sup>60</sup> The faithfulness of God is made manifest in Jesus Christ, whose death and resurrection is the inauguration of both the triumph and vindication of God and the climax of his redemptive plan.<sup>61</sup> While affirming the importance of salvation history for Paul's apocalyptic thought, Beker, like Käsemann, guards carefully against history as a smooth evolutionary development. Pauline apocalyptic, for Beker, 'expects the future to entail a definitive closure/completion-event in time and space, rather than simply a continuous, open-ended process.'<sup>62</sup> For Beker, this triumph of God has an important cosmic-anthropological dimension. 'Cosmic-anthropological' because Beker again follows Käsemann in asserting that anthropology is cosmology. Human beings, in Beker's view, are not bystanders in the cosmic triumph of God but are involved in it, and this raises the question of *universalism*:

Because the person is viewed from a cosmic perspective, a profound solidarity and interdependence exists among the people in the world, a solidarity which even reaches into the realm of nature... This means that, until all of God's creation comes to its destiny of glory, neither God himself is vindicated nor the human being completely or fully 'saved'.<sup>63</sup>

While thus insisting on the logical imperative of a cosmic universalism, Beker is nevertheless clear that Paul 'refrains from any unequivocal assertion of this point' and

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167). This leads Matlock to suspect that Beker finds it 'easier to interpret Paul in the light of Vielhauer and Koch than in the light — or darkness — of the apocalypses' (Matlock, *Unveiling the Apocalyptic Paul*, 248).

<sup>60</sup> Beker, *Paul's Apocalyptic Gospel*, 30.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 31–2.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

that such a position must be ‘balanced by an emphasis on responsibility and obedience for those who have heard the gospel.’<sup>64</sup>

Beker relates these first two apocalyptic motifs, *vindication* and *universalism*, to the second two, *dualism* and *imminence*. Jewish apocalyptic dualism is defined by Beker as ‘the antithesis between this world and the world to come, and the hostility of the forces of evil in our world to representatives of the coming age of God’s kingdom.’<sup>65</sup> It is a dualism with both eschatological and cosmological dimensions, the two being closely interrelated. For Paul, however, ‘the Christ-event has strongly modified the dualistic structure of normal apocalyptic thought’<sup>66</sup> and the modifications of this apocalyptic component are twofold. First, Beker notes that, because of God’s commitment to his covenant faithfulness, Paul refuses to reject the significance of Israel’s history in the purposes of God and thus ‘softens’<sup>67</sup> the dualism between the two eschatological ages. Paul’s eschatological understanding of Christ as ‘the incursion of the future new age into the present old age’<sup>68</sup> further tempers this dualism. There is thus continuity in the midst of discontinuity. The second modification, however, is that eschatological dualism is intensified. The invasion of the age to come into the present aggravates this eschatological crisis since ‘the forces of the future are already at work in the world.’<sup>69</sup> An embattled church in the present is the sign of this inbreaking future.

This intensification of eschatological dualism then in turn intensifies the importance of the final component of Paul’s modified apocalyptic: eschatological *imminence*. The resurrection of Jesus as the inauguration of the age to come means that the present age is characterised by an eschatological intensity which makes necessary the imminent hope of Christ’s return and final victory. Thus for Beker, the Pauline cry of ‘*maranatha*’ (1 Cor 16.22) is echoed by the subaltern voices of Revelation 6.10, ‘Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long will it be before you judge and avenge our blood on the inhabitants of the earth?’ and the antiphonal song of 22.17–20, which, he says, ‘might as well have been taken out of the liturgy of a Pauline church.’<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 35–6.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 39. I will return to the question of definition in the second half of this chapter.

<sup>66</sup> Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 145.

<sup>67</sup> Beker, *Paul’s Apocalyptic Gospel*, 40.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 47–8.



*J. Louis Martyn*

Two years after its publication, Beker's *Paul the Apostle* was reviewed by a scholar whose name has since become synonymous with the 'apocalyptic Paul', J. Louis Martyn.<sup>71</sup> Martyn applauded Beker's focus on a 'consistent apocalyptic interpretation' of Paul, agreeing that 'exploring Paul's particular and peculiar grasp of apocalyptic seems... to offer the only hope of perceiving something that approaches coherence.'<sup>72</sup> The genealogical reasons behind this agreement are clear: both scholars owe a great deal to the influence of Ernst Käsemann.<sup>73</sup>

Martyn's agreement with Beker was not, however, wholehearted. Perhaps his major critique concerned the place of salvation history in the definition of apocalyptic. Beker, for Martyn, opts for an approach to apocalyptic which 'plays down the disjunctive dualism of the two ages'<sup>74</sup> in favour of the linear progression of God's plan of salvation leading to his ultimate triumph, a combination of salvation history and apocalyptic which Martyn found problematic. '[I]n the course of exploring Paul's thought,' he says, 'Beker is able to discover a kind of marriage between apocalyptic (as core) and salvation history (as structure?). My own opinion is that the marriage, as presented in this book, is rather more arranged by Beker than discovered in Paul.'<sup>75</sup>

One of the exegetical sticking points of Beker's project was Galatians. For Beker, this letter was an exception to the consistent application of an apocalyptic approach to Paul, one of the 'occasional inconsistencies' which Beker explained by conceding that 'there are clearly instances where the situational demands suppress the apocalyptic theme of the gospel.'<sup>76</sup> As such, Beker describes his 'apocalyptic' approach to Paul without reference to Galatians. Here Martyn takes issue, and so it is no

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<sup>71</sup> J. L. Martyn, "Review of Paul the Apostle: the Triumph of God in Life and Thought, by J. Christiaan Beker," *Word and World* 2, no. 2 (1982): 194–98.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.* See also his 'A Personal Word about Ernst Käsemann' in Davis and Harink, *Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology*, xiii–xv.

<sup>74</sup> Martyn, "Review of Beker", 196.

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

<sup>76</sup> Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, x.

coincidence that his 1997 commentary on Galatians,<sup>77</sup> dedicated to Käsemann, is arguably the seminal work for contemporary discussion of ‘apocalyptic’ in Paul.

There, Martyn outlines his view of the key features of apocalyptic theology in Galatians.<sup>78</sup> The first expression which Martyn notes is the phrase ‘the present evil age’ (Galatians 1.4b), an indication of the presence in the letter of ‘a scheme fundamental to apocalyptic thought’:<sup>79</sup> an eschatological dualism of two ages. To this eschatological theme is added a focus on epistemology. Citing Paul’s four uses of ἀποκαλύπτω in Galatians, Martyn underlines the importance of the notion of ‘revelation’ as a ‘disjunctive apocalypse’ and (Martyn’s key term) an ‘invasion’. Translating ἀποκαλύπτω simply as ‘reveal’ or ‘unveil’ is, for Martyn, therefore inadequate. ‘In Galatians,’ he argues,

Paul’s apocalyptic is not focused on God’s unveiling something that was previously hidden, as though it had been eternally standing behind a curtain (contrast 1 Cor. 2:9–10). The genesis of Paul’s apocalyptic — as we see it in Galatians — lies in the apostle’s certainty that God had *invaded* the present evil age by sending Christ and his Spirit into it.<sup>80</sup>

Here can be seen both the similarity between Martyn and Beker, in their shared use of *invasion* language, and their central difference, in Martyn’s rejection of linear histories. That this sending of Christ into the present age happens ‘when the fullness of time came’ (Galatians 4.4a) is, for Martyn, no endorsement of salvation historical approaches like Beker’s. Christ’s ‘coming onto the scene’ means that the relationship between the present evil age and the new creation is not linear but punctiliar. Martyn is

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<sup>77</sup> J. L. Martyn, *Galatians: a new translation with introduction and commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1997).

<sup>78</sup> The following is a summary of Martyn’s argument in ‘Comment #3’ of his Galatians commentary (ibid., 97–105). Martyn is clear that when he uses the term ‘apocalyptic’ here he intends to refer not to the literary genre but to ‘a theological pattern of thought’ (ibid., 96 n.47), directing the reader here to the work of Hanson and Sturm. Nevertheless, he does consider ‘essential’ the work on the apocalypses offered by Martinus de Boer which outlines an approach to apocalyptic which seeks to interpret that literature (ibid., 97 n.51, citing M. C. de Boer, “Paul and Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology,” in *Apocalyptic and the New Testament*, ed. Joel Marcus, Marion L. Soards, and J. Louis Martyn (Sheffield: JSOT, 1989)).

<sup>79</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 98.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 99.

quite clear about what he is thus rejecting: ‘for Paul, therefore, as for all thoroughly apocalyptic thinkers, this liberating redemption does not at all grow out of the present scene. Redemption is a matter of God’s invasive movement into that scene.’<sup>81</sup>

This invasion results in another key apocalyptic motif: *warfare*. God’s invasion of the present evil age launches a battle between the forces of that age and the new creation, resulting in the presence of numerous ‘antinomies’. One of the central implications of this motif is an interpretation of the cross not in terms of ‘personal guilt and forgiveness’ but in terms of ‘corporate enslavement and liberation’<sup>82</sup> and it is this latter message, Martyn argues, which the Galatians need to hear in order to correct the false theology of ‘the Teachers’.

This combination of warfare and cross is paradigmatic for the Christian life. The believer, through Paul’s notion of *co-crucifixion* (Galatians 2.19) is caught up in the ongoing warfare between the forces of God and his enemies; the church is ‘the apocalyptic community called to the front trenches in God’s apocalyptic war against the powers of the present evil age.’<sup>83</sup> Notwithstanding the struggles involved in the present, the church’s hope of victory is guaranteed because of the cross. What is involved is therefore a ‘bifocal vision of apocalyptic’<sup>84</sup> which sees the challenges of living in the battle of the present age as well as the true reality that God has won.

This vision cannot, for Martyn, come about by human means; it is not ‘visible, demonstrable, or provable in the categories and with the means of perception native to “everyday” existence’ but requires an ‘epistemological crisis.’<sup>85</sup> The results are a radically new way of seeing God, Christ, the cross, sin, the Law, rectification, grace, one’s neighbours and the very cosmos and time itself.<sup>86</sup> This, for Martyn, is nothing short of an epistemological earthquake.

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 104; cf. also the important essay J. L. Martyn, “Epistemology at the Turn of The Ages: 2 Corinthians 5.16,” in *Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox*, ed. W. R. Farmer, C. F. D. Moule, and R. R. Niebuhr (Cambridge: CUP, 1967) reprinted in J. L. Martyn, *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (T&T Clark, 2005), 89–110.

<sup>86</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 104.

## A 'Union School'?

Martyn's work has been enormously influential. Such is the confluence of scholars with a shared concern for 'apocalyptic' in Paul along Martyn's lines that some have suggested the emergence of a 'Union School'.<sup>87</sup> Whether or not this label will prove appropriate only time will tell, but it is clear that there has been a groundswell in the concern for 'apocalyptic' in Paul, with a number of collections of essays now produced in Martyn's honour as well as several important single-author works citing his influence.<sup>88</sup> While being mindful of the differences that exist between these scholars (some of which I will highlight in due course) it is thus not inappropriate to discuss them as a defined group or movement in contemporary Anglophone Pauline scholarship.<sup>89</sup> As with the above discussion of Martyn, I will limit the following to introductory remarks, reserving the more detailed analyses for the chapters that follow.

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<sup>87</sup> Referring, of course, to Union Theological Seminary in New York. According to Philip Ziegler, this label was suggested by J. F. Kay, "review of Douglas Harink, Paul among the Postliberals," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 56, no. 3-4 (2002): 203–5, 205, as quoted in P. G. Ziegler, "The Fate of Natural Law at the Turning of the Ages: Some Reflections on a Trend in Contemporary Theological Ethics in View of the Work of J. Louis Martyn," *Theology Today* 67(2011): 419–29, 420. In that review, however, Kay does not use the specific language of a 'school'. He does, however, draw a contrast between 'this Union emphasis upon the apocalyptic Gospel' and the postliberal *Yale School*.

<sup>88</sup> Single-author works with explicit indebtedness to Martyn: M. C. de Boer, *Galatians: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011); B. R. Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007); Campbell, *Deliverance*. Multi-author volumes: J. Marcus and M. L. Soards, eds., *Apocalyptic and the New Testament: essays in honor of J. Louis Martyn* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1989); Davis and Harink, *Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology* and Gaventa, *Apocalyptic Paul*. Much of this discussion is the product of the SBL working group 'Explorations in Theology and Apocalyptic', first held during the *American Academy of Religion* meeting in Montreal, 2009, and whose website (theologyandapocalyptic.wordpress.com) suggests a reading list headed by Martyn. Other names on this list are Beverly Gaventa, Martinus de Boer, Joseph Mangina, Christopher Morse, Cyril O'Regan, Douglas Harink, Travis Kroeker, Walter Lowe, Nathan Kerr and Douglas Campbell.

<sup>89</sup> This goes some way to explaining the rationale for my selection of dialogue partners in the chapters that follow. Among the scholars in this group the most influential voices are, to my mind, those of Martinus de Boer, Douglas Campbell and Beverly Gaventa. I will not here give an outline of the thought of each, since this will be provided in the first part of each chapter. It should be noted that this is an exclusively Anglophone group, which is also reflected in the scope of the present project. This is interesting, given the movement's largely German-language theological genealogy.

*Martinus de Boer*

One feature in particular of Martinus de Boer's approach to apocalyptic in Paul has been described by Martyn as 'extraordinarily perceptive' and 'essential to the reading of Galatians.'<sup>90</sup> This is de Boer's work on the apocalyptic literature, and his description of what he calls the 'the two tracks of Jewish apocalyptic eschatology.'<sup>91</sup>

A detailed examination and evaluation of this will be given in chapter five below, and so I offer here only a brief summary. De Boer's distinction between the 'two tracks' of Jewish apocalyptic began life in his doctoral dissertation, written under Martyn's supervision<sup>92</sup> and subsequently published in *The Defeat of Death*. It formed part of his contribution to the *Festschrift* for Martyn<sup>93</sup> the following year and has since been restated and refined in an essay in the *Encyclopaedia of Apocalypticism*<sup>94</sup> and now his own commentary on Galatians.<sup>95</sup> The 'two tracks' in question, which de Boer finds in second Temple Jewish apocalyptic literature, are 'cosmological apocalyptic eschatology' and 'forensic apocalyptic eschatology'. In the first, 'cosmological' track, sin and death are the result of a primordial angelic rebellion leaving the cosmos under the sway of evil powers. The resulting situation is a state of *cosmic warfare* between the two 'orbs of power' (God and his enemies) and salvation is to be found in the victory of God. De Boer cites the *Book of the Watchers* as the best example of this 'track'.<sup>96</sup> The second track, 'forensic apocalyptic eschatology', has to do not with warfare but human transgression against God's law and the coming assize. Sin and salvation are understood in juridical rather than martial categories, as punishment for the ungodly and reward for the righteous. Where cosmological 'powers' are present, their role is severely limited.<sup>97</sup> De Boer cites *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch* as examples of 'forensic' Jewish apocalypses 'in

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<sup>90</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 97 n51.

<sup>91</sup> de Boer, "Paul and Jewish Apocalyptic", 180.

<sup>92</sup> Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1983.

<sup>93</sup> de Boer, "Paul and Jewish Apocalyptic".

<sup>94</sup> M. C. de Boer, "Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology," in *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, ed. John J. Collins and Bernard McGinn (New York: Continuum, 2000).

<sup>95</sup> de Boer, *Galatians*, 31–36.

<sup>96</sup> de Boer, "Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology", 359.

<sup>97</sup> See *ibid.*, 358. In de Boer, *Galatians*, 32, he somewhat qualifies the sharpness of the distinction, allowing for the 'cosmological' to 'recede into the background'.

which such malevolent forces play no role.<sup>98</sup> These two tracks (which de Boer is careful to describe as ‘heuristic models’<sup>99</sup>) are then put to use in examining Paul’s Christological adaptation of apocalyptic thought.

Another major feature of de Boer’s discussions has been his assessment, often repeated, of the importance of the Käsemann-Bultmann debate for understanding ‘apocalyptic’ in Paul.<sup>100</sup> De Boer observes the similarities between the German masters’ anthropology/cosmology debate and his ‘forensic’ versus ‘cosmological’ division in Jewish apocalyptic, and, with this, the interpretative challenges involved in reading Romans. As regards the latter, de Boer notes the Bultmannian preference for Romans 1—4 and Käsemann’s focus on 6—8, commenting that ‘the Bultmann-Käsemann exchange allows us to see, or at least to suspect, that Romans 5 marks a shift from predominantly forensic-eschatological categories (focused on the individual) to predominantly cosmological-apocalyptic ones in Paul’s argument in Romans.’<sup>101</sup>

### *Beverly Gaventa*

Another leading figure in the contemporary ‘apocalyptic Paul’ movement who owes a debt to Martyn is Beverly Gaventa. The fullest statement of her ‘apocalyptic’ approach to Paul can be seen in her collection of essays *Our Mother Saint Paul*. A glance at the contents page might suggest that it is only the second part of that volume which deals with apocalyptic, and indeed it is here that her most important statements on the question are to be found,<sup>102</sup> but such a conclusion would be mistaken. The first part of

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<sup>98</sup> de Boer, “Paul’s Mythologizing Program”, 18. It is de Boer’s work on these texts which has helped to guide the selection of material for the present study, as I will discuss below.

<sup>99</sup> de Boer, *Defeat of Death*, 85.

<sup>100</sup> See *ibid.*, 25–30; de Boer, “Paul and Jewish Apocalyptic”, 169–172; and now de Boer, “Paul’s Mythologizing Program”, 3–7.

<sup>101</sup> de Boer, “Paul’s Mythologizing Program”, 7.

<sup>102</sup> Esp. the essay ‘The Singularity of the Gospel’ (p 101–111), previously published as B. R. Gaventa, “The Singularity of the Gospel: a Reading of Galatians,” in *Pauline Theology, vol 1*, ed. J. M. Bassler (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991). In the afterword which accompanies the essay in *Our Mother Saint Paul* Gaventa offers an intriguing comment on how she changed her mind on the suitability of the term ‘apocalyptic’ for the idea of the gospel’s ‘singularity’. Having first considered the term inappropriate she now embraces it, not specifically as an indication of relationship to the apocalyptic literature but as a term ‘signalling the relationship between this reading of Paul and earlier interpretations (notably those of Käsemann, Beker, and Martyn).’ (111, cf. p. 83).

the collection, containing Gaventa's important work on Pauline maternal imagery, cannot be so neatly divided from the 'apocalyptic' discussions of the second part. Apocalyptic themes appear throughout her discussions of maternity in Paul. It is not that the apostle's maternal metaphors are merely paralleled in apocalyptic or drawn from that source, but that they are 'substantively connected to the apocalyptic nature of Paul's theology.'<sup>103</sup> Paul's apocalyptic is the framework in which the maternal imagery makes the sense it does.

In defining what she means by 'apocalyptic', Gaventa makes clear that she is operating under the influence of Käsemann, Beker, and Martyn.<sup>104</sup> Apocalyptic for Gaventa is thus understood according to three key themes. First, apocalyptic is construed in the cosmological terms of the unilateral, invasive, and martial act of God in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Second, apocalyptic involves an epistemological invasion, rendering visible the power struggles at work in the world. Third, the soteriological result of 'God's reclaiming of the world' through cosmological invasion is 'liberation for humankind.'<sup>105</sup> Gaventa's most recent contributions to the discussion<sup>106</sup> have further underlined the importance of Martyn's thought for her construal of apocalyptic in Paul and have unpacked more fully her cosmological-apocalyptic standpoint and the soteriological implications of that approach since, in Gaventa's 'apocalyptic' framework, 'Paul's cosmology is soteriology.'<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul*, 79.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>106</sup> E.g. B. R. Gaventa, "Neither Height Nor Depth: Discerning the Cosmology of Romans," *SJT* 64, no. 3 (2011): 265–78; B. R. Gaventa, "'Neither Height Nor Depth': Cosmos and Soteriology in Paul's Letter to the Romans," in *Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology*, ed. Joshua B. Davis and Douglas K. Harink (Eugene: Cascade, 2012); Gaventa, *Apocalyptic Paul*.

<sup>107</sup> Gaventa, "Neither Height Nor Depth (2011)", 276.

*Douglas Campbell*

One of the most significant contributions to the conversation about an ‘apocalyptic’ reading of Paul is Douglas Campbell’s monumental work *The Deliverance of God*. It is of course not possible to summarise adequately a work of such size in a brief introduction like this, nor even in the more detailed discussions that follow. Instead, I offer a comment on the central issues in Campbell’s ‘apocalyptic re-reading’ of Paul.

Again, the influence of Martyn (with Käsemann and Beker behind) is clear, with Campbell listing him among the ‘towering interpretative figures of Paul’<sup>108</sup> for his role in the ‘apocalyptic protest’. It is to Martyn that Campbell points when defining his use of that label, arguing that ‘apocalyptic’ can be useful to indicate ‘broad loyalties and orientations’ and ‘denotes fairly that an approach to Paul is being pursued that ultimately aligns with the concerns and readings of — in this context in particular — Lou Martyn.’<sup>109</sup> Among Martyn’s various interpretative moves, Campbell highlights the following. As a result of God’s unconditional revelation of himself to Paul, disclosing a new reality, ‘the apostle’s *epistemology* is emphatically *retrospective*.’<sup>110</sup> In the light of this revelation, Christ’s followers understand themselves as being involved in a cosmic war with the forces of evil. Nevertheless, they are assured that Christ’s death and resurrection constitute the decisive victory and God’s act of deliverance. This is an ‘apocalyptic’, liberative and unconditional soteriological paradigm which Campbell suggests poses enormous problems for the ‘forensic’, individualistic and conditional model of what he calls ‘Justification Theory’, and for its foundationalist and prospective epistemology.<sup>111</sup> To understand Paul in ‘a consistently apocalyptic fashion’<sup>112</sup> is therefore to endorse the former over against the latter.

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<sup>108</sup> Campbell, *Deliverance*, 189.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 191. Campbell had earlier rejected the label ‘apocalyptic’ for his approach, preferring instead the rather awkward term ‘pneumatologically participatory martyrological eschatology’ (PPME) (D. A. Campbell, *The Quest for Paul’s Gospel: a Suggested Strategy* (London: Continuum, 2005), 56–68. Cf. the discussion in Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul*, 82) but now clearly endorses it wholeheartedly, to the point of using it in his subtitle. It is interesting to note the similarities here with Gaventa’s change of heart discussed above.

<sup>110</sup> Campbell, *Deliverance*, 190 (emphasis original).

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 191–2.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 192.



## *Prolegomena*

Before beginning the dialogue with this contemporary approach to ‘apocalyptic’ in Paul, a word or two is in order on procedural matters, beginning with a wander through two terminological minefields, ‘dualism’ and ‘apocalyptic’, before outlining important features of the methodology and the driving rationale for this project.

### *Terminology*

#### *‘Dualism’, ‘duality’, ‘dichotomy’*

Jewish Apocalyptic literature is often described as ‘dualistic’. The problem, however, is that this word is used in a variety of senses and it is therefore incumbent upon those who seek to characterise the apocalypses as ‘dualistic’ to ‘tease out the senses in which this is true, and the senses in which it is not.’<sup>113</sup> A central feature of this thesis is a desire to affirm the binary imagery that is characteristic of apocalyptic approaches to knowledge, time, cosmos, and salvation, while also questioning the strict dichotomies which sometime characterise the description of these themes in ‘apocalyptic’ interpretations of Paul. The term ‘dualism’, as Stuckenbruck has said, ‘has been regarded as a conceptual framework that involves two opposing systems, concepts, principles, or groups that can be neither resolved nor reduced in relation to one another.’<sup>114</sup> However, careful inspection of the variety of these frameworks reveals that ‘not all dualisms are equally dualistic.’<sup>115</sup> It is thus important to distinguish between strict oppositions and other kinds of binary relations, reserving the word ‘dualism’ for those systems which employ strictly separate conceptual spheres. A similar approach can be seen in Wright’s suggested taxonomy of ten kinds of ‘dualisms’ and ‘dualities’,

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<sup>113</sup> N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (London: SPCK, 1992), 297.

<sup>114</sup> L. Stuckenbruck, “The Interiorization of Dualism within the Human Being in Second Temple Judaism: The Treatise of the Two Spirits (1QS III: 13—IV:26) in its Tradition-Historical Context,” in *Light Against Darkness: Dualism in Ancient Mediterranean Religion and the Contemporary World.*, ed. A. Lange, et al., *Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplements* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), 145. Cf. also the introductory comments of Philip Alexander’s essay in that same volume (P. S. Alexander, “The Dualism of Heaven and Earth in Early Jewish Literature and its Implications,” in *Light Against Darkness: Dualism in Ancient Mediterranean Religion and the Contemporary World*, ed. A. Lange, et al., *Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplements* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010)).

<sup>115</sup> Stuckenbruck, “Interiorization of Dualism”, 146.

which reserves the former label for only three of these.<sup>116</sup> While such precise distinctions may have a certain degree of artificiality, this is not merely a pedantic terminological quibble. There are important differences between the various possible senses of the term ‘dualism’ which are not always explained clearly by those who use the term in descriptions of apocalypticism, and so further clarity is necessary.

This concern for terminological precision is by no means new. In 1969, Charlesworth also provided a taxonomy of ‘dualisms’ which bears many similarities to Wright’s. ‘The term dualism,’ Charlesworth says,

refers to a pattern of thought, an antithesis, which is bifurcated into two mutually exclusive categories (e.g. two spirits or two worlds), each of which is qualified by a set of properties and ethical characteristics which are contrary to those under the other antithetic category (e.g. light and good *versus* darkness and evil). There are various types of dualism in the history of ideas: philosophical, anthropological, psychological, physical, metaphysical, cosmological, cosmic, ethical, eschatological, and soteriological. However, few phenomena in the history of religion would be representatively defined by only one of these terms.<sup>117</sup>

Likewise, forty years ago John Gammie, in his assessment of Russell’s *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*,<sup>118</sup> described what he saw as ‘a lamentable lack of precision in defining and distinguishing between types of dualism’<sup>119</sup> before going on to offer his own corrective in the form of a precise taxonomy.<sup>120</sup> Stuckenbruck’s challenge to the use of the term, and Wright’s classification of the various types of ‘duality’ and

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<sup>116</sup> Wright, *NTPG*, 252–6; 297–9. The three strict *dualisms* in question are the ‘theological/moral’ (e.g. Zoroastrian construals of ultimate good and evil forces), ‘cosmological’ (i.e. in the terms of Platonic cosmology), and ‘anthropological’ (humans as bipartite creatures).

<sup>117</sup> J. H. Charlesworth, “A Critical Comparison of the Dualism in 1QS III, 13–IV, 26 and the ‘Dualism’ Contained in the Fourth Gospel,” *NTS* 15(1969): 389–418, 389 n1. Wright acknowledges the similarities between his work and Charlesworth’s list but states that he arrived at his own taxonomy independently (Wright, *NTPG*, 252 n38).

<sup>118</sup> D. S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* (SCM, 1964).

<sup>119</sup> J. G. Gammie, “Spatial and Ethical Dualism in Jewish Wisdom and Apocalyptic Literature,” *JBL* 93, no. 3 (1974): 356–85, 356.

<sup>120</sup> Gammie acknowledges some dependence on and extension of Charlesworth’s work here (*ibid.*, 359 n13). Wright is seemingly unaware of Gammie’s discussion.

‘dualism’, are therefore not idiosyncratic exercises in ‘intellectual tidiness’<sup>121</sup> but necessary attempts at a measure of precision in approaching the question.

It should be understood, however, that the decision in the present project to embrace this precision of language by preferring ‘duality’ rather than ‘dualism’ is not to be understood as terminological dogmatism. Others have made appropriately careful use of ‘dualism’, showing awareness of the kind of ‘permeation of boundaries’ described in the present project. An example of such nuanced use of the term is Nickelsburg’s description of a variety of ‘dualisms’ in his introduction to the theology of *I Enoch*.<sup>122</sup> There he draws attention to three kinds of dualism (temporal, cosmic and ontological), and then goes on to describe how salvation in *I Enoch* effects a ‘bridging’ or ‘resolution’ of these dualisms.<sup>123</sup> Though I prefer here to speak of ‘dualities’, there is nevertheless much to commend Nickelsburg’s usage. Less careful is Isaac’s introduction to *I Enoch* in Charlesworth’s *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, where the expression ‘the paradigm of apocalyptic dualism’ is used to describe the sharp distinction *both* between cosmic powers of good and evil *and* between the present and coming ages.<sup>124</sup> There is no reason, however, why the affirmation of a strict dualism in the former sense logically commits us to the same in the latter sense.

One final brief comment on a related terminological issue. At various points in the discussion that follows I have preferred to use terms such as ‘dichotomy’ and ‘antithesis’. This reflects Stuckenbruck’s challenge to consider whether all such oppositions are ‘of the same ilk’<sup>125</sup> and whether some binary relationships are rightly characterised as ‘dualisms’, since ‘not all oppositions are reducible to the same degree.’<sup>126</sup> While I employ the term ‘dualism’ in the chapters on eschatology and cosmology, the discussions of binary conceptual frameworks in discussions of epistemology and soteriology are not, strictly speaking, dualisms – and are thus better characterised as ‘dichotomies’ or ‘antitheses.’

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<sup>121</sup> Wright, *NTPG*, 255.

<sup>122</sup> G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *I Enoch 1: a commentary on the book of I Enoch, chapters 1–36; 81–108*, ed. Klaus Baltzer, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2001), 40–1.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>124</sup> E. Isaac in J. H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha. I. Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2009 [1983]), 9–10.

<sup>125</sup> Stuckenbruck, ‘Interiorization of Dualism’, 146.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

*'Apocalyptic'*

And so we come to another slippery term. 'Apocalyptic' and its cognates 'apocalypse' and 'apocalypticism' are words that have been the subject of intense debate, without producing consensus, for at least the last century and a half.<sup>127</sup> This situation has led some to wonder aloud whether the word is too ambiguous to be of any use.<sup>128</sup> T. F. Glasson, writing in 1980, expressed his exasperation that 'the current use of the noun Apocalyptic is so vague and confusing that years ago I came to the conclusion that it was best to drop the term. For about twenty years I have tried to avoid it; I have not suffered the slightest inconvenience and have found no difficulty in expressing myself.'<sup>129</sup> After surveying the word's use in contemporary scholarship, he concludes that 'apocalyptic' 'has no agreed and recognizable meaning' and that it is 'a useless word which no one can define and which produces nothing but confusion and acres of verbiage. To it I would re-apply Carmignac's words: "on doit la bannir le plus rapidement possible."<sup>130</sup> To a certain extent the present study cannot avoid becoming embroiled in this semantic debate and staking its own claim to a definition of the word 'apocalyptic'. Mindful of 2 Timothy 2.14, and not wishing to ruin those who read, it is my hope that I have here avoided *merely* wrangling over words. Nevertheless, de Boer is correct in his assessment that 'much depends on a proper definition'<sup>131</sup> and so a word or two is in order on my use of the word 'apocalyptic'.

It is, of course, a word of Greek origin, deriving from ἀποκάλυψις, 'unveiling' and much is to be gained by remaining mindful of this broad semantic domain, which is

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<sup>127</sup> There are too many rehearsals of this debate in print to list comprehensively. I have, however, found the following studies to be useful: K. Koch, *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic* (SCM, 1972), 18–35; Sturm, "Defining the word 'apocalyptic'"; D. Hellholm, "The Problem of Apocalyptic and the Apocalypse of John," *Semeia* 36(1986): 13–64; R. Bauckham, "Apocalypses," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism I*, ed. D. A. Carson, P. T. O'Brien, and M. A. Seifrid (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001) and of course the introductory remarks on the apocalyptic genre in J. J. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination: an introduction to Jewish apocalyptic literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) and C. Rowland, *The Open Heaven* (SPCK, 1982).

<sup>128</sup> See, e.g. the discussion in Sturm, "Defining the word 'apocalyptic'".

<sup>129</sup> T. F. Glasson, "What is Apocalyptic?," *NTS* 27, no. 1 (1980): 98–105, 99.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>131</sup> de Boer, *Galatians*, 31.

epistemological and theological.<sup>132</sup> In the field of biblical studies, however, it has a much narrower focus. It is rooted in a connection with the visions recorded in revelatory literature, and in particular the book of Revelation, whose ‘title’ ἀποκάλυψις Ἰωάννου gives us the word and which has long played a central role in discussions of the genre ‘apocalypse’.<sup>133</sup> The recognition of this origin has been useful in part but has not, however, completely cleared the ‘cloudiness of current definitions’ of the word, as Koch has lamented.<sup>134</sup>

Part of the confusion comes from the journey taken by the word from its home in first-century hellenophone near east to twenty-first century German- and English-speaking West, a route which was not a straight line. It is particularly important to note that the connection with the German noun *Apokalyptik* explains in part the current confusion and the reasons, perhaps, why ‘apocalyptic’ is used in English as both an adjective and a substantive. It is no use bemoaning this state of affairs. This is how words have always worked and it is pointless for the scholar to insist, Canute-like, that the tides of linguistic change stand still. Languages have long proven themselves to resist even the most hard-nosed programmes of conservatism. As long as we maintain an awareness of the route taken by the word ‘apocalyptic’ in its journey to modern scholarship we may continue to make use of it, and perhaps even profit from its multivalence.

Proper controls are needed here, of course. The journey from ἀποκάλυψις to *Apokalyptik* and ‘apocalyptic’ (adjective or noun) is one which involved multiple steps, and at each there is potential for confusion. For example, does the adjective ‘apocalyptic’ mean ‘pertaining to the genre apocalypse’ or ‘pertaining to the kind of thinking which the apocalypses express’? Or something else? And what then happens to its meaning when, under the influence of the German, that adjective is substantivised? Recognition that the term had an important sojourn in twentieth-century German

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<sup>132</sup> See, for example, the discussions of epistemology in chapter two below, particularly the engagement with the work of Christopher Rowland.

<sup>133</sup> John Collins’s definition, which has received widespread (though not uncritical) acceptance, continues to be useful: “‘Apocalypse’ is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.” (J. J. Collins, “Towards the Morphology of a Genre,” *Semeia* 14 (1979), 9)

<sup>134</sup> Koch, *Rediscovery*, 18–22.

scholarship must not be equated with attributing to ‘apocalyptic’ an origin in that scholarship.

Martyn may well exemplify this sort of problem when he says that apocalyptic in Paul is a ‘relatively new view, spawned originally and centrally by the work of Ernst Käsemann’.<sup>135</sup> Campbell too notes the connection between ‘apocalyptic’ and the genre of literature, and points also to the importance of Käsemann’s legacy, but then takes a further step. Given the problems inherent in defining the term, Campbell notes the temptation to abandon its use but rejects this severe conclusion by pinning his definition to contemporary anglophone scholarship, and Martyn in particular, as noted above.<sup>136</sup> This suggests that some contemporary scholarship of ‘apocalyptic’ has lost sight of the origins of the word in the Second Temple Jewish and Christian literature, acknowledged by the German scholars whose ancestry they claim.<sup>137</sup>

Christopher Rowland expresses concerns of a similar nature when he says that ‘it is striking that most definitions of “apocalyptic” work with a view of the phenomenon which is only loosely related to the apocalypses.’<sup>138</sup> Yet this semantic development, while fraught with potential dangers, is not in principle cause for despair, provided that at each step what is kept in mind is that the word has its roots in the theology of the apocalypses as expressed in the texts which bear that name. I will therefore continue to employ ‘apocalyptic’ as both an adjective and a noun without constant use of inverted commas.<sup>139</sup> One exception is the designation ‘apocalyptic Paul’, by which I mean to refer to the contemporary movement in scholarship detailed above, and which I keep in ‘scare quotes’ since the question driving this project is precisely the question of how genuinely apocalyptic the ‘apocalyptic Paul’ is when compared with the apocalypses.

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<sup>135</sup> ‘Afterword’ in Gaventa, *Apocalyptic Paul*, 161.

<sup>136</sup> Again see Campbell, *Deliverance*, 189–91.

<sup>137</sup> See the discussion of Käsemann in Wright, “A New Tübingen School? Ernst Käsemann and his Significance”, esp. p. 14, reprinted in N. T. Wright, *Pauline Perspectives: Essays on Paul* (London: SPCK, 2013) 52–67, esp. p. 65).

<sup>138</sup> C. Rowland and C. R. A. Morray-Jones, *The Mystery of God: Early Jewish Mysticism and the New Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 15.

<sup>139</sup> I remain mindful, however, of Macaskill’s warning against using apocalyptic as an adjective. See G. Macaskill, “Wisdom and Apocalyptic in the Gospel of Matthew: A Comparative Study with 1 Enoch and 4QInstruction” (St Andrews University, 2005), 44–5, and G. Macaskill, *Revealed Wisdom and Inaugurated Eschatology in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, JSJSup (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 19.

## Methodology

### *Paul ‘among the apocalypses’?*

This is perhaps a good point to explain my methodology: what do I mean by attempting to place Paul ‘among the apocalypses’? I should first state, quite plainly, that I am not suggesting Paul wrote texts which we could classify according to the genre ‘apocalypse’.<sup>140</sup> Nor am I suggesting that there is a direct line of literary dependence or theological genealogy between *1 Enoch*, *2 Baruch*, *4 Ezra*, Revelation and the writings of the apostle. What is it, then, that I *do* mean by ‘apocalyptic’ in Paul, and why do I place Paul and the selected apocalypses together? Two quotations frame an answer.

The first comes from Christopher Rowland and Christopher Morray-Jones and concerns the centrality of the book of Revelation in discussing New Testament apocalyptic, a centrality which is reflected in the architecture of this dissertation. Clearly stated in the foreword to their discussion of ‘early Jewish mysticism and the New Testament’ is Rowland and Morray-Jones assertion that ‘the key revelatory text among the early Christian documents, the book of Revelation, is the gateway to the consideration of apocalyptic and mystical themes in the rest of the New Testament.’<sup>141</sup> This is not, of course, an uncontested claim but it is nevertheless one with which the present project is in broad agreement.

The second quotation comes from Barry Matlock and expresses a similar sentiment in relation to the apocalypses more generally:

The abstraction ‘apocalyptic’ (or whatever else it may fittingly be called) must, if terminology is to signify anything other than confusion, be made on the basis of the apocalypses. ‘Apocalyptic’, then, will be in some sense what the apocalypses are ‘about’, and to speak of ‘apocalyptic’ *beyond* the apocalypses, as in Paul, is an implicit comparison with the literature and a suggestion that Paul is ‘about’ the same thing.<sup>142</sup>

In their different ways, these two statements express the conceptual starting-point for the present project. Language of ‘gateways’, or of Paul being ‘about the same

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<sup>140</sup> Though given the recent appreciation on Paul’s ‘apocalyptic’ thought it might well be time to reconsider the question of the authorship of that most ‘apocalyptic’ of letters, 2 Thessalonians.

<sup>141</sup> Rowland and Morray-Jones, *Mystery of God*, xix.

<sup>142</sup> Matlock, *Unveiling the Apocalyptic Paul*, 261.

thing' as the apocalypses, is, however, quite vague. More precision is required if we are properly to articulate what we mean by talk of the 'apocalyptic Paul'. First, though, lest it be said that these assertions are unfairly forced upon a discussion taking place on the basis of other commitments, I add to these two quotations the following statements from de Boer, which demonstrate the importance he attaches to this methodological point:

[T]he phrase 'apocalyptic eschatology' does not occur in Paul's letters and is in fact a construct of scholars. This construct is used to interpret Paul because such scholars as Käsemann and Beker perceive certain conceptual affinities between Paul's thought (and that of other early Christians as well) and Jewish eschatological expectations which are also labelled 'apocalyptic'. The problem of defining Paul's apocalyptic eschatology is thus partly a matter of defining what apocalyptic eschatology is apart from Paul.<sup>143</sup>

Ever since Schweitzer, students of Paul who have tended to label Paul's eschatology (and even his whole theology) as 'apocalyptic' have done so largely because, following Schweitzer's lead, they have discerned conceptual affinities between Paul's eschatological ideas and first-century Jewish eschatological expectations, which are also understood to be 'apocalyptic' in some sense (e.g., the resurrection of the dead). It is thus difficult, nay impossible, to discuss Paul's apocalyptic eschatology apart from Jewish apocalyptic eschatology and what scholars have said about the latter since the time of Schweitzer... Jewish apocalyptic eschatology, in short, was the matrix within which Christian apocalyptic eschatology, including that of Paul, arose and developed... the definition of apocalyptic eschatology is partly a matter of scholarly tradition and convenience even though it is based, as it ought to be, upon the data of the available sources, namely, such books as Revelation, Daniel, *1 Enoch*, *2 Baruch*, and *4 Ezra*.<sup>144</sup>

De Boer thus expresses the commitment of the present project to anchor the definition of Pauline 'apocalyptic' in the Jewish and Christian texts that bear this

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<sup>143</sup> de Boer, *Defeat of Death*, 19, cf. also the similar comments at 181–2.

<sup>144</sup> de Boer, "Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology", 347, 350, 353.



designation while also reminding us of the important legacies of Schweitzer, Käsemann, Beker and others.<sup>145</sup> De Boer's language of Paul's 'conceptual affinities' with a Jewish apocalyptic 'matrix' is to be welcomed in reaching towards precision in our characterisation of Paul as an 'apocalyptic' thinker 'in some sense'. It is there, however, that the question lies: in *what* sense, exactly? Perhaps better terminology can be found which allows us to drop such vague qualifiers.

'Worldview', 'social imaginary', 'mode'

One candidate is 'worldview', a term with a considerable vintage though not without problems. As we saw above, it was this concept which Schweitzer employed in his approach when he argued that 'since Paul lives in the conceptions of the dramatic world-view [*der dramatischen Weltanschauung*] characteristic of the late Jewish Eschatology, he is by consequence bound to the logic of that view.'<sup>146</sup> Likewise, for Beker, 'the apocalyptic world view is the fundamental carrier of Paul's thought.'<sup>147</sup>

'Worldview' designates not that which we look *at* but what we look *through*,<sup>148</sup> the unseen and generally unexamined pre-cognitive framework through which any given community approaches the world. This is not a question of a system of ideas but rather the deeper-level framework upon which such ideas are founded.<sup>149</sup> Wright is well known for making extensive use of the concept in his attempts at a 'thick description' of the thought of first-century Judaism and Christianity,<sup>150</sup> the historical Jesus<sup>151</sup> and now Paul.<sup>152</sup> Building on the earlier work of Clifford Geertz,<sup>153</sup> Brian Walsh and Richard

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<sup>145</sup> On which see de Boer, *Defeat of Death*, chapter 2. My affirmation of de Boer's hermeneutical framework here is not to say, however, that I agree with the conclusions he reaches concerning the theological content of this apocalyptic 'matrix', as will become clear as my argument unfolds in the chapters that follow.

<sup>146</sup> Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 11.

<sup>147</sup> Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 181.

<sup>148</sup> Cf. N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (London: SPCK, 2013), 28.

<sup>149</sup> For an extensive discussion of the term and its history in scholarship see D. K. Naugle, *Worldview: the history of a concept* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).

<sup>150</sup> Wright, *NTPG*, 109–12, 122–6.

<sup>151</sup> N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (London: SPCK, 1996), 137–44.

<sup>152</sup> Wright, *PFG*, 24–36, 63–8.

<sup>153</sup> C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic, 1973).

Middleton,<sup>154</sup> Wright's worldview model examines the interrelated stories, questions, symbols and praxis of a community for the tell-tale signs of that community's conceptual presuppositions which generate their beliefs, intentions and actions.

However, there are at least two potential problems with the notion of 'worldview'. The first is the danger of the singular. Put simply, any attempt to discern *the* apocalyptic worldview risks flattening out the diversity of the apocalypses in the search for a monolithic construct. It must be recognised that in the adjectival use of 'apocalyptic', as Macaskill notes, 'assumes a consistency in the worldview that lies behind the genre, a dangerous assumption to make.'<sup>155</sup> This challenge of balancing the singular and the plural applies to all these conceptual frameworks, and will remain in view throughout the present work.

The second problem with 'worldview' is the potential for the term to privilege the sense of sight and imply an inappropriate rationalism. This is a problem highlighted by J. K. A. Smith when he expresses his concern that worldview 'still retains a picture of the human person that situates the center of gravity of human identity in the cognitive regions of the mind rather than the affective regions of the gut/heart/body' resulting in 'a narrow, reductionistic understanding of the human person that fails to appreciate the primarily affective, noncognitive way that we negotiate being-in-the-world.'<sup>156</sup> Wright takes Smith's point, welcoming the focus on the noncerebral categories of 'desire' and 'worship' while still preferring 'worldview', provided the term is employed in his expanded and thus not entirely cognitivist sense.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> B. Walsh and J. R. Middleton, *The Transforming Vision: Shaping a Christian Worldview* (Downer's Grove: IVP, 1984).

<sup>155</sup> Macaskill, *Revealed Wisdom*, 19. Cf. Macaskill, "Wisdom and Apocalyptic", 45. See also the argument of G. Boccaccini, *Middle Judaism: Jewish thought 300 B.C.E. to 200 C.E.* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), who says that 'lack of critical reflection has allowed these texts to be presented as a homogeneous corpus' (127) and cautions against the 'careless use of terminology' (131) represented by using 'apocalyptic' to denote a literary genre, a worldview, and a tradition of thought, calling for 'a better methodological clarity in the study of apocalyptic' (131). This advice is well heeded, and I hope the present discussion offers a route which avoids the various pitfalls.

<sup>156</sup> J. K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Baker Academic, 2009), 63.

<sup>157</sup> See Wright, *PFG*, 28 n80.

Smith's concerns led him to call for a moratorium on 'worldview' and to prefer another option: Charles Taylor's term 'social imaginary'.<sup>158</sup> This is a conceptual framework described by Taylor as 'something much broader and deeper than the intellectual schemes people may entertain when they think about social reality in a disengaged mode' but rather 'the ways in which they imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations which are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images which underlie these expectations.'<sup>159</sup>

This, he argues, requires something much deeper than a purely rationalistic concept such as 'social theory', something that encapsulates 'the way ordinary people 'imagine' their social surroundings, and this is often not expressed in theoretical terms, it is carried in images, stories, legends, etc.'<sup>160</sup> In taking up Taylor's concept, Smith describes a 'social imaginary' as 'not how we think about the world, but how we imagine the world before we ever think about it'.<sup>161</sup> In its favour, 'social imaginary' places a welcome emphasis on the imaginative and non- or supra-rational, an emphasis which seems useful for a discussion of the inherently visionary material of the apocalypses, whose purpose is not to present rational argument but, as Collins argues, to effect a 'revolution in the imagination' which 'entails an appreciation of the great resource that lies in the human imagination to construct a symbolic world'.<sup>162</sup>

Mention of genre leads to a third option, taken from contemporary literary criticism. This is the notion of 'modes' of thinking and writing. This concept is described in detail in the seminal work of Alasdair Fowler,<sup>163</sup> and is, by his own admission, 'a more elusive generic idea'.<sup>164</sup> To illustrate the concept of 'mode', he gives the example of the noun 'comedy' and the related adjective 'comic'. Clearly, 'comedy'

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<sup>158</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 65.

<sup>159</sup> C. Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Harvard University, 2007), 171. See also the discussions of the concept in C. Taylor, "On Social Imaginary," *Contemporary Sociological Theory* (2001) and C. Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Duke University, 2004).

<sup>160</sup> Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 171–2.

<sup>161</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 66. There is clearly considerable semantic overlap here between 'social imaginary' and 'worldview', at least in Wright's more expansive use of the latter described above

<sup>162</sup> Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 283.

<sup>163</sup> A. Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: an Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Harvard University, 1982), esp. 106–111.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

is, in the world of literary criticism at least, a specific generic label designating a kind of literature, namely a play with certain distinguishing features. But the related adjective ‘comic’ can also be applied to other forms of writing, such as the description of Jane Austen’s *Emma* as a ‘comic novel’. ‘Then,’ Fowler says, ‘we mean that *Emma* is by kind a novel, by mode comic.’<sup>165</sup> This all seems quite straightforward, but the extrapolation from the concrete and contingent embodiment of the comedies to the more broad modal application ‘comic’ is by no means a simple process, as we have found in the case of ‘apocalypse’ and ‘apocalyptic’. Fowler thus concedes, with perhaps a touch of understatement, that ‘the adjectival use of generic terms is a little complicated’.<sup>166</sup> He rejects the conclusion, however, that this must mean that such usage is inherently vague — limits can and must be applied to the modal adjectives on the basis of an examination of the nonstructural features of that mode’s repertoire and the application of those features to another kind of literature. Fowler speaks of modes as ‘distillations’<sup>167</sup> of the most valuable features from its embodiment in the contingent texts of any given genre. It is only by keeping the implied connection with this textual repertoire in mind that modal usage can avoid vagueness.

One scholar of apocalyptic literature who has found Fowler’s framework useful in navigating this complex discussion is Eibert Tigchelaar.<sup>168</sup> A possible route through the minefield of confusion surrounding ‘apocalyptic’ as noun and adjective can be found in the recognition that ‘nouns indicate genres, adjectives modes’.<sup>169</sup> The noun ‘apocalypse’ thus refers to the genre while ‘apocalyptic’ as an adjective refers to the mode, the ‘special way of thinking often found in the apocalypses’.<sup>170</sup> Importantly, the apocalyptic mode of thought need not be confined to the genre apocalypse, since ‘modes are extensions of genres’.<sup>171</sup> That this is a useful framework for the present study of the ‘apocalyptic Paul’ in relation to the corpus of Jewish and Christian apocalypses should be clear. To speak adjectivally of an ‘apocalyptic Paul’ is, therefore,

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>168</sup> See the discussion of ‘apocalypse’ and ‘apocalyptic’ in E. J. C. Tigchelaar, *Prophets of Old and the Day of the End: Zechariah, the Book of Watchers, and Apocalyptic* (Brill, 1996), 5–8.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 5.

to speak of the apostle operating in the apocalyptic mode, and in order to be precise about this modal adjective we must establish the limits of meaning in relation to the apocalypses through a ‘distillation’ of the most important features of that corpus. In this way Fowler’s framework expresses well the central task of the present project.<sup>172</sup>

### *Summary*

Whether the framework is the ‘apocalyptic worldview’, the ‘apocalyptic social imaginary’ or the ‘apocalyptic mode’, what is at stake in all this is a question of *literary and historical context*. In our examinations of Paul as an ‘apocalyptic’ thinker we must guard against dislocating him from the cultural-formative context of Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity. Certainly, we must allow for innovation in the apostle’s thinking, but such discontinuity must not come at the expense of continuity. By placing Paul ‘among the apocalypses’ I want to encourage a proper contextual assessment of the apocalyptic mode of thought in his letters and, by doing so, outline such ‘conceptual affinities’ as may be discerned between Paul and his context.<sup>173</sup> It should be clear from the above discussion that I share with de Boer a desire to strive for this sort of historical approach to apocalyptic in Paul.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Concomitantly, the noun ‘apocalypticism’ can be used to designate the worldview, the ‘complete set of beliefs centred around this mode’, as argued in *ibid.*, 7–8. We might also explore the more troublesome substantival use of ‘apocalyptic’, which we might see as a reification of this mode of thought (though given the number of steps away from source it is perhaps wise to avoid this substantive).

<sup>173</sup> A similar approach can be seen in Bird’s treatment of Mark in M. Bird, “Tearing the Heavens and Shaking the Heavens: Mark’s Cosmology in its Apocalyptic Context,” in *Cosmology and New Testament Theology*, ed. Jonathan T. Pennington and Sean M. McDonough (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2008), esp. p. 46–7. B. W. Longenecker, *Eschatology and the Covenant: A Comparison of 4 Ezra and Romans 1–11* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1991) is another example of the use of apocalyptic literature (*4 Ezra*, in this case) as a methodological control (though Longenecker uses the terms ‘background’ and ‘backdrop’ rather than ‘context’).

<sup>174</sup> Matlock accuses ‘recent discussion’ (he doesn’t here say who he has in mind precisely) of ‘fluctuat[ing] oddly between being claimed to be free of the apocalyptic literature and yet still being claimed to be tied to the literature somehow’ (Matlock, *Unveiling the Apocalyptic Paul*, 291–2). This appears to ignore the importance placed on the primary texts by de Boer, who frequently expresses his desire to connect ‘apocalyptic’ in Paul to the Jewish literature (see the quotations above). As such, some of Matlock’s critique misses the mark, at least as far as de Boer is concerned. The intention of the present project is to offer a critique of the ‘apocalyptic Paul’ while acknowledging this shared methodology.

It is, of course, entirely possible to ignore this contextual imperative and approach Paul in an historical vacuum, but to do so is to risk making the apostle in our own image, allowing the word ‘apocalyptic’ to stand as a cipher for whatever contemporary theological issues we want to emphasise. As Matlock cautions, ‘an ‘apocalyptic’ which resists this methodological control suggests a notion perhaps retained more for its usefulness than its integrity.’<sup>175</sup> The methodology of employing the apocalypses in order to guide definitions of ‘apocalyptic’ thought in the New Testament is a vital defence against such hermeneutical errors. This, as Matlock continues, is a matter of making the concept accountable to the literature, lest in cutting that connection we make of ‘apocalyptic’ a historically artificial concept. In brief, ‘when “apocalyptic Paul” is being discussed, it should sound as if something historical is being discussed.’<sup>176</sup> Regrettably, Matlock’s project does not contain the kind of close engagement with the primary texts for which he so passionately advocates, as his critics have rightly noted.<sup>177</sup> The two questions which lie at the heart of the argument and the structure of this dissertation are, therefore, ‘what do the apocalypses actually say?’ and ‘what conceptual affinities can we see in the letters of Paul?’

### *Rationale: the selection of texts*

In this endeavour, we will focus on four texts: *1 Enoch*, *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch* and Revelation. There are, of course, a number of others which could have been included. The first volume of Charlesworth’s *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*<sup>178</sup> contains no fewer than 19 apocalypses. The earlier taxonomies of John J. Collins and Adela Yarbro Collins list no fewer than 15 Jewish and 24 Christian apocalypses.<sup>179</sup> It is important to recognise, too, that this is not simply a question of volume but also of variety. As

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 270.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 292.

<sup>177</sup> E.g. Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul*, 83. Gaventa here also accuses Matlock of failing to do justice to the close engagement with the primary texts provided by the work of Martinus de Boer, and I am inclined to agree with her assessment here. As noted above (n173), I should therefore be clear that while endorsing Matlock’s call for close engagement with the texts I am by no means suggesting that de Boer has ignored them. Far from it. The evidence of his PhD dissertation alone (published as de Boer, *Defeat of Death*, esp. 39–91) demonstrates the opposite.

<sup>178</sup> Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*.

<sup>179</sup> J. J. Collins, “The Jewish Apocalypses,” *Semeia* 14(1979): 21–60; A. Yarbro Collins, “The Early Christian Apocalypses,” *Semeia* 14(1979): 61–122.

Tigchelaar notes, ‘the close analysis of apocalypses has disclosed that their modes of thought are anything but homogeneous’.<sup>180</sup> There is thus no strict theological mould into which all these texts fit neatly, and any analysis of a selection of apocalyptic material must proceed in a manner mindful of this diversity.

It is thus vital that the present project avoid the charge of ‘cherry-picking’. Why these apocalypses and not others? *1 Enoch*, *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch* have been chosen because they are not only representative of the variety in apocalyptic literature, but are also the texts cited most frequently by the scholars with whom I am in dialogue. As such, whatever questions I may subsequently raise about the contemporary ‘apocalyptic Paul’, this can at least be done on the basis of shared methodological starting-points and a shared corpus of apocalyptic literature and thus, I hope, some progress can be made.

It is also important to explain the rationale for comparing Paul with texts that post-date his letters. On the matter of the relative dating of *4 Ezra/2 Baruch* and the Pauline corpus, de Boer states his position quite plainly: ‘these books, though written some decades after Paul wrote Romans, clearly make use of earlier and commonly available traditions and do so independently of each other.’<sup>181</sup> As such he considers it entirely appropriate to allow these two texts to help us understand apocalyptic in Paul, who ‘shows his deep familiarity’<sup>182</sup> with such traditions. De Boer is, of course, not alone here. Dunn has called *2 Baruch* and *4 Ezra* ‘the two classic Jewish apocalypses’ which, despite their post-dating Paul’s letters may nevertheless be useful in Pauline exegesis since ‘the degree of continuity with motifs already developed suggests that in our immediate area of interest they may reflect themes already current in Jewish theologizing at the time of Paul’<sup>183</sup> concluding, therefore, that ‘Paul was entering into an already well-developed debate and that his own views were not uninfluenced by its earlier participants.’<sup>184</sup> Moreover, long before de Boer and Dunn, Schweitzer had listed these two apocalypses along with *1 Enoch* and the *Psalms of Solomon* as the key

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<sup>180</sup> Tigchelaar, *Prophets of Old*, 7. Thus the preference for ‘mode of thought’ over ‘worldview’ does not entirely avoid the dangers of assumed uniformity discussed by Macaskill in the works cited above.

<sup>181</sup> de Boer, “Paul’s Mythologizing Program”, 11.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>183</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 88.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

writings to be considered in discussions of Jewish apocalyptic eschatology, particularly as related to Paul's thought.<sup>185</sup>

There is, however, one glaring omission from this list: the book of Revelation.<sup>186</sup> By the above rationale for using the later apocalypses of *2 Baruch* and *4 Ezra*, there is no reason for excluding Revelation and every reason why it must be included. Given these methodological arguments, it seems odd to place such an emphasis on these two Jewish apocalypses in the debate over the 'apocalyptic Paul' while all but ignoring the New Testament's only full apocalypse.<sup>187</sup> If the choice of Revelation as a conversation partner for Paul still seems irretrievably peculiar, this perhaps demonstrates the enduring influence of the pre-Schweitzer prejudice against 'apocalyptic' in New Testament studies which should, by now, have gone by the wayside. Now that 'apocalyptic' has been retrieved from that prejudice and employed effectively as a window onto Paul's thought, a dialogue between Paul and Revelation should really be quite an obvious thing to do. Any attempt to approach what de Boer calls 'Paul's christologically determined apocalyptic eschatology'<sup>188</sup> which does not make substantial use of this thoroughly Christological apocalypse is bound to be impoverished. Yet the absence of a comparison of the Apocalypse of John with the 'apocalyptic Paul' remains a remarkable lacuna in this important conversation about the apostle's thought. As such, I not only include it here but give it the greater attention it deserves, reflecting its importance as the canonical Christian apocalypse and, I hope, redressing this imbalance in contemporary scholarship on New Testament 'apocalyptic'.

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<sup>185</sup> Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 54–5. Besides these four, Schweitzer also mentions the *Book of Jubilees*, the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, and the *Ascension of Moses*. Cf. de Boer, "Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology", 347. Sadly, constraints of space preclude what would be a valuable discussion of *Jubilees*, though footnotes pointing in the direction of such a discussion will be made at key points.

<sup>186</sup> Though cf. Koch, *Rediscovery*, 23, where Revelation is included alongside Daniel, *1 Enoch*, *2 Baruch*, *4 Ezra* and the Apocalypse of Abraham as the crucial writings for the construction of 'a serviceable and generally applicable concept of apocalyptic.'

<sup>187</sup> Though note here Beker's use of Revelation, discussed above.

<sup>188</sup> de Boer, *Defeat of Death*, 18. It is striking that, while devoting an entire chapter (pp. 39–91) to examining Jewish apocalyptic literature, de Boer gives less than two pages to Revelation (134–5).



### *The structure of this thesis*

The above *prolegomena* have helped shape the architecture of this project. The chapters that follow are arranged thematically, each one examining the conceptual affinities between Paul's apocalyptic mode of thought and that of the selected apocalypses according to four distinct but interrelated themes: epistemology, eschatology, cosmology and soteriology. These have been selected due to their importance in the apocalyptic literature and the way in which they distil the central motifs of the debate over the 'apocalyptic Paul'.<sup>189</sup> There is, however, a great deal of interrelationship among these categories, and as such it is appropriate to conceive of these four chapters as a whole rather than a linear progression. My reasons for lining them up in this order will become clear as the argument develops.

Each chapter has the same basic shape, outlined here in the hope of providing signposts to facilitate navigation of the argument. Section one of each chapter introduces its theme as developed in the work of Martyn and at least one other contemporary exponent of the 'apocalyptic Paul' (Campbell, de Boer, and Gaventa). Section two then provides exegesis of selected relevant portions of the apocalypses of *1 Enoch*, *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*, followed (in section three) by a more in-depth exegetical examination of the relevant concepts in the book of Revelation. Each chapter then concludes by bringing these exegetical insights into dialogue with the 'apocalyptic Paul' and its exegesis of key texts from the Pauline corpus. Broadly, the conclusions reached through placing Paul in his apocalyptic context call into question some of the dichotomies which characterise the contemporary 'apocalyptic Paul'.

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<sup>189</sup> As discussed above, Martyn, *Galatians*, 97–105, lists ten features of Paul's 'apocalyptic theology in Galatians'. The four categories employed here, I believe, encapsulate Martyn's list quite effectively while also offering windows onto the larger apocalyptic landscape.

## 2.

### EPISTEMOLOGY: REVELATION AND WISDOM

#### *Introduction*

This chapter will explore the first of four themes, epistemology. This is an important first step which must be taken if the subsequent discussions of eschatology and cosmology are to make any headway. It would be a mistake, however, to think of this as a mere *prolegomenon*. That it is much more is demanded by the subject matter: whatever else it may be, ‘apocalyptic’ is an epistemological category. Here above all, epistemology is not the invisible framework of the discussion that follows but its conceptual nexus.

It is important, at the outset, to say a word about the use of the term ‘epistemology’. It is true to say, with Joel Marcus, that the apocalypticists did not possess ‘a systematically worked out, philosophical “theory of knowledge”’<sup>1</sup> and as such I will employ the term here in something of a non-technical sense. However, the absence of such philosophical systems in apocalyptic thought does not imply an absence of epistemological sophistication; apocalypses offer profound reflections on the nature of true knowledge, its source and objects, and how it can be attained by humankind. At this point it is important to recognise that talk of ‘epistemology’ can indicate discussions of that which is known (the ‘objective’ aspect) as well as the capacity for or means of knowledge (the ‘subjective’ aspect). Statements made about one do not necessarily correlate to statements about the other. This is a distinction which is important to apocalyptic epistemology, and which will receive due attention below.

A useful summary of the heart of the ‘apocalyptic Paul’, and a useful starting point for the present discussion, is the following statement from Martyn’s commentary on Galatians. Paul, for Martyn, ‘takes his bearings from the good news that in Christ – and thus in the act of *new* creation – God has invaded the cosmos. Paul does not argue, then, on the basis of a cosmos that remains undisturbed.’<sup>2</sup> The motif of ‘invasion’ is central to Martyn’s project, and will be examined more closely in the chapters that

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<sup>1</sup> J. Marcus, “Mark 4:10–12 and Marcan Epistemology,” *JBL* 103, no. 4 (1984): 557–74, 558 n4.

<sup>2</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 22.

follow for its eschatological, cosmological and soteriological implications, but the present concern is the epistemological claim made by the use of that motif. Outlining this epistemology is the task of the first part of this chapter. Also important here is Douglas Campbell, and I offer an engagement with the epistemological dichotomy at the heart of his work.

This will lead to an examination of epistemology in Jewish apocalyptic, and the question of whether it expresses an emphasis on divine revelation which trumps all other kinds of knowing, that is whether such revelation is compatible with other sources of truth, especially that of the wisdom tradition. I will conclude that such compatibility is indeed possible; knowledge given through direct divine revelation is compatible with knowledge attained through natural, practical and theological reasoning<sup>3</sup> (including reasoning from scripture and tradition), and this epistemological coexistence is evidenced in the literature. The central argument of this chapter is therefore that the epistemology of the apocalypses is not best characterised as a strict dichotomy.

The third section of this chapter examines this epistemological duality in the book of Revelation. In particular, I will examine the important development of this duality brought about by John's Christology and pneumatology, and the way the book characterises the relationship between these and human rationality.

In the final section of the chapter, I will draw out the implications of this examination of apocalyptic epistemology for the 'apocalyptic Paul'. In the light of the examination of the epistemology found in the Jewish apocalypses and the book of Revelation, I will argue that the antithesis inherent in the epistemology espoused by Martyn and Campbell is problematic, and that a properly 'apocalyptic Paul' should take into account the compatibility of wisdom and revelation, challenging any putative dichotomy between 'apocalyptic' and 'natural theology'.

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<sup>3</sup> This threefold distinction refers to the argument of J. Crenshaw, "Method in Determining Wisdom Influence Upon Historical Literature," *JBL* 88 (1969), 132.

## *Epistemological dichotomies in the ‘apocalyptic Paul’*

### *Martyn: ‘epistemology at the turn of the ages’*

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view [κατὰ σάρκα]; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! (2 Corinthians 5.16–17)

Martyn’s evaluation of the epistemology of the ‘apocalyptic Paul’ is most clearly argued in an essay on these two verses, first appearing in 1967 and then reproduced in the 1997 accompanying volume to the Galatians commentary.<sup>4</sup> His argument has had considerable influence on the epistemological discussions of various commentators,<sup>5</sup> and proceeds as follows. Paul’s use of the phrase κατὰ σάρκα in verse 16a is adverbial, that is to say it refers not to the ‘fleshly’ Christ but to a ‘fleshly’ *way of knowing* (what I earlier called the ‘subjective’ aspect of epistemology). Paul thus ‘coins an epistemological locution’<sup>6</sup> indicating the epistemology of the ‘old age’ within which Paul and the Corinthian believers used to regard Christ but within which, since the death and resurrection of Jesus, they no longer operate. He thus establishes ‘an inextricable connexion between eschatology and epistemology’<sup>7</sup> which forms the guiding principle of his essay and which locates verse 16 in Paul’s overall argument. For Martyn’s Paul,

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<sup>4</sup> J. L. Martyn, “Epistemology at the Turn of the Ages,” in *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997). The earlier version is Martyn, “Epistemology”. For an interesting response to this essay, see T. E. Boomershine, “Epistemology at the Turn of the Ages in Paul, Jesus and Mark: Rhetoric and Dialectic in Apocalyptic and the New Testament,” in *Apocalyptic and the New Testament*, ed. Joel Marcus and Marion L. Soards (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1989), 147–167.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Boomershine dubbed it a ‘seminal essay on Paul’s eschatology’ (Boomershine, “Epistemology at the Turn of the Ages”, 147). Cf. also Marcus, “Mark 4:10–12 and Marcan Epistemology”.

<sup>6</sup> Martyn, “Epistemology at the Turn of the Ages”, 95.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 92. That I agree with the presence of this ‘inextricable connexion’ should be clear from the structure of the present project.

there are two ways of knowing, and that what separates the two is the turn of the ages, the apocalyptic event of Christ's death/resurrection. There is a way of knowing which is characteristic of the old age. In the past Paul himself knew in that way. And, since Paul now knows Christ (Phil 3:8), there must be a new way of knowing that is proper either to the new age or to that point at which the ages meet.<sup>8</sup>

What exactly Paul meant by these two ways of knowing and how this argument would have been heard in Corinth are the concerns of the rest of Martyn's essay. In a key section, Martyn engages in a mirror-reading strategy to speak about Paul's opponents in Corinth against whom much of Paul's epistemological discourse is directed. These were 'gnosticizing, pneumatic Enthusiasts'<sup>9</sup> who believed themselves to be in possession of true knowledge and who were 'certain that they were the perfected recipients of the Spirit'.<sup>10</sup> These opponents would have first applauded Paul's attack on the 'old age of knowing', believing themselves to be completely in the 'new age of knowing' in the Spirit. The implied and expected positive alternative to knowing *κατὰ σάρκα* was, for the Enthusiasts, knowing *κατὰ πνεύμα*. But for Martyn's Paul the intention in sailing so close to the Enthusiastic wind was radically different, consciously avoiding this expression in order to avoid the misinterpretation that he is siding with the Enthusiast's argument:

Specifically, given the fact that both the Enthusiasts and the pseudo-apostles were thoroughly attached to the motif of spiritual knowledge, Paul must have realised that he could not use again the expression 'to discern by the power of the Spirit.' Had he done so, he would have been understood to imply that, with them, he himself was already living totally in the new age. He is careful, therefore, to imply that the opposite of the old-age way of knowing is not that of the new age – this point must be emphasized – but rather the way of knowing that is granted at the juncture of the ages.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 98 n31.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 98, cf. 1 Cor 4.8.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 107.

Here is Martyn's key argument. Martyn's Paul confronts the question of the epistemological antithesis between knowing *κατὰ σάρκα* and knowing *κατὰ πνεῦμα* with a third epistemological category introduced by the invasion of God in Christ. This 'epistemology at the turn of the ages' is understood as knowledge *κατὰ σταυρόν*, knowledge that is characterised neither straightforwardly by old-age, fleshly norms, nor by its antithesis, the new-age, spiritual norms, but by the cross: this represents, for Martyn, nothing short of an 'epistemological crisis'.<sup>12</sup>

But here another kind of epistemological dichotomy is introduced. What the argument of Martyn's essay rejects, under the banner of 'apocalyptic antinomy', is any knowledge that is 'visible, demonstrable, or provable in the categories and with the means of perception native to "everyday" existence'.<sup>13</sup> This claim must be evaluated through examination of the epistemology of Jewish and Christian apocalypses. It is also a claim that has been taken up and significantly expanded in another recent 'apocalyptic' approach to Paul, Campbell's *The Deliverance of God*.

### *Campbell: apocalyptic against foundationalism*

Douglas Campbell's massive contribution to the recent interest in the 'apocalyptic Paul' had its genesis, by his own account, in the work of T. F. and J. B. Torrance.<sup>14</sup> There, Campbell found expressed the recognition that there is in the tradition of the church 'a collision between two fundamentally different modes of doing theology'<sup>15</sup> which is to say two fundamentally opposing sources of truth. One mode is oriented around the self-revelation of God in Christ; the other makes claims about God from within the human sphere. The latter, he claims, is a 'foundationalist' mode of thinking about God based upon rational interpretation of the world and the human situation prior to God's self-revelation in Christ and by which that event is understood and judged – and is therefore

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 108–9, cf. Martyn, *Galatians*, 104, 142, 146–8. See also the discussion in Boomershine, "Epistemology at the Turn of the Ages", 148.

<sup>13</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 104.

<sup>14</sup> See D. A. Campbell, "An Apocalyptic Rereading of 'Justification' in Paul: Or, an overview of the argument of Douglas Campbell's *The Deliverance of God*," *Expository Times* 123, no. 8 (2012): 382–93, 385 for the references to the relevant articles by T. F. and J. B. Torrance. Campbell was introduced to these essays by a third Torrance, Alan J.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 385.

by Campbell's reckoning 'not theology at all properly speaking'.<sup>16</sup> Comparing this epistemological bifurcation to Athanasius and Arius, Campbell claims that these two modes of doing theology are mutually exclusive: 'there can be no compromise between them. They are fundamentally and radically different ways of deriving the truth about God. The triumph of one is the death of the other and *vice versa*.'<sup>17</sup> At the heart of Campbell's 'apocalyptic rereading of justification in Paul' is, therefore, a radical epistemological dichotomy.

In the opening pages of *Deliverance*, Campbell offers his assessment of Justification theory's use of 'an epistemology that is oriented toward the essentially philosophical contemplation of the cosmos by a rational individual'<sup>18</sup> which then moves to the particular, historical and revelatory epistemology of the Christ event, considering what he sees as a two-phase shift from the former to the latter to be an intrinsic and insurmountable difficulty in Justification Theory, rendering it, he argues, 'basically incoherent'.<sup>19</sup>

In his concern with the 'foundationalism' of the first epistemological approach, Campbell aligns himself with the Barthian critique of natural theology, considering it 'a grievous error in terms of theological epistemology'.<sup>20</sup> As such, his critique of Justification is based upon recognising this error and the fundamental epistemological incompatibility at the heart of the theory. The alternative he offers (and the resulting rereading of key texts in Paul, especially Romans 1—4) comprises a thoroughgoing rejection of the *prospective*, 'foundational' model in favour of a theology of rectification based upon a *retrospective* epistemology of revelation under the banner of 'apocalyptic'.

At this point Campbell recognises the potentially ambiguous and question-begging nature of his use of such a contested term, and offers the following explanation. Among other things, apocalyptic 'denotes certain positions within the more diverse, Jewish apocalyptic corpus and worldview that are held to characterize Paul's gospel (e.g. theocentric rather than anthropocentric, and revelation versus philosophical

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 385.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., emphasis original.

<sup>18</sup> Campbell, *Deliverance*, 38.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 203, and cf. p. 948, n13 for a more nuanced and detailed discussion of some of the issues attending examination of natural theology in Paul.

emphases).<sup>21</sup> This, of course, leads to the question of whether he is correct in ascribing such an epistemological antithesis (note his use of ‘*rather than*’ and ‘*versus*’) to the apocalyptic worldview, and whether such a scheme may rightly be called ‘apocalyptic’ in a sense that would be meaningful to the authors of Second Temple Jewish apocalypses. Answering this question is the task of the rest of this chapter.

### *Epistemological duality in Jewish apocalyptic literature*

N. T. Wright defines epistemological duality as ‘the attempt to differentiate sharply between that which can be known by means of human observation and/or reason and that which can be known only through divine revelation’.<sup>22</sup> Apocalypses, by definition, evoke such a duality. Christopher Rowland has rightly identified the importance of epistemology for studies of apocalyptic. In his seminal work, *The Open Heaven*, and more recently (with Christopher Morray-Jones) in *The Mystery of God*, Rowland describes the offering of a heavenly perspective on earthly reality as nothing other than ‘the heart of apocalypticism.’<sup>23</sup>

However, it is important to recognise from the outset that the epistemological duality discussed here is by no means unique to the worldview of apocalyptic literature. Bornkamm was right to say that ‘the disclosure of divine secrets is the true theme of later Jewish apocalyptic’,<sup>24</sup> but this must not be allowed to become a caricature.<sup>25</sup> To say ‘apocalyptic literature is revelatory literature’ is to offer not a definition but a translation of the term. Such pithy but simplistic reductionisms may well cover all the material, but will do so while also including too much else. God’s revelation of truth to

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 191. What these ‘other things’ are is extremely important. I will return to Campbell’s revealing discussion of the meaning of ‘apocalyptic’ later. For now, suffice it to say that Campbell lists, alongside the importance of the Jewish apocalyptic literature, alignment with the concerns of Käsemann and Martyn as potentially definitive for the meaning of the term.

<sup>22</sup> Wright, *NTPG*, 254.

<sup>23</sup> Rowland and Morray-Jones, *Mystery of God*, xvii.

<sup>24</sup> ‘Mysterion’, TDNT iv, p.815 cited in Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 9. Cf. also Rowland’s assertion that ‘the key to the whole movement is that God reveals his mysteries directly to man and thereby gives them knowledge of the true nature of reality so that they may organize their lives accordingly’ (p. 11).

<sup>25</sup> Markus Bockmuehl cautions against such a caricature, discerning it in Rowland’s definitions (M. Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery in Ancient Judaism and Pauline Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1990), 31).



humankind, surpassing and transcending human observation and rational capabilities, is a concept not unique to apocalyptic, being shared by much else in Judaism besides. Higher wisdom through revelation (Hengel) is common to the Pentateuchal, prophetic, and sapiential traditions.

### *Wisdom, apocalyptic and epistemological compatibility*

Exactly how sharp is the dichotomy in apocalyptic thought between that which is divinely revealed and that which can be known by human observation? Does apocalyptic epistemology by necessity trump other forms of knowledge? It is useful here to consider the sapiential material of the Hebrew Scriptures, which employs an epistemology of human reflection on nature and history, seemingly at odds with the emphasis on divine revelation found in the apocalypses. Insistence on the mutual incompatibility of apocalyptic and sapiential thinking has been a popular position, particularly in redaction criticism, employing this as a criterion for the identification of redactional strata. Precision is needed in defining both terms.

In an article entitled ‘Wisdom, Apocalypticism and Generic Compatibility’,<sup>26</sup> Collins, building on the work of Crenshaw, presents a typology of five kinds of wisdom:<sup>27</sup>

1. wisdom sayings (e.g. proverbs);
2. theological wisdom (e.g. reflections on theodicy);
3. nature wisdom (e.g. Job 28, 38–41);
4. mantic wisdom (divination and dream interpretation);
5. higher wisdom through revelation, including apocalyptic material.

Crucially, the presence of one kind of wisdom by no means implies the presence of any of the other kinds, nor does one kind of wisdom preclude any of the others. There is no *prima facie* reason that an apocalyptic epistemology (type 5, with perhaps the influence of type 4) cannot also affirm knowledge gained through theological or natural wisdom (types 2 and 3). That is to say, with Collins, that ‘there is no necessary antithesis

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<sup>26</sup> J. J. Collins, *Seers, Sybils and Sages in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism* (Brill, 1997), 385–404. The argument that follows owes much to this excellent discussion.

<sup>27</sup> Adapted from *ibid.*, 388 cf. also Macaskill, *Revealed Wisdom*, 10.

between “apocalyptic” and “sapiential.”<sup>28</sup> A good example is the *Wisdom of Solomon*, which combines, without any sense of epistemological contradiction, the apocalyptic motifs of chapters 1—5 with the emphasis on wisdom all through.<sup>29</sup> A sharp epistemological bifurcation (which has resulted in, among other things, the redaction-critical separation of sapiential and apocalyptic material) is analogous to this false generic incompatibility and should therefore equally ‘be viewed with some suspicion, and will need to be evaluated critically’.<sup>30</sup> This approach goes against the grain of much NT scholarship (particularly in historical Jesus studies), which wrongly assumes the strict incompatibility of the apocalyptic and sapiential traditions.

Grant Macaskill considers Collins’ assessment ‘crucial to any research on the relationship between wisdom and apocalyptic’.<sup>31</sup> For Macaskill, the notion of revealed wisdom is ‘a key explanatory concept for the co-mingling of sapiential and apocalyptic elements’<sup>32</sup> in the literature. The questions of apocalyptic versus sapiential thought and revelation versus natural theology are not, of course, identical. But approaching the question of this epistemological dichotomy in apocalyptic thought with these insights in mind opens up the possibility of an examination of the ways in which knowledge gained through divine revelation might be compatible, in the apocalypses, with that based on human reflection.

#### *4 Ezra and 2 Baruch*

##### *Two epistemological worlds? (4 Ezra 3—14)*

In the dialogues between Ezra and his angelic interlocutor, Uriel, in *4 Ezra* 3—14, Ezra voices a pained reflection on creation, election, covenant, and salvation history<sup>33</sup> in order to seek wisdom regarding the present ‘desolation of Zion’ (3.2). Forged in the theodicy-crucible of the aftermath of the fall of Jerusalem, Ezra expresses his desire for wisdom:

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<sup>28</sup> Collins, *Seers, Sybils and Sages*, 401.

<sup>29</sup> And, we might add, a redemption-historical narrative at the end.

<sup>30</sup> Collins, *Seers, Sybils and Sages*, 404.

<sup>31</sup> Macaskill, *Revealed Wisdom*, 12.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>33</sup> Creation: 3.4; 6.38–54; election: 5.21–30; covenant: 3.15; 4.22–25; 7.45–47; salvation history: 3.4–27.

I did not wish to inquire about the ways above, but about those things which we daily experience: why Israel has been given over to the gentiles as a reproach; why the people whom you loved has been given to godless tribes, and the Law of our fathers has been made of no effect and the written covenants no longer exist... It is about these things that I have asked. (4.22–25)

Ezra's wisdom leads him, however, to nothing but frustrated questioning and theological dead-ends, futile endeavours which Uriel compares to trying to weigh the fire, measure the wind, or gather the raindrops. Ezra's exasperation gives voice to his epistemology: 'who is able to know these things except he whose dwelling is not with men? As for me, I am without wisdom, and how can I speak concerning the things which you have asked me?' (5.38). Uriel does not answer Ezra's questions with natural or theological reason; the only solution to his epistemological crisis is a sequence of direct revelations. This is an apocalyptic epistemological dichotomy in action, and it appears to offer no middle ground. As Rowland puts it, 'the contrast between human and divine wisdom in the dialogue between Ezra and the angelic intermediary is stark. Even those who are the most righteous of humanity are unable to comprehend the ways of an inscrutable divinity.'<sup>34</sup>

Thus it would seem that the door which was opened to epistemological compatibility between sapiential and apocalyptic modes of knowledge in the previous discussion shuts firmly under the weight of this evidence. Yet a more careful examination of the material reveals a more complex situation, and one which we must appreciate if we are properly to understand apocalyptic epistemology.

*Revelation and wisdom in the end times (4 Ezra 14.19–26 and 2 Baruch 28–29)*

Despite the contrast displayed between Ezra's futile attempts at natural/theological reason and wisdom attained through Uriel's revelations, Ezra does not demonstrate a complete swing of the epistemological pendulum. He retains throughout a concern for reflection on the history, the scriptures and the covenant of Israel. Often he sounds like Job, and the questions of Uriel like those Job heard from God.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Rowland and Morray-Jones, *Mystery of God*, 21.

<sup>35</sup> E.g. *4 Ez.* 16.51 and compare the questions of Uriel with God's in Job 38–41.

An example can be found in the concluding dialogue. At the end of the sequence of apocalyptic visions a suitably chastened Ezra, having received higher wisdom through revelation, does not conclude therefore that wisdom attained from natural reasoning is futile, or that the Law and scriptures belong to the old order:

Then I answered and said, ‘Let me speak in your presence, Lord. For behold, I will go, as you have commanded me, and I will reprove the people who are now living; but who will warn those who will be born hereafter? For the world lies in darkness, and its inhabitants are without light. For your Law has been burned, and so no one knows the things which have been done or will be done by you. If then I have found favour before you, send the Holy Spirit to me, and *I will write everything that has happened in the world from the beginning, the things which were written in your Law, that men may be able to find the path, and that those who wish to live in the last days may live.*’

He answered me and said, ‘Go and gather the people, and tell them not to seek you for forty days. But prepare for yourself many writing tablets, and take with you Sarea, Dabria, Selemia, Ethanus, and Asiel – these five, because they are trained to write rapidly; and you shall come here, and I will light in your heart the lamp of understanding, which shall not be put out until what you are about to write is finished. And when you have finished, some things you shall make public, and some you shall deliver in secret to *the wise*; tomorrow at this hour you shall begin to write.’ (4 Ezra 14.19–26, my emphasis)

A world lying in darkness is in need of the light of revelation. But the solution is more nuanced than a strict epistemological antithesis allows: divine revelation, yes, but also knowledge gained from wise reflection on the Law, and on acts of divine disclosure in history. ‘Those who live in the last days’ (a characteristically apocalyptic expression) will live not only by epistemological irruption (the lamp of understanding divinely lit in the people’s darkened hearts) but also by wisdom and the Law. In what follows, Ezra does as commanded in God’s response, and he and his scribes have a profound visionary experience resulting in an epistemological breakthrough: ‘the Most High gave understanding to the five men, and by turns they wrote what was dictated, in characters

which they did not know' (v.42). The result of their vision-inspired scribal labours is a collection of ninety-four books; twenty-four for public consumption and seventy reserved for 'the wise'. Metzger's interpretation here is helpful: the seventy are the apocalypses, and the twenty-four are the canonical books of the Hebrew Scriptures comprising the Pentateuch, the prophets and the sapiential writings.<sup>36</sup> Both the 'public books' and the secret ones, Tanakh and apocalypse, are valued and compatible sources of truth. Likewise both divine disclosure and human reflection are valid epistemological modes. There is no incompatibility between Ezra's divine apocalyptic vision and wise reflection on Torah: Ezra upholds salvation history and the Law as acts of divine disclosure. Rowland insists that we take the presence of such material seriously in any consideration of apocalyptic epistemology.

To do justice to apocalyptic texts, however, we cannot ignore that quest for knowledge of things earthly and heavenly which in part at least is characteristic also of the wisdom tradition... the apocalyptic visionary approaches Scripture with the conviction that the God who is revealed in the pages of the sacred writings may be known too by vision and revelation.<sup>37</sup>

Rowland's conclusion is further supported from an earlier portion of *4 Ezra*, 12.37–8, where interpretation of the vision is an occasion for instruction of 'the wise'. Ezra's interlocutor makes it quite clear (v. 11) that the eagle in the vision is a reference to the fourth kingdom of Daniel 7. More cryptic, though no less significant, is that the attendant call for wisdom is also a Danielic allusion. Daniel 12.8–10 describes the end-time epistemological situation:

I heard but could not understand; so I said, 'My lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?' He said, 'Go your way, Daniel, for the words are to remain secret and sealed until the time of the end. Many shall be purified, cleansed, and refined, but the wicked shall continue to act wickedly. None of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand.

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<sup>36</sup> See Metzger's footnotes in Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 555.

<sup>37</sup> Rowland and Morray-Jones, *Mystery of God*, 21–22.

This Danielic combination of noetic and bestial imagery, an example of what Macaskill called ‘the co-mingling of sapiential and apocalyptic elements’,<sup>38</sup> is then repeated in *4 Ezra* 14.13–17, where Ezra is told to ‘instruct those that are wise’ because ‘the eagle which you saw in the vision is already hastening to come’.<sup>39</sup>

A similar co-mingling of themes occurs in *4 Ezra*’s sister apocalypse, *2 Baruch*. In *2 Baruch* 26—30, a passage dense in apocalyptic imagery, Baruch receives a revelation concerning the ‘end of times’ (27.15) in which he is told about the coming tribulations (including famine, earthquakes, and falling fire), the subsequent revelations of the Anointed One (29.3), and the two beasts Behemoth and Leviathan (29.4). The epistemological situation of those days is bleak. Earlier in the vision, Baruch is well aware that he is unable to understand except through divine revelation. In 21.18, conscious of the inadequacy of his rational faculties for discernment of the end times, he makes a plea for divine enlightenment. This epistemological deficiency is then underscored in the angelic response.<sup>40</sup> This seems to imply that a strict epistemological antithesis is in operation.

But again the situation is not so straightforward. In the middle of this vision, Baruch is told that ‘those who live on earth in those days will not understand that it is the end of times’ (27.15). Immediately following this assessment, however, is a remarkable epistemological promise. At 28.1, Baruch is told that at that time ‘everyone who will understand will be wise’. Such wise people will be able to calculate the length of the time of tribulation. Thus, in the same way as *4 Ezra* 12 and 14, then, *2 Baruch* 28—29 combines elements of sapiential epistemology with apocalyptic material. A sapiential epistemology based on the exercise of human noetic faculties is not set in dichotomy with an apocalyptic epistemology based on divine disclosure: the two are intertwined.

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<sup>38</sup> Macaskill, *Revealed Wisdom*, 14.

<sup>39</sup> I will return to this combination of themes in the discussion of Revelation below.

<sup>40</sup> See 23.2–6.

## *1 Enoch*

### *Revealed wisdom and the resolution of dualism (1 Enoch 1—5)*

Let us consider now the evidence from *1 Enoch*. In chapters 2—5 we are invited to ‘examine and observe everything’<sup>41</sup> in the natural world and to consider the orderliness of the sky and the heavenly bodies, the earth and its seasons, trees and their fruit. For a book comprised largely of divine revelation, such natural theological reasoning makes a surprising introduction. Adding to this the evidence of the *Astronomical Book*, Collins concludes that ‘such nature wisdom seems to have been a primary interest of the early Enoch movement’.<sup>42</sup> While this wisdom is not final (nature’s order being ultimately flawed and subject to human rebellion), its role must not be ignored. Higher wisdom through revelation maintains an important dialectical relationship with human rationality: as Sacchi has put it, apocalyptic ‘continually reveals truths that do not deny those of this world, but transcend them and constitute the underlying reason for them’.<sup>43</sup> This transcendent wisdom does not reject other forms of knowledge but ‘provides the framework through which all other forms of knowledge are viewed and in relation to which they are evaluated and given new meaning.’<sup>44</sup>

Commenting on the presence of dualisms in *1 Enoch*, Nickelsburg discusses the connections that can be traced between epistemology and soteriology. ‘Although definitive salvation lies in the future,’ he argues, ‘revelation transmitted *now* effects a significant resolution of the book’s temporal, spatial, and ontological dualism... The authors’ revelations are the salvific means by which the readers bridge and overcome the dualisms that are the very nature of reality as they understand and experience it.’<sup>45</sup> Nickelsburg later asks the same question which has concerned us here, namely whether the apocalypses represent a strict dichotomy between ‘apocalyptic revelation’ and the

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<sup>41</sup> *1 En.* 3.1.

<sup>42</sup> Collins, *Seers, Sybils and Sages*, 393.

<sup>43</sup> Sacchi, P. "The Theology of Early Enochism and Apocalyptic: The Problem of the Relation Between Form and Content of the Apocalypses; The Worldview of Apocalypses." *Henoch* 24, no. 1/2 (2002): 82–83, cf. A. Portier-Young, *Apocalypse Against Empire: Theologies of Resistance in Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 291–2.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 292.

<sup>45</sup> Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch I*, 41–2. Note the interlinking of the present discussion with the subsequent chapters. The epistemology of *1 Enoch* has, among other things, a ‘salvific function’ (*ibid.*, 41).

mode of knowledge characteristic of the wisdom writings. The evidence of *1 Enoch* leads him to conclude that ‘apocalypticism involves the fusion of both traditions.’<sup>46</sup> This suggests that a strict epistemological antithesis between the ways of knowing found in wisdom and apocalyptic is unwarranted by the evidence of the Jewish apocalyptic literature.

*‘They began to open their eyes’ (1 Enoch 85—90)*

Another example of this is the *Animal Apocalypse* of *1 Enoch* 85—90, a breathless allegorical retelling of Israel’s history in which human beings are portrayed as animals, angels as men, and fallen angels as falling stars. The story can only really be appreciated by reading the whole, but is worth summarising here in order to ground the argument that follows.

It begins with a white bull (Adam) and a heifer (Eve), who produce two offspring – one black bull and one red (Cain and Abel). The black bull gores the red. The black bull grows up and produces many oxen, while the heifer bears another white bull (Seth). Many cattle follow, until first one star, and then many more, fall from heaven – fallen angels who begin to mate with the cattle, resulting in the bizarre production of elephants, camels and asses. What follows is a descent into violence and fear, with the result that ‘the earth began to cry out’. There is then an angelic intervention (‘white men’) and divine judgement on the elephants, camels, asses and the fallen stars, and a detailed flood narrative.

Following the disembarkation, the bulls multiply, and various other wild animals arise, symbolising the nations. One white bull (Abraham) bears a bull (Isaac) and also a sheep (Jacob). The transition from the patriarchal period to the story of Israel is signalled by this change of imagery, with the focus shifting to the birth of twelve sheep who hand one of their number over to the wild asses, and thence to the wolves of Egypt.

The Exodus story is told in some detail, with the Lord hearing the cries of his sheep and delivering them from the wolves, leading them into the desert and giving them the law. The sheep, oftentimes blinded and straying from the path shown to them by the Lord, nevertheless arrive at a good and pleasant land. The story continues through the time of the judges and of Saul, David and later kings; the building and destruction of the temple; the exile and return and the Maccabean period. The sheep go

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.



through cycles of sight and of blindness, accompanied by oppression by the dogs, foxes and boars, then deliverance by a ram or a sheep raised up from among the flock. The story concludes with the gathering of the sheep into a new house, and the arrival of a great white bull bringing the transformation of the wild animals into white cattle.

This historical review is important for any discussion of apocalyptic eschatology, and as such I will return to the *Animal Apocalypse* in the following chapter. For now I restrict my comments to an examination of some aspects of its epistemology. A crucial moment for the present discussion is found in 90.6. Here, the dual problem of earthly/demonic domination and human blindness is solved as the sheep begin to open their eyes and cry out against oppression. This moment encapsulates the importance of epistemology to the whole book.

The Enochic Book of Dreams (*1 En.* 83—90) counters imperial hegemony by calling the people of Judea to open their eyes and ears. They must see and hear God's law, given to Moses and preached by the prophets, and the order of creation, written in the course of the stars. They must see past and future, a flood vision, Israel's story with God and empires, the end of domination, and God's joy in the peace of all peoples.<sup>47</sup>

This response to oppression cannot be simply described as the application of natural faculties of sight, hearing and historical reflection. Despite the fact that some lambs begin to open their eyes (90.6), we are told that the sheep did not listen and that their eyes became 'exceedingly dim-sighted' (v.7). Human faculties of sight and hearing alone are insufficient: revelation is required. This comes in verse 9, when one of the sheep sprouts a horn and opens the eyes of the other sheep. Importantly, however, this epistemological act does not negate the importance of the sheep's noetic abilities, but rather enables them.

However one interprets the figure of the sheep with the horn,<sup>48</sup> this revelatory act, like the similar scenes in 89.28 and 89.41–44, finds its significance as a foreshadowing of 90.35, where the eyes of all of the sheep are opened when they finally come into the house of the Lord. What is in view here is that 'God reveals to humans

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<sup>47</sup> Portier-Young, *Apocalypse Against Empire*, 346.

<sup>48</sup> The majority of commentators prefer Judas Maccabeus. See e.g. M. Black, *The Book of Enoch or 1 Enoch* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 276; Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 400.

things that they have previously failed to see... acceptance of a new revelation will bring about Israel's final and permanent deliverance from their enemies.'<sup>49</sup> The epistemological significance of this imagery is found in the recognition that what is needed is not simply the exercise of natural abilities, but neither is it a 'pure' act of divine disclosure. The opening of the eyes of the sheep, whether in the anticipatory act of a divinely-appointed leader or in the final consummation in the house of the Lord, is an image of the divinely-activated noetic faculties of sight and speech which make possible the communication of understanding. In short, this is an eschatological epistemology of *revealed wisdom*.<sup>50</sup> This transformation of the 'subjective' aspect of epistemology is then the basis of understanding the object of knowledge, the purposes of God in redemptive history.

### *Summary*

We have here considered whether apocalyptic epistemological duality is best considered a strict dichotomy, or whether there is a degree of compatibility with the approach to knowledge characteristic of the sapiential tradition. The evidence considered from the apocalyptic literature demonstrates that such compatibility is what we find. As such, while this affirms the presence of an apocalyptic epistemological duality, it should not be understood as a strict dichotomy between human reason and divine revelation. These two modes of knowing, while distinct, are not to be understood antithetically but are often co-mingled in the apocalyptic literature. I now move on to consider the role of this epistemological duality in the New Testament's only full apocalypse, the book of Revelation.

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<sup>49</sup> Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 381. Nickelsburg's whole excursus on blindness and straying is instructive.

<sup>50</sup> See Macaskill, *Revealed Wisdom*, 39–40.

## *Epistemological duality in the book of Revelation*

### *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*

I begin at the beginning, and with a phrase which encapsulates not only the book of Revelation but the debate over the New Testament's appropriation of apocalyptic thought in general. Beale opens his expansive commentary on the text of Revelation by making the succinct observation that these opening three verses 'contain a general summary of the whole book'.<sup>51</sup> The great themes of revelation, eschatology, witness and blessing are all tightly-packed into the prologue. The Apocalypse's epistemology is even more compressed in its first three words: Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Much ink has been spilled on the interpretation of genitives in the New Testament, and in some cases heavy theological weight rests upon the question 'objective or subjective'? Thankfully, in the case of Revelation 1.1 the following clause ἦν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ θεός allows for a more speedy resolution to the question; this is a subjective genitive.<sup>52</sup> Jesus Christ reveals to his servants that which was given to him by God. Though insisting on a subjective genitive, it is important to consider that in the wider context of the book of Revelation Jesus is both the revealer and the one revealed. Mindful of this, I will begin to consider the epistemology of Revelation through an examination of one of its central Christological images, which has significant impact on our understanding of the Apocalypse's epistemology.

### *The Lamb and the scroll (Revelation 5.1–14)*

At the opening of Revelation 5, John receives a vision at the heart of which is an epistemological crisis. A sealed scroll is seen in the right hand of God whose desire is that it be opened and the contents made known. But no-one is found worthy to open it

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<sup>51</sup> G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 181.

<sup>52</sup> As favoured by the majority of commentators. Beale (*ibid.*, 183) provides a number of useful references. J. L. Mangina, *Revelation* (SCM, 2010), 40, argues for both subjective and objective genitive.

and reveal God's purposes, causing John to weep.<sup>53</sup> The Christological resolution of this epistemological crisis comes in verse 5: 'Weep not; lo, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.' Turning to face the victorious Lion of Judah, John sees in fact a Lamb, looking as though it had been slain, who, by virtue of his conquering through death, can take and open the scroll, resulting in an outpouring of worship.

Beale highlights the role played by this 'hearing-seeing' pattern, which is repeated twice more in Revelation.<sup>54</sup> In chapter 5, what John hears ('the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered') is reinterpreted by what he sees ('a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain'). The importance of the juxtaposition of these two images has also been noted by Bauckham, for whom the 'hearing-seeing' pattern 'forge[s] a new symbol of conquest by sacrificial death.'<sup>55</sup> It is a symbol with profound implications not only for soteriology and Christology but also for epistemology.

As we saw above in the divine opening of the eyes of the sheep in the *Animal Apocalypse*, a characteristic solution to epistemological crises in the apocalypses is the notion of revealed wisdom. In John's vision it is Christology that provides the definitive epistemological resolution. Jesus, the Lion-Lamb, accomplishes the epistemological mandate of 5.1–4 by virtue of his death and victory over sin (5.5—6.1). Through the angelic intermediary and John of Patmos, Jesus then delivers the revelation given to him by God to his people. This revelation is what the rest of the book contains and is what we find in microcosm in the book's opening verses. The slain Christ is at the centre of the Apocalypse's epistemology.

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<sup>53</sup> Mangina, *Revelation*, 85 compares John's weeping with the groaning of creation in Romans 8. This is suggestive, since the cause of groaning there is also an epistemological crisis: waiting for the revelation of the sons of God.

<sup>54</sup> This device is again employed in chapter 7, in what Bauckham considers a parallel depiction of the same reality. There, what John hears, the 144,000-strong army from the tribes of Israel, is reinterpreted by what he sees, the innumerable multitude of martyrs from all tribes and peoples and nations (see R. Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation* (Cambridge: CUP, 1993), 76–8). In chapter 4 I will argue that a similar hearing-seeing pattern can be seen in the vision of the heavenly city in Rev 21.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 74. See too E. Humphrey, *And I Turned to See the Voice: The Rhetoric of Vision in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), chapter 4.

How, then, does this relate to the question of epistemological duality? In this connection we explore the somewhat vexed question of the βιβλίον, the book/scroll.<sup>56</sup> Beale argues that the various possible identifications, when placed within the broader theological context, suggest that the βιβλίον is best understood as ‘a covenantal promise of an inheritance’ by which he means ‘God’s plan of redemption and judgement formulated throughout the OT, a plan that encompasses the development of all sacred history, especially from the cross to the new creation.’<sup>57</sup> On this latter point Mangina agrees: the βιβλίον contains God’s plans for ‘the setting right of all that is wrong in human history, the defeat of the demonic powers who seek to frustrate God’s purpose.’<sup>58</sup> Bauckham argues, on the basis of shared allusions to Ezekiel 2—3, that the connection should be drawn with the βιβλαρίδιον in chapter 10 and that, whatever the precise contents, ‘it must contain some aspect of the divine purpose, hitherto secret, which will be revealed when the scroll is opened.’<sup>59</sup>

Yet a further epistemological conundrum lies at the heart of the passage. Why doesn’t the one on the throne himself open the βιβλίον and reveal its contents, as in Ezekiel? As Aune puts it, ‘one must assume that the one holding the scroll has the right and the ability to open it and read it, but it is equally obvious that in this context this is abrogated.’<sup>60</sup> Surely, if any is worthy to open the book it must be God? Beale argues that an essential feature of God’s covenantal promise to humankind is that ‘a human person had to open the book’<sup>61</sup> and act as agent of God’s revelation. The epistemological crisis caused by ‘the inability of any among God’s creatures to execute God’s plan of redemption and judgement’<sup>62</sup> finds a Christological solution. As both the sacrificed Lamb and the victorious Lion of the tribe of Judah, the human root of David, Jesus is worthy and therefore can be the agent of revelation of God’s purposes.

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<sup>56</sup> On this debate and its significance for the rest of the book see, for example R. Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: studies on the book of Revelation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 243–257 and Beale, *Revelation*, 342–347. The survey of the numerous explanations in D. E. Aune, *Revelation* (Dallas: Word 1998), 338–46, is also very useful.

<sup>57</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 340–41.

<sup>58</sup> Mangina, *Revelation*, 85.

<sup>59</sup> Bauckham, *Climax*, 249.

<sup>60</sup> Aune, *Revelation*, 347.

<sup>61</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 341. Beale’s insistence on invoking Adam at this point is perhaps overplayed, but the importance of human agency in revelation is well taken.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 348, cf. Mangina, *Revelation*, 85.

Regardless of how one interprets the βιβλίον, what is important to note is that the worthiness of the Lamb to carry out this act of revelation breaks down any would-be division between divine and human epistemological agency and also any division between revelation and human reflection on God's action in history.

### *Revelation 'in the Spirit'*

To this Christological insight we must add a discussion of the Spirit's role in Revelation's epistemology. Bracketing out mentions of 'the seven spirits', there are fourteen references to the Spirit in Revelation. These fourteen are significant for an understanding of apocalyptic epistemology, since all have something to do with the question of John's reception of revealed knowledge.

Four references to the Spirit use the expression ἐν πνεύματι, each introducing a significant new vision.<sup>63</sup> In the first, at 1.10, John records that he was 'in the Spirit on the Lord's day', followed immediately by his Christological vision. The second time this expression occurs is at 4.2, introducing the throne-room vision of chapters 4 and 5. The third, in 17.3, and fourth, in 21.10, form a pair introducing two visions of two contrasting cities: the whore Babylon and the New Jerusalem, the Bride. Thus there is clearly a close connection between this phrase and moments of epistemological significance.

But what did John mean by ἐν πνεύματι? In his discussion of the Spirit's role in Revelation, Bauckham discusses the possibility that the expression 'may suggest a kind of bodily possession more readily associated with those pagan prophets of antiquity who became in a trance the wholly passive mouthpieces of the god.'<sup>64</sup> If correct, this interpretation would further support a strict epistemological dichotomy since the implication of such bodily possession is that true revelation ἐν πνεύματι supersedes human noetic faculties. Bauckham rejects this interpretation. While certainly experiencing something that surpasses or transcends ordinary human epistemological norms, John nevertheless 'remains a free agent throughout his visions',<sup>65</sup> maintaining an active role as auditor, scribe and questioner. The Spirit is the one who enables John to fulfil this epistemological role: 'the Spirit thus performs a role distinct from the chain of

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<sup>63</sup> Bauckham, *Revelation* argues that the number four is significant here, since it is the number of this world (p. 109).

<sup>64</sup> Bauckham, *Climax*, 152.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

revelation by which the content of John's prophecy comes to him from God (God – Christ – angel – John: 1.1; cf. 22.16). The Spirit does not give the content of the revelation, but the visionary experience which enables John to receive the revelation.<sup>66</sup> Thus we should question a putative epistemological antithesis which might otherwise be implied by John's use of the phrase ἐν πνεύματι. What we find instead is the co-mingling of human reason and divine revelation, manifest in the intimate relationship between John and the Spirit, a relationship characterised not by possession but by shared agency.

### *Revelation and human rationality*

Having seen that the Christologically- and pneumatologically-shaped epistemology of Revelation does not exclude human agency in the transmission of knowledge, we now move to a consideration of two phrases which seem to approach the question from the other direction. The first is John's repeated refrain 'let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.' The second, found in the later visionary material, is the expression 'this calls for wisdom'. These two phrases are important for the present discussion as they seem to place emphasis on the exercise of human rational capabilities in discerning truth. As we shall now see, however, this is not antithetical to Revelation's emphasis on divine disclosure.

#### *'Ears to hear' (Revelation 2—3)*

Each of the seven messages to the churches concludes with the same epistemological refrain: ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις.<sup>67</sup> Bauckham discusses this expression, the first of four 'detachable *logia*',<sup>68</sup> in his examination of the relationship between Revelation and the Synoptic parables,<sup>69</sup> where it functions as 'a formulaic exhortation to heed the message of the symbolic parables'.<sup>70</sup> Are we to conclude, therefore, that it is a call simply to employ human noetic faculties, a

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<sup>66</sup> Bauckham, *Revelation*, 116.

<sup>67</sup> The phrase occurs at 2.7, 11, 17, 29; 3.6, 13, 22 cf. also 13.9, which has a variation on this phrase.

<sup>68</sup> Bauckham, *Climax*, 96.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Matt 11.15; 13.9, 43; Mk 4.9, 23; Lk 8.8; 14.35. See the discussions in *ibid.*, 92–117, esp. 96, and in Beale, *Revelation*, 236–9.

<sup>70</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 234.

circumlocutory ‘summons to obedient attention’?<sup>71</sup> Such a conclusion would carry the rationalistic implication that all that is required for knowledge is a competent audience paying close attention and employing their faculties. The seven churches, all of whom (we must assume) possessed such faculties, need only use them properly in order to hear what Christ, through the Spirit, is saying to them. Thus construed, an epistemological dichotomy remains intact, and what we have here is a call to apply human reason – in stark contrast to John’s epistemological experience ἐν πνεύματι discussed above.

Yet the phrase ‘he who has ears, let him hear’ is much more than a euphemistic summons. Important in this connection is a consideration not only of the Synoptic background of this phrase, but also its roots in another throne-room vision from the Jewish Scriptures. In Isaiah 6.6–10, after the prophet has seen the throne vision and heard his commission, the voice of the Lord sets up an epistemological crisis:

And he said, ‘Go and say to this people:  
“Keep listening, but do not comprehend;  
keep looking, but do not understand.”  
Make the mind of this people dull,  
and stop their ears,  
and shut their eyes,  
so that they may not look with their eyes,  
and listen with their ears,  
and comprehend with their minds,  
and turn and be healed.’<sup>72</sup>

This passage lies behind the use of the ‘ears to hear’ formula in the Synoptics<sup>73</sup> and in the seven messages to the churches in Revelation 2—3. What is striking is that, far from being an appeal to the noetic competency of the audience, the intention in Isaiah 6 is the *obscuring* of human rationality. No matter how much the people apply their natural

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<sup>71</sup> S. S. Smalley, *The Revelation to John: a commentary on the Greek text of the Apocalypse* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2005), 63.

<sup>72</sup> Isa 6.9–10.

<sup>73</sup> E.g. Mk 4.10–12 (though the meaning is there altered). Cf. the discussions in Beale, *Revelation*, 234; G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, eds., *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 1093. Surprisingly, Bauckham does not categorise this phrase among the *logia* with OT roots, discussing only the Synoptic connections (Bauckham, *Climax*, 93, 96).



faculties to the message of God, they will not succeed in gaining understanding. The result is that those seeking understanding must henceforth turn not to their own abilities, but to God himself.

Returning to the seven messages to the churches, we find what at first glance appears to be something of an epistemological paradox. The messages contain a large amount of parenetic material involving appeals to rational argument, while also containing allusions to this Isaianic-Synoptic epistemological tradition. This apparent contradiction can, however, be resolved. Despite all the appeals to rational argument, rationality alone does not characterise the epistemology of the seven messages. David deSilva, in his rhetorical analysis of the use of rational argument in Revelation, qualifies the significant role played by λόγος in the messages to the seven churches with the observation that ‘the arguments work within a frame of belief’,<sup>74</sup> specifically belief in Jesus and his promise to intervene in world history. DeSilva continues: ‘the argumentation within the oracles presupposes the audience’s willingness to assent also to other distinctive elements of Christian “knowledge,” for example, Christ’s story as a paradigm for believers.’<sup>75</sup> Rational argument cannot be neatly separated from divine disclosure; the two are interrelated.

*‘A mind with wisdom’ (Revelation 13.18; 17.9)*

Twice the reader of Revelation is reminded that interpretation of the vision is something which requires wisdom (σοφία) and understanding (νοῦς). At 13.18 John insists that the interpretation of the number of the Beast is an epistemological conundrum which ‘calls for wisdom’ and the calculation of that number is possible by ‘anyone with understanding’ (ὧδε ἡ σοφία ἐστίν· ὁ ἔχων νοῦν ψηφισάτω τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ θηρίου). At 17.9 the interpretation of the harlot riding the beast with seven heads and ten horns is something which requires ‘a mind that has wisdom’ (ὧδε ὁ νοῦς ὁ ἔχων σοφίαν).

The combination of σοφία and νοῦς in both of these expressions, and the bestial thematic context which they share can both be explained only when the relevant intertextual echoes are appreciated. The bestial imagery comes, quite obviously, from Daniel 7. Less obvious is that John’s repetition of the call for σοφία and νοῦς in these passages also has Danielic echoes. At the close of the book, Daniel is told that at ‘the

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<sup>74</sup> D. A. DeSilva, *Seeing Things John’s Way: The Rhetoric of the Book of Revelation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 254.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 254-5.

time of the end' the wicked will continue to rebel and will not understand, but 'those who are wise shall understand'.<sup>76</sup> Recognising this intertextuality allows us to develop the eschatological and epistemological significance of Revelation's call for wisdom and understanding. The combination of the bestial imagery of Daniel 7 and the requirement for σοφία and νοῦς in allusion to Daniel 12 makes the epistemological and eschatological point clear: we are at 'the time of the end', the time when the wise will understand.

This is not the only allusion to Daniel 12 with epistemological significance. In a brief comment in 22.10, John receives a final command: 'do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.' This instruction to keep the revelation unsealed contrasts with Daniel, who is told to 'keep the words secret and the book sealed until the time of the end.'<sup>77</sup> For Daniel, the vision pertained to a time far off and so the content of his apocalypse was to remain under seal until that time came, a time in which God's people would have wisdom and understanding. As we have already seen in Revelation 5, it is only Jesus who is worthy to control the sealing and unsealing of the purposes of God; we now see that it is also only he who is able to answer the apocalyptic question 'what time is it?' with the answer 'it is the time of the end'.<sup>78</sup> Jesus, the eschatological revealer, having defeated his opponents, declares that the days of sealing up the revelation of the purposes of God are past in the light of his imminent coming.<sup>79</sup> The arrival of the 'time of the end' brings this divine disclosure, but also heralds the time when God's people will exercise wisdom and understanding in relation to the unfolding history of this world.

Therefore, the call for wisdom and understanding is not a straightforward call for the use of noetic faculties, a detached rationalism or epistemological foundationalism which attempts to discern the ways of God 'from the ground up'. As Beale argues,

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<sup>76</sup> Dan 12.10 (cf. 11.33). Cf. the above discussions of *4 Ez.* 12.37–38; *2 Bar.* 28–29.

<sup>77</sup> Dan 12.4a, cf. 12.9.

<sup>78</sup> The question 'what time is it?' is, for Martyn, the apocalyptic eschatological question which is at the heart of the letter to the Galatians. See Martyn, *Galatians*, 104. See also the importance of this question in the worldview approach of Wright, *JVG*, 467–72; Wright, *PFG*, 550–62. Cf. chapter three below.

<sup>79</sup> There is thus a close relationship between Revelation's Christological epistemology and the apocalyptic eschatological duality of the two ages (again see ch 3 below).

in 13.18 and 17.9 believers are to have ‘wisdom’ to enable them to know God’s wise plan and to be prepared to discern divine impostors and their propagandists, which have been prophesied by Daniel... John is exhorting saints to spiritual and moral discernment, not intellectual ability to solve a complex math problem.<sup>80</sup>

Recognising the importance of this web of Danielic threads, and hence the eschatological significance of John’s call for wisdom, allows us to see that the σοφία and νοῦς called for is that which is characteristic not of humanity generally but the spiritual perception that is given by God to his chosen people at the time of the end. The epistemological promise of that time is not that human knowledge will be replaced by divine disclosure, but that it will be transformed. Where Daniel, though wise, had failed to understand, John now calls for understanding in the churches, driven by the conviction that such end-time revealed wisdom is now possible since the church exercises a noetic faculty transformed by the power of the Spirit.

### *Summary*

The epistemology of Revelation is characterised by the co-mingling of human rationality and divine disclosure. This can be seen in the epistemological roles played by Christ, the Spirit and the church. The various key epistemological phrases, understood according to their important echoes of the Jewish Scriptures (especially Daniel), demonstrate that Revelation does not place a solid barrier between knowledge gained through human wisdom and that gained by divine revelation. There is an epistemological duality in Revelation between human wisdom and divine disclosure, but it is not characterised by a strict dichotomy.

Since the conviction of the present project is that consideration of apocalyptic themes in the New Testament must be properly informed by the apocalypses (and chiefly the book of Revelation), these insights have important implications for the study of apocalyptic epistemology in Paul, to which I now turn.

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<sup>80</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 726.

## *Implications for the epistemology of the ‘apocalyptic Paul’*

### *Epistemology and inaugurated eschatology in 2 Corinthians 5.16*

There are a number of aspects of Martyn’s discussion of epistemology in 2 Corinthians 5.16–17 which must be celebrated, but we must also raise a number of questions in the light of the above discussion of the apocalypses.

First, Martyn is correct to draw attention in his analysis to the vital importance of the motif of the two ages, and the corresponding two ways of knowing, in apocalyptic epistemology. Moreover, he is right to highlight this epistemological duality as a useful place to begin if we seek to demonstrate that Paul’s theory of knowledge is in any sense ‘apocalyptic’. However, the evidence presented in this chapter has suggested that apocalyptic epistemology is characterised by the co-mingling of divine revelation and human reason, problematising Martyn’s putative ‘apocalyptic’ account of Paul. Faced with knowledge *κατὰ σάρκα* and *κατὰ πνεύμα*, Martyn suggests that Paul’s apocalyptic epistemology is characterised by a third category: knowledge *κατὰ σταυρόν*. But what apocalyptic epistemology employs as a response to that would-be antithesis is not a third category but the co-mingling of the two means of knowledge. Certainly, this relationship between reason and revelation is not an unambiguous one, but it is nevertheless the hallmark of apocalyptic epistemology.

Martyn’s insistence on the close relationship between epistemology and eschatology is well taken, but the eschatology suggested by his epistemological framework itself raises questions. Briefly to anticipate the discussion in the next chapter, an inaugurated eschatology properly informed by the apocalyptic literature is characterised by a duality similar in nature to that observed in epistemology: the age to come punctures or permeates the present age. This goes hand in hand with the epistemological duality found in the apocalyptic worldview as examined above. Martyn’s knowledge *κατὰ σταυρόν*, rather than being the fruit of inaugurated eschatology, appears actually to work against it. In placing knowledge *κατὰ πνεύμα* on the lips of the ‘Enthusiasts’ and suggesting a different kind of knowledge at the juncture of the ages, Martyn in effect creates a third epistemological category, and thus a ‘third age’ which stands between the old and new.

Martyn is of course correct to reject the epistemology of the ‘Enthusiasts’, based upon an over-realised eschatology, which asserts the presence of knowledge *κατὰ*

πνεύμα in an unambiguous way, and he is correct to see Paul guarding against such ideas.<sup>81</sup> Here there are important connections with 1 Corinthians 2.6–16, where Paul first expounded his apocalyptic epistemology.<sup>82</sup> Martyn argues that the apostle’s earlier statement on pneumatic epistemology was misinterpreted by the Corinthian Enthusiasts, and that the absence of the phrase κατὰ πνεύμα from 2 Corinthians 5.17 proves that Paul is now deliberately avoiding that hostage to fortune in favour of knowledge κατὰ σταυρόν. At this point Martyn’s discussion risks begging the question, and perhaps places too much confidence on arguments from silence.<sup>83</sup> The numerous references to the Spirit in 2 Corinthians 3—5 suggest rather that some kind of knowledge κατὰ πνεύμα is exactly what Paul has in mind.<sup>84</sup> Certainly, ‘Paul deals with the epistemological dualism of apocalyptic by refusing to accept either way of knowing in an unqualified, simplistic manner.’<sup>85</sup> But the apostle’s response to the over-realised eschatology of the Enthusiasts is not the creation of a third way but the emphasis on the present ambiguity of an inaugurated eschatology and its related epistemological tension. Apocalyptic epistemology at the juncture of the ages should be characterised by the inauguration of the new-creation way of knowing κατὰ πνεύμα amid the present age. This is by no means a return to the epistemology of ‘enthusiasm’ which unambiguously declares the possibility of knowing according to the age to come: such an over-realised eschatology is incompatible with Paul’s constant highlighting of his sufferings.<sup>86</sup> Rather, it is an epistemology characterised by the ambiguity of the overlap of the ages, of the fragrance of the age to come amid the struggles of the present age. The present experience of knowledge κατὰ πνεύμα is, as Paul reminds the Corinthians, τὸν ἀρραβῶνα – ‘a first instalment’ (1.22).

Second, and more briefly, Martyn’s call to place Christ and his cross at the heart of Pauline epistemology must be heeded, as the above discussion of Revelation 5

<sup>81</sup> E.g. 1 Cor 13.12, cf. Rev 22.4 and Martyn, *Galatians*, 107.

<sup>82</sup> The marks of Paul’s apocalyptic thought are all there as he contrasts the wisdom of this age (τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου, v.6) with the revelation of God (ἀπεκάλυψεν, v.10).

<sup>83</sup> See Martyn, “Epistemology at the Turn of the Ages”, 107, where Martyn repeatedly expresses confidence in his assumptions about what Paul must have been thinking. The evidence he presents, however, does not really sustain such confidence.

<sup>84</sup> At 3.3; 3.6 (x2); 3.8; 3.17 (x2); 3.18; 4.13 and 5.5. It is also important to note here the new covenant echoes of Ezek 36.26 and Jer 31.33.

<sup>85</sup> Boomershine, “Epistemology at the Turn of the Ages”, 148.

<sup>86</sup> E.g. 2 Cor 1.3–7; 6.1–10.

suggests. But there are questions to be asked about how exactly this is done, especially in Martyn's coining of the adverbial expression *κατὰ σταυρόν*. Not only is this phrase absent from Paul's language (indeed *σταυρός* itself is absent from 2 Corinthians, as Martyn admits<sup>87</sup>) but it seems also to involve a category mistake. We recall the discussion in the introduction to this chapter which highlighted the important distinction in epistemology between the 'objective' and 'subjective.' It is certainly true that the cross is an important object of Christian epistemology. But by employing *κατὰ σταυρόν* adverbially, making it parallel to *κατὰ σάρκα* and *κατὰ πνεύμα*, Martyn switches the role of the cross from the *object* of Christian knowledge to a *means* of knowing. This is a problematic move. The Flesh and the Spirit are both 'internal' to the subject of knowledge, and as such can be spoken of adverbially as subjective aspects of epistemology. The cross, however, is an 'external' event (appropriated by the knower but not internalised). As such, while one can certainly know the cross, and indeed use such knowledge as the benchmark for all Christian thought, this does not mean one can 'know cross-ly'.<sup>88</sup> This subjective role in Christian epistemology belongs to the Spirit.

Third, Martyn is correct that Paul rejects an epistemology which leaves no room for divine disclosure. But in attributing to Paul a complete rejection of continuity with the 'old way' of knowing, Martyn creates problems for his assessment of Judaism:

Once God has disclosed God's self in the Christ event as a new way of knowing, all else that came before becomes functionally irrelevant, not only for Paul but even for Paul's interpreters. Such an epistemology, a way of knowing that involves divine disclosure within the bounds of the created order as we know it, may arguably be a way of construing the thinking of Paul, but does this also have to mean that Jewish writers did not think about divine disclosure in any analogous way?<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Martyn, "Epistemology at the Turn of the Ages", 108 n52.

<sup>88</sup> Martyn's recognition of this shift in logic (in *ibid.*) is revealing. The regrettably brief and partial argument he presents there in defense of this move introduces the (equally problematic) eschatological connection discussed earlier, but seems to continue to beg the question of whether the cross can function adverbially.

<sup>89</sup> L. Stuckenbruck, "Overlapping Ages at Qumran and 'Apocalyptic' in Pauline Theology," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Pauline Literature*, ed. Jean-Sébastien Rey (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 317.

The evidence of this chapter suggests that we should answer Stuckenbruck's question with the recognition that Jewish writers did indeed think about epistemology in a way analogous to Paul's emphasis on divine disclosure, but in those texts what we find is that this source of truth is compatible with knowledge gained by means of reflection on the Jewish covenantal narrative. In neglecting this epistemological compatibility in the Jewish apocalyptic literature, Martyn is led to posit a third category rather than the interrelated dual epistemology characteristic of apocalyptic thought. Paul asserts that in Jesus the age to come has been inaugurated in a radically transformative way, and that this has important implications for 'epistemology at the turn of the ages', as Martyn recognises, but this does not lead to his rejection of human reflection on the Law and history of God's involvement with Israel, a history also filled with anticipations of the age to come through divine disclosure.<sup>90</sup>

To say that the apostle Paul stands in continuity with this context of Jewish apocalyptic epistemology is not, however, to downplay or ignore the importance of the revelation of Jesus Christ, as the above discussion of the book of Revelation demonstrates. As Wright has said, there is certainly 'an epistemological revolution at the heart of Paul's worldview and theology,' through which 'the act of knowing has itself been transformed.' However, 'Ordinary human wisdom, ordinary human knowledge, is not just cancelled. It is taken up into something at one level similar and at another level radically different.'<sup>91</sup> An 'apocalyptic' approach to Paul rightly emphasises the radical claim that God has in Christ revealed himself to the world, with important epistemological consequences, but this is not to assert a total discontinuity with other forms of Jewish apocalyptic and sapiential epistemology.

### *Revelation and foundationalism in Romans 1.18–32*

A similar epistemological dichotomy lies at the heart of Campbell's 'apocalyptic' approach to justification in Paul: the pursuit of knowledge through human reasoning in relation to the cosmos is fundamentally incompatible with a commitment to divine revelation. This incompatibility is, according to Campbell, a major problem for Justification Theory, which makes use of both modes of knowing in its two 'phases'.

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<sup>90</sup> E.g. 1 Cor 10–11.

<sup>91</sup> Wright, *PPG*, 1355–6. Wright here footnotes Martyn, "Epistemology at the Turn of the Ages", saying that it 'raises important questions but should not be deemed to have settled them for ever.'

His proposed solution rejects the former approach to epistemology while maintaining the latter under the banner ‘apocalyptic’.

The evidence of this chapter suggests that the epistemology of the apocalypses themselves problematises this dichotomy. The apocalypses do not demonstrate this kind of antithesis but rather the essential compatibility of knowledge attained through divine revelation and wise human reflection on the world. The radical split between the two ‘utterly different’ and ‘diametrically opposed’<sup>92</sup> ways of knowing at the heart of Campbell’s project appears, therefore, to be unsupported by the apocalyptic worldview. Campbell’s emphasis on divine revelation is welcome, but he has fallen into the same trap as Martyn in arguing for this radical epistemological incompatibility without proper discussion of the evidence from the Second Temple Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature.<sup>93</sup> Those who have worked closely with such material have advanced a number of hypotheses which would, if considered, offer some support and also some correctives to Campbell’s project. Rowland in particular stands out as a valuable potential conversation partner<sup>94</sup> since his work on apocalyptic has placed a strong emphasis on epistemology (rather than eschatology) as the heart of ‘apocalyptic’ thought.<sup>95</sup> ‘The key to the whole movement,’ he says, ‘is that God reveals his mysteries directly to man and thereby gives them knowledge of the true nature of reality so that they may organize their lives accordingly.’<sup>96</sup> This represents an interpretative approach which, on the surface at least, promises to offer a great deal of shared ground with Campbell’s epistemology.

Where Rowland’s work problematises Campbell, however, is in his assessment of the related Jewish themes of the Law, salvation history and natural theology. Explicit concerns throughout Campbell’s book are a reassessment of the role of Torah, a

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<sup>92</sup> Campbell, *Deliverance*, 74.

<sup>93</sup> This is not surprising, since his approach to ‘apocalyptic’ themes in Paul owes more to Käsemann and Martyn than to the apocalypses. See *ibid.*, 191.

<sup>94</sup> As per the suggestion of G. Macaskill, “Review Article: The Deliverance of God,” *JSNT* 34, no. 2 (2011): 150–61, 160.

<sup>95</sup> See the well-known discussion of this theme in Rowland, *Open Heaven*, chapter 1; and more recently Rowland and Morray-Jones, *Mystery of God*, chapter 2.

<sup>96</sup> Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 11.



rejection of salvation history,<sup>97</sup> and a Barthian critique of the ‘fundamentally foundationalist’<sup>98</sup> epistemology of natural theology. All of these themes can be seen to be products of Campbell’s dichotomistic epistemological framework that considers ‘apocalyptic’ or revelatory epistemology fundamentally incompatible with the approach to knowledge which characterises the sapiential tradition. But the evidence of the apocalypses suggests that this solution is problematic precisely in its suggestion of such a radical dichotomy. Rowland maintains a conviction about the essentially epistemological character of apocalyptic thought without excluding the compatibility of this with an epistemology of human wisdom. ‘To do justice to apocalyptic texts,’ he argues, ‘...we cannot ignore that quest for knowledge of things earthly and heavenly which in part at least is characteristic also of the wisdom tradition.’<sup>99</sup> The solution he proposes brings both sides of the epistemological duality into a creative tension:

Apocalypticism has its origin neither in prophecy nor in wisdom. Both have contributed much to apocalyptic. Rather it is a case of elements of prophecy and wisdom contributing to an outlook which set great store by the need to understand the ways of God. The apocalyptic visionary approaches Scripture with the conviction that the God who is revealed in the pages of the sacred writings may be known too by vision and revelation.<sup>100</sup>

Rowland’s study of Second Temple Jewish apocalyptic literature, within this epistemological framework, also leads him to reject an antithesis that screens out forensic or salvation-historical categories:

To state the importance of the visionary element in ancient religion is not to assert that apocalyptic religion was antithetical to Tora study. The choice of Enoch rather than Moses as the apocalyptic seer need not be taken as a

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<sup>97</sup> Specifically a rejection of the *foundational* salvation-history he discerns in Justification theory, which is an important theoretical distinction. Wright has raised the question of whether rationalism is an appropriate category for the Jewish salvation-historical narrative and asks ‘how much an argument of this type was ever a problem in the pre-rationalist world of the first century’ (Wright, *PFG*, 758).

<sup>98</sup> Campbell, *Deliverance*, 203.

<sup>99</sup> Rowland and Morray-Jones, *Mystery of God*, 21. This combination of natural theology and revelation can also be seen, for example, in, for example, *4QInstruction* and the *Epistle of Enoch* (1 En 105.1–2). I owe these observations to Loren Stuckenbruck.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

rejection of the Tora and the tradition of its interpretation. There is much in the apocalypses to suggest that there is no fundamental opposition to the Tora. ... The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has proved once and for all that apocalyptic and legal materials were held closely together, as they were also in emerging rabbinic Judaism.<sup>101</sup>

I will have more to say on this soteriological insight in due course.<sup>102</sup> For now, it is important to note that this apocalyptic epistemology holds together what Campbell's false dichotomy seeks to divide.

These issues can be framed in relation to Campbell's specific interpretation of Justification in the letter to the Romans. In his epistemological framework, chapters 1—4 represent a 'foundationalist' approach to theological reasoning based upon 'the essentially philosophical contemplation of the cosmos by a rational individual.'<sup>103</sup> Since he considers this to be fundamentally incompatible with the 'apocalyptic' epistemology of chapters 5—8, Campbell explains the presence of the material in the letter's early chapters as a 'speech-in-character'.<sup>104</sup> The basis for his critique of 'Justification Theory' and his exegesis of Romans is, therefore, Campbell's commitment to a dichotomistic epistemology. The evidence of this chapter has called this premise into question. If (as I have argued) the 'apocalyptic' and 'wisdom' approaches to epistemology are not incompatible, there is no reason to suppose that Paul's appeal to human contemplation of creation in Romans 1.18—32, and to the covenant in Romans 2—3, is at odds with the 'apocalyptic' material of the letter's later chapters. The whole letter proceeds under the rubric of the double ἀποκαλύπτεται of 1.17—18, an important link between the programmatic statement of verses 16—17 and the opening argument of 18—23, where Paul is happy to express the interrelatedness of divine revelation (v. 18—19) and human understanding (v. 20). While this still affirms his essential assertion that Paul is an

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>102</sup> I will return to the question of apocalyptic and salvation history in chapter 3, and to the question of apocalyptic and forensic soteriology in chapter 5.

<sup>103</sup> Campbell, *Deliverance*, 38.

<sup>104</sup> E.g. in *ibid.*, 528—9, and the development in the rest of that chapter.

‘apocalyptic’ thinker, the epistemological rationale for Campbell’s ‘speech-in-character’ treatment of Romans 1—4 is thus called into question.<sup>105</sup>

Furthermore, there are problems with the characterisation of the covenantal and forensic narrative of Romans 1—4 as an example of a ‘foundationalist’ epistemology. An epistemology which affirms reflection on the narrative of God’s covenant history with Israel is not ‘foundational’ in the sense Campbell seeks to resist, since the object of such reflection is a narrative of God’s ongoing revelation and deliverance, combining God’s revelatory acts with human noetic faculties. This is also what we found in the *Animal Apocalypse*, which is a narrative whose epistemology combines human wisdom and divine disclosure. A dichotomy between human rational contemplation and divine revelation is thus a false one, since Jewish and Christian apocalyptic thought has no problem holding these together. If this ‘dual epistemology... looks basically incoherent’<sup>106</sup> then it is perhaps we, the modern interpreters, whose eyes, darkened by enlightenment rationalism and false epistemological dichotomies, need to be opened by the evidence of the apocalypses.

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<sup>105</sup> In response to critiques of his use of *prosōpopoeia*, Campbell has now moved towards a more general Socratic *parody* as an interpretative framework for Rom 1.18—3.20. This, however, does little to lessen the force of those critiques (as Campbell admits) and of the argument being made here, that apocalyptic and sapiential approaches to knowledge are compatible and so such rhetorical devices, being unnecessary, are removed by Occam’s razor. See Campbell’s response to Griffith-Jones in C. Tilling, ed. *Beyond Old and New Perspectives on Paul: reflections on the work of Douglas Campbell* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2014), esp. p. 176.

<sup>106</sup> Campbell, *Deliverance*, 39.

### 3.

## ESCHATOLOGY: 'IRRUPTION' AND HISTORY

### *Introduction*

While for Rowland epistemology is 'the heart of apocalypticism'<sup>1</sup> for other interpreters it is eschatology that is the *sine qua non* of apocalyptic such that 'to many, the two words are virtually synonymous.'<sup>2</sup> While acknowledging the important role eschatology plays, Rowland considers this an unwelcome focus drawing attention away from the more central epistemological concerns of apocalyptic thought. 'Concentration on the future orientation of the apocalypses,' he argues, 'has at times given a rather distorted view of the essence of apocalyptic. Apocalyptic is as much involved in the attempt to understand things as they are now as to predict future events.' Again, as he has recently argued:

The hope for a glorious new age in which sorrow and sighing would flee away has a significant part to play, either explicitly or implicitly, in the presentation of the early Christian message. It is questionable, however, to use the word 'apocalyptic' to describe the beliefs concerning the arrival of a new age, and to see 'apocalyptic' merely as a form of eschatology featuring a contrast between the present age and a new age which is imminent and which breaks in from beyond through divine intervention and without human activity.<sup>3</sup>

To these concerns must be added Collins' important observation that any suggestion of a consistent and distinctive 'apocalyptic eschatology' in the abstract falls foul of the eschatological variety present in the texts.<sup>4</sup> If this is the situation within the apocalyptic genre, how much more, then, is caution required in describing 'apocalyptic eschatology' outside of that genre – in Paul's letters, for example.

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<sup>1</sup> Rowland and Morray-Jones, *Mystery of God*, xvii.

<sup>2</sup> Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Rowland and Morray-Jones, *Mystery of God*, 14–15.

<sup>4</sup> See Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 11–12.

A notable example of this eschatological focus is Käsemann, who understood ‘primitive Christian apocalyptic’ as something which denoted ‘the expectation of an imminent Parousia.’<sup>5</sup> Many have followed his lead, not least in the ‘apocalyptic Paul’ movement. Introducing the question of ‘Paul and apocalyptic eschatology’ in the *Encyclopaedia of Apocalypticism*, de Boer says that ‘it is thus difficult, nay impossible, to discuss Paul’s apocalyptic eschatology apart from Jewish apocalyptic eschatology and what scholars have said about the latter since the time of Schweitzer.’<sup>6</sup> The cautions of Rowland and Collins notwithstanding, an examination of eschatology in Jewish and Christian apocalyptic must remain an important part of any discussion of Paul’s apocalyptic thought.

I begin, as before, with a summary analysis of the eschatology of recent scholarship on the ‘apocalyptic Paul’. First, again, is Martyn, who describes Paul’s ‘apocalyptic’ answer to the question ‘what time is it?’ Just as with his epistemology, Martyn’s answer to this question is framed in irruptive, invasive terms. I will look in more detail at the way in which Martyn describes this eschatology in Paul, specifically in Galatians 4.4. I then address the similar eschatological discussions of de Boer, who follows Martyn in his treatment of that verse while also offering his own discussion of the underlying importance in Pauline apocalyptic of ‘a two-ages dualism characteristic of Jewish apocalyptic eschatology.’<sup>7</sup> The section is completed by discussion of Gaventa, who approaches the question of Paul’s ‘apocalyptic’ thought through the lens of maternal imagery and in particular the use of such imagery in Galatians 4.

Having thus outlined the contours of eschatological thinking in the contemporary ‘apocalyptic Paul’, I will consider the presence of eschatological motifs in Second Temple Jewish apocalyptic literature. Here I consider the questions of the dualism of the ‘two ages’ and the periodisation of history in *1 Enoch*, *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*, attempting to trace some of the eschatological variety in these texts.

I will then consider these issues in the book of Revelation, focusing particularly on two interrelated images: the ‘woman clothed with the sun’ of chapter 12 and the use of the temporal motif ‘a time, times and half a time.’ I will suggest that in both Jewish

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<sup>5</sup> Käsemann, “Primitive Christian Apocalyptic”, 109 n1, cf. Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 455 n7.

<sup>6</sup> de Boer, “Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology”, esp. 347–9.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 349.

apocalyptic and the book of Revelation a strict eschatological dualism is a problematic framework.

I conclude by suggesting several implications of this study of the eschatology of the apocalypses for the ‘apocalyptic Paul,’ engaging with the three scholars mentioned. I will show that the major eschatological themes of Martyn, de Boer and Gaventa, which are described as ‘apocalyptic,’ are called into question by the eschatology of the apocalypses. In particular, the dualism between the ‘two ages,’ which frames their eschatological logic of ‘invasion’ and the concomitant rejection of redemption-historical paradigms, is not what we find in Second Temple apocalyptic thought. Rather, apocalyptic eschatology affirms the place of redemption history, properly conceived, in the ongoing purposes of God in the world.

### *Eschatological dichotomies in the ‘apocalyptic Paul’*

#### *Martyn: ‘what time is it?’*

Martyn introduces his commentary on Galatians by summarising the heart of Paul’s letter as the answer to two questions, namely ‘what time is it?’ and ‘in what cosmos do we actually live?’<sup>8</sup> My focus here is on the first of these (the second will be addressed in chapter four). We saw in the previous chapter that Martyn’s commentary is driven by his conviction that the gospel presents to the Galatian believers an ‘epistemological crisis’. In the same way he argues that ‘God’s apocalyptic invasion of the cosmos... creates a radically new perception of time’ and that ‘the matter of discerning the time lies at the heart of apocalyptic.’<sup>9</sup> For Martyn, there is, corresponding to the epistemological crisis of the previous discussion, an eschatological crisis brought about by Paul’s gospel, a crisis which receives the following answer:

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<sup>8</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 23. In framing their approaches to Paul with these questions Martyn and Wright share some common ground. Wright initially listed four questions (in Wright, *NTPG*, 369–70). He then added ‘what time is it?’ to this list (Wright, *JVG*, 138; cf. 467–471). For a discussion of these five worldview questions in the thought of the apostle Paul see now Wright, *PFG*, 538–69.

<sup>9</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 104.

What time is it? It is the time after the apocalypse of the faith of Christ, the time, therefore, of God's making things right by Christ's faith, the time of the presence of the Spirit of Christ, and thus the time in which the invading Spirit has decisively commenced the war of liberation from the powers of the present evil age.<sup>10</sup>

This tightly-packed answer to the eschatological question is something of a summary of what 'apocalyptic' means for Martyn, containing his key themes of time, rectification, invasion, warfare and liberation from the powers of this age.<sup>11</sup> It is this latter phrase which Martyn calls a 'distinctly apocalyptic expression,' and 'a scheme fundamental to apocalyptic thought',<sup>12</sup> acknowledging the influence of the 'two ages' eschatological framework found in the 'writings and traditions of Paul's time.'<sup>13</sup> However, as Martyn notes, Paul does not use the expression 'the age to come' in contrasting the two ages, but speaks rather of 'the new creation,' an expression which has other resonances but which nevertheless indicates Paul's indebtedness to Jewish apocalyptic eschatology.

How, then, does Paul conceive of the relationship between 'this present age' and 'the new creation'? For Martyn, this is a dynamic interrelationship characterised by the ever-present motif of 'invasion'.<sup>14</sup> The relationship between 'before' and 'after' cannot be described in simple terms as the end of the former and the arrival of the latter. Nor do the two ages stand in some kind of isolation. Rather, the 'new creation' disjunctively invades the present age: Christ, as Martyn often puts it, 'comes onto the scene'. This 'invasion' motif, which can be described as a preference for the *punctiliar* over the *linear*,<sup>15</sup> is analogous to that which characterised Martyn's epistemology. There, knowledge according to the present age is rejected in favour of knowledge according to the invasion of Christ. Here, this epistemological pattern finds its eschatological

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 104–5.

<sup>11</sup> Compare, for example, the themes of this sentence with the more thorough exposition of 'apocalyptic theology in Galatians' in his Comment #3 (97–105).

<sup>12</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 97–8.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 98. Sadly Martyn does not here provide any indication of precisely which 'writings and traditions' he has in mind. All that can be deduced from the context is that Martyn has in mind the Second Temple Jewish apocalyptic writings.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>15</sup> See *ibid.*, 347.

corollary: the new creation has invaded the present age. Once again, we can thus see the ‘inextricable connexion between eschatology and epistemology’<sup>16</sup> characteristic of Paul’s apocalyptic thought.

The recognition of this apocalyptic theme of the ‘two ages’ comes into its own in Martyn’s discussion of Galatians 4.3–5, the passage he calls ‘the theological centre of the entire letter.’<sup>17</sup> There, in verse 4, Paul speaks of God’s sending of his Son ‘when the time had fully come’, a phrase which Martyn recognises as another ‘clear apocalyptic motif.’<sup>18</sup> Martyn’s discussion of apocalyptic eschatology in Paul comes to a sharp focus in his exposition of this phrase. Surveying the interpretative options, Martyn examines the arguments for an understanding of τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου as a point arrived at the end of a line, as redemptive history reaching its appointed end, but rejects such an interpretation. He argues, on the basis of the surrounding context, that the phrase should be better rendered as ‘at a time selected by [God]’<sup>19</sup> and that it is a mistake to conceive of 4.4 as supporting evidence for *Heilsgeschichte*. For Martyn the conclusion is clear: in contrast to the Teachers, who were arguing for a linear redemptive-historical model, ‘Paul does not think of a gradual maturation, but rather of a punctiliar liberation, enacted by God in his own sovereign time. Stepping on the scene, that is to say, God has closed the enslaving parentheses of the Law at the time chosen by him alone.’<sup>20</sup> Whether the implication that all redemption-historical approaches are characterised by ‘gradual maturation’ is a fair assessment will be explored in due course. For now, we note that at the heart of the issue is an eschatological dichotomy, assumed by Martyn, between the linear and punctiliar.

### *De Boer: the ‘two ages’ in Pauline apocalyptic*

Martinus de Boer, following Martyn, considers Galatians 4.4 ‘the central theological announcement of the letter.’<sup>21</sup> In his commentary he examines two possible ways of understanding the phrase τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου. The first view operates with the metaphor of a will or testament, and so ‘fullness’ is likened to the moment such a

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<sup>16</sup> Martyn, “Epistemology at the Turn of the Ages”, 92.

<sup>17</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 388; cf. also Comment #42, 406–8.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 388.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 389, cf. 347–8.

<sup>21</sup> de Boer, *Galatians*, 261.



testament comes into effect; the second is a view of time which can be compared to a container that has been filled.<sup>22</sup> De Boer considers these two views complementary but emphatically rejects a third option:

It would be wrong, however, to conclude that God's action is somehow dependent on time, on the course of human history. That approach would lead to a futile endeavour to study the history of the Greco-Roman period, or of Israel, around the time of Jesus in order to establish the marks of that fullness... The 'fullness of time' thus signifies a clean break with the past and may be regarded as an apocalyptic assertion on Paul's part: it announces the end of 'the present evil age' (1.4) and the beginning of the 'new creation' (6.15).<sup>23</sup>

Here, in his assertion of 'a clean break with the past' there is perhaps an important difference between de Boer's approach and that of Martyn who, as we have just seen, is careful to exclude a simple 'clean break' approach from the characterisation of the two ages in favour of his metaphor of 'invasion'.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, the result is much the same: for de Boer and for Martyn what Paul is saying in his use of the phrase τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου is precisely not a redemptive-historical framework but the announcement of a radically different conception of time as a result of the irruptive sending of Christ into the world.<sup>25</sup>

De Boer, like Martyn, makes it clear that the presence of the motif of the 'two ages' is a clear indication of the influence of Second Temple Jewish apocalyptic literature on Paul, a point clearly stated in *The Defeat of Death*. While making his debt to Schweitzer, Käsemann, Martyn and Beker explicit, de Boer insists that his description of Paul's 'christologically determined apocalyptic eschatology' is so called because it is characterised by 'conceptual affinities between Paul's eschatology and Jewish eschatological expectations that are also labelled "apocalyptic"' namely 'the eschatological dualism of the two ages, 'this age' and 'the age to come', which is the

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 261. De Boer rejects a third option, mentioned by Martyn, namely 'the moment that a contract has come to an end'.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 261–2.

<sup>24</sup> He explicitly argues against a 'clean end' of the present evil age in Martyn, *Galatians*, 99.

<sup>25</sup> De Boer's insistence on this point has to do with the wider eschatological arguments made by his 'apocalyptic' approach to Paul, to which I will shortly return.

fundamental characteristic of all apocalyptic eschatology.<sup>26</sup> Likewise, de Boer makes plain the importance of grounding discussions of apocalyptic in Paul in the Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature when he says that ‘a two-ages dualism characteristic of Jewish apocalyptic eschatology underlies Paul’s thought’ which is

a distinctive form of eschatology (teaching concerning ‘last things’) that scholars have discerned not only in Paul’s letters but also in other ancient Jewish and Christian literature. Christian versions of apocalyptic eschatology, including that of Paul, are deeply indebted to, or are modifications of, Jewish apocalyptic eschatology... Jewish apocalyptic eschatology, in short, was the matrix within which Christian apocalyptic eschatology, including that of Paul, arose and developed.<sup>27</sup>

De Boer, building on insights gleaned from Vielhauer, Hanson and Russell, states that the essential characteristic of the eschatology of Jewish apocalyptic literature, and which is presupposed by Schweitzer, Käsemann, Beker and Martyn, is a strict eschatological dualism of ‘two ages.’<sup>28</sup> De Boer thus repeatedly insists on the methodology of evaluating Paul’s apocalyptic eschatology against the backdrop of this eschatological dualism in Jewish apocalyptic literature.

An important additional aspect of de Boer’s approach to the ‘two ages’ in apocalyptic thought is his argument that they are not merely eschatological but also cosmological categories. As he describes it, ‘the categories “this age” and “the age to come” have spatial as well as temporal aspects. ... The dualism of the two ages characteristic of apocalyptic eschatology is thus *at once temporal and spatial*.’<sup>29</sup> I will return to the spatial aspect of de Boer’s thought in the following chapter. For the present discussion of eschatological dualism it is important to observe how de Boer’s spatio-temporal approach to the ‘two ages’ requires a mutually exclusive relationship between them. For de Boer, the ‘two ages’ are not merely successive periods of history but are contrasting orbs of power.<sup>30</sup> This leads him, following Martyn, to the motif of

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<sup>26</sup> de Boer, *Defeat of Death*, 7.

<sup>27</sup> de Boer, “Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology”, 349–50.

<sup>28</sup> de Boer, *Defeat of Death*, 22.

<sup>29</sup> de Boer, “Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology”, 348 (emphasis his); see too de Boer, *Galatians*, 33–4.

<sup>30</sup> See Martyn, *Galatians*, 261 n389.

‘invasion’ in characterising the relationship between the two ages.<sup>31</sup> When applied to the question of time and history, this eschatological dualism results in the rejection of redemptive-historical paradigms, exemplified above in his exegesis of Galatians 4.4.

### *Gaventa: maternity and apocalyptic expectation*

A third scholar building on Martyn, and now one of the leading figures in the ‘apocalyptic Paul’ movement, is Beverly Gaventa.<sup>32</sup> Reading the opening chapters of *Our Mother Saint Paul*, where Gaventa draws our attention to the maternal imagery employed by Paul in describing his apostolic ministry, one might be forgiven for asking what all this motherly language has to do with the earth-shattering themes of ‘apocalyptic’. This question, and the false assumptions which underlie it, are emphatically answered by Gaventa in the second part of her book.<sup>33</sup> After some initial reticence over the appropriateness of the term,<sup>34</sup> Gaventa argues that ‘apocalyptic’ is the proper framework within which to understand this maternal imagery, a framework which reveals that it is far from a cosy pastoral metaphor. There is, in her words, ‘an established association between apocalyptic expectation and the anguish of childbirth.’<sup>35</sup> The recognition of this association, she insists, is more than an exercise in tracing the presence of parallel maternal metaphors, but is the recognition ‘that these metaphors are substantively connected to the apocalyptic nature of Paul’s theology’<sup>36</sup> which, for Gaventa, means

the conviction that in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God has invaded the world as it is, thereby revealing the world’s utter distortion and foolishness, reclaiming the world, and inaugurating a battle that will doubtless culminate in the triumph of God over all God’s enemies (including the captors Sin and Death).<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> See the discussion in *ibid.*, 34.

<sup>32</sup> See, for example, her recent edited volume Gaventa, *Apocalyptic Paul*.

<sup>33</sup> See the introduction to Part II in Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul*, 79.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

In all this, Gaventa follows Martyn (and, behind him, Beker and Käsemann).<sup>38</sup> What continues to mark out Gaventa's particular contribution to this conversation is her focus on Paul's maternal imagery and the placing of that imagery in its 'apocalyptic' context. A brief outline of two such discussions is therefore fruitful.

Reflection on Paul's use of maternal imagery began, for Gaventa, with Galatians 4.19, which the RSV translates as 'my little children, with whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you!' This rather bland translation of the verb ὠδίνειν obscures what Gaventa rightly highlights: that the word used by Paul to describe his 'travail' for his churches refers to the labour and pain that accompanies childbirth (rather than the ordinary word τίκτειν). Thus Paul continues the imagery of 4.1–7, casting himself in the role of an expectant mother who labours until Christ is formed in the Galatians. These labour pains are not simply an emotional picture of Paul's maternal care for his Galatian churches and his earnest desire for their spiritual maturity. They perform a much more integral theological role, being for Gaventa a signal of 'the anguish anticipated in an apocalyptic era'; a metaphor employed 'to identify Paul's apostolic work with the apocalyptic expectation of the whole created order.'<sup>39</sup> In support of this interpretation Gaventa examines a number of uses of ὠδίνειν in the New Testament, the Septuagint and Pseudepigrapha, all of which demonstrate the apocalyptic and corporate sense with which the word is employed.<sup>40</sup>

Paul, however, does not reserve this maternal imagery for discussions of his apostolic ministry. Turning to Romans 8.22, Gaventa observes how Paul again employs childbirth imagery (ὠδίνειν again) in discussing the role of the non-human created world in the apocalyptic eschatological drama. Here it is not Paul who is labouring, but the whole of creation (πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις) which groans in anticipation of the 'apocalyptic revelation' of the sons of God (ἀποκάλυψιν τῶν υἱῶν τοῦ θεοῦ, v.19). Gaventa highlights the apocalyptic epistemology at work here, that 'this apocalypse is not merely

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<sup>38</sup> See *ibid.*, 82.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>40</sup> She directs the reader (*ibid.*, 32–34) to the use of the 'birth pains' metaphor in apocalyptic contexts in (among others) Mic 4.10, Isa 13.6–8, *1 En.* 62.4, *2 Bar.* 56.6, *4 Ez.* 4.42, Matt 24.8 and Rev 12.2. *4 Ez.* 4 will receive attention in the next section of this chapter. *2 Bar.* 56 will be discussed there, and again in chapter 5. The last of these, the vision of the woman in labour in Rev 12 (together with its OT resonances), will receive its own attention in part three of the present chapter.

a public discourse of something that has been kept secret; it is an event in which something happens that so radically disrupts the world as to be called an invasion.’<sup>41</sup>

But again there are complications, the most significant of which, for Gaventa, is that creation may be in labour pains, but there is no birth scene. The expectation of the arrival of a child is thwarted. ‘What is it that creation will bring to birth? Exactly nothing, because creation itself is captive to nothingness, to “futility.” Creation itself cannot possibly give birth, nor does the participation of humanity make a difference.’<sup>42</sup> Thus Gaventa defines the boundaries of Paul’s birthing metaphor and eliminates as a possibility the involvement of the present creation in the eschatological birthing of a new world, something which is wholly God’s invasive act, a theological move which ‘argues against any evolutionary reading of the passage.’<sup>43</sup> For Gaventa, this unilateral and invasive act of God, as we saw above, is at the heart of apocalyptic.

What this means for apocalyptic eschatology, as understood by Gaventa, is that this world and its history have no role to play in bringing about the new creation. Thus some attempts at emphasising the continuity between the history of Israel and the Christ-event have undermined, in her view, the ‘apocalyptic’ theology of Paul’s letters,<sup>44</sup> which is best characterised by ‘God’s unilateral action of intervention in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ.’<sup>45</sup>

### *Summary*

This brief survey of the contributions to discussion of Paul’s ‘apocalyptic’ eschatology proffered by Martyn, de Boer and Gaventa has highlighted the following four characteristics. First, corresponding to the epistemological crisis seen in the previous chapter, there is an eschatological crisis brought about by the coming of Christ into the world, a crisis described using the apocalyptic motifs of a ‘two ages’ dualism. Second, this crisis is best described using the language of ‘invasion’ and ‘warfare’ since the two ages are not simply ‘temporal’ but also ‘spatial’ categories, in the sense of being competing and mutually-exclusive ‘orbs of power’ (and to this Gaventa adds the image

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 56, directing the reader here to the classic statement of this view in Martyn, *Galatians*, 99. For an extended discussion of this would-be ‘apocalyptic epistemology’ see chapter 2 above.

<sup>42</sup> Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul*, 57.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>44</sup> See *ibid.*, 122.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 14.

of childbirth). Third, this means that, for the ‘apocalyptic Paul’, all ‘linear’ redemptive-historical paradigms must be rejected in the light of the ‘punctiliar’ action of God in Christ, which represents a ‘clean break with the past’.<sup>46</sup> Each of these three motifs will be subject to critique in what follows. The basis for this critique, and the point of shared methodology between the present project and the ‘apocalyptic Paul’ is the fourth characteristic: the insistence that these features of Paul’s apocalyptic thought are discerned by comparison with the mode of eschatological thought in Second Temple Jewish apocalyptic literature. While acknowledging their indebtedness to Schweitzer, Käsemann, Beker and others, the advocates of this ‘apocalyptic’ approach to Paul nevertheless insist on some kind of historical basis for their arguments, grounded in the Second Temple Jewish and Christian apocalyptic texts. My questions are not, therefore, a tussle over the meaning of the word ‘apocalyptic’ but questions about the features and worldview of Second Temple Jewish and Christian apocalypses, and of Paul’s thought as seen in relation to them.

### *Eschatological duality in Jewish apocalyptic literature*

I have already noted the important contribution made by Christopher Rowland in challenging the assumption that the defining characteristic of apocalyptic is its eschatology, which he argues is ‘not their most distinctive feature, nor does it deserve to become the focus of attention in the study of apocalyptic to the exclusion of the other secrets which the apocalypses claim to reveal.’<sup>47</sup> In saying this he does not, however, deny the importance of eschatology as an apocalyptic theme. The motif of the ‘two ages’ is almost universally cited as one of several important features of apocalyptic thought, and so it is important to establish how this is construed, and how it is not, in apocalyptic literature.

In this connection there are at least two questions which much be asked of de Boer’s assertion, cited above, that ‘the eschatological dualism of the two ages... is the fundamental characteristic of all apocalyptic eschatology.’<sup>48</sup> The first is whether this eschatological motif is as universal and fundamental to apocalyptic thought as de Boer

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<sup>46</sup> de Boer, *Galatians*, 262.

<sup>47</sup> Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 26.

<sup>48</sup> de Boer, *Defeat of Death*, 7.

and many others assume.<sup>49</sup> The second is how the two ages are to be related to one another, and whether this relationship is best characterised by ‘dualism’ (or, as Rowland puts it, ‘radical dichotomy’<sup>50</sup>) or in some other way.

However, at the outset it is important to recognise an important qualification: that the motif of the ‘two ages’ is not a theme unique to apocalyptic thought but is found widely in Second Temple Judaism. Wright makes this point when he writes that ‘virtually all Second Temple Jews, with the possible exception only of the aristocracy, believed that they were living in a “present age” which was a time of sorrow and exile, and which would be succeeded by an “age to come” in which wrongs would be righted and Israel’s god would set up his kingdom.’<sup>51</sup> An eschatological duality of ‘two ages’ can be seen in the prophetic literature<sup>52</sup> as well as later rabbinic reflection on the ‘world to come’.<sup>53</sup> The presence of the ‘two ages’ motif should not, therefore, be used as a litmus test for apocalyptic. As Rowland and Morray-Jones argue, ‘evidence from the apocalypses themselves indicates that, apart from a handful of passages, their doctrine of the future hope seems to be pretty much the same as that found in other Jewish sources.’<sup>54</sup>

## *1 Enoch*

### *‘Temporal dualism’ in the Book of the Watchers (1 Enoch 10)*

Nickelsburg introduces the ‘dualisms’ of *1 Enoch* as follows:

Several complementary kinds of dualism characterise *1 Enoch*’s construction of reality, with its temporal and spatial dimensions and its populations of divine and human characters. The temporal axis divides sharply between the present time, which will end with the judgement, and a

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<sup>49</sup> In addition to the works discussed here, see also the references in Stuckenbruck, “Overlapping Ages”, 311–20, esp. 312 n.12. I will return to Stuckenbruck’s argument in my evaluation of the ‘apocalyptic Paul’ at the end of this chapter.

<sup>50</sup> Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 25.

<sup>51</sup> Wright, *NTPG*, 254. See now also the similar discussion in Wright, *PFG*, 1059.

<sup>52</sup> Isa 2.2–4; Mic 4.1–4; Zech 8.23.

<sup>53</sup> *m. Sanh.* 10.1–2; *m. Ab.* 4.1.

<sup>54</sup> Rowland and Morray-Jones, *Mystery of God*, 15.

new age that follows. The authors contrast this present time, which is evil or deficient, with a future that will bring healing and renewal.<sup>55</sup>

This assessment would seem to support the common view of apocalyptic literature as characterised by a radically dualistic eschatology. As his remarks develop, however, Nickelsburg introduces the notions of salvation and revelation in *1 Enoch* as a ‘resolution’ or ‘bridging’ of its dualisms: ‘although definitive salvation lies in the future, revelation transmitted *now* effects a significant resolution of the book’s temporal, spatial, and ontological dualism.’<sup>56</sup>

This important insight is also the driving idea behind Macaskill’s examination of the eschatological significance of revealed wisdom. One example will serve to demonstrate the eschatological framework, from *1 Enoch* 10:

Then the Most High said, and the Great Holy One spoke.  
And he sent Sariel to the son of Lamech, saying,  
‘Go to Noah and say to him in my name, “Hide yourself.”  
And reveal to him that the end is coming, that the whole earth will perish;  
And tell him that a deluge is about to come on the whole earth and destroy  
everything on the earth.  
Teach the righteous one what he should do,  
the son of Lamech how he may preserve himself alive and escape forever.  
From him a plant will be planted,  
And his seed will endure for all the generations of eternity’ (Aram. *‘alam*).<sup>57</sup>

While the narrative framework here is the Noahic deluge, it is recognised by many commentators that what is in view is the future. Macaskill, following Nickelsburg and Hartman, argues that this is an example of Jewish exegetical strategies,<sup>58</sup> and that this can be seen by examining the presence of final-judgement terminology. ‘It is clear,’

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<sup>55</sup> Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 40.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>57</sup> *1 En.* 10.1–3 (tr. Nickelsburg).

<sup>58</sup> Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 219f.; L. Hartman, “An Early Example of Jewish Exegesis: 1 Enoch 10.16–11.2,” *Neotestamentica* 17(1983): 16–27, 20–22. Hartman suggests that this passage may be ‘the earliest extra-biblical example’ of such strategies.



Macaskill concludes, 'that the judgement in view is a final one... the primeval imagery is intended as typological for eschatology.'<sup>59</sup>

Alongside the flood/judgement imagery, a clear eschatological picture appears in this text in the form of agricultural images, particularly the 'plant' of verse 3. The image of planting and fruitfulness is expanded later in chapter 10:

Destroy all perversity from the face of the earth;  
And let every wicked deed be gone;  
And let the plant of righteousness and truth appear, and it will become a blessing;  
(and) the deeds of righteousness and truth will be planted forever with joy.  
And now all the righteous will escape,  
And they will live until they beget thousands,  
And all the days of their youth and their old age will be completed in peace.  
Then all the earth will be tilled in righteousness,  
And all of it will be planted with trees and filled with blessing...<sup>60</sup>

This imagery is evocative both of Noah's status as 'the first to plant a vineyard'<sup>61</sup> and the depiction of eschatological fruitfulness in Isaiah 65. What is particularly interesting for the present discussion is that the eschatological 'plant of righteousness' of verse 16 is prefigured in the references to the 'plant' and 'seed' in the antediluvian scene of verse 3. That is to say, the 'plant' straddles the two eschatological ages, an interpretation further supported by the presence of the term '*alam*' at the end of that verse.<sup>62</sup> Interpreting the image of the 'plant' as the chosen remnant community,<sup>63</sup> Macaskill suggests that it is the revealing of wisdom to this chosen people which constitutes their eschatological blessing, and therefore establishes the remnant as an inaugurated

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<sup>59</sup> Macaskill, *Revealed Wisdom*, 33.

<sup>60</sup> *I En.* 10.16–18 (tr. Nickelsburg).

<sup>61</sup> Gen 9.20.

<sup>62</sup> Nickelsburg, commenting on his translation of '*alam*' here, admits that the word is problematic, suggesting 'eternity', 'age' and 'world' as possibilities. 'No English word,' he says, 'indicates the fact that in the Greco-Roman period '*alam*' is acquiring spatial as well as temporal connections' G. W. E. Nickelsburg and J. C. VanderKam, *I Enoch: A New Translation* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2004), 28.

<sup>63</sup> That is, in the terms suggested by the use of the 'plant' imagery in Isa 61.3.

eschatological community, the present ‘seed’ which corresponds to the ‘plant of righteousness’ in the age to come. Similarly, Nickelsburg summarises the Enochic eschatological framework as follows:

the books of Enoch are a corpus of texts that guarantee future salvation on the basis of a present reality to which the seer had been privy and which he then revealed. That seer – in the book’s fiction, Enoch of old; in reality the complement of authors who stand behind these texts – provides a bridge between opposing worlds, present and future, earthly and cosmic, human and divine... these revelations are promulgated in a present that stands on the threshold of the end time. Functionally, they are eschatological revelation... the authors’ revelations are the salvific means by which the readers bridge and overcome the dualisms that are the very nature of reality as they understand and experience it.<sup>64</sup>

Likewise, concluding his discussion of *I Enoch*, Macaskill argues that ‘the eschatology of the text is best understood as “inaugurated,” and that the revealing of wisdom to a chosen minority or remnant is the key inaugural event.’<sup>65</sup> In his use of the term ‘inaugurated eschatology’ Macaskill has in mind ‘an eschatology that contains both realised and future elements.’<sup>66</sup>

Macaskill and Nickelsburg’s expositions of the eschatological role of revealed wisdom in *I Enoch* exemplify the interrelatedness of epistemology, eschatology and soteriology in discussions of apocalyptic ‘dualisms.’ Yet Nickelsburg’s observation that salvation and revelation effect a ‘resolution’ or ‘bridging’ of eschatological dualism suggests that his use of the term is closer to what I am here describing as a ‘duality.’ There is a distinction between the two ages, but because of their resolution in soteriology and epistemology, this distinction does not become a dichotomy.

#### *Periodisation of history in the Animal Apocalypse*

I return now to another part of the Enochic corpus, the *Book of Dreams* (chapters 83—90) and in particular the *Animal Apocalypse* of chapters 85—90. The relationship between these chapters and the *Book of the Watchers* is itself complex, and has been

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<sup>64</sup> Nickelsburg, *I Enoch 1*, 41–2.

<sup>65</sup> Macaskill, *Revealed Wisdom*, 70.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

subject to a great deal of discussion.<sup>67</sup> The presence of shared imagery such as the flood, the fall of the Watchers and the ‘plant of eternal seed’ (84.6), as well as the Aramaic manuscript testimony from Qumran, suggests the importance of allowing the two texts to speak to one another. A striking difference between them, however, is the emphasis in the *Animal Apocalypse* on a redemption-historical eschatological narrative rather than the ‘two age’ scheme of the *Book of the Watchers*. Christopher Rowland describes this eschatological approach (which is by no means unique to *I Enoch* 85—90) as follows:

The view of human history with its many epochs which emerges in the apocalypses can be compared to a play with many scenes which have been written but not all acted out on stage. Only part of the number of scenes has been portrayed on stage; the rest is still to come. The apocalyptic seer, however, is privileged to have a total view of the play, including that which is still to be actualized on the stage of history.<sup>68</sup>

Thus the new revelation given to the seer is part of an ongoing and unfolding story with many stages. This would seem to be an eschatological framework at odds with the two-age dualism of the *Book of the Watchers*. We recall Stuckenbruck’s caution that construals of time in Second Temple Jewish thought should not be reduced to simple dualisms: there are more complex eschatological frameworks involved.<sup>69</sup> The presence of differing eschatological frameworks is itself, therefore, no reason to separate the *Book of the Watchers* from the *Book of Dreams*; such eschatological complexity is to be expected. As Stuckenbruck puts it, ‘beyond contrasting present and future reality, some writers of apocalyptic texts demonstrated a concern with divine activity as a constant that shaped the unfolding story of Israel as a way of understanding and posing questions about the present.’<sup>70</sup>

For the purposes of the present argument, two features in particular should be noted. The first is that a significant shift in the redemption-historical narrative of the *Animal Apocalypse* occurs at 90.6–7 where the lambs ‘began to open their eyes and see, and cried aloud to the sheep.’ As discussed in the previous chapter, this is an event of

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<sup>67</sup> For some of the interpretative issues at stake see, e.g. the ‘Enochic Testament’ proposal of Nickelsburg, *I Enoch 1*, 22–28 and the discussion Macaskill, *Revealed Wisdom*, 26–30.

<sup>68</sup> Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 143–4.

<sup>69</sup> Again see Stuckenbruck, “Overlapping Ages”, 312.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 322.

great epistemological importance. But, as Macaskill has argued, ‘the revealing of wisdom, here denoted by the opening of eyes,’ is also ‘an eschatological event.’<sup>71</sup> The opening of the eyes of the lambs in 90.6–7 anticipates the final eschatological opening of the eyes of all in 90.35. The lambs are those who have been given the ability to see in the present as all will see in the eschaton, a significant demonstration of inaugurated eschatology. It is not, however, an epistemological event without prior anticipation in history: the opening of the lambs’ eyes here parallels the opened eyes in the time of the Exodus (89.28) and during the time of the judges (89.41, 44).<sup>72</sup>

This last comment leads to the second observation, that the textual relationship between the *Book of the Watchers*, with its ‘two-ages’ eschatological framework, and the redemption-historical eschatology of the *Animal Apocalypse* suggests that the notion of ‘salvation history’ is not something that can be set against ‘apocalyptic eschatology’ as if these were two incompatible eschatological systems. Tracing the differences between these two apocalyptic frameworks is a complex task, but it is a task to be conducted while recognising their essential compatibility.

#### 4 *Ezra*

‘*Not one age but two*’ (4 *Ezra* 7.47–50)

The classic statement of the doctrine of the ‘two ages’ in Jewish apocalyptic writing comes in 4 *Ezra* 7.45–50:<sup>73</sup>

I answered and said, ‘O sovereign Lord, I said then and I say now: Blessed are those who are alive and keep your commandments! But what of those for whom I prayed? For who among the living is there that has not sinned, or who among men that has not transgressed your covenant? And now I see that *the world to come* will bring delight to few, but torments to many. For an evil heart has grown up in us, which has alienated us from God, and has brought us into corruption and the ways of death, and has shown us the

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<sup>71</sup> Macaskill, *Revealed Wisdom*, 39.

<sup>72</sup> See the discussion in Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 380–1; 398.

<sup>73</sup> Koch, for example, says that ‘Der Satz 7,50... gilt weithin als der ‘Grundsatz,’ mit dem die Argumentationen des Verfassers stehen und fallen’ (‘Estras erste Vision: Weltzeiten und Weg des Höchsten’, *BZ* 22, p. 46 (cited in Longenecker, *Eschatology and the Covenant*, 81 n.3. Likewise, Longenecker himself remarks that 7.50 is ‘most often cited as the centrepiece of Uriel’s two-age scheme’.

paths of perdition and removed us far from life — and that not just a few of us but almost all who have been created!’

He answered me and said, ‘Listen to me, Ezra, and I will instruct you, and will admonish you yet again. For this reason the Most High has made *not one world but two*.

This passage demonstrates the characteristic negative anthropology of *4 Ezra*, with its discussion of the small number of the saved and the problems of humanity’s ‘evil heart’ (*cor malum*, cf. 3.20–27). For the present purposes, however, it is the eschatological dualism of the two ‘worlds’ which will receive attention.

Here, we must be wary of assuming a neat framework of two ages but must attend to the precise words used. The presence of the term here translated ‘world’ raises this complex linguistic question in the various passages that seem to demonstrate an eschatological duality. The term ‘world/worlds’ (*saeculum*, 7.12–13, 29–31; 7.112; 8.1) is not the only one employed in this context by *4 Ezra*; related terms used are ‘age/ages’ (as translation of *saeculum*: 4.26–7; 6.9–10;<sup>74</sup> as translation of *tempus*: 7.112–13), ‘time/times’ (*tempus*, 6.7;<sup>75</sup> 6.34; 7.73–77, 87), and ‘day/days’ (7.84, 95<sup>76</sup>). Stone argues that there is an essential equivalence between these various terms, reflected in the semantic range of the translations.<sup>77</sup> In a detailed excursus on the meaning of the term ‘age’ in its various languages and grammatical forms, Stone concludes that it is ‘a noun meaning something between “time,” “age,” “world-age,” and “world”’ and that ‘there is no clear external indicator of which of these meanings may be most appropriate in any given context of *4 Ezra*, or even whether they may be truly distinguished. This must be done on contextual grounds.’<sup>78</sup> His point is well taken, and stands as a reminder

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<sup>74</sup> On which see below.

<sup>75</sup> Again, see below.

<sup>76</sup> Metzger’s translation in both of these verses uses the word ‘days,’ but the Latin simply says ‘*novissimis*’ making it likely that the referent is the same ‘*novissimis temporibus*’ of 7.73, 77 and 87, perhaps suggesting that a better translation of this phrase would be ‘last times’ rather than ‘last days.’ To make much of this would, however, be to miss the point being made here. The various translations of these terms reflect the semantic overlap that exists between them in the original languages.

<sup>77</sup> See M. E. Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1990), 92; cf. 352.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 219. Stone’s whole excursus on the term ‘age,’ and the references therein, makes fruitful reading in this connection. Also valuable here, both on the terminological issue and the broader question of the

that the neat modern categories of horizontal/vertical or time/space do not always do justice to the semantic range of the original terms.<sup>79</sup>

Nevertheless, clear statements of present and future such as that found in 8.46 indicate that the temporal aspect of the eschatological duality warrants discussion in its own right. In this regard, Stone asserts that ‘the author sees a clear separation of two ages,’<sup>80</sup> offering no objection to the common designation of such eschatological schemes as ‘dualistic.’ Bauckham, likewise, highlights ‘a stark eschatological dualism’<sup>81</sup> as one of the key elements of *4 Ezra*. I suggest, however, that a strict ‘dualism’ is inappropriate as a description of the relationship between the two ages in *4 Ezra*. The following discussions will offer some justification for this view and offer an alternative account.

*Two ages, two metaphors: the harvest and a woman in labour (4 Ezra 4.22–43)*

In the first vision of the Ezra apocalypse, Ezra and the angel discuss the ‘age (*saeculum*) to come’, and how one might know when it is near. Again, the key *topoi* of Adam’s evil seed/heart (4.30–32) and the ‘two ages’ (v. 26–27) feature prominently. In response to Ezra’s question about the present suffering of Israel (v. 22–25), Uriel first replies that this age, which is ‘full of sadness and infirmities’ (v. 27), is coming to an end. This may not be the full explanation of the problem of suffering Ezra hoped for, but, as Longenecker points out, it is a thoroughly eschatological approach to the question: ‘If Uriel ever gives Ezra an answer in explanation of the ways of God it is imbedded in the two-age scheme which he propagates for the first time (*in nuce*) at this point.’<sup>82</sup> Two metaphors are used to describe the relationship between the two ages, beginning with an

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‘two ages’ is D. M. Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 96–104 (on *4 Ez*) and 110–15 (on *2 Bar*).

<sup>79</sup> If further evidence were required, we need only compare the subtle but important differences between the Latin and Syriac versions of 7.12–13, with its discussion of ‘this world/age’ and the ‘greater/future (Lat./Syr.) world/age’. While the present project separates out ‘eschatology’ and ‘cosmology’ for the sake of clarity, I am mindful that this is a somewhat artificial distinction: there is constant to-and-fro between these categories. I will, therefore, return to this in my discussion of cosmology below. There is also a connection here with de Boer’s analysis, discussed above, of the ‘spatial as well as temporal aspects’ of the two ages (de Boer, “Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology”, 348).

<sup>80</sup> Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 93.

<sup>81</sup> Bauckham, “Apocalypses”, 164.

<sup>82</sup> Longenecker, *Eschatology and the Covenant*, 61.

agricultural one. The point of using the harvest image of sowing and reaping is to explain to Ezra that the present sufferings of Israel are an indication that ‘the evil about which [he asks] has been sown, but the harvest of it has not yet come’ (v. 28). This leads Ezra to the natural question, ‘how long?’ (v. 33)<sup>83</sup> In response, the archangel Jeremiel explains that, as with all harvests, a time of growth must first take place before the reaping can begin. The times must be first ‘measured’ by God until their number is ‘fulfilled’ (36–7), and only then will God move to act and bring about the time of harvest and threshing.

To explain further the relationship between this age and the age to come, there is then a switch of metaphors:

He answered me and said, ‘Go and ask a woman who is with child if, when her nine months have been completed, her womb can keep the child within her any longer.’ [*Ezra, of course, does not need to ask the question*]

‘No, my lord,’ I said, ‘it cannot.’

He said to me, ‘In Hades the chambers of the souls are like the womb. For just as a woman who is in travail makes haste to escape the pangs of birth, so also do these places hasten to give back those things that were committed to them from the beginning. Then the things that you desire to see will be disclosed to you.’<sup>84</sup>

The point being made is similar to the one made by the harvest metaphor: labour pains are a signal of the arrival of an end of an appointed span of time (a maturation of nine months, in the case of human gestation) which leads up to and anticipates, but does not condition, the birth event. There is, importantly, no radical separation between the pangs of birth and the arrival of the child, even though the birth event may be dramatic (even, in a sense, ‘unexpected’<sup>85</sup>) in its nature.

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<sup>83</sup> On which see further below.

<sup>84</sup> *4 Ez.* 4.40–43.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. *4 Ez.* 5.6. I say ‘in a sense’ because the point being made in *4 Ez.* 5 is not that a coming reign was unanticipated but that the one who exercises that reign does not meet expectations. There is thus a continuity of this expectation while also surprising discontinuity in the manner of its fulfilment.

*The birth of Jacob and Esau, and 'the dividing of the times' (4 Ezra 6.7–10)*

Further insights about 4 Ezra's understanding of the relationship between the two ages can be gained by a consideration of another 'birth scene'. Consider the following key eschatological passage, 4 Ezra 6.7–10:

I answered and said, 'What will be the dividing of the times (*separatio temporum*)? Or when will be the end of the first age<sup>86</sup> and the beginning of the age that follows?'

He said to me, 'From Abraham to Isaac,<sup>87</sup> because from him were born Jacob and Esau, for Jacob's hand held Esau's heel from the beginning. For Esau is the end of this age (*finis saeculi*), and Jacob is the beginning of the age that follows. For the beginning of a man is his hand, and the end of a man is his heel, between the heel and the hand seek for nothing else, Ezra!'

Ezra's question about the dividing of the times is answered by his angelic interlocutor with this fascinating Abrahamic 'allegory', noting immediately Stone's objection to this term: 'it is not an allegory using the closeness of the grasping of the hand on the heel as a *symbol* of the succession of the two ages. It is an eschatological interpretation of the biblical text based, like the Qumran *pesharim*, on the idea that the biblical text has a veiled eschatological meaning.'<sup>88</sup> Whether allegory or *peshet*, the use made of the Genesis 25.26 imagery is important for its eschatological implications, since the relationship between Jacob and Esau serves to illustrate the relationship between the two world-ages.

Two things should be noted. The first is that this passage, like the similar material at 3.12–19, exemplifies the way in which the theme of the covenant runs as a thread through the whole of the apocalypse. The relationship between the two ages in 4

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<sup>86</sup> It should be noted that the Latin does not include the word *saeculum* here, and so another possible translation would be 'the first time... the time that follows' (the whole verse reads '*Et respondi et dixi: Quae erit separatio temporum, aut quando prioris finis aut sequentis initium?*'). Stone again argues that 'age' and 'time' are here synonymous (see Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 159 and footnotes).

<sup>87</sup> Metzger's translation note on 6.8 observes that some authorities read '...to Abraham', an interpretation preferred by Stone.

<sup>88</sup> Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 161.



*Ezra* must be understood, therefore, within this covenant-historical framework<sup>89</sup> not a radical dualistic separation. While there is an important distinction to make between the ‘age of Jacob’ and the ‘age of Esau’ there is also genealogical and redemptive-historical continuity. As Collins notes, despite the ‘sharpness of the break between this world and the world to come’, *Ezra*’s apocalyptic eschatology is focused on ‘the Deuteronomic covenant and the election of Israel. *4 Ezra* does not deny that covenant but can only salvage it by buttressing it with further revelations.’<sup>90</sup>

The second comment is that in highlighting the connection between the hand of Jacob and the heel of Esau, underlined by the angel’s closing instruction to *Ezra* to ‘seek nothing else’ between the two, *4 Ezra* makes clear that the two ages should not be logically separated. The end of the first comes at the same time as the beginning of the second, for the hand of Jacob comes out of the womb at the same time as the heel of Esau. The two ages thus ‘touch one another’. Commenting on the presence of the ‘two ages’ motif in the angel’s reply in *4 Ezra* 4, Collins says that ‘there is no question here of an ultimate dualism. Yet the emphasis is on the discontinuity between this age and the world to come. There is no smooth evolution from this age to the next.’<sup>91</sup> The sharpness of the distinction between the two ages which is characteristic of *4 Ezra* must be accounted for but not characterised as a strict dualism.

## 2 *Baruch*

### *Periodisation of history in the cloud-apocalypse (2 Baruch 53—74)*

One of the many similarities between *4 Ezra* and its sister apocalypse is that the latter also employs the eschatological motif of the ‘two ages’ (e.g. 14.13; 15.8; 44.11–15). How the motif operates in *2 Baruch* is, however, rather different. While *4 Ezra*

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<sup>89</sup> Cf. the argument made by Collins (and others) that ‘*2 Baruch* envisages fulfilment of the covenantal promises, but *in the process the covenantal people must be redefined.*’ Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 219 (emphasis mine). That there is a reworked understanding of the covenant people does not, of course, detract from the importance of the covenant as a framework for this apocalypse. See also R. Bauckham, ‘The Apocalypse as a Christian War Scroll,’ in *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 169–70; Longenecker, *Eschatology and the Covenant*, 149–57.

<sup>90</sup> Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 211.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 202.

emphasises the discontinuity between the ‘two ages’ (though not, as we have just suggested, in a radically dualistic way), *2 Baruch* does not.<sup>92</sup>

As with *4 Ezra*, the covenant and redemption-historical framework of *2 Baruch* is essential to the book’s eschatology. Arguably the most useful passage of the book in this connection is the ‘apocalypse of the cloud’ in chapters 53—74. The vision itself is brief enough to bear repetition in full.

And I saw a vision. And behold, a cloud was coming up from the great sea. And I was looking at it, and behold, it was entirely filled with black water and there were many colours in that water. And something like great lightning appeared at its top. And I saw that the cloud was rapidly passing in a quick run and covering the whole earth. And it happened after this that the cloud began to pour the water that it contained upon the earth. And I saw that the water which descended from it was not of the same likeness. For at first, it was very black until a certain time. And then, I saw that the water became bright, but there was not much of it. And after this, I saw black water again, and after this bright again, and black again and bright again. This, now, happened twelve times, but the black were always more than the bright. And it happened at the end of the cloud that, behold, it poured black water and it was much darker than all the water that had been before. And fire was mingled with it. And where that water descended, it brought about devastation and destruction. And after this I saw how the lightning which I had seen at the top of the cloud seized it and pressed it down to the earth. That lightning shone much more, so that it lighted the whole earth and healed the regions where the last waters had descended and where it had brought about destruction. And it occupied the whole earth and took command of it. And after this I saw, behold, twelve rivers came from the sea and surrounded the lightning and became subject to it. And because of my fear I awoke.<sup>93</sup>

In the subsequent angelic interpretation of this vision, twenty chapters in length, it is made clear that the sequence of bright and dark waters signifies ‘the course of times,

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<sup>92</sup> See *ibid.*, 217.

<sup>93</sup> *2 Bar.* 53.1–12.

namely those which have passed and those which in his world will come to pass, from the beginning of his creation until the end.’<sup>94</sup> This historical review begins with the first dark waters of Adam’s transgression and the corruption which followed, including untimely death, illness and labour pains.<sup>95</sup> After this come Abraham and his family, the first bright waters of the unwritten law and the hope of judgement before black waters return again with the rebellion of the people and the Egyptian oppression. In this way the review of Israel’s history continues, outlined in the table below:

Chapter	waters sequence	signifying
56	#1 (black)	Adam
57	#2 (bright)	Abraham
58	#3 (black)	national rebellion, Egypt
59	#4 (bright)	Moses, Aaron, Miriam, Joshua
60	#5 (black)	works of the Amorites
61	#6 (bright)	David and Solomon
62	#7 (black)	Jeroboam and successive kings
63	#8 (bright)	Hezekiah
64–5	#9 (black)	Manesseh
66	#10 (bright)	Josiah
67	#11 (black)	Babylonian exile
68	#12 (bright)	Rebuilding of Zion
69–71	last black waters	‘Final Judgement’
72–74	last bright waters	Messianic Kingdom

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<sup>94</sup> 2 Bar. 56.2.

<sup>95</sup> On which see the discussion in chapter 5.

An important observation is that the kind of ‘redemption history’ involved in the cloud apocalypse, as in other apocalyptic historical reviews, is anything but a story of smooth evolution towards national and global bliss, containing as it does many moments of darkness. Nevertheless it is a story, requiring a framework of ‘continuity’. Wright, discussing Josephus’ *Jewish War*, might well have been describing 2 *Baruch* 55—74 when he said ‘whatever else this is, it is not “salvation-history”... It is, if anything, a “condemnation-history”, with the “salvation-historical” narrative overcome by its shadow side. *But it is still the great story of Israel coming at last to a long-delayed climax, albeit a terrible and tragic one.*’<sup>96</sup>

However, the bright and dark waters are not the only meteorological features of this vision. In 53.8–12, lightning strikes and brings an end to the sequence. How, within this framework of covenant history, do we account for what appears to be *by definition* a radically discontinuous event? The answer comes in verse 8, where the lightning is described as ‘the lightning which I had seen at the top of the cloud’.<sup>97</sup> The lightning, while not a natural consequence of the sequence of waters, was nevertheless there from the beginning: a symbol of the abiding divine presence through history. The lightning’s breaking into the history of the world may be dramatic, but that does not make it a symbol of total discontinuity from that history.

#### *The cloud-apocalypse and the ‘two ages’ (2 Baruch 74)*

This discussion of the interplay between eschatological continuity and discontinuity leads to a related question: how does the motif of the ‘two ages’ operate within this framework? As we have just seen, the presence of the lightning at the top of the cloud represents the permeation of the duality between this age and the age to come. Further evidence comes in chapter 74, where Baruch is given the interpretation of the last bright waters, the Messianic Kingdom:

And it will happen in those days that the reapers will not become tired, and the farmers will not wear themselves out, because the products of themselves will shoot out speedily, during the time that they work on them in full tranquillity. For that time is the end of that which is corruptible and

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<sup>96</sup> Wright, *PFG*, 129 (emphasis original). His words can also be applied to Paul, as we will see below. See *ibid.*, 132–5, 137 (for 2 *Bar.*), 1211, 1262 (for Paul).

<sup>97</sup> Cf. 53.1.

the beginning of that which is incorruptible. Therefore, the things which were said before will happen in it. Therefore, it is far away from the evil things and near to those which do not die. Those are the last bright waters which have come after the last dark waters.<sup>98</sup>

The key phrase for the present discussion comes in the middle of the chapter, in verse 2: ‘that time is the end... *and* the beginning.’ We have here, encapsulated in this ‘and’, the same phenomenon observed previously in the Jacob/Esau image in *4 Ezra* 6. In the time symbolised by the last bright waters, the present age of corruptibility and the incorruptible age to come meet and touch at the point which is *both* the end of the former *and* the beginning of the latter. There is, to borrow language from *4 Ezra* 6.10, ‘nothing else between.’

In summarising the thought of *2 Baruch*, Collins brings together the themes of the ‘two ages’, the covenant, and redemption history in the following helpful way:

Finally, the promised salvation finds its fulfilment not in this world but in the world to come. Salvation lies not only in the future of the covenant people but also in the destiny of the individual. As in all the apocalypses, salvation is salvation out of this world. *2 Baruch* can say, like Paul, that ‘if there were this life only, which belongs to all men, nothing could be more bitter than this’ (21:13; cf. 1 Cor 15:19). Yet even in an age of dark waters *Baruch* is never deprived of ‘the Mighty One and his law.’ Accordingly, there is significant continuity from this world to the next.<sup>99</sup>

### *Summary*

What this section has suggested is that the eschatology of the apocalypses is more complex than a simple dualistic paradigm allows, as evidenced by the ‘periodisation of history’ in the *Animal Apocalypse* and *2 Baruch*’s vision of the cloud.<sup>100</sup> While the ‘two age’ motif is certainly important for the apocalyptic literature, the evidence of the Jewish apocalyptic texts challenges any strict eschatological dualism. The boundary between present age and age to come is not an impervious one, resulting in the

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<sup>98</sup> *2 Bar.* 74.1–4.

<sup>99</sup> Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 221–2.

<sup>100</sup> Again, on *2 Bar* see also Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection*, 110–15.

importance for apocalyptic eschatology of *both* the continuity of redemption history *and* the discontinuity of God's dramatic acts.<sup>101</sup> The presence of both continuity and discontinuity means that 'apocalyptic' cannot be used as a reason for the wholesale rejection of redemption-historical eschatology. It also means that we must resist any characterisation of the latter as some sort of gradual maturation.

Both of these interrelated themes (the 'two ages' duality and the periodisation of redemption history) are important in the eschatology of the book of Revelation, to which I now turn.

### *Eschatological duality in the book of Revelation*

#### *The Woman with child: an 'invasive' Christ-event? (Revelation 12)*

In the earlier discussion of *4 Ezra*, we encountered the use of childbirth imagery in explaining the eschatological framework of 'two ages'. In Revelation 12, John also receives a vision of a woman in labour:

And a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; she was with child and she cried out in her pangs of birth [ὠδίνουσα], in anguish for delivery [τεκεῖν]. And another portent appeared in heaven; behold a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems upon his heads. His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child, that he might devour her child when she brought it forth; she brought forth a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which to be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> See also the similar conclusions of Wright, *PFG*, 476–7, who suggests the importance of this 'both-and' for biblical theology, not least in Paul.

<sup>102</sup> Rev 12.1–6.

Many have recognised that this imagery draws upon an ancient ‘combat myth’ of cosmic warfare between a hero and his bestial adversary.<sup>103</sup> In its wider context, the birth of the child constitutes the decisive event, launching an eschatological war between the Woman and her offspring on one side and the Dragon and the Beast on the other. I will have more to say about this warfare motif in chapter 5 below; what is of concern for the present discussion is the eschatological significance of the image of the Woman and her child. Is this an event best explained within a dualistic eschatological scheme of ‘two ages’ separated by a decisive ‘invasive event’? And what of the identity of the woman and her role in this eschatological framework?

Here we should note at least the following: (a) that the woman has a history that pre-dates the birth of the child; (b) that her labour pains anticipate that event; (c) that she actively participates in it; (d) that she has a continuing significance thereafter. Each of these contributes an important aspect of the eschatological framework, combining to mean that this framework cannot be adequately accounted for by recourse to the motifs of ‘invasion’ or a simple ‘two-ages’ dualism.

*The woman’s identity, her pre-history and continuing significance*

There are many options for the interpretation of the σημεῖον μέγα of the woman introduced in 12.1–2. Suggestions include Eve, Mary, the Church, the people of God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and various connections with astronomical figures and pagan goddesses.<sup>104</sup> A consideration of the Jewish Scriptural background of the pregnant woman as a corporate image of the people of God presents compelling evidence for an interpretation of the woman as Israel. A tapestry of Isaianic threads can be discerned in John’s use of this imagery. The famous σημεῖον of Isaiah 7.14 is of course part of the picture, as the close connections in vocabulary demonstrate.<sup>105</sup> To this we add Isaiah 13.8 and 26.17–18, where the woman crying out in labour pains is a corporate image of the people in their distress,<sup>106</sup> and 66.7–9 where the woman is identified as Zion who

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<sup>103</sup> E.g. A. Yarbro Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation*, Semeia (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976), and the extended discussion in Aune, *Revelation*, 667–74, with references therein.

<sup>104</sup> For a useful survey of these options see Aune, *Revelation*, 680–1.

<sup>105</sup> As well as being described as a σημεῖον, there are other linguistic parallels between Rev 12.1–2 and Isa 7.14 (LXX): she is pregnant (ἐν γαστρὶ) and gives birth (ἔτεκεν) to a son (υἰόν, 12.5). See B. K. Blount, *Revelation: a commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 227.

<sup>106</sup> Again, with close linguistic connections. See again *ibid.*, 227.

delivers a son and other children whom she nurses and for whom she cares. Beyond the Isaianic context, we might also look to Jeremiah 6.24, Micah 4.9–10, and 4 *Ezra* 4.40–43<sup>107</sup> and the fourth vision of that apocalypse, 9.38–10.18, the woman in distress who is ‘Zion, the mother of us all’ (10.7).<sup>108</sup>

Most commentators, while recognising these echoes, nevertheless understand the woman not simply as a monovalent symbol for Israel but as a combined corporate image of both the covenant people of God, from whom the Messiah comes, and the church which he establishes.<sup>109</sup> This interpretation is supported by the continuing role of the woman in the narrative after the birth of her first child, clearest in verse 17 where the rest of the woman’s offspring are mentioned and described as ‘those who keep the commandments of God *and bear testimony to Jesus.*’ If the woman portrays simply Israel then this second clause makes no sense. The combined corporate view accounts for this: as Beale puts it, ‘this woman is a picture of the faithful community, which existed both before and after the coming of Christ.’<sup>110</sup>

The twelve stars with which she is crowned (v. 1) stand for both the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles who establish the ‘new Israel’, the church.<sup>111</sup> Thus Mangina can speak here of the woman’s representation of ‘the essential unity of God’s people across time. As Israel, the woman brings forth the Messiah. As the church, she gives birth to the multitude of Messiah’s brothers and sisters.’<sup>112</sup> It is this woman who bears the Christ-child, and is it she who provides the eschatological framework for

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<sup>107</sup> On which see above.

<sup>108</sup> There are, of course, many more passages which could be added here, since the image of a woman in labour is a frequent metaphor for Israel at times of national distress. See, for example, the discussions in Beale, *Revelation*, 629; Smalley, *Revelation*, 316; Aune, *Revelation*, 682. The corporate interpretation of the image of the woman also makes the most sense in relation to Revelation’s other images of women, since both the Harlot and the Bride are also corporate images.

<sup>109</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 627, 629–31; Blount, *Revelation*, 228; Mangina, *Revelation*, 150.; Smalley, *Revelation*, 315.

<sup>110</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 625.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. Gen 37.9 and Rev 7.4–8. See the discussion in *ibid.*, 626–7 and especially the Rabbinic evidence presented. Aune, *Revelation*, 681 argues that they refer to the twelve signs of the zodiac. These two interpretations are not, strictly speaking, mutually exclusive. Beale argues that ‘later Jewish writings interpreted the twelve signs of the zodiac as representing the twelve tribes of Israel’ and that therefore the twelve constellations ‘connote the Israel of God viewed from the perspective of Israel’s heavenly life or calling’ (Beale, *Revelation*, 626–7).

<sup>112</sup> Mangina, *Revelation*, 150.



that ‘apocalyptic Christ-event’. Building on this, we might say that, as Israel, the woman stands for the importance of redemptive history leading up to the arrival of Messiah. As the church, she stands for the continuity that exists between that covenant community and the ‘new-covenant community’ of the followers of Jesus. As both, she confounds any attempt at a neat division of the times into a dualistic scheme.

### *The birth pains and the child*

Despite all this emphasis on anticipation and continuity we must not conclude that the birth of the child is a smooth progression. The recognition of the anticipation of the labour process does not diminish the fact that this birth, like any other, is a *novum*, a painful and ‘irruptive’<sup>113</sup> event. The coming of this child, like any other, is both expected (with a nine month period of preparation) and yet nevertheless surprising.

It is important to note here that while the labour pains announce and anticipate the coming of the child they in no way fully determine his nature. This is part and parcel of the imagery of childbirth. Anguish in birth gives way to joy at the arrival of a child, not (hopefully) the continuation of pain (John 16.21). Beale is correct when he argues that the labour pains themselves are representative of the ‘persecution of the covenant community and the messianic line during OT times and the intertestamental period.’<sup>114</sup> But the labour pains, like the woman herself, are a multivalent symbol, standing for the persecution of the people of God in the period before Christ but also representing something more: the eschatological end-time woes, the suffering that precedes the coming of the final Messianic age.<sup>115</sup> As noted above, Gaventa has observed that while the word *τίκτειν* may refer to any normal birth scene, the word *ὠδίνειν* ‘usually appears in contexts having to do with the situation of the people collectively, rather than with the situation of an individual.’<sup>116</sup> This adds further support to the corporate understanding of the image. To repeat, Gaventa’s main point is to highlight the importance of the image of labour pains, since in a variety of apocalyptic texts we encounter ‘an established association between apocalyptic expectation and the anguish

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<sup>113</sup> I use this word reluctantly, in ‘scare quotes’, given the freight it sometimes carries in contemporary discussion of apocalyptic eschatology.

<sup>114</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 629.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. e.g. Isa 13.8, *1 En.* 62.4 We could of course bring in Paul here, especially 1 Thess 5.3; Rom 8.18–22; Gal 4.19, on which see again the various discussions in Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul*.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

of childbirth.<sup>117</sup> Just as in the actual birth of a child, these apocalyptic eschatological ‘labour pains’ are important because they tell you ‘what time it is’.

The child’s nature is thus both continuous and discontinuous with the mother and the pain of her labour. When the child himself is born, he is described as ‘a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron.’ This echo of Psalm 2.7–9 summons the whole context of that Psalm: God’s reign over all the nations through his king on Zion, his begotten son. It is the Psalm which has run as a thread since its appearance in Revelation 11, where ‘the nations rage’ (11.18, cf. Psalm 2.2) as God ‘begins to reign’ (11.17, cf. Psalm 2.6–9). There we find expressed the inauguration of God’s end-time reign through the employment of an ‘ingressive aorist’<sup>118</sup> ἐβασίλευσας, ‘you began to reign’. More will be said about how this relates to Revelation’s understanding of time in the discussion below. Suffice it to say for now that in the birth of the child this inaugurated reign, shot through with the imagery of Psalm 2, finds its proper expression. His birth is the fulfilment of the covenant promise of divine rule in the age to come, through the Messiah, from the womb of Israel, inaugurated in the present age and advanced by the warfare of the new covenant community against the forces of the Dragon.

The image of the woman thus complicates any putative eschatological dualism, since her history straddles the Christ-event. The multivalent and corporate interpretation of this symbol suggests the importance of the covenant community of Israel in birthing the Messiah into the world, and the continuation of this role in the church after his birth. This continuity does not, however, override the dramatic ‘irruption’ of the Christ-event and the *novum* that this represents. Moreover, the motif of warfare that forms the backdrop for the birth scene reminds us of the decisive conflict that is launched by the arrival of the Christ-child ‘onto the scene’.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 33. See the summary of Gaventa’s argument above for the list of texts cited. There is much in Gaventa’s analysis that commends it. There are questions, however, about her central point, the sense in which the word ‘apocalyptic’ is used. See below for a more detailed discussion.

<sup>118</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 615.

<sup>119</sup> This is, of course, a favourite phrase of Martyn’s. For further confirmation of the messianic warfare motif, one might also consider the linguistic connections between the present description of the child as one who ‘rules with a rod of iron’ and the similar description of the ‘rider on the white horse’ in Rev 19.15. For the soteriological significance of this imagery see chapter 5 below.

There is a continuity in the birth of the child himself, in that it fulfils Isaianic prophecy, is signalled by the labour pains announcing his imminent arrival, and inaugurates the Messianic reign described in Psalm 2. But all this does not diminish the shock of the birth-event, nor does it condition the nature of the one born. In short, the Christ-event as depicted in Revelation 12 is both anticipated and irruptive, both redemption-historical and ‘apocalyptic’. The eschatological framework implied by the imagery of the woman and her child is, therefore, not best represented as a strict dualism.

### *‘What time is it’ in Revelation?*

#### *Asking the right question: ‘how long?’*

I introduced this chapter with a discussion of the important eschatological question, asked by Martyn: ‘what time is it?’<sup>120</sup> But the question usually found on the lips of the apocalypticists is another, more pained, enquiry: ‘how long?’<sup>121</sup> Revelation places this eschatological question at a crucial juncture:

When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slaughtered for the word of God and for the testimony they had given; they cried out with a loud voice, ‘Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long will it be before you judge and avenge our blood on the inhabitants of the earth?’ They were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number would be complete both of their fellow-servants and their brothers and sisters, who were soon to be killed as they themselves had been killed.<sup>122</sup>

The question ‘how long’ expresses much more powerfully than the more neutral ‘what time is it?’ the emotionally-invested eschatological questioning of the oppressed. To ask ‘how long?’ is not merely to ask about the time; it is to cry out for eschatological revelation and deliverance. As Bauckham notes, this characteristic apocalyptic question has its roots deep in the thought of the Psalms and the prophets, since it was ‘the

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<sup>120</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 23; 104. On the worldview-question ‘what time is it?’ see also Wright, *JVG*, 467–471 and now Wright, *PFG*, 550–62.

<sup>121</sup> E.g. Dan. 8.13; 12.6; *4 Ez.* 4.33–35; 6.59; *2 Bar.* 21.19; 81.2–3.

<sup>122</sup> Rev 6.9–11.

question asked in the face of God's apparent non-intervention or delayed intervention on behalf of his people... whence it became a question asked by apocalyptic writers about the time which must pass until the decisive, eschatological intervention of God.<sup>123</sup>

The answer received in Revelation 6, that a full number of martyred believers must come in before the judgement comes, is very much 'a traditional answer to the traditional question, "How long?"'<sup>124</sup> Though the form of the intervening tribulation differs across the apocalypses, the essential point of this question and its answer is that there will be a span of time which must come to pass before God acts to deliver his people. This span of time, while characterised by tribulation, is nevertheless not arbitrary but is (in theory) measurable and logically important, and plays an essential role in the explanation of eschatological delay and the unfolding of God's action in history.

*Calculating the answer: time and history in the Danielic numbers*

In the epistemological discussions of the previous chapter, I mentioned briefly one of Revelation's many allusions to the book of Daniel. Whereas Daniel is told to 'keep the words secret and the book sealed until the time of the end'<sup>125</sup> John of Patmos, in a radical and Christologically-driven transformation of this motif, is instructed not to 'seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.'<sup>126</sup> Commenting on the term translated 'the end' in Daniel 12, André Lacocque concludes that it 'designates history's direction and ultimate significance.'<sup>127</sup> To this connection we may now add the above discussion of the apocalyptic eschatological question 'how long?' in Daniel chapters 8 and 12 and Revelation chapter 6.

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<sup>123</sup> Bauckham, *Climax*, 51, citing as evidence Ps 6.3; 13.1–2; 74.10; 79.5; 80.4; 89.46; 90.13; 94.3; Jer 12.4; Hab 1.2; cf. Isa 6.11. For the connections between *2 Baruch*, *4 Ezra* and Revelation see Bauckham's wider discussion (p. 48–56).

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 51. cf. *1 En.* 47.4; *4 Ez.* 4.36–37; *2 Bar.* 23.5.

<sup>125</sup> Dan 12.4a, cf. 8.26.

<sup>126</sup> Rev 22.10.

<sup>127</sup> A. Lacocque, *The Book of Daniel*, trans. D. Pellauer (London: SPCK, 1979), 249.

The answer, if indeed it can be called that,<sup>128</sup> to this quintessentially apocalyptic question is, on one level, the non-specific eschatological answer: ‘it is the time of the end’, the time ‘of God’s making things right.’<sup>129</sup> The apocalypses, however, go further and sometimes seem to provide much more specific information, and here another connection between Revelation and Daniel is important. Since this again concerns Daniel 12, it is worth repeating that whole passage, so that the multiple echoes might be more easily heard:

Then I, Daniel, looked, and two others appeared, one standing on this bank of the stream and one on the other. One of them said to the man clothed in linen, who was upstream, ‘How long shall it be until the end of these wonders?’ The man clothed in linen, who was upstream, raised his right hand and his left hand towards heaven. And I heard him swear by the one who lives for ever that it would be for a time, two times, and half a time, and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end, all these things would be accomplished. I heard but could not understand; so I said, ‘My lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?’ He said, ‘Go your way, Daniel, for the words are to remain secret and sealed until the time of the end’.<sup>130</sup>

The much-discussed Danielic motif of ‘a time, two times, and half a time’, found also in Daniel 7.25 and 12.11–12,<sup>131</sup> features frequently in Revelation. The passage discussed above, for example, measures the woman’s sojourn in the wilderness at ‘one thousand two hundred and sixty days,’<sup>132</sup> a period equivalent to the three-and-a-half year wilderness flight of 12.14, described as ‘a time, and times, and half a time’. This period, in turn, corresponds to the 42-month authority of the beast in 13.5, the trampling of the holy city in 11.2 and the 1260-day prophetic ministry of the two

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<sup>128</sup> The question ‘how long?’ of Rev 6.10 and the answer of v. 11, ‘rest a little longer’ reminds me of the well-worn family holiday question ‘are we nearly there yet?’ to which I usually give the non-answer ‘just a little longer’.

<sup>129</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 104.

<sup>130</sup> Dan 12.5–10.

<sup>131</sup> In the form of 1,290 days.

<sup>132</sup> Rev 12.6.

witnesses in 11.3.<sup>133</sup> The significance of this Danielic time period is that, being half of seven (the number of completeness), three-and-a-half stands for transience: for the sake of his people God will cut short the time of suffering. This is a symbol of a time of witness (chapter 11) and a time of intense trial, but it is also ‘a symbolic apocalyptic number for a divinely restricted period of time.’<sup>134</sup>

Four brief observations should be made concerning the use of this symbolic number. The first is that, in linking the number to the theme of the wilderness in 12.6 and 12.14, Revelation makes clear that the narrative background to the vision of the woman and her flight is that of the Exodus.<sup>135</sup> Second, an important theme which links the Exodus with the other key allusion, Daniel 7, is the theme of the end of idolatrous empires and the establishment of the kingdom of God. The eschatological hope of Daniel’s vision is ‘the hope of a new day... a hope that included the demise of anti-god empires, allegiance to the coming kingdom of God on earth instead, and the participation of the righteous dead through the resurrection.’<sup>136</sup> The combination of the themes of the Exodus and the promised reign of God with and through his people on earth leads to the third aspect of Revelation’s use of the Danielic number. The Danielic period of time is, as Mangina comments, ‘the apocalyptic period immediately preceding the day when “the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end” and the promises of God are fulfilled’.<sup>137</sup> The proper interpretative framework within which these promises and the temporal motif are to be understood is the covenant.

Revelation’s use of the symbolic period of three-and-a-half years therefore unites the themes of Exodus, empire and covenant, via Daniel chapters 7, 9 and 12. All three of these motifs, it should be noted, concern God’s action within history to deliver his people in fulfilment of his promises. This, as I argued above, is what we should

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<sup>133</sup> These equivalences rely, of course, on a somewhat artificial 360-day year composed of twelve 30-day months. For the precise calendrical and mathematical workings of these numbers in John’s thought which led him to prefer the number 1260 over Daniel’s 1290/1335 (Dan 12.12), Bauckham’s detailed article ‘Nero and the Beast’ in Bauckham, *Climax*, 384-452 is particularly instructive, esp. 400–1.

<sup>134</sup> Aune, *Revelation*, 609.

<sup>135</sup> See, for example, Beale, *Revelation*, 565, who argues that the number 42 further reinforces this interpretation.

<sup>136</sup> P. L. Redditt, *Daniel (New Century Bible Commentary)* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 200.

<sup>137</sup> Mangina, *Revelation*, 135.

expect apocalyptic to do<sup>138</sup> and Revelation is no exception. But to these three interconnected themes we add a fourth: the apocalyptic period of 1,260 days functions as a Christologically-transformed symbol of inaugurated eschatology. The point of the repeated use of this apocalyptic number in Revelation 11—12 is that it represents the time of testing between the great act of deliverance in the Christ-event (his life, death, resurrection and ascension) whereby God has ‘begun to reign’ (11.17) and his final victory when that reign will be made complete. Since Christ has come, the time of ‘the end’ is now here, the Lamb is on the throne, but this is not unambiguous.<sup>139</sup> As Beale argues, what the combination of the birth of the child and the Danielic time period means in Revelation 12 is that ‘the three and a half year period was inaugurated at Christ’s resurrection and will be consummated at his final coming.’<sup>140</sup> It is, in short, a symbol of the permeation of the eschatological duality between the present age and the age to come.

It should by now be clear that dualistic eschatological schemes cannot properly account for the way in which the images function in Revelation 11 and 12. Nor does an approach which rejects redemption history, since the themes of Exodus and covenant frame John’s use of these motifs. While it is true that the ‘interrupted’ number three-and-a-half symbolises that ‘suddenly and surely, at the appropriate moment, divine intervention will interrupt history’s course’<sup>141</sup> this does not mean that history itself is condemned to the wreckage of the rubbish heap.<sup>142</sup> Such a radical dualism misses the point of the redemptive-historical framework within which apocalyptic symbols function. ‘Salvation,’ DiTomasso argues, ‘is thus understood in Daniel as a historical process. The book is embedded in history.’<sup>143</sup> As with the other apocalypses discussed

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<sup>138</sup> See also, for example, L. Hartman, *Asking for a Meaning. A Study of 1 Enoch 1–5 (Coniectanea Biblica New Testament Series #12)* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1979) and Portier-Young, *Apocalypse Against Empire*.

<sup>139</sup> 22.10. See the discussion above.

<sup>140</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 567.

<sup>141</sup> J. G. Baldwin, *Daniel (Tyndale Commentaries)* (Leicester: IVP, 1978), 208.

<sup>142</sup> I refer here to an essay by Walter Benjamin, where he describes history as ‘one single catastrophe, which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage’ (W. Benjamin, *Theses on the Philosophy of History* (New York: Schocken, 1969), 257). At the close of this chapter I will return to Benjamin’s image, and the use of it in at least one would-be ‘apocalyptic’ approach to Paul.

<sup>143</sup> L. DiTomasso, “Deliverance and Justice: Soteriology in the Book of Daniel,” in *This World and the World to Come: Soteriology in Early Judaism*, ed. D. M. Gurtner (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 84.

above, this must not be characterised as some sort of slowly evolving salvation-historical scheme. That would be to create a straw man and miss the emphasis on the ‘irruptive’ and decisive divine intervention. But neither is the flow of history to be ignored entirely or made functionally irrelevant. Revelation’s approach to time and history embraces both truths.

### *Summary*

What this discussion has demonstrated, through an examination of the two symbols of the woman in labour and the use of Danielic numerical symbolism in Revelation 11—12, is that Revelation’s understanding of eschatology is best construed not through recourse to a radical temporal dualism but as a permeation of the boundary between this age and the age to come. I will now conclude by bringing these conclusions to bear on the ‘apocalyptic’ Paul.

### *Implications for the eschatology of the ‘apocalyptic Paul’*

#### *Eschatological dualism and the ‘two ages’*

As noted above, de Boer has described the problem of approaching apocalyptic eschatology in Paul as ‘partly a matter of defining *what apocalyptic eschatology is apart from Paul*.’<sup>144</sup> This chapter has attempted to do just that, by describing the contours of eschatological thought in several Jewish apocalypses and the book of Revelation. My discussion has focussed on two interrelated topics: the notion of the ‘two ages’ and the question of redemptive history.

For de Boer, the notion of the ‘two ages’ constitutes ‘the fundamental characteristic of all apocalyptic eschatology’ and the presence of the motif of ‘eschatological dualism’ in Paul is one of the ‘conceptual affinities’ between his thought and Jewish apocalyptic eschatology.<sup>145</sup> Central to his argument is the notion that the relationship between the two ages is characterised by a strict dualism: ‘there is and can be “no continuity” between the two ages.’<sup>146</sup> This assertion is in contradiction to the

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<sup>144</sup> de Boer, *Defeat of Death*, 19 (emphasis mine).

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>146</sup> de Boer, “Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology”, 348, citing here Vielhauer.



assessment of Collins when he says that the ‘two age’ eschatologies of Jewish apocalyptic are characterised by ‘significant continuity from this world to the next.’<sup>147</sup> What the above discussion has shown is that the radical eschatological dualism preferred by de Boer is problematised by the evidence of the texts.

To be sure, the motif of ‘two ages’ is rightly identified as a key characteristic of the apocalyptic writings, and the presence of this motif in Paul (for example in Galatians 1.4 and 4.4) should be taken as an indication that the thought of the apostle is to be understood in the context of apocalyptic thought. However, a close examination of the way in which this works, which I have attempted to provide, reveals that the kind of radical dichotomy between the ‘two ages’ characteristic of some ‘apocalyptic’ approaches to Paul is not what Second Temple apocalyptic actually does. Rather, what we find in the apocalypses is ‘inaugurated eschatology’: the boundary between the ‘present age’ and the ‘age to come’ is permeated. The age to come has, to be sure, broken into this world, but that does not mean that there is no continuing eschatological role to be played by the present age.

This tension is even more evident in the apocalypses which combine the ‘two ages’ motif with a ‘periodisation of history’ approach. De Boer says that ‘the essence of apocalyptic’ is not to be found in such ‘periodisation’, which is an ‘optional feature’ chosen by certain Jewish and Christian apocalypses.<sup>148</sup> By applying this interpretative grid to the various texts, he thus excludes *a priori* those texts which describe the action of God in history. However, as indicated in the above discussion of the periodisation of history in the *Animal Apocalypse of 1 Enoch*, the ‘cloud apocalypse’ of *2 Baruch*, and Revelation’s use of the Danielic symbolic time periods, such a neat division between the two eschatological frameworks is called into question. To repeat Stuckenbruck’s argument, while the ‘two ages’ motif is certainly an important feature of apocalyptic eschatology, ‘construals of time in Second Temple Jewish literature cannot be simplified into such a scheme’ since ‘beyond contrasting present and future reality, some writers of apocalyptic texts demonstrated a concern with divine activity as a constant that shaped the unfolding story of Israel as a way of understanding and posing questions about the present.’<sup>149</sup> As such, it will not do to exclude on other grounds this

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<sup>147</sup> Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 221–2.

<sup>148</sup> de Boer, *Galatians*, 261 n389.

<sup>149</sup> Stuckenbruck, “Overlapping Ages”, 312; 322.

equally ‘apocalyptic’ concern with God’s abiding presence and covenant activity in history from any assessment of apocalyptic in the New Testament.

### *Maternity, history, and apocalyptic in Romans 8.18–23*

A similar critique of dichotomistic schemes can be brought out of the above examination of the birth scenes in *4 Ezra* 4, 6 and Revelation 12. For Gaventa, maternal imagery of this sort, such as in Romans 8.22, is indicative of ‘apocalyptic’ in the sense described by Martyn, as ‘not merely a public discourse of something that has been kept secret’ but an event ‘that so radically disrupts the world as to be called an invasion.’<sup>150</sup> However, the above discussions have suggested that, while dramatic birth imagery is certainly a popular motif in the apocalypses, such a radically dualistic interpretation is questioned by the evidence of the texts. By no means do the apocalypses employ a smooth evolutionary understanding of the relationship between the two ages, but this does not mean that there is no eschatological significance attached to the present age. In *4 Ezra* 4 the point made by the childbirth image is similar to the image of harvest: labour pains signal that the end of an appointed period of time (yes, of ‘maturation’) has arrived. This span of time is *logically continuous* in that it anticipates the birth of the child, but this does not mean that the birth event is *logically conditioned* in a smooth developmental way. Likewise, the arrival of the child in Revelation 12 is not an ‘invasion’ which ends the significance of the woman. Rather, she is portrayed as having a continuing role to play in the ongoing history of the world, before and after the birth of the child. There is, to be sure, an ‘irruptive’ discontinuity in the child’s arrival, but there is also continuity in the ongoing life of the woman.

What does this mean, then, for Paul’s ‘apocalyptic’ use of maternal imagery? His labour pains, and those of creation itself in Romans 8, are certainly an indication of ‘the time in which we live’. But this does not mean we are bound to an approach to ‘apocalyptic’ that characterises the Christ-event as a unilateral and invasive act of God over against any alleged ‘evolutionary’ salvation-historical approaches. Gaventa cites Edward Adams and Philip Esler as examples of scholars who conclude that Romans 8.18–23 envisions ‘not an apocalyptic inbreaking into the present but a gradual

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<sup>150</sup> Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul*, 56, cf. again Martyn, *Galatians*, 99 and the discussion of this would-be ‘apocalyptic epistemology’ in chapter 2 above.

movement toward transformation’<sup>151</sup> and she is correct to defend against such evolutionary readings. However, her use of ‘*not... but...*’ indicates the presence of a false antithesis. As this chapter has sought to demonstrate, there is another option besides ‘radical invasion’ on the one hand and ‘smooth evolutionary progress’ on the other. Such false dichotomies are called into question by the evidence of a creative tension between continuity and discontinuity found in the apocalypses.<sup>152</sup>

### *Redemptive history and the ‘fullness of time’ in Galatians 4.4*

The above discussions of eschatological duality in Jewish apocalyptic and the book of Revelation allow us also to evaluate two further aspects of the eschatology of the ‘apocalyptic Paul’. The first is the motif of divine warfare. The book of Revelation is a particularly strong witness to the importance of viewing the world as a battlefield and the Christ-event as a decisive victory over God’s enemies, and so Martyn and others are correct to identify this motif as a key aspect of apocalyptic thought. The discussion of Revelation 12, characterised by the features of an ancient ‘combat myth’, nevertheless does not support Martyn’s argument unambiguously since he connects the warfare motif to a particular approach to history that the texts call into question.

Martyn’s eschatology is characterised by a preference for the *punctiliar* over against the *linear*, as seen in his commentary on Galatians, especially in his exegesis of the phrase τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου in 4.4, arguably the key phrase for Martyn’s eschatological framework.<sup>153</sup> Likewise de Boer summarises the meaning of ‘the fullness of time’ in a manner rejecting redemptive-historical approaches, which, he argues, erroneously conclude that ‘God’s action is somehow dependent on time, on the course of human history’ in favour of an interpretation based upon ‘a clean break with the past... the end of “the present evil age”’.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul*, 52, 60–1.

<sup>152</sup> Particularly useful here is N. Elliott, “Creation, Cosmos, and Conflict in Romans 8—9,” in *Apocalyptic Paul: Cosmos and Anthropos in Romans 5—8*, ed. B. R. Gaventa (Waco: Baylor, 2013), which rightly draws attention to the role of history in apocalyptic thought as examined by Portier-Young, *Apocalypse Against Empire*, as well as making some useful comments on the connections between Rom 8 and 9—11.

<sup>153</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 389, cf. 347–8.

<sup>154</sup> de Boer, *Galatians*, 261–2.

What the above discussion has suggested is that this sharp dichotomy between the linear and the punctiliar is problematised by the eschatology of the Jewish and Christian apocalypses. These apocalypses, while affirming the duality of the ‘two ages’, nevertheless express a concern for the importance of redemptive history. Setting the linear against the punctiliar under the banner of ‘apocalyptic’ is arguably to assert a false dichotomy unsupported by the texts themselves. As with Gaventa, Martyn’s concern to argue against redemptive-historical ‘gradual maturation’ leads him to swing the pendulum in favour of ‘punctiliar liberation’<sup>155</sup> and in so doing he creates a false antithesis. Even the most ‘historical’ of the apocalypses do not suggest that the movement towards the coming reign of God is a matter of smooth linear progress. A properly ‘apocalyptic’ approach to the question of the linear and punctiliar calls for an assessment of their interrelatedness in the narrative of divine presence and activity in human history.

In Galatians 4.4, therefore, Paul’s use of the expression τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου places him in the context of the apocalypses, but his use of this eschatological phrase is to invoke a redemptive-historical framework, something which Martyn and de Boer seek to rule out, as seen in Martyn’s rendering of this verse as ‘at a time selected by him, God invaded...’<sup>156</sup> The evidence of the apocalypses suggests that an ‘apocalyptic’ approach to this verse should affirm the role of the covenant and redemptive-history in bringing humanity to the moment of God’s ‘intrusion’ in the Christ-event. As Wright argues ‘the radical newness of this moment does not constitute a denial of all that has gone before.’<sup>157</sup> A similar argument might be made concerning the phrase τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων in 1 Corinthians 10.11, an apocalyptic eschatological expression<sup>158</sup> which makes sense not within a strictly dualistic eschatological framework but in the context of the redemptive-historical Exodus narrative of 10.1–13.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 389, cf. 347–8.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 388. Wright argues that Martyn thereby ‘unravel[s] the controlling metaphor of the chapter’ (Wright, *PPG*, 876 n286).

<sup>157</sup> Wright, *PPG*, 877.

<sup>158</sup> As de Boer suggests (de Boer, *Galatians*, 31).

<sup>159</sup> Despite the clear connections to apocalyptic eschatology, this phrase and its exodus context are largely undiscussed by de Boer and Martyn. Marion Soards, in his contribution to Martyn’s *Festschrift*, addresses it but argues that it should be rendered ‘upon whom the ends of the ages have met’, thus bringing it into line with the dualistic ‘juncture of the ages’ paradigm characteristic of Martyn’s eschatology – but in

This insistence on the redemptive-historical framework of apocalyptic eschatology is not affirmation of a smooth developmental approach to salvation history. Martyn's characterisation of linear redemptive-historical eschatology as 'gradual maturation' suggests a straw man. The apocalypses, when they address the flow of history, do not do so with an approach anything like gradual maturation. In the above discussion of the 'cloud apocalypse' of *2 Baruch* we saw the importance of the tension between the continuity of history and the discontinuity of God's dramatic action. The sequence of light and dark waters is anything but a smooth developmental *Heilsgeschichte* (if anything it is more of a *Verdammungsgeschichte*<sup>160</sup>) but this does not dispense with history's significance in the apocalypse's eschatology. Likewise, as the above discussion has suggested, the lightning bolt of *2 Baruch* 53, while a dramatic event, cannot be cited as evidence against redemptive history.

### *Summary*

The following reflection is found in Walter Benjamin's *Theses on the Philosophy of History*:

A Klee painting named 'Angelus Novus' shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something that he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees a single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.<sup>161</sup>

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doing so he ignores the wider redemptive-historical context in which the phrase occurs (Marcus and Soards, *Apocalyptic and the NT*, 250; 254 n50).

<sup>160</sup> Cf. Wright, *PPG*, 1211. Cf. also the discussion of *2 Baruch*, noted above, on 129.

<sup>161</sup> Benjamin, *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, 257–8.

In Douglas Harink's opinion, 'Paul might have written that paragraph' since in his view the apostle 'finds no saving trajectory, no saving *divine* storm of progress, running through and amidst the ungodly storm piling up wreckage'.<sup>162</sup> But this negative assessment of the value of redemptive history, influenced by Martyn and proffered as an 'apocalyptic' interpretation of Paul's thought, is called into question by the evidence of the apocalypses discussed in this chapter.<sup>163</sup>

Reviewing Beker's *Paul the Apostle*, Martyn described how Beker, in arguing for 'a consistent apocalyptic interpretation of Paul's thought',<sup>164</sup> does so in a way that 'plays down the disjunctive dualism of the two ages, accenting instead the linear matter of God's victorious faithfulness as it is directed toward the future consummation of his gracious plan' which Martyn called 'a brand of apocalyptic primarily focused not on dualistic patterns of thought, but rather on the continuum of a history that God is directing toward his final triumph.'<sup>165</sup> Martyn's antithetical assessment reveals the fault lines of his own approach to apocalyptic in Paul: 'Beker is able to discover a kind of marriage between apocalyptic (as core) and salvation history (as structure?). My own opinion is that the marriage... is rather more arranged by Beker than discovered in Paul.'<sup>166</sup> What this chapter has shown is that Beker's approach to apocalyptic, on this point at least, is supported by the evidence of the apocalypses. The marriage between salvation history and apocalyptic is genuine and can be seen in the Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature. Martyn's dichotomy between the 'linear' and the 'punctiliar' (between 'apocalyptic' and 'salvation history') appears to be a false one.

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<sup>162</sup> D. K. Harink, "Partakers of the Divine Apocalypse: Hermeneutics, History and Human Agency after Martyn," in *Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology: with and beyond J. Louis Martyn*, ed. Joshua B. Davis and Douglas K. Harink (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2012), 86.

<sup>163</sup> It has also recently been challenged as a problematic application of Benjamin. See Wright, *PFG*, 1471–84.

<sup>164</sup> Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 143, cf. Martyn, "Review of Beker", 196.

<sup>165</sup> Martyn, "Review of Beker", 196. See also Beker, *Paul's Apocalyptic Gospel*, where Beker says that, for Paul 'because the history of Israel is for him not simply the old age of darkness. Israel's past contains the footprints of the promises of God, and these promises are taken up into the new age rather than cast aside... The dualism between the old age and the new age, then, is *tempered* in the first place by Paul's stress on continuity in the midst of discontinuity with respect to God's continuing faithfulness to Israel. In the second place, the incursion of the new age occurs in the midst of the old because of the new life brought about by Christ's death and resurrection' (40).

<sup>166</sup> Martyn, "Review of Beker".



## 4.

# COSMOLOGY: HEAVEN AND EARTH

### *Introduction*

Like ‘apocalyptic’ itself, the word ‘cosmology’ is one of those slippery terms. Broadly speaking, usage falls into two categories. The first is the spatial category of *Weltbild*, which is concerned with the structure of the universe, including the subterranean, earthly and heavenly realms and, within the latter, the throne-room of God. The second is concerned with *Weltanschauung*, the worldview-story of divine ‘cosmic’ warfare against hostile powers and related soteriological narratives.<sup>1</sup> This semantic breadth, it must be said, is a right and proper echo of the same breadth of meaning for which the word κόσμος does duty in the New Testament, and so a false precision of language here would be counterproductive. *Weltbild* and *Weltanschauung* are never far apart in Jewish apocalyptic literature<sup>2</sup> and so their organisation into separate chapters in this project should not be understood as an attempt to enforce a strict conceptual divide since, as Beverly Gaventa has said, ‘cosmology and soteriology are inextricably connected’.<sup>3</sup>

For the purpose of organising the material, we focus first on the spatial aspects of cosmology and address soteriology in the following chapter. This discussion of cosmological themes is vital groundwork for the subsequent examination of soteriology, since the two are intimately connected – a feature that is made explicit by the scholars with whom this thesis is in dialogue. Treating each theme separately will, however, allow for the proper descriptive precision in our examination of cosmological-

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<sup>1</sup> Compare the contributions on Pauline cosmology in two recent volumes: Gaventa in Davis and Harink, *Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology* and White in J. T. Pennington and S. M. McDonough, eds., *Cosmology and New Testament Theology*, vol. 355, LNTS (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2008). De Boer has recently offered a more limited version of this second category, defining ‘cosmic’ as ‘pertaining to the whole human world’ (de Boer, “Paul’s Mythologizing Program”, 8). He asserts that this ‘cosmic’ frame of reference is a distinctive mark of apocalyptic thought.

<sup>2</sup> See Bird, “Tearing the Heavens”. Bird speaks of the link between *Weltbild* and *Weltanschauung* in Mark’s gospel (p. 47) and describes the connection between cosmos and the socio-political realm of this world as ‘religio-political cosmology’ (p. 57).

<sup>3</sup> Gaventa, “Neither Height Nor Depth (2011)”.



soteriological themes in Jewish apocalyptic literature and the book of Revelation, facilitating on that basis the proper assessment of apocalyptic cosmological themes in Paul.

Following the pattern set by previous chapters, the first section will summarise the use of cosmological themes in the ‘apocalyptic Paul’, with reference to the work of Gaventa, de Boer and Martyn. We will then explore the cosmology of Jewish apocalyptic literature, with a particular focus on the *Book of the Watchers*, noting that the characteristic apocalyptic framework is not best characterised as a strict dualism. The third section of the chapter traces the same two themes in the book of Revelation, noting in particular the ways in which John’s Christology and pneumatology effect important changes in this cosmological duality. The discussion concludes as before by employing the insights gained in critical dialogue with the ‘apocalyptic Paul’ to offer proposals for how apocalyptic cosmological themes should be understood.

### *Cosmological dichotomies in the ‘apocalyptic Paul’*

#### *Gaventa: cosmology and soteriology*

Paul’s letters do not contain extended musings on the form and wonder of the cosmos such as we find in the Psalms and some Jewish apocalyptic literature.<sup>4</sup> The cryptic description of a heavenly ascent found in 2 Corinthians 12.1–10 is, of course, a notable exception without which it might seem that Paul is unconcerned with the ouranological speculations so popular with the apocalypticists. Nevertheless, many commentators have stressed that cosmological themes are integral to Paul’s letters, and that his cosmology is best described as in some way ‘apocalyptic’. Crucially, the textual basis for these arguments has not been 2 Corinthians 12 but the letters to Rome and Galatia.

One such line of thought has been advanced by Edward Adams, who takes issue with (among others) Bultmann’s treatment of cosmos-language in Paul. Adams argues that in Romans the term κόσμος is not a negative term (so Bultmann) but a neutral one, not itself part of the condemned power structures but a sphere that has been ‘invaded

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<sup>4</sup> E.g. *1 En.* 14.8–9, Ps 19.1.

and placed under enemy rule’ so that ‘the κόσμος is thus occupied territory’<sup>5</sup> and the location of a conflict between God and anti-God powers. Building on Adams’ work, Gaventa argues that it is this theme of conflict (particularly against the powers of Sin and Death, but also humanity in its present state), rather than reflections on the beauty of the heavens, that characterises Paul’s cosmology in Romans.<sup>6</sup> ‘What Paul sees in creation (both the human cosmos and the remainder of creation) is not its order or its wonder,’ says Gaventa, ‘but its captivity to powers that endeavour to separate it from its rightful Lord.’<sup>7</sup> When viewed through this ‘apocalyptic’ lens, she argues, the importance of cosmology to Romans (particularly chapters 5—8) comes into focus.

What characterises ‘apocalyptic’ cosmology for Gaventa, therefore, is not primarily its spatial aspect but a soteriological drama of conflict and liberation. Her discussion of cosmology in Romans is focussed, therefore, on tracing such themes through the letter, examining Paul’s frequent use of martial language, culminating in the climactic statements of Romans 8.31–39. Gaventa admits that ‘this examination of cosmology in Romans looks very little like what one would customarily expect from a discussion of cosmology. Little or nothing has been said about the cosmos in the non-human sense of that term’.<sup>8</sup> Rather, for Gaventa’s ‘apocalyptic Paul’, ‘Paul’s cosmology is soteriology’.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, this close connection between soteriology and cosmology requires that the implied spatiality of the language of cosmic conflict/invasion receive its own attention.

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<sup>5</sup> E. Adams, *Constructing the World: a study in Paul’s cosmological language* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000).

<sup>6</sup> Her argument, summarised here, was originally presented to the Pauline Soteriology Group at the 2010 Annual Meeting of the *Society of Biblical Literature*, published as Gaventa, “Neither Height Nor Depth (2011)” and then subsequently revised for inclusion in Davis and Harink’s collection of essays on *Apocalyptic theology: Gaventa*, “‘Neither Height Nor Depth’ (2012)”.

<sup>7</sup> Gaventa, “‘Neither Height Nor Depth’ (2012)”, 197. Note the strengthening of the language in comparison with the earlier version of the same material (Gaventa, “Neither Height Nor Depth (2011)”): ‘what Paul sees in creation... is *less* its order or its wonder *than* its captivity to powers...’ (278, italics mine). The additional discussion in the more recent volume is elucidating in demonstrating the influence of Martyn (183–4) and in showing that Gaventa is careful to avoid the soteriological dichotomy between individual and corporate found in some scholarship (197–9).

<sup>8</sup> Gaventa, “Neither Height Nor Depth (2011)”, 276.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

*De Boer: the two ages as 'orbs of power'*

The close connection between *Weltbild* and *Weltanschauung* is not the only point at which the material in the present chapter intersects with the other themes. In many ways, the discussion of cosmological duality in the 'apocalyptic Paul' mirrors the discussion of eschatological duality in the previous chapter. De Boer has repeatedly identified the close relationship between apocalyptic cosmology and apocalyptic eschatology:

As realms (or spheres) of activity, the categories 'this age' and 'the age to come' have spatial as well as temporal aspects. The locus of 'this age' is earth, whereas the locus of 'the age to come' is heaven, from which the benefits of the new age will descend at the end of time or history. The dualism of the two ages characteristic of apocalyptic eschatology is thus *at once temporal and spatial*.<sup>10</sup>

In Jewish cosmological apocalyptic eschatology,<sup>11</sup> the two ages are not simply, or even primarily, temporal categories, referring to two successive, discontinuous periods of world history ('ages'); they are also spatial categories, referring to two spheres or orbs of power, both of which claim sovereignty over the world.<sup>12</sup>

These two characteristic statements mirror the conclusions found by Stone in his grammatical-linguistic analysis of *saeculum* (and related terms) in *4 Ezra*, which challenged any neat categorical division between 'time' and 'space.' De Boer here rightly offers an approach which allows for the proper interpenetration of these categories. In his analysis, however, both the temporal and the spatial aspects of the apocalyptic motif of the 'two ages' are described as dualisms. I hope to suggest, as before, that such a strict dichotomy is problematic. First, though, we must examine the nature of this putative cosmological dualism in the 'apocalyptic Paul', and in particular enquire as to the precise nature of the relationship between the spheres of heaven and earth.

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<sup>10</sup> de Boer, "Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology", 348 (emphasis his); see too de Boer, *Galatians*, 33–4.

<sup>11</sup> This phrase has a very specific meaning for de Boer, on which see chapter 5 below.

<sup>12</sup> de Boer, *Galatians*, 33.

In his recent commentary on Galatians, de Boer again places the relationship between heaven and earth within ‘the framework of the apocalyptic dualism of the two world ages understood spatially as well as temporally’,<sup>13</sup> characterising this relationship as *cosmic warfare*. The Jewish eschatological hope thus looks to the invasion of this realm by the forces of God from the heavenly realm:

The powers of the new age (God and those whom he delegates, such as the Messiah) will thus at the end of time reveal themselves; from heaven above they will invade the orb of the powers on earth below (the orb of Satan and his minions) and aggressively defeat them, thereby removing them from the creation and liberating human beings from their malevolent, destructive control.<sup>14</sup>

For de Boer’s Paul, ‘God has initiated this eschatological act of cosmic rectification in the person and the work of Jesus Christ’ thereby effecting a ‘christological adaptation of Jewish apocalyptic eschatology’.<sup>15</sup> Here de Boer follows Martyn, and it is he who gives us the most thoroughgoing application of the motif of cosmological invasion in the letters of Paul.

### *Martyn: apocalypse as invasion*

It should be clear by now that there is considerable mutual influence among these scholars. I have already noted that Gaventa builds on Adams in her treatment of cosmology in Romans. Adams, in turn, refers in his argument to de Boer’s work on ‘cosmological conflict’<sup>16</sup> which began as doctoral research under Martyn’s supervision. Indeed it is Martyn’s work, and in particular his commentary on Galatians, which is the common thread. We saw above how Gaventa illustrates the close relationship between cosmology and soteriology, and de Boer highlights the similar connections between cosmology and eschatology. Martyn stands as an example not only of these two relationships but also of how cosmology and epistemology are interrelated in the ‘apocalyptic Paul’.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. As with Gaventa, we can again see the close connections between the cosmological themes discussed here and the soteriological questions of chapter 5.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> See Adams, *Constructing the World*, 172 citing de Boer, *Defeat of Death*, 160.

The theme of ‘invasion’ is one of the main structuring elements of Martyn’s argument and is used early on in *Galatians* to explain Paul’s rhetorical strategy. Paul, for Martyn, does not base his arguments on the commonly-held principles of this world (one of the ‘elements of the cosmos’) but from ‘the good news that in Christ – and thus in the act of *new* creation – God has invaded the cosmos... Paul does not argue, then, on the basis of a cosmos that remains undisturbed, a cosmos that he shares with the Teachers.’<sup>17</sup> For Martyn, *Galatians* is an announcement of a new cosmos, and the death of the old cosmos which God has invaded, with far-reaching theological implications. ‘Invasion’, then, is not only an eschatological-soteriological metaphor but a theme which frames Martyn’s epistemology and more besides.

As we saw in chapter three above, the passage which Martyn dubs ‘the theological centre of the entire letter’<sup>18</sup> is *Galatians* 4.3–5. He translates and (somewhat tentatively) unpacks these verses in an attempt to demonstrate how they contain what are, for him, the letter’s major motifs:

Like all other human beings, we were held in a state of *slavery* by the very *building blocks of the cosmos*, the cosmos having fallen to a significant degree out of God’s control. But God did not leave us in that state of slavery. At a time selected by him,<sup>19</sup> God *invaded* the partially foreign territory of the cosmos, *sending* his own Son into it, born, as all human beings are born, and *subject to the enslaving power of the Law*, as all human beings are subject to that power. The mission God gave to his Son was to *redeem from slavery* those who were thus caught under the Law’s power, so that we who are incorporated into the Son might *receive adoption* at the hands of God himself.<sup>20</sup>

In the previous chapter we discussed the eschatology of Martyn’s exposition of these verses, particularly verse 4. The focus now is on the cosmological language running through this passage. In his notes on the translation of the apparently simple clause ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, (‘God sent his Son’) Martyn is explicit

<sup>17</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 22.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 388; cf. also Comment #42, pp. 406–8.

<sup>19</sup> For a discussion of Martyn’s revealing rendering of τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου at this point, see chapter three.

<sup>20</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 388 (italics original).

about the dualistic spatial scheme he sees operating in Paul's cosmology. The two orbs of heaven and earth are ordinarily separate, this world being 'partially foreign territory'<sup>21</sup> to God. The good news, however, is that 'redemption has occurred in the human orb via an invasion that had its origin outside that orb'.<sup>22</sup> This certainty, that God has invaded the cosmos, is, for Martyn, 'the genesis of Paul's apocalyptic.'<sup>23</sup>

Martyn thus considers the usual translation of ἀποκάλυπτω as 'unveil' or 'reveal' inadequate in that it implies that something of God's activity has been 'eternally standing behind a curtain'<sup>24</sup> and does not capture the kind of invasive movement he considers to be crucial to Paul's apocalyptic view of the world. Instead, for Martyn 'the term "apocalypse" refers centrally to God's timely and redeeming invasion of the cosmos in Christ'.<sup>25</sup> It is in his repeated distinction between these definitions that we can discern one of Martyn's central polemics, which is his insistence that apocalyptic theology stands in stark contrast to redemptive-historical approaches. This he states quite clearly: 'for Paul, as for all thoroughly apocalyptic thinkers, this liberating redemption does not at all grow out of the present scene. Redemption is a matter of God's invasive movement into that scene.'<sup>26</sup> Leaving the important eschatological and soteriological questions for the time being,<sup>27</sup> this statement encapsulates the question which this chapter seeks to answer: does the spatial motif of 'invasion', with its implicit cosmological dualism and concomitant rejection of the 'scene' of this present world, stand up to scrutiny as a part of what the apocalypticists believed about the cosmos?

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<sup>21</sup> It is not clear why Martyn uses the tell-tale word 'partially' here, or how that might affect his overall insistence on the category of 'invasion'.

<sup>22</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 389, cf. also again Comment #42, pp. 406–8, which discusses this clause at length. Particularly salient here is his frequent use of the spatial language such as 'outside' and 'orbs'.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 388.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>27</sup> for the former ('growing out of' versus 'invasive movement into'), see chapter 3 above; for the latter ('liberating redemption') see again chapter 5 below.

## *Summary*

At the heart of Gaventa, de Boer and Martyn's characterisation of Paul's 'apocalyptic' cosmology is a shared conviction of a dualistic worldview of two realms in conflict. The act of God in Christ is described using the motifs of 'invasion' and 'warfare', employing the label 'cosmological apocalyptic' for this, and explicitly rejecting any covenantal categories as antithetical to this putative 'apocalyptic' view. The soteriological questions raised are impossible to bracket out, and will receive their own attention in the following chapter, but since what lies at the heart of this apocalyptic protest is a (largely) shared view of what constitutes apocalyptic cosmology, what is required first is an assessment of Jewish and Christian apocalyptic cosmology and how it operates. The central purpose of this chapter is to enquire whether the apocalyptic cosmology of the Second Temple Jewish apocalypses and the book of Revelation support this use of 'apocalyptic cosmology', and in particular the dualism which lies at the root of the language of 'invasion'.

In the discussions that follow I will examine Jewish apocalyptic literature and attempt to outline some of the key features of Jewish apocalyptic cosmology, examining in particular the theme of an apocalyptic 'spatial duality' of heaven and earth. The same will then be done for the book of Revelation. These two central discussions will then be used as the basis for an assessment and critique of cosmological themes in the 'apocalyptic Paul'.

### *Cosmological duality in Jewish apocalyptic literature*

I begin with a discussion of cosmological duality as that basic 'spatial' distinction between the earthly and the heavenly realms, although the picture is sometimes more complex, involving not just two but three or more realms. Again I am using the word *duality* rather than *dualism*, the latter being reserved as a designation for those Platonic and other worldviews in which the universe is split strictly into two realms. In cosmological *dualism*, one realm goes by various names (including, often and confusingly, 'heaven') but is basically a version of the Platonic world of Forms, the 'real' world which is eternal and primary. The other realm is that of this material world, which is transient and secondary (even inherently evil), consisting of the shadows cast

by the world of the Forms. These two realms stand in opposition, and the division between the two is strict and total. Crucially, as I hope to demonstrate, this is precisely not the *Weltbild* found in Second Temple Judaism and, specifically, not what we find in the Jewish apocalyptic literature.<sup>28</sup>

## *I Enoch*

### *Mountains and Gates (1 Enoch 17—18; 21—25; 33—36)*

We begin not with a heavenly journey but an earthly one. After Enoch's heavenly ascent in chapters 14—16,<sup>29</sup> *I Enoch* 17—36 recounts his experience of travelling through the two other realms of his three-tiered cosmos: Earth and Sheol. His earthly journey takes him through valleys and over mountains, encountering fruitful trees and great beasts and discovering the secret places and foundations of the earth. In chapters 17 and 18, which detail his first of two journeys, Enoch tells of what he saw:

And I saw the storeroom of all the winds and saw how with them he has embroidered all creation as well as the foundations of the earth. I saw the cornerstone of the earth; I saw the four winds which bear the earth as well as the firmament of heaven. I saw how the winds ride the heights of heaven and stand between heaven and earth: These are the very pillars of heaven.<sup>30</sup>

Two features of Enoch's journey should be noted. The first is the symbolic role played by mountains. In a tantalisingly brief remark in 17.2, Enoch sees a great mountain, and comments that 'the top of its summit was reaching into heaven'. In his second journey, in chapters 21—25, mountains again make an appearance, and Enoch asks his angelic guide about their significance. The angel's answer is intriguing. 'This tall mountain which you saw whose summit resembles the throne of God is indeed his

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<sup>28</sup> It should be noted that much of what I describe in Jewish apocalyptic is by no means unique to that trajectory – many aspects of the cosmology of Jewish apocalyptic writing are common also to other strands of Jewish thought including the prophetic and sapiential traditions (e.g. Isa 64.1; Job 22.12, 14; Ps 18.6–9; Eccl 5.2). On 'spatial dualism' in the Wisdom tradition, and particularly of the book of Job, see Gammie, "Spatial and Ethical Dualism", 362–6, who says that 'without acknowledging the profound debt of the book to the conception of a heaven-earth (i.e., spatial) dualism, the modern interpreter can scarcely claim to have reached an accurate assessment of the thought-world of the original author' (364).

<sup>29</sup> See below.

<sup>30</sup> *I En.* 18.1–3.



throne, on which the Holy and Great Lord of Glory, the Eternal King, will sit when he descends to visit the earth with goodness.<sup>31</sup> This mountain, like the one mentioned in 17.2, is a place where heaven and earth meet. The divine throne is not only to be found by heavenly ascent – it is also to be found on this earth, or at least it will be on the day of God’s descent. Neither this eschatological qualification, nor the epistemological observation that this location is only found by Enoch as a result of a divinely given revelatory journey, should obscure the significance of the fact that it is *on earth* that God’s throne will be placed.

The second feature is the ‘gates of heaven’. These are mentioned in Enoch’s journeys to the East, North, West and South in 33.2, 34.2, 35.1, and 36.1–3 respectively. These gates, from which come the weather and the stars, are described as open gates into heaven at the ultimate ends of the earth (33.2).<sup>32</sup> The precise details of any meteorological or zodiacal significance of the gates need not concern us here. For our present purposes it is sufficient to note that these gates are openings in the firmament of heaven, and as such stand as evidence of the interpenetration of heaven and earth. An earthly mountain which reaches into heaven; another whose summit is the throne of God; and open ‘gates of heaven’ at the four points of the earthly compass: Enoch’s *Weltbild*, while emphasising a three-tiered cosmos and a distinction between heaven and earth, nevertheless resists a strict cosmological dualism.

#### *Temple cosmology (1 Enoch 14–15)*

It is hard to overestimate the importance of the Temple to the Jewish worldview. It was much more than a meeting-place for the performance of religious ceremonies, but was the centre of the Jewish way of life, encompassing what we might call ‘politics’ and ‘economics’ as well as ‘religion’. It was also a locus of profound cosmological importance. The origins of the Temple must be traced back, of course, to the construction of the tabernacle in Exodus 25–26, where God commands Moses to ‘have them make me a sanctuary, so that I may dwell among them. In accordance with all that I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle and of all its furniture, so shall you make it...’<sup>33</sup> While not explicit in the Exodus text itself, a popular interpretation,

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<sup>31</sup> 1 En. 25.3.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Rev 21.13.

<sup>33</sup> Exod 25.8–9.

attested in various Jewish sources,<sup>34</sup> is that the physical layout of the tabernacle (and after it the Temple) was patterned after the shape of the cosmos. Josephus comments that the fabric and contents of the tabernacle, considered in all their detail, reveal that ‘they were every one made in way of imitation and representation of the universe.’<sup>35</sup> Levenson says therefore that the Temple ‘is not one of many items in the world. It is the world *in nuce*, and the world is the Temple *in extenso*.’<sup>36</sup> The Rabbis believed that the tabernacle, and especially the holy of holies, was not a mere *image* of heaven but the very *axis mundi*, the ‘navel of the earth’.<sup>37</sup>

With all this in mind, we turn to *I Enoch* 14–15. While his visionary account is (to understate) not always completely clear, it is evident that Enoch’s journey takes him through a tripartite heaven, with each of the three concentric zones being greater than the one before.<sup>38</sup> What is important to note is that this tripartite ouranology reflects the tripartite structure of the earthly Temple and its division into three zones of purity.

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<sup>34</sup> As well as 2 *Bar.* 4.5–6; 59.4 (discussed below), cf. also Philo, *De Opificio Mundi* and the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* (4Q400–407, 11Q17, Mas1K). On the latter see J. R. Davila, *Liturgical Works*, Eerdmans Commentaries on the Dead Sea Scrolls (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 83–93.

<sup>35</sup> *Ant.* 3.179–187 (cf. the similar comments about the Jerusalem Temple in *War* 5.184–247). See also J. D. Levenson, “The Temple and the World,” *The Journal of Religion* 64, no. 3 (1984): 275–98, 284 and C. R. A. Morray-Jones, *A Transparent Illusion: The Dangerous Vision of Water in Hekhalot Mysticism*, ed. J. J. Collins, vol. 59, JSJSup (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 169–170.

<sup>36</sup> Levenson, “The Temple and the World”, 285.

<sup>37</sup> See *ibid.*, 283 and rabbinic references therein. See also G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004), 333 and refs.

<sup>38</sup> See Rowland and Morray-Jones, *Mystery of God*, 306 n.14 and refs. There is some discussion as to whether Enoch travels through three houses or two. See also Paula Gooder, *Only the Third Heaven? 2 Corinthians 12.1–10 and Heavenly Ascent*, LNTS (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2006), 39, 48f.; M. Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (Oxford: OUP, 1993), 14–15. I follow Rowland and Morray-Jones in considering the tripartite approach to be more convincing, since there are three transitions referred to in the text (at 14.9, 10, 13). In his vision within the third of the three spaces, the ‘great house’ of white marble, Enoch sees a ‘second house’, greater than the one before and visible through an ‘opening’ (14.15), wherein dwells ‘the Great Glory’. While the language is complex enough to give pause before pronouncing too definitive an interpretation (as Himmelfarb helpfully says, ‘loose correspondence to the earthly temple is the rule in depictions of the heavenly temple’ (p. 33)), I suggest that what is in view here is a tripartite temple ouranology with a glimpse into the holy of holies contained within the third space.

Enoch's heaven is thus Temple-shaped,<sup>39</sup> with its inner chamber (wherein is found the *merkavah*, the chariot-throne of God) corresponding to the holy of holies. The descriptions of the size of these concentric chambers defy the physics of this universe, with the innermost room being largest.<sup>40</sup> These impossible dimensions are more than a mere fantastical element designed to produce a sense of otherworldliness. What Enoch's description captures is something of the correspondence that exists in Jewish cosmology between the 'inward' journey through the concentric zones of purity of the earthly temple, centred upon the holy of holies, and the 'outward' journey through the heavens to the throne-room of God.<sup>41</sup>

In the seven-tiered temple ouranologies of the later apocalypses,<sup>42</sup> the correspondence between the Temple zones of purity and the tiers of heaven is made more explicit and more precise. What concerns us here is not, however, the speculation on the number of heavenly tiers and their precise relationship to the Temple zones of purity, but the cosmological significance of the Temple as *the place where heaven and earth meet*. Apocalyptic Temple-cosmologies reveal that heaven and earth are not entirely separate spheres but are joined at the holy of holies, which is the footstool in the throne-room of God and the dwelling place of his glory. Any discussion of Jewish

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<sup>39</sup> Or, rather, reveals that the Temple is heaven-shaped. This distinction, of course, dissolves once understood. Rowland and Morray-Jones put it in a similar way, concerning Isaiah's vision in Isa 6.8–13 (which, along with Ezek 1, is a key text in any discussion of heavenly ascent or *merkavah* vision): 'Whether the 'house' into which he has been transported is the earthly temple or its celestial counterpart is nowhere specified. It is perhaps doubtful whether this distinction would have been very meaningful to the author' (Rowland and Morray-Jones, *Mystery of God*, 304).

<sup>40</sup> Cf. the discussion of heaven as a different 'dimension' in Alexander, "Dualism of Heaven and Earth" See also N. T. Wright, *Paul: Fresh Perspectives* (London: SPCK, 2005), 54.

<sup>41</sup> Compare too the shift in the direction of the spatial metaphors for ecstatic *merkavah*-experience in the *Hekhalot* literature; from 'ascent' to 'descent'. On this 'dimensional shift' see, Rowland and Morray-Jones, *Mystery of God*, 330–5 (though the whole chapter is illuminating) and also, including a discussion of the relationship between apocalyptic literature and the *Hekhalot*, J. R. Davila, *Descenders to the Chariot: the people behind the Hekhalot literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

<sup>42</sup> E.g. 2 *En.* 3—22 and the *Testament of Levi*. For the division of the Temple into seven zones of purity, see Josephus *War* 1.26; 5.227ff. For more discussion of this theme in 2 *Enoch* and the *Testament of Levi* see Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 32ff., however compare C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "2 Enoch and the New Perspective on Apocalyptic," in *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch: No Longer Slavonic Only*, ed. A. Orlov and G. Boccaccini (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 131f. for an interesting take on the temple-cosmological strategy of 2 *Enoch*.

cosmology ('apocalyptic' or otherwise) that does not take into account the cosmological significance of the Temple is bound to be lacking, and risks being reduced to a non-Jewish and non-apocalyptic dualism, for it is in the Temple, and the Temple-shaped ouranologies of apocalyptic literature, that we find the most striking examples of a cosmological duality characterised by the permeation of boundaries.

*Heavenly ascent to the merkavah (1 Enoch 14—15)*

At various points in the history of Israel, the Temple is rendered inaccessible through exile, desecration, or destruction. These events were not only a challenge for religious practice, affecting a worshipper's access to adequate sacrificial cult and ceremony, but a worldview-crisis of cosmological proportions. What is to be done when access is denied to the holy of holies as the meeting-place of heaven and earth and the dwelling-place of the glory of God?<sup>43</sup> A response to such cosmological crises found in many apocalyptic and mystical texts is the presence of a seer's account of one or more heavenly ascents.

These ascent accounts may be a later development in Jewish thought, but their roots run deep. Isaiah's vision in chapter 6 affirms that the holy of holies is the meeting place of heaven and earth, but the exile prevents access to the Temple. The vision of the *merkavah* (throne-chariot) in Ezekiel 1 marks 'the beginning of a trend to dissociate God's heavenly abode from the temple in Jerusalem.'<sup>44</sup> The rationale for this dissociation is found in Ezekiel 8—11 and the vision of the departure of the presence and glory of God from the Temple. It is no coincidence that these two are the key OT passages which provide the background for the developing tradition of apocalyptic heavenly ascent visions in the Second Temple period. The building of the Second Temple does little or nothing to repair the worldview-damage of the departure of the glory of God with its profound cosmological consequences. Himmelfarb summarises the theological and worldview relationship between the Ezekelian narrative and Enoch's heavenly ascent:

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<sup>43</sup> One answer given is that the glory, the presence of God among his people and the cosmological permeation of heaven and earth, continues to be available in the form of Torah. This can be seen in later Rabbinic reflection on Torah, which asserts that where two or three gather to study Torah, the Shekinah rests among them (*mAb.* 3.2) and that the disciplined study of the Law is akin to a process of Temple-building (*Midrash Rabbah* Leviticus 7.2–3. cf. Beale, *Temple*, 318).

<sup>44</sup> Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 11.

The Second Temple is never able to emerge from the shadow of the disengagement of the glory of God. The ark and the cherubim are gone. In the period of the Second Temple, under the influence of Ezekiel, those who are unhappy with the behaviour of the people and especially its priests come to see the temple not as God's proper dwelling, the place where heaven and earth meet, but rather as a mere copy of the true temple located in heaven. It is this desacralization of the earthly temple in favour of the heavenly that opens the way for Enoch's ascent in the *Book of the Watchers*. The first ascent in Jewish literature is thus a journey to the true temple.<sup>45</sup>

But, importantly, Jewish thought refuses to collapse at this point into cosmological dualism – the doctrine of creation requires that some permeation of the boundary of heaven and earth must be maintained, even if the Temple can no longer perform this function.<sup>46</sup> This permeation is what is provided by the heavenly ascent tradition, which guarantees that, though the cosmological permeation of the holy of holies may have been lost when the glory of God departed, the seer can still pass through the boundary between heaven and earth and ascend to the presence of God.

As the earliest example of an apocalyptic 'heavenly ascent' in Jewish literature, *I Enoch* 14—15 is a passage of great significance for any discussion of apocalyptic cosmology, and merits the following substantial quotation.

And behold I saw the clouds: And they were calling me in a vision; and the fogs were calling me; and the course of the stars and the lightnings were rushing me and causing me to desire; and in the vision, the winds were causing me to fly and rushing me high up into heaven. And I kept coming (into heaven) until I approached a wall which was built of white marble and surrounded by tongues of fire; and it began to frighten me. And I came into the tongues of fire and drew near to a great house which was built of white marble, and the inner wall(s) were like mosaics of white marble, the floor of

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>46</sup> On the significance of the doctrine of creation here see, e.g. R. W. Jenson, "On Dogmatic/Systematic Appropriation of Paul-According-to-Martyn," in *Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology: with and beyond J. Louis Martyn*, ed. Joshua B. Davis and Douglas K. Harink (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2012), 159, who says that the doctrine of creation is 'in the way' of any would-be dualistic cosmology. I will return to Jenson's essay (though not specifically to his arguments about creation) at the end of this chapter.

crystal, the ceiling like the path of the stars and lightnings between which (stood) fiery cherubim and their heaven of water; and flaming fire surrounded the wall(s), and its gates were burning with fire. And I entered into the house, which was hot like fire and cold like ice, and there was nothing inside it; (so) fear covered me and trembling seized me. And as I shook and trembled, I fell upon my face and saw a vision. And behold there was an opening before me (and) a second house which is greater than the former and everything was built with tongues of fire. And in every respect it excelled (the other) – in glory and great honour – to the extent that it is impossible for me to recount to you concerning its glory and greatness. As for its floor, it was of fire and above it was lightning and the path of the stars; and as for the ceiling, it was flaming fire. And I observed and saw inside it a lofty throne – its appearance was like crystal and its wheels like the shining sun; and (I heard?) the voice of the cherubim; and from beneath the throne were issuing streams of flaming fire. It was difficult to look at it. And the Great Glory was sitting upon it...<sup>47</sup>

Enoch's account of his ascent to heaven is by no means the only such account in the apocalyptic literature. Such heavenly journeys are a major feature of the apocalypses<sup>48</sup> and are greatly varied in their details. For example, as well as this commonly found tripartite view represented in *I Enoch* 14—36, we find in later apocalypses that heaven is divided into five,<sup>49</sup> seven or more<sup>50</sup> compartments. In discussing this development, Rowland notes that 'immediate apprehension of God becomes more restricted in Jewish thought.'<sup>51</sup> On the face of it, such complex ouranologies and extended accounts of ascents would suggest that later apocalyptic

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<sup>47</sup> *I En.* 14.8–20.

<sup>48</sup> See M. Himmelfarb, "From Prophecy to Apocalypse: the Book of the Watchers and Tours of Heaven," in *Jewish Spirituality: from the Bible through the Middle Ages*, ed. A. Green, *World Spirituality* (London: Routledge, 1986), 146, and references in footnote 3. See also Collins, "Towards the Morphology of a Genre".

<sup>49</sup> E.g. Greek Baruch.

<sup>50</sup> E.g. Slavonic Enoch, which has ten heavens.

<sup>51</sup> Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 81. Rowland goes on to draw attention to the remarkable simplicity of the cosmology of Revelation, given this context. I will draw out the significance of this theme in detail below.

cosmology is characterised by an increasing transcendence and therefore a stricter dualism. As Rowland has said more recently,

There was developing in ancient Judaism a more sophisticated cosmology in which God was believed to be enthroned in glory far above the heavens. Well before the beginning of the common era, if *1 En.* 14 is anything to go by, some Jews had taken the step of establishing the merkava of Ezekiel in a heavenly palace which only the privileged seer could view. Such a cosmological development may hint at something also of their theology. God was transcendent in heaven; signs of the divine presence were indirect and not immediate.<sup>52</sup>

However, Rowland immediately cautions against overplaying this dualistic cosmology, citing evidence from Second Temple literature. Rowland's argument suggests that apocalyptic cosmological 'dualism', even in the more complex view of later apocalypses, is not best conceived as a strict dichotomy. For all the ouranological complexity of such accounts and the difficulty of the seer's heavenly journey, it must be remembered that the essential cosmology at work here is one where the boundary between the heavens and the earth remains permeable. If apocalyptic cosmology were characterised by a strict dualism, there would be no place for heavenly ascents. Later apocalypses certainly appear to increase the distance between the throne-room of God and the earthly realm, but at no time does access become impossible.

## *2 Baruch and 4 Ezra*

*'Not one world but two' (4 Ezra 7.47–50)*

In the previous chapter we explored the eschatological significance of *4 Ezra's* statement that 'the Most High has made not one world but two' (7.50), noting Stone's argument that the term *saeculum* is 'a noun meaning something between "time," "age," "world-age," and "world". There is no clear external indicator of which of these meanings may be most appropriate in any given context of *4 Ezra*, or even whether they

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<sup>52</sup> Rowland and Morray-Jones, *Mystery of God*, 80.

may be truly distinguished.<sup>53</sup> A parallel discussion of this motif with cosmological themes in mind is therefore useful. Stone's comments remind us that neat modern distinctions between horizontal and vertical are not always appropriate for ancient texts.

The previous section considered the cosmological significance of the motif of heavenly ascent in the *Book of the Watchers*. It was noted that such ascents can be understood, in part, as a response to restricted access to the earthly Temple as a result of exile or ritual defilement. One would assume, therefore, that the motif of heavenly ascent would grow in importance in the post-destruction apocalypses *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*. But this is not the case. One of the striking features of these apocalypses is their complete lack of any heavenly ascent or journey, raising the question of whether this represents evidence of a strict cosmological dualism.

In the discussions that follow we will see that, despite the absence of heavenly ascents, *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch* nevertheless resist dualism, expressing the interpenetration of heaven and earth in other ways. Before turning to that question, we begin with a return to the question of Temple cosmology.

*Temple cosmology (2 Baruch 3.4—4.7; 59.4—12)*

In the earlier discussion of *1 Enoch* 14—15, we saw that Jewish thought viewed the Temple not just as a place of worship but a location of profound cosmological significance, an earthly copy of the heavenly realm. Tracing this theme through Baruch's reflection on the destruction of the Temple in the book's early chapters helps us to grasp this cosmological significance. In chapter 3, Baruch expresses his fear that the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple jeopardises not only the name of Israel and the preservation of the Law and the covenant, but is also a cosmological crisis:

But one thing I shall say in your presence, O Lord: Now, what will happen after these things? For if you destroy your city and deliver up your country to those who hate us, how will the name of Israel be remembered again? Or how shall we speak again about your glorious deeds? Or to whom again will that which is in your Law be explained? *Or will the universe return to its nature and the world go back to its original silence?* (*2 Baruch* 3.4—7)

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<sup>53</sup> Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 219. In translating the term, the choice between the two senses can only really be made according to immediate context. Stone cites the following as instances where the term has a more unambiguous 'spatial' sense, meaning 'world': 5.49; 6.1; 6.59(2x); 7.70; 8.50; 9.20; 11.40; 13.20.



Baruch's subsequent realisation that 'he who guarded the house has left it'<sup>54</sup> thus has a similar importance. The departure of the presence and glory of the Lord from the Temple is not only a portent of the coming destruction but an indication that the gateway of heaven and earth is no more. This potential cosmological crisis is the framing context for the Lord's response:

Is it not this building that is in your midst now; it is that which will be revealed, with me, that was already prepared from the moment that I decided to create Paradise. And I showed it to Adam before he sinned. But when he transgressed the commandment, it was taken away from him — as also Paradise. After these things I showed it to my servant Abraham in the night between the portions of the victims. And again I showed it also to Moses on Mount Sinai when I showed him the likeness of the tabernacle and all its vessels. Behold, now it is preserved with me — as also Paradise.  
(2 *Baruch* 4.3–6)

We saw above, in reference to *I Enoch* 14–15, that the Temple was understood as being constructed according to plans revealed by God on Sinai. This Exodus theme also appears in *2 Baruch* 4, which goes even further in locating the revelation of the shape of the Temple at various points in the covenant story.

A similar Temple cosmology can be found in chapter 59, in the middle of *2 Baruch*'s 'apocalypse of the clouds', where the fourth bright waters are described as the revelation to Moses of (among other things) 'the likeness of Zion with its measurements which was to be made after the likeness of the present sanctuary.'<sup>55</sup> As Rowland and Morray-Jones argue, 'according to the Hebrew Bible, the earthly temple is the embodiment of a celestial archetype, i.e., the heavenly palace and throne-room of the Lord.'<sup>56</sup> That the human world or the Temple is a copy of the heavenly realm is a theme not unique to Judaism; it can also be found in Platonist philosophy and ancient

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<sup>54</sup> *2 Bar.* 8.2, cf. 6.7.

<sup>55</sup> *2 Bar.* 59.4. On the rest of the revealed list in this chapter see also M. E. Stone, "Lists of Things Revealed in the Apocalyptic Literature," in *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright* (New York: Doubleday, 1976).

<sup>56</sup> Rowland and Morray-Jones, *Mystery of God*, 338. The whole of chapter twelve is essential reading here.

Mesopotamian thought.<sup>57</sup> But, crucially, in Jewish thought this extends beyond the level of Platonic forms and mere ‘correspondence’. Rowland and Morray-Jones continue:

In Isaiah’s vision, the distinction between these two levels of reality seems to disappear. In the literature of the Second Temple period, this symbolic correspondence acquires cosmological significance. The cosmos itself is now conceptualized as a temple, and the earthly temple reflects this structure.<sup>58</sup>

A proper appreciation of this aspect of Jewish cosmology guards against any dualistic reading of the Temple cosmology in *2 Baruch* or elsewhere. Wright has recently expanded his earlier discussion of the Temple<sup>59</sup> to account for its cosmological importance. ‘The point of the Temple,’ he argues,

...is that it was where heaven and earth met. It was the place where Israel’s god, YHWH, had long ago promised to put his name, to make his glory present. The Temple, and before it the wilderness tabernacle, were thus heirs, within the biblical narrative, to moments like Jacob’s vision, the discovery that a particular spot on earth could intersect with, and be the gateway into, heaven itself.<sup>60</sup>

To repeat, in the worldview of Second Temple Jewish apocalyptic literature (as in much else in Judaism besides) the holy of holies was the *axis mundi*, the *omphalos*, the ‘navel of the earth.’<sup>61</sup> And this means that heaven and earth cannot be understood as a strict dualism, since in Jewish understandings of cosmology there is always at least one place where the two interpenetrate.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> See Davila, *Liturgical Works*, 83, citing as an example the *Enuma Elish* v. 119–30.

<sup>58</sup> Rowland and Morray-Jones, *Mystery of God*, 338.

<sup>59</sup> E.g. Wright, *NTPG*, 224–6; Wright, *JVG*, 320–68.

<sup>60</sup> Wright, *PFG*, 96.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Ezek 38.12. See Levenson, “The Temple and the World”, 283, and refs; Rowland and Morray-Jones, *Mystery of God*, 332. Again see also Beale, *Temple*, 333 and refs.

<sup>62</sup> And not only since the building of the tabernacle but since Adam (4.3).

*The absence of ascent (2 Baruch 22.1; 4 Ezra 4.7–8; 8.19–21)*

This understanding of the cosmological importance of the Temple thus allows us more fully to appreciate the significance of its destruction as an ‘earth-shattering’ event.<sup>63</sup> It also makes all the more remarkable another feature of the post-destruction apocalypses. In the absence of a physical temple, one would think that seers would turn to the existing trope of heavenly ascent as a means to access the heavenly realm. What we find, however, is the opposite. The motif of heavenly ascent is absent from three major apocalypses: *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch* and the book of Daniel. *4 Ezra* even goes so far as to explicitly deny the possibility when Uriel suggests the following hypothetical discourse:

If I had asked you, ‘How many dwellings are in the heart of the sea, or how many streams are at the source of the deep, or how many streams are above the firmament, or which are the exits of hell, or which are the entrances of Paradise?’ perhaps you would have said to me, ‘I never went down into the deep, nor as yet into hell, neither did I ever ascend into heaven.’ (*4 Ezra* 4.7–8)

Uriel ends this dialogue with the starkly dualistic conclusion that ‘those who dwell upon the earth can understand only what is on the earth, and he who is above the heavens can understand what is above the height of the heavens’.<sup>64</sup>

The lack of heavenly ascent is just part of a wider theme in these apocalypses, namely the absence of glimpses into the heavenly world. Later, Ezra further underscores the inaccessibility of the heavenly realm when he says that God’s throne is ‘beyond measure’ and his glory ‘beyond comprehension’ (8.21). This seems to contrast with other apocalyptic and prophetic texts, such as *1 Enoch*, Ezekiel and Daniel,<sup>65</sup> who maintained the possibility of beholding and describing the throne-room and glory of God and for whom (as we saw above) such a possibility had important cosmological significance.

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<sup>63</sup> For the question of apocalyptic and ‘cosmic collapse’ see Wright, *PPG*, 163–75 and refs, particularly to Wright’s debate with the arguments advanced by Edward Adams in, e.g., E. Adams, *The Stars will Fall from Heaven: cosmic catastrophe in the New Testament and its world* (T&T Clark, 2007).

<sup>64</sup> 4.21. Thus cosmology and epistemology are intimately related. See chapter two for more on this apparently stark epistemological dichotomy in *4 Ezra*.

<sup>65</sup> Daniel, like *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*, does not include a heavenly ascent. It does, however, include the important vision of the heavenly court in chapter 7.

In *2 Baruch* 22.1, Baruch tells how heaven was opened before the voice of the Lord speaks to him, a statement of cosmological importance. The echoes of Ezekiel 1.1 are clear but there is at least one important difference between the two. A comparison reveals an omission in the *2 Baruch* text:

In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the exiles by the river Chebar, *the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God...* (Ezekiel 1.1)

And afterward it happened that, behold, *the heaven was opened, and I saw, and strength was given to me, and a voice was heard from on high which said to me...* (*2 Baruch* 22.1)

The absence of the explicit mention of ‘visions of God’ in *2 Baruch*’s echo of Ezekiel 1.1 is something which Rowland views with great importance. Whereas for Enoch, the experience of the open heaven led to entrance and ascent, and for Ezekiel it led to visions of God, ‘Baruch merely hears the voice of God who answers his prayer. Clearly the open heaven indicates to the seer that his dealings are directly with God himself, but this directness does not appear to give the seer any grounds for a vision of God and the world above.’<sup>66</sup> While the absence of heavenly ascents and visions of God and his throne-room in *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch* might seem to suggest a strict cosmological dualism in these two post-destruction apocalypses, there are indications that such a conclusion is unwarranted.

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<sup>66</sup> Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 54.

### *Cosmological duality in the book of Revelation*

It is remarkable how few commentators give detailed attention to the question of Revelation's *Weltbild*. In her monograph on Paul's account of his heavenly ascent in 2 Corinthians 12.1–10, Paula Gooder notes with surprise this dearth of scholarly discussions of the cosmology of Revelation.<sup>67</sup> Two passages in particular will be considered in this chapter. Following the prologue (1.1–8), the opening Christological vision (1.9–20) and the messages to the seven churches (2.1—3.22), the 'ascent' and throne-room vision of Revelation 4 and 5 mark an important transition and the beginning of the bulk of the visionary material. These two chapters form 'a kind of second beginning of [John's] visionary experience: an inaugural vision of heaven'.<sup>68</sup> Similarly, preceding the epilogue (22.8–21) is a vision of the New Heaven and New Earth (21.1—22.7) of great cosmological significance. Thus 4—5 and 21—22 enclose the visionary material, and, since they not only have this structural importance in the book but also contain the most significant cosmological insights, these two passages will form the twin focus of this section.

We begin with Revelation 4, and John's heavenly 'ascent' to the divine throne-room. A striking feature of this passage is the simplicity of John's journey and his vision of heaven. There is no complex sequence of heavenly tiers for John to traverse, nor, seemingly, is his access to the throne-room achieved after great effort but simply and directly. The simplicity of Revelation's cosmology in comparison to the complex ouranologies of other apocalyptic writings is perhaps one of the chief reasons why it has received so little attention, but its significance must not be overlooked. Also significant in this vision is the question of divine presence and omnipresence, indicated by Isaianic connections in the song of the living creatures. We then turn to the climax of the drama of Revelation, the description of the New Jerusalem, and in particular the question of temple-cosmology. John describes the new creation as a world-wide ('cosmic') temple, christologically transformed and eschatologically consummated, with important implications for Revelation's cosmology.

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<sup>67</sup> Gooder, *Only the Third Heaven?*, 102 n75. See below for the further discussion of 2 Cor 12.

<sup>68</sup> Bauckham, *Climax*, 4.

### *An open door in heaven (Revelation 4)*

Heavenly ascents are not a common feature of the New Testament.<sup>69</sup> In the opening verses of Revelation 4, however, we find the following account of John's ascent to heaven, an account which functions structurally to introduce the larger body of visionary material in chapters 4—22.

After this I looked, and lo, in heaven an open door! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, 'Come up hither, and I will show you what must take place after this.' At once I was in the Spirit, and lo, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne! (Revelation 4.1–2)

A striking feature of this passage is its brevity. For a reader whose expectations of apocalyptic ouranology were shaped by the extended and detailed accounts of heavenly ascents found in *1 Enoch* and elsewhere, the sudden arrival of John into the throne-room of God, immediately after his summons to 'come up hither', would have been quite arresting.<sup>70</sup> Entrance through an open door in heaven normally leads to the first of three, seven, ten or more chambers, traversed at length with great fear and trembling. Rarely, if ever, does the first door lead directly to the throne-room, and rarely, if ever, does the seer immediately encounter the one seated on that throne. Such is the simplicity and immediacy with which John describes his ascent to heaven that Himmelfarb concludes that it 'is not really an ascent'<sup>71</sup> at all.

Not only is John's heavenly ascent arrestingly immediate, but also his vision of the throne of God, when compared with other such visions in biblical and pseudepigraphal literature, is striking in its bare simplicity. The obvious canonical antecedents to the throne-vision of Revelation 4 are Isaiah 6 and Ezekiel 1, two chapters which form the backdrop to John's account of his heavenly throne-room experience and which will remain important throughout this discussion. Also significant is *1 Enoch* 14,

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<sup>69</sup> Other than the ascent in Rev 4, we find only the Lukan account of Jesus' ascension (Lk 24.51 and Ac 1.6–11) and Paul's account of his own experience in 2 Cor 12.

<sup>70</sup> The similarities with Mark's gospel, which employs the same arresting immediacy signalled by the constant refrain of εὐθὺς are indicative of that gospel's apocalyptic character.

<sup>71</sup> Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 34.

a passage which owes its inspiration to these two biblical visions.<sup>72</sup> In these three texts we find detailed descriptions of the throne-room of God and the *merkavah*, the throne-chariot. But again, it is John's omissions that are striking. In stark contrast to Ezekiel, and the tradition of *merkavah* mysticism, John's description of the throne and throne-room is sparse. In Ezekiel 1, and later Jewish reflection on that chapter, the seer begins with contemplation of the environs of the throne-chariot, its wheels, the throne itself and only then (if successful) the occupant of that throne.<sup>73</sup> In Revelation 4, there is no mention of the whirling wheels of the throne-chariot, and, rather than starting with the wheels and moving upward, John's vision of the one seated on the throne is immediate. Revelation 4 contains a number of Ezekielian visionary elements, including the rainbow surrounding the throne and the entourage of living creatures, but these come afterwards. John's account thus reverses the usual visionary direction; he first encounters the throne and the one seated upon it, then he 'works outwards' to take in the throne's surroundings and the various figures found there.<sup>74</sup>

What are we to make of the immediacy of both the ascent and the throne vision? Responding to Himmelfarb,<sup>75</sup> Gooder argues that Revelation 4 should be included in any discussion of heavenly ascents in the New Testament:

Although due to the cosmology of the text the account does not contain an ascent through the heavens, there does seem to be good evidence to believe that, when John is summoned by the voice *anaba hode* and he records seeing the throne in heaven, this indeed is a report of ascent into heaven. The narrative does not return to the notion of ascent in what follows, but the ascent itself sets up the book for a series of visions and journeys through the heavenly realms.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> See Rowland and Morray-Jones, *Mystery of God*, 76.

<sup>73</sup> Or at least 'the likeness of the glory of the Lord' (Ezek. 1.28).

<sup>74</sup> 4.3ff. See Gooder, *Only the Third Heaven?*, 101, 'John appears to have ascended to the centre of heaven first and then moved outwards to see the various visions'.

<sup>75</sup> And the similar interpretation of Bousset. See W. Bousset, "Die Himmelsreise de Seele," *Archiv für Religionwissenschaft* 4(1901): 139–69, 229–73, 143. Cf. Gooder, *Only the Third Heaven?*, 83.

<sup>76</sup> Gooder, *Only the Third Heaven?*, 83, though later conceding that Revelation is 'an odd text which fits more easily into a category of heavenly journeys than into heavenly 'ascent''. It is not clear what is to be gained by insisting on a precise distinction between 'heavenly journey upwards' and 'heavenly ascent'.

Certainly John does not recount his journey in any detail,<sup>77</sup> but that does not imply that no heavenly ascent has taken place, highlighting rather the remarkably immediate access John is granted to the divine presence.

This raises a further question. Why does John describe his ascent in such immediate terms, and what are the cosmological implications of this? For Rowland, as discussed above, texts such as *I Enoch* 14—15, with the placing of the *merkavah* at the end of a long visionary journey through numerous concentric heavens, indicate an increasing restriction of the apprehension of God in Jewish thought and the presence of cosmological dualism.<sup>78</sup> However, as we saw, Rowland is careful not to overplay this dualism. Nevertheless, the maintenance of a multi-tiered ouranology and extended *merkavah* reflections all serve to support the kind of transcendent theology suggested by Rowland. Against this backdrop, the vision of Revelation 4 is striking in its immediate access to the throne-room of God.

John's account of his vision contains no reference to intermediate compartments in the heavens through which he has to travel to reach God's presence. He speaks immediately of being in the presence of God himself. Indeed the very first thing that attracts his attention in heaven is the throne of God himself.<sup>79</sup>

What this immediate access suggests for Revelation's apocalyptic cosmology is that heaven and earth are not as sharply divided as earlier apocalypses have assumed (moments of permeation notwithstanding). Direct access to the heavenly throne-room, without the need for complex meditation and extended journeys, is possible ἐν πνεύματι.

A final feature of Revelation 4 must be noted. In verse 8, the four living creatures surround the throne singing the *Qěduššah*, or *trisagion*: ἅγιος ἅγιος ἅγιος κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ, 'holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty'. The combination of John's 'ascent' to the throne room and the creatures' song draws together Ezekiel 1 and Daniel 7 with Isaiah 6.<sup>80</sup> The Isaianic reference, already in view from earlier discussions, is now particularly important for its cosmological themes and

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<sup>77</sup> See Rowland and Morray-Jones, *Mystery of God*, 73.

<sup>78</sup> Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 81.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>80</sup> As noted by many commentators, e.g. Aune, *Revelation*, 302–6, Beale, *Revelation*, 332.



its significance as a trope in Jewish apocalyptic, merkavah and hekalot literature.<sup>81</sup> In Isaiah 6.3, the *trisagion* is followed by an explicit statement on divine omnipresence: ‘the whole earth is full of his glory’. There the prophet’s experience of the particular, local presence of God in his throne room is placed in tension with the affirmation of divine omnipresence. John’s employment of the *trisagion* in Revelation 4 replaces the second phrase with the divine designation ‘who was and is and is to come’ (cf. 1.4, 8; 11.17; 16.5), evoking the giving of the divine name in Exodus 3.14 and thereby placing the theme of divine presence within a covenant eschatological framework, God’s ‘eternity in relation to the world’ and his ‘commitment to be who he will be in his history with his people.’<sup>82</sup> The cosmological implications are nevertheless clear: the earth is full of the glory of God.

### *New Jerusalem, New Heaven, New Earth (Revelation 21)*

Mention of the eschatological framework for the presence of God brings us to the closing vision of the book. In *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*,<sup>83</sup> G. K. Beale begins by asking why, when John sees a vision of ‘a new heaven and a new earth’ in Revelation 21.1, we do not encounter a description of a new cosmos: ‘Why does John not see a full panorama of the new heavens and earth? Why does he not see the many forests, rivers, mountains, streams, valleys and the many other features of a fertile worldwide new creation?’<sup>84</sup> Here there is another contrast to be drawn with Enoch, whose cosmological visions involve not only a heavenly but also an earthly journey, taking in the mountains, trees and the wonders of the ends of the earth. Not so with John – his cosmological vision is sharply focussed on one image: a city-temple. In both that book and his earlier commentary on Revelation,<sup>85</sup> Beale has examined at length the inner-biblical exegesis at work in John’s description of the new heavens and the new earth,<sup>86</sup> and he connects the dimensions and architectural features of the heavenly city in Revelation 21.2—22.5 with the OT background, particularly Ezekiel 40—48. Two features of this exegesis are particularly noteworthy.

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<sup>81</sup> E.g. *1 En.* 39.12–13. For a discussion of the *Qēduššah* in these contexts see Aune, *Revelation* 304–6.

<sup>82</sup> Bauckham, *Revelation*, 30. There are thus clear links between cosmology and eschatology.

<sup>83</sup> Beale, *Temple*.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>85</sup> Beale, *Revelation*.

<sup>86</sup> Beale, *Temple*, esp. pp. 23–7; 313–31; 346–53; 365–73.

We noted in chapter two above the importance of the ‘hearing-seeing’ pattern in the vision of the Lion-Lamb of Revelation 5 and the 144,000 of Revelation 7. For Beale, the vision of Revelation 21.1–3 constitutes a similar interpretative device. In this case both images are seen by John, but Beale makes a convincing case that the former (the vision of ‘a new heaven and a new earth’) is reinterpreted by the latter (‘the holy city, new Jerusalem’). In support, Beale cites Levenson’s observation that the phrase ‘heaven and earth’ is an OT way of referring to Jerusalem, and indeed the temple itself.<sup>87</sup>

Secondly, Beale discusses the significance of the lexical parallels with one of the key OT passages alluded to by John: Ezekiel 40—48. After the departure of the glory of God from the Temple in 8—11, in the closing chapters of the book, Ezekiel is given a vision of the return of the glory of the Lord to the eschatological Temple. As he is shown around the Temple and its environs, Ezekiel is instructed to take measurements and finds its length and width to be equal; it is square (τετράγωνος, cf. Ezek. 41.21; 45.1–5 LXX). This vision is taken up in the description of the heavenly city in Revelation 21.16a, where the angelic measuring reveals that ‘the city lies foursquare (τετράγωνος), its length the same as its breadth’. However, the second part of the verse adds a feature not present in Ezekiel: the measurements of the city are described not in two but three dimensions, ‘its length and breadth *and height* are equal’ (21.16b). This development can be accounted for by comparing the cubic dimensions of the heavenly city in Revelation with another OT text, the description in 1 Kings 6.20 of the holy of holies as a cubic room overlaid with gold.<sup>88</sup> Revelation’s eschatological vision of a ‘new heaven and new earth’ thus combines allusions to the two OT passages and should therefore be considered not merely a picture of a heavenly temple-city but an eschatological vision of a global holy of holies.

There are thus two aspects of Beale’s exegesis of Revelation 21—22 that have a bearing on the present cosmological discussion. First, there is the recognition that the New Jerusalem is in fact a city-temple and therefore a cosmological vision. Second, the New Jerusalem is not simply a global temple but a global holy-of-holies, the outer two

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 24–6; cf. 368 and the refs. Beale’s views here are supported by the theme of the temple as cosmological microcosm.

<sup>88</sup> Again, this connection is by no means unique to Beale’s exegesis. It is also observed by Bauckham, *Revelation*, 136, and Blount, *Revelation*, 389. Noting the three-dimensional nature of the measurements but without discerning the significance of this in relation to the holy of holies are Mangina, *Revelation*, 241, and Smalley, *Revelation*, 551.

zones of the temple having ‘fallen away like a cocoon’,<sup>89</sup> resulting in universal access into the presence and the glory of God. Crucially, this is an eschatological vision which reaches back into covenant history and the Jewish prophetic hope that God’s glory, having departed, would not always be absent but that one day ‘the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple’.<sup>90</sup> His returning glory would not be confined to the holy-of-holies, but rather the anticipation of God’s cosmic presence indicated by such passages as Isaiah 6 will be fulfilled as ‘the earth will be full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea’.<sup>91</sup> The remarkable access to the glory of God, in fulfilment of this covenant hope, is encapsulated for Beale in the dissolution of the temple zones and the filling of the whole earth with the presence of God:

God’s special presence that was formerly confined to the holy of holies, which was the essence of temple reality, will at last encompass the whole new earth and heaven because of the work of Christ. At the very end of time, the true temple will come down from heaven and fill the whole creation, as Revelation 21:1–3, 10 and 22 affirm.<sup>92</sup>

This eschatological vision stands in contrast to the ouranology of *1 Enoch*. The central theme here, as throughout Revelation, is again the question of God’s presence.<sup>93</sup> Notwithstanding the striking immediacy of access John experiences, in that initial vision of heaven the orbs of heaven and earth are still separated by a door. But the door is open, and access is granted directly to the presence of God, resulting in the radical permeation of cosmological duality. This is developed further in the vision of 21—22 where the duality is finally dissolved.

How has this change come about? Rowland and Morray-Jones describe the important development in cosmology represented by the contrast of Revelation 21—22 with Revelation 4, and indicate the significance of Christology in this development:

In the latter the seer is granted a glimpse into the environs of God in a world beyond this present one, to which access is given through the door open into

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<sup>89</sup> Beale, *Temple*, 372.

<sup>90</sup> Mal 3.1.

<sup>91</sup> Hab 2.14; cf. Isa 11.9.

<sup>92</sup> Beale, *Temple*, 369–70.

<sup>93</sup> See Bauckham, *Revelation*, 136.

heaven. The need for this disappears in the new creation where the tabernacle of God is with humanity. God's dwelling is not to be found above the cherubim in heaven. God's throne is set in the midst of the New Jerusalem, where the living waters stream from the throne of God (22:1), whose servants are marked with the divine name seeing God face to face... God is no longer transcendent but immediately present to those privileged to inhabit the new Jerusalem. Indeed, they will be identified with the character of God and enjoy the divine presence unmediated, without the need of heavenly ascent or vision.<sup>94</sup>

This identification with his people makes possible global access to the glory of God without the mediation required by a dualistic cosmology. The access to God's glory provided by the holy-of-holies, a zone of purity formerly restricted to the high priest, is now enjoyed by all God's people. In order to show how such a radical transformation of cosmology has come about, John weaves into his vision of the heavenly city another metaphor, that of a wedding.<sup>95</sup>

Most commentators note that the image of the Bride in chapter 21 stands in parallel opposition to the image of the harlot Babylon in chapter 18.<sup>96</sup> What is significant for the present discussion is the sexual and marital language employed by John in these two visions. This language is deeply participatory:<sup>97</sup> involvement with the harlot is fornication, the uniting of oneself with the whore and her sins. The call to the church is therefore to 'come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues' (18.4b). The alternative presented to the church is a vision of the pure union of a Bride and her husband, developed with distinctive cosmological significance in chapter 21.

In another 'hear-see' moment in 21.9–11,<sup>98</sup> John is invited to follow an angel to see 'the Bride, the wife of the Lamb'. What he sees is not a vision of a Bride, but 'the

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<sup>94</sup> Rowland and Morray-Jones, *Mystery of God*, 92–3.

<sup>95</sup> See also G. Macaskill, *Union with Christ in the New Testament* (Oxford: OUP, 2013), 187–90.

<sup>96</sup> E.g. Beale, *Revelation*, 1117–21; Bauckham, *Revelation*, 126–32; D. L. Barr, *Tales of the End: a narrative commentary on the book of Revelation* (Salem: Polebridge, 1998), 141; Blount, *Revelation*, 383–5.

<sup>97</sup> Macaskill, *Union with Christ*, 286.

<sup>98</sup> See also Beale, *Revelation*, 1063.

holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God'. Here, and earlier in 21.2, the participatory language of marriage is juxtaposed with the image of the temple-city. The union of Christ and his people (consummated at the eschaton but inaugurated now) is the theological driving force behind the dissolution of the duality of heaven and earth.

### *Summary*

The cosmology of John's ascent to the divine throne-room in chapter 4 is characterised by an immediacy of access in comparison with the normal expectations of heavenly ascents. The reasons for this radical shift are both pneumatological and Christological: direct access to the presence of God and the throne of glory is possible only in the Spirit and through the work of Christ. Heavenly ascents function as a response to the cosmological 'problem' caused by the departure of the glory of God from the Temple (Ezekiel 8—11) and maintain the essentially interpenetrating nature of Jewish cosmology in anticipation of the return of YHWH to Zion and the establishment of the eschatological Temple (Ezekiel 40—48). This local and particular experience of the presence of God is, however, placed in tension with the Isaianic theme of divine global omnipresence expressed in the heavenly song of praise. When read in this context, Revelation 21—22 presents us with an even more striking truth: in the new creation, God's glory will not only return to his Temple but his throne will be in the midst of the people who, as the new priesthood, will bear his name on their foreheads and enjoy immediate access to the presence of God.<sup>99</sup> In John's final vision the microcosmic role of the Temple is fulfilled (22.1–3)<sup>100</sup> and christologically transformed so that the New Jerusalem needs neither Temple nor mystic. The cosmological interpenetration provided by the holy of holies is now seen for what it is: an anticipation of the future consummation of this cosmological duality as the whole earth becomes the dwelling-place of the glory of God (21.3) in fulfilment of the hope expressed in Isaiah 11.9 and Habakkuk 2.14. Revelation 21—22 is thus a vision of 'the climax of cosmology.'<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Beale, *Temple*, 370; Bauckham, *Revelation*, 136; Rowland and Morray-Jones, *Mystery of God*, 92–3.

<sup>100</sup> See Beale, *Revelation*, 1109–10.

<sup>101</sup> J. T. Pennington, "Revelation: The Climax of Cosmology," in *Cosmology and New Testament Theology*, ed. Jonathan T. Pennington and Sean M. McDonough (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2008).

### *Implications for the cosmology of the 'apocalyptic Paul'*

If we are to allow this apocalyptic literature to guide our understanding of the key features of New Testament apocalyptic cosmology then certain questions might be asked about some of the major moves made by the 'apocalyptic Paul'. I begin with a discussion of Paul's cryptic description of his own heavenly ascent in 2 Corinthians 12, before linking this to apocalyptic temple cosmology and the motif of 'invasion' as it is employed by Martyn and others, concluding that the implicit cosmological dualism of such language is problematic. I will then assess the question of whether the relationship between cosmological apocalyptic and salvation-history/covenant is best characterised by antithesis or compatibility, arguing in favour of the latter.

#### *Paul's heavenly ascent in 2 Corinthians 12.2–4*

Any discussion of Pauline cosmology, particularly one which examines his apocalyptic thought, would be incomplete without at least a brief look at Paul's cryptic account of his own ascent to heaven.<sup>102</sup> Much as with John's ascent in Revelation 4, Paul's account is striking in its brevity:

I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven – whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that this man was caught up into Paradise – whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows – and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. (2 Corinthians 12.2–4)

Interpretive challenges abound. Was this a bodily experience or not? What is 'Paradise'? And what does it mean to be 'caught up'?<sup>103</sup> Is the 'third heaven' the highest heaven, or does this represent some kind of interrupted ascent, stopping short of, say, the seventh heaven?<sup>104</sup> Detailed discussion of such issues is beyond our purview, but what is important to note is that this passage demonstrates that 'Paul is using the traditional language and style of Jewish apocalyptic.'<sup>105</sup> Whatever conclusions may be reached about the specific interpretative issues, the cosmology which frames this ascent

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<sup>102</sup> I take it, with the consensus, that when Paul speaks of 'a man in Christ' he is referring to himself.

<sup>103</sup> ἀρπάζω, cf. 1 Thes 4.17; Rev 12.5.

<sup>104</sup> As argued by Gooder, *Only the Third Heaven?*, esp. chapter 11.

<sup>105</sup> Rowland and Morray-Jones, *Mystery of God*, 141.

account is a characteristic Jewish mystical cosmology which allows for the permeation of heaven and earth in the experience of a seer. To argue for a Pauline apocalyptic cosmology without consideration of this text would thus be a grievous error.

2 Corinthians 12.2–4 is by no means a classic case of a heavenly ascent, omitting many of the genre’s characteristic features. The ascender is Paul and not a famous figure from the past. There is no account of the arrival into the heavenly throne-room or of the content of the revelation received. There is no angelic guide (or angels of any sort), and no detailed description of the journey.<sup>106</sup> In much the same way as with the arresting immediacy of John’s ascent ἐν πνεύματι in Revelation 4, so Paul is granted immediate access to the heavenly realms ἐν Χριστῷ. Despite the many differences, the essential cosmological framework of 2 Corinthians 12 is in common with other heavenly ascent texts, as Rowland and Morray-Jones explain: ‘in line with apocalyptic hermeneutics Paul thinks of another dimension to human existence normally hidden from sight but revealed to the favoured few.’<sup>107</sup>

As we will see, the implications of Paul’s experience as recounted in 2 Corinthians 12 for understanding his apocalyptic epistemology and cosmology are at odds with the implied cosmological dualism of the language of ‘invasion’ so important to the ‘apocalyptic Paul’. The chief advocate of the ‘invasion’ motif is, of course, Martyn, and it is illuminating to contrast the above description of the cosmology implied by Paul’s heavenly ascent with Martyn’s comments on the meaning of ‘apocalyptic’.

### *Cosmology, presence, and ‘invasion’ in Galatians 4 and 1 Corinthians 2*

In examining the translation of the term ἀποκάλυπτω in Galatians, Martyn refers to an earlier section of Paul’s Corinthian correspondence, 1 Corinthians 2.6–11, where God reveals to his people, through the Spirit, the secret and hidden wisdom which he has eternally prepared ‘before the ages’ (πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων, v.7).<sup>108</sup> For Martyn, this contrasts sharply with Galatians 4.3–6, where ‘apocalyptic’ is construed as God’s sending his Son ‘into the scene’ of this world, an invasive action which represents

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<sup>106</sup> See Gooder, *Only the Third Heaven?*, chapter 10, for a discussion and a case for the significance of these differences. See also her useful table comparing 2 Cor 12 with other ascent texts on p. 157, summarising the analysis of other ascent texts found in Part One of her book.

<sup>107</sup> Rowland and Morray-Jones, *Mystery of God*, 138.

<sup>108</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 142–5.

a linguistic turn inadequately represented by the usual translation of ἀποκάλυπτο as ‘to reveal,’ ‘to unveil’; for it shows that in Galatians Paul’s apocalyptic is not focused on God’s unveiling something that was previously hidden, as though it had been eternally standing behind a curtain (contrast 1 Cor 2:9–10). The genesis of Paul’s apocalyptic – as we see it in Galatians – lies in the apostle’s certainty that God has *invaded* the present evil age by sending Christ and his Spirit into it.<sup>109</sup>

But the unveiling of something behind a curtain is exactly the image conveyed by ἀποκάλυπτο, both lexically<sup>110</sup> and contextually. The importance of temple-cosmology for the apocalyptic worldview suggests that the image of a curtain is precisely what is required, the proper analogy for the boundary between heaven and earth being the veil of the temple.<sup>111</sup> There is an apocalyptic rendering, to be sure, but that rendering does not operate according to the category of ‘invasion’ but of the decisive unveiling of that which was present but hitherto hidden, as in 2 Corinthians 12. This calls into question Martyn’s contrast between Galatians 4.3–6 and 1 Corinthians 2.6–11.

Martyn’s resistance to this ordinary translation of the word ἀποκάλυπτο throughout Galatians is revealing. The insistence on the controlling category of ‘invasion’ and the rejection of anything like an ‘unveiling’ seems to imply an isolation of Galatians from its historical context, and particularly the Jewish apocalyptic literary context. Allowing Revelation and *1 Enoch*, let alone 2 Corinthians 12,<sup>112</sup> into the discussion presents a challenge to apocalyptic cosmology as construed by Martyn, since they problematise the implicit dualistic cosmology of the category of ‘invasion.’ In a

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<sup>109</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 99.

<sup>110</sup> See ἀποκάλυπτο and ἀποκάλυψις in BDAG. The definitions provided are (1) the general sense of ‘revelation’, (2) ‘divine revelation’ of secrets through visions etc., (3) interpretation of prophetic visions and (4) the eschatological sense of revelation of the return of Christ, final judgement etc. Etymology further suggests that something like ‘the removal of a covering that obscures’ is the image which unites this semantic field.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. the discussion of the torn veil in Matthew in D. M. Gurtner, *The torn veil : Matthew’s exposition of the death of Jesus* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007) and, on the cosmology of Mark, Bird, “Tearing the Heavens”, esp. p. 54–5.

<sup>112</sup> Consideration of 1 Cor 2.9–10 and Col 1.13–14 could also offer a similar challenge to Martyn’s construal of Pauline apocalyptic.



recent collection of essays engaging with Martyn, Robert Jenson has voiced similar concerns in a series of pointedly-worded questions.

Can we say that with the *apokalypsis Christou* God ‘invades’ the world? Is this in fact true, by the whole witness of Scripture? Can we legitimately structure a systematic doctrine of revelation by the claim? We will, I fear, answer these questions affirmatively only if Paul-according-to-Martyn is a very peremptory canon indeed within the canon... surely the apocalypticism that Martyn finds in Paul must have something to do with the ‘apocalyptic’ mode of prophecy extant in Judaism... Martyn has not – we may hope – reinvented the language *de novo*...<sup>113</sup>

If Martyn is correct about Paul’s apocalyptic, Jenson concludes, then ‘Paul is an eccentric also in that part of the biblical witness to which he is said most to relate’.<sup>114</sup> Jenson highlights three relevant features of apocalyptic literature. The first two he considers congenial to Martyn’s Paul: ‘an unveiling of God’s underlying plot for history, paradigmatically by a glimpse into heaven’ and ‘a dramatic display of God’s conflict with and victory over opposing powers’.<sup>115</sup> The third, and the focus of his disagreement, is that ‘in actual apocalyptic prophecy we do not see God invading earth from heaven. We see instead an extended conflict carried out at once on earth and in heaven, with the heavenly version dramatizing the divine plot of the earthly events.’<sup>116</sup> The evidence above suggests that Jenson’s critiques, though brief, are on target.

The material discussed in this chapter has suggested that apocalyptic cosmology is not best characterised by a strict dualism. In the cosmology of Revelation, reshaped and reimagined according to the work of God in Christ and the Spirit, a vision is given of the eschatological dissolution of the boundary between heaven and earth. This

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<sup>113</sup> Jenson, “Dogmatic/Systematic Appropriation”, 159. His whole discussion on p. 159–61 is illuminating.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 160.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 159. That these two critiques correspond to the discussions of ‘epistemology’ and ‘soteriology’ in the present work further supports the selection of these *topoi* in my discussion of the ‘apocalyptic Paul’. I wonder, though, whether the first of Jenson’s points also presents a challenge, with its mention of an ‘underlying plot for history’, which, it seems to me, is precisely the kind of salvation-historical language resisted by Martyn and others. I take up this point again below.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 159–60, emphasis mine.

suggests therefore that the language of ‘invasion’ or ‘irruption’ to describe the activity of God in the world is problematic, implying an inappropriate cosmological dualism where apocalyptic cosmology employs a permeated duality, expressed in the Jewish worldview by moments of ascent and places of interpenetration, the chief of which was the holy of holies. While God’s action in Christ is certainly dramatic and unexpected, the Jewish worldview-symbol of the temple as microcosm speaks not of an absent God who invades the world but of the continuing (though veiled) presence of a God whose footstool stood in the holy of holies and whose departed (though still not entirely inaccessible) glory fills and will one day fill the earth: Isaiah 6 and 11 fulfilled in Revelation 21. The drama of the ‘Christ event’, and the eschatological reality it inaugurated, is the consummation of this worldview-story of divine presence: an interpenetrated cosmology and the anticipation of the final global dissolution of this duality in the new creation. The cosmology of the apocalypses thus calls into question the implied dualism of the language of ‘invasion’.<sup>117</sup>

### *Cosmology and covenant*

The argument of this chapter problematises another move, the eschatological corollary of a cosmology of ‘invasion’, namely the attempt to screen out the covenant narrative in discussions of the ‘apocalyptic Paul’. It was noted above that Jenson considered the apocalyptic ‘unveiling of God’s underlying plot for history’ as a feature congenial to Martyn’s Paul. Martyn would perhaps challenge the phrase ‘underlying plot for history’ since, for him, an ‘apocalyptic’ approach to Paul means a resistance to any salvation-historical interpretation of the apostle. According to Harink, ‘the whole of [Martyn’s] Galatians is written against that interpretation, arguing in fact that it is the Teachers, the opponents of Paul... who establish their position on the basis of a salvation-historical exegetical paradigm.’<sup>118</sup> As such, it is impossible for Paul-according-to-Martyn to speak of a ‘divine plan’, of history ‘going somewhere’. Rather, history is in bondage until the invasive and liberating act of God in Christ. Harink does not mince words: ‘history

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<sup>117</sup> It should be noted that this challenge to the use of the category of ‘invasion’ does not at all mean that there is no place for the theme of ‘divine warfare’ in apocalyptic cosmology and soteriology. Far from it – Revelation relies heavily on such a theme and it is important in apocalyptic thought, but even a cursory look at Revelation 20 reveals that the motifs of divine warfare and divine judgement operate in tandem not dichotomy. I will return to this in the next chapter.

<sup>118</sup> Harink, “Partakers of the Divine Apocalypse”, 85.

before this event, according to Paul in Romans, is wreckage.’<sup>119</sup> In Martyn’s language, this is the distinction between the *linear* and the *punctiliar*.<sup>120</sup> Responding to the contemporary popularity of redemptive-historical exegesis of Paul,<sup>121</sup> he argues that

the covenantal promise is as polemically *punctiliar* as it is polemically *singular*... The distinction between linear and punctiliar is thus a distinction drawn by Paul himself. In Gal 3:16 he denies the Teachers’ linear, redemptive-historical picture of a covenantal people, affirming instead the punctiliar portrait of the covenantal person, Christ.<sup>122</sup>

We might also recall here Martyn’s statement that ‘the gospel is not about human movement into blessedness (religion); it is about God’s liberating invasion of the cosmos (theology)’.<sup>123</sup> Douglas Harink’s recent argument against salvation-historical interpretations of Paul are another case in point. Citing Wright as a representative, Harink critiques salvation-historical interpretations of Paul which involve a smooth ‘continually progressing “plan” of God’.<sup>124</sup> But these descriptions of salvation-history appear to be a straw man. Nowhere in redemptive-historical Pauline exegesis, or in Jewish apocalyptic literature, do we get the idea that salvation-history is a smooth developmental transition into a state of blessedness (the ‘religion’ which Martyn’s Paul confronts). This is not the message of Ezekiel or Revelation, which do not portray anything like a steady development of human history and religion towards its future in the heavenly city. The city-temple descends *from* heaven *to* earth and the day of the Lord comes with warfare and upheaval. In *2 Baruch*, history is portrayed in (literally) black-and-white terms. There are times of great darkness and rebellion, but also times

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 85–6. As discussed in chapter three above, Harink is here referring to Walter Benjamin’s discussion of history in his reflections on Klee’s *Angelus Novus* (Benjamin, *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, 257–8.) As noted above, Wright has challenged this interpretation (see Wright, *PGF*, 1471–84).

<sup>120</sup> On which see also chapter three above.

<sup>121</sup> Citing in particular the work of Beker and Wright.

<sup>122</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 347–8.

<sup>123</sup> J. L. Martyn, “The Apocalyptic Gospel in Galatians,” *Interpretation* 54, no. 3 (2000): 246–66, 255. cf. Martyn, *Galatians*, 349.

<sup>124</sup> Harink, “Partakers of the Divine Apocalypse”, 85 citing. Wright 2005, 50–1, 134, 9. Consideration of the full context of the relevant discussion, however, reveals that Harink has misunderstood or misrepresented Wright’s argument. See Wright, *Paul: Fresh Perspectives*, 50–53.

when God intervenes in surprising ways, bringing light – and lightning. In the great vision of the cloud, there are no ‘shades-of-grey waters’.

To be sure, the fulfilment of God’s promises will involve some shocking and dramatic events, not least a radical re-reading/re-telling of the covenant story and a concomitant redefinition of the covenant people, as *1 Enoch* and *2 Baruch* make clear.<sup>125</sup> But nevertheless, apocalyptic and salvation history cannot be so summarily divided, and oftentimes the two go together.<sup>126</sup> As Wright puts it, ‘we cannot expound Paul’s covenant theology in such a way as to make it a smooth, steady progress of historical fulfilment; but nor can we propose a kind of ‘apocalyptic’ view in which nothing that has happened before Jesus is of any value even as preparation.’<sup>127</sup> As the above discussion shows, the cosmological significance of the Temple *is what it is* because of its place in the covenant narrative. Apocalyptic cosmology cannot be isolated from the narrative of YHWH’s presence expressed in Ezekiel 1—3, its departure from Jerusalem in 8—11 and the eschatological hope of its return to the temple in 40—48, of which Malachi also spoke: ‘the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple’ (3.1a). However sudden the Lord’s coming may be, and however arrestingly immediate John’s vision, the Temple cosmology of the Apocalypse *means what it means* because of the covenant, as Isaiah 10—11, Habakkuk 2 and the rest of Malachi 3.1 attest.<sup>128</sup> Cosmological questions of divine presence cannot, therefore, be divorced from their covenantal context, since ‘covenant and presence go hand in hand.’<sup>129</sup> The rending of the heavens in the coming of Christ is not an unprecedented invasion which sweeps all of history off the table, but the surprising climax of the story of God’s covenant presence, permeating the duality of heaven and earth, now radically reimagined and anticipating its eschatological consummation. As Wright continues, ‘in

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<sup>125</sup> Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 219.

<sup>126</sup> As de Boer concedes: ‘Jewish apocalyptic eschatology naturally finds its focus in God’s covenantal relationship to Israel’ (de Boer, ‘Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology’, 348–9). The accompanying statement that ‘the scope of the two ages is cosmic’ somewhat begs the question.

<sup>127</sup> Wright, *Paul: Fresh Perspectives*, 54 (emphasis mine).

<sup>128</sup> Mal 3.1b continues: ‘the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight – indeed he is coming, says the Lord of hosts’. The juxtaposition of the suddenness of God’s coming with the covenant hope is very much in line with the view of apocalyptic for which I am arguing. See also Wright, *PFG*, 1051.

<sup>129</sup> W. A. Tooman, ‘Covenant and Presence in the Composition and Theology of Ezekiel,’ in *Divine Presence and Absence in Exilic and Post-Exilic Judaism*, ed. N. Macdonald and I. J. De Hulster, *Forschungen zum Alten Testament 2* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 179.

the messianic events of Jesus' death and resurrection Paul believes *both* that the covenant promises were at last fulfilled *and* that this constituted a massive and dramatic irruption into the processes of world history unlike anything before or since.<sup>130</sup> This problematises any attempt to describe 'apocalyptic' in the New Testament by screening out redemption history. Rather, God's covenant with Israel is, to borrow the words of Lars Hartman, the 'referential background' of apocalyptic cosmology.<sup>131</sup>

### *Summary*

Jenson critiques the use of vertical/horizontal coordinates in describing God's action, considering such discourse to be 'just Platonism stripped to its geometry'.<sup>132</sup> Martyn's use of the motif of punctiliar invasion, and his resistance to anything resembling the linearity of redemptive-historical paradigms, opens his 'apocalyptic Paul' to such a charge and implies a cosmological dualism which is problematised by the witness of the Jewish apocalyptic literature and the book of Revelation. This implicit dualism of the language of invasion, and the dichotomy of 'linear' versus 'punctiliar', are foreign to apocalyptic thought, as they are to much in Second Temple Jewish and early Christian thought besides. The temple-cosmology of the apocalypses problematises any strict heaven-earth dualism since it affirms the ongoing presence of God in this world. As Jenson concludes, 'much as it goes against the polemical consensus, the notion of a *Heilsgeschichte* maps what Scripture as a whole presents better than can any geometry.'<sup>133</sup> History, for Käsemann, 'is not, therefore, marked by a visible earthly continuity but by interruptions and paradoxes; again and again its path leads over the grave out of which it brings the dead to life. We must not deny salvation history, however, because God's Word in its activity permeates the world in its breadth and depth.'<sup>134</sup> This is no smooth developmental narrative, but a narrative it is, nonetheless.

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<sup>130</sup> Wright, *Paul: Fresh Perspectives*, 54 (emphasis mine). I would, however, want to question Wright's choice of the word 'irruption' here for the reasons argued above.

<sup>131</sup> Hartman, *Asking for a Meaning*. See also the discussion in Macaskill, *Revealed Wisdom*, 46; Bauckham, "Apocalypses", 142. Contrast the discussion in Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 49.

<sup>132</sup> Jenson, "Dogmatic/Systematic Appropriation", 160.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>134</sup> Käsemann, "The Faith of Abraham in Romans 4", 88. Cf. Käsemann, "Justification and Salvation History", 66–8.

## 5.

### SOTERIOLOGY: DELIVERANCE AND JUSTICE

#### *Introduction*

As noted in the previous chapter, cosmology as *Weltbild* plays a secondary role in the ‘apocalyptic Paul’, or is even eliminated altogether as a concern. Gaventa, for example, says she cannot ‘imagine Paul gazing in awe at the heavens as evidence of God’s glory or expatiating on the order of the cosmos.’<sup>1</sup> For her (following Martyn), Paul’s ‘cosmology’ is less concerned with the shape of the cosmos than with its redemption understood within a *Weltanschauung* of invasion and cosmic warfare. Having laid the important cosmological groundwork (though the arguments there have importance in their own right), we turn now to these more central soteriological paradigms, remembering Gaventa’s observation that ‘cosmology and soteriology are inextricably connected to one another.’<sup>2</sup>

The pattern of this chapter is as before. I will first give a brief summary of the soteriological dichotomy characteristic of the ‘apocalyptic Paul’, focussing on Martyn, de Boer and Campbell. I then look at *1 Enoch*, *2 Baruch* and *4 Ezra* and examine the two soteriological narratives of judgment/forgiveness and warfare/victory (what de Boer calls the ‘forensic’ and the ‘cosmological’, as we will see shortly). I then turn again to the book of Revelation and look at those soteriological patterns. I hope to demonstrate that a more interrelated framework best characterises the way in which the two soteriological narratives function. These insights will then be brought into critical dialogue with the soteriological antithesis characteristic of the contemporary ‘apocalyptic Paul’.

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<sup>1</sup> Gaventa, “Neither Height Nor Depth (2011)”, 278.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 265.

## *Soteriological dichotomies in the 'apocalyptic Paul'*

### *Martyn: the cross and cosmic warfare*

I begin with Martyn, whose soteriological paradigm is arguably the most influential aspect of his work on the 'apocalyptic Paul.' At the heart of Martyn's account of Paul's soteriology is the motif of cosmic warfare in which the cosmos is involved in a drama of 'dualistic struggle'<sup>3</sup> between God and anti-God powers. In his commentary on Galatians, Martyn identifies these two conflicting powers, the two *actors* engaged in battle,<sup>4</sup> as 'the Flesh' and 'the Spirit' (cf. Galatians 5.17). This constitutes a cosmic 'pair of opposites', an antinomy, to use Martyn's preferred term. In Martyn's apocalyptic theology, the pairs of opposites which had defined reality prior to Christ's advent (τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου, Galatians 4.3) have now disappeared. This represents nothing short of the death of the old cosmos with its fundamental antinomies and the birth of a new creation characterised by unity in Christ – and the emergence of new antinomies.<sup>5</sup> One of these, the opposition between Flesh and Spirit, is thus 'an apocalyptic antinomy characteristic of the dawn of God's new creation'<sup>6</sup> and an aspect of the ongoing cosmic war in the present time before Christ's return.<sup>7</sup>

At first glance, this scheme may sound a lot like the dualistic warfare worldview evident in the 'two spirits' theme of the Dead Sea Scrolls, such as the reflections on the cosmic conflict between light and darkness found in the *Community Rule*.<sup>8</sup> However, Martyn makes a crucial distinction between cosmic warfare as he sees it in Qumran and in his construal of the 'apocalyptic Paul'. This concerns the question of aetiology. For Martyn, in the *Community Rule* the cosmic warfare between the two spirits of truth/light and falsehood/darkness is an inherent aspect of the created universe, established by God at the origin of creation and terminating at its appointed time. For Martyn's Paul, however, the cosmic war does not inhere in creation but was

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<sup>3</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 529 n175.

<sup>4</sup> See *ibid.*, 493 cf. de Boer, *Defeat of Death*, 23, 192 n15.

<sup>5</sup> On all this see Martyn, *Galatians*, 570–4.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 572.

<sup>7</sup> Other 'new-creation antinomies' mentioned are the death of Christ versus the Law, cross and circumcision, which stands for all 'religion'. See too the discussion of 'tables of opposites' in Comments #45 and #46 (*ibid.* pp. 447–66).

<sup>8</sup> 1QS 3.17–23; 4.22–26.

decisively declared, not by the anti-God powers but by God himself in his sending of his son Jesus into a world controlled by hostile forces.<sup>9</sup> The result is the launching of ‘the apocalyptic battle of the end-time, the war that has been declared by the Spirit, not by the Flesh’.<sup>10</sup> The sending of the son therefore creates a ‘militant antinomy born of apocalypse’.<sup>11</sup>

If Jesus started the war, it is also he who finishes it. The cross represents not only the moment of divine invasion which triggers the cosmic war, but also the decisive moment of final victory.<sup>12</sup> In the present time, however, the war is waged in and through the church, enlisted in their baptism as combatants in the cosmic struggle of the Spirit against the Flesh and the elements of the old cosmos, waging this war in the form of co-crucifixion, participation in the cross of Christ.

For Martyn, this *Weltanschauung* of cosmological warfare has important consequences for the construal of Pauline soteriology. This apocalyptic warfare motif means that salvation can no longer be understood according to the doctrine of the ‘two ways’, nor with any medical metaphors of infection and cure,<sup>13</sup> but only through the victory of Christ and his deliverance of humanity from hostile powers. The consequence of Paul’s apocalyptic *Weltanschauung* thus construed is that his gospel is not about ‘personal sin and forgiveness’ but ‘corporate enslavement and liberation’.<sup>14</sup> Martyn thus sets the two soteriological systems in an antithetical relationship; the salvation-historical, covenantal narrative is seen in contrast to an ‘apocalyptic’ invasive movement which does not grow out of but breaks into the scene of history.<sup>15</sup> Paul, for Martyn, maintains a clear distinction between the present covenantal or salvation-historical scene and the apocalyptic invasion of God. He thus establishes a strict soteriological dichotomy, under the banner of ‘apocalyptic’, and employs that dichotomy throughout his reading of Paul’s letter to the Galatians.

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<sup>9</sup> A discussion of the importance of the category of invasion, and an assessment of its suitability as an ‘apocalyptic’ motif was the subject of the previous chapter.

<sup>10</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 494.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 500–1.

<sup>13</sup> See *ibid.*, 530.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 101. See too the similar comments on 272–3 and 530.

<sup>15</sup> See his statements in *ibid.*, 100 and Martyn, “The Apocalyptic Gospel in Galatians”, 255 and the discussion of the eschatological issues in chapter three above.



### *De Boer: 'two tracks' of apocalyptic*

De Boer's most influential contribution to the 'apocalyptic Paul' is his work on what he calls 'the two tracks of Jewish apocalyptic eschatology.'<sup>16</sup> Martyn heartily endorses de Boer's work on this subject, considering it 'extraordinarily perceptive' and nothing less than 'essential to the reading of Galatians.'<sup>17</sup> In de Boer's analysis, Jewish apocalyptic eschatology of the Second Temple period was characterised by two distinct patterns, or 'tracks'. These he labels 'forensic apocalyptic eschatology' and 'cosmological apocalyptic eschatology'.<sup>18</sup>

In the latter, 'cosmological apocalyptic eschatology', the aetiology of sin and death has to do with the cosmos being under the dominion of evil anti-God powers, the result of a primordial angelic rebellion. These powers have usurped God's rule and have led humanity into rebellion. A righteous remnant bears witness to the coming victory of God and is thus caught up in *cosmic warfare* between two 'orbs of power', awaiting their own deliverance and the eschatological establishment of the unopposed reign of God. De Boer suggests the *Book of the Watchers* as an example of this track in its 'purest form.'<sup>19</sup>

In the former track, 'forensic apocalyptic eschatology', the issue is not cosmic warfare but individual human decision. Sin in this view is not the result of the rebellion of evil powers but the consequence of human disobedience. The categories here are not martial but juridical: God's law and his righteous final judgment are the hope of humanity and the *divine courtroom* is the solution to the problem of sin and death. Cosmic forces are absent, or play a limited part.<sup>20</sup> In support, de Boer cites *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch* as examples of 'forensic' Jewish apocalypses 'in which such malevolent forces play no role.'<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> de Boer, "Paul and Jewish Apocalyptic", 180.

<sup>17</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 97 n51.

<sup>18</sup> The paragraphs that follow paraphrase and summarise de Boer's arguments, which were first framed in de Boer, *Defeat of Death*, 84–8, 182–3; and then subsequently re-stated in de Boer, "Paul and Jewish Apocalyptic", 180–1; de Boer, "Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology", 358–61; and de Boer, *Galatians*, 31–35; 79–82. See now also de Boer, "Paul's Mythologizing Program", esp. p.18.

<sup>19</sup> de Boer, "Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology", 359. I will return to the question of 'pure forms' below.

<sup>20</sup> See *ibid.*, 358. cf. de Boer, *Galatians*, 32, where he qualifies the sharpness of the distinction somewhat, and allows for the 'cosmological' to 'recede into the background'.

<sup>21</sup> de Boer, "Paul's Mythologizing Program", 18.

There are clear similarities between de Boer's framework and the soteriological dichotomy of Martyn's Paul. Yet de Boer's scheme comes with a number of important caveats and disclaimers, which must be noted. He repeatedly points out that his intention in describing the two 'tracks' of Jewish apocalyptic is not to force the simplistic assignment of any given apocalyptic text to one or other of the tracks.<sup>22</sup> He readily acknowledges that apocalyptic literature displays evidence of both 'tracks', indicated by his use of the expression 'purest form' in the examples discussed above. Sometimes one or other 'track' dominates, but at other times both can be seen to be equally prominent with cosmic powers and human transgression existing side-by-side.<sup>23</sup> As such, de Boer insists that these two 'tracks' are to be understood as 'heuristic models'<sup>24</sup> and should be employed with recognition that they are not antithetical but 'two internally consistent or coherent configurations of motifs that, like railway tracks, may lie parallel, crisscross, or overlap, even within a single work.'<sup>25</sup>

How, then, does de Boer put this analysis of Jewish apocalyptic literature to work in his discussions of the 'apocalyptic Paul'? De Boer recognises that Paul lived in an environment in which both 'tracks' were extant, and he acknowledges that evidence of both is present in Paul's writings.<sup>26</sup> Here, however, a crucial move is made. Following Martyn, de Boer asserts that Paul travels the 'cosmological' track, *and rejects the 'forensic'*. Paul should thus be understood as a thoroughly 'cosmological apocalyptic' thinker, and where we do find 'forensic' elements (such as in Romans 2.5–8) this should be attributed to constraints placed on the apostle by his 'conversation partners' whose language he adopts only for rhetorical reasons.<sup>27</sup> Commenting on the presence of both 'tracks' in Galatians, for example, de Boer attributes the presence of 'forensic' elements to Paul's engagement with his opponents,

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<sup>22</sup> See the repeated statements in, e.g. de Boer, *Defeat of Death* 85, 88 and again in de Boer, "Paul and Jewish Apocalyptic", 181.

<sup>23</sup> Here de Boer cites the Dead Sea Scrolls as examples, notably 1QS, 1QM, and CD (see de Boer, *Defeat of Death*, 89).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>26</sup> de Boer defends his use of the later apocalypses of *2 Baruch* and *4 Ezra* in discussing Paul on the basis that 'these books, though written some decades after Paul wrote Romans, clearly make use of earlier and commonly available traditions' (de Boer, "Paul's Mythologizing Program", 11). The same logic applies to my own use of the book of Revelation, with which de Boer does not engage.

<sup>27</sup> E.g. de Boer, *Defeat of Death*, 183.

the ‘Galatian Teachers’, in order to refute their ideas, concluding that ‘by the end of the epistle the forensic apocalyptic eschatology of the Teachers has been decisively overtaken and neutralized by Paul’s cosmological apocalyptic eschatology.’<sup>28</sup>

Describing Romans in similar terms, de Boer notes that in the early chapters of the epistle ‘the language and perspectives of forensic apocalyptic eschatology are clearly prominent’, in Romans 5, ‘forensic and cosmological ideas completely interpenetrate’ but that by the end of chapter 8 ‘motifs proper to cosmological apocalyptic eschatology circumscribe and, to a large extent, overtake forensic motifs.’<sup>29</sup> This leads de Boer to ask why the forensic motifs are present at all. At this point, rather than concluding that both themes interpenetrate in Paul’s own theology, he gives the answer that the presence of ‘forensic’ categories is ‘something to do with Paul’s assumed or imagined conversation partners’.<sup>30</sup>

This rhetorical approach to accounting for the presence of both soteriological paradigms in Paul is by no means unique to de Boer. Martyn’s use of the ‘Teachers’ in Galatia represents a similar move,<sup>31</sup> as does another significant contribution to the ‘apocalyptic Paul’ which reads Romans in this way: that of Douglas Campbell.

### *Campbell: apocalyptic re-reading of Justification*

Campbell’s *The Deliverance of God* is arguably the most thoroughgoing contribution to the ‘apocalyptic’ approach to Paul since Martyn’s *Galatians*, and is a massive work with which the present project cannot attempt to engage comprehensively. I will, however, highlight the main contours of Campbell’s project and offer signposts to aspects of his particular ‘apocalyptic’ approach to Pauline soteriology.<sup>32</sup>

*The Deliverance of God* is composed in five sections, arranged according to a broad problem-solution pattern. Part One of the book, entitled ‘Justification Theory,

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<sup>28</sup> de Boer, “Paul and Jewish Apocalyptic”, 185.

<sup>29</sup> de Boer, “Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology”, 364–5. de Boer has described Romans 5 not as a locus of ‘interpenetration’ but in the stronger terms of ‘contested territory’ (de Boer, “Paul’s Mythologizing Program”, 6–7). I will return to this shortly.

<sup>30</sup> de Boer, “Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology”, 365.

<sup>31</sup> See Martyn, *Galatians*, 89–90.

<sup>32</sup> Campbell’s own summaries of the argument of *Deliverance* are most helpful for those wrestling with this massive book. See Campbell, “An Apocalyptic Rereading” and D. A. Campbell, “Beyond Justification in Paul: The Thesis of The Deliverance of God,” *SJT* 65, no. 1 (2012): 90–104.

and its Implications’, outlines ‘the problem’ as Campbell sees it, at the heart of which is Wrede’s observation<sup>33</sup> that in Pauline thought we find two different soteriological systems in tension. The first employs forensic categories and revolves around questions of ‘faith’ and ‘works’ construed largely in individual and contractual terms; this Campbell terms ‘Justification Theory’ or simply ‘Justification.’ The second soteriological discourse is the ‘mystical’ one, which Campbell calls ‘Rectification’, revolving around the notion of participation in Christ and salvation understood in sacramental and corporate terms. For Campbell the essence of the problem is that this Pauline ‘tension’ is in fact a paralysing conundrum for which there is still ‘no effective interpretative solution.’<sup>34</sup> Thus what Campbell’s project attempts is a re-reading of Paul’s key ‘forensic’ texts (particularly Romans 1—4) in order to surmount this deep-rooted problem, something which he admits is a ‘giddy prospect.’<sup>35</sup>

Campbell’s solution is informed by what he terms the ‘apocalyptic protest’<sup>36</sup> of Martyn (and, before him, Käsemann) against Justification Theory. Campbell, like de Boer, makes this indebtedness to Martyn explicit in defending his use of the term ‘apocalyptic’ for his rereading of Justification in Paul:

The signifier ‘apocalyptic’ is a useful label at an introductory level of discussion when broad loyalties and orientations are being sketched in relation to different basic approaches to Paul; it denotes fairly that an approach to Paul is being pursued that ultimately aligns with the concerns and readings of – in this context in particular – Lou Martyn, and that therefore is in sympathy with the alternative texts and soteriological paradigm that he endorses, and sensitive to the tensions that he detects between that paradigm and Justification concerns.<sup>37</sup>

This last phrase is something of an understatement. ‘Sensitivity to soteriological tensions’ in Campbell’s project amounts to a radical antithesis between

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<sup>33</sup> W. Wrede, *Paul* (London: Philip Green, 1907), 74–154. Cf. Campbell, *Deliverance*, 177–83.

<sup>34</sup> Campbell, *Deliverance*, 2.

<sup>35</sup> Campbell, “An Apocalyptic Rereading”, 388.

<sup>36</sup> Campbell, *Deliverance*, 188.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 191. This quotation also underscores the decision in the present project to describe this collection of scholars under the collective term ‘apocalyptic Paul’, since Campbell here points to Martyn’s work as singularly load bearing for the ‘apocalyptic’ approach.

the two paradigms. While acknowledging that Wrede ‘denies that the two systems are utterly separate’,<sup>38</sup> for Campbell, ‘Justification’ and ‘Rectification’ must be conceived in ‘terms of contradiction, and not of mere complementarity.’<sup>39</sup> There is a soteriological dualism in Paul’s writings between the forensic and the mystical, a dualism which must be addressed if Paul is to make sense.

Campbell’s proposed solution is outlined in detail in Part Four in his ‘Rhetorical and Apocalyptic Rereading’ of key Pauline texts, particularly Romans. Rather than seeking to reconcile or integrate the forensic and mystical themes in Romans, Campbell employs the rhetorical technique of *prosōpopoeia*, or ‘speech-in-character’. This hermeneutical stance allows Campbell to explain the presence in Paul of such clearly ‘forensic’ passages such as Romans 1.18–32 as a Socratic presentation of Paul’s opponents’ views, given by Paul in order to perform a rhetorical *reductio ad absurdum* and undermine their logic.<sup>40</sup> With this interpretation, Campbell claims (somewhat grandly perhaps), ‘all the problems generated by the conventional reading of Romans 1.18—3.20 and its endorsement of Justification theory basically evaporate.’<sup>41</sup> Having thus set up a soteriological dichotomy, and employed hermeneutical techniques to provide a re-reading which accounts for the presence of both elements in Romans, in Part Five, ‘Rereading the Heartland’, Campbell transfers his insights to the rest of Romans and other pivotal texts in the Pauline corpus.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 178, cf. Wrede, *Paul*, 84–85 wherein Wrede says the following: ‘It must not however be supposed that these two things, which we separate for the sake of convenience, are really two entirely separate and distinct entities, or were so regarded by Paul. The two bodies of thought are, in truth, continuously in contact at many points, and both have their centre in Christ’. However in this regard, says Campbell, ‘later scholars have not been so restrained.’ (Campbell, ‘An Apocalyptic Rereading’, 383) – this is an important observation and will be picked up below.

<sup>39</sup> Campbell, *Deliverance*, 192.

<sup>40</sup> On all this see the discussion in *ibid.*, 528–9. Campbell’s use of the ‘speech-in-character’ technique has been challenged by classicists on formal grounds. See, for example, the critique offered by Robin Griffith-Jones, ‘Beyond Reasonable Hope of Recognition? *Prosōpopoeia* in Romans 1:18—3:8’ in Tilling, *Beyond Old and New Perspectives*, 161–174. In response to this criticism, Campbell has since moved to suggest *parody* as a more useful category (Campbell’s response to Griffith-Jones in *ibid.*, 176). The basic structure of his argument, however, remains unchanged, as do the problems therein.

<sup>41</sup> Campbell, *Deliverance*, 529.

<sup>42</sup> Specifically: after covering other parts of Romans in chapter 19, in chapter 20 Campbell addresses Galatians 2.15–3.26; 5.5–6; 1.23; 6.10. Chapter 21 turns to Philippians 3; and what he calls ‘loose ends’ in the Corinthian and Thessalonian correspondence.

## Summary

It should be clear by now that the similarities between the soteriological dichotomy at the heart of Campbell's project and Martyn's antithesis between 'personal sin and forgiveness' and 'corporate enslavement and liberation'<sup>43</sup> are neither accidental nor incidental. Nor are the similarities with de Boer's 'two tracks' of 'forensic' and 'cosmological apocalyptic eschatology'. There is considerable mutual influence among these scholars and much shared ground on the issue of Pauline soteriology. Whether it is applied to the question of invasive cosmic warfare in Galatians (Martyn), a reading of Jewish apocalyptic eschatology (de Boer), or a rereading of justification in Romans (Campbell), what is shared is a putative 'apocalyptic' soteriological antithesis between 'forensic' and 'cosmological' discourses of sin and salvation.

The question which concerns the remainder of this chapter is whether such an antithesis is supported by evidence from the Jewish apocalypses and Revelation. When called upon to provide such evidence,<sup>44</sup> de Boer has pointed to his previous work,<sup>45</sup> where he cites *1 Enoch* (especially chapters 6—19<sup>46</sup>) as evidence of the 'cosmological' track in 'relatively pure form'<sup>47</sup> and *2 Baruch* and *4 Ezra* for the 'forensic' track.<sup>48</sup> An assessment of whether these three apocalypses support this essential and influential soteriological dichotomy is therefore required.

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<sup>43</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 101. See too the similar comments on 272-3 and 530.

<sup>44</sup> N. T. Wright, "Paul in Current Anglophone Scholarship," *Expository Times* 123, no. 8 (2012): 1–15, 373.

<sup>45</sup> de Boer, *Defeat of Death*, 84–8, 182–3; de Boer, "Paul and Jewish Apocalyptic", 180–1; de Boer, "Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology", 358–61; and de Boer, *Galatians*, 31–35; 79–82. De Boer's brief response to Wright's challenge is found in de Boer, "Paul's Mythologizing Program", 18 n41.

<sup>46</sup> de Boer lists *1 Enoch*: 6–19; 64.1–2; 69.4–5; 86.1–6; 106.13–17. He also cites *Jubilees* 4.15, 22; 5.1–8; 10.4–5 and *2 Baruch* 56.12–15. This last piece of evidence is particularly revealing and will be discussed further below.

<sup>47</sup> de Boer, *Defeat of Death*, 85.

<sup>48</sup> Citing *4 Ezra* 3.5–7, 20–21; 4.30–31; 7.118–119; *2 Baruch* 17.2–3; 23.4; 48.42–43; 54.14, 19; 56.6. He also cites *1 Enoch* 69.6 and 98.4–5 in this regard, along with *Jubilees* 3.17–25 and 4.29–30. His use of *1 Enoch* here will be discussed below.

### *Soteriological duality in Jewish apocalyptic literature*

I begin this examination of soteriology in the Jewish apocalypses mindful of two cautions. The first is the appropriateness of the word ‘soteriology’. In a recent survey of soteriology in early Judaism, Nickelsburg asks whether the term is appropriate in discussions of Jewish thought, or whether it is a particularly Christian construct, unhelpfully forced onto the earlier Jewish material:

The noun [soteriology] was coined to designate an aspect of Christian theology that was concerned with the salvation/redemption/atonement that was effected through the death (especially) and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, and it brings with it an element of systematization that is foreign to many of the texts in the corpus of ancient Jewish literature.<sup>49</sup>

The second caution, voiced by Nickelsburg, is that we must remember that ‘there is no single Jewish soteriology. “Salvation” shows its face in many different ways, sometimes in the same text.’<sup>50</sup> This can be seen even within the limitations of the corpus of Jewish apocalyptic literature, which employs a variety of images and narratives to approach the question of ‘salvation’. This multifaceted soteriology becomes all the more complex once one also brings into view the perspectives of Jewish narrative, psalmody, philosophical, and Rabbinic texts. ‘Salvation,’ writes Lorenzo DiTommaso, ‘is a concept with a simple meaning but many applications.’<sup>51</sup>

In the present discussion, I will continue to use the word ‘soteriology’ in the singular, but with Nickelsburg’s two cautions in mind. The focus here is on the two poles of a putative soteriological dichotomy represented by the categories described in the above summaries of key thinkers in the ‘apocalyptic Paul’. But it is worth being reminded that the concept of salvation in Jewish thought encompasses much more than these two poles allow.

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<sup>49</sup> G. W. E. Nickelsburg, “Salvation Among the Jews: Some Comments and Observations,” in *This World and the World to Come: Soteriology in Early Judaism*, ed. D. M. Gurtner (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 299.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 313.

<sup>51</sup> DiTommaso, “Deliverance and Justice”, 73.

## *1 Enoch*

### *The cosmological-soteriological framework of the Book of the Watchers*

The introduction to Nickelsburg's commentary on *1 Enoch* describes the presence of a dual soteriological narrative, as follows:

The Enochic corpus explains the origin and presence of sin and evil on earth in two ways: (1) sin and evil are the function of a primordial heavenly revolt whose results continue to victimize the human race; (2) responsibility for sin and evil lies with the human beings who transgress God's law. Each part of *1 Enoch* has its own emphasis with respect to the origin of sin and evil...<sup>52</sup>

The relative weight put on each of these two narratives shifts throughout the Enochic corpus. In the *Book of the Watchers* (chapters 1—36), it is the first that dominates: the presence of sin in the world can be attributed to a primordial angelic rebellion, the results of which are the corruption of humankind and the earth. This aetiological myth, which expands on the cryptic reference in Genesis 6.1—4, is recounted in *1 Enoch* 6—11, which tells the story of the angels' rebellion and descent to earth to take for themselves wives from among the daughters of men. There were two results of this event which have a bearing on the aetiology of sin. Firstly, the offspring of these unions, the giants, brought violence and destruction to the earth (7.3—6). Secondly, the angels passed to humankind knowledge of such hidden mysteries as magic, warfare, personal adornment and astrology (8.1—4). The combined effect of these events was that humankind became corrupt and sinful and 'the whole earth was filled with blood and oppression.'<sup>53</sup> Enoch describes how both humankind (8.4) and the earth itself (7.6) cried out to God for deliverance from this oppression (chapter 9).

The story of salvation is then told as divine intervention in response to this situation, construed as the overthrow of the angelic rebellion, the destruction of evil, the cleansing of corruption from the face of the earth, and the restoration of order, peace, and the blessings of divine rule over the cosmos (10.1—11.2). Thus concludes this section of the book, which outlines its founding myth.

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<sup>52</sup> Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 46.

<sup>53</sup> *1 En.* 9.9.



In the following section, chapters 12—16, we find a repeat of this myth in the form of Enoch’s oracle against the fallen angels.<sup>54</sup> Here we see that, as well as framing the understanding of the aetiology of evil, the narrative of angelic rebellion also accounts for the ongoing presence of sin and death in the world, as the evil spirits of the fallen giants continue to oppress humankind, leading them into sin and bringing increased corruption to the earth (15.8—16.1). It is a worldview in which ‘sin and evil are largely functions of a spirit realm that is at war with humanity.’<sup>55</sup>

We recall that de Boer holds up *1 Enoch* 6—19 as an example of the ‘relatively pure form’ of the cosmological track of Jewish apocalyptic. Certainly, the themes of angelic rebellion and divine deliverance dominate the *Book of the Watchers*, but as we will now see, the narrative of sin and salvation is not quite so straightforward. The ‘cosmological’ warp is interwoven with a ‘forensic’ weft.

*Forensic elements (1 Enoch 1—5; 21—32)*

Consider first the oracular prologue in *1 Enoch* 1—5, a vision concerning the coming judgment of God on sinful humanity. Here the central theme is the order of the cosmos and the contrast between the obedience of the earth to the word of God and humanity whose failure to observe this divine order results in their transgression of the divine commandments.<sup>56</sup> In 1.9 and 5.4–10 the judgment of God on such human transgression is detailed. On the surface, this represents a stark theological contrast to the ‘cosmological’ narrative of sin and salvation found in chapters 6—11.

This, of course, raises the question of the redaction of *1 Enoch*. Does the coincidence of the differing soteriological narratives and the stylistic division observable in the transition from chapters 1—5 to 6—11 suggest not so much an interwoven whole but more a crude patchwork of conflicting soteriologies?<sup>57</sup> In his study of *1 Enoch* 1—5, Lars Hartman acknowledges the different roles played by the fallen angels and wicked men in the two sections as one of the ‘remarkable

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<sup>54</sup> As well as the heavenly ascent material of chapters 14—15, discussed in chapter 4.

<sup>55</sup> Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 41.

<sup>56</sup> Note here the connections with the epistemological discussions of chapter 2 above. Briefly, we can discern here the importance for human obedience of *both* divine revelation (1.1–2) *and* wise examination/observance of the order of the cosmos (2.1–2; 3.1; 4.1; 5.1 *et passim*), operating in concert.

<sup>57</sup> On the related question of the redaction of the wider Enochic corpus, see below.

differences'<sup>58</sup> between 1—5 and 6—36, but on the basis of a number of substantial parallels, he concludes 'beyond any doubt'<sup>59</sup> that the addition of the prologue, with its 'forensic' narrative, is far from a theologically clumsy collocation. There is, rather, a tightly-woven relationship between the introduction and the rest of the book, for which the question of the aetiology of sin is something of a 'test case.'<sup>60</sup> Hartman concludes that

the introduction presents the main theme and provides the reader with an important point of departure for the rest of the book. Under this assumption the almost wearisome passages of 6—36 on the fall and the punishments of the watchers are subservient to and should somehow be understood in the perspective of the sinners' fate.<sup>61</sup>

In his own commentary on this subject, Nickelsburg goes so far as to say that 'the final redaction of the *Book of the Watchers* de-emphasises the importance of the heavenly rebellion by focusing on the human responsibility for sin.'<sup>62</sup>

To anticipate my later discussion, there is a stark contrast between the conclusions of Nickelsburg and Hartman and de Boer's operating hypothesis of the *Book of the Watchers* as the archetypal 'cosmological' apocalypse.<sup>63</sup> Whether Hartman and Nickelsburg are correct in their assessment of the relative weight given by *1 Enoch* 1—5 to the two soteriological narratives, and whatever history of redaction brought these chapters into their present position, it is clear that in its final form the *Book of the Watchers* weaves the 'forensic' narrative of human sin together with the 'cosmological' story of angelic revolt in a deliberate and creative tension.

The same can be said of a second example, Enoch's journeys in chapters 17—36. In his first journey (17—19), the familiar 'cosmological' narrative of the angelic rebellion appears quite straightforwardly. Enoch is shown the places of punishment reserved for the stars (18.14) and the spirits of the rebel angels (19.1). But in the second journey (21—32), Enoch encounters 'the prison house of the angels' (21.10) as

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<sup>58</sup> Hartman, *Asking for a Meaning*, 141.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 141. The parallels are detailed on pp. 139–41.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 143–5.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

<sup>62</sup> Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch I*, 47.

<sup>63</sup> I will return to this and other critiques below.

well as places of judgment reserved human souls (22.1–5, cf. 27.2). Furthermore, a recurring image features in the closing chapters of this journey: a tree. The *angelus interpretes* explains:

Then the holy angel Raphael, who was with me, responded to me and said, ‘This very thing is the tree of wisdom from which your old father and mother, they who are your precursors, ate and came to know wisdom; and (consequently) their eyes were opened and they realized that they were naked and (so) they were expelled from the garden.’<sup>64</sup>

Thus in these two journeys, the two aetiologies for sin and evil are placed side-by-side. This is a common feature of the apocalypses.<sup>65</sup> On the one hand the primordial, corrupting rebellion of angels; on the other the human transgression of God’s command beginning in Eden. Humankind is both victim and perpetrator of evil, and God’s judgment has been prepared for both angelic rebellion and human transgression.

These two brief examples illustrate that in the *Book of the Watchers* the themes of human responsibility for the presence of evil in the world and the coming divine assize are woven together with the narrative of angelic rebellion and God’s final victory. This is not just a matter of selecting a few small examples of ‘forensic’ soteriology scattered here and there in what would otherwise be a purely ‘cosmological’ text. This interweaving of two soteriological themes is an integral part of the pattern of the *Book of the Watchers*, and indeed the whole of *I Enoch* in its final form. As Nickelsburg puts it, ‘scarcely a page in *I Enoch* is not in some sense related to the expectation of an impending judgment that will deal with human sin and righteousness and the angelic rebellions that are related to them.’<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> *I En.* 32.6.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. the similar discussion of *I En.* 53–55, in J. L. Kovacs, “‘Now Shall the Ruler of This World Be Driven Out’: Jesus’ Death as Cosmic Battle in John 12: 20–36.,” *JBL* 114, no. 2 (1995): 227–47, at p. 238–40, where Kovacs observes a similar ‘juxtaposition of combat and forensic images.’ Similar juxtaposition of angelic and human aetiologies can be seen in, e.g. *Jubilees* and the *Astronomical Book* (*I En* 72–82, esp. ch. 80, where the wandering stars are correlated with erring humanity). I owe this last point to Loren Stuckenbruck (and on *Jubilees* see his discussion in L. Stuckenbruck, “The Book of Jubilees and the Origin of Evil” in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees*, ed. G. Boccaccini and G. Ibba (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 294–308).

<sup>66</sup> Nickelsburg, *I Enoch* 1, 37 (emphasis mine).

## *Unity and diversity in 1 Enoch*

*1 Enoch* is a particularly useful text for discussions of apocalyptic soteriology because it contains a number of different soteriological motifs: God's final victory over his enemies, the final judgement of sinful humanity, the cleansing of the earth, the rescue from persecution, and the future resurrection.<sup>67</sup> It is thus, as Nickelsburg has said, 'a kind of microcosm of the larger Jewish corpus.'<sup>68</sup> Other commentators have been less appreciative of this variety, describing *1 Enoch* as a 'bizarre variety of often disparate and overlapping traditions'<sup>69</sup> or a 'Labyrinth ... chaotisch zusammengewirbelten Stoffe'<sup>70</sup> and even 'a total pandemonium of heterogeneous traditions.'<sup>71</sup> Navigating this labyrinth of composition and redaction of *1 Enoch* is a complex task.

We should, of course, exercise caution in basing theological conclusions on a text that has so many redactional strata. Appeals to *1 Enoch's* form and redaction history could present a rebuttal to this argument. One might, for example, employ such critical approaches as tools to separate the various strata of the text, assigning to each literary microstructure in turn the soteriological category 'forensic' or 'cosmological.' For example, the largely 'forensic' *Epistle of Enoch* (chapters 91—105) could be separated from the 'cosmological' material of the *Book of the Watchers*. Thus an attempt could be made to maintain the strictness of the antithesis, accounting for the presence of both soteriological narratives on redaction-historical grounds. But is this a valid approach?

Hartman has presented evidence from Qumran which points to an understanding of the introduction of *1 Enoch* as relating to the book as a whole.<sup>72</sup> Chapters 1—5 are not to be viewed as merely the first piece of text tacked onto the

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<sup>67</sup> For more discussion see *ibid.*, 41; Nickelsburg, "Salvation Among the Jews", 311–4.

<sup>68</sup> Nickelsburg, "Salvation Among the Jews", 312.

<sup>69</sup> Black, *1 Enoch*, 8.

<sup>70</sup> Loosely translated, 'a chaotic labyrinth of 'swirled together' materials', G. Beer, "Das Buch Henoch," in *Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen de Alten Testaments*, ed. E. Kautzsch (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1900), quoted in Black, *1 Enoch*, 8.

<sup>71</sup> H. Gunkel, *Creation and Chaos in the Primeval Era and the Eschaton: A Religio-historical Study of Genesis 1 and Revelation 12*, trans. W. J. Harrington (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 185 (ET of 'ein wüstes Durcheinander verschiedener Traditionen.', H. Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit: eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung über Gen 1 und Ap Joh 12* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1895), 289.)

<sup>72</sup> Hartman, *Asking for a Meaning*, 138–9.

collection, but a carefully integrated introduction of key motifs and unifying elements which run as threads through the whole corpus. As we saw above, this includes the structural integration of both the ‘forensic’ and ‘cosmological’ soteriological narratives. This illustrates that attempts to explain the presence of both soteriologies through redaction/form criticism will not get us very far. In its final form, *I Enoch* is certainly complex, but it is not as bizarre, disparate, or labyrinthine a collection as some would have us think. Nickelsburg’s suggestion that *I Enoch* is a ‘consciously shaped compilation of traditions and texts that developed from and built on one another’<sup>73</sup> may err in overstatement, but certainly the corpus has so many interwoven threads that to pull one or two out of the fabric risks unweaving the whole.

Moreover, such an approach does a disservice to the redactors, who chose to weave these threads together. As noted above, Nickelsburg has recently characterised *I Enoch* as ‘a potpourri of soteriological motifs.’<sup>74</sup> However, in his summary of the book he continues by highlighting the greater importance of its unity:

what is striking about this collection is less its individual notions of salvation... than the fact that they are all to be found in one collection that derives from a common tradition, whose redactor(s) appear to have had no problem bringing them together in spite of the tensions that we moderns might perceive in their variety.<sup>75</sup>

To summarise, and to anticipate the fuller critique below, we must not force this diverse and carefully-shaped text onto the procrustean bed of our own modern dichotomy of ‘forensic’ versus ‘cosmological.’ However hard it might be for us to understand, what *I Enoch* presents is an apocalyptic soteriology characterised by the interweaving of both narratives.

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<sup>73</sup> Nickelsburg, *I Enoch 1*, 37.

<sup>74</sup> Nickelsburg, “Salvation Among the Jews”, 311.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 312.

## 2 Baruch

### *The forensic-soteriological framework*

Written after the fall of Jerusalem, though using the Babylonian destruction as its subject matter, *2 Baruch* has at its heart the question of theodicy. Whether or not the term ‘soteriology’ can be appropriately applied here has been subject to debate,<sup>76</sup> but if the term is allowed, what the salvation narrative of *2 Baruch* encapsulates is a framework of ‘forensic’ soteriology, highlighting the responsibility of humanity for the presence of sin and death in the world. In 48.42–3, he laments ‘O Adam, what did you do to all who were born after you? And what will be said of the first Eve who obeyed the serpent, so that this whole multitude is going to corruption?’<sup>77</sup> This Adamic aetiology for sin and death is qualified, however, by the insistence, in 54.15–19, that ‘although Adam sinned first’ he is ‘not the cause, except only for himself, but each of us has become our own Adam.’ De Boer has recently described this ‘double function’ of Adam as a ‘logically irreconcilable tension between corporate destiny and personal culpability’ while also acknowledging that ‘they belong together in the tradition about Adam in Jewish thought of the period.’<sup>78</sup> The soteriology of *2 Baruch* is an excellent example of the interweaving of the corporate and personal aetiological narratives of sin and the coming judgment of God. As we shall now see, however, any straightforward assignment of the label ‘forensic’ to this soteriology is challenged by another theme that is incorporated into the soteriology of *2 Baruch*.

### *Cosmological elements (2 Baruch 56.5–16; 73.1–5)*

The vision of dark and bright waters in *2 Baruch* 53, and the accompanying interpretation of 55—74, constitute over a third of the book and represent its ‘climactic revelation.’<sup>79</sup> We have already noted (in chapter three) how the periodisation of history in this vision challenges any ideas that redemptive history in Jewish apocalyptic can be understood as a smooth developmental scheme. We return to this crucial passage with the question of soteriology in mind.

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<sup>76</sup> E.g. D. M. Gurtner, “On the Other Side of Disaster: Soteriology in *2 Baruch*,” in *This World and the World to Come: Soteriology in Early Judaism*, ed. D. M. Gurtner (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 114.

<sup>77</sup> See also 17.2–3; 18.2; 23.4; 56.5–6.

<sup>78</sup> de Boer, “Paul’s Mythologizing Program”, 12.

<sup>79</sup> Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 214.

This vision might seem to confirm the above assessment of the soteriology of 2 *Baruch* as a meditation on the Deuteronomistic doctrine of the ‘two ways’, the alternating waters representing a choice between the way of light and the way of darkness.<sup>80</sup> But such an interpretation is unsustainable for two reasons. First, the clouds are not presented simultaneously as a choice to be made but in a mutually exclusive sequence, representing divinely determined periods of history. There is no question of humankind choosing the one or the other.<sup>81</sup> Second, while Baruch’s prayer meditates on the decision of each person for torment or glory (54.15, 19<sup>82</sup>), this is not the only soteriological scheme presented in the interpretation of 55—77. The logic of the Deuteronomistic summons to choose light over darkness certainly appears in these chapters (when the people are obedient to the law they flourish; when they ignore it disaster comes) but this narrative is complemented by another, a meditation on the primordial angelic rebellion, echoing Genesis 6.1–4 and the *Book of the Watchers*. It is introduced early in the section, in the angelic interpretation of the first black waters:

And as you first saw the black waters on the top of the cloud which first came down upon the earth; this is the transgression which Adam, the first man, committed. For when he transgressed, untimely death came into being, mourning was mentioned, affliction was prepared, illness was created, labour accomplished, pride began to come into existence, the realm of death began to ask to be renewed with blood, the conception of children came about, the passion of the parents was produced, the loftiness of men was humiliated, and goodness vanished. What could, therefore, have been blacker and darker than these things? This is the beginning of the black waters which you have seen. And from these black waters again black were born, and very dark darkness originated.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> As argued, e.g., in R. Nir, *The Destruction of Jerusalem and the Idea of Redemption in the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch* (Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 185–6. Cf. Dt 30.

<sup>81</sup> This is primarily an eschatological rather than soteriological image, but the two are of course intimately related in apocalyptic thought. However, there are soteriological insights contained within the eschatological framework of the vision.

<sup>82</sup> On which see above.

<sup>83</sup> 2 *Bar.* 56.5–9.

It is at this point, having outlined the familiar, ‘forensic’ discussion of the Adamic aetiology of sin and suffering, that ‘cosmological’ imagery is introduced as the angel interprets the first black waters. After Baruch’s earlier meditation that ‘each of us has become our own Adam’ (54.19), we might here expect a presentation of the doctrine of the ‘two ways’ — ‘choose therefore light not the Adamic darkness!’ or some such summons. What we find instead is the introduction of the ‘cosmological’ narrative of angelic rebellion. The passage continues:

For he who was a danger to himself was also a danger to the angels. For they possessed freedom in that time in which they were created. And some of them came down and mingled themselves with women. At that time they who acted like this were tormented in chains. But the rest of the multitude of angels, who have no number, restrained themselves. And those living on earth perished together through the waters of the flood. Those are the first black waters.<sup>84</sup>

The ‘cosmological’ narrative of primordial angelic rebellion through which the inhabitants of the earth are deceived and enslaved is thus structurally interwoven with the ‘forensic’ soteriology of human transgression and divine punishment. This challenges any dichotomistic division of ‘forensic’ and ‘cosmological’ in the soteriology of *2 Baruch*. While the emphasis may be on the questions of corporate and individual transgression of the law, the inclusion of the angelic rebellion narrative at this crucial point ensures that ‘cosmological soteriology’ is not entirely absent.<sup>85</sup>

This is not an isolated phenomenon. A similar combination of ‘forensic’ and ‘cosmological’ elements can also be seen in *2 Baruch* 73, wherein the interpretation of the last bright waters is given in a picture of the hope of the final rule of the Anointed One, bringing joy, rest and health to the earth.<sup>86</sup> Earlier chapters of the apocalypse underlined the importance of divine assize and the ‘punishment of those who have transgressed,’<sup>87</sup> but it is not this ‘forensic’ eschatological hope that we find at the close

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<sup>84</sup> *2 Bar.* 56.10–16.

<sup>85</sup> I do not think de Boer would deny this, at least on the evidence of his assessment of *2 Baruch* in de Boer, *Defeat of Death* 81–83. The issue is what happens in his exegesis of Paul, to which I will return.

<sup>86</sup> *2 Bar.* 73.1–3. Again, cf. also *Jubilees* (and see Stuckenbruck, *Jubilees and the Origin of Evil*).

<sup>87</sup> 55.7, cf. e.g. 59.2.



of the interpretation of the waters vision. Instead Baruch describes an eschatological narrative of deliverance:

Judgment, condemnations, contentions, revenges, blood, passions, zeal, hate, and all such things will go into condemnation since they will be uprooted. For these are the things that have filled this earth with evils, and because of them life of men came in yet greater confusion.<sup>88</sup>

Human beings are here not the perpetrators of sin but the victims of these sinful ‘forces’. It is not ‘those who commit hate’ who go into condemnation, but hate itself, hate personified. We might well (in a Martyn-esque move) use capital letters throughout verse 4 (‘Judgment, Condemnations, Contentions, Revenges, Blood, Passions, Zeal, Hate’) since these are portrayed not merely as the actions of men but as actors in the cosmological drama. This personification of the evils in the world is a classic indication of a ‘cosmological’ soteriology.

We have seen, then, that the emphasis of the soteriology of *2 Baruch* certainly falls on the Deuteronomistic scheme of the ‘two ways’, conceived in both corporate and individual terms through meditation on the significance of Adam. However, the evidence of the above discussion shows that this is by no means a straightforward ‘forensic’ state of affairs. At key moments Baruch weaves into his apocalypse ‘cosmological’ themes such as the angelic rebellion narrative in chapter 56 and the judgment on personified ‘cosmic powers’ in chapter 73. The presence of such elements at the head and tail of the vision of the waters indicates that, just as we saw in *1 Enoch*, the two apocalyptic soteriologies are not to be understood in a relationship characterised by strict dichotomy.

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<sup>88</sup> *2 Bar.* 73.4–5.

## 4 Ezra

### *The forensic-soteriological framework*

Can a similar pattern be found in 2 Baruch's sister apocalypse, 4 Ezra, a text described by de Boer as the 'purest form' of 'forensic apocalyptic eschatology', an apocalypse in which 'cosmological powers are absent'?<sup>89</sup> At first it would appear not, since 4 Ezra seems to be characterised by an extreme version of a legalistic soteriology. In his comparison of 4 Ezra and Romans, Bruce Longenecker described 4 Ezra as 'something of an oddity within the broader scope of Judaism.'<sup>90</sup> He was here largely following Sanders, for whom this apocalypse was an anomaly within the pattern of covenantal nomism he discerned in Palestinian Judaism, arguing that here 'one sees how Judaism works when it actually does become a religion of individual self-righteousness'<sup>91</sup>

This individualistic-forensic scheme appears in Ezra's lament concerning Adam in chapter 7, leading to a characteristically pessimistic litany of questions regarding the human situation:

O Adam, what have you done? For though it was you who sinned, the fall was not yours alone, but ours also who are your descendants. For what good is it to us, if an eternal age has been promised to us, but we have done deeds that bring death? And what good is it that an everlasting hope has been promised us, but we have miserably failed? Or that safe and healthful habitations have been reserved for us, but we have lived wickedly? Or that the glory of the Most High will defend those who have led a pure life, but we have walked in the most wicked ways?<sup>92</sup>

His questions (which continue in the same desperate vein) receive the following response, indicating the 'two ways' paradigm so essential to the soteriology of 4 Ezra:

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<sup>89</sup> de Boer, *Defeat of Death*, 87.

<sup>90</sup> Longenecker, *Eschatology and the Covenant*, 17–18.

<sup>91</sup> E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A comparison of patterns of religion* (London: SCM, 1977), 409. Cf. also the discussion in J. Moo, "The Few Who Obtain Mercy: Soteriology in 4 Ezra," in *This World and the World to Come: Soteriology in Early Judaism*, ed. Daniel M. Gurtner (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 99f.

<sup>92</sup> 4 Ez. 7.118–121.

This is the meaning of the contest which every man who is born on earth shall wage, that if he is defeated he shall suffer what you have said, but if he is victorious he shall receive what I have said. For this is the way of which Moses, while he was alive, spoke to the people, saying, ‘Choose for yourself life, that you may live!’<sup>93</sup>

This ‘two-ways’ paradigm, anthropological pessimism, and forensic-legalistic soteriology dominates *4 Ezra*, leading Sanders to describe it as ‘the closest approach to legalistic works-righteousness which can be found in the Jewish literature of the period’ and that it ‘differs from other literature which we have studied by viewing sin as a virtually inescapable power (see 3.20), while still considering it to be transgression of the law which must be punished accordingly.’<sup>94</sup>

It is this last statement, however, which offers a response to the question asked at the start of this section, namely whether *4 Ezra* does in fact present a ‘pure form’ of the ‘forensic’ soteriological paradigm. Sanders’ reference to sin as a power *while still being law transgression* suggests that a soteriological dichotomy is not appropriate. Let us consider the evidence, laid out broadly in the two major sections of the book (as they are commonly described<sup>95</sup>) and starting with the dialogues of chapters 3—9 and the passage referred to in the above quotation from Sanders.

*Cosmological elements (4 Ezra 3.20–22; 9.20–21; 11–13)*

*4 Ezra* 3.20–22 introduces a key concept of the book, the question of the ‘evil heart’:

Yet you did not take away from them their evil heart [*cor malignum*], so that your Law might bring forth fruit in them. For the first Adam, burdened with an evil heart, transgressed and was overcome, as were also all who were descended from him. Thus *the disease became permanent*; the law was in the people’s heart along with the evil root, but what was good departed, and the evil remained.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> *4 Ez.* 7.127–9.

<sup>94</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 418. The exceptional status assigned by Sanders to *4 Ezra* continues into his conclusions regarding grace and works in Palestinian Judaism (see p. 544).

<sup>95</sup> For a useful summary of the structure of the book see Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 28–29.; 50–51.

<sup>96</sup> *4 Ez.* 3.20–22 (italics mine).

As the above highlighted clause indicates, even in this most ‘forensic’ of the apocalypses, the problem of the *cor malignum* means that there is no such thing as ‘pure choice’. Human decision is circumscribed by the recognition that sin is a disease that has infected and corrupted the whole world, an ‘evil root’ which renders impossible any Deuteronomistic individual choice to fulfil the law.

This ‘cosmic corruption’<sup>97</sup> caused by the evil inclination means that salvation must depend, at least in part, on divine action rather than a pure ‘two-ways’ soteriological paradigm, something that is confirmed by God’s lament in 9.20–21: ‘So I considered my world, and behold, it was lost, and my earth, and behold, it was in peril because of the devices of those who had come into it. And I saw and spared some with great difficulty, and saved for myself one grape out of a cluster, and one plant out of a great forest.’ By no means does this brief comment represent a clear example of ‘cosmological’ soteriology. But it is a salvation model weighted towards divine mercy and divine action rather than human decision, and that is significant, particularly when combined with the above insights regarding the evil inclination. These two examples indicate that salvation in *4 Ezra*, while bound up with the Deuteronomistic pattern of the ‘two ways’, can also be understood as God’s ‘cosmological’ liberation of humankind from the corrupting influence of the *cor malignum*, the ‘evil root’ which can be described as a ‘deep-seated power.’<sup>98</sup> If correct, this analysis suggests that *4 Ezra* is not the exception Sanders would have it be since ‘cosmological’ themes are not entirely absent in this most ‘forensic’ of apocalypses.<sup>99</sup>

Further support for this position comes from the ‘eagle vision’ in chapters 11—12 and the ‘man from the sea’ in chapter 13. Both episodes have a three-part framework: the dream-vision itself, the request for interpretation and then the interpretation. In the first of the two visions, Ezra sees in a dream a many-headed eagle coming up from the sea, its heads and wings rising in succession to rule over the earth and its inhabitants. Then out of the forest comes a second beast, a lion, who declares to the eagle the words of the Most High:

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<sup>97</sup> Moo, “The Few Who Obtain Mercy”, 104.

<sup>98</sup> de Boer, *Defeat of Death*, 77.

<sup>99</sup> See also Bauckham, “Apocalypses”, 173–4. Cf. Moo, “The Few Who Obtain Mercy”, 113.

‘Are you not the one that remains of the four beasts which I had made to reign in my world, so that the end of my times might come through them? You, the fourth that has come, have conquered all the beasts that have gone before; and you have held sway over the world with much terror, and over all the earth with grievous oppression; and for so long you have dwelt on the earth with deceit. And you have judged the earth, but not with truth; for you have afflicted the meek and injured the peaceable; you have hated those who tell the truth, and have loved liars; you have destroyed the dwellings of those who brought forth fruit, and have laid low the walls of those who did you no harm. And so your insolence has come up before the Most High, and your pride to the Mighty One. And the Most High has looked upon his times, and behold, they are ended, and his ages are completed! Therefore you will surely disappear, you eagle, and your terrifying wings, and your most evil little wings, and your malicious heads, and your most evil talons, and your whole worthless body, so that the whole earth, freed from your violence, may be refreshed and relieved, and may hope for the judgment and mercy of him who made it.’<sup>100</sup>

The interpretation of the vision makes explicit (in 12.11–12) what any competent Jewish reader would already know, that the vision echoes Daniel 7. The eagle is Daniel’s fourth great kingdom, identified as Rome, which faces judgment because of its wickedness. The lion is the Messiah (v. 32) who triumphs over the eagle and ‘will deliver in mercy the remnant of my people, those who have been saved throughout my borders, and he will make them joyful until the end comes, the day of judgment, of which I spoke to you at the beginning.’<sup>101</sup>

In the second vision, coming to Ezra in another dream seven days later, ‘something like the figure of a man’<sup>102</sup> comes up from the sea (the Danielic links should again be clear<sup>103</sup>). This figure is confronted by ‘an innumerable multitude of men... gathered to make war’<sup>104</sup> who are instantly and utterly defeated by a stream of

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<sup>100</sup> 4 Ez. 11.39–46.

<sup>101</sup> 4 Ez. 12.34.

<sup>102</sup> 4 Ez. 13.3.

<sup>103</sup> specifically, Dan 2.4; 7.13–14.

<sup>104</sup> 4 Ez. 13.5.

fire from the man's mouth. Ezra cries out in woe for those who would live through these tumultuous last days (13.14–20). Again, he receives an interpretation of the vision from God, beginning with a response to Ezra's concern:

He who brings the peril at that time will himself protect those who fall into peril, who have works and have faith in the Almighty. Understand therefore that those who are left are more blessed than those who have died. This is the interpretation of the vision: As for your seeing a man come up from the heart of the sea, this is he whom the Most High has been keeping for many ages, who will himself deliver his creation... Behold the days are coming when the Most High will deliver those who are on the earth.<sup>105</sup>

Both visions involve a soteriological narrative of divine warfare against the powers of evil, whether personified as the empire of Rome or the forces of the eschatological 'last battle'. The soteriological paradigm is one of deliverance of the cosmos (11.46; 13.26) and the people of God (12.34; 13.29), in the pattern we might expect from the more 'cosmological' apocalypses. Thus, as Bauckham has observed, 'the understanding of salvation which *4 Ezra* read as a whole propounds is not dissimilar to that in the Enoch tradition.'<sup>106</sup> Yet a simplistic assignment of such a soteriological category to the visionary portions of *4 Ezra* is frustrated by the presence of 'forensic' elements such as the importance of works-righteousness (13.23b) and the 'day of judgment' (11.46; 12.34). Before the lion destroys his enemies he will first 'set them living before his judgment seat' (12.33). And in 13.37–39, the man from the sea is described both as a judge who reproves the assembled nations and a warrior who is victorious over them. This juxtaposition of soteriological imagery is, we might note, also what we find in that key passage for the interpretation of these visions in *4 Ezra*, Daniel 7, where a court scene (v. 10) is followed immediately by victory over the beast (v. 11). As such the 'forensic' and the 'cosmological' are woven together in these final visions, in their interpretations, and in the larger framework of the book.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> *4 Ez.* 13.23–26, 29.

<sup>106</sup> Bauckham, "Apocalypses", 162.

<sup>107</sup> On all this Kovacs, "Jesus' Death as Cosmic Battle" is again useful. See 238–40 for *4 Ez.* 13 and Dan 7 and 241–44 for a useful discussion of the portrayal of the 'son of man' figure in apocalyptic literature as *both* judge *and* warrior.

### *Unity and diversity in 4 Ezra*

In part, it is a failure to discern this essential thematic and structural unity of the book that lies behind Sanders' assessment of the exceptionally 'forensic' nature of *4 Ezra*'s soteriology. Sanders was here informed by source-critical views of the coherence of the book, especially in regard to its closing visions, which appeared to offer something rather different to the 'legalistic piety' of the earlier dialogues – perhaps even a redactor's attempt to 'save' *4 Ezra* for Jewish sensibilities.<sup>108</sup> The question of whether *4 Ezra* represents the work of a redactor combining diverse sources or a skilfully-crafted production of a single hand has been a topic of much scholarly discussion.<sup>109</sup> Stone surveys the various source-critical approaches, beginning with the work of Kabisch and Box in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>110</sup> In his view the methodologies and criteria involved in their identification of the hypothetical sources of *4 Ezra* are demonstrably flawed, as Gunkel showed soon after Kabisch's study was published. In Stone's view Gunkel 'recognised the distinctions drawn between the major parts of the book. However, he was not of the view that the differences were to be explained by their stemming from different authors or source documents.'<sup>111</sup> Gunkel argued that the apparent 'contradictions' and 'inconsistencies' driving Kabisch's source-critical project were 'engendered largely by misinterpretations' and 'held to be based upon misinterpretation of the text and the application to it of inappropriate categories.'<sup>112</sup> After completing his survey of subsequent scholarship on the subject and examining the structural evidence, Stone concludes that 'one skilled and sophisticated hand has directed the composition of the whole book.'<sup>113</sup> This is not, however, to ignore the presence of diverse pre-existent materials and themes in *4 Ezra*, an insight which Stone is careful to incorporate in his analysis. The source-critical approaches to the book typified by Kabisch and Box, however, involve assumptions which 'obviated any serious attempt to understand the book as a whole.'<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 417–8.

<sup>109</sup> See the brief comments of Metzger in Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 522 and refs.

<sup>110</sup> Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 11–13.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 14–15.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

Elsewhere, Stone has convincingly argued that such source-critical methods are based upon the false assumption that two incoherent theologies are at work in the two parts of *4 Ezra*. In one useful article, he illustrates this argument with a case study of the two uses of the eschatological term ‘the end’ (one, a future Day of Judgment for human transgression and two, the fall of the wicked kingdom at the hands of the Messiah) in order to demonstrate the structural and thematic coherence of the two uses of the term.<sup>115</sup> While his discussion deals specifically with eschatology it is useful here due to the broader conceptual points he makes about the coherence of *4 Ezra* and the close thematic connections between the two ‘eschatologies’ examined in his essay and the two soteriological paradigms discussed here. A rehearsal of Stone’s whole argument is unnecessary; his concluding remarks will suffice.

The differing identifications of ‘the end’ have not been adequately explained by saying that they stem from (a) two different eschatological schemes existing separately in different sources employed by the author, or (b) differing responses to two different religious problems... Consequently, (a) The author’s use of ‘the end’ is seen to be coherent; it makes sense and fits with other aspects of his thought. (b) The author’s multiple identifications of ‘the end’ *appear* to be inconsistent, yet in fact are regular and systematic. (c) The difficulties perceived in his thought as regards ‘the end’ are only apparent, arising from the application to it of criteria of logical consistency which are inappropriate.<sup>116</sup>

In sum, to borrow Bauckham’s assessment, ‘recent work has demonstrated more than adequately the literary unity of *4 Ezra*, indeed that *4 Ezra* is a very carefully constructed whole.’<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> M. E. Stone, “Coherence and Inconsistency in the Apocalypses: The Case of ‘The End’ in *4 Ezra*,” *JBL* 102, no. 2 (1983): 229–43.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 241.

<sup>117</sup> Bauckham, “Apocalypses”, 173 n100.



## *Conclusions*

The Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature contains (at least) two soteriological paradigms: the ‘forensic’ pattern of human transgression and divine assize, and the ‘cosmological’ pattern of primordial angelic rebellion and divine deliverance. The evidence examined from *1 Enoch*, *2 Baruch* and *4 Ezra* suggests in each case the presence of both paradigms and thus calls into question interpretations based on a strict dichotomy. A better understanding of the two patterns of thought is through their interrelationship, wherein the two narratives of salvation operate in concert. This approach to the duality can be seen to be operating at the macro-structural level of the books themselves but also at the level of individual literary units. There is no example of a ‘pure form’ of either soteriological paradigm in Jewish apocalyptic literature. Even in the case of the one possible candidate for a ‘purely forensic’ soteriology, *4 Ezra*, we have seen significant indications of a ‘cosmological’ soteriology at work within the dominant ‘forensic’ paradigm. What the apocalypses provide, while diverse in their relative emphases, is a salvation story of deliverance *and* justice.<sup>118</sup> The significance of these observations for the ‘apocalyptic Paul’ has been necessarily anticipated at times in this argument, but awaits the fuller discussion of the final section of this chapter. Likewise, the broader issues raised by the challenges to source-critical readings of *4 Ezra* represented by Gunkel and Stone will have much more to contribute to the present engagement with the ‘apocalyptic Paul’, but this too will have to wait until after a consideration of the book of Revelation.

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<sup>118</sup> Cf. DiTommaso, “Deliverance and Justice”, which has much in common with this analysis of *4 Ezra*.

## *Soteriological duality in the book of Revelation*

### *Messianic war and final assize*

The theme of holy war plays a major role in Jewish eschatology and particularly in the apocalypses, in the form of the Divine Warrior's defeat of his enemies, a theme which Yarbrow Collins considers 'the basic principle of composition in the Apocalypse.'<sup>119</sup> Bauckham notes, however, a shift towards a more 'forensic' interpretation in the post-destruction apocalyptic literature. 'In the later apocalypses of *2 Baruch*, *4 Ezra* and the Parables of Enoch the victory of the Messiah over the pagan oppressors of Israel is prominent, but the idea of a victory by judicial sentence takes precedence over military language.'<sup>120</sup> The above discussion broadly supports Bauckham's description, while suggesting that the two narratives operate in concert and not in dichotomy. Relative emphasis on the one or the other paradigm in a given text cannot be used to drive a wedge between the two.

The motif of messianic war is one of the dominant images throughout the book of Revelation. The presence of the 'combat myth' in chapter 12, discussed earlier,<sup>121</sup> is extremely important but is not the only place warfare imagery appears. Christ himself is portrayed as the conquering messiah, and his people are likewise called to 'conquer'. The manner of this portrayal, however, is significant not only for Revelation's Christology but also for the present discussion of apocalyptic soteriological duality.

### *The Lion and the Lamb (Revelation 5.1–6)*

Revelation 5.1–6 presents a powerful example of the close interrelationship that exists between soteriology and epistemology in apocalyptic thought. In chapter two, I looked at this passage with epistemological questions in mind. I return to it now to consider its

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<sup>119</sup> A. Yarbrow Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypse* (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1984), 130. Cf. Bauckham, "The Apocalypse as a Christian War Scroll"; Paul D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic: the Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology* (Fortress, 1979), 292–324; P. D. Miller, *The Religion of Ancient Israel* (London: SPCK, 2000), 6–12; and the seminal P. D. Miller, *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (Harvard University Press, 1973).

<sup>120</sup> Bauckham, *Climax*, 211, citing *2 Bar.* 40.1; *1 En.* 62.2–3; *4 Ez.* 12.31–33, 13.9–11. 37–38.

<sup>121</sup> Again see Yarbrow Collins, *Combat Myth*, and Aune, *Revelation*, 667–74.

soteriology, since its imagery is important for understanding the relationship between two major soteriological paradigms.

And I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals; and I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?’ And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, and I wept much that no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. Then one of the elders said to me, ‘Weep not; lo, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.’

And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders, I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain...

In Mangina’s estimation, ‘how we interpret the entire Apocalypse depends on how we interpret the scene that now lies before us.’<sup>122</sup> In this dense and important passage we find encapsulated in visionary form the alleged soteriological dichotomy between ‘deliverance’ and ‘forgiveness’.

In what John hears, ‘the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David’, is expressed the Jewish Messianic hope for a coming warrior-king who would deliver his people. The above discussion of the Lion in *4 Ezra* 11–12 is just one of the key relevant passages; the image goes back, of course, to Jacob’s blessing on Judah in Genesis 49.8–12, and is here combined with the ‘Root of Jesse’ image from Isaiah 11. The overall picture is one of conquest and deliverance of the people of God from their oppressors by the long-awaited Davidic Messiah. But, as Bauckham has convincingly argued,<sup>123</sup> what John *hears* is radically transformed by what he *sees*: ‘a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain.’ The military conquest implied by the invocation of the Lion is thus redefined through the suffering of the sacrificial Lamb, and this represents a startling and novel reinterpretation of the messianic hope: ‘John has forged a new

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<sup>122</sup> Mangina, *Revelation*, 87.

<sup>123</sup> Bauckham, *Revelation*, 74, cf. Bauckham, *Climax*, 183. Bauckham’s interpretation has been taken up by a number of commentators, including Blount, *Revelation*, 116.

symbol of conquest by sacrificial death.’<sup>124</sup> Furthermore, he has drawn together the two threads of ‘deliverance’ and ‘forgiveness’ in his paradoxical imagery.

In his comments on Revelation 5, Joseph Mangina unpacks further the relationship between the two soteriological perspectives, beginning by affirming Martyn’s dramatic approach to apocalyptic in Paul.

Like all apocalyptic theology in the New Testament, Revelation is shaped by what may be called a ‘three-actor drama’ involving God, human beings, and the anti-God forces of sin and death. The three-actor pattern is one in which God acts to deliver human beings *from* these forces; the operative soteriological metaphor is that of deliverance from bondage or defeating an enemy in warfare.<sup>125</sup>

This is essentially the same as the ‘cosmological’ paradigm of soteriology. Mangina continues by describing a second paradigm in which

what human beings need is not so much liberation as reconciliation or forgiveness. Here the primary agents in the drama are not three but two: God and his covenant partner... If in the three-actor drama Christ destroys the power of death, in the covenantal view he submits to death in order to make his atoning sacrifice, the priest who is at the same time the victim.<sup>126</sup>

So the question is ‘which is operative in Revelation 5’? And if both, which is dominant?<sup>127</sup> Mangina’s response is that ‘there are not two dramas or stories in the New Testament, but only one – the story of the Messiah who is *both* victorious Lion *and* self-offering Lamb. The sacrifice is the victory.’<sup>128</sup> This observation, that there is a harmony between ‘apocalyptic’ and ‘covenantal’ narratives, is crucial to the present discussion. Revelation ‘preserves the unity of these two moments’<sup>129</sup> through the paradox of the Lion-Lamb. The thematic distinctions of the two paradigms remain without collapsing into each other. The newly-forged symbol of Revelation 5

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<sup>124</sup> Bauckham, *Revelation*, 74.

<sup>125</sup> Mangina, *Revelation*, 89.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 89–90.

<sup>127</sup> See Martyn, *Galatians*, 98 n51.

<sup>128</sup> Mangina, *Revelation*, 90.

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

undermines any sharp division between categories of ‘deliverance’ and ‘forgiveness’. These different soteriological threads, attested in the OT as well as in the apocalyptic literature discussed above, are drawn together in Jesus Christ, the ‘sacrifice that not only redeems but also conquers.’<sup>130</sup>

Here we might return to Revelation 12, wherein Satan is ‘conquered... by the blood of the Lamb.’<sup>131</sup> The above discussion, however, is not in itself an argument for the interweaving of ‘cosmological’ and ‘forensic’ soteriologies, since the sacrificial Lamb is not strictly speaking a ‘forensic’ image. The locus of salvation here is the altar, not the law-court. In order to see how Revelation combines the ‘forensic’ and ‘cosmological’ we turn to another Christological image.

### *The Warrior and the Judge (Revelation 19—20)*

At the other end of Revelation stands another Christological vision.

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems; and he has a name inscribed which no one knows but himself. He is clad in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, followed him on white horses. From his mouth issues a sharp sword with which to smite the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron; he will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name inscribed, King of kings and Lord of lords.<sup>132</sup>

Here, again, is the Messianic/divine warrior imagery of Isaiah 11, 49 and 63, and of Psalms 2, 96 and 98,<sup>133</sup> which is so important to apocalyptic soteriology. The image here is one of the swift and total victory of the divine warrior-king, defeating the beast

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<sup>130</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 351. Cf. now also J. R. Treat, *The Crucified King: Atonement and Kingdom in Biblical and Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 119–124.

<sup>131</sup> Rev 12.11a. The designation of Satan as ‘the accuser’ in 12.10 and the ‘word of testimony’ in 12.11b indicate that legal theme sits alongside the military and cultic. See Treat, *Crucified King*, 124–6; 206–7.

<sup>132</sup> Rev 19.11–16.

<sup>133</sup> And many more psalms besides, not least Ps. 89, where the divine warrior ‘rule[s] the raging of the sea’ (v.9). For a survey of the ‘divine warrior’ in the psalter see Hanson, *Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 305–8.

and his allies (19.19–21) and ruling with a rod of iron.<sup>134</sup> After the millennium, the forces of evil gather for a great cosmological battle against the saints, only to be thrown into the lake of fire (20.10). But, before the arrival of the New Heaven and the New Earth, another significant soteriological event takes place. The narrative does not end with a battle, but with a judgment scene:

I saw a great white throne and him who sat upon it; from his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Also another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, by what they had done.<sup>135</sup>

This should not come as a surprise to the attentive reader of the first passage, or to anyone familiar with the Psalms and Isaiah. Revelation 20.11–12 is not simply a juxtaposition of the two soteriological images. Woven into the description of the warrior on the horse in chapter 19, and the OT passages to which it alludes, is important juridical language. The Rider's designation 'Faithful and True' (19.11), echoes the earlier description of Jesus as the 'faithful and true *witness*' (3.14). We are then told that 'in righteousness *he judges and makes war*' (19.11; cf. Isaiah 11.4) and his means of triumph is 'the sword of his mouth' (19.15, 21; cf. Isaiah 49.2) which is his word of judgment. John demonstrates no awkwardness in weaving together the 'cosmological' victory and deliverance of the Rider on the white horse and the 'forensic' judgment and forgiveness of the Judge on the white throne. As Bauckham summarises it, 'the military imagery is controlled by judicial imagery... early Christians commonly understood Jesus as both Saviour now and Judge at the end, without feeling any of the incongruity modern minds often find in that combination.'<sup>136</sup> Crucially, what unites these soteriological themes, and what undergirds the trope of the divine warrior in the Psalms and Isaiah, is the narrative of the covenant, and in particular the Exodus,<sup>137</sup> a theme to which we now turn.

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<sup>134</sup> Cf. Ps 2.9. See chapter 3 for the eschatological significance of this designation. On the shift from 'break them with a rod of iron' to 'rule them with a rod of iron' here see, e.g. Beale, *Revelation*, 962.

<sup>135</sup> Rev 20.11–12.

<sup>136</sup> Bauckham, *Revelation*, 105–6. Cf. also Kovacs, "Jesus' Death as Cosmic Battle", for whom Rev 19.11 clearly demonstrates 'the close association of the two types of images' (239–40).

<sup>137</sup> E.g. Ps 98.3 (covenant) and Isa 11.15–6 (Exodus).

### *The new Exodus: deliverance and judgment*

Arguably Judaism's central soteriological theme is the Exodus, which Bauckham considers 'one of the dominant symbolic motifs of Revelation'<sup>138</sup> and which Mangina describes as 'a kind of subtext throughout the Apocalypse, present yet hidden under multiple figures, hints, and allusions.'<sup>139</sup> My focus will be chapters 15—16, but John does not limit Exodus imagery to that passage: the Lamb of chapter 5 is best understood, I shall argue, as (at least) the Passover Lamb. Additionally, the symbolic name of Egypt has already been introduced in 11.8, and the call in 18.4 is for God's people to 'come out' of Babylon lest they 'share in her plagues'. The use of the Exodus as a soteriological paradigm is a feature of Revelation that is by no means unique to the book, being found elsewhere in Jewish apocalyptic thought. Citing the evidence of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* chapter 30, in which an even closer Exodus parallel is given with a sequence of ten plagues on the Gentiles, Bauckham has argued 'that there was already, before John wrote, an apocalyptic tradition of paralleling the last plagues with the plagues of Egypt, in accordance with the well-established treatment of the End as a new Exodus.'<sup>140</sup> And Joel Marcus' 'apocalyptic' commentary on Mark repeatedly highlights the gospel's important Exodus typology.<sup>141</sup>

While it is clear that Revelation 15—16 does not slavishly follow the narrative order of Exodus 5—15, there are at least three major images to highlight. I will discuss each of these, working forwards through Revelation 15—16 (glancing at chapter 5). Firstly, I shall argue that the 'new song' of 15.2–4 parallels the song of Moses in Exodus 15.1–19. Then there is the mention of the Lamb in 15.3, just discussed. Finally, the bowl judgments in 15.5—16.21 bring seven plagues, which are closely modelled after the ten plagues of Egypt in Exodus 7—12.

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<sup>138</sup> Bauckham, *Climax*, 296.

<sup>139</sup> Mangina, *Revelation*, 181.

<sup>140</sup> Bauckham, *Climax*, 204.

<sup>141</sup> J. Marcus, *Mark: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 2 vols., vol. 27 & 27A, Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1999) (passim, see index s.v. 'Exodus typology'). Cf. also J. Bowman, *The Gospel of Mark: The New Christian Jewish Passover Haggadah* (Leiden: Brill, 1965).

*The 'song of Moses' (Revelation 15.2–4; 5.6–10)*

We pick up the Christological vision of chapter 5 where we left off.

And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders, I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth; and he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and with golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints; and they sang a new song, saying, 'Worthy art thou to take the scroll and open its seals, for thou wast slain and by thy blood didst ransom men for God from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and hast made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on earth.'<sup>142</sup>

The theme of the 'new song' is taken up again in 15.2–4:

And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, 'Great and wonderful are thy deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are thy ways, O King of the ages! Who shall not fear and glorify thy name, O Lord? For thou alone art holy. All nations shall come and worship thee, for thy judgments have been revealed.'

To what does John refer in his designation 'song of Moses'? There are a few options, of which I will highlight two.<sup>143</sup> The first interpretation, preferred by most

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<sup>142</sup> Rev 5.6–10.

<sup>143</sup> Aune, *Revelation*, 872, lists a third text, Ps 90, as a 'song of Moses'. Moreover, as well as these three texts, there is of course another option: that of the song being a more general amalgam of themes from various OT passages (see, for example E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation: justice and judgment* (Fortress, 1985)135 and Beale, *Revelation*, 794). While this solution may remove the problem



commentators, is that John is referring to Moses' song by the Red Sea in Exodus 15, praising God for delivering his people from Egypt. But this is problematised by the observation that the content of the song of Revelation 15 appears to have very few connections with Exodus 15 beyond a basic sense of the praise of God for his deeds as a triumphant King (v. 3; cf. Exodus 15.1, 11, 18).<sup>144</sup> For some commentators, therefore, the more convincing contender for John's 'song of Moses' is Deuteronomy 32.1–43, in which Moses praises God's justice and covenant faithfulness.<sup>145</sup> Bauckham considers this link 'very tenuous indeed'<sup>146</sup> but a close examination suggests numerous verbal connections:

ὅτι ὄνομα κυρίου ἐκάλεσα  
 δότε μεγαλωσύνην τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν.  
 Θεός, ἀληθινὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ,  
 καὶ πᾶσαι αἱ ὁδοὶ αὐτοῦ κρίσεις  
 Θεὸς πιστός, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἀδικία,  
 δίκαιος καὶ ὄσιος κύριος.  
 (Deuteronomy 32.3–4 LXX)

Μεγάλα καὶ θαυμαστά τὰ ἔργα σου,  
 κύριε, ὁ θεός, ὁ παντοκράτωρ·  
δίκαιαι καὶ ἀληθινὰ αἱ ὁδοί σου  
 (Revelation 15.3b)

On the other hand, among the evidence in favour of the Exodus 15 connection are a number of allusions to the Exodus narrative in the wider context. First, the theme of victory, so prevalent in the Exodus song, is introduced through the depiction of the singers as 'those who had conquered' (v.2). Second, paralleling Moses' location beside the Red Sea, the song takes place 'beside the sea of glass' (v.2), a feature that also

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of the lack of literary connection between Rev 15 and the two OT 'songs of Moses', it does so at the expense of rendering redundant John's choice of that designation.

<sup>144</sup> See the discussions in Aune, *Revelation*, 872–3; Bauckham, *Climax*, 301–2.

<sup>145</sup> See, for example, Beale, *Revelation*, 793.

<sup>146</sup> Bauckham, *Climax*, 297.

echoes the ancient theme of the divine warrior's triumph over chaos (cf. 21.1b).<sup>147</sup> Third, Moses is described as 'the servant of God' (v.3), the title ascribed to him immediately before the song in Exodus 14.31. These three echoes have been sufficient for most commentators to link Revelation 15.2–3 with Moses' song in Exodus 15, despite the apparent lack of a literary relationship between them.

Consideration of Jewish exegetical strategies suggests, however, that there are perhaps more literary connections to the text of Exodus 15 than some have granted. In his discussion of the 'song of Moses' Bauckham has argued against what he sees as a 'scholarly misunderstanding'<sup>148</sup> regarding the Jewish reading strategies of the book of Revelation, and argues at length that the text of Exodus 15 is in fact being carefully expounded in John's 'song of Moses'. To illustrate these reading strategies, Bauckham gives the parallel example of the reference to the 'song of Deborah' in Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities*, chapter 32. Just as in Revelation 15, what is given in that passage is not a quotation or paraphrase of Judges 5.2—31, but

the author's own, new version of the biblical song of Deborah, by which he expresses his own interpretation of the great deliverance of the Israelites from the army of Sisera. Like the biblical version of the song of Deborah, it celebrates that deliverance, but as a new version of the song of Deborah it can provide a fresh interpretation of the significance of that deliverance.<sup>149</sup>

Bauckham describes how 'Jewish exegesis made much use of the principle that passages in which the same words and phrases occur can be used to interpret each other.'<sup>150</sup> He uses this insight to argue that John's song is an example of skilful exegesis of Exodus 15,<sup>151</sup> but by a similar argument the same conclusions may be drawn regarding Deuteronomy 32, as suggested by the numerous verbal parallels between Deuteronomy 32.3–4 and Revelation 15.3 observed above. This need not mean, however, that we reject the clear thematic links between Revelation 15 and

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<sup>147</sup> On which see Miller, *The Religion of Ancient Israel*, 7–10. Hanson describes Exodus 15 as 'the finest example of the Divine Warrior Hymn' in the literature (Hanson, *Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 300–1).

<sup>148</sup> Bauckham, *Climax*, 298.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 299. Bauckham draws parallels here with the rabbinic exegetical principle of *gezērâ šāwâ*.

<sup>151</sup> Not directly, but via acknowledgment that the same exegetical strategy is at work in Psalm 105 and Isaiah 12's use of Exodus 15. See the whole detailed argument in *ibid.*, 296–307.

Exodus 15 (and, if Bauckham is correct, their literary relationship) in favour of the Deuteronomy 32 option: it is possible to retain both connections. An exegetical technique frequently employed throughout John's writing is his gathering together of multiple passages from the Jewish Scriptures through a web of allusions, images and echoes in order to fashion a new combination of these features of the source texts. In his depiction of the whore in Revelation 18, to cite one example, he skilfully weaves together the oracle against Tyre in Ezekiel 26—28 and the prophecy against Babylon in Jeremiah 50—51 to create a new oracle against Rome. Given the strong evidence in favour of each of the two possible source texts there is every reason, therefore, to suggest a similar reading strategy at work in John's 'song of Moses.' Thus we need not choose between the two sources, but rather view Revelation 15 as a combination and reinterpretation of the themes of both Exodus 15 and Deuteronomy 32.

This hypothesis has some important soteriological implications. Exodus 15 praises God the warrior for the triumph and deliverance of the Exodus (with, behind it the trope of the divine warrior's defeat of the chaotic sea), while Deuteronomy 32 praises God's justice and covenant faithfulness. To put it in the terms of the present discussion, the first is shaped by a largely 'cosmological' soteriology; the second is largely 'forensic'. By gathering up both of these themes in the new context of the one 'song of Moses' in Revelation 15 John breaks down a putative antithesis between these two paradigms, just as he did with the Christological imagery discussed above. In John's 'new song', God is to be praised both for his great deeds of deliverance *and* his just and true judgement.

#### *The Passover Lamb (Revelation 15.3; 5.6–10)*

The song of Revelation 15 is not only the 'song of Moses' but also 'the song of the Lamb' (15.3). But which Lamb? There are at least three options: (a) the Passover sacrifice, (b) a reference to animal sacrifice more generally, and (c) the suffering servant of Isaiah 53.7.<sup>152</sup> Since the Exodus is the framing context, the proper identification of the Lamb is likely the Passover sacrifice. This is supported by the

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<sup>152</sup> See the surveys of the interpretative options in, e.g. Beale, *Revelation*, 351; Mangina, *Revelation*, 87–90. At this point in his argument, Mangina's commentary states that 'we have to choose among these alternatives.' (89) This is an unfortunate misprint (confirmed by correspondence) and should presumably read 'we *do not* have to choose...' since his argument here is precisely for the Lamb as a polyvalent 'intertextual image.'

content of the song of the elders in 5.9–10. The Lamb is worthy, they sing, since he ransomed men for God by his blood, an image often used to describe God’s deliverance of his people from the slavery of Egypt.<sup>153</sup>

But we should not exclude the possibility that John has in mind the Isaianic servant reference. For Bauckham the song of verses 9–10 indicates quite clearly that this should be understood *both* as the Passover lamb *and also* the Isaianic suffering servant.<sup>154</sup> Again John is creatively combining imagery from two sources, a polyvalent approach also favoured by Beale who adds that ‘both have in common with the metaphorical lamb, which accomplishes redemption and victory for God’s people.’<sup>155</sup> Regardless of which option or combination of options we choose, therefore, what is implied by this image is not a paradigm of victory and deliverance but one of guilt, sacrifice, and forgiveness.

What implications can be drawn from this? We remember here the earlier discussion, and especially Beale’s insight that the Lamb is ‘a sacrifice that not only redeems but also conquers’<sup>156</sup> Moreover, since the song is *both* the song of Moses *and* of the Lamb, it stands as a testimony to this combination of the themes of deliverance/victory and sacrifice/forgiveness. The Passover Lamb stands in the Jewish imagination as a symbol of *both* God’s unilateral deliverance *and* sacrificial cost (including the contingent obedience of the people). This is a combination of soteriological themes which finds its locus in John’s Christology, which takes up, intensifies and transforms the soteriological statements of the song of Moses by attribution also to the Lamb in its eschatological new-Exodus context.<sup>157</sup>

#### *The plagues (Revelation 15.5—16.21)*

In Revelation 15—16 John sees, coming out of the temple, seven angels with seven bowls to be poured out on the earth. There are clear, though not exact, connections between the seven bowls and the plagues of Egypt. The pouring out of the first bowl in 16.2 unleashes a plague of ‘foul and evil sores’ in a clear parallel with the sixth plague of Exodus 9.10, the plague of boils. Then the second and third bowls (Rev 16.3–4) turn

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<sup>153</sup> E.g. Dt 7.8; 13.5. See the discussion in Bauckham, *Revelation*, 71.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 70–1.

<sup>155</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 351.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 351.

<sup>157</sup> See the discussion in Mangina, *Revelation*, 181–2.

first the sea and then the rivers to blood, paralleling the transformation of the Nile in Exodus 7.20–24. The fourth bowl judgment, in 16.8–9, is poured on the sun which afflicts the earth with scorching heat, an image with no clear Exodus reference, save perhaps the blasphemous and unrepentant response of humankind which parallels Pharaoh’s repeated hard-heartedness. The Exodus imagery returns in the remaining judgments. Bowl five (16.10) sends the kingdom of the beast into darkness, paralleling the ninth plague of Exodus 10.22–23. The sixth bowl judgment in 16.12–16, in which the Euphrates is dried up, seems to have no clear Exodus allusions until we are told its purpose: to clear the way for the kings of the east, assembled for the battle of Armageddon under the influence of ‘three foul spirits like frogs’ (16.13) evoking the second plague of Exodus 8.5–7.<sup>158</sup> The seventh and final bowl brings peals of thunder, flashes of lightning and a great earthquake. It thus appears to parallel the Sinai theophany rather than any of the plagues. Accompanying the earthquake, however, is a storm of ‘huge hailstones, each weighing about a hundred pounds’ (v.21) and thus the seventh bowl combines the thunder and hail of the seventh plague of Exodus 9.23–26 with the earthquake of the Sinai theophany.<sup>159</sup> Clearly, the number and order of the plagues in John’s account are not in exact correspondence with the Exodus tradition. There are omissions such as the plagues of gnats and flies (though note the locusts of the fifth trumpet judgment in 9.3–11<sup>160</sup>). But despite the lack of precise parallelism, it is clear that an Exodus motif is at work in Revelation 16 and elsewhere.

What is the soteriological purpose of the plagues? Firstly, there is a retributive appropriateness to the plagues, which are repeatedly designated ‘judgments’. The first bowl brings the plague of sores, aptly ‘marking’ the flesh of those who bore the mark of the beast. Then, in response to the second bowl and the plague of blood, the angel declares, ‘just art thou in these thy judgments, thou who art and wast, O Holy One. For men have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink. It is their due!’ (16.5b–6). But the plagues are not a straightforward retributive

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<sup>158</sup> Here, perhaps, the drying up of the waters can be seen as a sort of ‘twisted’ parallel of the Red Sea. There the dry river bed brought deliverance; here it opens the way and threatens destruction.

<sup>159</sup> See the discussion in Bauckham, “Eschatological Earthquake”, 199–209, esp. 204–7.

<sup>160</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 465–72; 808–10 also demonstrates the importance of Exodus imagery to understanding the earlier trumpet judgments, which he considers ‘parallel literarily, thematically, and temporally’ (809) with the bowl plagues. I have here limited myself to consideration of the seven bowls, but the same exegetical conclusions could equally be applied to the trumpets.

‘forensic’ image. The lack of repentance mentioned in 16.11 is suggestive of the similar statement, at 9.20–21, during the sequence of trumpets. There, the judgments of God are limited to a ‘third of the earth’, so that repentance and deliverance of the people might be gained, just as the Exodus plagues were intended to soften the hard heart of Pharaoh and bring release from slavery for the people of God. As Mangina puts it, ‘just as the goal of the exodus was not the death of the Egyptians but Israel’s deliverance, so the purpose of the bowls is not the destruction of humanity but the gathering of a people.’<sup>161</sup> There is thus a twofold soteriological purpose to the plagues: a just sentence for sinful humanity and divine deliverance from the slavery of rebellion.

### *Summary*

What does this mean for the present discussion of soteriological dichotomies? The theme of Exodus is central to any discussion of salvation in the book of Revelation, since that event stands as arguably the most significant locus of reflection on the question of salvation in Judaism, and supplies much of the book’s soteriological imagery. The soteriological paradigm represented by the Exodus is a many-layered one. It is a great act of unilateral divine deliverance and the defeat of his enemies, celebrated by his people. ‘I will sing to the Lord,’ Moses declares, ‘for he has triumphed... the Lord is a warrior.’<sup>162</sup> But the victorious deliverance of the people of God out of Egyptian slavery also involved the vicarious sacrifice of the Passover Lamb, personally appropriated through the obedience of the people, and it is this Lamb whose blood marks out the people of God in Revelation. Additionally, it represents the execution of divine judgment for the hardness of human hearts; the plagues of Revelation are the response to the subaltern cry for the Sovereign Lord to both ‘judge and avenge’ (6.10). The Exodus themes of the divine warrior, the ‘song of Moses’, the Passover Lamb, and the sequence of plagues involve at each point both the forgiveness of ‘forensic’ judgment and the deliverance brought about through ‘cosmological’ warfare; Revelation thus exemplifies how apocalyptic thought transcends any putative dichotomistic approaches to soteriological paradigms.

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<sup>161</sup> Mangina, *Revelation*, 186.

<sup>162</sup> Exod 15.3.

## *Conclusions*

This discussion of soteriological duality in Revelation has suggested, through the examination of the themes of the Messianic war and the Exodus, that the categories of ‘cosmological’ and ‘forensic’ soteriology cannot be bifurcated, however paradoxical this might appear to modern minds. Revelation’s Christology speaks most powerfully to this truth: the victorious Lion of Judah is also the Passover Lamb; the Warrior on the white horse is also the Judge on the white throne. Moreover, one of Revelation’s dominant soteriological motifs, the Exodus, cannot be adequately explained by recourse to the dichotomies of some modern New Testament scholarship. It is a narrative of ‘deliverance’ *and* ‘judgment’, themes which cannot therefore be construed according to an antithetical relationship. As Bauckham succinctly puts it, in Revelation ‘salvation and judgment are inevitably two sides of a single coin.’<sup>163</sup>

I now hope to demonstrate that the evidence of these discussions, together with the earlier similar discussions of soteriology in *1 Enoch*, *4 Ezra*, and *2 Baruch*, have much to contribute to our understanding the dynamics of these soteriological paradigms in Paul’s apocalyptic thought.

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<sup>163</sup> Bauckham, *Revelation*, 67.

## *Implications for the soteriology of the 'apocalyptic Paul'*

### *'Cosmological' and 'Forensic' Soteriology*

#### *Assessing the 'two tracks' paradigm*

In a recent survey of currents in Pauline scholarship, Wright asked the following pointed questions of the 'apocalyptic' approach to Paul:

How come it is so different from what the leading analysts of first-century Jewish apocalyptic describe? Where else do we find evidence of the split between two types of 'apocalyptic' theology which Martyn, following his former student Martinus de Boer, predicates as characterising Paul and his opponents?<sup>164</sup>

De Boer has recently responded to Wright by saying that such evidence is available in his earlier publications describing the 'two tracks' of Jewish apocalyptic.<sup>165</sup> There de Boer offers lists of passages from various apocalyptic texts which he categorises according to his 'two tracks' paradigm. The present chapter has examined these texts and the book of Revelation in order to assess the validity of de Boer's approach. What this exegesis suggests is that a strict dichotomy between 'cosmological' and 'forensic' soteriology is untenable.

It is important to remember, however, that de Boer did not originally advocate a simplistic dualism, but insisted quite clearly that he viewed the 'two tracks' of Jewish apocalyptic as 'heuristic models' which are best described as 'two internally consistent or coherent configurations of motifs that, like railway tracks, may lie parallel, crisscross, or overlap, even within a single work.'<sup>166</sup> This is an important qualification

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<sup>164</sup> Wright, "Paul in Current Anglophone Scholarship", 373.

<sup>165</sup> de Boer, "Paul's Mythologizing Program", 18 n41. De Boer directs the reader to de Boer, "Paul and Jewish Apocalyptic"; de Boer, *Defeat of Death*, 85–88 and de Boer, *Galatians*, 31–35, 79–82. It is important to note that in responding to Wright de Boer does not reject the premise of his questions, that there is a 'split' between the two types.

<sup>166</sup> de Boer, *Defeat of Death*, 85. See too the similar qualifications made in de Boer, "Paul and Jewish Apocalyptic", 176 and de Boer, *Galatians*, 32.



which the present discussion broadly supports.<sup>167</sup> The evidence of this chapter suggests, however, that the ‘overlapping’ of the two soteriological paradigms is the norm in apocalyptic literature and that what de Boer covers in a brief caveat touches on a much more important facet of Jewish and Christian apocalyptic. There is great variety in apocalyptic soteriology, and it is possible to discern two broad paradigms of salvation which receive varying emphasis in the different texts. But these two soteriological paradigms are characterised by interrelation, with elements of each penetrating the other. The subsequent use made of the de Boer’s paradigm (by de Boer himself and by Martyn) seems to suggest that his earlier qualifications have not been adequately heard.

*The ‘two tracks’ in the Jewish apocalypses and Galatians 1.4*

This chapter has shown how the most ‘cosmological’ of apocalypses, the *Book of the Watchers*, makes important use of ‘forensic’ categories in such a way as to challenge any putative dualistic soteriological framework. This places a question-mark next to certain moves made by de Boer in his use of this book in describing the two ‘tracks.’ Take, for example, his assessment of the *I Enoch* 69.4–5, which begins by listing the names and deeds of the fallen angels:

The name of the first is Yeqon; he is the one who misled all the children of the angels, brought them down upon the earth, and perverted them by the daughters of the people. The second was named Asb’el; he is the one who gave the children of the holy angels an evil counsel and misled them so that they would defile their bodies by the daughters of the people.

This is the expected ‘cosmological’ narrative. But the following verse shifts the focus:

The third was named Gader’el; this one is he who showed to the children of the people all the blows of death, who misled Eve, who showed the children of the people (how to make) the instruments of death (such as) the shield, the breastplate, and the sword for warfare, and all (the other) instruments of death to the children of the people.

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<sup>167</sup> From my reading of de Boer, I suspect that we would be largely in agreement about the assessment of the presence of the two ‘tracks’ in Jewish apocalyptic literature, but that we would disagree when it comes to Paul. See, for example, the assessments of the two tracks in *2 Baruch* in de Boer, *Defeat of Death* 81–83 and the concluding remarks of 83–88.

This brief mention of Eve into an otherwise purely ‘cosmological’ discussion of sin’s aetiology is the sort of thing expected by the paradigm for which I have been arguing in this discussion, but it poses a problem for any neat distinction between the supposed two tracks of apocalyptic. So, rather than see the whole passage as a blend of the two motifs,<sup>168</sup> de Boer’s insistence on the two ‘tracks’ paradigm requires that he categorise verses 4 and 5 as ‘cosmological’, and verse 6 as ‘forensic’.<sup>169</sup> Yet the seamless way in which the passage blends such ‘forensic’ elements into the ‘cosmological’ narrative suggests that such neat divisions between the two ‘tracks’ represent a questionable dichotomy.

A second example further illustrates this point. In his description of the ‘forensic track’ of Jewish apocalyptic, de Boer points to the various ways in which ‘the notion of evil, cosmological forces is absent (cf. the *Psalms of Solomon*), recedes into the background (cf. *Wisdom of Solomon*; *Pseudo-Philo*; *4 Ezra*; *2 Baruch*) or is even explicitly rejected (cf. *1 Enoch* 91–105).<sup>170</sup> That ‘cosmological’ themes take a more background role in *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch* seems quite clear. Later in that same discussion, however, de Boer states more forcefully that ‘cosmological powers are absent’<sup>171</sup> from these two apocalypses. He has recently re-stated this more exclusive assessment of the soteriology of the post-destruction apocalypses, saying that ‘the absence of cosmological powers from these two works is striking. *2 Baruch* and *4 Ezra* represent a Jewish apocalyptic worldview in which such malevolent forces *play no role*.’<sup>172</sup> There are a number of problems with such a categorical statement. To start, it is at odds with de Boer’s own description of the ‘two tracks’ wherein he cites *2 Baruch* 56.6 as evidence of the ‘forensic’ track and 56.12–15, which deals with the angelic rebellion, as evidence of the ‘cosmological’ track.<sup>173</sup> Moreover, it is an assertion which does not appear to stand up to the textual evidence. As we have seen, *4 Ezra*, the

<sup>168</sup> Something de Boer concedes in, for example, the Dead Sea Scrolls. See de Boer, *Galatians*, 32–3.

<sup>169</sup> de Boer, “Paul and Jewish Apocalyptic”; de Boer, *Galatians*, 31–2.

<sup>170</sup> de Boer, *Defeat of Death*, 86.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>172</sup> de Boer, “Paul’s Mythologizing Program”, 18 (emphasis mine).

<sup>173</sup> de Boer, *Galatians*, 31–2; cf. de Boer, *Defeat of Death*, 81–3. Moreover, the following verses (57.1–3) speak of ‘the coming judgement’, which presumably would also warrant the ‘forensic’ label, resulting in the following division: 56.6: *forensic*; 56.7–11: *uncategorised*; 56.12–15: *cosmological*; 57.1–3: *forensic*. This approach to the text is questionable and renders suspect the neatness of de Boer’s categories.

‘purest’ example of ‘forensic’ soteriology, incorporates ‘cosmological’ elements in significant ways. And neither is the ‘cosmological’ narrative of angelic rebellion and malevolent forces absent from *2 Baruch*, as the above discussions of chapters 56 and 73 have demonstrated.<sup>174</sup> There, as in the example from *1 Enoch*, we saw not two distinct apocalyptic ‘tracks’ but the important *interrelationship* between the fall of humankind and the fall of angels, between the ‘forensic’ and the ‘cosmological.’ There are, in short, no ‘pure’ forms of either ‘track’ in Jewish apocalyptic, a fact which challenges the validity of the metaphor.

The problems with de Boer’s paradigm become more apparent when applied to ‘apocalyptic’ themes in Paul. To repeat, de Boer is quite clear that he does not intend that ‘the various documents we have discussed can be assigned simply to one of the two tracks’ but that the ‘two tracks’ should be ‘used as interpretative tools to understand the dynamics of the various texts (including the letters of Paul...).’<sup>175</sup> But when it comes to applying his paradigm to the apostle, he states that ‘Paul’s christologically determined apocalyptic eschatology is of the cosmological variety,’ explaining the presence of ‘forensic’ elements in Romans as the result of a conversation with ‘those (probably both Jews and Christians) who adhere to the forensic type.’<sup>176</sup> Concessions that Paul sometimes adopts the categories of ‘forensic’ soteriology in order to redefine or circumscribe them do little to soften the hard distinction being made between the two ‘tracks’ in Paul. Where both tracks are found in Paul letters, de Boer does not allow them to stand together but explains the presence of the ‘forensic’ elements through rhetorical analysis, redefinition, or circumscription by ‘cosmological’ soteriology. In Galatians 1.4, Paul speaks of how Christ ‘gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age’, seemingly combining the ‘forensic’ and ‘cosmological’ motifs. In his recent treatment of that verse, de Boer’s ‘apocalyptic Paul’ interprets Christ’s giving himself for our sins as effecting

*not forgiveness but deliverance from an evil realm... Paul thus shifts the import of the phrase ‘for our sins’ from a forensic (judicial) frame of reference (the divine law court) to a cosmological one (a cosmic conflict*

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<sup>174</sup> Pace de Boer, *Galatians*, 32, which claims that ‘evil angelic powers are absent’ from *2 Baruch*.

<sup>175</sup> de Boer, *Defeat of Death*, 85.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

between God and malevolent powers for sovereignty over the human world).<sup>177</sup>

The ‘*not... but...*’ and ‘*from... to...*’ suggest that de Boer’s use of the ‘two tracks’ is an essentially mutually-exclusive one. This is the same sort of problematic move we noted above in de Boer’s treatment of *2 Baruch* 56, and represents the kind of false dichotomy which his earlier presentation of the two ‘tracks’ was careful to avoid.<sup>178</sup>

A similar logic is found in Martyn’s application of these ideas. In introducing de Boer’s scheme into his discussion of apocalyptic in Galatians, Martyn asserts that ‘the crucial issue is that of determining which of these “two tracks” is dominant in a given source.’<sup>179</sup> Approaching the question of ‘cosmological’ and ‘forensic’ soteriology in apocalyptic as two themes with varying degrees of dominance is a promising approach. But what Martyn’s commentary reveals is that he treats the two ‘tracks’ as fundamentally incompatible soteriological narratives. His own analysis of Galatians 1.4 attributes the second clause of that verse (‘to deliver us from the present evil age’) to Paul’s ‘cosmological’ soteriology while placing the first clause (‘who gave himself for our sins’) in quotation marks.<sup>180</sup> The reason given for this creative treatment of 1.4a is that ‘the formula is to a significant degree foreign to Paul’s own theology’ since ‘he sees liberation rather than forgiveness as the fundamental remedy enacted by God.’<sup>181</sup> This ‘*rather than*’ is revealing, for Martyn thus demonstrates that he views the two soteriological paradigms as essentially incompatible, the presence of both requiring rhetorical explanation. The foregoing analysis of how apocalyptic soteriology functions suggests that the division of Galatians 1.4 into its two clauses as found in the exegesis of de Boer and Martyn is unnecessary, and forces a strict soteriological dichotomy onto the Pauline text which the apocalyptic mode of thought does not require.

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<sup>177</sup> de Boer, *Galatians*, 30 (emphasis mine).

<sup>178</sup> Such false antitheses are not unique to the ‘Union School’, being found on both sides of the present discussion. For example, Douglas Moo, in critiquing Campbell’s project, falls into the equal and opposite trap when he speaks of ‘[t]he basically forensic rather than liberative notion of Paul’s righteousness language’ (D. J. Moo, “Review Article: The Deliverance of God by Douglas Campbell,” *JETS* 53, no. 1 (2010): 143–50, p. 147).

<sup>179</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 98 n51.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 88–91, cf. also Comment #3 (97–105).

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

In his contribution to a recent conference on the ‘apocalyptic Paul’ and Romans 5—8,<sup>182</sup> Martyn appears to retreat somewhat from this strict soteriological antithesis, describing how ‘sin is *both* an active agent, an enslaving power, *and* — secondarily — a complicit act of the Adamic agent, for which he is subject to God’s judgment.’<sup>183</sup> By thus combining Sin as an ‘enslaving power’ and as human act in a form of dual agency, Martyn here, in my understanding, implies the combination of ‘cosmological’ and ‘forensic’ themes in his Pauline apocalyptic view of Sin. This ‘both-and’ thus appears to bring the two ‘tracks’ into creative tension, but it is not clear how this recent statement is consistent with the logic of Martyn’s earlier work, where he seems to insist on a split between the two paradigms: ‘Jesus’ death... is oriented *not* toward personal guilt and forgiveness, but *rather* toward corporate enslavement and liberation.’<sup>184</sup> Once one admits the essential compatibility of the ‘cosmological’ and ‘forensic’ soteriological paradigms within Paul’s own apocalyptic mindset, by what logic should Galatians 1.4a be placed in quotation marks?<sup>185</sup>

*Käsemann-Bultmann redivivus: Romans 5 as ‘contested territory’?*

Matlock’s assessment of de Boer challenges ‘the apparent ease with which de Boer puts together two coherent “tracks” out of seemingly chaotic materials’ and asks whether ‘such is often tacitly done from scattered bits and pieces according to some completed picture already in mind from the New Testament.’<sup>186</sup> This ‘completed picture’ can be discerned in the explicitly acknowledged influence of the famous debate between Bultmann and Käsemann, a theological genealogy which surfaces frequently in de Boer’s work.<sup>187</sup> Broadly, he sees Bultmann’s ‘anthropological’ understanding of Paul aligning with the ‘forensic track’ of apocalyptic, while Käsemann’s ‘cosmological’ approach parallels the ‘cosmological track’.

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<sup>182</sup> The conference in question was held at Princeton Theological Seminary on the occasion of its bicentenary, the main papers being subsequently published as Gaventa, *Apocalyptic Paul*. The conference was hailed by Martyn (apparently without hyperbole) as ‘one of our period’s most significant international events in the study of the apostle Paul’ (157).

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 163. The notion of ‘complicity’ is a promising option for uniting the two paradigms.

<sup>184</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 101 (emphasis mine).

<sup>185</sup> A similar confusion can be seen in the discussion of *δικαιόω* and *δικαιοσύνη* in de Boer, *Galatians*, where he says that ‘for Paul, the terms *also* acquire a *cosmological-eschatological* nuance’ (34).

<sup>186</sup> Matlock, *Unveiling the Apocalyptic Paul*, 314 n147.

<sup>187</sup> See, for example, de Boer, “Paul and Jewish Apocalyptic”, 169–72, 181.

In de Boer's estimation, Bultmann's Paul demythologised Jewish apocalyptic eschatology (understood as dualism/imminent end) through a present eschatology and a focus on individual responsibility and decision, in what de Boer calls 'a deapocalypticized Paul, a Paul with no future eschatology and no cosmological powers.'<sup>188</sup> Käsemann, however, argued for the importance of future eschatology in Paul's thought, the untenable nature of Bultmann's individualist anthropology, and a view of this world as a cosmic battlefield. De Boer adds to this discussion the resulting different interpretations of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ: Bultmann's reading being individual and forensic; Käsemann's liberative and cosmological.

The use of different passages in Romans to support these two positions suggests to de Boer that Romans 1—4 is characterised by Bultmann's 'forensic-eschatological' categories while Romans 6—8 is characterised by Käsemann's 'cosmological-apocalyptic' ones, with chapter 5 being 'contested territory'.<sup>189</sup> Of particular interest in this pivotal chapter is the 'cosmic context of the gospel' and the role played in this by the Adam-Christ typology of 5.12–21. This cosmic frame is 'one of the distinguishing marks of an apocalyptic perspective'.<sup>190</sup> De Boer compares Paul's use of the Adam-Christ imagery in Romans 5 with the same in 1 Corinthians 15, highlighting differences such as the focus on 'eternal life' rather than resurrection, and, concomitantly, the issue is not physical death but moral/eternal death.<sup>191</sup>

This brings us to Romans 5.12 and another instance of one sentence appearing to demonstrate features of both 'tracks'. Here the question is how we are to relate corporate destiny (12a) to personal responsibility (12b). Here de Boer invokes *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch* (the 'forensic' apocalypses, according to de Boer's paradigm) as representative of the kind of thinking with which Paul is in dialogue. In those apocalypses, he finds a 'logically irreconcilable tension'<sup>192</sup> between the role of Adam

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<sup>188</sup> de Boer, "Paul's Mythologizing Program", 5.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 6–7. Cf. also the similar discussion in de Boer, "Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology", 364–5. I noted earlier that de Boer initially characterised Romans 5 as a place where 'forensic and cosmological ideas completely interpenetrate' (ibid., 365). The later shift to the stronger language of 'contested territory' suggests the increasing sharpness with which he now draws this dichotomy.

<sup>190</sup> de Boer, "Paul's Mythologizing Program", 9. By 'cosmic frame' he means 'pertaining to all human beings'.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 12.

in bringing death to the world and the personal culpability of all human beings in their sin, each one following the pattern set by Adam. Given this evidence, de Boer considers unlikely views of Romans 5.12 which explain the second clause as a ‘correction’ of the first. The two themes ‘belong together in the tradition about Adam in Jewish thought of the period.’<sup>193</sup> It is at this point that de Boer, rather than applying the same both-and logic to Paul, highlights Paul’s distinctiveness in regard to the story of Adam. Thus the dichotomistic terms of the Bultmann-Käsemann debate trump de Boer’s own insights about the Adam traditions in Second Temple Judaism.

The heart of de Boer’s essay is the idea that Paul had a ‘mythologizing’ program, personifying Sin and Death as invading cosmological powers. Behind human sin is the influence of these malevolent forces<sup>194</sup> which de Boer attributes to Paul’s placing of the motif of personal responsibility in a new cosmological-apocalyptic context, thereby siding with Käsemann. Thus what *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch* left in tension de Boer’s Paul places in dichotomy: ‘sinning is not the result of a bad choice made by an autonomous individual; it is the result and the mark of a cosmological force that has come into the world and has reigned over human beings since the time of Adam, bringing Death in its wake’.<sup>195</sup>

It is unclear what de Boer’s basis is for asserting this antithesis, other than the Bultmann-Käsemann debate. What other reason is there not to attribute to Paul the same creative tension between ‘cosmological’ and ‘forensic’ soteriological paradigms that we find in *2 Baruch* and *4 Ezra*?<sup>196</sup> The dichotomy found in de Boer’s ‘two tracks’ motif is problematised by the Second Temple Jewish and early Christian apocalypses, and since it seems to owe more to the antitheses of modern German scholarship than to the first-century apocalyptic worldview, it is questionable whether it can be used to describe genuine apocalyptic thought in Paul.

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<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., 13–14.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>196</sup> Cf. the similar questions raised by Wright, “Paul in Current Anglophone Scholarship”, 373.

## *Justification and Rectification*

### *Questioning the dichotomy*

Similar questions might also be asked about the soteriological antithesis running through Campbell's *Deliverance of God*. For Campbell, the relationship between the two soteriological paradigms of 'Justification' and 'Rectification' should be understood 'in terms of contradiction, and not of mere complementarity.'<sup>197</sup> The logic of his project is founded on this dichotomy, and so to challenge this is to challenge the heart of his argument, as Campbell admits:

It is also not uncommon to encounter denials that the set of difficulties I have just outlined is especially serious; that the two soteriologies are inconsistent and so denote deep contradictions in Paul's thinking are said to be exaggerated charges. While Paul might not be fully 'systematic', he is nevertheless – conceived in these terms – 'coherent', and so we need not press further for some alternative explanation of this data over against its customary construal. Clearly, then, this rebuttal needs to be addressed because, if it is true, then much of the impetus for my overarching project will be dissipated. I would be making a mountain out of a mole hill, and suggesting that we all need to be equipped with alpine gear to move onward.<sup>198</sup>

Campbell insists that he is 'concerned, of course, that Paul's positions are possible given his available encyclopaedia, which is being rearranged by revelation.'<sup>199</sup> But when this 'available encyclopaedia' – the Jewish apocalypses and the book of Revelation – challenges this soteriological antithesis, questions might be asked. The evidence presented above suggests that Justification and Rectification (to borrow Campbell's terms) operate in concert, not antithesis, and so appeals to 'speech in character' or parody to explain the presence of both elements in Romans do seem somewhat like 'unnecessary alpine gear'. To view the two soteriological paradigms in terms of contradiction and build a reading of Paul on that basis is questionable. To call

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<sup>197</sup> Campbell, *Deliverance*, 192.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

<sup>199</sup> D. A. Campbell, "An Attempt to be Understood: A Response to the Concerns of Matlock and Macaskill with The Deliverance of God," *JSNT* 34(2011): 162–207, 169 n19.



this an ‘apocalyptic’ reading, when the apocalypses themselves challenge the logic of the project, is all the more so.

Two final comments. Firstly, caution is needed when we observe apparent contradictions in the paradigms used by ancient writers. In the preface to his commentary on Romans, Käsemann says ‘until I have proof to the contrary I proceed on the assumption that the text has a central concern and a remarkable inner logic that may no longer be entirely comprehensible to us.’<sup>200</sup> Stone puts it similarly: ‘the preliminary hypothesis must always be that the author’s thought was coherent.’<sup>201</sup> He was talking about *4 Ezra*, but his comments stand as a useful reminder for any ancient text. This is not to sweep off the table the hermeneutical challenges of handling *prima facie* incoherence, nor is it to ignore the important insights gained through form- and redaction-critical analyses which may elucidate layers of theological complexity in a text. But it is a commitment which should give us pause before placing too much weight on dichotomies such as Campbell’s (though it goes back at least to Schweitzer). Of course, the present argument has not explained precisely how the two soteriological paradigms might cohere.<sup>202</sup> But it has suggested that, however incoherent we might find it, Jewish apocalyptic thought did exactly that. Attempts to describe how this was done must be mindful that, as Stone continues: ‘the documents of apocalyptic literature are religious compositions of a non-Aristotelian type, and consequently the application of a criterion of rigid logical consistency within them is not appropriate.’<sup>203</sup>

The second comment concerns the appeals to Christology such as Campbell’s argument that Paul’s ‘available encyclopaedia’ is ‘rearranged by revelation.’ Such appeals, I suggest, fall flat when the book of Revelation is admitted to the discourse. There the ‘apocalypse of Jesus Christ’ is the clear and defining epistemological moment, but it is also a book whose soteriology weaves together the ‘forensic’ and ‘cosmological’. The earth-shattering revelation of Jesus rearranges and re-imagines the

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<sup>200</sup> E. Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), viii.

<sup>201</sup> M. E. Stone, “Coherence and Inconsistency in the Apocalypses: the case of ‘the End’ in 4 Ezra,” in *Selected Studies in Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 346.

<sup>202</sup> Though, as we shall see, the Exodus offers a way forward. Michael Gorman has now suggested covenant as a possible unifying narrative for the various soteriological metaphors (M. Gorman, *The Death of the Messiah and the Birth of the New Covenant* (London: Cascade/Wipf & Stock, 2014)).

<sup>203</sup> Stone, “Coherence and Inconsistency”, 346. Cf. Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 14–15.

expectations of the Jewish narrative of salvation, to be sure, but the essential compatibility of the two soteriological paradigms is nevertheless maintained.<sup>204</sup>

*The new Exodus and false soteriological dichotomies in Romans 3—8*

This essential compatibility was demonstrated in the above discussion of the Jewish apocalypses and of the Exodus as a central theme in the book of Revelation. The Exodus, after all, involves a soteriology which is *both* liberative (freeing enslaved humanity and declaring God's victory over enemies earthly and cosmic) *and* juridical (promising a final assize for human transgression). The divine warrior is also king and judge.<sup>205</sup> If we are to give appropriate weight to Paul's apocalyptic 'encyclopaedia' then this multi-layered Exodus soteriology must play its role.

Building on the work of Sylvia Keesmaat, whose doctoral dissertation examined the Exodus tradition in Romans 8,<sup>206</sup> Wright has argued for the importance of the Exodus for the narrative substructure of the whole of Romans 3—8.<sup>207</sup> Importantly, Keesmaat demonstrates that Paul's interpretation and reinterpretation of the Exodus narrative was not without pedigree in the prophetic, sapiential and apocalyptic literature of his world: 'the exodus story which Paul tells is one that has been transformed already by Hosea, Isaiah and Jeremiah, the books of Wisdom and Sirach, the traditions found in Baruch, *1 Enoch*, *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*.'<sup>208</sup> It is thus

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<sup>204</sup> See the similar discussion in Wright, *PFG*, 756–8.

<sup>205</sup> Cf. Miller, *The Religion of Ancient Israel*, 7.

<sup>206</sup> S. C. Keesmaat, "Paul's Use of the Exodus Tradition in Romans and Galatians" (Oxford University, 1994), published as S. C. Keesmaat, *Paul and his Story: (Re)Interpreting the Exodus Tradition* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999). Behind them both is the work of Richard Hays, particularly R. B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Harvard University Press, 1989); R. B. Hays, "The Faith of Jesus Christ: An Investigation of the Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1—4:11," *SBLDS* 56(1983) [2nd ed. R. B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: the narrative substructure of Galatians 3:1—4:11* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002)].

<sup>207</sup> N. T. Wright, "New Exodus, New Inheritance: the narrative structure of Romans 3-8," in *Romans and the People of God: Essays in Honour of Gordon D. Fee on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, ed. Sven K. Soderlund and N. T. Wright (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) (=Wright, *Pauline Perspectives: Essays on Paul*, ch. 11). Wright makes a similar case for Galatians 4 (see Wright, *PFG*, 656–8 and, connecting this to *4 Ezra*, 876–9). We might also consider the much more explicit role of the Exodus in 1 Cor. 10—11, as noted in relation to epistemology and eschatology in chapters two and three above.

<sup>208</sup> Keesmaat, *Paul and his Story*, 229.

particularly relevant to the present examination of the Jewish apocalyptic mode of thought. Wright's concluding remarks illustrate the implications for the study of Paul:

A reflection is therefore in order about the different categories with which Paul's thought has been analyzed. Schweitzer's distinction of 'mystical/eschatological' and 'forensic', Sanders's similar one of 'participationist' and 'juristic', and the more recent distinction between 'covenant' and 'apocalyptic', are all ultimately beside the point. The story of the Exodus, as Paul uses it, overlaps and enfolds all these categories.<sup>209</sup>

This reading of the Exodus in the narrative substructure of Romans 3—8 'joins together that which Paul's interpreters have often put asunder.'<sup>210</sup> Similar conclusions about the essential compatibility of 'Justification' and 'Rectification' were drawn regarding the role of the Exodus in Revelation 15, the Christological imagery of the Lion and the Lamb in Revelation 5, and the final battle and judgement in Revelation 19—20. The divine warrior image of the Psalms and Isaiah, while supporting the use of martial categories, must not, however, be isolated from its covenant framework, a framework which allows for the combination of both soteriological narratives. The point of noting all this, of course, is that it calls into question the necessity of Campbell's Socratic reading of Romans 1—4 and the putative 'apocalyptic' soteriological dichotomy which drives it. This soteriological dichotomy, like the epistemological, eschatological and cosmological ones before it, is a false one, since the Exodus is 'the action whereby God justifies as well as liberates.'<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> Wright, *Pauline Perspectives: Essays on Paul*, 166.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*

## 6.

### CONCLUSIONS: QUESTIONING THE DICHOTOMIES

#### *Thesis aims*

This thesis has engaged in dialogue with contemporary ‘apocalyptic’ approaches to Paul by examining key themes in the context of the apocalypses. Its central conviction is that a proper description of ‘apocalyptic’ in the thought of Paul can only proceed through thorough consideration of this ‘worldview’, ‘social imaginary’ or ‘mode of thinking’. Such consideration leads to the conclusion that while Paul’s thought can certainly be described by the category ‘apocalyptic’, questions must be asked about the central dichotomies characteristic of the ‘apocalyptic Paul’ movement.

The selected interlocutors are those whose work is judged to be the most influential in this movement: J. Louis Martyn, Martinus de Boer, Beverly Gaventa and Douglas Campbell. The discussion was arranged thematically, evaluating epistemology, eschatology, cosmology and soteriology, touching on key passages in Paul at each point. These four interrelated themes are employed as a means of distilling the central ideas of the ‘apocalyptic Paul’.

In each chapter, the key contours of the ‘apocalyptic Paul’ were outlined and evaluated in the context of exegesis of key passages of *1 Enoch*, *2 Baruch* and *4 Ezra*. These texts in particular were chosen from among a large corpus of apocalyptic texts not only because they are representative of the theological variety of that genre, but also because of their importance in the work of the scholars with whom this thesis is in dialogue. To this selection of Jewish apocalyptic literature was then added the Christian book of Revelation. It is the conviction of this project that exegesis of Revelation is vital for any assessment of apocalyptic thought in the New Testament, since it allows for the examination of the way in which early Christian apocalyptic took up many of the themes found in the Jewish texts and modified them in the light of Christ and the Spirit. In each chapter of this thesis, it has been suggested that these ‘apocalyptic’ approaches to Paul are founded upon false dichotomies, themselves often based on falsely dualistic interpretations of the apocalypses, which are challenged by exegesis of the Jewish apocalyptic texts and the book of Revelation.

## *Apocalyptic Epistemology*

At the heart of the ‘apocalyptic Paul’ is the epistemological conviction, stated in different ways by Martyn and Campbell, that, as an ‘apocalyptic’ thinker, Paul rejected any approach to knowledge that is ‘visible, demonstrable, or provable in the categories and with the means of perception native to “everyday” existence’.<sup>212</sup> This means of knowledge is, for Martyn and Campbell, fundamentally in opposition to knowledge gained through divine revelation. This strict epistemological dichotomy is made central to these putative ‘apocalyptic’ approaches to Paul.

This dichotomy, however, is called into question by the evidence of the apocalypses themselves. Consideration of *4 Ezra* 3—14, *2 Baruch* 28—29 and *1 Enoch* 1—5 and 85—90 has suggested that the epistemology of the apocalyptic worldview, though varied, is not characterised by such a radical dualism and the rejection of human noetic faculties but by the co-mingling of natural theological reasoning (characteristic of the sapiential tradition) with a revelatory epistemology.

Exegesis of key passages in the book of Revelation (specifically 1.1–3; 2—3; 5.1–14; 13.18; 17.9) further supported this conclusion while demonstrating the centrality of Jesus and the Spirit for early Christian apocalyptic epistemology. While insisting on the vital importance of the ‘revelation of Jesus Christ’ for Christian knowledge in the power of the Spirit, the Apocalypse nevertheless maintains a role for wisdom and human rationality. There is a binary of revelation and wisdom, to be sure, but it is not one characterised by strict antithesis.

These insights pose challenges to the epistemology of the ‘apocalyptic Paul’. In particular, while there is much to affirm in Martyn’s discussion of ‘epistemology at the turn of the ages’ in 2 Corinthians 5, the strict epistemological dichotomy which characterises certain key moves in his argument is called into question by the evidence of the apocalypses. Furthermore, the similar protest against epistemological ‘foundationalism’ which is found at the heart of Campbell’s putative ‘apocalyptic’ re-reading of Paul (especially in Romans 1.18–32) is also a problematic move. In affirming the ‘apocalyptic’ character of Paul’s epistemology, we need not entirely reject what Martyn and Campbell have rejected.

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<sup>212</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 104.

## *Apocalyptic Eschatology*

A second problematic dichotomy can be discerned in the eschatology of the 'apocalyptic Paul'. The importance of the 'two ages' motif in apocalyptic thought is certainly one of its chief characteristics. For Martyn this indicates what for him is a central motif of Paul's apocalyptic thought, the category of 'invasion'. He thus prefers the punctiliar over the linear, and sets 'apocalyptic' against any kind of 'salvation history'. In this regard he is followed by de Boer, who describes the 'two ages' as two contrasting 'orbs of power'. For Gaventa, this theme is developed in relation to Paul's use of childbirth imagery. In each case what is being employed is a radical eschatological dualism.

Again, however, this eschatological framework is called into question by the evidence of the apocalypses. In the *Animal Apocalypse* of *1 Enoch* 10, various passages of *4 Ezra* (4.22–43, 6.7–10, and 7.47–50), and in *2 Baruch* 53–74 what we find is that the 'two ages' are not best characterised by dualism. Moreover, a genuine 'apocalyptic eschatology' is not reducible to the 'two ages' motif. The periodisation of salvation history also remains an important theme, though as we saw it is vital that this should not be caricatured as 'smooth evolution'. In short, the 'punctiliar' and the 'linear' are compatible in the eschatology of the apocalypses.

Consideration of the eschatology of the book of Revelation further develops these insights. Important for the present discussion are the maternal imagery of chapter 12 and the Danielic symbolism of Revelation's construal of time. What is suggested by exegesis of these passages is that the eschatology of the Apocalypse affirms both the linear and the punctiliar.

In the light of the apocalypses, the somewhat oversimplified characterisation of apocalyptic eschatology as a two-ages dualism apparent in the 'apocalyptic Paul' is seen to be problematic. Moreover, the attendant rejection of salvation-historical paradigms in favour of a 'punctiliar' liberation, which can be found in these treatments, is called into question by the importance attached to history in the apocalyptic literature. This can be seen most clearly in the challenge this evidence presents to Gaventa's approach to maternal imagery in Romans 8, and Martyn and de Boer's dualistic approach to the question of the 'fullness of time' in Galatians 4.4.

## *Apocalyptic Cosmology*

As with the temporal, so also with the spatial. A similar argument was made concerning the cosmology of the ‘apocalyptic Paul’ in relation to the Jewish and Christian apocalypses. Again, Martyn’s language of ‘invasion’ and de Boer’s motif of two ‘orbs of power’ are crucial points of engagement. Added to this is Gaventa’s discussion of the crucial relationship between cosmology and soteriology in Paul’s apocalyptic thought. At the heart of each of these treatments is an essentially dualistic understanding of the cosmos that frames the conviction that Paul’s apocalyptic thought is founded upon the belief that God’s liberation is based upon his invasion into the scene of this world.

Consideration of the cosmology of the Jewish apocalypses is a complex task. The present discussion has highlighted a few key images. First, we considered the presence of ‘permeated places’ in *1 Enoch* 17—18; 21—25 and 33—36. Second, and crucially, we examined the importance of the temple and heavenly ascent for Jewish apocalyptic cosmology in the vision of *1 Enoch* 14—15. Similar themes were examined in *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*. The variety of these texts notwithstanding, the driving conviction of Jewish apocalyptic cosmology is of a cosmos characterised not by a strict dualism but by a duality of heaven and earth which is always permeated, whether at key places, in the temple or through mystical ascent.

This led us to Revelation 4, and John’s vision of an open door in heaven. The immediacy of his ascent ‘in the Spirit’ and consideration of the Isaianic theme of divine presence and omnipresence in that chapter further underscores the essentially interpenetrated nature of Christian apocalyptic cosmology. Furthermore, John’s vision of heaven in chapter 21 is best understood, it was argued, as a temple cosmology for which a strict dualism is an inappropriate framework. The descent of the New Jerusalem with which the book concludes represents the final consummation of this cosmological duality.

The language of ‘invasion’, so central to the cosmology of the ‘apocalyptic Paul’ is thus problematised by this context. Consideration of 2 Corinthians 12, Galatians 4 and 1 Corinthians 2 supported this assessment of apocalyptic cosmology. The importance of temple imagery to apocalyptic cosmology places a further question-mark next to the related eschatological issue of the bracketing out of covenantal and redemptive-historical themes which the apocalypses affirm.

## *Apocalyptic Soteriology*

The final theme of this engagement with the ‘apocalyptic Paul’ was soteriology. For Martyn, Paul’s gospel is characterised by warfare: a war against evil powers launched by God in the sending of Jesus. It is this narrative, and not one of personal sin and forgiveness, that characterises the soteriology of the ‘apocalyptic Paul.’ Important here is de Boer’s work on apocalyptic literature, where he identifies what he sees as two distinct ‘tracks’ of apocalyptic (the ‘forensic’ and the ‘cosmological’), corresponding broadly to Martyn’s two soteriological narratives. Despite numerous caveats in his earlier discussions, de Boer’s two tracks are employed antithetically in some recent work on Paul’s ‘apocalyptic’ soteriology. A similar dualistic logic can also be seen in Campbell’s approach to justification in Paul, especially in Romans, which sets forensic and liberative categories in dichotomy.

Consideration of the soteriology of the Jewish apocalypses suggested that such dichotomies are false ones. In different ways, *1 Enoch*, *2 Baruch* and *4 Ezra* weave together forensic and cosmological themes, and even in the most ‘pure form’ of each track we find the other functioning in important structural ways. Consideration of the redaction history of these texts does not detract from the importance of recognising the essential compatibility of these soteriological narratives in apocalyptic thought.

Revelation, too, weaves together multiple soteriological images in such a way that attempting to separate them would unravel the book’s structure. In particular, themes of divine warfare and divine judgement are inextricably linked, especially through Revelation’s Christological imagery, the motifs of the divine warrior, the Messianic war and final assize, and the importance attached to the Exodus narrative.

As with the epistemological, eschatological and cosmological discussions of earlier chapters, consideration of the Jewish and Christian apocalypses calls into question the radical soteriological dichotomy at the heart of the ‘apocalyptic Paul’. It is suggested that this dualistic framework found tightly-packed in Martyn and de Boer’s exegesis of Galatians 1.4 and, more expansively, in Campbell’s approach to Romans 1—8, is not something recognisable in Paul’s apocalyptic mode of thought but more likely the product of theological debates from other, more recent, sources.



‘It has always been a characteristic of Pauline interpretation...,’ Ernst Käsemann once said, ‘to fall from one extreme into another and often enough to postulate alternatives which destroy the apostle’s dialectical treatment of the facts.’<sup>213</sup> Käsemann was describing German scholarship, but a similar problematic tendency is, I suggest, characteristic of the modern Anglophone ‘apocalyptic Paul’ movement. It is a dichotomistic tendency which, while suggesting a historical basis in the apocalyptic worldview, is problematised by the evidence of Jewish and Christian apocalypses. A genuinely apocalyptic approach to Paul, developed in the context of the mode of thought expressed in this body of literature, avoids such false antitheses. In its epistemology, this apocalyptic approach to Paul affirms both revelation and human rationality; in its eschatology, it affirms both ‘irruption’ and redemption history; in its cosmology, it affirms the abiding permeation of heaven and earth; and in its soteriology, it affirms both the forensic and the martial narratives of God’s act of salvation in Jesus Christ.

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<sup>213</sup> Käsemann, “Justification and Salvation History”, 65–66.

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