

Behind the Scenes of the New Testament

CULTURAL, SOCIAL, AND HISTORICAL CONTEXTS

EDITED BY

Bruce W. Longenecker, Elizabeth E. Shively, and T. J. Lang



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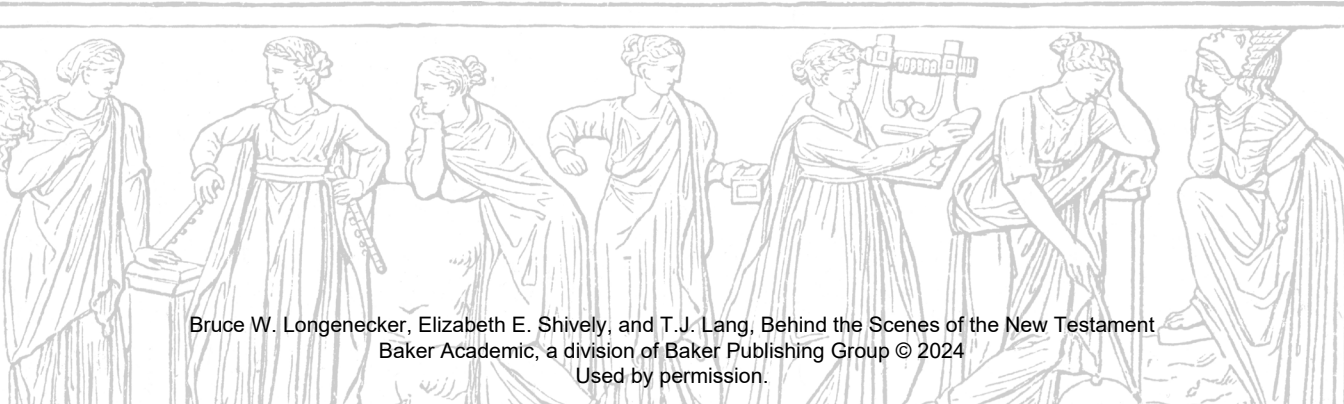
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PART ONE

Setting the Stage



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SECTION I

Symbolic Worlds

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1

Judaism

Matthew V. Novenson

There is a movement afoot among some Bible scholars to replace the traditional terms "Old Testament" and "New Testament" with the terms "Jewish Scriptures" and "Christian Testament," respectively (Schüssler Fiorenza 2001, 66–67). The morally praiseworthy cause behind this proposal is to underline the fact that the Hebrew Bible was first read—and still is read—by Jews before it was ever read by Christians or anyone else. But good intentions notwithstanding, there are problems with the proposal, perhaps chief of which is this: it gives the misleading impression that the New Testament is a Christian book ("Christian Testament"), when in fact it, too, is a Jewish book! Most of the New Testament's main characters (God, Israel, Jesus, the apostles), locales (Jerusalem, Judea, Galilee, diaspora synagogues), big ideas (covenant, law, messiah, priesthood, etc.), and many, perhaps most, of its authors are Jewish. They are "Christian" only by way of theological retcon. Granted, it is Christians who *read* the New Testament as Scripture, but it was mostly Jews who *made* the texts that compose it (Levine and Brettler 2017). Hence, if we want to understand the religious context of the New Testament, then Judaism is far and away the most relevant symbolic world.

Circumscribing "Judaism"

There are other relevant symbolic worlds of the texts constituting the New Testament—in particular Hellenism (see chap. 2, "Hellenization," below) and Romanness (see chap. 45, "The Roman Empire," below). These, however, are best understood not as *competitors* with or *alternatives* to Judaism but rather as larger umbrellas subsuming Judaism and a myriad of other provincial cultures (Egyptian, Syrian, Anatolian, etc.). By the first century CE, due to the world-changing conquests of Alexander and of Augustus, the whole eastern Mediterranean world (more or less) was culturally Greek and politically Roman. (This is a generalization and exaggeration, but only a slight one.) In other words, it is a matter not of Judaism versus Hellenism, as some older books tended to put it, but rather of Judaism

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as one tradition among many others in the vast, Hellenism-inflected Roman Empire. To be sure, some ancient Jewish (including New Testament) texts do quarrel with Hellenism, Romanness, or both. But many ancient Jewish (including New Testament) texts do not do so; and whether they quarrel with the empire or not, they are all unavoidably part of it (Himmelfarb 1998). They are "subaltern texts" (to use the helpful language of modern postcolonial criticism), written by subject people from their respective corners of the empire, coping with the fact of empire variously: for, against, as, and otherwise (Moore 2006). We should, therefore, think of Judaism and Hellenism not as two equal and opposite forces in zero-sum competition but rather as concentric circles. Judaism is the most relevant symbolic world for the New Testament just in the sense that it is the most proximate.

The term "Judaism" is admittedly an anachronism, but there is nothing wrong with anachronism as long as we do it well. The texts that compose the New Testament, along with other texts from the early Roman Empire, do not yet have the word "Judaism." (There is one apparent, though not real, counterexample to this claim, to be discussed in a moment.) But these texts contain mountains of evidence for what we mean when we use the word "Judaism"—namely, the religion of Jewish people (Schwartz 2011). The Jerusalem temple, its priestly sacrifices, diaspora synagogues, the great annual festivals; the stories of Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, and other heroes; customs including daily prayer, circumcision, kashrut, ritual purity, vows, tithes, marriage rites, and so on—all of this we very reasonably call "Judaism" (Sanders 1992), even if our ancient sources do not call it that. (Indeed, this is standard operating procedure with many, even *most*, modern terms of analysis: gender, ethnicity, identity, religion, economy, etc. We use our own apt terms for ancient phenomena for which ancient sources had their own, usually different, terms.)

I said that there was one apparent counterexample to my claim that New Testament and other ancient sources lack the word "Judaism." There is a rare ancient Greek word, *Ioudaismos*, which does appear twice in a single sentence in the New Testament: Galatians 1:13–14, where the apostle Paul writes to his audience of Gentile Christ believers, "You heard of my former occupation in *Ioudaismos*, how I was indicting the assembly of God severely and besieging it, and I was advancing in *Ioudaismos* beyond many of my peers among my people, being so great a champion of my ancestral traditions" (my translation, here and throughout). Because our English word "Judaism" is etymologically related to the Greek word *Ioudaismos*, many English Bible versions assume that the two words mean the same thing, and they render our verse, "You heard of my former life in Judaism . . .", as if Paul were saying that he used to practice Judaism but now practices something else instead. (Neither Paul nor any New Testament writer ever uses the word "Christianity," for the simple reason that that word did not exist yet. The Greek word *Christianismos* first occurs in the second-century letters of Ignatius of Antioch.)

But despite their surface similarity, the Greek word *Ioudaismos* and the English word "Judaism" do not mean the same thing. As I have said, "Judaism" means—in most instances and for most purposes—the religion of Jewish people, but *Ioudaismos*, in its few, rare instances in Hellenistic and Roman sources, means a particular sectarian program for the defense and promotion of Jewish customs. It is not what all pious Jews do; it is what only a radical few do. These radical few include the war-waging Maccabees in 2 Maccabees and 4 Maccabees and the young activist Paul in this reference in Galatians. As for the great mass of pious Jews, they practice what Paul here calls "the ancestral traditions" (which is what we would call "Judaism") but not *Ioudaismos*. The moral of this story is that ancient Jews, like

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ancient people generally, did not have a special name for their own religion. Jews had their ancestral traditions (or customs, or laws, etc.), while Greeks had theirs, Romans theirs, Gauls theirs, Egyptians theirs, and so on (Novenson 2014). Our familiar modern "-ism" words for religions (e.g., "Judaism," the traditional religion of Jewish people; "Hinduism," the traditional religion of Indian people) are artificial creations of the nineteenth-century heyday of European empires and Christian missionaries (Masuzawa 2005). They are not the natural or obvious names for these religions, and they are certainly not the ancient names.

The Sense of a Mismatch

So, then, if our word "Judaism" means the religion of Jewish people (as it does), and if the New Testament is populated largely by Jewish people doing religious things (as it is), then it follows that the New Testament attests quite a lot of Judaism—as it does (Fredriksen 2018)! And yet this claim seems strange to modern ears. Why so? One important reason is that Judaism as we know it today was decisively shaped by a cluster of events that transpired just *after* the time of the New Testament—in particular, the codification of the Mishnah and the ascendancy of the rabbis around the turn of the third century CE. Mainstream Judaism from late antiquity to the present is, in broad strokes, a form of *rabbinic* Judaism, which was not quite yet on the scene at the time of the New Testament; this accounts for at least some of the common impression of a mismatch. The Judaism of the New Testament is not yet rabbinic Judaism (Cohen 1984). Neither, on the other hand, is the Judaism of the New Testament ancient Israelite religion—that is, the religion of ancient Israelite people that we find attested (selectively, and with bias) in the Hebrew Bible (a.k.a. the Old Testament, in Christian jargon). Ancient Israel and Judah had their own monarchies, temples, pantheons, schools of prophets, and so on, most of which did not survive to the time of the New Testament. The religion of Jesus and Paul differs profoundly from the religion of Elijah and Jeremiah, even if the former is a descendant of the latter.

The Judaism of the New Testament is late Second Temple Judaism (Boccaccini 1991)—that is, the Judaism of the period stretching from the late sixth century BCE to the late first century CE, during which the second temple stood in Jerusalem (the temple rebuilt under Achaemenid Persian sponsorship after the Babylonian exile). Like in ancient Israel, priests still offered sacrifices to God in Jerusalem, but unlike in ancient Israel, new classes of religious experts (e.g., Pharisees, Essenes, seers) also interpreted Torah for Jews in Judea and abroad. The New Testament falls at the very end of this Second Temple period, in the early days of the Roman Empire, roughly contemporary with the Qumran covenanters, Philo of Alexandria, Yohanan ben Zakkai, and Flavius Josephus. Its stories of Jesus and the apostles take place while the temple still stands. Thus Jesus, arrested in Jerusalem during Passover, must appear before the high priest (Mark 14:53); Paul brings a votive offering to the temple (Acts 21:23–26); and the Gospel of Matthew says that God is resident in the temple (Matt. 23:21). But most of the texts themselves were actually written after 70 CE, after Titus's Roman army had sacked Jerusalem and destroyed the temple. Thus, they sometimes betray a bit too much knowledge of how it all would end (e.g., Luke 19:43–44; 21:20–24). The New Testament is a literary artifact of this very important liminal period in Jewish history. Most of the New Testament writers know about the end of the Second Commonwealth, but they do not yet know that the rabbis will soon arise to offer a post-temple *modus vivendi* for Jews across the Mediterranean and West Asia. Like the Bar Kokhba Revolt under Hadrian (132–136 CE), the Jesus sect gives us a snapshot of a messianic

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movement—a direction Jewish history might have taken, which its partisans hoped it would take, but it did not. The temple was not rebuilt; the kingdom of God did not come in power. The future of Judaism lay with the rabbis; the Jesus sect, for its part, evolved into a majority Gentile religion that came to be called Christianity (Donaldson 2020).

This brings us to another reason it might seem strange to modern readers to speak of Judaism in the New Testament—namely, the presence of *anti-Judaism* in the New Testament. The New Testament is a motley collection of twenty-seven texts written by at least(!) ten different authors over the course of a century (40s to 140s CE, roughly), and so it contains multitudes. Although most of the authors of these texts were Jewish, some were Gentile. And a few of the authors (both Jewish and Gentile ones, perhaps) lash out in anger at Jews and Judaism at certain points (Fredriksen and Reinhartz 2002). For example, the author of the Gospel of John, who was possibly (though not certainly) Jewish himself, programmatically sets Jesus and his disciples against the hostile *Ioudaioi*, "Jews" (not just against the school of the Pharisees, as in Mark, Matthew, and Luke). In one heated exchange, John writes, "[Jesus said to the Jews (*Ioudaioi*),] 'I know that you are seed of Abraham, but you are seeking to kill me, because my word does not find a place in you. . . . You are from your father the devil, and you want to do his desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and he did not stand in the truth, for there is no truth in him'" (John 8:37, 44). In this and a few other related passages, John voices what we might accurately call anti-Judaism, even though his Gospel is also a rich source for many aspects of Judaism, certainly of its characters and possibly also of its author (Reinhartz 2018).

Perhaps even more historically significant, however, are other instances where (arguably, and I think certainly) the New Testament texts themselves are not anti-Jewish but later Christian interpretation has made them so. For example, Paul, a Jewish apostle to Gentiles, and the earliest of all the New Testament writers, wrote a circular letter to Gentile Christ assemblies in Galatia (central Asia Minor) warning the men there not to convert to Judaism by proselyte circumcision. To these Gentile Christ-believing men, Paul writes, "I tell you that if you undergo circumcision, Christ will benefit you nothing. . . . [In that case] you are undone from Christ, fallen away from grace" (Gal. 5:2–4). Some later Christian interpreters, however, reinterpreted these verses to mean that *all Jews*, because their men are normally circumcised in infancy, are automatically cut off from the grace of God. Paul himself expressly rejects such an idea elsewhere (Rom. 11), but that did not stop later Christian readers from reusing his words in this way (Novenson 2022, 46–66). Another example is the Apocalypse of John (a.k.a. the book of Revelation), a late first-century CE visionary text written by a Jewish prophet from Patmos in the Aegean Sea. At one point John rages against certain anonymous people "who say they are Jews and are not but are a synagogue of Satan" (Rev. 2:9; cf. 3:9). Many later Christian readers took this phrase to be a Christian condemnation of actual Jews, involving a Christian claim to the name "Jews" and a denunciation of actual Jews as servants of Satan. But in Revelation itself, the statement has almost exactly the opposite force, condemning people who falsely appropriate the name "Jews" for themselves (as some later Christians would do!). In other words, Revelation itself is not anti-Jewish, but some later Christian interpreters took its words and made anti-Jewish meaning out of them (Marshall 2001).

Examples from the Gospels and the Letters of Paul

Precisely because there are those New Testament texts that are themselves (at least partly)

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anti-Jewish (e.g., John), debate over these other cases (e.g., Galatians, Revelation) continues apace. Some scholars think that Galatians and Revelation are anti-Jewish in just the way that later Christians took them to be, but other scholars (including the present writer) think not and are engaged in the complicated project of unpicking the layers of text and interpretation. To illustrate, let us consider two central examples of how Judaism functions as a symbolic world for the texts that compose the New Testament: first, the case of Jesus and ritual impurity, and second, the case of Paul and the law of Moses. In both cases, later readers would make new sense of the texts in a different, Christian frame of reference. But in their first-century context, they are Jewish texts playing by Jewish rules.

First, then, let us consider Jesus and ritual impurity. It is a commonplace in the (overwhelmingly Christian) history of research on the Gospels to say that Jesus overthrew the system of ritual purity prescribed in the Torah. According to this old saw, Jews saw menstruating women, people with skin disorders, and certain others as unclean, but Jesus chose to see them as clean, supposedly demonstrating the moral superiority of Christianity to Judaism. But as Matthew Thiessen has recently argued (Thiessen 2020, and chap. 38, "Purity and Holiness," below), this does not match up at all with what the Gospels actually say. In the stories, Jesus everywhere engages with ritually impure people (menstruating women, people with skin disorders, etc.) as if the ritual impurity does in fact exist, as the Torah says it does. What Jesus does, however, is to destroy the contaminant of ritual impurity by the power of his contagious holiness. He exercises a similar kind of purifying power to that exercised by sacrifices of purification in the temple (because he is the Messiah, the Holy One of God). Like the book of Leviticus, Jesus takes for granted that ritual impurity is a real force in the world. Like the Levitical priests (armed with their purifying sacrificial paraphernalia), he undertakes to destroy the impurity and restore the people suffering from it to their natural, ideal state as worshipers. This whole mass of stories from the Synoptic Gospels makes sense only within a Jewish symbolic universe with a robust account of ritual impurity and the means of cleaning it (both cultic and messianic). To say that it is a Jewish system is not to say that it is not also—at a higher level of generalization—a Greco-Roman system, since most ancient Mediterranean peoples had their respective systems for cleansing ritual impurity from cultic spaces. But the particular ancient Mediterranean purity system that the Gospels assume is, naturally, the Jewish one. Later Christian interpretation of these stories played by different rules, sometimes *very* different—hence the confusion in the history of interpretation.

Second, consider Paul and the law of Moses. Here, again, the history of Christian interpretation—in this case, especially since the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation—has wanted to say that Christianity transcends Judaism by its willingness to jettison the law of Moses and has taken Paul as biblical warrant for saying so (Novenson 2022, 180–96). As with Jesus and impurity, there is a lot of material in the letters of Paul that can be made to give this impression, but in their first-century context it is not so. For one thing, as we saw above in regard to circumcision in Galatians, there is a world of difference between opposing circumcision *for Gentiles*, as Paul does, and opposing circumcision *for all people*, which Paul emphatically does not do. (He actually praises the circumcision of Jewish men [Rom. 3:1–2], and of himself in particular [Phil. 3:5]!) Indeed, opposition to circumcision for Gentiles is a well-attested ancient Jewish view, founded on the premise that God gave the covenant of circumcision to Israel, not to everyone. So says the book of Jubilees (15.25–34), for example, and so says Paul. Paul's position on proselyte

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circumcision makes sense only in the context of this Jewish discourse.

Beyond the circumcision debate, however, Paul also makes some famously dismissive-sounding statements about the law of Moses *as such*. "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law" (Gal. 3:13); "Now that faith has come, we are no longer under a custodian" (3:25); and so on. These statements, Christian readers have often thought, show that Paul must finally want to forsake Judaism for Christianity. But here, again, that is not the first-century meaning of these texts. Paul reasons, as the Torah itself reasons(!), that God gave the Torah to people who sin and die, to give them a means of restraining sin and purifying the contamination of death. The difference between Paul and Moses is that Paul believes that—because the Messiah has just risen from the dead at the end of the ages—his own generation is the last generation of mortals, that henceforth people will literally no longer sin or die. To the extent that he believes that is true, he believes that the law of Moses is transcended—*not* that people are free to disobey the commandments; Paul loudly denies that idea (Rom. 6:1–2, 15). But he thinks that he, and other people who have absorbed the *pneuma* (spirit) of God, can live a superhuman life, a life like that of the angels. Angels do not have the Torah because they neither sin nor die; so it is, too, with pneumatic people. That is Paul's position on the Torah. Paul's Christian interpreters, however—most of them—made peace with the idea that people *do* still sin and die. Hence, they reinterpreted Paul's words to make them a manifesto against Jewish law and for Christian freedom. But when Paul wrote those words, he meant them in the context of a very different, Jewish theological discourse about human mortality and its relation to divine law. Here, again, Judaism is the symbolic world within which these New Testament texts first made sense (Nanos and Zetterholm 2015; Novenson 2022).

Conclusion

If we were to follow the current fashion for calling the New Testament "the Christian Testament," we might miss the crucial fact that, in their original historical context, most of these texts were Jewish. It is only Christians, of course, who have ever read them as Scripture, which is all well and good. There is nothing inherently new about the New Testament (indeed, relative to us, it is very old!), nor anything inherently old about the Old Testament (which is why it can just as accurately be called the Hebrew Bible; see Levenson 1993, 1–32). The logic of religious communities and their canons is just different from the logic of historical description. In terms of historical description, it is not the case that—as the older textbooks often put it—Judaism is the "background" against which the New Testament stands out. On the contrary, we should think of the New Testament as one chapter in the history of ancient Judaism (Vermes 1980).

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2

Hellenization

Carl R. Holladay

Hellenization is the process through which the language, values, and culture of ancient Greece (especially Classical Greece of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE) is appropriated by non-Greek peoples and cultures. The conquest of the eastern Mediterranean region by Alexander the Great (356–323 BCE) is usually seen as the major catalyst through which the Greek language and Greek cultural values spread to other parts of the ancient world (Walbank 1993, 29–45). For this reason, Alexander the Great marks a major point of transition in the ancient world so that scholars of classical antiquity use "pre-" and "post-Alexander" to designate two distinct historical eras.

The origin and use of the terms "Hellenize" and "Hellenization," and the related terms "Hellenism" and its adjectival form "Hellenistic," present some interpretive challenges. The ancient Greek historian Thucydides (ca. 460–400 BCE) uses the term "Hellenize" (*hellēnizein*) to mean fluency in Greek, but the context suggests that the term could also signify acquiring Greek cultural sensibilities (*Hist*. 2.68). In 2 Maccabees 4:13 (ca. 1st c. BCE), the noun form *hellēnismos* ("Hellenization," NRSV) denotes practices typically associated with "the Greek way of life," including participating in athletic contests in the gymnasium and wearing an easily recognizable Greek hat, both of which are characterized as "foreign ways." In Acts 6:1 the dispute between "Hellenists" (*hellēnistai*) and "Hebrews" (*Hebraioi*) probably implies two competing groups who speak different languages but who also reflect different cultural values associated with those languages (cf. Acts 9:29; 11:20).

These passages suggest that "Hellenize" and "Hellenism" in the ancient context can be used in two distinct, but closely related, senses: speaking Greek and living as a Greek. In both cases, the terms imply that one actively engages in learning the Greek language and embracing Greek cultural values, and that one is similarly aggressive when urging non-Greeks to do the same. Some think Hellenization in modern usage has a negative connotation because it signifies a form of cultural domina-

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tion in which one cultural system is actively imposed upon another.

The German historian J. G. Droysen (1808–84) is credited with coining the term "Hellenismus" as a way of characterizing the period from Alexander the Great to the emperor Augustus (63 BCE–14 CE). By referring to this period as the Hellenistic age, Droysen has in view not only the active spread of Greek language and culture throughout the Mediterranean world but also the fusion of Greek and non-Greek cultures. Droysen also sees the Hellenistic age as a time of energetic cultural interaction that prepared the way for the arrival of Christianity (Droysen 1952–53 [1836–43], 2012 [1833]).

Some describe the pre-Alexander period as "Hellenic" to signify its close attachment to earlier, Classical Greek culture; they refer to the post-Alexander period as "Hellenistic" in order to emphasize that the era inaugurated by Alexander the Great is still Greek, but different. One of the main differences is how the world was viewed. Alexander's sweep across the East, eventually reaching India, dramatically changed political boundaries, which resulted in the territorial expansion of Greece. These new political realities made Alexander a popular hero. His popularity is reflected in the widespread use of his image in paintings and statuary, and on coins. An entire body of literature such as the Alexander romance, a novel rehearsing Alexander's military exploits, developed around this larger-than-life military leader. Composed between the mid-second and the mid-fourth century CE, but containing stories and traditions that are much earlier, some traceable to the third century BCE, this work was extremely popular, as witnessed by its survival in eighty versions in twenty-four languages (Dowden 1989, 650). These writings broadened the geographical horizons of many readers. People became aware of countries and regions in other parts of the world in a way previously unknown.

Another innovation introduced by Alexander's dramatic rise to power related to the Greek language. Although Aramaic was the main language spoken in the eastern Mediterranean, it was eventually replaced by Greek as the lingua franca, the common language spoken by most educated people, especially court officials and the ruling classes.

With the spread of a language, now spoken by people whose own first language was different and by those speaking various dialects, changes were bound to occur. In the post-Alexander period, variations emerged in the ways Greek was spoken. New Greek words formed, sometimes as foreign words rewritten using Greek letters (*amēn*, *allēlouia*, *pascha*, *geenna*, *abba*, *maranatha*, *rabbi*). So too, common terms were used in new ways. The term *adelphos* (the word for "brother," but which could also include females, especially in the plural form; see, e.g., Luke 21:16) acquired a specialized sense, being used to designate a comember of a religious community (Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 5:11). Other terms acquired new meanings: for instance, *martys* (martyr; Acts 22:20; Rev. 2:13) and *metanoia* (repentance; Acts 20:21; 26:20) acquired a special religious coloring.

Along with these changes in word meaning came changes in pronunciation and patterns of inflection. This new, common Greek language came to be known as Koine ("common") Greek, a new phase of Greek clearly distinguishable from pre-Alexander Classical (Attic) Greek.

Koine Greek is widely attested during the Hellenistic-Roman period. It is found in nonliterary sources, including papyri, ostraca, and inscriptions. It is also the language employed by notable Greek authors such as Polybius, Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Plutarch, and Epictetus. Its use among Greek-speaking Jewish authors is clearly documented in the Greek translations of the Jewish Bible (Septuagint), the Letter of Aristeas, Philo of Alexandria, and Flavius

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Josephus. It comes as no surprise that Koine Greek is the language found in the writings of the New Testament, which were produced in different parts of the Roman Empire between 50 and 100 CE. This is also the case with the large group of early Christian writings that appeared from the early second century onward, such as the apocryphal Acts of various apostles and other Christian leaders.

The discovery of numerous Egyptian papyri in the nineteenth century enabled scholars to see that the style of Greek found in everyday writings (such as shopping lists, school assignments, and even legal documents relating to contractual agreements of various kinds) often resembled the type of Koine Greek found in the New Testament and other early Christian writings. At an earlier period, this distinctive form of biblical Greek was sometimes referred to as "Holy Spirit Greek" as a way of accounting for its unusual grammatical and syntactical qualities. But classical scholars and linguists such as Adolf Deissmann published papyri that served as useful comparative texts for reading the New Testament (Deissmann 1978 [1911]). Through these efforts, scholars came to see that the quality and style of New Testament Koine Greek often resonated with the language found in the Greek papyri and other forms of popular Greek writing.

Those who spoke and wrote in Greek during the Hellenistic-Roman period did so at different levels and with different degrees of sophistication. Some had attended schools in which children read Classical Greek texts such as Homer and the Greek tragedians Euripides and Sophocles. These students learned to imitate these classical models and were thus able to write in a refined Classical or "Attic" style.

We see this variety within the New Testament itself. Mark's Gospel is well known for its simple, unadorned Greek and is often characterized as being written in a popular, storytelling style. The Gospels of Matthew and Luke, by contrast, display a more refined style of Koine Greek. Their vocabulary is larger than Mark's, and they often use grammatical forms that are more refined and elegant (and more correct) than the ones found in the parallel account in Mark. Luke-Acts displays a form of Koine Greek that is more typical of well-educated pagan authors such as Plutarch. The letter to the Hebrews also displays an elegant form of Greek composition, which suggests that its unknown author knew the conventions of rhetorical composition and could employ them to great effect.

Hellenization as Cultural Change

No one disputes that Hellenization, as it relates to the widespread use of Koine Greek, is present in the period following Alexander the Great. But if someone wrote in Greek as their second language, in what sense were they Hellenized? This simple act would require them to enter the world of Hellenism and to some extent embrace that world. But would the use of Greek as a second language mean that they experienced fundamental shifts in how they thought or acted?

This is where the question of "Hellenistic," and "Hellenization" as a cultural process, has been hotly contested, especially among scholars trying to ascertain the degree to which Jews became Hellenized during the period between 200 BCE and 200 CE. At one time, especially in the nineteenth century, and even earlier, it was widely assumed that Jews living in the land of Israel during this period spoke Aramaic and that Jews living in the diaspora spoke Greek. Consequently, Palestinian Judaism was equated with Aramaic-speaking Judaism, while diaspora Judaism was equated with Hellenistic, or Greek-speaking, Judaism.

Martin Hengel challenged this dichotomy in his landmark work *Judaism and Hellenism* (Hengel 1974). In this methodically argued work, Hengel showed that the Hellenization of Jews during the Second Temple period was

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not limited to the diaspora but characterized Palestinian Judaism. In order to support his argument, Hengel surveyed both literary and nonliterary sources from the Maccabean period. He argued that there is substantial evidence showing the widespread use of Koine Greek in Palestine during the centuries immediately preceding the time of Christ. But he also argued that the Hellenization of Palestine was deeper, that it shaped fundamental beliefs and practices of Greek-speaking Jews. Hellenization was not a surface phenomenon, limited to acquiring fluency in Koine Greek; it altered the ways Hellenistic Jews thought about their core beliefs.

One of the key figures in Hengel's reconstruction is Qoheleth, a wisdom teacher who belonged to upper-class, aristocratic circles in Judea (Hengel 1974, 1:115–30). While the dating of Qoheleth is contested, Hengel opts for 270 to 220 BCE as the probable dates for his activity. Hengel finds evidence that "the spirit and the atmosphere of early Hellenism" deeply influenced Qoheleth even though he wrote the book of Ecclesiastes in Hebrew (1:116). This is seen in the consistently critical stance of the work vis-à-vis the broader Jewish wisdom tradition. It is also reflected in Qoheleth's conception of a universal, distant God, far removed from human concerns, which Hengel thinks represents a basic theological shift toward the Greek understanding of fate. Further evidence of the Greek spirit is seen in Qoheleth's rejection of retribution, one of the pillars of Jewish belief.

While Hengel's claims about the pervasive Hellenization of Palestine in the pre-Christian era have been challenged, his book marks a turning point in the debate. After Hengel, Hellenistic Judaism could no longer be equated with diaspora Judaism, as had been the case in earlier scholarship. Even so, some scholars see Hellenism more as a veneer than as a deeply embedded cultural outlook, especially in the eastern Mediterranean.

What we mean by Hellenization has to be demonstrated on a case-by-case basis—or, perhaps, on a region-by-region basis. Philo of Alexandria serves as an illuminating example. His voluminous writings, which consist mainly of essays that comment on the Greek translation of the Pentateuch, along with a handful of thematic essays, reveal his extensive knowledge of Classical Greek literature. He frequently cites Homer, along with other Greek authors, such as Plato. He not only cites these authors, but he also knows them well. He incorporates Platonic categories relating to the ideal and real world (or, to use Philo's language, the noumenal and phenomenal world) in order to explain the two accounts of creation in Genesis 1–3. Philo writes a refined level of Greek, and his knowledge of Greek enables him to participate in philosophical discussions that typified the Middle Platonism of his time.

No one seriously doubts that Philo was thoroughly Hellenized. He wrote in Greek; he thought in Greek; there is no clear evidence that he knew much, if any, Hebrew or Aramaic. He read the Bible in Greek. For Philo, the Septuagint was the Word of God.

And yet Philo maintained certain core Jewish beliefs. He believed that God's will is revealed in the Pentateuch. He believed in the one, ineffable God and emphasized the sharp distinction between humanity and God. Like other Jewish writers at the time, he believed that the universe was populated with a diverse array of demonic powers, but he sharply differentiated them from God, "the Existent One," the One Who Is. While conceding the multiple ways in which God could be manifested, Philo remained an ardent monotheist. His conception of the Logos was novel, though not unprecedented among Jewish writers, and his conception of the Divine Logos drew on various strands of Greek philosophical thought at both scholastic and popular levels. Philo also affirmed the practice of circumcision for Jewish male infants. While he recognized the

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metaphorical dimensions of circumcision and saw it as an act signifying the "cutting away" of evil desires, he nevertheless upheld it. He never came close to Paul's claim that circumcision and uncircumcision are nothing (1 Cor. 7:19; Gal. 5:6). For Philo, they mattered greatly, and like other divine commands found in the Pentateuch, circumcision was part of God's ethical code, which is to be obeyed.

Philo is generally credited with developing a way of reading the Pentateuch that was philosophically compatible with Platonic thought as it was known in Alexandria at the time. He was not the first Jewish writer to engage in the sort of allegorical interpretation that one finds throughout his biblical commentaries. Aristobulus, the so-called Peripatetic philosopher, who also resided in Alexandria in the second century BCE, anticipated Philo in his use of allegory. Both were indebted to Stoicism, which had also employed allegorical interpretation to interpret Homer.

There are many ways to describe the interpretive programs of Philo and his predecessor Aristobulus, but it is appropriate to see their respective interpretations as examples of Hellenization. They were a part of Alexandrian culture, and within that setting they breathed the air of Hellenism. There is no reason to deny that they utilized the strategies of interpretation that had already been developed by Hellenistic writers. While Philo's embrace of Hellenism enabled him to synthesize biblical with Greek philosophical thought, he did not alter or abandon his core Jewish beliefs.

The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, an equally prolific author, displays a different profile. His native language was Aramaic; Greek was his second language. In writing the *Jewish War*, Josephus used assistants whose Greek was better than his (*Ag. Ap.* 1.50). Josephus had no interest in the range of philosophical questions that intrigued Philo. But like with Philo, the Septuagint was an important source for him, although he appeared to have relied on other sources as well. The story he tells in his *Jewish Antiquities* is the biblical story, which he paraphrases, but which he extends down to his own time.

Was Josephus Hellenized? Not in the same way, or to the same extent, as Philo. But Josephus clearly saw himself as a historian of the Jewish people, writing in Greek so that he could communicate his story to the widest possible readership. There is good evidence that Josephus saw himself as a historian writing in the same tradition as Dionysius of Halicarnassus (ca. 60 BCE–7 BCE), who wrote a twenty-volume history of Rome in Greek. In this work Dionysius seeks to show that the Rome of his day (the late Republic) has noble origins that are traceable to the eighth and seventh centuries BCE. Similarly, Josephus tried to show that the Jewish people had a noble history with ancient origins comparable, even superior, to that of Rome. If this construal of Josephus's historical projects is correct, he should be seen as operating with the self-consciousness of his model, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who wrote a history of Rome in Greek.

In the *Jewish Antiquities* Josephus does more than rehearse the story of Israel from its inception down to his own time. He also operates with theological convictions. He adheres to belief in the one God, and he even credits Abraham with formulating a teleological proof for the existence of God (*Ant.* 1.156). At times, Josephus tones down the biblical accounts of miracles, allowing his readers to judge the credibility of such accounts for themselves. In making these adjustments to the biblical story, Josephus is responding to the spirit of Hellenism.

Hellenization and the Liberal Spirit

It is sometimes assumed that Hellenization implies liberalization, a broadening of one's outlook that is somehow more universalistic and less narrow, more inclusive toward other cultures and points of view, and less exclusive

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of alien points of view. In some nineteenth-century scholarship (see, e.g., Harnack 1986 [1900]), Hellenization tends to signify universalism and inclusivity. It is often claimed that, as Jews became more Hellenized, they became more tolerant and less judgmental toward Gentiles. This correlation has to be examined more closely by analyzing individual Hellenistic Jewish writers.

The Jewish writer Artapanus, who flourished in Alexandria in the mid-second century BCE, wrote an account of the Jewish people in Greek. Although he is sometimes described as a historian, he should probably be seen as a writer of romantic history. His account displays an unusually strong embrace of pagan values. He portrays Moses as the teacher of Orpheus and as the founder of Egyptian religion to whom the people gave divine honor, even calling him Hermes. Some scholars find it inconceivable that Artapanus was Jewish, that someone devoted to the teachings of Moses could have said such things. But it is equally difficult to imagine a pagan writer at this time having much interest in, much less knowledge of, what Moses said or did in Egypt.

As difficult as it may seem, Artapanus was probably Jewish. And if so, his portrait of Moses can be aptly characterized as strongly Hellenized. After all, in his portrait of Moses, Artapanus is using a template found among other Hellenistic writers who were keen to present figures from their countries as cultural benefactors. Just as other figures are presented as renowned inventers, devising ingenious solutions to everyday problems, so is Moses portrayed by Artapanus as an inventor of ships, labor-saving machines, and philosophy. Artapanus's depiction of Moses follows a cultural template used by non-Jewish writers in rehearsing the exploits of such figures as the legendary Egyptian king Sesostris, among others. On any showing, Artapanus is rightly characterized as being thoroughly Hellenized. Few other Jewish writers were willing to push the envelope the way Artapanus does (Collins 2000, 37–46; Holladay 2021, 112–14, 159–62).

At the other end of the spectrum is another Greek-speaking Jewish writer, Theodotus, an Alexandrian epic poet who flourished in the mid-second century BCE. Only short sections of his epic poetry are preserved, but the fragments focus mainly on the patriarch Jacob. Theodotus recasts the story of the rape of Dinah in Genesis 34 and reinterprets the actions of Jacob's sons Levi and Simeon in responding to Shechem's violent actions.

The poetry of Theodotus reflects close familiarity with Homeric epic and with epic poetry in general. Most agree that Theodotus is Hellenized literarily—that is, in his knowledge and use of Greek poetic style. And yet he displays little, if any, embrace of liberal, open-minded attitudes toward foreigners. Quite the reverse. Theodotus steadfastly defends circumcision as a Jewish rite that must be practiced. He also upholds endogamy by explicitly condemning intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews. Theodotus is a vivid example of what seems anomalous—a Jewish (or perhaps Samaritan) writer who is literarily Hellenized and yet who remains theologically or culturally conservative. Theodotus illustrates how someone can embrace Hellenistic style and can be thoroughly proficient in the use of a particular Greek genre, in this case Greek epic, and yet take a hard line against competing cultural values and religious beliefs. Theodotus proves that Hellenization does not necessarily mean that one is more open-minded about embracing another culture's values (Collins 2000, 57–60; Holladay 2021, 147–53).

Summary

We can speak confidently of Hellenization as a process of cultural assimilation, especially among Jews during the Second Temple period. What this actually means has to be determined within specific, well-defined parameters for

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judging degrees of accommodation and assimilation. That Jews adopted the Greek language as their main and, in some cases, exclusive form of communication is clear. At the level of language usage, Judaism was thoroughly Hellenized during the Second Temple period. At the level of cultural appropriation in which fundamental shifts in belief and behavior occur, we find a spectrum along which individual cases can be placed. Artapanus and Theodotus clearly represent opposite ends of that spectrum. Philo of Alexandria also illustrates a high level of Hellenization, although it takes a particular form that has to be understood within his own highly developed system of philosophical thought. Qoheleth represents another point on the spectrum, being well advanced in the direction of Hellenization, although still within the Jewish wisdom tradition.

The debate about Hellenization as it relates to early Christianity has advanced in some important ways. It is now clear that "Judaism" and "Hellenism" are not airtight categories that signify two alternative, mutually exclusive ways of thinking. Their boundaries can be fluid. When claims of Hellenization are made, we have to ask what this actually means. Is the Gospel of John Hellenized in a way that the Gospel of Matthew or Luke is not? We have also learned that Hellenization can be viewed positively or negatively. For some, it signifies openness to other points of view; for others, it threatens what is perceived as pure and undiluted.

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3

Apocalyptic Thought

John J. Collins

The literary genre apocalypse takes its name from the opening verse of the book of Revelation in the New Testament: the revelation, *apokalypsis*, of Jesus Christ. The word is used not for just any revelation but for revelations of another world or another dimension of this world. Apocalyptic revelations assume that human affairs are heavily influenced by superhuman forces, angelic or demonic. Crucially, they assume that individuals will be judged after death and rewarded or punished forever. Belief in superhuman beings was common in the ancient world, but it is more prominent in apocalyptic literature than in other strands of Jewish thought (e.g., wisdom literature). Belief in life after death is attested sporadically in neighboring cultures but was a novelty in Judaism in the Hellenistic age. The apocalyptic worldview, however, is constituted not by any one motif in isolation but by a configuration of motifs: revelation, heavenly mysteries, angels and demons, resurrection, eternal life, and final judgment.

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul seeks to assure his readers of the resurrection of the dead. These readers evidently accepted that Jesus had been raised, but apparently they thought of that as an exceptional event. Paul argues to the contrary: "If the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised" (1 Cor. 15:16). But, he insists, "Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died" (15:20). He describes a fuller scenario in 1 Thessalonians: "For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. 4:16–17). In short, the resurrection of Jesus was not an isolated event but was the beginning of the end of the world as we know it. The conviction that this world was passing away and that Jesus would return to judge the living and the dead animated the early Christian movement (see, e.g., 1 Thess. 4:17; 1 Cor. 7:29; Rom. 13:11–12).

Paul here was assuming a view of the world that had developed in Judaism in the last two centuries before Christ but that was very

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different from the worldview of ancient Israel. In the Torah and the Prophets, the goal of life had been to live long in the land and see one's children and one's children's children. After death, good and bad alike went to Sheol, the shadowy underworld where one could not even praise the Lord. A few people (Enoch, Elijah, possibly Moses) were believed to have been taken up alive to heaven, but they were exceptions. Even when the Prophets predicted that the Lord would come in judgment, they did not suppose that the conditions of life would change radically. Qoheleth could state as undisputed fact that "the earth remains forever" (Eccles. 1:4). At the end of the book of Isaiah we find a prophecy of a new creation, in which one who died at the age of a hundred years would be considered a youth (Isa. 65:20), but even in that new creation people would still die. Another passage in Isaiah speaks of a time when God would swallow up death forever (25:8), but even that passage does not promise that the dead would be raised. One other verse in the same section of Isaiah (26:19) says to the Israelites, "Your dead shall live, their corpses shall rise," but opinion is divided as to whether that is a prophecy of resurrection or a metaphor for the restoration of Israel as in Ezekiel 37 (the valley full of dry bones).[1]

Daniel

There is only one undisputed reference to the resurrection and judgment of individuals in the Hebrew Bible. That is in the book of Daniel (12:2–3). It comes at the end of a long revelation in which the angel Gabriel discloses to Daniel what is written in "the book of truth," or what is really going on in history (Collins 1993, 361–404; Newsom 2014, 320–68). The revelation is dated to the third year of King Cyrus of Persia. Gabriel explains to Daniel that he is engaged in combat with "the prince of the kingdom of Persia" and is aided by Michael, "one of the chief princes" (Dan. 10:13). Later "the prince of Greece" will come (10:20). "Princes" are evidently patron angels, who would have been called gods of the various nations in earlier times. Michael is "your prince" (10:21), "the protector of your people" (12:1), the patron angel of Israel. Gabriel goes on to narrate the history of the Hellenistic period, in the guise of prophecy. No names are mentioned. The king of Syria is "the king of the north," the king of Egypt is "the king of the south," and so forth (11:5–14). The prophecy culminates in the suppression of the Jerusalem cult by Antiochus Epiphanes in the years 167–164 BCE and concludes by saying that the king would meet his death in the land of Israel, "between the sea and the beautiful holy mountain" (11:45). The last prophecy was not fulfilled. Antiochus died in Persia late in 164 BCE. Already in antiquity the pagan philosopher Porphyry noted that the prophecies were accurate down to 164 and inferred that this was the time of composition (Casey 1976).[2] The accurate prophecies were composed after the fact. This inference is accepted by modern critical scholars, except in more conservative circles.

According to Gabriel's prophecy, Michael would arise in victory after the death of the king, and the resurrection would follow. "Many" would rise, not all, some to everlasting life and some to everlasting shame. The victory would be brought about not by the militant action of the Maccabees but by Michael and the angelic host. The heroes of the story are the "wise," who understand this and make the many understand. Some of them would be killed, but at the resurrection they would be exalted to shine like the stars, which is to say that they would join the angelic host. It is not clear that the world comes to an end in Daniel,

1. On ideas of afterlife in ancient Judaism, see Nickelsburg 2006; Collins 2015.

2. Porphyry's critique is known from Jerome's commentary on Daniel (Archer 2009).

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but the goal of life is changed. It is no longer to see one's children's children but to join the angels in heaven.

Gabriel's prophecy is the last of a series of revelations in the second half of the book of Daniel. The most famous of these is chapter 7, which symbolizes the pagan kingdoms as four great beasts coming up out of the sea, a motif evocative of ancient Near Eastern myth (Collins 1993, 274–324). They are condemned in a heavenly court scene by God, represented as an ancient figure, and the kingdom is given to "one like a son of man," who comes on the clouds with the holy ones of the Most High (Dan. 7:13, 18 NIV). "Holy ones" are angels; Israel is "the people of the holy ones" (7:27). The trials of the Jewish people are seen against the backdrop of cosmic conflict, analogous to the primeval battles of gods and sea monsters in ancient myths. In the context of Daniel, the one like a son of man is the archangel Michael, leader of the heavenly host. He would later be reinterpreted as the Messiah, and in Christianity specifically as Jesus Christ.

The motif of four kingdoms, followed by a definitive fifth one, was widespread in the Hellenistic and Roman periods. (Rome was often cast as the fifth kingdom.) This was one of several ways in which history could be divided into periods. In Daniel chapter 9, the prophecy of Jeremiah that Jerusalem would be desolate for seventy years is reinterpreted to mean seventy weeks of years. In each case, the implication is that time is measured out and is near its "end." (The "end" is not necessarily absolute but marked by divine intervention and radical change.) The book of Daniel gives the number of days until the end and even gives two different numbers. According to Daniel 12:11 the time from the disruption of the cult by Antiochus Epiphanes would be 1,290 days. The following verse says, "Happy are those who persevere and attain the thousand three hundred thirty-five days." Presumably, the prophecy was updated when the first number of days passed. Such precise prediction is exceptional in ancient apocalyptic literature, but it gave rise to numerous attempts to predict the end of the world, down to the present time (Breed in Newsom 2014, 309–20).

The view of history and human destiny in the book of Daniel is presented as revelation, transmitted to Daniel by angels. It is not something that could be learned by observation. For this reason, it is called "apocalyptic."

Enoch

The visions of Daniel are the only part of the Hebrew Bible that can properly be called apocalyptic, but Daniel was not the first apocalypse. First Enoch, which is regarded as Scripture in the Ethiopian Church, contains at least five books, several of which are older than Daniel (Nickelsburg 2001, 7–9). These books were composed in Aramaic. Fragments of most of them have been found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. (The exception is the Similitudes or Parables of Enoch, 1 En. 37–71; see Nickelsburg and VanderKam 2012.) Enoch had supposedly lived in the seventh generation from Adam. He is the subject of an enigmatic notice in Genesis 5:24: "Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him." The Hebrew word for God, *'elohim*, is a plural form. In the Hellenistic period, the statement that Enoch walked with God was understood to mean that he walked with *gods* or angels. The statement that God "took him" was taken, reasonably enough, to mean that he was taken up alive to heaven, but because he had "walked with gods" before that, he was also believed to have made round trips to heaven, where he learned heavenly secrets and saw the heavenly tablets on which destiny was recorded. The books of Enoch purport to describe what he learned in the course of these trips.

The story of Enoch's initial ascent to heaven is told in the Book of the Watchers (1 En. 1–36). The Watchers are fallen angels (the sons of

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God in Gen. 6 who lust after human women). When they are condemned, they ask Enoch to intercede for them. He goes up to heaven and sees God on his throne, described in terms very similar to Daniel 7. The petition is rejected. Enoch is told to explain to the Watchers that they have abandoned a spiritual world for the desires of the flesh. Enoch becomes the inverse of the Watchers, a human being who abandons the world of flesh for that of the spirit.

After his vision of God on his throne, Enoch is taken on a tour of places normally inaccessible to human beings. He sees the storehouses of the rain and snow but also the chambers under a mountain where the souls of the dead are kept while awaiting judgment (1 En. 22). He also sees the places that have been prepared for the final judgment. The lesson of his vision is that such places exist and that all is prepared for a final judgment. Whereas Daniel is mainly concerned with history, the Book of the Watchers is primarily concerned with cosmology. Angelic beings play a major part in both books, as does the final judgment of the dead.

Another early book of 1 Enoch, the Astronomical Book (1 En. 72–82), is concerned with the movements of the stars. Other Enochic revelations, however, deal with history. The Apocalypse of Weeks (1 En. 93 + 91.11–17) divides history into ten "weeks." An elect group emerges at the end of the seventh week. In the tenth week a new heaven will appear. After that there will be many weeks without number, but free from sin. The Animal Apocalypse in 1 Enoch 85–90 presents an elaborate allegorical review of history, in which Israel is represented by sheep and the nations by wild animals. In the postexilic period, Israel is ruled by seventy shepherds. Eventually, God comes down to judge the world. The Epistle of Enoch (1 En. 91–105) is an exhortation that encourages the righteous and promises them that they will become companions to the host of heaven (104.2, 4).

We know very little about the social location of the people who produced the books of Enoch. They repeatedly refer to the "chosen righteous," and this suggests that they may have been a distinct group, but we know nothing of their organization. Fragments of these writings were preserved in the Dead Sea Scrolls, and they were evidently translated into Greek (from which the Ethiopic was translated), so they must have circulated beyond the circles in which they were composed, but we do not know how widely they were accepted.

The books of Daniel and Enoch are usually dated to the early second century BCE. Several of them come from around the time of the Maccabean revolt, although some of the books of Enoch may be earlier. It was at this time that the apocalyptic worldview gained currency in Judaism. As can be seen from these books, the emphasis may be either on the course of history or on cosmology, but in either case human affairs are subject to the influence of superhuman powers, and human beings are liable to a judgment after death.

The Late First Century CE

Another cluster of Jewish apocalyptic writings dates from the period after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 CE (Henze 2011; Stone 1990). Two of these, 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch, were almost certainly composed in Hebrew, although they have survived only in translation (4 Ezra in several languages, including Latin and Syriac; 2 Baruch only in Syriac). Both are reflections on the problematic justice of God in light of the destruction of Jerusalem. Unlike the earlier apocalypses of Enoch and Daniel, these apocalypses are focused on the Torah and debate human waywardness in light of the sin of Adam rather than that of angels or demons (see, e.g., 4 Ezra 7.117–18; 2 Bar. 54.19). Both ultimately look to messianic deliverers. In 4 Ezra 13 the messiah is described in terms reminiscent of the one like a son of man in Daniel 7.

Other apocalypses of the period after the destruction of the temple were composed in

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Greek, probably in the Egyptian diaspora. Third Baruch is preserved in Greek and Slavonic. Both versions contain Christian elements, but these differ from each other, suggesting that there were two Christian editions of a Jewish original (Collins 2019). The angel seeks to distract Baruch from his grief over the destruction of Jerusalem by showing him the mysteries of God, taking him up through a numbered sequence of heavens, where he sees the abodes of the blessed and the damned. Second Enoch also involves an ascent through a numbered sequence of heavens. It is preserved in Slavonic, and its provenance is uncertain, but it is usually thought to have been written in Greek, in Egypt in the late first or early second century CE. Apocalyptic tours of heaven were increasingly popular in early Christianity (Himmelfarb 1993).

The Dead Sea Scrolls

Before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, we had very little literature from Judea from the period between the Maccabean revolt and the destruction of Jerusalem. One notable apocalypse that probably dates from this period is the Similitudes of Enoch, which develops the son of man figure of Daniel's vision into a heavenly messiah (Boccaccini 2007). The scrolls provide a rich trove of Aramaic and Hebrew texts from precisely this period. Many of the texts are fragmentary, and we cannot be sure of their literary genre, but several contain overviews of history in the guise of prophecy, similar to what we find in Daniel and Enoch (e.g., the Aramaic Four Kingdoms text, 4Q552–53, and a few writings in the name of Daniel). It is amply clear, however, that the major sectarian scrolls were informed by what may be called an apocalyptic worldview, in which human life is shaped by angelic and demonic powers and is subject to a final judgment after death (Collins 1997).

The Community Rule (1QS) contains a remarkable passage known as the Treatise on the Two Spirits (1QS III, 13–IV, 26). God, we are told, created two spirits for humanity to walk in, one of light and one of darkness. At first the treatise seems to suggest that people are entirely ruled by one spirit or the other. Then it says that the two spirits struggle within every individual. One spirit leads to virtuous conduct, the other to vice. The destiny of the one is eternal life in the realm of light; of the other, eternal punishment in the fire of dark regions. God, we are told, has set a term for the rule of the spirit of darkness, and at the appointed time he will destroy it forever. Another text, known as the War Scroll, provides instructions for the final battle between the forces of light and darkness. The people who preserved the scrolls believed that they were living in the period called "the end of days," although some notable events, including the coming of the messiah, were yet to come.

The scrolls include copies of the books of Daniel and Enoch, so the people who preserved them were evidently familiar with belief in resurrection. Yet, remarkably, there is no clear reference to resurrection, in the sense of the dead coming back to life, in the sectarian texts. There is ample evidence for belief in some form of eternal life, differentiated as reward or punishment, but several passages suggest that members of the sectarian community had already passed from death to life and were already living with the angels. The hymnist in the Thanksgiving Hymns thanks God for purifying him from sin so that he can take his place with the host of the holy ones and enter into communion with the heavenly beings (1QH^{a} XI, 19–23) or become united with the sons of truth in a lot with the holy ones (1QH^{a} XIX, 10–14). The apocalypses of Daniel and Enoch promise fellowship with the angels after death. The Dead Sea Scrolls promise it already in this life to those who join the sectarian association and live a life of purity.

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Conclusion

Apocalyptic thought is not systematic and rational in the manner of philosophy. It is a work of imagination that relies heavily on mythic symbolism. It allows for considerable variety. The dualism of the two spirits in the Dead Sea Scrolls is distinctly different from the rebellion of the fallen angels in Enoch or the beasts from the sea in Daniel. People who shared an apocalyptic worldview did not necessarily agree with each other. They might have radically different ideas about the criteria for the final judgment or about the identity of the savior figure. Underlying all this diversity, however, is an orientation to an invisible world. Salvation, as it is conceived in apocalyptic literature, is not something that can be achieved in this world as we know it. We must suppose either that the Most High has made "not one world but two" (4 Ezra 7.50) or that there will be a new creation, by which this world will be transformed.

As Paul indicates in 1 Corinthians 15, this apocalyptic worldview was an essential presupposition of the acceptance of a crucified man as Messiah. Without it there would have been no belief in resurrection of the dead and no hope that Jesus would come again as the Son of Man on the clouds of heaven. Only one book of the New Testament is structured as an apocalypse—that is, as an explicit account of revelation. That is the book of Revelation, written toward the end of the first century CE. But as in the case of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which also contain relatively few apocalypses in the formal sense, the apocalyptic worldview is pervasive in the New Testament: human life is bounded by the activity of angels and demons, and life is lived in anticipation of a final judgment, followed by everlasting rewards and punishments. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, the present form of this world is passing away (1 Cor. 7:31). This view of the world was largely rejected by rabbinic Judaism, even as it became an essential presupposition of Christianity.

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