

gence of rabbinic Judaism and the rise of Christianity. In this sense, they may truly be considered historical texts.

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History-Writing in, and on the Basis of, the Jewish Apocalyptic Literature

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0.1. Introduction

In addressing the topic of this conference, I will pose two questions. (a) How do the writers of the Jewish apocalypses write history? (b) To what extent can we use the apocalypses as the basis for our own writing of the history of the Jews in the Greco-Roman period? Before I address these questions, I will deal with a methodological problem (§1): How do we place these pseudonymous works in their real historical contexts? Then, with the apocalypses set in time, I will pose my first question (§2): how the apocalypticists write their historical summaries and otherwise describe historical events (a). Next I will pose my second question in two parts (§3.1): what bits and pieces of historical information can we extract from their historical summaries (b.1)? Finally (§3.2): looking outside the historical summaries and descriptions, I will cite some examples of the kind of substantial historical information can we glean from the apocalypses (b.2), which are, after all, historical artifacts themselves.

My sources include the major apocalyptic works of the 3rd century BCE to the 1st century CE: parts of *1 Enoch*, Daniel 7–12, the *Testament of Moses*, *4 Ezra*, and *2 Baruch*. I also refer briefly to *Jubilees* and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*.¹

¹ For a definition of the genre apocalypse, see J.J. Collins, "Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre," *Semeia* 14 (1979) 1–10: "'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." The *Testament of Moses* is not an apocalypse strictly speaking, since Moses is not an *otherworldly* mediator of revelation. Nonetheless,

1.1. The Basic Problem: Pseudonymous Ascription

The basic methodological problem in the study of history-writing in the Jewish apocalyptic literature pertains to the pseudepigraphic character of these texts. Their authorship is falsely ascribed to figures of the distant past: Enoch from pre-diluvian times,² Moses from the time of the Exodus,³ Baruch from shortly after Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of Jerusalem,⁴ Daniel and Ezra from the Babylonian Exile.⁵ The problem has two aspects. First, the spurious attribution masks the time of the real author(s) of a given text. Second, because their real authors set the texts in ancient time, they frequently omit the proper names of the persons (and, to a lesser extent, the places) associated with the events that will take place centuries after the alleged authors.

1.2. Breaking the Pseudepigraphic Code

The pseudonymous ascription of the apocalypses brings with it, however, the seeds of a solution to the problem it creates. In order for the real author to persuade his audience that the message of the ancient prophet pertains to their own time, that author must place on the lips (or rather the pen) of his pseudonymous author identifiable and "accurate" descriptions (allegedly predictions) of that audience's own time and the events that have led up to it. When we, who do not have first-hand familiarity with the events, compare these descriptions with "historical" accounts from antiquity (e.g., 1 and 2 Maccabees, and the writings of Philo and Josephus, Arrian, Dio Cassius, Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Suetonius, and Tacitus) we are able, with considerable accuracy and probability, to place the pseudepigraphic texts in the real authors' own times.

1.2.1. The Apocalypses in Daniel 7; 8; and 10:1-12:13

These texts can be ascribed to the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. The easiest to date is the vision recounted in 10:1-12:13 and dated to the third year of Cyrus (535 BCE) (10:1). An angel appears to Daniel and describes how he has been fighting the angelic prince of Persia and how he will return to finish Persia's prince and take on the angelic prince of Greece (10:2-21). His historical summary of events yet to

he is the functional equivalent of such, revealing to Joshua the hidden meaning of his words in the last chapters of Deuteronomy.

² 1 Enoch and 2 Enoch.

³ Jubilees and the Testament of Moses.

⁴ 2 Baruch and perhaps 3 Baruch if, indeed, it is Jewish.

⁵ The canonical book of Daniel and 4 Ezra.

come begins in 11:2: four kings of Persia will reign, and the last of these will make war against the kingdom of Greece. Within this context, the historical summary that follows parallels extraneous explicit sources about the Hellenistic period. The description begins with the rise of "a mighty king" (Alexander the Great, 11:3) and the division of his kingdom (among the Diadochoi, 11:3). It continues with an account of the wars of "the king[s] of the north" and "the king[s] of the south" (the Seleucids and the Ptolemies, 11:5-45) that climaxes with increasingly detailed descriptions of the reigns of Antiochus III (vv. 15-20) and Antiochus IV (vv. 21-45) and concludes with the death of Antiochus IV in Israel "between the sea and the glorious holy mountain" (v 45). This coded, albeit transparent account of the Hellenistic period allows us to date this historical apocalypse after Antiochus's desecration of the Jerusalem temple (Dec. 167 BCE) and before his death, which occurred not in Israel, as predicted here, but in Babylon (Dec. 164). The conclusion of the vision concurs with this dating. It places the inception of the end time – which begins with Antiochus's death ("at that time," 12:1-3) – three and a half years ("a time, times, and a half") after the desecration of the temple, that is, in the middle of 163.⁶ Since the rededication of the temple occurred exactly three years after its desecration, the apocalypse, on this account also, dates from before December 164.

The vision in ch. 7 can be placed at roughly the same time as chs. 10-12. Four beasts represent four kingdoms, the fourth being the worst. The tenth king speaks arrogant words against the Most High and seeks to change the times and the law, and in this he will succeed for a time, times, and a half a time. Here too the details of the vision fit the Hellenistic period and the reign of Antiochus IV.⁷ The time stipulation of three and a half years forms the specific point of connection with chs. 10-12. The four kingdoms are Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece. The blasphemous king is Antiochus IV, who introduced the divine epithet Epiphanes, "(God) Manifest,"⁸ and disrupted the cultic calendar and proscribed the Torah.

The vision in ch. 8 depicts the clash of a two-horned ram and a one-horned he-goat, which overthrows it (vv. 1-7). These animals are identified as the kings of Media and Persia and the king of Greece (Alexander the Great) (vv. 20-22). From the great horn a little horn

⁶ On the dating of the events described in 11:1-45, see J.J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993) 376-90.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 294-324.

⁸ The full title appears on his coins, *ibid.*, 321.

comes forth that grows great and storms heaven, taking away the daily sacrifice for 2300 evenings and days (that is three years and two months). Like Daniel 7, the dating of this vision coincides roughly with that of chs. 10–12 and focuses on the blasphemous deeds of Antiochus IV and anticipates his destruction within three years and some months.

In short, all three visions depict events in coded but transparent form, which historical sources allow us to locate in the latter years of the reign of Antiochus IV.

1.2.2. 1 Enoch

The collection known as 1 Enoch is especially difficult to date because it contains only two historical apocalypses with the kind of information that enables us to date them. The first of these, the Animal Vision (chs. 85–90), recounts the history of the world from creation to the eschaton.⁹ This account mentions no names or places. It is an allegory about bulls and heifers, stars that descend from heaven and become bulls that mate with the heifers, humanoid figures who descend from heaven and enact judgment, sheep that are preyed upon by wild beasts and birds of prey, and “the Lord of the Sheep.” The allegory is transparent, however. The events that it recounts follow the sequence of the Bible from Genesis to Ezra–Nehemiah and beyond into the Maccabean period, which concludes with the divine judgment that initiates the eschaton. The bulls depict the patriarchs through Isaac, who begets a sheep (Jacob) and a wild boar (Esau). Other wild animals began to proliferate after the flood (cf. Gen 11). The stars are “the sons of God” who descended from heaven according to Genesis 6. The sheep, who are the descendants of Jacob, are the Israelites, and the wild beasts and birds are the Gentiles, who prey upon Israel. The humanoid figures are the seven archangels, and the Lord of the sheep is the God of Israel. Given this sequence, we can date the vision to the time of Judas Maccabeus, who is the best candidate to fill the role of a ram with a great horn who does battle with the birds of prey, who represent the Seleucids (90:9b–16). Some duplications in the description of this period may indicate an earlier version of a vision dated from the late third or early second century BCE.¹⁰

⁹ For the basis of my treatment of these chapters, see G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch Chapters 1–36; 82–108* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001) 354–408.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 360–61, 396–98.

A second historical summary, the Apocalypse of Weeks (93:1–10; 91:11–17) is either a prototype for the Animal vision or a stylized summary of it, which briefly recounts human history and the eschaton in ten periods. Its highly stylized form allows us to date it only at roughly the same time as the Animal Vision.¹¹

Taking the Animal Vision as our chronological point of departure, it is possible to provide relative dating for other parts of the Enochic corpus. The prominent role played by the descent of the rebel angels in the episode of the flood and their primordial and final judgment indicate that the Animal Vision is dependent on *1 Enoch* 6–11, and other details reflect the broader account of Enoch’s journeys in chs. 12–36.¹² Literary analysis of chs. 1–36 indicates the development of an ongoing tradition that places chs. 6–11 in the early third century or perhaps the late fourth century, with the battle of the giants perhaps depicting the wars of the Diadochoi.¹³ The dating of the Book of Parables (chs. 37–71) is disputed.¹⁴ Literary considerations indicate that at least the first, and perhaps the second parable reflect material in chs. 1–36, which indicates the early second century as a *terminus post quem*.¹⁵ The Parables’ portrayal of “the son of man” depends on Daniel 7, and this, then, indicates 164 BCE as a *terminus post quem*. Beyond that, the dating of the Parables becomes slippery. In my view, the portrayal of the Son of Man in the Gospels presupposes something very close to that of the son of man in the Parables, and some other elements in Paul’s Christology indicate a similar dependence.¹⁶ This would indicate the early first century CE as a *terminus ad quem*. The other major section of *1 Enoch* of importance for this paper is the Epistle of Enoch (chs. 92–105). It is of special interest because of its detailed description of social conditions in the author’s time (see below, §3.1.2). Its *terminus post quem* is indicated by its knowledge of the material in chs. 1–36,¹⁷ and its *terminus ad quem* perhaps by a pair of late first-century Qumran manuscripts that may have contained the section.¹⁸ This

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 398–99, 440–441.

¹² *Ibid.*, 359–60.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 169–71.

¹⁴ G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah* (2nd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005) 254–55.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 250.

¹⁶ G.W.E. Nickelsburg, “Son of Man,” *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (6 vols.; Garden City, Doubleday, 1992) 6:142–48.

¹⁷ Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 422.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 427.

would place it sometime in the second century or the early first century BCE.

1.2.3. The Testament of Moses

The *Testament of Moses* purports to recount the last words of Moses and their context.¹⁹ In reality, they are a rewriting of the last chapters of Deuteronomy, whose scheme of history (sin-punishment-repentance-salvation) is used in a double cycle to shape a summary of events (1) before, in and immediately after the Babylonian Exile (chs. 2–4) and (2) in the Hellenistic period (chs. 5–9). A reference to a king who will rule for thirty-four years and his sons who will rule for shorter periods (6:6–7), refers to the reign of Herod the Great and indicates a time of composition before 30 CE, when the reigns of his sons Antipas and Philip were moving toward forty-three and thirty-seven years respectively. The banishment of Archelaus in 6 CE after a reign of ten years may have triggered the notion of shorter reigns. The reference to the death of Herod (6:6), the burning of the temple at the time of Varus, and the incident of the golden eagle, including Varus's crucifixion of some Jewish rebels, indicate 4 BCE as a *terminus post quem*. So we can set the date of the final form of the *Testament* between 4 BCE and 30 CE, and perhaps between 6 and 30 CE.²⁰

I say “final form” because, in my view, literary considerations indicate that chs. 6–7 are later additions to a text whose recitation of history climaxed in events that closely correspond to the time of Antiochus IV as we know it from other sources (chs. 8–9) and that are immediately followed by a description of the eschaton. For this reason, I date the *Testament* perhaps a little earlier than Daniel and a few years before the Animal Vision of *1 Enoch*.²¹

1.2.4. 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch

These two apocalypses are set in the aftermath of the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem, *4 Ezra* thirty years later (3:1), and *2 Baruch* shortly before (chs. 1–8) and in the ten weeks following the destruction (marked by four fasts of seven days [10:1; 12:5; 20:5; 47:2] and a forty-day period of instruction [76:4]). The Babylonian destruction is

¹⁹ Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 74–76

²⁰ For details see J. Priest, “The Testament of Moses,” in J.H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols.; Garden City: Doubleday, 1983–85) 1:920–21; Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 247–48, and the studies by A.Yarbro Collins and J.J. Collins, cited in *ibid.*, 299, nn. 32–33.

²¹ Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 76.

uniformly taken to be a prototype for Titus's destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE.

In the case of *4 Ezra* a date in the neighborhood of 100 CE is confirmed by details in the vision in chs. 11–12. The double vision in chs. 11–12, 13 is a creative interpretation of Daniel 7 (*4 Ezra* 12:10–11). Chapters 11–12 focus on the last of the four beasts, here described as an eagle, and ch. 13 depicts the judicial activity of a man who comes up out of the sea and flies with the clouds. The eagle is a natural symbol for the Roman empire, whose military standards bore the figure of an eagle.²² The multiplicity of wings and the three heads represent the Roman emperors (12:19–24). This numerology brings us to Domitian, the third of the Flavian emperors and suggests a date in his reign (81–96 CE), with the end being predicted during that reign.²³

The date of *2 Baruch* is less certain. The many parallels to *4 Ezra* suggest a time of composition in the same, post-destruction period, with *2 Baruch* being, perhaps, a bit later than *4 Ezra*.²⁴ The details of the text, however, do not help to specify the time of composition more precisely. The book's two visions do not provide the chronological hooks that we find in *4 Ezra* 11–12. The vision in chs. 36–37 and its interpretation in chs. 39–40 briefly describe a sequence of four kingdoms and, like *4 Ezra* 11–12, an end in which the Messiah will confront the last king. The vision in ch. 53 and its extensive interpretation in historical sequence (chs. 54–72), brings Israelite history up to the Babylonian exile (ch. 67) and then briefly describes the post-exilic period (ch. 68) and the present evil times (chs. 69–72), in which the Messiah will triumph and after which the earth will return to its paradisaical perfection (ch. 73).

1.2.5. Summary

Our discussion has indicated how we are able to date these five apocalypses on the basis of details – especially in their historical summaries – that coincide with information from extraneous historical sources. The apocalypses date to times of severe religious and social crisis in the history of Israel: Daniel, the original form of the *Testament of Moses*, and the Animal Vision in *1 Enoch* 85–90 to the Antiochan persecution of the Jews; a later form of the *Testament of Moses* to the decade(s) after the death of Herod the Great; and *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch* to the decades

²² M.E. Stone, *Fourth Ezra: A Commentary on the Book of Fourth Ezra* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990) 348.

²³ *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁴ Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 283–85.

after the Roman destruction of Jerusalem. Comparative literary analysis enables us to place other parts of *1 Enoch* both before and after the composition of the Animal Vision, in the early Hellenistic period and in the later Hellenistic period and/or the decades around the turn of the era.

2.0. How the Apocalypticists Wrote History

We turn now to the specific topic of this conference. How did the apocalypticists shape their historical accounts? What principles guided the presentation of their material? How did they understand historical reality?

2.1. The Individual Texts

2.1.1. Daniel 7-12

Several features characterize the writing of history in Daniel 7, 8, 9, and 10-12. First, in all cases, the authors present their material as the product of revelation. Chapters 7 and 8 recount a pair of dream visions whose symbolism is interpreted by an angel (7:1-2; 8:2, 27),²⁵ while the historical contents of chs. 9 and 10-12 are said to have derived from waking encounters with angels (9:20-23; 10:2-9).²⁶

Second, the events of human history are said to be the counterparts of events that take place on the heavenly realm. The demise of the Macedonian kingdom is a function of the session of the heavenly court (7:9-12, 26), and Israel's domination over the nations follows from the exaltation of their heavenly patron, the "one like a son of man" (7:13-14, 27). Antiochus's desecration of the Temple is an assault on the host of heaven (8:9-13). The destruction of both the Persian and the Macedonian kingdoms results from clashes between Israel's angelic patron, "the great prince Michael," and the princes of Persia and Greece (10:13, 20-21; 12:1).

Third, the course of history is divided into periods—the four kingdoms of Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, and Greece in 7:1-8, 17; and seventy weeks of years in 9:24-27—and note is taken of a succession of kings (7:7-8, 24; 11:2-45). In keeping with this, the seers engage in speculation as to the time of the end, placing their calculations in the mouths of their angelic interpreters (7:25; 8:13-14; 9:24-27; 12:11-12).

²⁵ Dan 7:1-2 is explicit. On ch. 8, see F.F. Dailey, *Dreamers, Scribes, and Priests: Jewish Dreams in the Hellenistic and Roman Eras* (JSJSup 2004; Leiden: Brill, 2004) 223-24.

²⁶ For details, see *ibid.*, 224-27.

Fourth, the recitation of history becomes more detailed as it recounts the most recent events, which lead up to the end-time, thus indicating that the eschaton is near (7:23-25; 8:9-13, 22-25).

Finally, the apocalypticists draw on both Scripture and non-Israelite myth to interpret history. Daniel 9 understands the present crisis in terms of Mosaic covenantal theology,²⁷ and chs. 10-12 draw on the language of Isaiah and Second Isaiah.²⁸ Both the enthronement scene in ch. 7 and the description of Antiochus's assault on heaven reflect Canaanite mythology.²⁹

2.1.2. *1 Enoch* 85-90 and 93:1-10; 91:11-17

The Animal Vision and the Apocalypse of Weeks are marked by most of characteristics we have seen in Daniel 7-12. Chapters 85-90 are a symbolic dream vision whose patent summary of Genesis through Ezra-Nehemiah requires no angelic interpretation. This summary features throughout an antagonism between Israel and the nations and identifies the oppression by the nations as punishment for Israel's apostasy, described as the blindness and straying of the sheep. As in Daniel, the author posits the interaction of the earthly and heavenly realms. Rebel angels descend to wreak havoc on earth. The archangels descend to execute judgment at the time of the flood and later in the last judgment. The malfesance of the seventy angelic shepherds creates extraordinary trouble from the time of Manasseh to the time of the end. An angelic scribe records the sins of the shepherds, and both this scribe and Enoch plead for Israel in the heavenly throne-room. History from the time of Manasseh to the end is divided into four periods of twelve, twenty-three, twenty-three, and twelve subdivisions respectively. These calculations, which add up to 490 years (70 weeks of years) appear to be related to the numerology of Daniel 9 (and Dan 7 with its four major divisions).³⁰

The Apocalypse of Weeks is also the product of revelation, specifically, Enoch's heavenly vision in which he read the heavenly tablets and listened to their angelic interpretation (93:2). Its summary of human history is much briefer than in the Animal Vision. Although its

²⁷ R.A. Werline, *Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism: The Development of a Religious Institution* (SBLEJL 13; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998) 67-81.

²⁸ R. Clifford, "History and Myth in Daniel 10-1," *BA* 220-21 (1975-76) 25.

²⁹ Collins, *Daniel*, 286-94; G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism and Early Christianity* (expanded ed.; HTS 56; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006) 91-92.

³⁰ On these calculations, see Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 391-93.

periodization is obscure, it is explicit (seven weeks up to the beginning of the eschaton and then three additional weeks) and, to some degree, symmetrical.³¹ Important events happen at the end of various weeks. In times of evil, a righteous person is saved. Deceit and violence leads to the flood, as it brings on judgment in the end time. Abraham's election is paralleled by the election of the chosen in the end time. The various sanctuaries are noted in their respective weeks: the tabernacle (93:6); Solomon's temple (93:7-8); eschatological temple (91:13).

2.1.3. The Testament of Moses

The history summary in the *Testament of Moses* is revelatory in the sense that the author interprets the last chapters of Deuteronomy with the claim that this interpretation comprises the words of the prophet Moses himself. The author's periodization of history involves the phases of the Deuteronomic historical scheme: sin-punishment-repentance-salvation, which are repeated in a double cycle. As is typical of the apocalypses, the events of most recent history are described in the greatest detail. The function of the Deuteronomic scheme is to identify the present time as the moment in which repentance (the obedience of Taxo and his sons) will bring on the eschaton.

Although I have not discussed the book of *Jubilees* as an apocalypse, it is worth noting that in ch. 23, a similar use of the Deuteronomic scheme places the author at the brink of the end time and indicates that obedience to the Torah as it is expounded in the book will bring on the eschaton.³²

2.1.4. 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch

4 Ezra 11-12 and 13 are this text's two exemplars of the genres I have been discussing. Both are presented as revelation in the form of dream visions. The first is explicitly a reinterpretation of Daniel 7: "The eagle that you saw coming up from the sea is the fourth kingdom that appeared in a vision to your brother Daniel" (12:11). Thus a text that will have been considered scripture by the time 4 Ezra was written (viz. Daniel) is interpreted through a revelatory medium. Although the imagery is different from Daniel, like Daniel, the author periodizes history, increasing the detail as he approaches the eschaton. Ezra's second dream vision is not a historical review as such, but an additional

³¹ *Ibid.*, 438-40; J.C. VanderKam, "Studies in the Apocalypse of Weeks (1 Enoch 93:1-10; 91:11-17)," *CBQ* 46 (1984) 518-21.

³² For *Jubilees* as an apocalypse, see G.W.E. Nickelsburg, "Apocalyptic Judaism," in *Encyclopedia of Judaism* (4 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 2005) I:76-77.

interpretation of Daniel 7, which describes the coming of the Messiah by focusing on the man who rides on the clouds.

2 Baruch contains two symbolic dream visions, which are interpreted by the deity and the angel Remiel respectively (38:1; 39:1; 55:3). In first instance (chs. 36-40), the interpretation adopts the four-kingdom periodizing of Daniel 7, without citing Daniel, and it concludes with the coming of the Messiah. The second dream vision is much broader in scope and, like Enoch's Animal Vision, it tracks key points in the biblical account of human history from Adam to the eschaton (chs. 56-71). Indeed, more than any apocalypse we have discussed, it provides details from biblical history and the proper names of the major characters, specifically the good and evil leaders of Israel and two of their Gentile counterparts. Differently from the other apocalypses, its detailed conclusion does not describe current historical events, but rather a long list of stereotyped characteristics of the end time (chs. 70-71), followed by a detailed description of the paradisiacal conditions that will obtain in the eschaton (ch. 73). The vision's division into periods is explicit in its alternation of black and white waters, which symbolize periods of sin and righteousness.

2.1.5. History – or the lack of it – in the Apocalypses

Our survey of the apocalypses indicates a major characteristic in the "historiography" of the early texts. These authors are not interested in conveying historical information as such. Instead they summarize events that are already well known, either from the biblical accounts or from a general acquaintance with "recent" events. The purpose of these summaries, especially with their more detailed descriptions of the present time, is to place the audience in these sequences and thus to show that they stand on the brink of the end time. Thus, they function to comfort the righteous and to admonish them to stand fast and not capitulate to unfaith or apostasy. Although the two latest apocalypses have a similar function, they differ somewhat from this profile. Fourth Ezra reinterprets Daniel 7 and expands considerably on the activities of the Messiah, whether the Lion of Judah (chs. 11-12) or the Man from the Sea (ch. 13). A similar situation pertains in 2 Baruch; however, his historical summary (chs. 56-66) reflects a concern about Israelite leaders that mirrors a similar emphasis in the contemporary biblical paraphrase of Pseudo-Philo.³³

³³ See Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 266.

2.1.6. Summary

The authorial intent to comfort and admonish is also reflected in other characteristics that we have noted in at least some of the apocalypses. The periodizing of history emphasizes the fact that God orders the course of history. By positing the existence of a unseen heavenly or cosmic realm, the authors emphasize that God and God's justice are operative, or imminent, even when the phenomenal world suggests otherwise. Hand-in-hand with this go the claims of the revelation that provides access to this hidden world.³⁴

3.0. The Apocalyptic Literature as a Source of Historical Information

Now that we have placed the apocalypses in time and have seen how they shape *their* historical accounts, we can seek to determine what information they provide for *our own* writing of history.

3.1. Extracting Information from the Apocalypses' Historical Accounts

As we have seen, we can identify the time of the apocalypses' composition on the basis of their overlaps with the writings of Jewish and pagan historians (above §§1.2.1-5). So, what information do the apocalypses' historical accounts provide about the events they recount that is *not* available from the accounts of ancient historians? To use a metaphor, let us think of the apocalypses and the historical writings as two superimposed images, in which certain parts of the two images are more or less identical. When we have overlaid those coinciding parts of the images, much is left over that is unique to each layer. In particular, the historical texts describe events in much more detail than the historical summaries in the apocalypses, and they recount many events that are omitted from the apocalypses. But what of the apocalypses? Do they refer to, or describe, events and persons that are omitted in the histories? The answer is "yes," although we learn much less than we might have hoped for.

3.1.1. The Danielic Apocalypses

From the apocalypses in Daniel 7, 8, and 10-12, we learn two things. First, according to 11:14,

³⁴ See my discussion of the apocalyptic construction of reality in *1 Enoch* 1, 37-42.

... the violent ones of your people will assert themselves to substantiate the (*or a*) vision, but they will stumble.³⁵

From this obscure passage, we learn that during the reign of Antiochus III, probably in the last decade of the third century, some Jews, informed by a vision, attempted a futile uprising against the Syrian crown. In short, visionary activity was not limited to those who composed the apocalypses in the book of Daniel, and it could lead to a kind of violent activity that Daniel does not countenance.³⁶

Secondly, according to 11:33,

And the wise among the people will make many understand, though they fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder (for some) days.

In 12:3, these *maskîlîm* are identified as "those who cause many to be righteous" (*mašdîqê hārabbîm*). That is, during the Antiochene persecution, resistance to the king's proscription of the Torah (living the righteous life prescribed by the Torah) was encouraged by the activity of Jewish sages and teachers – presumably the sort who composed the Danielic apocalypses.³⁷

3.1.2. 1 Enoch

Like the Danielic apocalypses, the contemporary Animal Vision (*1 Enoch* 85-90) provides a few bits of information. In its description of the end of the third or the beginning of the second century BCE, the author writes:

And look, lambs were born of those white sheep, and they began to open their eyes and to see and to cry out to the sheep. But they did not listen to them nor attend to their words, but they were extremely deaf, and their eyes were extremely and excessively blinded (90:6-7).³⁸

That is, some of the younger generation of Jews begin to chide their elders for what they claim to be the older generation's apostasy, described as the sheep's blindness and straying from the path. More-

³⁵ Translation draws on Collins, *Daniel*, *ad loc.* and A. Berlin and M.Z. Brettler, eds., *The Jewish Study Bible* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), *ad loc.*

³⁶ On the "obscure" character of the passage, see Collins (*Daniel*, 379-80), who recounts the various possibilities of interpretation. On the pacifist ideology of the Danielic authors, see *ibid.*, 66-67.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 66.

³⁸ Translations of *1 Enoch* are taken from G.W.E. Nickelsburg and J.C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch: A New Translation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004). A more detailed exposition of the Enochic texts appears in Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, *ad loc.*

over, they base their actions on the authority of revelation. Since this claim to revelation takes place within an account of a dream vision, it is possible that, in part, this revelation was also embodied in a vision. A similar take of this period appears in the Apocalypse of Weeks and in other parts of the Epistle that are not parts of a historical summary:

And at its [the seventh week's] conclusion, the chosen will be chosen,
as witnesses of righteousness from the everlasting plant of righteousness,
to whom will be given sevenfold wisdom and knowledge.
And they will uproot the foundations of violence,
and the structure of deceit in it
to execute judgment. (93:10; 91:11)

Again a group claims to be the recipients of special revelation, here because they are the chosen, and they take a position over against others who are the perpetrators of false religion and violence, as we shall see in a moment. The identity of these recipients of revelation, and presumably of those in the Animal Vision, is clarified at the end of the Epistle:

... to the righteous and pious and wise
my books will be given for the joy of righteousness and much wisdom.

Indeed, to them the books will be given,
and they will believe in them,
and in them all the righteous will rejoice and be glad,
to learn from them all the paths of truth. (104:12-13)

That is, the righteous, the recipients of revelation, are those who find divine truth *in the books of Enoch*. This division between the pious and enlightened and the sinners, and the religious and social tensions indicated in the Animal Vision and the Apocalypse of Weeks are the subject of further discussion in the Epistle.³⁹

Woe to those who write lying words and words of error
and lead many astray with their lies when they hear them ...
You yourselves err;
you will have no peace but will quickly perish. (98:15)

³⁹ On the religious polemics, see G.W.E. Nickelsburg, "The Epistle of Enoch and the Qumran Literature," *JJS* 33 (1982) = J. Neusner and G. Vermes, eds., *Essays in Honour of Yigael Yadin*, 333-45, reprinted in J. Neusner and A. Avery-Peck, eds., *George W.E. Nickelsburg in Perspective: An Ongoing Dialogue of Learning* (2 vols.; JSJSup 80; Leiden: Brill, 2003) 1:105-18 (hereafter, *GNP*).

Woe to you who alter the true words
and pervert the everlasting covenant
and consider themselves to be without sin;
they will be swallowed up in the earth ... (99:2)

In short, the Enoch texts indicate that around the turn of the second century BCE, and later in the century, there were sharp religious divisions that the self-proclaimed wise and righteous understood to constitute the difference between the saved and the damned.

Finally, the long strings of woes in the Epistle of Enoch depict actions of the rich and the powerful, who pervert justice and oppress the righteous and the poor in a variety of ways.⁴⁰ Of course, one must be careful not to accept uncritically as fact the content of the polemics of one group against the other. In this case, however, granting the possibility of some rhetorical overstatement, I see no reason to write off the content of these woes as simply the delusional complaints of the underdogs. A total disconnect with reality would render these complaints pointless. Thus, the Epistle provides some evidence for social and economic tensions that are not attested in the writings of the Jewish historians.

3.1.3. The Testament of Moses

As we have seen, like the Danielic apocalypses, the cycle of the historical summary in the Testament of Moses has numerous parallels with the historians' accounts of the time around the Antiochene persecution, which allow us to date its earliest form to that period. Also like Daniel, the summary adds little to our knowledge of the period, not least because ch. 5 engages primarily in stereotyped polemics. At one point, however, the text agrees with the Enochic texts. Concerning the beginning of this period, it states that "they themselves will be divided as to the truth" (5:2). One could hardly articulate a better, more pithy summary of the texts in the Animal Vision and the Epistle of Enoch cited above. It was a time of religious dispute, when truth and falsehood were major issues.

⁴⁰ In detail see G.W.E. Nickelsburg, "Riches, the Rich, and God's Judgment in 1 Enoch 92-105 and the Gospel According to Luke," *NTS* 25 (1979) 324-40; and *idem*, "Revisiting the Rich and the Poor in 1 Enoch 92-105 and the Gospel According to Luke," *SBLSP* 37 (1998) 324-44, both reprinted in *GNP* 2:521-85, together with responses by J.S. Kloppenborg and G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *ibid.*, 586-99.

3.1.4. 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch

As far as I can see, the historical summaries in these texts provide no significant information about the times that they describe that is not to be found in the Bible and the Jewish historians.

3.1.5. Summary

With the pseudepigraphic apocalypses placed fairly precisely in time, thanks to some close parallels in the Jewish and pagan historians, we have found a few details about Jewish religious and social life that are not mentioned by these historians, principally some indications of religious difference and disputes, as well as attestations of social oppression. While these findings are quantitatively skimpy, we should not minimize their significance. In the first instance, they are indicators early on of a religious pluralism and sectarianism that comes much more to the fore at a slightly later period in the Qumran scrolls. In the second case, we know little enough about social and economic conditions in Palestine in the second century as it was viewed by the underdogs. The Epistle of Enoch presents a view of the rich and riches that is very different from the viewpoint of Joshua ben Sira, the teacher of the aristocratic sons of Jerusalem.⁴¹

3.2.1. The Apocalypses as Historical Sources

I have suggested that the historical summaries in the apocalyptic literature provide relatively little information about Jewish history that we cannot glean from other sources in much greater detail, and I have argued that, in these sections, the apocalypticists were not really interested in communicating historical information for its own sake. These facts notwithstanding, I will argue in this section that we can, in fact, glean a good deal of important historical information from the apocalypses that is not available elsewhere, or that is available only in bits and pieces. For the fact is that *the apocalypses are themselves pieces of Jewish history*, and careful study of them as historical artifacts sheds important light on the developing multifaceted shape of Jewish religion in its theological, intellectual, institutional, and social aspects.

⁴¹ See the discussion by R.A. Horsley, "Social Relations and Social Conflict in the Epistle of Enoch," in R.A. Argall, B.A. Bow, and R.A. Werline, eds., *For a Later Generation: The Transformation of Tradition in Israel, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity*, Fs. George W.E. Nickelsburg (Harrisburg: Trinity International, 2000) 100-11.

3.2.1.1. The Centrality of Revelation

First and most obvious, the apocalypses attest the existence in the 3rd century BCE to the 1st century CE of a kind of Jewish religion that attaches central importance to claims of divine revelation.⁴² The centrality of revelation in the apocalypses is evident from the fact that these authors embody their message in literary forms that are almost entirely revelatory in nature. Daniel 7-12 consists of dream visions in which the author sees events taking place in the heavenly realm and angelophanies in which the seer learns about the hidden structure and course of history. *1 Enoch* is more complex. It comprises: a prophetic oracle of salvation and damnation (chs. 1-5); a throne-vision and prophetic commissioning (chs. 1-16); journeys through the cosmos and visions of how it operates (chs. 17-19; 20-36; 72-82); another ascent to heaven and a series of journeys through the cosmos (chs. 37-71); two dream visions about the coming judgment and the structure and course of history (83-84; 85-90); a historical summary of information that Enoch read from the heavenly tablets (93:1-10; 91:11-17); forms of woe and encouragement and predictions of the future that echo the prophets, and appeals to earlier revelations of heaven (chs. 94-104).⁴³ The *Testament of Moses* features a detailed forecast of the future that expounds Moses' prophecy in Deuteronomy 28-32, placing the exposition in the mouth of Moses. Most of *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch* consists of dream visions about the future and revelatory dialogues with angels and with the deity.

These authors' claims to revelation and to the divine authority that derives from it validate and add persuasive power to the various aspects of their message. The assurance that the eschaton and divine vindication is near offers consolation in times of trouble and provides a rationale for admonitions to stand fast when apostasy or the loss of faith in God's justice are a clear and present danger. In some cases, accounts of journeys through the cosmos to the places where judgment is being prepared or (will be) enacted provides spatial reinforcement for predications of the eschaton.⁴⁴ Alternatively such accounts provide assurance that order rather than chaos rules in God's universe. The assertion that "wisdom has been given" to an author or the author's group validates polemics against persons or groups who differ in their interpretation of God's will. In short, what these authors say is the case in matters of existential concern is not simply asserted as

⁴² Nickelsburg, "Apocalyptic Judaism."

⁴³ On the literary forms in *1 Enoch*, see Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 28-34.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 278.

fact, it is presented as God's truth, often when phenomenal "reality" seems to indicate otherwise.

As I have suggested but not emphasized, the apocalypticists often expressed their revelatory claims in forms and rhetoric that are paralleled in the writings of the biblical prophets. This is especially, but not exclusively, true of various sections of *1 Enoch*.⁴⁵ This is not to say, however that the apocalypticists were clones of the biblical prophets. I cite two examples from *1 Enoch*. First, in chs. 26–27, the author draws on material in Third Isaiah (Isa 65–66) to describe Jerusalem in the eschaton. But it is not sufficient to quote the prophet; the author presents the material of Isaiah's prophecies in an account of Enoch's cosmic journeys.⁴⁶ Second, and more generally, *1 Enoch* exemplifies a fusion of prophetic and sapiential forms, so that, to state it very generally, wisdom is for him revelation, and prophetic material is sapientialized beyond what we find in the prophets.⁴⁷ These data indicate a major transition in the theology and intellectual life of Israel. Moreover, the literary data point beyond themselves to the social *realia* that generated them. In what sense is it correct to say that prophecy was dead and prophets were gone by the end of the Persian period? It is a complex problem I cannot address here.⁴⁸ What is clear, however, is that there were people in the Hellenistic and early Roman periods who acted and wrote and spoke as if they were prophets of some sort. Thus the apocalypses are both a testimony to and an expression of a major transition in the religious and social history of Israel.

3.2.1.2. Increased Concern about Divine Justice and Speculation about the End Time

By their very nature, Israelite covenantal theologies, psalms of lament, and, to some degree, wisdom speculation concerned themselves with the issue of divine justice. It was axiomatic that God rewards the right-

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 30–31, 34.

⁴⁶ Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 315–19. On Second and Third Isaiah, see further, *ibid.*, 57–58.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 59–60. On the relationship between wisdom and apocalypticism, see the papers in F. García Martínez, ed., *Wisdom and Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the Biblical Tradition* (BETL 158; Leuven: Leuven University Press; Peeters, 2003); and in B.G. Wright III and L.M. Wills, eds., *Conflicted Boundaries in Wisdom and Apocalypticism* (Symposium 35. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005).

⁴⁸ I touch on this briefly in "The Nature and Function of Revelation in *1 Enoch*, Jubilees, and Some Qumranic Documents," E.G. Chazon and M.E. Stone, eds., *Pseudepigraphical Perspectives: The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Proceedings of the International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 12–14 January, 1997* (STDJ 31; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 91–119.

eous and punishes the wicked. But sometimes human experience seemed to falsify the axiom. Times of severe crisis increased the efforts of "the righteous" to deal with this cognitive dissonance. The apocalypses in particular are exercises in theodicy. Early forms of it appear in *1 Enoch* in the prayer in ch. 9 and the lament in ch. 103. Much more developed speculation about God's justice fills the pages of *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*, with the former echoing Job's struggle with the Almighty.

The result of these struggles of faith and intellect is usually the assertion that God's justice will come to a full and final resolution in the end time. A concern with what we may meaningfully describe as the end is already evident in the writings of the biblical prophets, preeminently Second and Third Isaiah.⁴⁹ Drawing on some of these traditions, the apocalypticists, especially but by no means exclusively, focus on the end as the solution to present problems. The particular characteristics of their "eschatology" include: speculation about the course of history and the events that will occur in the time of the end, not least the great judgment and the resurrection of the dead or its equivalent⁵⁰; usually a spatial dualism that posits a certain correspondence between events in this world and in the heavenly world; and claims of revelation that guarantee the truth of these claims about the heavenly world and the eschatological enactment of God's justice. Since an interest in the end appears in quite a few Jewish works that are not apocalypses, a comparison of these texts with the apocalypses offers another opportunity for us to see where literary historical artifacts overlap, and where they differ from one another.⁵¹

3.2.1.3. A Range of Attitudes about the Jerusalem Temple

It is axiomatic that the Second Temple was central to the piety of what is often called "Second Temple Judaism." Evidence of the temple's importance is to be seen in the book of Daniel, where Antiochus's pollution of the sanctuary and the cessation of the daily Tamid sacrifice are portrayed as the epitome of his sacrilegious arro-

⁴⁹ On this issue, see G.W.E. Nickelsburg, "Eschatology (Early Jewish)," *ABD* 2:580–83.

⁵⁰ For these variations on the theme, see Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*.

⁵¹ For a sketch of the eschatology of the Jewish writings of the Hellenistic and early Roman periods, see Nickelsburg, "Eschatology," 2:583–93.

gance (8:11-14; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11). The same issue arises in the *Testament of Moses* (8:5).⁵²

Several strata of *1 Enoch* paint a different picture however. Most striking is the Animal Vision. According to 89:73-74 the cult of the second temple was polluted from its inception:

And they began again to build as before and they raised up that tower and it was called the high tower. And they began again to place a table before the tower, but all the bread on it was polluted and not pure. And besides all these things, the eyes of the sheep were blind, and they did not see . . .

The language appears to be drawn from Mal 1:7-8, 12, including perhaps the reference to the blind sheep, which here refers not to sacrificial animals, but to Israel's apostasy. The *Enoch* text is striking because the blindness of the sheep persists until the author's own time, when some of his own persuasion begin to open their eyes (90:6). The *Apocalypse of Weeks* is also important in this respect. Although the author mentions the construction of the tabernacle, the construction and destruction of the first temple, and the construction of the eschatological temple (93:6, 7-8; 91:13), he makes no explicit reference to the second temple and describes the post-exilic period as a time of complete perversion (93:9).⁵³ Yet another possible reference to cultic irregularities occurs in chs. 12-16, where the sin of the rebel watchers is described in language that occurs in explicit polemics against the Jerusalem cult.⁵⁴ These polemics in *Pss. Sol.* 8:13 and CD 5:6-7 indicate that *1 Enoch* is not unique in its accusation, but the Enochic texts as a group demonstrate that a criticism of the cult is older than the foundation of the Qumran community and the first-century pietist group that composed the polemics in the *Psalms of Solomon*. The criticism in *1 Enoch* is striking also because according to 26:1, Jerusalem is located at the center of the earth. The place is sacred, but the institution has been perverted.

Other critiques of the second temple occur in texts that were composed in response to the Roman destruction of Jerusalem. For all of

⁵²J.A. Goldstein, "The Testament of Moses: Its Content, Its Origin, and Its Attestation in Josephus," in G.W.E. Nickelsburg, ed., *Studies in the Testament of Moses* (SBLSCS 3; Cambridge: Society of Biblical Literature, 51-52. See also *T. Moses* 5-6.

⁵³His only possible allusion to the temple is in 91:11 (see Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 448):

And they will uproot the foundations of violence,
and the structure of deceit in it,
to execute judgment.

⁵⁴Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 271-72.

his grief over the destruction of the temple and the desolation of Zion, Baruch lays the blame on the priesthood, although the precise reason is not specified:

But you priests, take the keys of the sanctuary,
and hurl them into the heights of heaven.
And give them to the Lord and say,
"Guard your house yourself,
for we have been found to be false stewards." (10:18)

In the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, a text from this period that I have not discussed, Manasseh's pollution of the first temple and its consequent destruction are symbolic of the destruction of the second temple and its cause (chs. 25-27).⁵⁵

In short, although some of the prophets criticize the first temple and its priesthood and the cult, and 2 Maccabees, for example, decries the hellenizing excesses of the priests in the years before the Antiochan persecution and defilement of the temple, and the Qumran texts polemicize against a polluted cult, the apocalyptic texts that we have discussed indicate a broader, ongoing critique of temple, priesthood and cult, rooted in the earlier post-exilic period and still evident in the post-70 period.

3.2.1.4. Wisdom – an Intellectual Phenomenon in Transition

Traditional discussions of biblical wisdom literature have focused on Job, to some extent, Psalms, especially Proverbs, and also Qohelet. With the increased study of the non-canonical literature that has followed from the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Wisdom of ben Sira, the Wisdom of Solomon, and Baruch have been included as later exemplars of sapiential literature. It is now clear, however, that we must bring the apocalypses into the picture, as well.⁵⁶ There is still much that is unclear in this picture, and especially its social settings, but here are a few considerations. "Wisdom" is the self-designation for two or three major parts of *1 Enoch*,⁵⁷ a number of the literary forms in *1 Enoch* are at home in the sapiential literature,⁵⁸ and significant parts of

⁵⁵*Idem*, *Jewish Literature*, 288.

⁵⁶See above, n. 47. See also J.J. Collins, "Wisdom, Apocalypticism, and Generic Compatibility," in L. Perdue, et al., eds., *In Search of Wisdom: Essays in Memory of John Gammie* (Louisville: Westminster, 1993) 165-85.

⁵⁷See 1:8; 37:1-2; 92:1; 93:10; 104:13; cf. 98:9; 99:10.

⁵⁸Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 60.

its contents parallel the contemporary Wisdom of ben Sira (Sirach).⁵⁹ The interpretation of dreams and visions is an important element in the book of Daniel, a composition of “the wise” (*maskilim*). Sirach 24:23 contains the first explicit identification of wisdom with the Mosaic Torah, and it is followed in this by Baruch 4:1. This identification recurs in 2 *Baruch* 51:7; 77:13–16, and the apocalypse is saturated with the vocabulary of intellection,⁶⁰ which suggests that we cannot make a clean distinction between sapiential and revelatory literature in this period. 1 *Enoch* is striking for the manner in which it ties moral instruction not to the Mosaic Torah, but to the revelations of Enoch, and for its placing the Mosaic Torah on the back burner.⁶¹ That this is not an isolated phenomenon is evident from the Qumran 4QInstruction, which employs typical forms of wisdom instruction, shows little if any interest in the Mosaic Torah, and cites the revelatory *raz nihyeh* (the mystery to be) as the functional equivalent of “wisdom” as we see it, for example, in Sirach.⁶²

What we see in these data and many others that could be cited is the existence in the Hellenistic period of a complex set of phenomena that resided in intellectual “circles” that variously claimed the receipt of revelation and practiced the hard-headed search for “wisdom and knowledge” (cf. 1 *Enoch* 93:10 for this noun pair) that embraced the heavenly and the earthly and that related to the realm of the sacred and to what we might call the ordinary activities of everyday life. In short, careful study of the apocalyptic literature, as well as related texts from the Qumran caves, considerably muddies the waters as we seek to describe the intellectual life of the Jews in the Hellenistic and early Roman periods and the concrete settings in which it was nourished.

3.2.1.5. Attitudes toward Scripture

The Jewish apocalypses demonstrate some of the variety of ways in which Scripture was used, interpreted, and, indeed, ignored in the Second Temple period. Taken as a whole, the corpus of apocalypses

⁵⁹ R.A. Argall, *1 Enoch and Sirach: A Comparative Literary and Conceptual Analysis of the Themes of Revelation, Creation and Judgment* (SBLEJL 8; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1995).

⁶⁰ Here I am indebted to a graduate seminar paper by Francis Flannery written some years ago at The University of Iowa.

⁶¹ G.W.E. Nickelsburg, “Enochic Wisdom and its Relationship to the Mosaic Torah,” in G. Boccaccini, ed., *The Early Enoch Tradition* (JSJSup; Leiden: Brill, 2007, forthcoming).

⁶² Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 58–59; see also the literature cited in *idem*, *Jewish Literature*, 387, n. 323.

indicates that divine revelation was believed to exist apart from the Tanak. The *Testament of Moses*, on the other hand, posits revelation by rewriting the last chapters of Deuteronomy with specific, detailed, and explicit reference to current events. The authors of the Enochic corpus appear to have known almost all the books of the Tanak,⁶³ and the author of the Animal Vision recounts the history of humanity by summarizing the content of Genesis through Ezra–Nehemiah. At the same time, these authors’ claims to revelation depend on the alleged ancient Enochic authorship of their texts. Moreover, a good part of the corpus as a whole is presented as authoritative scripture,⁶⁴ and parts of the parts of the corpus appear to have been considered as authoritative sacred tradition at Qumran. A similar situation pertains to *Jubilees*. It alleges to be the Mosaic transcript of an angelic recitation of heavenly Torah and appears to have been authoritative in the Qumran community. 4 *Ezra* accepts the authority of the Tanak and includes his own work in a group of other inspired works intended for the wise (14:37–48). In his messianic chapters, he presents his interpretation of Daniel 7 as the product of a divinely sent dream vision.

In sum, the apocalypses variously: respect the authority of the Tanak, or parts of it; claim to be the inspired interpreters of the Tanak; and claim authoritative revelation apart from it. In Qumran, as our one known example, Daniel, parts of 1 *Enoch*, and *Jubilees* were accepted as part of the “corpus” of authoritative sacred writings.

3.2.1.6. The Apocalyptic Writings and non-Israelite Myth

In composing their writings, the early apocalypticists not only drew on Israelite sacred tradition, they also fished in Gentile waters. Daniel 7 and 8 employ Canaanite mythic material to color their vision reports (above §3.2.1.6). In order to explain the origins of violence in his own time, the author of 1 *Enoch* 6–11 employed motifs from the Prometheus myth, and other elements from pagan mythology appear in other strata of 1 *Enoch*.⁶⁵ Thus, the apocalyptic texts provide evidence that in the Greco-Roman period some Jews found it useful to express their Israelite religion by means of non-Israelite symbols. From this we may extrapolate a situation in which they either read pagan texts or inter-

⁶³ Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 57–58.

⁶⁴ G.W.E. Nickelsburg, “Scripture in 1 Enoch and 1 Enoch as Scripture,” in T. Fornberg and D. Hellholm, eds., *Texts and Contexts: Biblical Texts in their Textual and Situational Contexts, Essays in Honor of Lars Hartman* (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1995) 333–54; and in summary, Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 57–58.

⁶⁵ Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 62.

acted with other Jews or with Gentiles who were schooled in these texts. In their use of non-Israelite myth, however, the apocalypticists were not doing a new thing; they were following the precedent of earlier writers of the biblical texts, from the first Genesis creation account to the oracles of Second Isaiah.

3.2.1.7. Sects and Groups

The early apocalypses provide a window into the sociology of early Judaism, in a negative way. There is no reason to believe that Daniel, the *Testament of Moses*, any part of *1 Enoch*, or *Jubilees* was composed by a member of any Jewish sect known to us. Taken along with the Qumran sectarian texts, and earlier quasi-sectarian texts, they attest that a plurality of groups, sects, and perhaps isolated persons of peculiar persuasive dotted the Palestinian landscape between 250 BCE and the turn of the era.⁶⁶ To a large degree these groups, sects, and persons appear to have been constituted or theologically and socially shaped by their particular understanding of divine law, but other factors were doubtless at work. Closer scrutiny of these texts may bring this geographic and religious landscape into clearer focus. We may never learn names, but we can get a better view of the religious and social contours.

4.0. Summary

Several conclusions are relevant to the topic of this conference.

1. From a certain perspective, it is difficult to describe history writing in the apocalypses, because the apocalypticists do not seek to convey historical information.
2. Alternatively, they do present historical summaries whose primary purpose is to interpret their present situation and identify their place and the place of their audience with respect to the eschaton.
3. In the process of doing this they assert God's ordering of and control of history.
4. In both respects the claimed source of their history writing is divine revelation.
5. Although the apocalyptic historical summaries do not seek to convey historical information, there are a few tidbits here and

⁶⁶ G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *Ancient Judaism and Christian Origin: Diversity, Continuity, and Transformation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003) 160-81.

there that help to fill out the pictures created by authors who are self-consciously historians.

6. Perhaps most important for the historian of antiquity, the apocalypses are themselves precious historical data that shed light on aspects of the religious, intellectual, cultural, and social life of the Jews in the Greco-Roman period.

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5

Encountering the Past through the Works of Flavius Josephus

Steve Mason

Julian Barnes's recent novel *Arthur and George* explores the encounter between Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of Sherlock Holmes, and one George Edalji, a thoroughly British man who cannot grasp that his Parsee ancestry might be the cause of sudden legal troubles. One reviewer confides his shock at discovering that the character of George, along with other figures and documents in the novel, are "historical":

I was initially sorely disappointed. Barnes didn't invent the letters? ... Barnes didn't make up George? But of course he's invented him, or at least raised him from the dead. And using mere kitchen scraps of historical information, has added marrow, muscles, nerves and a pumping heart to a footnote in British legal history, animated long-interred bones in a way no biography ever could.¹

These observations prompt a number of questions concerning the boundaries between fact and fiction: Does it take a novelist to bring dead characters to life? At what literary threshold does one who writes about such figures cease to be a historian or biographer? What is the relationship, ideal or real, between fact and art in history – or in a novel? Where can we find those "kitchen scraps of historical information," from which to build stories? Are there *simple facts* available somewhere? And what is history, anyway? Such questions are also part and parcel of any investigation of the writings by the first-century priest, soldier, and historian, Flavius Josephus.

Josephus (37–c. 100+ CE) left behind what has always been considered, as it was recopied and reissued in the west until the printing press

¹ Z. Gardner, "A Palpable Hit, by George!" (Review of J. Barnes, *Arthur & George* [New York: Random House, 2005], *Globe and Mail*, Saturday Oct. 8 (2005), D-6.