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JEWISH AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

TO 2 THESSALONIANS 2:1-12

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Exegetical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

by

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BACKGROUND TO 2 THESSALONIANS 2:1-12

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Thesis

The eschatology of 2 Thess. 2:1-12 has been a perennial problem for biblical interpreters. The language of the chapter is very different from that which Paul uses in his other epistles. He exhorts the Thessalonians not to be excited about the coming of the day of the Lord, "for that day will not come unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed . . ." (verse 3). When the appears, he will exalt himself "against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God" (verse 4). But there is something holding back (ΚΑΤΕΧΩΝ) the appearance of the ἄνομος and the restrainer is known to the Thessalonians. All the activities of the lawless one are instigated by Satan but the end of the lawless one will come when the Lord Jesus will appear and "slay him with the breath of his mouth" (verse 8).

The problems that an interpreter of this passage encounters are various. Different questions have been raised in the course of interpretation. Who is ὁ ἄνομος? What is the ΚΑΤΕΧΩΝ and the ΚΑΤΕΧΩΝ? What is meant by the ἄνομος taking "his seat in temple of God?" Did Paul have any time-table in mind pertaining to the coming of the Lord when he wrote these things? The

different possible answers to these questions can be found in many commentaries on Paul's Second Epistle to the Thessalonians¹ and do not concern us here.

This thesis deals neither with the meaning of 2 Thess. 2:1-12 nor with the exegesis of the passage. The purpose of the study is to examine the passage in the light of the Jewish background. The question to be answered is not "What does Paul mean by *ἄνομος*?" but "Where does he get the idea?" Are the language and thoughts in this passage unique to Paul or do they reflect reminiscences of Jewish literature and thoughts? In short, "What is the Jewish background to 2 Thess. 2:1-12?"

There are many extant works in which the authors have attempted to show the relation of some aspects of Paul's teachings to Jewish thoughts and ideas. Hans Joachim Schoeps² in his book on the theology of Paul argues that Paul's theology is a christianized Jewish theology. Paul Volz,³ Herman Gunkel,⁴ and Henry St. John Thackeray⁵ have

¹Beda Rigaux, St. Paul: Les Epitres aus Thessaloniens (Paris: Etudes Biblique, 1956). This commentary is one of the best and most up to date on the different lines of interpretation of this passage.

²H. J. Schoeps, Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History, translated from German by Harold Knight (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961).

³Paul Volz, Die Eschatologie der jüdischen Gemeinde im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter (Tübingen: Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr, 1934).

⁴Herman Gunkel, Schopfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1921).

⁵Henry S. John Thackeray, The Relation of St. Paul to Contemporary Jewish Thought (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1900).

demonstrated the interpenetration of Jewish thoughts in Paul's teachings. In these works Paul's eschatology is singled out as having a very close relation to Jewish eschatology. None of these works mentioned above has dealt at length with the Jewish background to 2 Thess. 2:1-12.

Procedure and Method

The hope that the Messiah will come in the last days to deliver the Jews is pivotal to Jewish eschatology. In 2 Thess. 2:1-12, Paul affirms that the Lord Jesus will return. In both Jewish Messianism and in Paul there is a strong hope that salvation will be brought in by the Messiah. For Paul, on the one hand, the Messiah has already come in the person of Jesus, who in turn will come again. While for the Jews, on the other hand, the Messiah is still yet to come. Chapter II, therefore, is a brief survey of Messianic expectation, the person and function of the Messiah and the day of the Lord in Jewish thought and in Paul's thought on the basis of 2 Thess. 2:1-12. Chapter III will point out that the eschatology of 2 Thess. 2:3-7 is based on "Messianic Woes," the belief among many Jews that chaos, apostasy and the appearance of the anti-God will precede the advent of the Messiah. The origin of Antichrist will be sought in the Babylonian myth of creation in which the creator god is opposed by the goddess Tiamat. The history of Antiochus Epiphanes is discussed in relation to verse 4. Since Paul asserts that at the end *ὁ ἀνομος* will finally appear, but will be destroyed by the Lord Jesus "with the breath of his

mouth," Chapter IV will deal with the discussion of the fate of God's opponents in Jewish literature. This chapter will also discuss the person and role of Satan and the signs and wonders of anti-God on the basis of Paul's statement in verse 9 that the activities of the lawless one are instigated by Satan. Chapter V will finally summarize the conclusions on the basis of the study and will suggest possible directions for further research.

The method employed in the study is a cursory investigation of the ancient Jewish literature, namely, the Old Testament, the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, the Rabbinic writings and Qumran.

Preliminary Conclusions

This investigation will indicate that 2 Thess. 2:1-12 is unique in Paul's eschatology but the conceptions in the passage are not uncommon in Jewish writings. The expectation of the coming of the Lord is reminiscent of Jewish hope of the coming of the Messiah. The coming of the man of lawlessness and the threat of apostasy are "signs of the end," "the birth pangs" of the Messiah, a concept which dominates most of the Jewish literature examined. The expression in verse 8 that the Lord Jesus will slay the lawless one with the breath of his mouth is taken verbatim from Jewish writings (Is. 11:4; Enoch 62:2; Psalms of Solomon 17:27) and is based on the concept of the Holy War in which the Messiah fights for the people of God and destroys the enemy of Yahweh. Paul was a Jew by birth and when he wrote the Second Epistle

to the Thessalonians he was contemporary with some of the Jewish apocalyptic writings. When he became a Christian, he did not abandon Jewish thoughts, ideas and conceptions, but by using them proved that Christianity is a fulfillment of the Jewish religion. Jesus becomes for Paul the Messiah and the coming of the Messiah is for Paul the parousia of the Lord Jesus.

CHAPTER II

MESSIANIC EXPECTATION IN JEWISH

LITERATURE AND IN PAUL

Eschatology is the center of Paul's thought; it can be said that messianic expectation occupies a great part of Paul's teaching. But whether it is eschatology in general or messianic expectation in particular, these thoughts did not crystalize in a vacuum. Paul's thoughts were formed in a surrounding which already had a doctrine of messianic expectation. The influence of Jewish messianic expectation is claimed to be prominent in Paul's writings. This chapter is a cursory investigation of messianic expectations in the Old Testament and other Jewish writings in order to test this claim.

Messianic Expectation in Judaism as the Foundation for the Pauline Doctrine of Eschatological Expectation

Messianic expectation in the Old Testament

The history of messianic expectation in the Old Testament goes back to the beginning of monarchy in Israel. The Israelites were unable to endure the invisible kingship of God, and so they demanded an earthly king. As a concession to human weakness, God gave Samuel the command to anoint¹ a human king (1 Samuel 8,9,10). The anointing

¹From the root of the Hebrew word for Messiah comes the word "to anoint." There is no doubt, therefore, that kingship and messianic expectation were closely related.

of Saul as the first king of Israel initiated kingship in Israel and laid the foundation for messianic hope.

Kings in Israel were to represent Yahweh before the people and vice versa. But not all the kings were faithful in fulfilling their roles. As Schoeps says,

The history of the kings is the history of the anointed king's failure to fulfill the meaning of his anointing. From this source alone is Messianism, faith in an anointed one who shall fulfill the meaning of his anointing, to be understood.²

Of course, the kings were not a failure in every case. The institution of kingship, under the exceptional rule of David, won a place for itself in Israelite religion and the era of King David became "the seed plot of Israelite Messianic hopes."³ God, according to 2 Sam. 7:12, promised King David that his kingship should last forever. The reign of David became a model. From that time on the expected Messiah was to be of David's seed, his work being the restoration of the ancient glory and splendor of Israel.

Not all kings were like David. The failure of kings was an impetus for intensification of messianic hopes.

Despair of earthly history caused what was impossible in the present either to be transferred to the future and supernatural and in consequence the figure of the ideal king, whose return was looked for, became moulded in the process of mythical creation. Thus the Messiah,

²Hans Joachim Schoeps, Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History, translated from the German by Harold Knight (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), p. 90.

³Ibid.

which originally denoted only the Israelite king as the anointed vicar of God, became a figure destined to appear in the future.⁴

The substance of messianic expectation in the Old Testament is essentially political in character. This national expectation is an inheritance from prophecy. The golden age to come presented itself to the imagination of people as "a renaissance of the golden age in the past, the good old times of the early monarchy, and in this, the revival of the kingdom of the prince of Davidic line."⁵ This idea is present throughout the writings of the prophets. Thus Amos believed that the ruined booth of David would again be raised up (Amos 9:11). Isaiah depicts the political messianic hope more vividly in chapter 9:6-7:

For unto us a child is born. . . . Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and for evermore.

In Chapter 1 Isaiah writes again, "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." In Jer. 23:5-6, the expected political Messiah is known as "a righteous branch" from the house of David and his mission is to reign as a king,

and deal wisely, and execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: "The Lord is our righteousness."

⁴Ibid., p. 91.

⁵George F. Moore, Judaism in the First Century of the Christian Era: The Age of the Tannaim (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), II, 324.

This kind of expectation did not concentrate only on the restoration of the kingdom of Israel, but also on the corollary, that is, the destruction of the nations that proved hostile to Israel. The peace of Israel would mean trouble for the enemies. Ezekiel depicts the fate of the "nations" in his book. Those nations who rejoice at the destruction of Israel shall be punished when Israel shall be restored (Ezekiel 25).⁶

Perhaps, one other thing can be said about the messianic expectation of the prophets:

the eschatology of the prophets did not suggest a transcendent, but a thoroughly earthly state of well-being with a corresponding Messiah, who was to be political in significance in so far as he was destined to gather together the outcasts and to bring about the glorification of Zion.⁷

Even though Jeremiah speaks of the new covenant (Jeremiah 31-32), and both Isaiah and Ezekiel speak about renewal of heart and mind, there apparently is nothing said to signify the end of earthly history. The eschatological expectation of the prophets had in view nothing else than the final fulfillment of the divine will and the establishment of God's kingdom on earth, where God will be King. In this period there is no allusion to a resurrection of the dead or to a winding up of history with a recompense and punishment in the world beyond. As

⁶More will be said on the enemies when discussing the "Day of the Lord" and the fate of the anti-God figure in the Old Testament.

⁷Schoeps, p. 92.

Schoeps puts it,

The Messiah is viewed not as a person with supernatural power or as the divine deliverer, but merely as the executive officer of God; generally speaking, the Messianic kingdom is more important than the person of the Messianic king.⁸

The exile did not drown the messianic hope of Israel; rather, it intensified it. Deutero-Isaiah describes elaborately the messianic age during the time of the exile and return. There is a tone of universalism which implies that the messianic kingdom may include other nations. Israel is to be a light to the nations. He speaks words of comfort to his people (Is. 40:1). Except for the figure of "the Servant" in Deutero-Isaiah, the figure of the Messiah is not mentioned, but there is a splendid description of a restored Jerusalem where the world will come to worship.

In other writings of the exilic period, especially in Haggai and Zechariah, the messianic hope was centered upon the figure of Zerubbabel. Being himself a scion of the Davidic dynasty, Zerubbabel was to the people the living reminder of a glorious past and the pledge of a glorious future also. But when Zerubbabel was obliged to return to Babylon, the messianic hope was flickered until it was revived later among the Tannaits.

One fact is to be pointed out before discussing messianic expectation in other Jewish writings. While messianic expectation in the Old Testament was that of a final age, it is a new aeon of this world's

⁸Ibid.

history that is expected, not the end of history. Schoeps calls this "a king of Messianic interim kingdom,"⁹ in which the Messiah is considered as God's forerunner. The last thing is to remain solely at the disposal of God.

Messianic expectation in Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

Messianic expectation did not die with the end of prophetic movement. It continued and even became more pronounced in the history of the Jews. This section and the sections which follow in this chapter will be devoted to the investigation of messianic expectation in non-biblical books.

The books of the Jewish Apocrypha consist of those Jewish documents which were written before the destruction of the second Temple, some of them during the more prosperous period of the Hasmonean dynasty. For this reason

they do not show evidence of despair which the Second Destruction put into the hearts of the nation's leaders, nor of the Messianic hope and the hope for a life after death, of which the nation had such need following the frightful catastrophe.¹⁰

Nevertheless, the expectation was not completely forgotten. The expectation in Apocryphal books does not change much from what we have in the Old Testament. The emphasis is on the national and political

⁹Ibid., p. 93.

¹⁰Joseph Klausner, The Messianic Idea in Israel, translated by W. F. Stinespral (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1955), p. 249.

growth of Israel while the so-called enemies of Israel are doomed to destruction. A passage from Sirach goes to prove the point:¹¹

Hasten the end and ordain the appointed time, for who may say to Thee: What does Thou? Let him that escapeth be devoured in the glowing fire, and make Thy people's wrongers find destruction. Make an end of the head of the enemy's princes that saith: There is none beside me! Gather all the tribes of Jacob that they may receive their inheritance as in the days of old (Sirach 36:8-11).

The verses which follow call for compassion over "Thy holy city" and the filling of Sion with "Thy majesty." The whole of this section up to verse 22 speaks of the humiliation of the oppressors of Israel, the sanctification of the divine name, the performance of signs and miracles, which is an integral part of the works of the Messiah, the ingathering of the exiles and the glorification of the Temple.

There is no mention of the persons of the Messiah in the Apocrypha, but there is mention of the house of David which is regarded as an everlasting rule. "David for his righteousness inherited the throne of the kingdom for ever and ever." (1 Macc. 2:57).

But before the Messiah comes, according to Klausner's interpretation,¹² Elijah will come and his duty is described in these words:

Who art ready for the time, as it is written,
To still wrath before the fierce anger of God,
To turn the heart of the fathers to children,
And to restore the tribes of Israel (Sirach 48:10).

¹¹All quotations from Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha are from R. H. Charles, editor, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, 2 vols. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1913), except where a different translation is preferred.

¹²Klausner, p. 257.

Even in the Apocryphal books there are to be found beliefs such as the life of the world to come, eternal life and resurrection of the dead. The two Apocryphal books outstanding in these aspects are 2 Maccabees and the Wisdom of Solomon.¹³

It is in the Pseudepigrapha, or what is known as the "Apocalyptic" writings, that we have a fuller development of messianic expectation in its elaborate and exotic forms. There is a change from earthly to transcendental and supernatural expectation. The difference between messianic expectation in the prophets and apocalyptic writings is summarized thus by Schoeps:

Whereas Messianic thought among the Biblical prophets expressed itself in the feeling of a tension between the present and the future, between what now exists and what is coming to be, here it is expressed in the consciousness of opposition between the world and what lies beyond it. The "coming age" is here no longer a day of realization towards which hope is directed-- "Yamonim ba'im"--but a world disclosed in vision-- "olam habba." If in the former case the expected one towards whom hopes are turned is a shoot of the house of David, who will fulfill the ideals conceived historically, here he is an unearthly being who from the height of heaven will bring all history to a close. Whereas the dimension of longing in prophetic thought is a horizontal one, here it is vertical: a fact which constitutes the essence of apocalyptic.¹⁴

¹³These two books are regarded by Joseph Klausner to be of Hellenistic origin, written by Hellenistic Jews in diaspora. This may be the reason for their apocalyptic content which is an expression of despair over their plight.

¹⁴Quoted by Schoeps, p. 95, from Leo Baeck, "Der Menschensohn," Monatsschrift fur Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums, XXC (1937), 19.

It is not difficult to find the cause for the origin of apocalyptic messianic expectations among the Jews. For many years the prophets had been assuring the Israelites of the coming of the messianic kingdom on earth, but one catastrophe after another came, and there was no messianic kingdom. It was this kind of despair under the oppression of the "nations" and

the non-fulfillment of the greatest of all prophecies, namely, the advent of the messianic kingdom, that popularized the methods of the apocalyptic.¹⁵

What follows is a brief sketch of the different aspects of messianic expectation in the apocalyptic writings.¹⁶

The troubles which befell the nation of Israel were regarded not only as earthly catastrophe, but as a prelude to the coming of the messianic kingdom and finally of the Messiah himself. They are known as the "birth pangs" or "the Messianic woes."¹⁷

The person of the Messiah is one aspect of messianic expectation which permeates the apocalyptic writings. This is seen in the Book of Daniel. The context for the writing of this book is the attack upon the nation of Israel by Antiochus Epiphanes; the author of the book wanted to direct the attention of the people from the earthly kingdoms

¹⁵R. H. Charles, Eschatology (New York: Schocken Books, 1963), p. 187.

¹⁶I am including the Book of Daniel in this group of writings. It belongs to the apocalyptic literature, even though it is in the canon of the Old Testament.

¹⁷I will relegate any detailed discussion of this to the next chapter.

and their power to someone supernatural, who can deliver the people. The earthly kingdoms are to be destroyed. This is clearly illustrated by the vision of the four beasts. The four beasts represented the four kingdoms and when these are taken away the scene of the vision continues thus:

I saw in visions of night,
 And behold with the clouds of heaven there came one
 like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days
 and was presented before him. And to him was given
 dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples,
 nations and languages should serve him;
 His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall
 not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be
 destroyed (Dan. 7:13-14).

The interpretation of the vision is that after the earthly kingdoms are ended, "the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom for ever, forever and ever" (verse 18).

The supernatural figure who is to possess the kingdom is "a son of man."¹⁸ This figure is very prominent in the apocalyptic writings, especially in the section of the book of Enoch known as "The Parables" (Enoch 37-71), and 4 Ezra. In Enoch the Son of Man is named before the Ancient of Days (48:2-3), thus agreeing with Talmudic belief that the Messiah existed with God from the beginning. Other names are given to the Messiah in the apocalyptic books, such as "the Righteous One" (Enoch 38:2), "the Elect One" (Enoch 52:6), the "Man" (4 Ezra 13:5),

¹⁸The identification of the "Son of Man" has been a perennial problem for theologians. Joseph Klausner identifies the Son of Man in Daniel with Israel. An elaborate discussion is beyond the scope of this paper.

"His Anointed One" (Enoch 52:4), "My Son (4 Ezra 7:28). Thus, the person of the Messiah is well portrayed in these books, and so also his function.

In Enoch, chapter 45, the Messiah is the Judge, and in 4 Ezra he is the Savior of the world.

Whereas thou didst see a Man coming up from the heart of the sea: this is he whom the Most High is keeping many ages and through whom he will deliver his creation, and the same shall order the survivors (4 Ezra 13:25-26).

Even though the person of the Messiah is presented as coming from above, his sphere of activity is mundane. The idea of Jerusalem being the center of messianic activities is deeply imbedded in messianic expectation of the apocalyptic age:

My son shall be revealed whom thou didst see as a Man, ascending. It shall be, when all the nations hear his voice, every man shall leave his own land and the warfare which they have one against another; and an innumerable multitude shall be gathered together, as thou didst see, desiring to come and fight against him. But he shall stand upon the summit of Mount Sion. And Sion shall come and shall be made manifest to all men, set in order and builded . . . (4 Ezra 13:32-36).

Here is a picture of a new Jerusalem. Thus far, apart from the change from the earthly "Son of David" to a supernatural Messiah who is to come from above, there are no significant changes in apocalyptic messianic expectation from that of the prophets. Material prosperity still occupies a large place in Ethiopic Enoch and in the Syriac Baruch:

And it shall come to pass in those days that the reapers shall not grow weary, nor those that build be toiled over; for the works shall of themselves speedily advance together with those who do them in tranquility (2 Baruch 74:1).

The spiritual bliss of the Days of the Messiah is strongly brought out in 4 Ezra:

For evil shall be blotted out, and deceit extinguished. Faithfulness shall flourish and corruption be vanquished. And truth, which for so long a time has been without fruit, shall be made manifest (4 Ezra 6:27-28).

Political success is emphasized during the days of the Messiah in the claim that all the righteous who live in Palestine will be delivered and all the tribes that went out into exile will return into Palestine.

And through that country there was a great way to go (a journey) of a year and a half; and that region was called Arzareth. There they have dwelt until the last times; and now, when they are about to come again, the Most High will again stay the springs of the River; that they may be able to pass over. Therefore thou didst see a multitude gathered together in peace (Ezra 13:45-47).

A marked difference between the messianic expectation in the apocalyptic writings and that of the prophets is the fact that in the latter the messianic kingdom was generally pictured as eternal on earth.¹⁹ But in the apocalyptic writings the messianic age was a transition to the next age, known as "the world to come." The order is "This World," "the Messianic Age," and the "World to Come."

The messianic age, the heavenly Jerusalem, will come down to earth. The heavenly Jerusalem is presented before the Lord because it has been preserved with him in heaven since the day when he created Paradise. After this will come the "new world:"

¹⁹The only exception to this is in Is. 65:17 and 66:22, where the prophet speaks of a "new heavens and a new earth."

And the hour comes which abides for ever. And the new world (comes) which does not turn to corruption those who depart to its blessedness, and has no mercy on those who depart to torment. And leads not to perdition those who live in it (2 Baruch 44:12).

This concept of a new age is well brought out in the book of 4 Ezra:

And he answered me and said: The present age is not the End; the glory of God abides not therein continuously; therefore have the strong prayed for the weak. But the day of judgment shall be the end of this age and the beginning of the eternal age that is to come; where corruption is passed away,
 weakness is abolished,
 infidelity is cut off;
 While righteousness is grown
 and faithfulness is sprung up (4 Ezra 7:112-114).

What is obvious from the last quotation is that the end of this world and the beginning of "the World to Come" is the Day of Judgment which will come after the advent of the Messiah.

At this point the apocalyptic writings introduce a teaching which completely changes the Jewish eschatology, namely, the resurrection of the individual dead. The first statement about the resurrection is in Daniel chapter 12:

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever (12:2-3).

This idea of the resurrection of the dead as an aspect of messianism flowers more in 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra. The New World is described as the world to which there is no end, in which the righteous will receive great light. The world to come is believed to bring death to an end:

Bring to an end therefore henceforth mortality. And reprove accordingly the angel of death, and let Thy glory appear, and let the might of Thy beauty be known, and let Sheol be sealed so that from this time forward it may not receive the dead, and let the treasuries of souls restore those which are enclosed in them (2 Baruch 21:23).

The resurrection will coincide with the last judgment. After the resurrection of those who sleep,

The Most High shall be revealed upon the throne of judgment: and then cometh the End
And compassion shall pass away . . . (4 Ezra 7:33).

What is significant about the concept of the resurrection in apocalyptic eschatology, according to R. H. Charles, is that whereas the eschatology of the prophets dealt only with the destiny of the nation of Israel, the resurrection now provided comfort for the individual. Not only that, but the doctrine of the resurrection was a synthesis between national and individual eschatology. Charles describes the situation in these words:

Thus, when the doctrine of the blessed immortality of the faithful is connected with that of the coming of Messianic kingdom, the separate eschatologies of the individual and the nation issue finally in their synthesis: the righteous individual, no less than the righteous nation, will participate in the Messianic kingdom, for the righteous dead of Israel will rise to share therein.²⁰

One more point may be mentioned in this section, and that is the death of the Messiah. In 4 Ezra the Messiah dies, along with all in whom there is human breath, after four hundred years of the messianic age:

²⁰ Charles, Eschatology, p. 130.

For my Son shall be revealed, together with those who are with him, and shall rejoice the survivors for four hundred years. And it shall be, after those years, that my Son the Messiah shall die, and all in whom there is human breath. Then shall the world be turned into the primeval silence seven days, like as the first beginnings; so that no man is left (4 Ezra 7:28-30).

The Syriac Book of Baruch knows only of the death of the Messiah "ben" Joseph, who dies in the war with Gog and Magog. According to Klausner,²¹ the idea of two Messiahs originated in the post-Hadrianic period when there was a distinction between the political and spiritual Messiah. Messiah "ben" Joseph was the political Messiah who would fight the enemies of Israel but would be slain. The Messiah "ben" David is the spiritual Messiah. He "does not die; neither does he remain on earth forever; he will return, apparently, to heaven, like the prophet Elijah."²² But the death of Messiah "ben" Joseph does not carry any atoning merit. This, according to Klausner, is Christian and never Jewish.²³

Messianic expectation in Rabbinic teachings

Messianic expectation in Rabbinic teachings can be described as extravagant and speculative. One Rabbi disagrees with the other as to the time of the messianic age, the person of the Messiah and his function. Discussions on Rabbinic teachings fall into two periods of the Jewish people. The first period is the period of the Tannaim and

²¹Klausner, p. 498.

²²Ibid., p. 343.

²³Ibid., p. 530.

the second is the period of the Amoraim and Geonim.²⁴ Messianic expectation in the Tannaitic period is not very different from the expectation in the prophetic period. There is a recapitulation of the political role of the Messiah. The Messiah is still of Davidic dynasty. Rabbi Judah the patriarch says, "Whoever omits to mention . . . the kingdom of the house of David . . . has not performed his obligation."²⁵ Such names as "Son of David," "Peace," "Shiloh" are ascribed to the Messiah in the Tannaim period. In respect to the personality of the Messiah, Klausner says:

In no trustworthy, authoritative source of the Tannaitic period is there found any description of the person and characteristics of the Messiah that goes beyond the bound of human nature.²⁶

It is true that the Messiah may perform supernatural acts, but such acts are also attributed to Elijah in his life time. The kingdom of the Messiah is that of this world. One of the earthly functions of the Messiah is to bring the scattered tribes back to Palestine. This also is disputed among the Rabbis. Rabbi Akkiba ventured the opinion that the ten tribes will not return, but was opposed by Rabbi Eliezer:

²⁴The period of the Tannaim, according to Klausner, p. 391, covers the period beginning with Hillel and Shammai and ending with the final redaction of the Mishnah about 200 C.E. The second period is what follows after this period. The genuine Jewish Messianic expectation is to be found in the period of the Tannaim. The second period is too full of supernatural expectation which is evidence of non-Jewish sources.

²⁵I. Epstein, editor, The Babylonian Talmud, English edition (London: The Soncino Press, 1948), Berakhoth 49a.

²⁶Klausner, p. 465.

The Ten Tribes shall not return again, for it is written (Deut. 27:27) "And he cast them into another land like as this day." As this day goes and returns not, so do they go and return not. So R. Akiba says. But R. Eliezer says, "Like as this day": as the day grows dark and then becomes light, so also with the Ten Tribes; now are they in darkness, but in the future there shall be light for them.²⁷

But according to the general Tannaitic opinion, all the Ten Tribes shall return to share in the prosperity of the land of their fathers during the messianic age.

The time for the coming of the Messiah was never agreed upon by the Rabbis. A number of extravagant opinions are found in the Rabbinic writings. One belief is that the world would exist for six thousand years and become waste during the seventh thousand after which the Messiah will come. After fruitless debate the Rabbis discouraged any further speculation, but made the advent of the Messiah dependent upon repentance and good deeds of Israel. If Israel could keep one Sabbath perfectly with all its complex law, the Messiah would come.

The last point to be mentioned is the concept of "this World" and "the World to Come." These expressions are very common in Rabbinic writings, but what they really mean is a matter of dispute. In Rabbinic and Talmudic literature the phrase "this World" refers to the time of the writer, while "the World to Come" refers to the Messianic Age:

And the division in the World to come will not be like division in this world. In this world, should a man possess a cornfield, he does not possess an orchard;

²⁷ Mishnah, Sanhedrin 10:3.

should he possess an orchard, he does not possess a cornfield. But in the world to come there will be no single individual who will not possess land in mountain, lowland and valley.²⁸

The world to come in this quotation refers to the messianic age with all its material prosperity.

On the other hand, there are many instances in the Rabbinic writings in which "the World to Come" stands in antithesis to the messianic age.

Think not that in the Days of the Messiah any terrestrial custom will be nullified, or that there will be a new creation; but the world will pursue its ordinary course. . . . The desire of the sages and the prophets was not for the Days of the Messiah . . . but that they might be accounted worthy of life in the world to come.²⁹

One essential aspect of the world to come is the resurrection of the dead. One Mishnaic passage reads: "But for the future to come it says (Is. 25:8), 'He hath swallowed up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces.'"³⁰ This is a reference to the life of the world to come, where the resurrection of the dead will take place and death be abolished.

The change in meaning of the phrase "the World to Come" from an earthly to a supernatural sphere belongs not to the Tannaitic period but to the Amoraim. It developed because of the failure of the fulfillment

²⁸Baba Bathra 122a.

²⁹Quoted by Klausner, p. 415, from Mishreh-Torah, Hilkhot-Melakhism 12:1-4.

³⁰Quoted by Klausner, p. 416, from Moed Katan 3:9.

of an earthly messianic kingdom during the Tannaitic period. The final development is the growth of emphasis on the resurrection of the dead and the idea of reward and punishment in the life to come. This in itself, as Klausner says,³¹ belongs to the area of Jewish eschatology and not to the doctrine of the Messiah.

Messianic expectation in the Qumran literature

The Qumran sect separated themselves from other people in order to concentrate on the worship of God and to wait for the coming salvation. Among such people one could naturally expect a strong messianic hope. An outstanding passage in the Qumran writings which summarizes messianic beliefs among the Qumran sect occurs in the Collection of "Benedictions:"

(For the Blessing of the Prince of the Congregation . . .)
 May the Lord exalt thee to an everlasting height, and of
 strength on a lofty rampart.
 Thou shall smite the peoples with the power of Thy Word;
 With thy rod thou shalt lay waste the earth,
 And with the breath of thy lips thou shalt slay the wicked,
 With a spirit of counsel and eternal might;
 A spirit of knowledge and of the fear of God;
 Righteousness shall be the girdle of thy loins,
 And faithfulness the girdle of thy reins;
 And he will set thy horn with iron and thy hoofs with
 brass. . .
 Thou shall tread down nations as mud in the streets,
 For God has raised thee up as the scepter of rulers.
 They shall come before thee and worship thee,
 And by His holy name He will make thee great
 And thou shalt be as a lion. . .
 tearing and there is none to restore.³²

³¹Klausner, p. 418.

³²1QSb v. 20-23.

These words are believed to be said by the Prince of the Congregation and in them one can find traditional messianic features. The Messiah is to be a political ruler who will destroy the nations and the wicked with the breath of his mouth. There are references to the Lion of Judah and the Messiah as the Scepter of rulers. Here is depicted the Davidic Warrior Messiah which is familiar in the Old Testament.

The personality and character of the Messiah in Qumran writings are subject to varying opinions among scholars. The Damascus Document speaks of two Messiahs, "The Messiah of Israel and Aaron." Some people take the phrase to refer to the Messianic King and the Prophet which were expected among the Qumran. But a lot of discussion has centered around the mysterious figure of the "Teacher of Righteousness." There are many attempts to identify him as the Messiah. In support of this the expression, "from the gathering of the unique teacher to the arising of the Messiah from Aaron and from Israel"³³ is quoted from the Damascus Document. From this quotation it is not clear whether "The Unique Teacher" is equated with "the Messiah from Aaron and from Israel." It is also not clear whether "Messiah from Aaron" is the same as "Messiah from Israel" or different. The Commentary on Psalm 37 equates "The Teacher of Righteousness" with "the Priest." What is obvious from the Qumran writings is that "The Teacher of Righteousness" was the founder of the sect, but whether he was regarded as an

³³Quotations from Qumran writings are from translations given by Millar Burrows, The Dead Sea Scrolls (New York: Viking Press, 1955), pp. 348-415.

eschatological figure and subsequently as a Messiah cannot be confidently affirmed. Maybe because the people of Qumran regarded their time as the last time, it might have been possible for them to regard their founder as the Messiah. But as Burrows says, "Their Messianic beliefs were not a strong point in their theology, but were vague and perhaps unimportant."³⁴

Even though messianic expectation among the Qumran sectaries may be vague, the people certainly expected a better future to come. The age in which they were living is described negatively in different Qumran writings. From the description of preparation for war in "The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light with the Sons of Darkness" it may be concluded that the age in which they were living was expected to come to an end when the Sons of Light would defeat the Sons of Darkness in the final battle. The Damascus Document refers to the explanation of the Torah as being "for the period of wickedness" (CD VI:10,14), and the Manual of Discipline calls the Qumran age "the days of the dominion of Belial" (1QS ii:19). Under such circumstances the people of Qumran regarded every day of their life as the drawing near of their salvation. Victory will one day be their own and God's true sons shall stand before him with the eternal host "to be made new together with all that is to be."

³⁴ Millar Burrows, More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls (New York: Viking Press, 1958), p. 334.

Implications for Paul

A casual look at Paul's messianic expectation on the basis of what has been said above will show many similarities in expression, though not necessarily in theology. The following will illustrate the points of similarity.

1. Paul's entire scheme is conditioned by the belief in two ages. St. Paul believed that he was living in "the age" or "this present age" (Rom. 12:12; 1 Cor. 1:20; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 1:21). According to Paul this present age is passing away (1 Cor. 7:31). The idea of "this age" and "the age to come" is one which dominates Jewish messianic expectation as shown above.
2. The present age for Paul is evil (Gal. 1:4). This also is very predominant in Jewish writings. The purpose of messianic expectation, especially in the apocalyptic writings, was to escape the evil world.
3. While Paul speaks much about the evil and transient nature of this age, yet there is no mention of "the age to come" in his epistles. It may be assumed that as the present age for Paul is evil, and full of distress, that the age to come is for him the messianic age. But this dichotomy is not very neat in St. Paul's writings. While he calls this age evil, yet he also believes that it is the time for salvation because the Messiah in the person of Jesus Christ has come already. But for Paul the messianic work of Christ will be consummated by the second coming of Christ at the end of the world. It is this second coming which is the basis of 2 Thessalonians 2 and it is this aspect of Paul's theology which differentiates his teaching from Jewish Messianism.

The Day of the Lord

The expressions "the day of the Lord," "the day," "that day"³⁵ are common to both Jewish and Pauline writings, two of which are found

³⁵All these expressions have the same meaning and are used interchangeably.

in 2 Thess. 2:22. It is worthwhile investigating briefly what these expressions mean in the Old Testament, other Jewish writings and the Pauline corpus.

Day among the Jews occasionally had the definite meaning of "day of battle." For example, in Is. 9:4, "the day of Midian" means the day of victory over the Midianites. So the expression "day of the Lord" is not without an eschatological significance in the Old Testament. The popular conception of this day of the Lord among the Israelites was that on that day Yahweh would judge Israel's national enemies (Joel 3:14-15). The day of the Lord for the Israelites was the day in which Yahweh would manifest himself to the world. Yahweh would vindicate his chosen people and his true reign would begin. It is the inauguration of a great redemption for Jerusalem (Is. 40:9-10). The destruction of Israel's enemies and the consequent deliverance of Israel are described in Joel 3:16:

And the Lord roars from Zion and utters his voice from
Jerusalem
and the heavens and the earth shake.
But the Lord is a refuge for his people,
a stronghold to the people of Israel.

The popular view had no ethical motivation. The fact that Israel was the chosen nation was enough to qualify her for deliverance. Whether the Israelites were faithful to Yahweh or not, did not come into the question. Destruction was for non-Jews and salvation for Jews. The day of the Lord is a day for vengeance on Israel's national foes.

But this popular notion was counterpoised by the prophetic message and so the false complacent attitude of the Israelites was exposed.

According to the prophets of the eighth century, "the day of the Lord" meant judgment, but judgment first against Israel and Judah and then against other nations. A notable passage is from Amos 5:18-19:

Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord!
 Why would you have the day of the Lord?
 It is darkness and not light;
 as if a man fled from a lion,
 and a bear met him;
 or went into the house and leaned
 with his hand against the wall
 and a serpent bit him.

The "Day of the Lord" is therefore a day in which Yahweh manifests himself for the vindication of himself and his righteous purposes, and not necessarily of Israel. The kingdoms of Israel and Judah were not to go on doing what they liked, but were subject to the doom of "that day" as the Gentiles were. This second interpretation runs through most of the prophets. The things to happen in the day of the Lord are similar to the messianic woes before the coming of the messianic kingdom.

The concept of the "day of the Lord" is not limited to the Old Testament only. It is to be found in other Jewish writings. The apocalyptic writings are full of this concept. The coming of the Messiah is to be preceded by terrors and tumults and when the Messiah would come, there will be judgment. The believers will be vindicated and the enemies of God will be condemned. Thus in Enoch 45:3 we read:

On that day Mine Elect One shall sit on the throne of
 glory and shall try their works . . .

"The day" is therefore a day of judgment by the Messiah.

In the Qumran writings there is also a reference to "the day." The Scroll of the War has a reference to "an appointed Day" and "the Day of Destruction." It may be rightly suggested that these may be references to the Day of the Lord in the Old Testament because the Old Testament concept was that the day was for the destruction of the enemies.

A look at the use of the expression in Paul will show close similarities to the uses in Jewish writings. Beginning at 2 Thessalonians 2, the Apostle warns the Thessalonians not to be excited in spirit or by any kind of false letter purporting to be from him, "to the effect that the day of the Lord has come." "That day" will not come unless the rebellion comes first. In 1 Cor. 3:13 he says, "the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire. . . ." Such phrases as "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:8) or simply "the day of Christ" (Phil. 2:10) are also found:

These designations at once reveal the intimate connection of the apostle's idea of judgment with the prophetic conception of the "Day of the Lord." Only on the one hand, the horizon has immensely widened. On the other hand, the somewhat vague pictures of God's judgment which the prophets clothe in various forms, have given place to the definite intervention of the exalted Lord, Jesus Christ, armed with complete authority.³⁶

³⁶ Harry Argus Kennedy, St. Paul's Conception of the Last Things, (2nd edition; London: Hodder and Houghton, 1904), pp. 193-194.

CHAPTER III

THE SIGNS OF THE END (2 THESSALONIANS 2:3-7)

The eschatology of 2 Thessalonians is based on the Jewish apocalyptic thought that the end of the world will be brought about by the direct intervention of God when evil has reached its climax. The moment of such intervention is conditioned by the development and the consummation of the forces of good and evil at work in the world. Therefore, Paul warns the people of Thessalonica not to be disturbed because the day of the Lord will not come "unless the rebellion ($\alpha\pi\theta\epsilon\sigma\tau\alpha\sigma\iota\alpha$) comes first, and the man of lawlessness ($\alpha\nu\omicron\mu\omicron\varsigma$) is revealed" (2 Thess. 2:3). This evil already pervades the world and must reach its consummation in the appearance of the son of perdition, the Antichrist.¹ As the revelation of God culminated in Christ, the manifestation of evil will culminate in Antichrist, whose coming is the counterfeit of the true Messiah. As the incarnation of evil, the Antichrist appears not only as a negation of Christ, but also of God. "He exalts himself against every so-called God or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God" (2 Thess. 2:4). However, his destruction is predicated, for the true Messiah will descend from heaven and slay him "with the breath of his mouth" (2 Thess. 2:8).

¹Later there will be a discussion to show that the "son of perdition" is identified as Antichrist.

The Messianic Woes

The belief that the end of time will be preceded by catastrophic events is integral to Jewish eschatology. Paul's warning to the Thessalonians not to be shaken about the coming "day of the Lord" is based on the fact that something catastrophic will happen to signal the end. The man of lawlessness will have to come first and confuse the people by claiming to be God before the parousia of Christ.

Messianic woes in the Old Testament

Messianic woes do not constitute a very prominent feature of the Old Testament. Nevertheless, they are not altogether lacking. Here and there one can find references to catastrophes which are expected to precede an eschatological event. This is commonly found in connection with the "day of the Lord."

Chapter I above discussed the significance of "the day of the Lord" for the Israelites. It was a day in which Yahweh was expected to intervene for Israel and so it had an eschatological significance. The eighth-century prophets and others after them challenged the popular thought that the day of the Lord would mean salvation for the Jews and destruction for the enemies.

The first work to be examined is that of the prophet Amos. Amos warned the Israelites not to be too optimistic about "the day of the Lord," because instead of being a time for deliverance, it may become a day of doom. Subsequently, the prophet came up with those calamities which would precede the "day of the Lord." Because of the unbelief of

the people of Israel, the prophet continued to portray "the day of the Lord" in darkest colors. First, there will be physical suffering:

Therefore thus says the Lord, the God of hosts, the Lord:
 "In all the squares there will be wailing;
 and in all the streets they shall say, 'Alas! Alas!'
 They shall call the farmers to mourning
 and to wailing those who are skilled in lamentation,
 and in all the vineyards there shall be wailing,
 for I will pass through the midst of you" . . .
 (Amos 5:16-17).

Confusions and panic are prophesied before the day of the Lord. Family unity shall be destroyed. "The great house shall be smitten into fragments, and the little house into bits" (Amos 6:11). The day is to be a bitter one; feasts will be turned into mourning and songs into lamentation and people will wear sackcloth and baldness shall be upon every head (8:10).

It is certain that Amos is referring to the Assyrian captivity of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, but one cannot fail to see an eschatological implication. Every event that happens in the world appears to him as an act of the Lord. We are, therefore, not surprised when Amos predicts that there will be great changes for the worse in all nature:

And on that day, says the Lord God,
 I will make the sun to go down at noon
 and darken the earth in broad daylight (Amos 8:9).

Other natural calamities like earthquakes and surface eruption of the earth are also mentioned as events before "the day of the Lord" (Amos 8:8):

All the outlines in the horrible and grandiose picture, fearful in its gloomy splendour, which the Sages of the Talmud call "the birth pangs of Messiah," are found here almost in their entirety.²

²Joseph Klausner, The Messianic Idea in Israel, translated by W. F. Stinespring (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955), p. 41.

Among the events before the coming of "the day of the Lord" is cessation of observance of the Torah. The prophet writes:

"Behold, the days are coming,"
 says the Lord God,
 "When I will send a famine on the land;
 not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water,
 but of hearing the words of the Lord.
 They shall wander from sea to sea,
 and from north to east;
 they shall run to and fro, to seek the word
 of the Lord,
 but they shall not find it" (Amos 8:11-12).

Among the Jews to cease observing the Torah was tantamount to apostasy. The implication was that the religious life of the people will also be affected and many will lose faith in God. This reminds us of the falling away which Paul talks about in 2 Thessalonians as preceding "the day of the Lord."

Another prophet that abounds in Messianic woes is Joel. The first approaching sign before "the day of the Lord" is the plague of locusts (Joel 1). As a result of the plague there will be failure of production of cereals and fruits:

The vine withers,
 the fig trees languish.
 Pomegranates, palm and apple,
 all the trees of the field are withered;
 and gladness fails
 from the sons of men (Joel 1:12).

Chapter 2 contains woes, more apocalyptic in type, which are reminiscent of Amos:

Blow the trumpet in Zion;
 sound the alarm on my holy mountain!
 Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,
 for the day of the Lord is coming, it is near,
 a day of darkness and gloom,
 a day of clouds and thick darkness! (Joel 2:1-2a).

Other woes that Joel predicts are earthquakes and eclipse of the sun, moon and stars (2:10).

The prophet Zephaniah prophesies the same doom. He is of the same opinion as Amos and Joel that Israel was under a false complacency if she believed that "the day of the Lord" could only be a day of deliverance. His language resembles apocalyptic language:

The great day of the Lord is near,
 near and hastening fast;
 the sound of the day of the Lord is bitter,
 the mighty man cries aloud there.
 A day of wrath is that day,
 a day of distress and anguish,
 a day of ruin and devastation,
 a day of darkness and gloom,
 a day of clouds and their darkness,
 a day of trumpet blast and battle cry
 against the fortified cities
 and against the lofty battlements (Zeph. 1:14-16).

Destruction, distress, anguish, sounds of battle-cry, and unusual happenings among the heavenly bodies characterize the events before "the day of the Lord." Later in the chapter the prophet speaks of the consummation of the earth "in the fire of his jealous wrath."

This prediction of woes before the end is not exclusive with the minor prophets. It is also to be found in the major prophets, especially Isaiah and Ezekiel. In this case the expected cataclysms are directed against non-Jewish nations in favor of Israel. Isaiah, prophesying the doom of Babylon, couches his language in apocalyptic terms:

Behold, the day of the Lord comes,
 cruel with wrath and fierce anger,
 to make the earth a desolation
 and to destroy its sinners from it.
 For the stars of the heavens and their constellations
 will not give their light,
 the sun will be dark at its rising
 and the moon will not shed its light (Is. 13:9-10).

Ezekiel, prophesying of the fate of Egypt, uses language reminiscent of the above:

When I blot you out, I will cover the heavens,
and make their stars dark;
I will cover the sun with a cloud
and the moon shall not give its light.
And the bright lights of the heavens
will I make dark over you,
and put darkness upon your land,
says the Lord God.

It is worth noting that even though these predictions are against non-Jewish nations, they are said to precede "the day of the Lord." The theology of this is that the power of Yahweh extends over the whole earth and He is able to intervene as He wishes. Destruction awaits the unbelievers. This reminds us of Paul's statement in 2 Thess. 2:12 where he speaks of God sending upon the unbelievers "a strong delusion."³

Messianic woes in Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

Messianic woe is not a common feature in the books of the Apocrypha. The reason may be that Messianism is not a common feature either. For any elaborate messianic woes we have to turn to the Pseudepigrapha. For the sake of convenience, the discussion will be carried on under three headings; namely, signs of nature, struggle among nations, and religious woes.

³See below for the fate of the unbelievers.

The apocalyptic writers frequently associate the advent of the Messiah with natural calamities such as earthquakes or eclipses. An example of this is the third book of the Sibylline Oracles:

Then when a widow⁴ shall reign over the whole world
and cast both gold and silver into the godlike deep,
and the brass and iron of shortlived man cast into
the seas, then the elements of the world, one and all,
shall be widowed, what time God whose dwelling is in
the sky shall roll up the heavens as a book is rolled.
And the whole firmament in its varied form shall fall
on the divine earth and on the sea: and then shall flow
a ceaseless cataract of raging fire, and shall burn land
and sea, and the firmament of heaven and the stars and
creation itself it shall cast into the molten mass and
clean dissolve. Then no more shall there be luminaries'
twinkling orbs, no night, no dawn, no constant days of
care, no spring, no summer, no winter, nor autumn. And
then the judgment of the Mighty God shall come into the
midst of the mighty aeon, when all these things shall
come to pass (Sibylline III. 77-92).

The passage deals with disruption in the orders of nature. The order of the heavenly bodies is disturbed and a great conflagration burns up even the sea.

Another such description of tumult before the advent of the Messiah is in Assumption of Moses:

For the Heavenly One will arise from His royal throne,
And he will go forth from His holy habitation
With indignation and wrath on account of His sons.
And the earth shall tremble: to its confines shall it
be shaken:
And the high mountains shall be made low
And the hills shall be shaken and fall
And the horns of the sun shall be broken and he shall
be turned into darkness;

⁴R. Charles, editor, Pseudepigrapha, II (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1913), notes that the usual suggestion for this widow is Cleopatra, who is transformed into a demonical personage.

And the moon shall not give her light, and be turned
wholly into blood
And the circle of stars shall be disturbed (10:3-5).⁵

Not only the disruption of the order of planets and the face of
the earth, but many abnormalities in the human and plant world and in
the firmament also occur. The author of 4 Ezra describes such woes:

If the Most High grant thee to live, thou shall see it
after the third period in confusion.
Then shall the sun suddenly shine forth by night and the
moon by day
And blood shall trickle forth from wood, and the stone
utter its voice.
The people shall be in commotion,
the outgoings of the stars shall change
And the sea shall cast forth its fish.
And one whom the many do not know
will make his voice heard by might; and all shall
hear his voice.
. . . And one-year-old children shall speak with their
voices;
pregnant women shall bring forth untimely births at
three or four months, and shall live and dance. And
suddenly sown places appear unsown and the full stone
house shall suddenly be found empty (4 Ezra 5:4-8).

In addition to these cataclysmic and abnormal happenings in nature,
the apocalyptists predict a struggle among the nations as a messianic woe.
In 4 Ezra chapter 11, the author records a vision of the eagle that
appeared from the sea and in chapter 12 God reveals the interpretation of
the vision to Ezra. The interpretation is that the eagle which came from
the sea represents the fourth kingdom of Daniel 7. After this kingdom
shall appear a series of kingdoms one after the other. The implication
is that one kingdom shall destroy the other until all the kingdoms are

⁵These words remind us of the apocalyptic passages in the Synoptic
Gospels--Matt. 24:29; Mark 13:24.

destroyed. At the end of all this is the appearance of a lion who is interpreted to be "the Messiah whom the Most High hath kept unto the end of the day, who shall spring from the seed of David" (4 Ezra 12:32).

Apart from the rise of one kingdom after the other, there shall also be wars and hatred among people and nations.

Behold! the days come, and it shall be when the time of the age has ripened, and the harvest of the evil and good seeds has come, that the Mighty One will bring upon the earth and its inhabitants and upon its rulers

Perturbation of spirit and stupor of heart.
 And they shall hate one another,
 And provoke one another to fight,
 And the mean shall rule over the honourable,
 And those of low degree shall be extolled above the famous . . .
 And when those things which were predicted have come to pass,
 Then shall confusion fall upon all men,
 And some of them shall fall in battle
 And some of them shall perish in anguish (2 Baruch 70:2-3,6).

After these events "the Most High will reveal those people whom He has prepared" (2 Baruch 70:7), so that they may wage war with the enemies.

The main emphasis of Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2 is the religious rebellion that will precede the "day of the Lord." This thought is a common occurrence in the Apocalypics. The writer of 4 Ezra warns the people of his time:

Concerning the signs, however:
 Behold, the days come when the inhabitants of the earth shall be seized with great panic,
 And the way of truth shall be hidden and the land shall be barren of faith
 And iniquity shall be increased above that which thou thyself now seest or that thou has heard of long ago (5:1-2).⁶

⁶Similar thought in Enoch 91:7-8 and 2 Baruch 48:38-40.

A passage which is very reminiscent of what we have in 2 Thessalonians is in the Third Book of Sibylline Oracles. Not only faithlessness, but also the actual appearance of an anti-God⁷ figure who leads people astray from God is mentioned.

From the stock of Sabaste Beliar shall come in later time and shall raise the mountain heights and raise the sea, the great fiery sun and the bright moon and he shall raise up the dead and shall perform many signs for men: but they shall not be effective in him. Nay, but he deceives mortals, and many shall be deceived, Hebrews, faithful and elect and lawless too, and other men who have not yet listened to the word of God (63-70).

A comparison of Paul's thought with the above passages will certainly remind us that Paul attributes the apostasy of the people to a figure opposing God. Faithlessness is attributed to the work of the lawless one who is instigated by Satan to deceive "those who are to perish, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved" (2 Thess. 2:10).

Messianic woes in Rabbinic literature

Messianic woes among the Jews were regarded as inevitable events which will usher in their redemption. Therefore we find the thought that catastrophic events will precede the advent of the Messiah prevalent in Rabbinic literature. Let us take a look into some passages in Rabbinic writings which speak to this point.

In a conversation between a Rabbi and an enquirer there is an interpretation of Amos 5:18:

⁷See below for a discussion of the anti-God figure.

R. Simlai expounded: What is meant by "Woe unto you, that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you? the day of the Lord is darkness, and not light?" This may be compared to a cock and a bat who were hopefully waiting for the light (that is, dawn). The cock said to the bat, "I look forward to the light because I have sight; but of what use is the light to thee?" And thus a Min said to R. Abbahu: "When will the Messiah come?" He replied, "When darkness covers the people." "You curse me," he exclaimed. He retorted, "It is but a verse: For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall shine upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee."⁸

This passage according to Rabbinic interpretation refers to the woes that will precede the coming of the Messiah. Darkness here may be a reference to the eclipse of the sun and moon which is one of the main features of Messianic woes.

In another passage we have more elaborate description of the "birth pangs" of the Messiah.

In the footsteps of the Messiah insolence will increase and honour dwindle; the vine will yield its fruits abundantly but wine will be dear; the government will turn to heresy and there will be none to offer them reproof; the meeting place of scholars will be used for immorality; Galilee will be destroyed; Gablan desolated, and the dwellers on the frontier will go about begging from the place without anyone to take pity on them; the wisdom of the learned will degenerate, fearers of sin will be despised, and the truth will be lacking; youths will put old men to shame, the old will stand up in the presence of the young. A son will revile his father, a daughter will rise against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's enemies will be the members of his household,⁹ the face

⁸I. Epstein, editor, The Babylonian Talmud, English edition (London: The Soncino Press, 1935), Sanhedrin 98b-99a.

⁹These words, "A son will rise up . . . members of his household" remind us of Micah 7:6 which is quoted in Matthew in 10:35-36 and Luke 12:53 by Jesus.

of the generation will be like the face of a dog, a son will not feel ashamed before his father. So upon whom is it for us to rely? Upon our father who is in heaven.¹⁰

When this passage is analyzed, various thought patterns common to other Jewish writings became evident. There is a note of a general chaotic condition before the coming of the Messiah, or what this passage calls "the footsteps of the Messiah." Failure of crops will result in famine and there will be a general breakdown of law and order even in the family circles, so that youths will rebel against their elders. But of greater significance to our purpose in 2 Thessalonians is the mention of religious apostasy. The government of that time is depicted as being heretical, spreading heresy throughout the land without any opposition. "The meeting place of the scholars will be used for immortality" reminds us of Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2 telling about the lawless one who "takes his seat in the temple of God" (2 Thess. 2:4b). A reference to a degeneration of wisdom of the learned and a lack of truth may be a reference to forsaking of the Torah by the leaders of Israel.

Messianic woes in Qumran writings

The above examples from various Jewish writings show that Messianic woes are a prominent feature of Jewish eschatology, and this is the case in Qumran texts. There is a reference to such a period in the Thanksgiving Psalms. In Psalm 3 we read these words:

¹⁰Sotah 49b.

they made my life a ship on the deep,
 and like a fortified city before them.
 I am in distress,
 like a woman in travail with her first-born,
 when her pangs come¹¹

The Psalm has been interpreted¹² to refer to the birth of the Messiah, especially the line "like a woman in travail with her firstborn." The "pangs" are taken to mean the "birth pangs" of the Messiah.

The subsequent section of the same Psalm is full of expressions which remind one of Messianic woes.

For I took my stand in the border of wickedness,
 and with the hapless in their lot;
 but the poor man's soul was in dread, with great
 confusion;
 engulfing destruction accompanied my steps;
 when all the snares of the pit were opened,
 and all the net of wickedness were spread,
 the seine of the hapless also on the face of the water
 When all the arrows of pit flew, not turning aside,
 and were loosed beyond hope;
 When the line fell on judgment,
 and a lot of anger on those who were forsaken;
 a molten mass of wrath for all worthlessness.
 The cords of death surrounded me inescapably;
 the torrents of Belial flowed over all the high banks.
 Like a fire eating into all their springs,
 destroying every green or dry tree in their channels
 it rushes about with flashes flame . . .
 The foundations of the mountains are given to the
 flames.¹³

The use of "I" in this passage may not refer exclusively to the Psalmist, but may be a representative "I" which includes the community. The passage

¹¹1QH iii, 4:1-4.

¹²Millar Burrows, More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls (New York: The Viking Press, 1958), pp. 317-321.

¹³1QH iii, 5:11-21.

reflects an idea of a universal conflagration, consuming the whole world. The Psalmist claims to be standing "in the border of wickedness," an expression which may refer to the general lawlessness of the era. The mention of Beliar and its activities is an indication of the sign of the end and may be a reference to the loosing of Belial and his host before the final consummation.

Summary

The above discussion has shown how prominent is the idea of a period of woes before the end in Jewish writings. Paul's eschatology in 2 Thessalonians is based on the idea that a significant event will happen to alarm the people about the approaching end. Thus, we observe a similarity of thought between Paul and these Jewish writings. Paul does not mention the eclipse of the moon or the earthquake. His point of emphasis is on the religious apostasy which will be brought about by an anti-God figure. The same thought is prevalent especially in the Apocalypics and Rabbinic literature. Some of these writings came into existence out of historical situations¹⁴ in Jewish history. For example, Klausner¹⁵ mentions that it was during the time of Hadrian that persecutions were directed against the Law and the schools for studying the Law. Some of the Jewish writings referred to above were written at a time not far away from the birth of Christianity. To point

¹⁴More will be said later on the historical situations in Jewish history that might have had an influence on Paul.

¹⁵Klausner, p. 442.

out one instance, Charles¹⁶ places the date of the final redaction of 4 Ezra between 100 and 135 A.D., a date which is later than Paul's composition of his Thessalonian letters.¹⁷ Under these circumstances one can draw the same conclusion as Klausner, that "similar historical events put similar expressions into the mouths of both Talmudic Sages and Christian Fathers. It is also possible to suppose that they borrowed from each other."¹⁸

The Anti-God Figure

The eschatology of Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2 revolves around the God-opposing figure that will emerge at the end of time. The appearance of this figure is to warn the Thessalonians that the end is near. Paul describes the figure as "the man of lawlessness,"¹⁹ "the son of perdition who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God" (2 Thess. 2:3c-4). This figure has traditionally been known as the Antichrist, but there is no specific mention of the term here. The closest word we have to Antichrist is ἀντικείμενος ,

¹⁶Charles.

¹⁷The date for 2 Thessalonians has been differently fixed between 50 and 70 A.D.

¹⁸Klausner, p. 442.

¹⁹Some manuscripts read "man of sin" (ἁμαρτίας) instead of "man of lawlessness" (ἀνόμειος). There are equally strong reasons for having either, so that it is difficult to have any preference.

which means "one who opposes or one who sets himself against." But since "the day of the Lord" for Paul is the day of the second coming of Christ, the figure is quite properly described as Antichrist. But is this idea of a God-opposing figure original with Paul? The following sections will attempt to answer this question.

The origin of the Anti-God figure

The answer to the question raised is that the idea of an Anti-God figure did not originate with Paul. If it did not originate with Paul, what is the source of such a religious idea? Three scholars--Gunkel,²⁰ Bousset,²¹ and Charles²²--have made significant contributions toward answering the question. All of them are of the opinion that the origin of the Anti-God figure should not be looked for in political or historical events. The origin of Antichrist goes back to the Babylonian myth of creation. The myth is as follows: The Babylonian god Marduk decided to create the world, but he was opposed by the dragon of chaos, a sea monster by the name of Tiamat. There ensued a conflict in which the divine Hero finally overcame Tiamat and split her into two parts. With one part of her Marduk made the firmament, and with the other he made the earth. It is not the act of creation which is of significant interest

²⁰Herman Gunkel, Schopfund und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1921), p. 221.

²¹W. Bousset, The Antichrist Legend, translated from the German by A. H. Keane (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1896), p. 143.

²²R. H. Charles, The Ascension of Isaiah (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1917), p. xviii.

to us here, but the opposition that Marduk experienced. This myth is to be understood on the basis of the principle which plays such an important role in eschatological development, that "Urzeit" is equal to "Endzeit"²³--the last stage will reproduce the first. The point of this principle is that since the beginning of the world was chaotic, so will be the end. Reminiscence of this myth are found in the Old Testament²⁴ and it is probable that it infiltrated into Hebrew religion from Babylon.

The next phase of this development is to be found in the wicked ruler of the ethereal region and thus a rival to the Divine power. From this point the myth might have been applied to political leaders who set themselves against Israel and Yahweh.

Various traits derived from the contemporary circumstances are added from time to time to the hateful figure, which is the incarnation of insolent wickedness. Thus, in the epoch of Daniel, the blasphemy and cruelty of Antiochus Epiphanes supply some prominent features.²⁵

Consequently the term might have been applied to Nero and Caligula, whose actions were God-opposing.

²³Ibid., p. xviii.

²⁴In making this statement, I am aware of the fact that not everyone accepts the idea of the Old Testament containing elements of Babylonian myth. I am basing my argument on the work of scholars I have quoted above. The fact that I quote them may imply my acceptance of their thought.

²⁵H. A. A. Kennedy, St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904), p. 210.

Bousset²⁶ is of the opinion that Paul was familiar with the figure of Belial as the opponent of the Messiah in the last days. Bousset therefore, identifies Belial with "the man of lawlessness"²⁷ of Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2.

From what is said above, we may conclude that Paul's knowledge of Antichrist comes from his associations with Jewish eschatology. What follows is an investigation into Jewish writings to find out how common this idea is.

Anti-God figure in the Old Testament

Mention has been made above of the infiltration of the mythical conflict between the Babylonian divine Hero and the sea monster into the Old Testament. A passage like this one from Isaiah will not fail to bring a reminiscence of the Babylonian myth:

In that day the Lord with his hard and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeting serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea (Is. 27:1).

Another such passage is Ps. 74:13-14:

Thou didst divide the sea by thy might,
Thou didst break the heads of the dragons on the waters.
Thou didst crush the heads of the Leviathan
Thou didst give him as food for the creatures of the wilderness.

²⁶Bousset, p. 155.

²⁷Since this thesis is not an exegetical treatment of 2 Thessalonians 2, I shall not deal in detail with the identification of the different figures. This task has been done by many scholars whose works are extant. I may deal with the interpretation of the passage when that is a necessity to explain a point.

One thing is very clear in these passages; namely, that Yahweh is referred to by "the Lord" in the case of Isaiah and by "Thou" in the case of the Psalmist. But who the Leviathan or the dragon is cannot be said, except that it is a mythical power believed to be opposed to Yahweh. The sea is also depicted as an enemy of Yahweh and the splitting of the waters of the Red Sea for the Israelites to pass through is to depict Yahweh's power over the Sea.

When we look at other passages in the Old Testament, it is possible to identify who in the given context, is the real enemy of Yahweh. In Ezekiel 32 we read:

Son of man, raise a lamentation over Pharaoh king of Egypt and say to him:

"You consider yourself a lion among the nations,
but you are like a dragon in the seas;
you burst forth in your rivers,
trouble the waters with your feet
and foul their rivers.

Thus says the Lord God:

'I will throw my net over you
with a host of many peoples:
and I will haul you up in my dragnet'" (32:2-3).

Egypt in particular is identified in this passage as the dragon, and so the opponent of Yahweh. In reality Egypt was the opponent of Israel, but the principle that the opponent of Israel is also the opponent of Yahweh applies here. The same thought is expressed in the second Psalm:

Why do the nations conspire
and the peoples plot in vain?
The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers take counsel together,
against the Lord and his anointed . . . (verses 1-2).

In Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39, we find the idea of a final assault of a heathen prince Gog and his allies upon the people of God. In Daniel

there is something of a parallel picture (7:7,1,11). Here also there is destruction at the end of time by brutal and boastful force which has risen against the Most High. The destruction of this force prepares the way for the possession of the kingdom by the saints of the Most High (7:22). In Chapter 11 of Daniel, there is a portrayal of a profane and blasphemous king with which Paul might have been familiar.²⁸ In all these passages it is the Gentiles or the non-Jews who are singled out as opponents of Yahweh and His people. A national enemy, according to the principle mentioned above, was also a religious enemy of Israel. The gods of the nations are only idols (Ps. 96:5), and they are subservient to Yahweh.

Bearing in mind that Paul was familiar with the thought of the Old Testament, one can say that the thought of the apostle has its background there. But the conception of a final struggle between God and evil before the end is determined and colored by circumstances and experiences of the apostle's own time. In the Old Testament the figure of the Antichrist has not yet taken a definite shape, because there is no mention of a Messiah as occupying a central place in the final collision between good and evil. But for the first Christians, all the events of the End had a Messianic bearing. For them the cause of God has its supreme representative in Christ.

²⁸ See below, section discussing the "Temple Imagery" where I plan to discuss Antiochus Epiphanes and the apostasy.

Anti-God figure in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

The idea of Yahweh's opponents, whether it be mythical, political, or religious, continues to dominate the extracanonical Jewish writings. In the Apocrypha there is a book known as "Bel and the Dragon," a continuation of the canonical book of Daniel. There are two stories with Daniel as the central figure. Daniel exposes the falsity of Babylonian religion by proving to the king of Babylon that neither Bel nor the Dragon which they had worshiped had any life. The mention of the Dragon in this book brings to mind the Babylonian myth of creation in which Tiamat struggled with Marduk, the god of creation. The point the stories in this apocryphal book make is that Yahweh is supreme over the gods of Babylon. Yahweh is able to deliver Daniel from the lion's den, to the astonishment of the king of Babylon, who magnifies the God of Daniel and punishes his enemies.

In the Pseudepigrapha there is a more developed anti-God idea. There is a persistent reference to the mythical monsters as God's opponents. In the book of Enoch 60:7-10 we read:

And on that day were two monsters parted, a female monster named Leviathan, to dwell in the abysses of the ocean over the fountains of the waters. But the male is named Behemoth, who occupied with his breast a waste wilderness named Duidain, on the east of the garden where the elect righteous dwell, where my grandfather was taken up, the seventh from Adam. . . . And I besought the other angel that he should show me the might of those monsters, how they were parted on one day and cast, the one into the abysses of the sea and the other into the dryland of the wilderness.

In other references, these monsters are to be made food for the righteous in the Messianic age (4 Ezra 6:49-52; 2 Bar. 29:4).

As was the case in the Old Testament, the Gentile nations are here also depicted as God's enemies. The Zadokite Work identifies the Gentile kings with dragons.

And they cast off restraint with a high hand,
to walk in the way of the wicked, concerning whom
God said:
"Their wine is the poison of dragons
and the cruel venom of asps."
The dragons are the kings of the Gentiles and their
wine is
their ways, and the venom of the asps is the head of
the kings
of Javan, who came to execute vengeance upon them
(Zadokite Work 9:19-20).

In the book of Enoch the Medes and the Persians are being stirred by the "Nephilim" to evil and to war against "the land of his elect ones," that is Palestine (Enoch 56:5-8). For Enoch these nations are the kingdom of Gog and Magog which we find in the book of Ezekiel (38-39). In addition, individual Gentile kings are regarded as opponents of Yahweh. In the Psalms of Solomon 2:29 Charles²⁹ explains the word "dragon" to mean Pompey. He is even referred to as the "lawless one" (Ps. Sol. 17:13) whose action forced the faithful Jews to flee from Jerusalem and seek refuge in the wilderness (Ps. Sol. 17:13).

A further development of the anti-God figure in the Pseudepigrapha centers on the figure of Beliar.³⁰ In the third book of the Sibylline

²⁹Charles, Pseudepigrapha, II, 633.

³⁰I shall have a separate section for Belial and its relation to Satan. The word can be spelled either "Belial" or "Beliar." Both spellings are used interchangeably in this thesis. The origin of the

Oracles 63-92, this figure is described. Beliar in this passage is depicted as a man from the stock of the Sabaste who is to come in later time. He is portrayed as a miracle worker who will deceive faithful Hebrews. The word "Sabaste" is taken by Charles to mean Samaria, and the reference is probably to Simon Magus,³¹ regarded as Antichrist. But the phrase "from the state of Sabaste" may refer to Emperors and, if this interpretation is accepted, the reference may be to Nero come back as Antichrist.³²

In other places Beliar is represented as a spiritual force working against God. We read of the following in Jubilees:

Let thy mercy, O Lord, be lifted upon thy people, and create in them an upright spirit, and let not the spirit of Beliar rule over them to accuse them before thee and to ensnare them from all the paths of righteousness, so that they may perish before thy face (1:20).

The function of Beliar is "to accuse" people before God, a function which reminds us of that of Satan, who accused Job before God. More than any book in the Pseudepigrapha, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs

word is uncertain. Some think it is derived from a combination of the Hebrew words לְיָוֵהּ יְהוָה which is translated in Sanhedrin 111 as "men" who have thrown off the yoke of heaven from their necks. Others say it comes from לְיָוֵהּ יְהוָה which means "without light." In LXX ἀποστασία are rendered by ὕψος βελίαμ (Jude 20:13), ἀνομήμα (Deut. 15:9), ἀνομέα (2 Reg. 22:5), and so it is difficult to establish the etymology of the word.

³¹In the writings of the church Fathers Simon Magus is depicted as an Antichrist and there are many stories told about his signs and wonders.

³²Charles, Pseudepigrapha, V, 63 note.

abounds in references to the figure of Beliar. Almost every book in the Testaments makes mention of the name of Beliar as an anti-God figure to appear in the last time.

Know ye therefore, my children, that in the last times
 your sons will forsake singleness
 and will cleave unto insatiable desire;
 And leaving guillessness, will draw near to malice;
 and forsaking the commandments of the Lord,
 they will cleave unto Beliar (Test. of Issachar 6:1).

There is a notion that the Antichrist will spring from the tribe of Dan. On the basis of the Testament of Dan 5:6,

For I have read in the book of Enoch the righteous,
 that your prince is Satan, and that all the spirits
 of wickedness and pride will conspire to attend constantly
 on the sons of Levi, to cause them to sin
 before God,

Bousset³³ arrives at the conclusion that the sons of Dan are in league with Beliar and his angels against Levi. Thus the Antichrist will arise from the tribe of Dan, but the Messiahs from Judah and Levi shall "war against Beliar" and destroy him.

Anti-God figure in Rabbinic literature

The Talmud provides a source for an investigation into Rabbinic teaching about God's opponents. There is a passage from Sanhedrin that throws light on the Rabbinic conception of the anti-God figure:

R. Hanan ben Tahlifa sent word to R. Joseph: I once met a man who possessed a scroll written in Hebrew in Assyrian characters. I said to him, "Whence has this come to you?" He replied, "I hired myself as a

³³Bousset, p. 174.

mercenary in the Roman army, and found it among the Roman archives. In it is stated that four thousand, two hundred and thirty-one years after the creation the world will be orphaned. As to the years following, some of them will be spent in the war of the great sea monsters, and some in the war of Gog and Magog and the remaining period will be the Messianic era, whilst the Holy One, blessed be He, will renew His world only after seven thousand years."³⁴

The first striking point from this passage is the mention of the war of the great sea monsters. Some other translators have "dragons" in place of sea monsters, which, of course, reminds one of the dragon myth. Mention is also made of Gog and Magog and the war is placed at the end of time before the appearing of the Messiah. These figures refer to the national enemies of the Jews. The one who is to lead the Jewish people against these opponents is the Messiah "ben" Joseph who is different from the Messiah "ben" David. The Messiah ben Joseph will, in the latter days, conquer Gog the mighty enemy of Israel, though he himself will be slain. Thus we find in Targum Jonathan on Is. 11:4 that Armilius,³⁵ a Roman Emperor, will be slain by the Messiah ben Joseph. In this respect Armilius has been identified with Antichrist.

Apart from the political enemies of Israel, the Talmud mentions other anti-God figures which are mythical and unidentified. Baba Bathra records a conversation between the Rabbis which runs as follows:

³⁴Sanhedrin 97b.

³⁵Armilius may be the same as Arminius in Roman history. He was a brilliant German who led revolt against Rome in about 18 B.C. to 19 A.D. He became the ruler of the Roman Empire for a brief period until his power was crushed.

It is written, "And God created the great sea-monsters . . ." And R. Johanan said: "This refers to Leviathan the slant serpent and to Leviathan the tortuous serpent; for it is written: In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the slant serpent, and Leviathan the tortuous serpent." Rab. Judah said in the name of Rab.: "All that the Holy One, blessed be He, created in his world he created male and female. Likewise, Leviathan the slant serpent and Leviathan the tortuous serpent he created male and female; and had they mated with one another they would have destroyed the whole world. What then did the Holy One, blessed be He, do? He castrated the male and killed the female, perserving it in salt for the righteous in the world to come, for it is written, 'And he will slay the dragon that is in the sea'" (Baba Bathra 74b).

The last line of this quotation is a verse from Isaiah 27 and the Targum interpretation of this verse is as follows:

In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the slant serpent, in the world to come, as he punished the tortuous serpent, for he slew the dragon that was in the sea, during the first six days of creation.³⁶

The passage provides evidence that the Babylonian myth of creation persisted up to the Talmudic period and this also may point to the fact that Paul, the Jew, might have been exposed to this myth.

There is another kind of anti-God figure in the Talmud. Since sin is generally conceived as rebellion against the majesty of God, the term

עֲרֵב רָעָה, usually translated as "evil inclination" or

"envy," is regarded as God's opponent. None of these translations gives real meaning of the term because the Hebrew word "Yezer" actually means a strong propensity to sin. The Talmud prefers to use the Hebrew word as it is and represents it as an opponent of God.

³⁶ Ibid.

The names applied to "Evil Inclination" are various and indicative of both his nature and function. R. Avira said:

The evil inclination has seven names. The Holy One, blessed be He, called him "Evil"; Moses called him "unclean"; Solomon called him "fiend"; Isaiah called him "stumbling block"; Ezekiel called him "stone"; Joel called him "hidden one in the heart of men!"³⁷

The activity of the "Evil Inclination" is summed up in the words of Simon ben Lakish who said, "Satan and Evil Inclination and the Angel of death are one."³⁸ The role of the "Evil Yezer" as an accuser is described in these words: "The evil inclination entices man in this world and testifies against him in the world to come."³⁹ The "Evil Inclination," therefore, is identified with Satan and the Angel of death. As Satan accuses and inflicts death, so also does the "Evil Inclination."

The "Evil Inclination" is also credited with inflicting other kinds of punishment besides death. The Men of the Great Assembly in their effort to destroy the "Evil Yezer" exclaimed, "Woe, woe it is he"⁴⁰ who has destroyed the sanctuary, burnt the Temple, and killed the righteous, driven all Israel into exile and is still dancing around us."⁴¹ As is the case with all anti-God figures, the "Evil Yezer" will meet his

³⁷ Sukkah, 52a.

³⁸ Baba Bathra, 16a.

³⁹ Sukkah 56b.

⁴⁰ The Hebrew word translated "it is he" is

הוּא

⁴¹ Yoma 49b.

fate by being slain by God. "The Holy One will bring Evil Inclination and slay it in the presence of the righteous and the wicked" (Sukkah 52a).⁴²

Anti-God figure in Qumran texts

In the Qumran Community the dichotomy between good and evil, light and darkness, was a strong one. In the Manual of Discipline, which is a description of the regulations governing the life of the community, the dichotomy is very pronounced. The novices at the time of initiation must swear "not to turn away from following because of any dread or trial which might occur in the dominion of Belial."⁴³ The people of the Community thought that they were living perpetually in the "day of Belial," and the people of the world were divided into the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness. In the hands of the Prince of Light is the dominion over all Sons of Righteousness, while the Angel of Darkness has dominion over the Sons of Perversion.

In the Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness (1QM 1:1-7), the conception of anti-God figure is depicted in the eschatological war between the "Sons of Light" and the "Sons of Darkness." The author begins by pointing out who the opponents of the Community, who also are the enemies of God, are. At the beginning the Sons of Light will be fighting "against the lot of the sons of darkness, the army of Belial, against the troop of Edom and Moab and the sons of

⁴²Sukkah 52a.

⁴³1QS 1:26-28.

Amon, against the people of Philistia and against the troops of the Kittim of Assyria and with them as helpers the violators of the covenant."⁴⁴ The Sons of Light are "the sons of Levi, the sons of Judah, and the sons of Benjamin, the exiles in the wilderness."⁴⁵ It is noteworthy that the enemies here mentioned are the traditional political foes of Israel, who lived in the immediate neighborhood. These people will be assisted by "the violators of the covenant." These are enemies of the Sons of Light within the Jewish people who might be apostate Jews.

With the details of the war we are not concerned. The author believes that the war will last forty years and the Sons of Light will be finally victorious after they shall have suffered many defeats. It is not easy to say definitely whether the reference is to political or spiritual warfare. There are names of nations mentioned while at the same time Beliar is said to be at the head of the army. Yadin⁴⁶ suggests that when the author of the Scroll says, "In all their troubles there was none like it," he is basing his assumption on Dan. 12:1, "And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was a nation even to that same time." If this is true, the author of the Scroll may have written at the same time that Daniel wrote and was experiencing both political and

⁴⁴1QM 1:1.

⁴⁵1QM 1:2.

⁴⁶Yagael Yadin, The Message of the Scrolls (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957), p. 129.

religious persecution. Beliar may, therefore, be identified with the power that oppressed the Community since a political enemy was also the religious enemy of the Community.

The Habakkuk Commentary mentions the Teacher of Righteousness, who was persecuted by the wicked priest. About the Teacher of Righteousness we read:

That he may run that readeth it. Its hidden interpretation concerns the Teacher of Righteousness to whom God has revealed all the mysteries of the words of His servants the prophets.⁴⁷

As for the wicked priest we read in the commentary on chapter 2:5-6:

This means the wicked priest, who was named according to truth when he first took office, but when he had begun to rule in Israel, his heart was lifted up and he forsook God and betrayed the statutes because of wealth. He plundered and assembled the wealth of men of violence who rebelled against God. He took the wealth of the peoples, adding to himself iniquity and guilt; and way of abominations he wrought, in all impurity of uncleanness.⁴⁸

What is obvious from the two descriptions is that the Teacher of Righteousness is God's agent while the wicked priest is a traitor to the Jewish people, a liar and an agent of the devil.

Both figures had their own followers. The author applies verse 3 of chapter 2 to the followers of the Teacher of Righteousness, of whom he says:

If it tarries, wait for it, for it will surely come; it will not delay. This means the men of truth, the doers of the law, whose hands do not grow slack in the

⁴⁷1Qp Hab. 2:1.

⁴⁸1Qp Hab. 2:5-6.

service of the truth, when the last period is stretched out over them. For all the periods of God will come to their fixed term, as he decreed for them in the mysteries of his wisdom.⁴⁹

Verses 12 and 13 of the same chapter are applied to the followers of the wicked priest:

This saying means the preacher of the lie, who enticed many to build a city of delusion in blood and to establish a congregation in falsehood for the sake of its honour, making many grow weary of the service of delusion and making them pregnant with works of falsehood, that their toil may be in vain, to the end that they may come into judgments of fire, because they reviled and insulted God's elect.⁵⁰

Some observations can be derived from this investigation from the Qumran Tests. The evidence of a belief in an anti-God figure who will come in the last days is clear. The anti-God figure may appear differently as political foes, violaters of covenants, traitors from the Jewish people, and Beliar. Such phrases as "the preacher of falsehood," or "the preacher of the lie," who enticed many people to works of falsehood remind us of Paul's "man of lawlessness" who will appear in the last days.

The Temple Imagery

The most striking feature of Paul's eschatology in 2 Thessalonians 2 is that the man of lawlessness will "exalt himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple

⁴⁹1Qp Hab. 2:3.

⁵⁰1Qp Hab. 2:12-13.

of God, proclaiming himself to be God" (2 Thess. 2:4). This portrayal of the "man of lawlessness" in 2 Thessalonians 2 has many similar features with various passages in the Book of Daniel. In the LXX of Dan. 9:27 we have the picture of an abomination set up in the temple,

καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ ἱερόν βδελυγματῶν ἐρημωσέων
ἔσται ἕως συντελείας, καὶ συντέλεια δοθήσεται
ἐπίτην ἐρημώσιν . The words of the first clause in 2 Thess.

2:4, ὁ ἀνεκκείμενος καὶ ὑπεραρόμενος ἐπὶ πάντα
λεγόμενον θεὸν ἢν σέβασμα is reminiscent of

a description applied to Antiochus Epiphanes by Daniel: ὁ βασιλεὺς
καὶ παροχυσθήσεται καὶ ὑψωθήσεται ἐπὶ
πάντα θεὸν καὶ ἐπὶ θεῶν τῶν θεῶν (11:36).

In examining the two passages from Daniel we find the ideas of something ungodly being set up in the temple and of someone who exalts himself above every god. The book of Daniel was written during the time of Antiochus Epiphanes,⁵¹ and because of the similarities between Paul's language and that of Daniel, it has been suggested that Paul was referring to the action of Antiochus. Before assessing the truth of this assertion, we would do well to discuss the actions of Antiochus Epiphanes.

The history and activities of Antiochus Epiphanes are recorded in the first and second Books of the Maccabees. Before the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, Palestine already had Greek influence, but the

⁵¹ I am following the ~~critical~~ critical method in accepting this dating.

influence reached its zenith during his reign. According to 1 Maccabees, "Lawless men" (1:11) in Israel, who favored Greek culture, after the death of Alexander the Great decided to invite Antiochus Epiphanes to set up Greek culture in Palestine. There were many who opposed this attempt. But in 169 and 168 B.C. Antiochus, after he had conquered Egypt, made an attempt to annex Palestine in his kingdom. He came down against Jerusalem and massacred the Jews, entered the sanctuary of the Temple and devastated it (1 Macc. 1:20-23). To the Jews, this was desecration of the Temple, since only the High Priests were allowed to enter the Holy of Holies. As if this was not bad enough, in 167 B.C. Antiochus set up an altar to the Greek god Zeus in the sanctuary of the Temple. This is how the act is described by 1 Maccabees:

And on the fifteenth day of Cheslev in the one hundred and forty-fifth year they set up upon the altar an "abomination of desolation,"⁵² and in the cities of Judah on every side they established high-places, and they offered sacrifice at the doors of the houses and in the streets (1:54-55).

Fully to subject the Jews to Greek culture and religion, officers went about "enforcing apostasy" by compelling the Jews to eat swine. But there was one family that resisted this command and decided to die rather than give in to the Greek culture and religion. The leader of this family, Mattathias, instigated a revolt against Antiochus Epiphanes and thus precipitated what has been known as the "Maccabean Revolt."

⁵²The phrase "abomination of desolation" reminds one of Dan. 9:27 (LXX); Matt. 24:15 and Mark 13:14.

A similar incident happened in the early Christian era. In about A.D. 40, Caligula, the Roman Emperor, wished "to be considered a god and to be hailed as such." He sent one of his officers with an army to Jerusalem to install his image in the sanctuary of the Temple. But Caligula died before his wish was achieved.⁵³

The above events have been narrated because many interpreters and commentators have assumed that 2 Thess. 2:4 is a reference to these two events. "The Temple" is taken to refer to the Temple of Jerusalem which was the target of these kings. The similarities existing between the language of Daniel in describing the activities of Antiochus and that of Paul has also contributed to this interpretation.

As sound as this line of interpretation may be, there are difficulties. In the first place, the action of Antiochus took place about two hundred years before the writing of 2 Thessalonians, and so it was not of immediate concern to the Thessalonians. We cannot prove that they knew of such an event. The attempt of Caligula might have been known by the people, but the actual setting up of the statue did not take place. Most important of all is the question, "What spiritual value would reference to these events have for the Thessalonians?" It is hard to see any value, especially when one considers the fact that Paul was always very pastoral in his approach. Anything which might not

⁵³Flavius Josephus, The Jewish War, translated by H. St. J. Thackeray (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1927), II, 393.

have contributed to the faith of his audience would not appeal to him.⁵⁴ Some people have suggested that the reference to the temple is to be interpreted as a heavenly temple, which might be a reminiscence of the dragon storming the abode of Marduk in the Babylonian myth. But again, here there is the problem of a "localized" temple, which might not have been Paul's intention. Secondly, Paul's description is confined to this earth, since the parousia of the *ἀνθρώπος* and that of the "Lord" are mundane.

The theory of Giblin⁵⁵ is one which I find less vulnerable to objections. The first part of the theory is that "temple"⁵⁶ in 2 Thess. 2:4 refers to the Church. Examples of this usage are in Eph. 2:21 and 4:16. According to Giblin the reference to the Church in Ephesians is not to the "organizational juridical" aspects but rather the reference is to the image of the Church as a body which implies the idea of growth. The second part of the theory is that Paul refers to individual Christians as *ἰδὸς Θεοῦ* (1 Cor. 3:16,17; also 1 Cor. 6:19). An individual Christian is regarded by Paul as the sanctuary of God, and this meaning fits into Paul's concern for the faith of his audience. I prefer the second theory to the first for the reason of Paul's concern for the faith of his audience.

⁵⁴See conclusion for suggestion of a possible line of interpretation that does not concentrate on the literary identification of the figures in 2 Thessalonians 2.

⁵⁵Charles Giblin, The Threat to Faith, An Exegetical and Theological Examination of 2 Thessalonians 2 (Rome: Pontifical Bible Institute, 1967), 77.

⁵⁶When Paul speaks of a Christian as the "temple" he uses *ἰδὸς* and not *ἐργόν*, as in Dan. 9:27. He uses *ἰδὸς* here in 2 Thess. 2:4.

Apostasy

At this juncture we shall discuss the concept of apostasy among the Jews. From what has been said above, it is apparent that the term apostasy for the Jews means deviation from their religious practices. The action of Antichous Epiphanes is described as "enforcing apostasy" and the Jews who assisted him are referred to as "Lawless men." In Qumran those Jews who were unfaithful to their religion are known as "traitors" and "violators of the covenant." Volz⁵⁷ points out instances of renegade Jews designated as "sons of Belial."

In his book, Christianity in Talmud and Midrash,⁵⁸ Herford discusses the different names given to the apostates in Jewish religion. He quotes a passage from the Tosephta treatise on Sanhedrin in which a severe censure is placed upon four classes of offenders: "Minim, Meshummadin (apostate), Masoreth (betrayers), and Epigurosin."⁵⁹ The term Minim (מיני, plural מיני, singular) denotes unfaithful Jews, who were not loyal at heart to the principles of Jewish religion, and who either in thought, word, or deed were false to the covenant between God and Israel. The "Meshummadin" are those who willfully transgress some

⁵⁷ Paul Volz, Die Eschatologie der Jüdischen Gemeinde in neutestamentlichen Zeitalter (2nd edition; Tübingen: Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr, 1934), p. 77.

⁵⁸ R. T. Herford, Christianity in Talmud and Midrash (Clifton: Reference Book Publishers, Inc., 1966), p. 365.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 366.

parts of the ceremonial laws, and thereby proclaim their apostasy from Jewish religion. The "Epigurosin" are free thinkers, who may be either Jews or Gentiles. The "Masoreth" are traitors among the Jews who for the sake of wealth would sell the Jewish nation to a foreigner. This may apply to the "lawless men" who were on the side of Antiochus Epiphanes when he took Jerusalem.

Of all the four classes of offenders, the "Minim" are regarded as the greatest enemy of the Jewish religion. A belief in "Two Powers" in heaven is attributed to the Minim. In one Pesiqta (Pesiqta 2. xxi. p. 100b) is the phrase, "If the son of the harlot said to thee, there are two Gods . . ." The "son of the harlot" indicates Jesus and the doctrine of "Two Powers" is attributed to Christians. Herford⁶⁰ therefore, identifies the "Minim" with Jewish Christians.

Apostasy among the Jews had something to do with violation of Jewish religion. When Paul speaks of apostasy to the Thessalonians, it was religious apostasy which was his immediate concern. The apostasy in 2 Thessalonians 2 is a threat to the faith of the people and is to be looked for among the Thessalonians and not outside them; but the idea is taken from Jewish religion. Mention has been made above that one feature of Messianic woes among the Jews was that people will fall away from true religion. Amos speaks of a famine not of bread but of hearing the words of God (Amos 8:11-12), while Ezra warns the people of his age that "the way of the truth shall be hidden and the land shall be barren of

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 378.

faith and iniquity shall be increased" (4 Ezra 5:2). Paul was familiar with the language of apostasy in Jewish use and he himself was an apostate Jew, a Min (מִינִי). But when he speaks of "the falling away," he means falling away from faith in the Gospel of Christ which includes the teaching of the Parousia. Against such he warns the Thessalonians.

The Restrainer

Another enigma in Paul's eschatology in 2 Thessalonians 2 is the statement that there is something "holding back" (*κατέχου*) the anti-God figure from appearing and that he who holds back (*κατέχων*) will have to be taken out of the way before the revelation of the "man of lawlessness." Many theologians from the early years of Christianity until now have cudgelled their minds to identify what and whom Paul was talking about. The different interpretations of these participles are beyond the scope of this paper, since I am concerned with pointing out the relation of Paul's language and thought to the language and thought of Jewish eschatology.⁶¹

⁶¹There are four lines of interpretation of *κατέχου* and *κατέχων* : political, mythological, apostolic and theological. The political interpretation is the traditional one. According to this interpretation the *κατέχου* is the Roman Empire and the *κατέχων* is the Roman Emperor of Paul's time. If, as some have thought, the "man of lawlessness" is the Roman Emperor, he cannot also be identified as the *κατέχων* . The mythological interpretation is championed by M. Dibelius (An die Thessalonicher I-II; An die Philipper, [3rd edition; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1937], p. 50). According to him, this is Paul's reinterpretation of the myth of creation. Oscar Cullmann ("Le caractere eschatologique de devoi . . .," Revue d'histoire et de

There is very little similarity between Paul and Jewish eschatology as far as the idea of the "restrainer" is concerned. Professor Betz⁶² has attempted to find parallels to *κατέχων (-ων)* in Jewish writings. He bases his research on a passage from Qumran and the book of Daniel. The Qumran Text from the Book of Mysteries is as follows:

They do not know the mystery that is to be, and the things of old they do not consider; they do not know what is coming upon them, nor how to save themselves from the mystery that is to be. And this shall be to you the sign that will come to pass. When the descendents of error are shut in, wickedness will depart from righteousness as darkness departs from light; and as smoke is destroyed and is no longer, so will wickedness be destroyed forever. And righteousness will be revealed like the sun, the fixed order of the world; and all who hold back the wondrous mysteries will be no longer.⁶³

The clause "all who hold back the wondrous mysteries" (*כֹּל הַמְּבַרְכִים אֶת הַמִּסְתֵּרִים הַגְּדוֹלִים*) is taken by Betz to be parallel to Paul's "he who holds back" and the Hebrew equivalent of *κατέχων* is *מְבַרֵךְ* which means

et de philosophie religiensus, xvi 1936, 210-245) and Johannes Munk (Paul and the Salvation of Mankind, translated from the German by F. Clarke [London: SCM Press, 1959], pp. 36-42) interpret *κατέχων* to mean Paul's preaching of the Gospel and *κατέχων* to mean Paul himself. The only thing that restrains the *ἀνομος* is that Paul has not completed his evangelistic work among the Gentiles. When Paul is out of the way, the *ἀνομος* will appear. The theological interpretation is by Gibling (pp. 224-235). He takes *κατέχων (ων)* to be an ally of the *ἀνομος*, a present threat to the faith of the Thessalonians, who will be out of the way for a worse evil in the person of the *ἀνομος*.

⁶²O. Betz, "Der KATECHON," New Testament Studies, IX (1962), 276-291.

⁶³Translated by Millar Burrows, p. 398.

"to take, to hold, to support, to maintain." But Betz himself has seen that this is not the best parallel because the Septuagint does not translate $\overline{\tau} \overline{\eta} \overline{\beta}$ with $\kappa\alpha\tau\acute{\epsilon}\chi\omega$ but with $\kappa\rho\alpha\tau\acute{\epsilon}\omega$.

Because the parallel in the Book of Mysteries does not offer the solution to the figure of "the restrainer," Betz turns to the Book of Daniel. In chapter 9:26 we have,

And after the sixty-two weeks, an annointed one shall be cut off, and shall have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war, desolations are decreed.

"An annointed one" who shall be cut off is identified with Cyrus the Persian king. He is the one who was restraining Antiochus Epiphanes from appearing and when he is "cut off" Antiochus shall destroy Jerusalem. Betz accepts this as parallel to $\kappa\alpha\tau\acute{\epsilon}\chi\omega$ of Paul, because he accepts the political interpretation of $\kappa\alpha\tau\acute{\epsilon}\chi\omicron\nu$ (CIV).

If these Jewish parallels influenced Paul in any way, they did so not because he had a political figure in mind when he used the word $\kappa\alpha\tau\acute{\epsilon}\chi\omega$. The only parallelism I see is the fact that both in the Book of Mysteries and in Daniel eschatological events are pending. The Book of Mysteries is expecting an outburst of wickedness, while in the case of Daniel there is an impending catastrophe from the attack of Antiochus Epiphanes. There is parallelism in language but not in meaning. What Paul meant by $\kappa\alpha\tau\acute{\epsilon}\chi\omicron\nu$ (CIV) none but his converts might know.

On the basis of the above investigation, we have seen the similarities between Jewish eschatology and that of Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2.

In almost all the Jewish writings we have discussed above, there are mentions of "the messianic woes," "the Antichrist" and apostasy. That Paul depends on Jewish writings for developing his eschatology in 2 Thessalonians is obvious from the above investigation, but how he makes use of the sources is the difference. The conclusion of the thesis will discuss this difference.

CHAPTER IV

THE REVELATION OF THE *ἀνομος* (2 THESSALONIANS 2:8-12)

In the last chapter it was shown that Paul's ideas that the end will be signaled by chaos and the appearance of the anti-God figure are not unique to Paul's writings. Jewish literature abounds in such ideas also. Paul asserts that after the revelation of the man of lawlessness, the end will come. But the end will mean different things for different people. For the lawless one and his followers it will be a fateful end because the day will bring destruction when the Lord Jesus will also appear. On the other hand, though it is not specifically mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 2, the coming of the day of the Lord will mean triumph for the believers. But before investigating the fate of the unbelievers in Jewish literature, let us first examine the figure of Satan in Jewish literature and in Paul.

The Person and Role of Satan in Jewish Literature

Paul in 2 Thess. 2:9 asserts that Satan is behind all the activities of the lawless one. It is interesting that Paul mentions Satan in particular. This demonstrates that Satan is different from the lawless one. The task of this section is to investigate the person and role of Satan in Jewish writings to show to what extent Paul has been influenced by these writings.

The person and role of Satan in the Old Testament

The Old Testament contains the first small beginnings of the stream of Hebrew thought concerning Satan as God's opponent. The name "Satan" is derived from the Hebrew verb שָׂטַן meaning "to oppose" or "to be or act as an adversary." The noun form of the verb is שָׂטָן and means "opponent," "adversary." In this meaning the word appears in a number of passages. For instance, in Num. 22:22 it is said that the angel placed himself in the way "as an adversary" against Balaam. In 1 Sam. 29:4 the princes of the Philistines are said to have objected to the presence of David lest he become an adversary to them. A similar usage is found in 2 Sam. 19:22; 1 Kings 5:4; 11:14,23. In Ps. 109:6 the term is used of an accuser or opponent-in-law.

"Satan" becomes the official title of a distinct personality in only four passages in the Old Testament, namely, Zach. 3:1; Job 1 and 2 and 1 Chron. 21:1. In Zach. 3:1 the term is used with an article--the Satan--and denotes the adversary who accuses men before God. In this case, Joshua the high priest is the accused. Satan is rebuked by Yahweh because of his harshness toward Joshua. As if all the calamities that have come upon Jerusalem were not enough, Satan demanded further punishment.

The Book of Job offers a fuller account of Satan's activities. Here also the article is still used, and Satan is not yet a proper name. As in Zechariah, he shows himself as the great accuser of men in their

claim to a right standing before God. He questions Job's sincerity and accuses him of selfish and insincere piety. There is a further development in his character. Satan is not only the accuser of man; but also urges God to test Job to the utmost to prove that his piety is superficial. With God's permission he brings many evils upon Job and anticipates that they will bring about his downfall (Job 2:6).

There are two facts which stand out in the narrative. In the first place, Satan is evidently one of the angel-ministers of Yahweh. He appears in the presence of God with the other "sons of God" to give account of his activities and to receive further Divine commissions. He does not act independently of God and he cannot harm man unless God gives permission. The second fact is that there is element in the character of Satan that appears contrary to the will of God. While the deep piety of Job delights God, Satan appears doubtful of Job's piety and wants his faith to be tested. Even though Satan is acting with God's permission, he delights in his anti-human activities.

In 1 Chron. 21:1 the name of Satan for the first time is used without an article, and thus becomes a proper name. He appears in the character of a tempter and tempts David to number the children of Israel, bringing upon him God's punishment. The Old Testament passages examined reveal that Satan, if not a malignant being, is on the way to becoming so.

The person and role of Satan in Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha provide many divergent accounts of Satan and his activities. Turning first to the parables of Enoch

(Enoch 37-71), we read of Satans who existed in heaven before the fall of the angels and who are held responsible for that event. In Enoch 40:7, Phanuel is represented as "fending off Satans and forbidding them to come before the Lord of Spirits to accuse them who dwell on the earth." A list of five Satans whose activities are described is given in 69:4-12,24. The first and the second are said to have been responsible for leading astray the angels and for bringing them down to earth, where they sinned with the daughters of men (69:4). The third Satan brought about the fall of Eve (69:6). This class of Satans is presented as ruled by the chief Satan (53:3; 54:6).

A number of conclusions can be drawn already at this point. In the first place, there is a host of Satans with one Satan as the leader. Secondly, the host of Satans is responsible for the fall of angels.¹ This consequently distinguishes the Satans from the fallen angels, although their activities may be identical.² Thirdly, when Paul asserts that the activities of the lawless one are the works of Satan, he might have been aware of the idea of a host of Satans with one as the chief.

The Books of Adam and Eve provide additional information about Satan's³ activities and his expulsion from heaven. Satan is clearly

¹Reference to the fallen angels in the extra-canonical literature is a reference to Gen. 6:1.

²Cf. Enoch 69:1-3 for the names of the fallen angels.

³The terms Satan and Devil are used interchangeably.

represented as being originally one of the angels of God. When Eve questions him as to why he so maliciously attacks Adam and herself, he replied that it was on account of Adam that he was expelled from the glory which he possessed in the heavens in the midst of angels, and which he lost when he was cast out into the earth (12:1).

Satan proceeds to explain that when Adam was formed in the image of God, Michael the archangel commanded the angels to worship him. Michael and other angels worshiped Adam but Satan refused to do so on the ground that he was senior to Adam in order of creation and therefore Adam should worship him (14:1-3). When the angels who were under Satan heard this, they also refused to worship Adam (15:1-2). God therefore was angry with Satan, banished him and his angels from their glory in heaven, and threw them down to earth. This caused Satan's antagonism toward Adam and Eve (16:1-4).

In the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs there are scattered references to Satan. The spirit of wrath, it is said, "goeth always with lying at the right hand of Satan" (Test. Dan 3:6). Satan is declared to be the prince of Dan (Test. Dan 5:6) and the patriarch Dan also urges his sons to beware of the spirits of Satan and his spirits (6:1). The spirit of hatred works together with Satan (Test. Gad 4:7) and men at death show their righteousness or unrighteousness "when they meet the angels of the Lord and of Satan" (Test. Asher).⁴

⁴There are other demonic figures in this body of literature whose activities are similar to those of Satan. Azazel, who in the Old Test. is conceived as a demon of the desert, is portrayed in Enoch 1-15 as one of the principal leaders of the angels who descended to the earth and

The person and role of Satan in Rabbinic literature

The Rabbinic literature like other Jewish writings, contains some references to Satan. According to one account in Bereshith Rabba (xvii),⁵ Satan was created on the sixth day at the same time as Eve. This tradition suggests a connection between Satan and the fall of man. In Debarim Rabbi (xi) Satan is known by the name of "Sammael," who is identified as the wicked angel and the chief of the Satans. We have thus the idea of Satan and his angels, or of an arch-Satan and subordinate Satans,⁶ an idea which we have seen above as appearing in the apocalyptic literature and in 2 Thessalonians 2.

Another account given in Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer⁷ (chapters 13 and 14) attributes the fall of Satan to jealousy on the part of the angels. The angels opposed the creation of man but the fact that Adam gave names to all creatures, which the angels had failed to do, proved his superiority to them, and led them to conspire against Adam in order that by his fall

intermarried with women. Asmodaeus in the Book of Tobit is depicted as evil demon (3:8). Samjaza is described by Enoch as one of the fallen angels and with Azazel is the chief of those angels (chapter 6). Mastema is described by Jubilees as the prince of the spirits (10:5). The most commonly known name is Beliar. I shall devote a separate section to discussing the relation between Satan and Beliar.

⁵H. Freedman, editor, The Midrash, translated by Maurice Simon (London: The Soncino Press, 1939), I, 132-139.

⁶Cf. Shemoth Rabba XX.

⁷Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer, translated from Hebrew by Gerald Friedlander (New York: Hermon Press, 1965).

they might regain superiority. Sammael, the first of the angel princes, took the company of his subject angels, came down to earth, and selected the serpent as a suitable instrument for his purpose. Thus using the serpent, "Sammael" deceived the woman, and prevailed upon her to touch the tree, following his example. In the consequence of this anti-human action, "Sammael" and his troop of angels were cast out of heaven and the feet of the serpent cut off.

In addition to the part played as the tempter of man, the activities of Satan are said to be various. He appears chiefly, however, in the three role of accuser, seducer, and destroyer. The threefold character is well illustrated in what is said in the Targum (Tar. Jer. to Gen. 22:1).⁸ "Sammael" accuses Abraham before God. God decides to test the piety of Abraham by commanding him to sacrifice Isaac (Sanhedrin 89b). Next Satan appears in the role of a seducer. He attempts to seduce Abraham from his loyalty to God, and also to persuade Isaac to rebel against the ordeal of sacrifice. Failing in all this, he told Sarah that Isaac had been slain, and so terrified her that she died.⁹ Satan also figures as the "Angel of Death" in the Targum¹⁰ and in the Talmud¹¹ he is represented as standing by the dying

⁸J. W. Etheridge, The Targums of Onkolos and Jonathan ben Uzziel on the Pentateuch (New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1968), p. 226.

⁹Cf. Pirke de Eliezer, chapter 32; Tar. of Jer. to Gen. 22.

¹⁰Cf. Tar. Jerusalem to Gen. 3:1.

¹¹Abudah Zurah 20b.

man with a drawn sword in his hand, in the point of which a drop of gall trembles. In Baba Bathra (16a) Satan is identified with the "evil inclination" in man.

The relation of Beliar (Belial) to Satan

Beliar is not the only anti-God figure other than Satan mentioned in Jewish literature¹² and at this point we want to expand on Bousset's¹³ claim that the Man of Lawlessness is to be identified with Beliar.

There is reference to Beliar almost in every type of ancient Jewish literature. In the King James version of the Bible there are three references to Beliar in the Old Testament. In Deut. 13:13 there is a reference to the "children of Beliar"; in 1 Sam. 2:12 the children of Eli are referred to as "the sons of Beliar"; and in Judges 19:22 the men of the city are called "sons of Belial." In the three references there is something evil about the men referred to as "sons of Belial." The sons of Eli were dishonest in their practices with sacrificial meat in the temple; the men in Judges are robbers and in Deuteronomy the men so called are accused of idolatry.

Beliar is mentioned predominantly in the apocalyptic literature. In the book of Jubilees Moses is represented as praying that the spirit of Beliar may not rule over God's people to accuse them before Him (1:20).

¹²Supra, p. 76, n. 4.

¹³W. Bousset, The Antichrist Legend, translated from the German by A. H. Keane (London: Hutchinson, 1896), p. 155.

In the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs Beliar is a dominating conception. Fornication, it is said, brings men into derision with Beliar. If fornication does not overcome the mind, Beliar cannot overcome man (Test. Reuben 4:7,11). Beliar is called, "the prince of deceit" (Test. Simon 2:7). The works of Beliar are opposed to "the law of the Lord" (Test. Levi 19:1). Beliar rules over the souls (Test. Dan 4:7) but if men do righteousness and love the Lord, every spirit of Beliar will flee from them (Test. Is. 7:7). The reference to the "spirits of Beliar" in some of the passages shows that Beliar is regarded as the chief of evil spirits like Satan.¹⁴ A prominent function assigned to Beliar and his spirits in the Testaments is that of tempting men and this function is also a characteristic of Satan. This points out that Beliar and Satan are one.

The closest relation between Satan and Beliar is found in the Martyrdom of Isaiah. In this work we have references to three princes of evil--Beliar, Sammael, and Satan--and it is difficult to determine any differences among them. Isaiah told the dying Hezekiah that

Sammael Melchira shall serve Manasseh, and execute his desire, and he shall become a follower of Beliar rather than of me. And many in Jerusalem and in Judea he shall cause to abandon the true faith, and Beliar shall dwell in Manasseh (1:8).

After the death of Hezekiah, Manasseh forgot the words of his father, "and he served Satan and his angels and his powers" (2:1). It is further

¹⁴E.g. Test. of Dan 1:7.

stated that Manasseh "turned aside his heart to serve Beliar: for the angel of lawlessness¹⁵ who is the ruler of this world is Beliar, whose name is Metanbuchus" (2:4).

The three angels--Beliar, Sammael, and Satan--are so closely connected in this book that it is not a simple task to consider them separately. Similar functions are ascribed to all of them. It is said that Sammael will serve Manasseh who will also become a follower of Belial (1:8). Both Sammael and Beliar are said to dwell in Manasseh (2:1; 1:8; 3:11). As a result of Sammael abiding in Manasseh he served Satan and his angels (2:2). In 2:4 Beliar is declared as the ruler of the world. The phrase "Satan and his angels and his powers" (2:2) appears to be parallel conception to Beliar "the angel of lawlessness" (2:4).

The investigation does very little to show what specific relations exist between Beliar and Satan. Both are mentioned as God's opponents and as the leaders of other spirits. Their activities as tempters and seducers are identical and they are depicted as destroyers of God's creation. Both Satan and Beliar are supernatural spirits who work through the serpent. Therefore, when Paul says that the activities of the lawless one are instigated by Satan, he does not necessarily say that Satan is working through Beliar. The lawless one may be a human being through whom Satan may work. Perhaps Bousset is assuming too much when he takes

¹⁵Cf. 2 Thess. 2:7.

the "lawless one" to be identical with "the angel of lawlessness" in the Martyrdom of Isaiah. We can conclude with Langton¹⁶ that the

presentation of the relations of these three powers of evil is no doubt largely due to the fact that these parallel conceptions prevailed at the same time, and no definite ideas existed as to their relations to each other.

Beliar may be identical with Satan.

The Signs and Wonders of the Antichrist

In addition to attributing the activities of the lawless one to Satan, Paul also mentions that there will be false signs and wonders by the Antichrist which may lead believers astray. He does not indicate what will be the nature of the signs and wonders but it is probable that miracles are meant. This suggestion is supported by the use of the phrase "by every power and signs and wonders" (ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει καὶ σημείοις καὶ τέρασιν). Each of these words has been used to describe miracles and in particular the phrase σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα is a common biblical expression for miracles.¹⁷

One of the Messianic expectations among the Jews was that the Messiah would raise the dead. It was therefore, possible for a false Messiah to perform miracles, and possibly raise dead in order to convince

¹⁶Edward Langton, Essentials of Demonology (London: The Epworth Press, 1949), p. 139.

¹⁷In Matt. 7:22 δυνάμεις means "miracles." The phrase σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα occurs in John 4:48; Acts 2:43; 4:30; 5:2 and Rom. 15:19.

the people that he is the Messiah. We have scanty references in Jewish literature to miracles performed by an anti-God figure. In Sibylline Oracles, III:63 miracles are attributed to Beliar:

From the stock of Sabaste Beliar shall come in later time and shall raise the mountain heights and raise the sea, the great fiery sun and the bright moon and he shall raise up the dead and shall perform many signs for men: but they shall not be effective.

Again in the Ascension of Isaiah¹⁸ there is a ruler who is depicted as anti-God. His activities are described thus:

This ruler will come in the likeness of that King and there will come with him all the powers of this world and they will hearken to him in all that he desires. And at his word the sun will rise in the night and he will cause the moon to shine at the sixth hour. All that he desires he will do in the world; he will act and speak in the name of the Beloved and say, "I am God and before me there has been none else." And all the people in the world will believe in him and serve him saying, "This is God and beside him there is none other." And the majority of those who have united to receive the Beloved will turn aside to him and the power of his miracles will be manifest in every city . . . (Ascension of Isaiah 4:4-10).¹⁹

There is an observable similarity between 2 Thess. 2:10 and these quotations. Both quotations mention the fact that the intention of the

¹⁸The Ascension of Isaiah is not included by Charles in the list of apocalyptic literature. It is believed to be a Christian addition to the Martyrdom of Isaiah.

¹⁹Bousset (p. 175) gives many quotations from non-canonical Christian writings which speak of the wonders of Antichrist. Special mention is made of Simon Magus in The Acts of Peter with Simon xxviii. Simon Magus is shown to reanimate a dead body, though this was only in appearance because the charm vanishes as soon as he withdrew. The corpse is said to have been really resuscitated by Peter, the Apostle.

anti-God figure is to lead the believers astray and occasionally he succeeds. In Sibylline III:69 lawless men and those who have never yet listened to the word of God are some of the victims of Beliar; in 2 Thess. 2:10 the victims of the signs and wonders of the "lawless one" are "those who are to perish, because they refused to love the truth, and so be saved." Once again we find another direct influence of Jewish thought on Paul's language in 2 Thessalonians 2.

Satan and Beliar in Paul

There are eight instances in Paul's epistles, excluding the Pastorals,²⁰ of the use of the term "Satan." Each of these instances will be examined.

Rom. 16:20: In these verses (Rom. 16:17-20) Paul deals with the question of divisions and heresies within the Church of Rome. The name of Satan here may show that the divisions and the heresies are the activities of Satan who is crushed by God. The crushing of Satan does not imply that he is stamped out of existence. It may refer to the whole realm of Satan which suffers defeat as a result of the obedience of the Church in Rome.

1.Cor. 5:5: In this passage Paul urges the Corinthians to deliver the sinner to Satan for the destruction of his flesh while his spirit is saved from the day of judgment. Satan here may be used in a metonymous sense to mean "Satan's realm."

²⁰The Pastorals are excluded because there is no unanimity as to the Pauline authorship of these books.

1 Cor. 7:5: The context here is the subject of marital relationships. Satan is said to make use of an opportunity of weakness to tempt an individual.

2 Cor. 2:11: The Corinthians are warned against allowing Satan to gain advantage over them (*ἵνα μὴ πλεονεκτήσῃ ὑμῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ σατανᾶ*). St. Paul's use of the verb *πλεονεκέω* here is significant in that implicit in these words is also the idea of Satan's guiles, *ἀντιοῦ τὰ νοήματα* a reminiscence of one of Satan's characteristics when he deceived Adam and Eve.²¹

2 Cor. 11:14: In this passage Paul characterizes Satan as one who disguises himself as the angel of light; his followers also disguise themselves as the followers of righteousness. Here is further evidence of St. Paul's conception of Satan as characteristically deceitful; his power over men is to be gained by using that which is an apparent good.

2 Cor. 12:7: The nature of Paul's malady does not concern us. What is obvious in this passage is that the sphere of Satan's operation is in the "flesh" (*σκόλοψ τῆ σαρκί*), and is seen to include the infliction of suffering. It is to be observed that even though Paul speaks of the *ἄγγελος σατανᾶ* , the emphasis is on Satan who is behind the action of the angel. In this Paul agrees with the Jewish apocalyptic point of view that Satan has angels under him.

1 Thess. 2:18: Here Paul indicates that Satan's power is a real power. As Ling has observed, what may be gathered from this verse

²¹Cf. The Books of Adam and Eve, 12:1.

is that Paul attributes to Satan the ability to confront the believer with situations in the face of which the believer is forced to acknowledge the real physical constraint which Satan at present is able to exercise over him.²²

Paul "endeavoured the more eagerly and with great desire" (verse 17) to see the Thessalonians, "but Satan hindered" him. Nothing can be more emphatic than these words.

2 Thess. 2:9: This passage confirms the reality of the power which Satan exercises in the world. The activities of the *ἀνομος* is described as being "energized" (*κατ' ἐνέργειαν*) by Satan. The idea of Satan "energizing" the *ἀνομος* is in keeping with similar expression in Eph. 2:2. Under the title of the "prince of the power of the air" Satan is described as "energizing" (*ἐνέργουτος*) the sons of disobedience.

The only reference to Belial in the Pauline corpus is 2 Cor. 6:15: "What accord has Christ with Belial?" It is natural to assume that Paul was familiar with the character of Belial as the leader of evil spirits. Here Belial is opposed to Christ.

In summarizing Paul's teaching on Satan, it is observable that Paul is in line with the conception of Satan in ancient Jewish literature. He depicts Satan as full of guiles, an instigator of sons of disobedience and inflictor of suffering. Ling is in support of these observations when he writes:

²²T. Ling, The Significance of Satan (London: SPCK, 1961), p. 40.

The conception of Satan which emerges from these Pauline references is that of a spirit characterized by an insatiable appetite for power and self aggrandisement; to his power over them men themselves contribute, because both weakness of their fallen nature, and the plausibility of his offers of apparent good render them unable to resist his pressures. Satan's power is a real power, and he is capable of inflicting disease and imposing physical constraint even upon members of the Church.²³ Again, Paul's thought is not divorced of Jewish ideas.

The Fate of the Anti-God and His Followers in Jewish Literature

The end will finally come when the *ἀνομος* will appear, but a fate awaits him because the Lord will also appear. The of the Lord Jesus means annihilation for the "lawless one." "The Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by his appearing and his coming" (2 Thess. 2:8). Similar conceptions of the fate of the anti-God figure are frequent in Jewish literature.

The fate of the Anti-God and his followers in the Old Testament

In Chapter II we have tried to sketch briefly the idea of the anti-God figure in the Old Testament. The figure can appear in the form of a mythical Leviathan and dragon (Isaiah 27; Ps. 74:13-14). In Ezekiel 32, Egypt is identified as the dragon and in Psalms 2 (1-2) the "nations," namely, the Gentiles are depicted as the opponents of Yahweh. Chapters 38 and 39 of Ezekiel describe a final assault of the heathen prince Gog and his allies upon the people of God (see also Dan. 7:7,9,11).

²³Ling, p. 42.

But in all this, destruction awaits the opponents of God. It is interesting to note that Paul's statement in 2 Thess. 2:8 recalls the description of the Messiah's victory in Is. 11:4:

καὶ πατήσεται τὴν γῆν τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ
καὶ πνεύματι δὴ χελεύων ἀνελεῖ ἄσεβη

In Isaiah 27 the final fate of the mythical dragon is annihilation by the Lord. In Ezekiel (38 and 39) Gog, who is said to be "the chief prince of Messhech and Tubal" (38:2) wages war with the people of Israel. But the Lord will come to the aid of his people, and will shake the earth against Gog and his army. He will pour out upon them a torrential rain and hailstone and fire and brimstone, and then every man's sword will be against his brother (38:19-23). Gog and his army will be slain on the mountains of Israel and their body will become food for the beast and the birds (39:1-6). The active participation of the people of Israel in this war against Gog and Magog is not apparent here. Only the Lord fights alone. The destruction is Yahweh's judgment on the nations who oppressed Israel, the holy nation.

The fate of the Anti-God figure in Apocryphal and Pseudepigrapha

This body of literature abounds in description of the fate of the opponents of God. Reference has been made above to the Apocryphal book of Bell and the Dragon. In it Daniel proved the falsity of the Babylonian gods and destroyed the idols. As a result, the king of Babylon was convinced that the God of Daniel was the true God and the enemies of Daniel who were in a sense also the enemies of Yahweh were destroyed in the lions' den. Yahweh is again victorious and the enemies are annihilated.

In the apocalyptic literature, there is a growing consciousness among the Jews that those nations who were oppressing them would face destruction. The destruction is one of the tasks of the Messiah. We have a description of such a destruction in 2 Baruch 72 (2-6):

After the signs have come, of which thou was told before, when the nations become turbulent, and the time of my Messiah is come, he shall both summon all the nations, and some of them he shall spare, and some of them he shall slay. These things therefore, shall come upon the nations which are to be spared by Him. Every nation, which knows not Israel and has not trodden down the seed of Jacob, shall indeed be spared. And this because some out of every nation shall be subjected to the people. But all those who have ruled over you, or have known you, shall be given up to the sword.

To prove the superiority of the Jewish Messiah, he will bring the leader of the enemy nation to Mount Zion where the glory of Yahweh dwells and will slay him there:

The leader of that time will be left alive, when the multitude of his hosts will be put to sword, and he will be bound, and they will take him up to Mount Zion, and My Messiah will convict him of his impieties, and will gather and set before him all the works of his hosts. And afterwards he will put him to death . . . (2 Baruch 40:1-3).

In writing about the function of the Messiah, the author of 1 Enoch mentions the different ways in which the enemies of God will meet their fate on the last day. Suddenly, the Head of the Days will appear, and with him the Son of Man (46:2,3,4; 48:2), to execute judgment. The fallen angels are cast into a fiery furnace (54:6); the kings and the mighty are given into the hands of the righteous (38:5); and their destruction furnish a spectacle to the righteous as they burn and vanish forever out of sight (48:9; 62:12), to be tortured in Gehenna by the

angels of punishment (53:3-5; 54:1-2). The remaining sinners and the godless people are driven from the face of the earth (38:3; 4:12; 45:6). The Son of Man slays them with the word of his mouth (62:2).²⁴

The function of the Messiah includes not only the destruction of the political enemies of the Jews, but also the spiritual enemy, Beliar. He is to war against Beliar and the powers of wickedness (Test. Reub. 6:12; Test. Levi 18:12; Test. Dan 5:10). Moreover, he should give the faithful power to tread upon evil spirits and bind Beliar (Test. Levi 18:12) who be cast into the fire (Test. Judges 25:3). A similar thought is found in Sibylline III.71:

But at whatsoever time the threatened vengeance of the Almighty God draws near, the fiery energy comes through the swelling surge to earth, and burns Beliar and the overweening men, even all who have put their trust in him . . .²⁵

The fate of the Anti-God figure in the Rabbinic literature

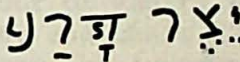
The same idea that the opponent of God will meet with an inevitable fate runs through Rabbinic literature. The Talmud speaks of the war with the great monsters and the war with Gog and Magog (San. 97b) which precede the advent of the Messiah. The leader of the war against the monsters and the kingdom of Gog and Magog will be Messiah "ben" Joseph.

²⁴Cf. 2 Thess. 2:8. The same expression is found in Ps. Sol. 17:27: "He shall destroy the godless with the word of his mouth."

²⁵These references are by no means exhaustive. Other passages include 4 Ezra 12; 13; Assumption of Moses 10:7; Book of Wisdom 3:16; Ps. Sol. 17:32.

He will deal an annihilating blow on the kingdom of Gog and Magog. In Targum of Jonathan on Is. 11:4 Messiah "ben" Joseph slays Armilius, the Roman Emperor with the breath of his mouth.²⁶ A similar description of the fate of the kingdom of Magog is found in Jerusalem Targum on Numbers 11:

Behold, a king will rise from the land of Magog, at the end of the days, and will assemble kings crowned with crowns, and captains wearing armour, and him will all nations obey. And they will set battle in array in the land of Israel against the children of the captivity; but already is provided that in the hour of distress, all of them shall perish by the burning blast of the flame that cometh forth from beneath the throne of glory; and their carcasses shall fall upon the mountains of the land of Israel, and the wild beasts of the field and fowls of the sky shall come and consume their bodies.

The Rabbis believed that God will destroy the Leviathan and the "slant serpent" by preventing the mating of the male and female. And finally, the Lord "will slay the dragon that is in the sea" (Baba Bathra 74b). Likewise the  depicted as God's opponent is to be brought by the Holy One and slain before the righteous and the wicked (Sukkah 52a).

The fate of the Anti-God in Qumran

The impending day of visitation, when the wicked and the opponents of God will be destroyed, bulks large in the thought of Qumran. When discussing the concept of the Anti-God in Qumran in Chapter II above,

²⁶Cf. 2 Thess. 2:8.

mention has been made of the figure of the Wicked Priest as an opponent of the Teacher of Righteousness and members of the sect (1Qp Hab. ii:5-6,15). As judgment for the action of the Wicked Priest, he and his followers will be destroyed by God. The commentary on Hab. 2:8 depicts their bitter end:

Its hidden interpretation refers to the Wicked Priest, whom because of the wrong done to the Teacher of Righteousness, and the men of his party, God delivered him unto the hands of his enemies to torment him with smiting that he might be destroyed in bitterness of soul, for the evil he had done to His elect one (1Qp Hab. ii:8).

Similarly in another instance, the author of the commentary mentions the Preacher of Falsehood (1Qp Hab. ii:12-13):

Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood and established a city by iniquity. Behold, it is not the Lord of Hosts that the peoples shall labour for fire and nations weary themselves for vanity? Its hidden interpretation refers to the Preacher of Falsehood who misled many into building a city of vanity through bloodshed and into forming a congregation through lies for the sake of his glory, to compel many to toil in labour of vanity and to make them pregnant with works of lies, and their labour will be to no avail, and they will enter the judgment of fire, because they have cursed and insulted the elect ones of God.

In the last part of the Scroll of the War between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness we have a description of the seven Lots of the battle, and the victory of each Lot, with alternating fortunes of the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness.²⁷ It is God himself who is fighting for the sect. There are references to "The ranks and the Banners of God for the Vengeance of His Anger against the Sons of

²⁷Yaegel Yadin, The Message of the Scrolls (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1957), pp. 128-143.

Darkness," "The Mighty Hand of God in Battle to Cast Down all the Faithless Slain," "The Mysteries of God for the Destruction of Wickedness," "God's Smiting of All the Sons of Darkness" (1QM iii:1-11).

In another instance the fighting is attributed to the star of Jacob:

A star shall come forth out of Jacob, and a scepter shall arise out of Israel, and it shall crush the forehead of Moab and break down all the sons of Sheth; and he shall go down from Jacob and destroy the remnant of Seir, and the enemy shall be destroyed, and Israel shall do valiantly (1QM xi:1-2).

After one of the defeats of the Sons of Darkness, when the Sons of Light are standing over their corpses, they have a special service of praise to God and curse to Belial in which they say:

Blessed be the God of Israel with all his holy purposes and all faithful works. And blessed be all his hosts in righteousness who know him by faith. But curse be Belial with his hostile purpose, and may he be an object of indignation in his guilty dominion; and cursed be all the spirits of his lot in their wicked purpose, and may they be the objects of indignation in all their unclean service of defilement; for they are the lot of darkness, but the lot of God belongs to eternal light (1QM xxx. 1-6).

The Damascus Document says that there will be about forty years between the "ingathering of the unique teacher" and "the annihilation of all the men of the war returned with the man of lie" (6QD xx. 14). The Thanksgiving Psalms mention "the war of the mighty ones of heaven" which rushes about the world and turns not back until the full end decreed forever (1QH iii. 35).

The Holy War imagery

Giblin²⁸ has a theory that 2 Thess. 2:8 is based on the Old Testament imagery of "The Holy War." This is a repeated theme in the Old Testament prophetic books, notably in connection with the Day of Yahweh. The essence of the Holy War is the struggle of the people of God for existence; but the struggle is waged by God himself and the victory is the Lord's. According to Giblin:²⁹

The term of the war is twofold. On the one hand, there is the $\square \gamma \pi$, the definitive annihilation of the enemy. On the other, the people enter into possession of the land or are confirmed in security.

In our investigation we have seen that this concept is prevalent in Jewish literature (Ezekiel 38 and 39; Is. 11:4; 4 Ezra 13:9; 1QM). When Paul said the words we have in 2 Thess. 2:8 it is likely that he was familiar with the concept of the Holy War. But for Paul the destruction of the enemy will not be by the Messiah "ben" Joseph, not by the Messiah "ben" David, not by Yahweh, but "by the Lord Jesus."

Summary

On the basis of the above investigation, we affirm that Paul's ideas in 2 Thess. 2:8-12 have their background in Jewish literature. The role of Satan in verse 9 is not unique to Paul; the Jewish literature we have investigated abound with such conception. The appearance of the

²⁸Charles Giblin, The Threat to Faith, an Exegetical and Re-examination of 2 Thessalonians 2 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1957), p. 89.

²⁹Ibid.

Messiah implies destruction of the anti-God because the Lord is fighting for the faithful. As an essence of the Holy War the believers triumph after the fate of the anti-God.³⁰

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this thesis as set out in Chapter I was to investigate the Jewish background that lies behind the language, thought and expressions of Paul in 2 Thess. 2:1-12. To provide a background for the investigation, Chapter II dealt with Messianic hopes and expectations, the person and functions of the Messiah in Jewish thought as found in the literature of the Old Testament, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Rabbinic writings and Qumran. The Day of the Lord in Jewish writings and the Pauline corpus was also discussed in this chapter. Chapter III took up the discussion of the signs of the end or what the Jews called "the Messianic Woes," the origin of the Antichrist and the predominance of this concept in the ancient Jewish literature. This was done on the basis of Paul's ideas in 2 Thess. 2:3-7 where he speaks of the coming of the lawless one, the apostasy, and the sitting of the lawless one in The Temple of God.

The next chapter investigated, on the basis of 2 Thess. 2:8-12, the role and person of Satan in Jewish writings. It also discussed the wonders and signs of the Antichrist and the inevitable fate that awaits all of God's opponents and the opponents of his people.

On the basis of our investigation, we have reached some conclusions about the Jewish background to 2 Thess. 2:1-12. The first conclusion is that the language, thoughts, and expressions in the passage are patterned after the language, thoughts and ideas of Jewish apocalyptic eschatology,

in which the Messiah is expected to come and deliver Israel and judge the enemies (Dan. 7:3-4; Enoch 45; 4 Ezra 13:25-26). The person and function of the Messiah stand out in those Jewish apocalyptic writings that are investigated. 2 Thess. 2:1-12 is based on the expectation that the Messiah, who for Paul is "the Lord Jesus," will come at the end. But Paul is cautioning the Thessalonians against being obsessed to the extent of losing faith. For Paul, Christ is the central figure in this passage.

The expression "the day of the Lord" is an eschatological expression which is used in Jewish writings to refer to the day that Yahweh or the Messiah will intervene for the holy people, Israel. It is a day of judgment for the "nations" and God's opponents but a day of deliverance for Israel. Paul takes this expression verbatim from Jewish thought. For Paul the "day of the Lord" is "the day of the coming of our Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. 1:8), but the day is still connected with judgment.

When Paul refers to the man of lawlessness, the apostasy, and the temple imagery in 2 Thess. 2:7-3, he is borrowing from the language employed in describing "Messianic Woes" in Jewish ideas. The belief that something will happen to signal the coming of the Messiah permeates Jewish writings. Paul is therefore relying on a fixed tradition. The origin of the Antichrist is traced back to the Babylonian myth of creation and from there it filtered into Jewish and Christian ideas.¹ The identification of *ὁ ἄνομος* and

¹Supra, p. 67.

ἀποστασία is not known to us. The fact that he reminds the Thessalonians of what he told them previously (2 Thess. 2:5), should make us more cautious in trying to identify these figures.

The language Paul uses to describe the lawless one in the temple is modelled on Dan. 11:36 which is a description of the work and activities of Antiochus Epiphanes,² as the king who will exalt himself against every god, although similarity of language does not imply similarity of ideas. The use of κρείσσον and κρείσσων does not have any apparent parallel in Jewish literature, though the idea is not entirely lacking.³

When he attributes the activities of the lawless one to Satan, Paul is in agreement with the Jewish writers who depict Satan as the leader of other Satans (Enoch 53:3) and the fallen angels. Paul depicts the lawless one as using "false signs and wonders" to lead the people astray, and in this he employs the Jewish idea of the false Messiah who is to perform false signs and wonders to prove his Messiahship (Sibylline Oracles III.63).

Finally, Paul mentions that the Lord Jesus will slay the lawless one with the breath of his mouth. A similar idea that the Messiah will destroy God's opponent with the breath of his mouth is common in Jewish

²Supra, p. 61

³Supra, p. 67.

apocalyptic literature. Almost all aspects of thoughts and expressions in 2 Thess. 2:1-12 have parallels in Jewish literature.

But why did Paul use these expressions to describe the coming of the Lord Jesus? First, apocalyptic language was the language of the time used to describe the Last Things. Some of the Jewish literature we have studied above are contemporary with Paul. Accordingly, Paul used this kind of language because it was commonly used at that time. But he used it apologetically to defend Christianity against Judaism. He is all things to all men, and therefore is ready to use Jewish expression if, perchance he might win the Jews.

Second, as was mentioned in Chapter I, Paul had a Jewish background. With this background deeply ingrained in him, he had his conversion experience on the Damascus road. He kept the things he knew as a Jew, but he subjected it to his Damascus experience. Frame describes the effect of this experience on Paul in these words:

Into the apocalyptic and eschatological tradition and faith of late Judaism, Paul entered as did the Master before him. But Paul, to refer only to him, brought to his inheritance not only his own personal equation but also his religious experience, his world became enlarged and his sympathies broadened. To him, Christianity was a universal religion in which Jesus the Messiah was not a national political factor but a world-redeeming power and wisdom of God. While holding to the traditional conceptualism of apocalyptic and to the essence of its faith, he demonstrates the originality of his religious insight in his attitude to the traditional forms. This scribe who had been made a disciple of the kingdom knows how to bring forth out of his treasures things new and old . . . This fusion of the old and new in the mind of the Christian Paul gives an original turn to the conception of the Antichrist.⁴

⁴J. Frame, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), p. 275.

When Paul was baptized after his Damascus experience, his Jewish thoughts were also baptized into Christianity. 2 Thess. 2:1-12 is loaded with Jewish expressions, but with the mention of "the Lord Jesus," these ideas and expressions have been also baptized into Christianity.

This investigation does not solve all the problems posed by this passage, but it has helped to point out that this esoteric passage has its background in Jewish thought. One area which needs further investigation is the relation of apocalyptic to eschatology in Pauline corpus.

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