

Master thesis Ancient history

22-03-2012

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## **Nearer to the End**

Comparing eschatology in Jewish and Greek sources 200 B.C.-200 A.D.

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## **Preface**

It has not been easy to write this thesis. The broadness of the subject and the immense amount of available literature always made it necessary to stay alert and not get lost into details. I would like to thank my parents and friends for keeping me motivated and listening to my laments and I especially would like to thank Dr. Naerebout, for the talks I had with him inspired me to explore new areas and keep on writing.

## Introduction

This thesis will take the form of a comparative study. The sources I have selected are: *Daniel*, *1Enoch*, the *Hodayot*, the *Revelation of John*, the *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*, the *Biblical Antiquities*, the *Sibylline Oracles*, the *Golden Tablets* and various texts written by Plutarch. In the first chapter of this thesis, I will introduce the sources. The reason I chose to include these sources may not be abundantly clear in every case. The Plutarch texts, for example, deviate in form and content. However I would like to extract elements that can be compared to the apocalyptically focused texts like *1Enoch*, *Daniel* and *Zephaniah*. The *Golden Tablets* are different in form, but the content is typical otherworldly and is therefore interesting when comparing Jewish and Greek tradition. *Revelation* is a Christian source that is very closely connected to its apocalyptic Jewish forbears. The *Biblical Antiquities* provide an interesting picture of the changing interpretation of biblical stories in the first century A.D. The *Sibylline Oracles* are Greek texts containing many Jewish elements. For that reason it may be possible to find there evidence of the blending of ideas into a new theory. In addition to *Daniel* and *1Enoch*, I chose to include the *Hodayot*, as a sectarian text, ascribed to the Qumran community. These three texts together may help to unravel some of the mindset of this distant community.

In the highly interesting Second Temple period the area of Palestine had known quite some different rulers. The strategic position of Palestine between the former Persian Empire and mighty Egypt attracted various interested parties to take it into possession. After the reign of the Ptolemies, the Seleucids continued ruling in a Hellenized style. Some of the Jewish elite became Hellenized too by interacting with the Greek rulers and thus developed a somewhat different view on religion than the more humble Jewish people. The reign of the Jewish Hasmoneans did not bridge all of the divisions that had developed among the Jewish people and neither did the Roman domination later on.<sup>1</sup> New ideas arose because of the interaction with so many different authorities, although it took some time before the common people adjusted their habits.

Numerous scholars have devoted many years of their lives to the research of Jewish and Greek interaction in a Hellenizing world. For that reason, it is of great importance to select a certain area within this field. There is no time in world history in which religion does not play an important role. Gaining more knowledge about the eschatological mindset of

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<sup>1</sup> F.G. Naerebout and H.W. Singor, *De Oudheid: Grieken en Romeinen in de context van de wereldgeschiedenis* (Amsterdam 2004) 252, 253.

people in any given period is therefore commendable. However, especially at the end of this Second temple period, the foundations for broad religious tendencies have been laid that have had a remarkable effect on religious thinking, even until today. Jewish and Greek ideas about the end of the world and one's personal end have to be studied carefully, in order to understand more about the background of religious ideas in 2012.

## Chapter 1: General Background

At the beginning of this thesis, I will discuss the different sources and some topics I touched upon in the introduction into greater depth. The purpose of this chapter is to create a framework for the comparison of the sources. Between the different groups of sources, I will suggest similarities but divisions as well. In each of the following chapters, I will discuss the nine sources I selected. Several themes will be discussed.

In this chapter I will also provide background information on the era in which the sources were written and we will meet some of the scholars that have explored and developed the research area. First, however, we have to look at the subject of eschatological and revelatory literature in general and determine some important notions.

### *General characteristics: definitions and scholars in the field*

#### Eschatology

I am mostly interested in the history of ideas. Ideas develop through time and I am curious whether the same idea can be recognized in various traditions, especially as an answer to general human conditions such as for example the feeling of thirst and the need for shelter. Death is an event too, that eventually every human being will experience. In every society, death is part of life and culture. Habits and customs regarding funerals differ greatly, as do theory and theology about what is thought to exist after death. It is not only by religion, that the need for a theology including afterlife is determined. It depends on many cultural, environmental and psychological factors as well. Eschatology is an overarching term that can be used in this context. It contains a specific set of ideas. In the Oxford dictionary eschatology is described as “the department of theological science concerned with ‘the four last things: death, judgement, heaven and hell’”.<sup>2</sup> For the various texts, it is important to determine what the purpose was, so with what aim the writer wrote the text. This is of course not clear in every case. It is clear, however, that all of the selected texts can be defined as eschatological literature. An even more overarching notion is that of ‘revelatory literature’. All of the sources are revelatory in some sense, for they all reveal (secret) knowledge to some extent.

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<sup>2</sup> *The compact edition of the Oxford English dictionary: complete text reproduced micrographically volume I* (Oxford 1971) 893.

## Pseudepigrapha

In the Hellenistic age, pseudonymity was a widespread phenomenon. The use of pseudepigrapha solved the question of authority, since sources were said to have been written by legendary figures who possessed a spotless reputation.<sup>3</sup> A nostalgic feeling about the past contributed to the need for noble ancient figures as scribes. In Greek and Roman tradition, this phenomenon was already integrated, and in the Second Temple period Judaism, when the role of the prophet, who had formerly been a councilman at the court, utterly changed, the Jewish literature became pseudepigraphic too. Four of the texts in this comparative study take the form of pseudepigrapha. These texts are: the *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*, *Daniel*, *L.A.B.* and *1 Enoch*.

The problem of anachronism is always present when dealing with texts from another era. In the case of pseudepigrapha, Grabbe warns his readers to beware when applying a strict boundary between prophetic and apocalyptic literature and thinking. While other scholars stick to this division, because they pose that apocalyptic is mythical and prophetic is historical, Grabbe states that prophetic can be very mythical too and that the dichotomy is a construct of our own, secular age.<sup>4</sup>

## Scholars and apocalypse

One of the scholars with most expertise on the subject of eschatology, apocalypse and pseudepigraphical Jewish writings is John J. Collins. He wrote numerous books and articles and inspired others to be involved in the subject as well. He focused on the diversity of the different apocalypses, but at the same time tried to invent a more or less coherent system to classify apocalypses. Together with a working group of scholars, Collins proposed a definition and certain boundaries for the subject. In *Semeia 14*,<sup>5</sup> the result of his classification appears in the form of a workable definition: “‘apocalypse’ is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.”<sup>6</sup> Since most of the nine texts that I compare in my research fall to some extent within

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<sup>3</sup> J.J. Collins, *The apocalyptic imagination* (Cambridge 1984) 39,40.

<sup>4</sup> L.L. Grabbe and R.D. Haak, *Knowing the End from the Beginning: the prophetic, the apocalyptic and their relationships*. Journal for the study of the pseudepigrapha 46 (London and New York 2003) 19.

<sup>5</sup> *Semeia* is a journal in biblical criticism that in this famous number 14 devoted special attention to the systematization of apocalypses. Personal afterlife is named as one of the most important features of eschatology in apocalypses. Most of the texts that are being compared in this research are apocalypses in so far that it is possible to discern certain aspects as outlined by John Collins.

<sup>6</sup> J.J. Collins, *Apocalypse: the morphology of a genre*. *Semeia* 14 (n.p. 1979) 9.

this category, it is useful to be aware of this definition. Collins believes that a certain Hellenistic mood existed, that because of similar circumstances the same feeling of nostalgia for the past and living outside of the present were visible.<sup>7</sup>

Of the nine sources that we will compare, five are classified as apocalypses. These texts are *1 Enoch*, *Daniel*, *Zephaniah*, *Revelation* and the *Sibylline Oracles*. Some of the other texts have apocalyptic tendencies. Apocalypses can be divided into eschatological prophecies (dreams and visions) and otherworldly journeys. Journeys in the realm on the Underworld are also visible in some Greek eschatological texts, which not necessarily have to be classified as apocalypses.<sup>8</sup>

Although I will not try to discover the origin of the apocalyptic genre or the mythical motives, it is interesting to note that various roots have been suggested, ranging from Canaanite, to early Jewish, to Babylonian. Scholars defending this last Babylonian origin, equal Enoch to king Enmeduranki, stating that the description of Babylonian kings is just another way of arranging the generations from Adam. According to this system of counting, Enoch is the seventh generation, while Enmeduranki is the seventh Babylonian king from the beginning.<sup>9</sup>

According to John Collins, the periodization of history occurring in apocalypses, is taken from Persian thought.<sup>10</sup> However, many currents of thought circulated in the Hellenistic era and no exclusive origin of apocalypses can be pointed out.

The *Book of Daniel* can for a part be explained in historical terms, but certainly has the traits of an apocalyptic work. Therefore, it is classified as a historical apocalypse.

*Daniel* is, according to the classification of *Semeia 14*, one of the most elaborate examples of a historical apocalypse. The historical story of Daniel and the visions he receives make up two parts of the book, but historical events and explanations of visions come together in his description of the events at the Babylonian court.

However, not only Collins is an important figure in the study of apocalypse and Jewish eschatology. The subject became much more widely acknowledged as a field of study after Koch wrote a paper on the denying mode that had surrounded biblical apocalyptic studies until that time.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Collins, *The apocalyptic imagination*, 37.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, 34.

<sup>9</sup> A. Annus, "On the origin of the Watchers: A comparative study of the Antediluvian wisdom in Mesopotamian and Jewish traditions", in: *Journal for the study of the Pseudepigrapha 19: 2010*, 277-320, 278.

<sup>10</sup> Collins, *The apocalyptic imagination*, 33.

<sup>11</sup> K. Koch, *Ratlos von der Apokalyptik: Eine Streitschrift über ein vernachlässigtes Gebiet in der Bibelwissenschaft un die schädlichen Auswirkungen auf Theologie und Philosophie* (Gütersloh 1970) 12.



Opposing opinions on the intrinsic nature of the apocalyptic tradition existed all along, but were influenced by the age the scholar lived in. Before the 1930's, the study of apocalypses was not taken seriously. It was considered a strange and alien field of theology. R.H. Charles, however, did some foundational work in the apocalyptic and pseudepigraphic area in these early years.<sup>12</sup>

Also nowadays, scholars tend to disagree on matters of an eschatological nature. Some pose that the apocalyptic tradition is dangerous because of the demonization of the 'other', and that it can even be used to justify racial violence.<sup>13</sup> Other scholars stress the connection between mythical tradition and end-of-time-theories, in which the myths are combined with historical reality and from that mixing emerges the apocalyptic genre. It is even proposed that the alienation that occurs in eschatological stories as otherworldly as apocalypses is meant to free the mind of the listener and enables a person to look at the world through other eyes.<sup>14</sup>

According to DiTommaso, apocalypticism is a worldview to explain the world in simple dualistic terms and to give meaning and purpose and direction to a person's life. He stresses the danger of apocalypticism, because it is intolerant and seeks revenge during days to come for harm that is afflicted on a person during his earthly life. DiTommaso even states: "...Design and destiny are two sides of the same coin..."<sup>15</sup> This is meant in the sense that identity is decisive for the course of events in someone's life and eventually determines its outcome. Through transferred responsibility, humans do not have any part in the final battle and judgement, but place all authority outside of themselves.

### ***Introduction into the sources***

By means of an introduction to the sources that I selected to compare in this thesis, I will here comment briefly upon the background of the cultural circles these came from, and also I will introduce each of the sources individually. The sources are selected to represent a wide range of Jewish texts through time. Different genres of texts also attribute to the diversity. The connecting elements are the eschatological features in all of the texts. To be able to detect cultural differences and similarities, I selected Greek texts can be said to be representative as

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<sup>12</sup> Grabbe and Haak, *Knowing the End*, 3.

<sup>13</sup> S. Freyne, "Apocalypticism as the rejected Other: Wisdom and apocalypticism in early Judaism and early Christianity" in: eds. D.C. Harlow et.al., *The "Other" in Second Temple Judaism: Essays in honor of John J. Collins* (Grand Rapids 2011) 247-261, 249.

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem, 260.

<sup>15</sup> L. DiTommaso, "The Apocalyptic Other", in: eds. D.C. Harlow et.al., *The "Other" in Second Temple Judaism: Essays in honor of John J. Collins* (Grand Rapids 2011) 221-246, 231.

well. Although the *Golden Tablets* and the texts by Plutarch cannot be classified as apocalyptic literature, these texts can certainly be seen as revelatory literature. Note again that since several sources can be classified as pseudepigrapha, these are ascribed to ancient figures that definitely were not responsible for writing these texts.

### Jewish worldview

Within Jewish society, controversy existed between Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes. All were Jews, but not every one of the groups explained the Torah in the same way. So the Pharisees for example believed in life after death. Sadducees did not believe in an afterlife, only in the remembrance of fame of good and brave people after their death. John Hyrcanus, one of the Hasmonean rulers, had become supporter of the Sadducee stream and for that reason was hated by the Qumran community that was Essene.<sup>16</sup>

The correlation between sectarian Qumran doctrine and more generally accepted Jewish dogma is a difficult one. Since it is often impossible to determine whether or not the texts found at Qumran were especially important to this community, for this research I took one text that is definitely a sectarian work, (*Hodayot*) and two texts that can be said to be important to the community because of the discovery of multiple copies of the texts there (*Daniel* and *1 Enoch*). *Daniel* and *1 Enoch* however, were important texts for other branches within the Jewish tradition as well. The Qumran sources will therefore be treated as Jewish sources, but I will take the special point of view of this sect into account.

### The Jewish sources

The *Apocalypse of Zephaniah* is found only in tiny fragments, but a longer text not containing the name of the visionary, is thought to belong to this same apocalypse. It is mentioned by some as the 'Anonymous Apocalypse'. I will, however, use this text as belonging to the *Zephaniah apocalypse*.<sup>17</sup> The texts have been discovered in two different manuscripts, dating from the fourth and fifth century A.D., but these Coptic texts are probably translations of a Greek original that can be dated between 100 B.C. and 175 A.D.<sup>18</sup>

The *Biblical Antiquities* (*L.A.B.* from *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*) that were falsely ascribed to Philo, date from the first century A.D. There is no consensus on whether or not it was written before or after the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. The Latin translation that

<sup>16</sup> D. Flusser, *Judaism of the Second Temple period vol. 1: Qumran and Apocalypticism* (Grand Rapids et.al. 2007) 182, 183.

<sup>17</sup> Collins, *The apocalyptic imagination*, 242.

<sup>18</sup> J. H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament pseudepigrapha volume 1: Apocalyptic literature and testaments* (London 1983) 499,500.

we know is probably a Latin translation of a Greek translation of a Hebrew original.<sup>19</sup> In *L.A.B.*, a genealogy is offered that is mostly similar to biblical example, but it transgresses at certain points. One difference is that daughters are mentioned by name. Another striking point is the presence of Enoch in two lines: first in the ‘normal’ genealogy of Genesis, but later on, he is mentioned as a son of Cain, placing him very early in the history of mankind and as the grandfather of Lamech, who committed evil deeds and had two wives and learned his sons wickedness. After this genealogy, a short paragraph is included about the sons of God who saw the daughters of men were beautiful and took them for wives.<sup>20</sup> This is the same story about the Watchers as in *1 Enoch* and in the *Sibylline Oracles*.

The *Book of the Revelation of John* is in our time perhaps the first text that comes to mind when talking about eschatology. This Christian apocalypse is written by someone trained in the Jewish tradition and it is therefore relevant to use in this comparative research, although the Christian elements make comparing more complicated. However, this book has definitely more connections to earlier Jewish apocalypses than to later Christian apocalypses such as for example the *Shepherd of Hermas* and the *Apocalypse of Peter*.<sup>21</sup> The *Book of Revelation* is usually dated around 80 C.E.

## Qumran

Hundreds of different texts have been found in the caves near Qumran. It is not my aim to provide a coherent overview of a doctrine of a Qumran community, but rather to compare some of these texts to sources outside of the corpus.

In this thesis I will assume that the people who left us the Dead Sea Scrolls were living at Qumran, that they together formed a community and that their ideology was to some extent Essene. There is much discussion on this subject of course, but this lies outside the scope of what I am discussing here. There is for example much debate on the question whether or not the people living at the Qumran settlement are the same as the sect described by Josephus as the Essenes. This has everything to do with the question of the origin of the scrolls found near Qumran. Were these written by the Community nearby? Or brought from Jerusalem? There are many questions that have not been fully answered. For more information on the subject I can recommend many books.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> C.T.R. Hayward, *The Jewish temple: a non-biblical sourcebook* (New York 1996) 154.

<sup>20</sup> M.R. James, *The biblical antiquities of Philo* (New York 1971)78.

<sup>21</sup> Grabbe and Haak, *Knowing the End from the Beginning*, 7.

<sup>22</sup> For example: J.J. Collins., *Beyond the Qumran community: the Sectarian Movement of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids, Michigan 2010), A. Dupont-Sommer, *The Jewish sect of Qumran and the Essenes* (London 1954), D.N. Freedman and P.F. Kuhlken, *What are the Dead Sea Scrolls and why do they matter?* (Grand Rapids

The Essene worldview was very apocalyptic. People were expecting the end of time to arrive soon. In that light it was not surprising that the Essenes tried to live a just life, abstaining from wealth and condemning greedy and wealthy people. They were eager to learn all about historical events and the whereabouts and actions of both other Jews and Romans, for every incident could reveal more about the beginning of the end.<sup>23</sup>

Although in the *Hodayot* there is no mention of a Day of the Lord that will signify the eschatological ending of the world, not every Qumran text was silent on this point. The *War Scroll*, for example, contained precise predictions of this last of days and how to recognize symptoms that the end was near.<sup>24</sup>

The Qumran sources

*1Enoch* should not be confused with later books that are also called 'Enoch'. 2 and 3*Enoch* are written much later and contain some thoughts that are different from *1Enoch*. I will briefly mention these two later books. The text of *1Enoch* consists of five different books and has been found in fragments in Qumran (lacking the *Book of Parables* and chapter 108) and in the eighteenth century in Ethiopia. The original text was probably written in Aramaic. *1Enoch* is one of the so-called pseudepigrapha, because it is ascribed to the biblical Enoch, the great-grandfather of Noah. The discovery of multiple versions of *1Enoch* at Qumran may indicate that this text enjoyed an important place within the community tradition at Qumran.<sup>25</sup>

The *Book of Daniel* consists of two parts, one historically focused and another eschatological and dealing with revelations and dream visions. The text was written in Hebrew and Aramaic, but this does not directly correspond to the historical and eschatological separation. Although the actual story of Daniel is situated during the Babylonian exile, the first composition of this document can be determined in the Hellenistic era, around the third century B.C., when at least chapters one till four were written.<sup>26</sup> Later on, additions were made. Probably during the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes around 165 B.C., famous additions about immortality were inserted in the text. Because of the pseudepigraphic nature of this text, it is assumed that Daniel was a legendary figure who had been famous, but who

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and Cambridge 2007), N. Golb, *Wie schreef de Dode Zeerollen?* (Baarn 1995), F.G. Martínez and J.T. Barrera, *The people of the Dead Sea Scrolls: their writings, beliefs and practices* (Leiden 1995).

<sup>23</sup> Flusser, *Judaism: Qumran and apocalypticism*, 198.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, 14.

<sup>25</sup> G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *1Enoch I: A commentary on the Book of 1Enoch, chapters 1-36; 81-108* (Minneapolis 2001) 11.

<sup>26</sup> Haag, E., *Daniel* (Würzburg 1993) 5.

received a different role and identity in this text.<sup>27</sup> At Qumran, the Daniel-figure from this story was probably considered to be one of the last prophets.<sup>28</sup>

The *Hodayot* or *Thanksgiving Hymns* were found amongst the first Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947. Although not every first line of the *Hymns* has been handed down to us, these hymns must almost all have started with the phrase “I thank Thee...”.<sup>29</sup> The *Hodayot* are thought to have been written by the Teacher of Righteousness, a figure that seems to have led the members of the Qumran community in a way that was highly appreciated. So much so, that his lifetime was thought to be the period of (spiritual) prosperity beyond all other times in the community.

### Greek worldview

The Greek philosophy of old inspired people in an era when antiquity provided authority. Plutarch for example, applied ancient myths to his moral writings on how to act and behave. Josephus compares the Essenes to the Pythagoreans. While these Pythagoreans try to escape the cycle of regeneration by ascetism, Essenes apply ascetism to keep the Law and prepare for the eschatological end.<sup>30</sup> The Pythagoreans represent the Greek belief in the immortality of the soul, but instead of endless reincarnation, one should attempt to arrive at the level beyond this life engaged in a body.

An enormous amount of text has been written on the subject of Jewish and Greek tradition influencing each other. Some problems arise in this field of research. That some influence of one tradition on the other can be traced is uncontroversial, but to what extent and how individual writers reacted to differing circumstances is lesser known. Barclay proposes a model around the words ‘assimilation, acculturation and accommodation’.<sup>31</sup> According to him, the integration of people from a Jewish background into Greek society was divided into these stages and did not pose insurmountable problems. Other scholars stress the continuation of Jewish tradition in an increasingly Hellenizing world.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> J.J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Minneapolis 1993) 1,2.

<sup>28</sup> C.A. Evans and P.W. Flint, *Eschatology, Messianism and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids 1997) 45.

<sup>29</sup> S. Holm-Nielsen, *Hodayot: Psalms from Qumran* (Aarhus 1960) 13.

<sup>30</sup> A.L.A. Hogeterp, *Expectations of the End: A comparative tradition-historian study of eschatological, apocalyptic and messianic ideas in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament* (Leiden and Boston 2009) 111-112.

<sup>31</sup> J.M.G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: from Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE-117 CE)* (Edinburgh 1996) 92.

<sup>32</sup> G.W.E. Nickelsburg, “The We and the Other in the worldview of 1Enoch, the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other early Jewish texts” in: eds. D.C. Harlow et.al., *The “Other” in Second Temple Judaism: Essays in honor of John J. Collins* (Grand Rapids 2011) 262-278, 270.

Philo of Alexandria, who lived in the middle of the first century A.D., was one of the greatest Jewish philosophers of the age. (This Philo should not be confused with pseudo-Philo who wrote the *Biblical Antiquities*, a source that I use in this paper.) Philo elaborates on the similarities between Jewish tradition and Greek philosophy. In his opinion, Moses possessed all kinds of wisdom before the ancient Greeks and thus, many of the Greek claims were really Jewish thoughts and inventions according to Philo.<sup>33</sup> As a writer from Hellenistic Alexandria, both Jewish and Greek philosophies were extensively studied by him.

After Philo, the Jewish historian Josephus was born. He elaborates on the same point as Philo, that Greek philosophers had studied the books of Moses. This point of view was widely shared in his time.

#### The Greek sources

The many texts that together make up the *Moralia* of Plutarch can be thematically divided in ethical, philosophical, political and religious writings. Of this last category, I will take some examples to compare to Jewish writings. Plutarch lived between 47 and 120 A.D. Apart from his *Moralia*, he is also famous for his *Parallel Lives*. These texts are about Greek philosophy and the lives of a number of honourable Greeks and Romans, whom he compares to each other. The reason to include some of Plutarch's *Moralia* into the comparison is his interesting mixture of philosophy and religion. He even served as a priest himself. Also his search for identity as a Greek in an increasingly Roman world plays a part.<sup>34</sup>

Another source in this paper is the collection of *Golden Tablets*. These originate throughout several centuries, ranging from the third century B.C. in Greece until the second century A.D. in Rome. These tiny inscribed tablets were discovered in the graves, folded into the mouth or put into the clothes of the deceased. This custom was not widespread at all, only 20 of these pieces have been discovered.<sup>35</sup> The one thing that is certain is that the *Golden Tablets* served some religious purpose. A heated debate has been going on among scholars to explain the origin of this custom. It has been explained as an Orphic ritual, but other theories are proposed as well. The *Tablets* could for example also have been part of a Pythagorean tradition or orientated more on Bacchic rituals. The first scholar who connected the Golden Tablets and Mystery cults was Comparetti in 1879.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> E.S. Gruen, "Jews and Greeks as philosophers: a challenge to Otherness" in: eds. D.C. Harlow et.al., *The "Other" in Second Temple Judaism: Essays in honor of John J. Collins* (Grand Rapids 2011) 402-422, 416, 417.

<sup>34</sup> R.H. Barrow, *Plutarch and his times* (London and Toronto 1967)xiii, xiv.

<sup>35</sup> R.G. Edmonds, *Myths of the Underworld Journey: Plato, Aristophanes, and the 'Orphic' Gold tablets* (Cambridge and New York 2004) 29.

<sup>36</sup> F.Graf and S.I. Johnston, *Ritual texts for the Afterlife* (New York 2007) 54.

I grouped the *Sibylline Oracles* together with Greek sources, but some of these texts are also Jewish and some are definitely Christian. I concentrate on the first two books, because these may provide a link between the Greek and Jewish tradition, which is interesting with regard to the main question of this paper. The gentile and Jewish traits are intertwined so much that they are impossible to unravel. This collection of texts has not only been edited by different people, but it has also been altered through time. In the *Sibylline Oracles*, the first book pays attention to the different races of men. The first is a noble race, beginning with Adam. After that, it goes downhill. Giants appear, and another race that God himself creates, but that also turns out to be evil. During the fifth race, God decides he wants to destroy humankind, because mankind is evil. Only Noah is righteous, so he can become the father of the sixth race, from which all new humans will descend. After the flood, the perspective of the text changes to one of Noah's daughters-in-law. She speaks as an oracle about Jesus coming out of this race and about the things he will do (book I, 324-400).<sup>37</sup>

### ***Hypothesis***

The framework and theory behind this thesis all revolves around the main question: *How can Jewish and Greek texts containing eschatological elements between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D. be compared?* When comparing several components, it is always useful to define and restrict your subject. I still try to cover a large area by choosing eschatology. There were plenty of other subjects that I could have chosen, but I concentrated on eschatology and apocalyptic tendencies, because it is very interesting and relevant to find out as much as possible about the thoughts and rituals of human beings in former days. The Qumran texts and the other sources I selected are among the relatively few written sources we have left of this period. In order to find out the thoughts of peoples in ancient Palestine about the end of the world and death in general, it is important to compare these texts and read between the lines. Within eschatology, I distilled three subjects. The theory will not be very strict, but in the end, I will provide a checklist to score the sources against each other.

There are numerous books on the behaviour of apocalyptic groups, but I try to limit myself mostly to ancient sources and only occasionally use information on modern Doomsday groups. However, I do use theories about the social interaction of groups, as far as these are useful for and applicable to ancient times.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Charlesworth, *The Old Testament pseudepigrapha*, 343,344.

<sup>38</sup> G.F. Martinez and M. Popovic, eds., *Defining identities: we, you, and the other in the Dead Sea Scrolls : proceedings of the fifth meeting of the IOQS in Groningen* (Leiden 2008) 112.

It may turn out that not all sources are comparable at the same level and that it will be impossible to get all on the same line, when I compare them while studying the same subjects. Several sources can be explained as apocalypses, but there is also the broader sense of eschatology. Every source I used was eschatological, but not every source was also apocalyptic.

In the end, it may be possible perhaps to see the difference in kinds of texts, other than their different cultural backgrounds. And not only that; the conclusions that can be drawn from this small comparison, may say something about the larger issues at stake in Greek and Jewish Second Temple period society. My hypothesis will be that it is indeed possible to compare the nine sources from different backgrounds and that mutual influences can be discerned. How and in which areas these tendencies occur, remains to be seen when the actual comparing takes place.

### ***History of the texts***

The texts originate in time roughly between the second century B.C. and the second century A.D., although some parts of *1Enoch* and some of the *Golden Tablets* have to be placed in the third century B.C. Parts of the *Sibylline Oracles* are of a much later date, but I will leave these books out of consideration. Dating the different sources more specifically is often the topic of heated debate, since these texts have a long history of editing. Because of existing similarities, it is clear the one is dependent upon the other, but the sequence of texts remains the difficult point.

A passage from *L.A.B.* (III,10) about resurrection for example, can be compared to *1Enoch* (LI, 1-3).<sup>39</sup> The historical order of the various texts is important to note, because of similarities that may have been copied. These copies can be on the level of text, the structure or thematic contents. It is visible in *Hodayot*, that themes from *Daniel*, for example in the story of the lions den, are copied and processed into a thanksgiving hymn (Psalm 9, column 5: 10,13)<sup>40</sup> The underlying question I try to answer is why a special interest in eschatological literature occurred in exactly this period of time. I consciously decided to extend the period of research until after the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., because this event had a profound influence on the Jewish religious mind.

Hanson states that there is a significant continuity between the biblical prophetic tradition and apocalyptic literature. In opposition to the prevailing opinion at that time, he did

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<sup>39</sup> M.A. Knibb, *Essays on the Book of Enoch and other early Jewish texts and traditions* (Leiden and Boston 2009) 148.

<sup>40</sup> Holm-Nielsen, *Hodayot*, 91.



not believe in the sudden emergence of a Jewish apocalyptic tradition in the third and second century B.C. He traces apocalyptic thinking back through prophetic tradition to archaic ages.<sup>41</sup> However, some important characteristics that are present in apocalypses do not explicitly occur in earlier prophetic texts. One of those points is the idea of resurrection and life after death as occurs in *Daniel* and *1 Enoch*. In *Isaiah* and *Ezekiel* there are eschatological chapters about the conquering of death, but these are normally taken to be metaphorical for the restoration of Israel.<sup>42</sup> This makes the explanation of passages of for example *1 Enoch* and *Hodayot* more complicated, since the possibility exists that these should be taken metaphorically too.

### ***Historical background***

The Second Temple period started when, after the return from the Babylonian exile, a second temple was erected at Jerusalem in 516 B.C. Within this period, other timelines can be discerned. I will focus on one of these. What we now call the Hellenistic era began after Alexander the Great conquered a vast empire in 336 B.C. that was divided after his death into four parts. Two of those parts are important for our purposes here, that of the Seleucids and that of the Ptolemies. When indigenous people and the conquering troops that stayed began to merge, a whole new system and society arose. Hellenization means the mixing of ideas, of cultures, of peoples and much more. I do not take it here as the artificial enforcement of Greek heritage on a foreign country, but the mutual influence of powers that created new ideas.<sup>43</sup>

Taking a leap in history we arrive at the end of the Hasmonean dynasty. At first, opposition against Rome was not that obvious as it seems from Jewish sources after 70 A.D. and literature from Qumran. The author of *1 Maccabees* for example is highly positive about the skills of the expanding Roman Empire. Judaea, however, had not been under Roman rule at this point.<sup>44</sup>

In 63 B.C., the Hasmonean dynasties were divided among themselves and on invitation of one of the parties, the Roman Pompey conquered Jerusalem. One branch of the Hasmonean dynasty was allowed to rule for another few years, but from 40 B.C., Herod the Great tried to gain power and in 37 B.C. became king of the Jews. He reigned until 4 B.C. His sons after him did not rule for a long time, and in 6 A.D. the area of Judaea was incorporated, together with the areas of Samaria and Idumaea, into the larger province Iudaea under the rule

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<sup>41</sup> P.D. Hanson *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia 1975) 6.

<sup>42</sup> Collins, *The apocalyptic imagination*, 24, 25.

<sup>43</sup> Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 3.

<sup>44</sup> Flusser, *Judaism of the Second Temple period*, 177, 180.

of Roman prefects. The most traumatic event for the Jewish community was without doubt the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 A.D. After this destruction, a new orientation in Jewish religion occurred, because orientation on the temple was no longer possible. In some of the texts, this change of orientation is visible.

### ***Subjects of following chapters***

I have chosen three subjects to narrow down my research on eschatology. These three subjects are the main elements of eschatology as became clear from the definition of eschatology. Since I compare all of the texts from an eschatological perspective, and to keep this comparative study manageable, I will concentrate on these three subjects. Within these subjects I will look at elements that contribute to a better understanding.

Because death is the inevitable end of every (human) life, I chose this topic of death and afterlife to be the first chapter. All peoples have ideas about death and what comes after it, whether emphasizing or suppressing death with rituals. Dying can be seen as the ultimate end or as a transition into another world or another life. The eschatological consequences of treatment of death in society are of great importance. When a group of people indeed believes that something will happen after death, it is important to note the influence this afterlife has on the behaviour of people still living on earth. Therefore, I also chose to include a chapter on judgement, to reveal perhaps fear or a change in moral behaviour. And not only the judgement directly after death, the judgement at the end of times plays a part as well. Judgement is always executed by God or the gods, but there are many other eschatological settings in which God or the gods can be seen and experienced by humans. The third chapter will be about revelations and visions and about how and why visionaries see the eschatological other world. The divine knowledge that authors of texts claim to share with their audience serves can link the subjects of afterlife and judgement together.

## Chapter 2: Afterlife and resurrection

In this chapter I will focus on the role of afterlife in the eschatological traditions of the nine sources that I selected. Afterlife is a very broad and complex subject, so I will be able merely to pinpoint some tendencies, remarkable characteristics and developing opinions. The many opinions of scholars on how to explain the various texts may help to see the diversity in the texts and to compare these on basis of general characteristics. Due to the broad nature of my main research question: *How can Jewish and Greeks texts containing eschatological elements between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D. be compared?* it is necessary to focus on just one aspect of eschatology. In this chapter the subject will be everything that has to do with afterlife, and especially with resurrection. The question of this chapter will therefore be: *What role does afterlife and especially resurrection play in the nine selected sources?*

The method I use to compare the sources is to focus on passages concerning the same topic, in this case thoughts on afterlife. In this respect, passages can be recognized by the use of certain words.

### *Jewish sources*

The most fundamental ideas about life and death in the Jewish and Greek traditions were profoundly different. Instead of a Greek repeating cycle of life, Jewish tradition proposed the linear direction of historical events, which are intended by God.<sup>45</sup> To be able to see meaning in all of these events, God provided Israel with a law for daily use. The strict keeping of the law, the *halakkah*, was a key feature in Jewish religion. In earlier Judaism, keeping it had been the precondition to receive blessings in the earthly life, but after the second century B.C., living in accordance to the law would be rewarded in the afterlife. Purity was a subject that played a large role within this law, therefore the behaviour of especially priests was closely registered. Unsurprisingly, not everyone felt that priests executed their duties well under changing regimes and because of this friction, new thoughts in theology occurred.

### L.A.B.

The *Biblical Antiquities* (L.A.B.) is a pseudepigraphical work ascribed to Philo. L.A.B. consists of 65 books that treat biblical history from Adam until Saul. The text dates from the first century A.D. and was translated from Hebrew to Greek and later to Latin. L.A.B. was

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<sup>45</sup> E. Segal, *Introducing Judaism* (London 2009) 164.

largely overlooked by Christian church fathers and for that reason kept the Jewish first century mindset.<sup>46</sup> In it, several references are made to the fate of the righteous and wicked after death. After the divine promise to Noah, a passage that appears in *Genesis* 9: 8-17, God predicts to Noah the end of times, saying: “But when the years of the world shall be fulfilled, then shall the light cease and the darkness be quenched: and I will quicken the dead and raise up from the earth them that sleep: and Hell (*Sheol*) shall pay his debt and destruction give back that which was committed unto him..” (L.A.B. III, 10).<sup>47</sup> He also predicts another earth and another heaven.<sup>48</sup> The ancient Jewish idea of reuniting a dead person with his ancestors is visible in the passage on the death of Moses. God tells him he will sleep with his fathers. This sleep will take until God visits the world and then Moses and his fathers will be raised and live an immortal life.<sup>49</sup>

One remarkable passage mentions that after death, souls will recognize each other.<sup>50</sup> The writer of *L.A.B.* puts this in this citation in the mouth of Jonathan, when he is parting with his friend David. He says: “And even if death parts us, yet I know that our souls will know one another.” (*L.A.B.* LXII, 11).<sup>51</sup> In the biblical context of *ISamuel* 20: 41,42, where this story originates, there is no sign of life after death. Here Jonathan only speaks of the Lord who will be present between his descendants and David’s descendants.

### Zephaniah

The *Apocalypse of Zephaniah* (Sophonias in Greek) has several important elements that match the *Semeia 14*-definition of an ‘apocalypse’, and therefore has in structure some resemblances to *IEnoch*, two myths by Plutarch and several passages from the *Sibylline Oracles*. *Zephaniah’s Apocalypse* strongly reminds one of *Revelation* and places emphasis on otherworldly journeys. The guiding angel, however, can not show Zephaniah the end of times itself, for the wrath of God will be too terrible (XII, 5-8).<sup>52</sup> The heavenly messenger takes ‘Zephaniah’ up to heaven and shows him what heaven looks like and where all different souls go to. The souls have to wait in an abyss after they have died, before the final judgement will take place. They have been there from the Great Flood of Noah, and will be gathered there until the end of time, when God will judge them.<sup>53</sup> Remarkable is the question Zephaniah asks

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<sup>46</sup> James, *The biblical antiquities*, IX, XI.

<sup>47</sup> G. Kish, *Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* (Notre Dame, IN 1949) 117.

<sup>48</sup> James, *The biblical antiquities*, 81, 82.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibidem*, 130.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibidem*, 36.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem*, 237.

<sup>52</sup> P. Riessler, *Altjüdisches Schriftum ausserhalb der Bibel* (Darmstadt 1966) 177.

<sup>53</sup> Riessler, *Altjüdisches Schriftum*, 172.

the guiding angel regarding resurrection. He asks whether or not revived persons will have hair and a body. The angel answers: “yes, God will give them the hair and body he likes (X, 13,14).”<sup>54</sup>

## Revelation

Regarding the *Revelation of John*, I will not go into detail about the content of the visions. In this chapter, I will extract references to resurrection. Chapter 20 of *Revelation* is particularly preoccupied with resurrection. It is very specific and speaks about the eschatological dragon being tied in the Underworld for a thousand years. In these thousand years, the servants of God that have suffered during their life are rewarded in these thousand years: they rule together with the lamb, who is Jesus. This is the first resurrection of the righteous. After their thousand-year reign, the dragon is unleashed for a short period of time. He will try to seduce people and gain a large crowd of followers. But in the end he will lose and all people will be judged. This is the second revival. The division between a first and a second revival is remarkable. The first one is exclusively a reward for righteous people who suffered persecution during their lifetime, while the second resurrection takes the face of a final judgement. These two revivals are due to a combination of the old Jewish idea of a king from the house of David ruling as the Messiah and a later idea of a divine messenger, who would judge humanity. To combine these two thoughts, the Messiah-king has to rule over the world just before the end of times.<sup>55</sup>

In at least some of the characteristics, the *Revelation of John* is more Jewish than Christian. This goes for example for the thousand year reign, a concept that does not occur in the Christian New Testament, but it is present in *1 Enoch* XCIII, 12 and even in the *Sibylline Oracles* III, 652.<sup>56</sup>

The description of afterlife in *Revelation* is continued in chapter 21, in which John sees the new heaven and earth, that are to be enjoyed by the righteous who have been saved in judgement. The motive of ‘water of life’ is visible in *Revelation* 21:6 and 22:1,17.

## 1 Enoch

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<sup>54</sup> Ibidem, 176.

<sup>55</sup> E. Lohse, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes in: das Neue Testament Deutsch* (Göttingen 1979) 104.

<sup>56</sup> Ibidem, 104.

The discovery of multiple versions of *1Enoch* at Qumran may indicate that this text enjoyed an important place within the community tradition at Qumran.<sup>57</sup> The Enochian texts at Qumran however, were preserved in a very fragmentary way, so it is impossible to extract much from these pieces without consulting the later Ethiopic edition. In this chapter, the *Book of the Watchers* will take a central place. The Enochian *Book of the Watchers* (book 1-36) starts with a story with reference to *Genesis* 6: 1-7. There myth describes how holy sons of God (the Watchers) took earthly women as their wives. The sons that were born from this cursed union were wicked giants with such a hunger that all man-made food was not enough to keep them satisfied. They started eating humans, animals and each other (book I, 7). When they died, their spirits haunted the earth as demons. God was highly disappointed in his creation and regretted he ever made it.<sup>58</sup>

The main element in the *Book of Watchers* is the idea of Enoch being sent to the Watchers by God as a messenger to tell them they will have no peace after what they have done. The Watchers send Enoch back to plead for them, but God refuses to have mercy on the Watchers, who have committed the terrible crime of violating Gods order of creation (book I, 14).<sup>59</sup> While residing in otherworldly spheres, heavenly secrets and hidden places are revealed to Enoch by guiding angels. It is in this light that we have to place the following passage.

In *1Enoch* XXII, Enoch encounters a mountain with different hollow places in it, and the angel Raphael tells him these places are the dwellings of the spirits of the dead waiting to be raised. According to *1Enoch* XXII, there are several categories of dead. There are the wicked people, who have had a miserable life, the wicked who experienced a good life, the righteous that lead a pleasant life and the righteous who did not have peace during their lifetime. The different caves in the mountain are adjusted to the group of spirits that is gathered there, so the righteous will have a fountain with bright water. The other caves are dark.<sup>60</sup> This passage appears to be the oldest text in Jewish literature to distinguish between the fate of righteous and wicked in afterlife.<sup>61</sup>

It is clear that the sinners who had a good life will be raised to receive compensation in the form of punishment in afterlife. However, in this part, the text here is not entirely clear on the matter of the wicked who had a miserable life and resurrection of righteous.<sup>62</sup> Even if this

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<sup>57</sup> Nickelsburg, *1Enoch*, 11.

<sup>58</sup> Ibidem, 183.

<sup>59</sup> Ibidem, 269.

<sup>60</sup> Ibidem, 302.

<sup>61</sup> S.I. Johnston, *Religions of the ancient world: a guide* (Cambridge et. al. 2004) 481.

<sup>62</sup> G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, immortality and eternal life in intertestamental Judaism and early Christianity* (Cambridge U.S. 2006) 170.

resurrection of the righteous is the case, they will revive as spirits, and not in bodily form, since the mountain with the holes is a gathering place for spirits. Also in *1 Enoch* (CII-CIV) resurrection is described, but only of the spirit.

## Daniel

Part of the *Book of Daniel* is written in Palestine in the time of Jewish resistance against Antiochus IV Epiphanes in 165 B.C. His measures against the continuation of Jewish tradition caused much hatred and contributed to a division within Jewish society. There were large differences within Judaism at that time. The Hasidic Jews tried to keep to the Torah in the time of persecution under Antiochus, while Hellenized Jews fitted in more neatly with Hellenizing culture.<sup>63</sup>

The book may be interpreted to some extent as a reaction to the incompatibility of the divine promises of bliss in the life of the sincere and strict keeper of the (Jewish) law and the daily reality in this turbulent time. The severe persecutions of strict Jews by Antiochus posed a problem in that respect. How could it be explained that living a respectful life without any concessions to the Greek lifestyle was not rewarded by God during lifetime, while some Jews who incorporated this new Greek element, had a pleasant life without persecutions? It was to this theological problem that the *Book of Daniel* posed an answer. Daniel states that justice will be achieved eventually, but this balance can be postponed until after death. The righteous will be rewarded by God in the afterlife (*Daniel* 12).

In Jewish society at that time, discussion arose whether or not resurrection of the body existed. In *Daniel*, bodily resurrection is meant. This does not mean that the opinions expressed in *Daniel* are mainstream Jewish thought in this period. In this time of persecution, other Jewish texts from the same period do not subscribe to bodily, but to spiritual resurrection, since the body reminds people of the earthly sufferings they experienced.<sup>64</sup>

In *Daniel* 12:2, resurrection is mentioned much more clearly than in other biblical Old Testament books. It reads: “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.” (*Daniel* 12:2) In this fragment, dust and renewal are not interpreted metaphorically, but literally. In other parts of the Old Testament, for example *Ezekiel* 37 and also in *Isaiah*, everything that has to do with dust and bones, is taken metaphorically for the renewal of the house of Israel.<sup>65</sup> Because of the difference in theology about afterlife, Eshel even proposes that the writer of *Daniel* could

<sup>63</sup> Segal, *Introducing Judaism*, 21.

<sup>64</sup> Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, 57.

<sup>65</sup> Hogeterp, *Expectations of the End*, 327.

have had inspiration from the Qumran community, since this part of *Daniel* was written at 165 B.C. and was highly popular at Qumran.<sup>66</sup> However, usually the community is thought to have been influenced by the book, not the other way around.

### Comparing Daniel and 1 Enoch

Although *Daniel* and *1 Enoch* both emphasize life after death in the form of a divine judgement, a difference between *1 Enoch* and *Daniel* is that in *Daniel* the righteous are being persecuted standing up for their faith, while in *1 Enoch* the righteous are rewarded for living a good life, but they do not necessarily have to have died for their piety.<sup>67</sup> The additional motif of martyrdom that is present in *Daniel* has obviously to do with the needs of that particular time. It is striking that in early Jewish theology throughout the biblical period, the notion of life after death is not precisely defined. Most of the time, after death there is said to be a place of shadows and silence called *Sheol*. This is quite similar to the Greek idea of an Underworld, but does not look like the later Jewish theological development. Reuniting with forefathers is mentioned in this early idea of afterlife, but not in a way that implies extensive activities after death.<sup>68</sup> However, in the Hellenistic era, Jewish theology changes radically. Not only in texts like *Daniel*, that were written as an answer to a special theological need, but in much broader context, afterlife became a subject of great interest. Perhaps this was due to contact with other cultures or implementation of ideas from Diaspora brethren. According to some scholars, this radical change was indeed visible. Others were not so convinced a transformation had taken place.

### Hodayot

The *Hodayot* are thought to be the sectarian hymns of the Qumran community. The general theme is to praise God for redeeming the righteous person from his enemies and praising God for his power and mercy. The structure of the *Hodayot* differs from the other sources, because of the aim of the author. These hymns were meant to be sung or recited. There are some eschatological elements visible in these hymns, which are important to highlight in connection to afterlife. Apparently, no mention of resurrection has been found in the *Hodayot*.<sup>69</sup>

The author of the *Hodayot* is identified by some scholars as the Teacher of Righteousness, a prominent figure that played a large part in the evolving community, as is

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<sup>66</sup> Eshel, H. *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Hasmonean state* (Grand Rapids 2008), 18.

<sup>67</sup> Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, 143.

<sup>68</sup> Johnston, *Religions*, 480.

<sup>69</sup> Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, 179.



indicated by sectarian texts such as the *Community Rule* and the *Damascus Document*.<sup>70</sup> According to Nickelsburg, the author of the *Hodayot* mentions his entrance into the community (of Qumran) as an eschatological event. From the outside world, which is not close to God at all, he entered into a new life within the community, in the congregation with angels and receiving knowledge of divine mysteries. This idea of transition to a new life, not after death, but still on earth, is different from the contemporary Jewish idea of afterlife judgement. It seems that resurrection is not mentioned in the *Hodayot*, most likely for the reason that the author is writing about events in his own life and there is no need to take a broader stand in the discussion about persecution and afterlife, because for him death is not the transition, the entrance into the community is.<sup>71</sup>

There is, however, discussion on the subject of resurrection in the *Hodayot*. It may be possible to interpret some passages differently, for example the ‘for those who lie in the dust’ as supporting a stand in favour of resurrection.<sup>72</sup> Most of the time, however, the *Hodayot* are read as transition having taken place and the community living in angelic communion already. Biblical references are very present in the *Hodayot*. Although it differs from one hymn to another, some hymns are mosaics of biblical texts, for example psalm 3.<sup>73</sup>

### *Greek sources*

#### Mystery cults

In mystery cults, much remains secret to people who are not initiated. But there are some elements that can be said to be important. One of those elements, like in the *Hodayot*, is transition. The transition can be from light until dark, from regular person to initiate, from life to death and vice versa. Of special importance is the point where the change happens: the entrance or exit. In ancient Greek society, myths about descending into the Underworld were very present. The mystery cult of Eleusis for example, evolved around the myth of Persephone going into and returning from Hades. Initiates would experience a transition and close connection to Persephone themselves. Several holes in a rock seem to form the entrance into Hades.

The Orphic mysteries are another example. These mysteries were never mainstream Greek religion, but at the margin of the Greek society, and this tradition remained present for

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<sup>70</sup> A. Schofield *From Qumran to the Yahad: A new paradigm of textual development for the Community Rule* (Leiden 2009) 142.

<sup>71</sup> Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, 193.

<sup>72</sup> Hogeterp, *Expectations of the End*, 289.

<sup>73</sup> Holm-Nielsen, *Hodayot*, 45.

many centuries. Like in the Eleusinian mysteries, the goddess of the Underworld, Persephone played an important part. But the figures of Orpheus and Dionysus were the main characters in this Mystery. The core belief of descending into Hades makes the Orphic tradition especially important for this chapter.

Unfortunately, it cannot be said in how far the mysteries were still an emotionally reality or more of a literary tradition. What is clear, however, is that some *Golden Tablets* have been discovered, that are ascribed by some scholars to be part of the Orphic tradition. These tiny *Tablets* were found in the vicinity of deceased people and certainly had an important function. The *Tablets* seem to have served as a guide in the confusing surroundings of Hades. When the deceased arrives, according to the *tablet*, he always sees the same: the house of Hades, two fountains and a white cypress next to one of the fountains. Bernabé is an advocate of the Golden Tablets as Orphic artefacts.<sup>74</sup> He proposes that the *Tablets* show a belief in resurrection in the form of reincarnation, but this reincarnation is something the deceased does not want to achieve. The souls in Hades have a choice to either drink from the fountain of Forgetfulness that brings them a new (mortal) life, or drink from the other fountain of Mnemosyne that is guarded. This one is the fountain of memory and it breaks through the cycle of reincarnation. This last fountain was the aim of initiates, drinking from the fountain was the reason for the guiding Orphic tablets.<sup>75</sup> So the initiates into the mystery cults seek to reach spiritual immortality, rather than bodily resurrection.

The Golden Tablets, Enoch and Daniel

The 'water of life' can also be found in *1Enoch* book I, 17. In *1Enoch* book I, 24-25, the 'tree of life', is mentioned when the guiding angel shows Enoch a beautiful tree that cannot be touched until after the final judgement. Only then will God give permission to the righteous to eat from it.<sup>76</sup> The motive of the fruitful garden and tree of life is in the *Hodayot* (for example in psalm 14) used as an example to express the blessings the righteous experiences when he keeps to Gods covenant.<sup>77</sup>

The symbolism of stars as destination or origin is a feature present in the Orphic Mysteries and the *Golden Tablets* that I study here. The initiate has to remember a secret formula, which has to be said to the guardians, before one is able to enter into eternal life. In this formula, reference is made to the divine human origin, origin of the stars. In the case of

<sup>74</sup> A. Bernabé and A.I. Jiménez San Cristóbal, *Instructions for the Netherworld: the Orphic Gold Tablets* (Leiden and Boston 2008) 2.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibidem*, 20.

<sup>76</sup> Nickelsburg, *1Enoch*, 279.

<sup>77</sup> Holm-Nielsen, *Hodayot*, 165.

Orphic mysteries, the human origin is normally linked to the myth of Dionysus and the Titans, who ate him and then he came back. Compare this motive of immortal humans of origin of the stars to *Daniel* 12:3, where the enlightened people will eventually shine like stars in astral immortality, after Gods final judgement.<sup>78</sup> Righteous people are also called luminaries in 1 Enoch, as they will shine like stars (book I, 23:4).<sup>79</sup>

## Plutarch

A first century author who has been thinking about immortality and divine judgement is Plutarch. Regarding thoughts on immortality, he is first and foremost associated with the letter of consolation he wrote to his wife, when their daughter died. However, much more can be extracted from his work about his opinion on afterlife.

In Plutarch's *De sera numinis vindicta* the main character of the myth that is told, Thespesius, experiences a heavenly journey in which he sees many interesting features about life after death. He meets souls that are rewarded or punished for their lives on earth, a motive that is common in Jewish eschatological literature of the first century A.D. We will elaborate on this motive in the next chapter. Thespesius meets many strange souls, creatures and colours and goes through different emotional states as he is guided along. Also he sees souls that are liquefied by pleasures and after that want to reincarnate, because they are so attached to having a body. (566, 27) These souls are not necessarily wicked, but they are weak. Lastly, he encounters an oracle that is the source of all dreams (566, 28).<sup>80</sup> In this book, the motive of divine punishment of the wicked after death is the core idea. It is not a question if a criminal will be judged, but when. In his 'delay of divine vengeance', Plutarch explains why it may take such a long time for this punishment to arrive. Together with some other men, he discusses this subject. Plutarch offers several reasons why this delay would be the case, including the ethical remark that the delay buys the criminal time to turn away from his evil deeds.<sup>81</sup> Death and afterlife have everything to do with this, as does the relation between ancestors and descendants. The discussion about divine vengeance is treated from a philosophical point of view. The structure of the book is somewhat complicated, with myths within stories, to serve as an example for a philosophical argument.

*De facie quae in orbe lunae apparet* is another text by Plutarch mentioning the whereabouts of souls after death. In this text, he discusses the possibility of inhibition of the

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<sup>78</sup> Johnston, *Religions*, 482.

<sup>79</sup> Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, 152.

<sup>80</sup> Collins, *Morphology*, 164.

<sup>81</sup> Plutarch *Moralia* in: Loeb, classical library edition 1957, VII, 175.

moon, comparing the earthly conditions to the geographical conditions the moon might possess. The entire text consists of arguments in favour and against inhibition. The final outcome of the discussion seems to be positive: Plutarch confirms that the moon is inhibited by souls that do not have a body after death, and by souls that have not yet reincarnated into a new earthly body, although his explanation may contain some strange elements for the modern reader (945).<sup>82</sup>

In Plutarch's *De genio Socratis* chapters 21-22, the main character Timarchus wants to learn the sign of master Socrates and then gets a vision. In a heavenly journey he meets a *daimon*. The *daimon* is explained to him as part of human soul that is linked to the stars.<sup>83</sup> Interestingly enough, the bottom line of this myth is that all souls have intellect, but that some of the souls are so attached to their bodies, and so sunken into it, that they become irrational.<sup>84</sup> Plutarch wrote first and foremost about events from the past and lessons that could be extracted from ages long gone. The *Parallel Lives* he wrote were even more orientated on the past.<sup>85</sup>

A slightly older contemporary of Plutarch was the Jewish writer Josephus. His historical writings provide a bridge between the Roman and Jewish thinking. It is interesting to see how he adjusts the various Jewish beliefs in afterlife to the Hellenistic mindset of his audience, by stating all beliefs as immortality of the soul (*Jewish War II*, 154-155).<sup>86</sup> This was an idea more appealing to Greek people than bodily resurrection, because physical immortality was generally not accepted among Greek authors.<sup>87</sup> The vision of an immortal soul engaged in an earthly body enjoyed a long tradition in Greek religion and philosophy, and it was therefore not surprising that the worst thing that could happen to for example initiates in one of the mystery cults was to be sent back from Hades to an earthly body. However, the Greek belief in immortality of the soul cannot be immediately juxtaposed to belief in bodily resurrection, professed by some Jewish groups. That is too schematic.<sup>88</sup> As we have seen, belief in resurrection had never been one of the main theological foundations from the beginning. Only in the Hellenistic era, resurrection in various forms became part of Jewish theology.

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<sup>82</sup> Plutarch *Moralia* in: Loeb, classical library edition 1957, XII, 18.

<sup>83</sup> Collins, *Morphology*, 164.

<sup>84</sup> Plutarch *Moralia*, VII, 369.

<sup>85</sup> R.H. Barrow, *Plutarch and his times* (London 1967) 146.

<sup>86</sup> Josephus, *Jewish War II* in: Loeb, classical library edition 1927, 381-382.

<sup>87</sup> Hogeterp, *Expectations of the End*, 251; Charlesworth, *pseudepigrapha*, 396.

<sup>88</sup> Hogeterp, *Expectations of the End*, 250.

## The Sibylline Oracles

A collection of texts, compiled throughout various centuries, is the *Sibylline Oracles*. Although most of the books are written in centuries far beyond the scope of this research, passages from the first four books can in some cases be taken into account. These texts are a union of Jewish religion and Greek philosophy and are written in the form of metrical hymns. Greek theological geographical locations such as the Elysian plains and the Acherusian Lake (Book II, 337,338) are seamlessly inserted into stories with biblical references, not to mention all of the Greek gods, goddesses and mythical personifications. *Sibylline Oracles* can be found throughout antiquity as warnings for events to come.

In the *Sibylline Oracles*, book IV, the writer mentions the end of the world as an enormous fire, lit by God, because of his anger over the wickedness of the world (Book IV, 76-78). However, he will create a new world from the ashes. An explicit reference is made to the beginning of the world, as the text states that “God will again fashion the bones and ashes of human beings” (Book IV, 79-82).<sup>89</sup>

In book II of the *Sibylline Oracles*, bodily resurrection is mentioned in a context of divine judgement. First, the destruction of the earth is described as the blending of all elements in a stream of fire. And then, after the description of God’s greatness, the content of the human body and the resurrection of the body of the pious is mentioned: “Then the heavenly one will give souls and breath and voice to the dead and bones fastened with all kinds of joinings...flesh and sinews and veins and skin about the flesh, and the former hairs. Bodies of humans, made solid in heavenly manner, breathing and set in motion, will be raised on a single day (Book II, 221-226).”<sup>90</sup> However, it must be taken into account that some elements of these Oracles have been Christianized later on, so it may not be possible in how far this text was of a Hellenized Jewish kind. On the other hand, the *Biblical Antiquities* was certainly not Christianized, and expresses the same belief in resurrection.

## Conclusion

Afterlife is a theme that can be discerned in all of the texts, except in the *Hodayot*, where eternal life is mentioned as a present reality of the writer. The exact discussion about afterlife differs from text to text, depending largely on the intentions of the writer or the (religious) function of the text. Greek, Jewish and sectarian texts all contain a division between the wicked and the righteous, who will be separated in judgement. In the *Golden Tablets*,

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<sup>89</sup> Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, 175.

<sup>90</sup> Charlesworth, *pseudepigrapha*, 350.

judgement depends on the memory of the initiate, in all other texts, judgement is externally executed by God. Although the structures of the sources differ profoundly, ranging from (metrical) hymns to apocalyptic compilations and philosophical discussions, it is possible to discern a common tendency. The more specific theme of bodily or spiritual resurrection is complicated in so far as it is a matter of interpretation. According to most scholars, *Daniel* is the first text in which bodily resurrection is visible. The later books of the *Sibylline Oracles*, *L.A.B.*, *Revelation* and the *Apocalypse of Zephaniah* all subscribe physical immortality too. Spiritual resurrection is visible only in *1 Enoch*, and reincarnation can be discerned in Plutarch's works and the *Golden Tablets*. In the end, the differences in cultural background can be seen quite clearly. When the *Sibylline Oracles* are regrouped into the more Jewish (or Hellenized Jewish) category, the division between the philosophical Greek immortality and the Jewish resurrection to a new heaven and earth is striking. The texts from Qumran are slightly more radical in the manner and time of the new eternal life, but fit nevertheless into the Jewish picture.

### Chapter 3: Judgement

The previous chapter about afterlife is in need of further specification in order to narrow down the argument to judgement and the division between righteous and wicked. It is this division I would like to focus on in this chapter, particularly on how judgement is executed according to the texts. The main question of this chapter will be: ‘*what is the role of final judgement in the selected sources?*’ Several elements that I will treat in this respect are: the influence of the historical setting of the source, the presence or absence of powers of evil, the use of books or codes and the specific tasks of beings beside God in the execution of judgement.

Throughout history, attempts have been made to see a certain order in the cosmos and course of the world history. In this respect, it is not too surprising to see many texts explaining and announcing succeeding empires. The number of empires, however, may differ. In *Daniel*, four empires are accounted for, while in the *Sibylline Oracles* 1 and 2 there are 10 periods that can be discerned.<sup>91</sup> The point here is the stream of thought behind the division into empires. When in a certain culture or text succession of empires is demonstrated, it is most logical to view history in a linear way.

The general idea of a time of distress followed by radical transformation with a future ideal kingdom was the same in Jewish apocalyptic texts and Greek oracles.<sup>92</sup> The political significance of prophecies and oracles had changed over time, so prophets were no longer advisers of the court. Historians always have to deal with texts and distil writer, audience, environment and social interaction from a given source. The description of an era, of certain habits or of larger structures depends on the right interpretation of a text and a useful combination of different texts. The opinion of a writer or composer is therefore of vital importance and should be taken into account. For our present subject, a useful question may be for example: did the author think the society he lived in was evil and therefore had to be punished, or were the people surrounding him just and did they suffer persecution from some external enemy?<sup>93</sup> Punishment does no longer work as an answer to the question why suffering occurs. This had been the traditional answer, but during the exile it no longer sufficed.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> J.L. Lightfoot, *The Sibylline Oracles: with introduction, translation, and commentary on the first and second books* (Oxford 2007) 123.

<sup>92</sup> J.J. Collins, *The Sibylline Oracles of Egyptian Judaism* (Missoula 1974) 18.

<sup>93</sup> P. Sacchi, *Jewish apocalyptic and its history* (Sheffield 1996) 221.

<sup>94</sup> S.G.F. Brandon, *The judgement of the dead: an historical and comparative study of the idea of a post-mortem judgement in the major religions* (London and Edinburgh 1967) 60.

Most of the texts propose an early separation between the righteous and the wicked, namely directly after a person dies. Between death and judgement, several options are possible, depending on cultural tradition. In Jewish tradition, people usually sleep or rest in this between-period, while in Greek texts, souls are disciplined and prepared for the next life. In both traditions from the third century B.C. onward, wicked and righteous people are kept in different places until they are judged at the end of times.<sup>95</sup>

The focus of the various sources concerning the end and the final judgement is fundamentally different. While some write from the perspective of the wicked and thus about the end as the horrible and earthshaking judgement in which all will be annihilated, others emphasize the everlasting reign of peace that will occur when the new heaven and earth have arrived.

At first, there was no division between just and wicked people at all after death in early Jewish theology. Reward for obedience to God was supposed to be received during lifetime. Death was the same for everyone, all people would go to *Sheol*, and there was no way back.<sup>96</sup> It is important to note this equality after death, for only later in Jewish theology, thoughts on retribution and revenge would occur that were to be inflicted after death, at the end of times.

The renewal at the end of times, that is to say the eschatological renewal of the world, is present in many pseudepigraphical and apocryphical Jewish texts. This word for renewal, however, is in mainstream Jewish sources also used in the sense of the liberation from disease or dangerous situations.<sup>97</sup> Liberation from disease appears to have the same meaning as the ‘current ill world’ that has to be liberated from evil. The world has to pass through difficult and painful times before the liberation and renewal is a fact.

The motive of a ‘Day of the Lord’ stems in Jewish tradition mainly from the Old Testament prophetic books and is continued and repeated in the sources I am using here that operate in a prophetic tradition. Outside of the prophetic tradition, the Day of the Lord can be used as an indication of date. In that case it will mostly be used as the closure of an era: ‘until the Day of the Lord’.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch*, 300; Graf and Johnston, *Ritual texts for the afterlife*, 101.

<sup>96</sup> Brandon, *The judgement of the dead*, 58.

<sup>97</sup> H.W. Kuhn, *Enderwartung und gegenwärtiges Heil: Untersuchungen zu den Gemeindeliedern von Qumran mit einem Anhang über Eschatologie und Gegenwart in der Verkündigung Jesu*. Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments 4 (Göttingen 1966) 75.

<sup>98</sup> N.Wendebourg, *Der Tag des Herrn: Zur Gerichtserwartung im Neuen Testament auf ihrem alttestamentlichen und frühjüdischen Hintergrund*. Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 96 (Neukirchen 2003) 127, 128.



## *Jewish sources*

### L.A.B.

In the earlier mentioned promise of God to Noah as described in Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical antiquities*, (*L.A.B. III*) it is remarkable that there is an extension to the regular biblical promise to Noah. The final judgement and the life thereafter are added by 'Philo' to the usual promise of God to not destroy the whole earth again. God will judge between the soul and the flesh and everyone is to be judged 'according to his workings and according to the fruit of their imaginations'. Hell or *Sheol* will be closed indefinitely in the end, when the years of the world shall be fulfilled. After that, a new heaven and earth will be created. At that time, Gods promise of seasons and harvest cycles that continue will not be valid any more.<sup>99</sup>

Before judgement arrives, God has to 'remember the world'. This motive is added by 'Philo': "day and night shall not cease, until I remember them that dwell on the earth, even until the times are fulfilled".<sup>100</sup> In a biblical context, in *Genesis* 8:1, God remembers Noah and the animals, before he ends the flood.

The idea of delay of punishment as described by Plutarch is also visible in the *Biblical Antiquities* of 'Philo' as well as in multiple books of the Old Testament. In *L.A.B. XXVI*, some men stand before Kenaz, the leader of Israel for a crime they committed. However, they are not condemned for their current crime, but for some earlier sin. In this case, the delay of punishment does not come from a divine source, but is used to set an example and reinforce the power of the leader Kenaz.<sup>101</sup>

In a speech (*L.A.B. XXIV*) Joshua, leader of Israel, tells the people what will happen at the end. Through Joshua, God announces that every one of the Israelites will receive eternal life, "And I will receive your souls and lay them up in peace, until the time of the age is fulfilled, and I restore you unto your fathers and your fathers unto you."<sup>102</sup>

### Zephaniah

The division between the fate of the wicked and the righteous is clear in *Zephaniah's Apocalypse*. First, the angel of God shows him a place of darkness, where souls are being punished (book IV). After that, he is shown a place without darkness, where the righteous dwell (book V). To become named 'righteous' the names of people have to be written in the

<sup>99</sup> James, *The biblical antiquities*, 81, 82. Compare this to *Genesis* 8: 21-9: 17: only *L.A.B.* contains references to judgement and afterlife.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibidem*, 81.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibidem*, 163.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibidem*, 144.

book of the living. Not only is there a book of the living, Zephaniah also encounters a scroll containing his sins. He becomes frightened, but does not need to fear, because his deeds show that he is a just man (book IX, 3).<sup>103</sup>

Zephaniah travels through the Underworld, where he encounters a terrible angel of the Underworld. Because the structure of the text follows Zephaniah on his otherworldly journey, it is not entirely clear. The geographical locations differ, but the reader does not have to know the exact whereabouts of Zephaniah to be able to comprehend the core of this source. Judgement is executed, and it appears that this happens both after the person has died and at the end of days. The final judgement of God over the earth, however, cannot be revealed to Zephaniah (book XII).<sup>104</sup>

## Revelation

Angels play an important role concerning judgement in some of our sources. In *Revelations* this role is crucial, because these beings are described as God's servants and thousands of them inhabit the heavenly realm, as is the case in *1 Enoch* and *Zephaniah*. Angels are important to some extent in *Daniel*, *Hodayot* and the *Sibylline Oracles*. The influence and importance depends on the kind of text we are dealing with. *Revelation*, *1 Enoch* and *Zephaniah* are all revelatory texts, in which the writer pictures himself as being guided through heaven by a guiding angel. The other texts are more diverse. The text of *Daniel* is a combination of a historical and revelatory apocalypse while the *Sibylline Oracles* are composed in such a way that bits and pieces come from all kinds of traditions. The angels figuring in revelatory texts are always connected to God (and his throne). They are pictured as the servants of God, obeying his will and following his orders. It is therefore the more remarkable that, depending on the text, angels may be the source of all evil, such as Satan, who is an angel too. However, not only angels execute Gods direct orders, in both *1 Enoch*, *Revelation* and *Daniel*, someone appointed by God receives power to judge all humanity. This Chosen One is in *Revelation* obviously identified as Christ, but the ancient tradition of the search for a Messiah must not be forgotten.<sup>105</sup>

There is a transition in thinking about the 'Book of life', used during the judgement. Originally in *Exodus* 32: 32-33 it had contained the names of 'Gods living subjects'. If a name

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<sup>103</sup> Riessler, *Altjüdisches Schrifttum*, 173.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibidem*, 177.

<sup>105</sup> J. Flemming and L. Radermacher *Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte: Das Buch Henoch* (Leipzig 1901) 72; H. Reventlow *Eschatology in the Bible and in the Jewish and Christian tradition* (Sheffield 1997) 146.

was not in the book, the person would die. In *Revelation* 20:11-15, the names in the book came to mean the people who were destined to take part in the coming new world.<sup>106</sup> In this respect, it is relevant to take the differences between Jewish and Christian tradition into account, although it is difficult to determine where the boundaries lie.

The 'realm of the dead' as somewhere under the earth can be traced in every one of the nine sources. Descending into the Hades is one of the most common motives in Greek eschatology and the fiery pit described in *Zephaniah's apocalypse* is just one of the many descriptions of an Underworld as deep down below. One explanation *Revelation* gives for the location of the Underworld, is particularly illustrative. In *Revelation* 20:11, the earth and heaven flee before God. Webb Mealy explains that earth and heaven vanish into absolute nothingness, revealing the Underworld and the dead that are present there. Now the judgement can begin.<sup>107</sup>

A significant part of *Revelation* is a detailed report about judgement. The seals and the trumpets are both used as execution of judgement for the sins of humanity and as announcement of the great Final Judgement. Many important elements of the Final Judgement can be traced to the Old Testament, but even more to *1 Enoch* and *Daniel*. In *Revelation* 19: 20 for example, the devil is thrown into the fire. Naturally, for Christian purposes, the messianic Son of Man has received in *Revelation* an even more elaborate place in heaven and judgement. The reaction to war and destruction at the end of the first century A.D. can be seen in the motive of the selective few people (144.000) who follow the lamb (*Revelation* 14:3-5).

In the discussions surrounding the *Book of Revelation*, a specific point is the millennium-problem. Some scholars do not take these thousand years into account at all, while others place this idea at the centre of their argument.<sup>108</sup> According to Webb Mealy, the two judgment-scenes in *Revelations* 20 should be seen as two versions of one story. It is a kaleidoscopic whole, where the two versions play at either end of the 1000-year gap. A millennium may be a long time for a human being, but for God, it is nothing.<sup>109</sup> Ford on the opposite, states that the text in *Revelation* about the 'thousand years' is indeed intended as a millennial kingdom. In early Christian interpretation, this had been explained the same way as the older Jewish messianic expectation, namely as the messianic rule for a thousand years in

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<sup>106</sup> J. Webb Mealy, *After the thousand years: resurrection and judgement in Revelation 20*. Journal for the study of the New Testament Supplement series 70 (Sheffield 1992) 170.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibidem*, 167.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibidem*, 173.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibidem*, 184.

Jerusalem before the final judgement. Throughout the centuries, he states, millennialism became obsolete and only occasionally emerged again.<sup>110</sup>

## 1 Enoch

To find out more about judgement and punishment, it is necessary to first discover some of the thoughts the writers of our sources had on the role of evil, in history and in the personal lives of people. In several sources, the Watchers are focussed on as the source of evil. Interesting in this respect is that the name ‘Satan’ that is used for one of the angels of God, actually means ‘enemy’, but in the sense of an accuser in trial.<sup>111</sup> This Satan stood before God to accuse humans of their wicked deeds. An excellent example of this trial in an Old Testament setting can be found in *Job* 1:6-12, where Satan accuses Job before God. In later periods, from the third century B.C. onwards, he becomes connected to the devil, who was leader of the Fallen Angels (either Asael or Semeyaza), but the connection remains unclear, because it is not discussed in any text.

The *Book of the Parables* is the latest of the Enochian books, dating from the late first century B.C. For the topic of judgement, this is an important book, since it portrays the judgement executed by the Righteous One, appointed by God. God has given him the power to divide the souls. It draws from *Daniel* 7 and other biblical sources.<sup>112</sup>

In the second century B.C., there existed the Zadokite priesthood. This was a ruling class of priests who were the authority in Palestine on Jewish religious matters at that time. Boccaccini states that apart from the Zadokite hegemony there was another stream within Judaism, namely the Enochian stream of thought. This Enochian stream may also have included the Qumran community. Where the Zadokite theory emphasized the existing order in the world, the Enochian Judaism proclaimed that Gods world order was corrupted, and there was no way to save it. The story of the Fall of the Watchers was important in this respect, to show the original trespassing of the formerly existing order. The Enochian ideas differed not only concerning the beginning. The way the world would end in the Enochian text was different too. *1 Enoch* introduced a new idea about judgement. The prophetic tradition had always placed the intervention of God in some indeterminate future. *1 Enoch*, however, made the expectation much more tangible and put the end of days together with some final events at a fixed point in time. The end of Gods creation, the first and corrupted creation, would arrive,

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<sup>110</sup> Ford, J. Massyngberde, *Revelation: introduction translation and commentary*. The Anchor Bible 38 (Garden City, NY 1975) 350-351.

<sup>111</sup> Sacchi, *Jewish apocalyptic*, 222.

<sup>112</sup> Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch*, 7.

and after this breaking point of judgement and cleansing, God would make a new and second creation.<sup>113</sup>

It is important to note the meaning and purpose of a text about judgement: whom it is written for and in what time and environment. In *The Epistle of Enoch*, *1Enoch* chapter XCII, the righteous are being comforted with the foreshadowing of vengeance. They are motivated to keep on going in the right way.<sup>114</sup> There has to be balance between the evil deeds of the wicked and the punishment they receive.

Instead of the focus on collective judgement that can be found in *Daniel*, *1Enoch* is preoccupied with the individual judgement based on moral characteristics. Immediately after death, a soul is judged and put in the suitable waiting-room, before the final judgement, although for some moral groups, no renewed judgement seems to be needed. Whether or not the suffering wicked are revived, is not clear, the passage is not very consistent.<sup>115</sup> So in the earlier mentioned passage in *1Enoch* about the rock with the hollow places, there appear in a way to be two times of judgement: one directly after death, to determine in what compartment the deceased should wait, and then in the end, the final judgement.

## Daniel

In *Daniel* 5:25-28, Daniel explains to king Belsassar the words on the wall concerning the balance and weighing of a person's soul, in this case that of the king's. His explanation is that not only the days of the kingship of Belsassar are fulfilled, but also that his soul has turned out to be too light.<sup>116</sup> This judgement over the king that has to be explained by Daniel, stands in the prophetic tradition of the Old Testament, where prophets warned and enlightened the king at his court about things to come.<sup>117</sup>

Other passages in *Daniel* concerning judgement can be found in the so-called prophetic second part of the book (chapters 7-12). Daniel's visions about the end of times include the presence of a court with judges. (*Daniel* 7:10-11, 26) After the reign of someone symbolically pictured as an especially wicked beast, the court will take place, ending the beast's reign and executing him in fire. This fire is used just to annihilate him and should not

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<sup>113</sup> G. Boccaccini, *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism: an intellectual history from Ezekiel to Daniel* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge 2002) 90, 91, 96. The seniority of the Enochian Book of the Watchers is by some scholars estimated as belonging to a much earlier era than the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. These scholars try to place the legend of the Watchers in the time of the first temple and even state that the Book of the Watchers predates the Biblical book of Genesis, because of the brief and revised character of the statement about the Watchers in Genesis. (Boccaccini, *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism*, 93, 94).

<sup>114</sup> Wendebourg, *Der Tag des Herrn*, 96, 97.

<sup>115</sup> Brandon, *The judgement of the dead*, 67, 69.

<sup>116</sup> G.Ch. Aalders, *Daniel* (Kampen 1962) 118.

<sup>117</sup> M. Fishbane, *Biblical interpretation in ancient Israel* (Oxford 1985) 494.

be confused with the everlasting torture of hell that can be found in for example some Enochian passages.<sup>118</sup> The other activities of the court are not revealed here by Daniel, but one thing that is mentioned is the involvement of books. He states that “books were opened” (*Daniel* 7:10), a motive that later plays an important role in *Revelation*. Since it is not clearly stated what kind of books are meant here, there are several options. The ‘book of life’ is one possibility; books containing all human deeds are another. A third, option, that is less likely according to Aalders, is the use of registers in which records are held of all decisions that have been made in this court.<sup>119</sup>

In *Daniel*, *Jubilees* and the *Testament of Moses*, the same historic event of the persecution by Antiochus are being recalled in the texts, but not in a literal manner. This event and its theological consequences can be distilled from the judgement scenes in the books.<sup>120</sup> The theological problem connected to the persecution was that it appeared at that time to be very fruitful to say goodbye to the strict Jewish faith and welcome some Greek elements, because in that case, you would not be persecuted. So in the eyes of rabbinic Jews, traitorous converts received a much better life than righteous Jews who stayed true to the strict law. They were punished for leading a good life in a way. Since Jewish leaders did not think this right, the theology underwent some serious changes in this period. The inclusion of judgement-scenes in many texts around and shortly after 165 B.C. is remarkable as a reaction to this. The righteous living of Jews who kept to the law was rewarded after they died.

The rules concerning life and crimes on earth may be contrasted to the treatment of the wicked after death and in the final judgement. The central point has become the balance that is sought: punishment as retribution and not necessarily as a means of educating the individual.

A significant division can be made between collective (selective) and individual judgement. In early Jewish tradition, it is only the people of Israel that are judged at the end of times. As the chosen people, they collectively expect to enjoy the pleasures of God while surrounding peoples finally see the greatness of the God of Israel.<sup>121</sup> This makes the Jewish religion in the beginning an ethnic religion. In other cases, an individual way of judgement is executed. Then Israel is the sum of its individuals that are judged separately. In *Daniel*, final judgement concerns Israel as Gods chosen people, although in Christianity, the *Book of Daniel* is read as judgement on all of mankind.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>118</sup> Aalders, *Daniel*, 144.

<sup>119</sup> Ibidem, 143.

<sup>120</sup> Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, 55.

<sup>121</sup> Wendebourg, *Der Tag des Herrn*, 129.

<sup>122</sup> Aalders, *Daniel*, 165.

## Hodayot

It is striking that the Hebrew expression for the 'end of times' (*'acharit hayyamim*) does not occur in the *Hodayot*, which is such an example of the eschatologically focused community, although the combination of words does appear in some other sectarian Qumran texts. We have seen in the previous chapter that afterlife is not discussed in the *Hodayot*, because of the writers' apparent confidence that he was already in the congregation of angels. The *Hodayot* is an interesting text in this respect, for it is about angels but not, as is usually the case, in connection to otherworldly journeys and visions. The same solution may be given for the absence of notions of the 'end of times': the state of the community did not require a fixed end.<sup>123</sup>

There is, however, a concept visible about judgement. The time of bliss for the righteous members of the community did already begin at their initiation, but the punishment of the wicked is still to come.<sup>124</sup> This can for example be seen in psalm 14, but many other psalms have the same elements.

As a consequence of the holiness of the congregation, there were quite some rules that had to be obeyed within the Qumran community. In practical daily life, the punishments that members of the Qumran community faced when one of them had committed an offence were quite harsh. A man who had committed a major crime was expelled from the community, and died of starvation because he was not allowed to take part in the meals any more. Josephus describes how sometimes, just before the person actually dies, the community takes him back, for almost dying of starvation is suffering enough (*Jewish War II*, 143).<sup>125</sup> The time of suffering apparently was thought to have a curing effect on the deficient member.

## Greek sources

In every tradition, theory and theology concentrate around the building of expectations in order to console members of a community and convince them of coming balance and justice. However, sometimes judgement is postponed indefinitely. To explain the injustice of this delay, different solutions are proposed in the sources we study here.

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<sup>123</sup> Evans and Flint, *Eschatology, Messianism and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 79.

<sup>124</sup> Kuhn, *Enderwartung und gegenwärtiges Heil* 39.

<sup>125</sup> Josephus, *The Jewish war* (Cornfeld 1982) 151.

## Golden Tablets

Remembrance is highly important in Hellenic tradition concerning afterlife as we have seen in the previous chapter. The ancient idea of Hades is that it is a gathering place for shadowy souls who lost their conscious self,<sup>126</sup> not unlike *Sheol* in ancient Jewish tradition. The *Golden Tablets* are meant as an escape in this respect.

As explained earlier on, the *Golden Tablets* are meant to help the deceased find his way in the confusing surroundings of Hades. For an initiate to know the right formulas and recognize landmarks when arriving in Hades, is vital for survival in this other world. One other aspect, however, is that of judgement. Persephone herself has to be convinced of the good intentions of the person standing before her (Tablet from Thurii L.10a-b). In principle, all humans are thought to descend from both the Titans and Dionysus. Only the initiates have tried to live a life suppressing their Titanic part.<sup>127</sup> Since the idea of life and death is in this tradition connected to (unwanted) resurrection as reincarnation, judgement is important only for the choice between eternal life and waiting yet another lifetime on earth. It is not as decisive as being cast into eternal fire.

In opposition to the apocalyptic texts, the *Golden Tablets* do not at all elaborate on the terrible fate of the wicked souls. This is due to the nature of the text, since this note has to be kept as short as possible because of the precious material and the limited amount of writing space. Another factor may have caused the difference in eschatology. While in Jewish apocalypses the wicked were numerous and had to receive eternal punishment, in Greek eschatology most of the wicked could be cured during the thousand year punishment in the Underworld. After this, all souls were more or less equal again and could gather for another reincarnation. In order to receive another life, everyone had to drink from the Water of Forgetfulness, but wise souls would drink less than other souls, so they would not forget everything they learned. (Tablet from Pharsalus L4 and tablet from Sfakaki L6a)<sup>128</sup>

## Plutarch

Plutarch gives an answer to several important ethical and religious issues. First of all, he discusses to what extent punishment is heritable. Should the wicked deeds of ancestors be visited upon their offspring? And even if this is fair and plausible, should punishments be

<sup>126</sup> Brandon, *The judgement of the dead*, 81.

<sup>127</sup> Bernabé and Jiménez san Cristóbal, *Instructions for the Netherworld*, 42.

<sup>128</sup> Graf and Johnston, *Ritual texts for the afterlife*, 102.



given to a whole city(state)? The scaring effect of punishment for the surrounding society should not be forgotten either. When souls would only be punished in the hereafter, no didactic point would be made. And apart from that, God can delay punishment because some good may come of a formerly evil person and a wicked person also suffers himself from guilt and suspicion during lifetime. Plutarch for example compares the punishment of children for the sins of their fathers to an inborn tendency to develop a certain disease, which may occur in children if they do not change their lifestyle.<sup>129</sup>

Plutarch also describes a connection between the ethics in a certain society and the effect the punishment of an individual has on the society at large. When a wicked person is punished in afterlife, the victim will not experience the revenge, and there will be no setting of an example, but in that case, as can be seen in both the *Apocalypse of Zephaniah* and Plutarch a possibility of repentance is visible. The souls that await judgement can still prove themselves to be repentant sinners who are willing to make up for their evil deeds.<sup>130</sup>

In connection to Plutarch, it is interesting to note that the writer of the *Pesher on Habakkuk*, whose work was found at Qumran, was also preoccupied with the notion of the delay of the End. From the context, it seems the writer of this *Pesher* is looking for a reason why the expected End had not arrived yet, so emphasis is placed on the notion that the End does come, at the right time.<sup>131</sup>

### Sibylline Oracles

The first *Sibylline Oracle* and Enoch's *Apocalypse of the Weeks* are connected, but the character of the relationship is unclear. The relationship consists of both a structural and a literary side. The story of the Fall of the Watchers is for example visible in both texts. A significant difference between the *Apocalypse of the Weeks* and the first *Sibylline Oracle* is that in the Enochian text, the fall of the Watchers is used as the explanation for the corruption of human beings, while in the *Sibylline Oracles*, this story is treated as just another stage in human history.<sup>132</sup>

Further on in the *Sibylline Oracles*, in book II, 231-232, another problem arises when trying to compare the Sibyl to Enoch. When we compare the Enochian Watchers to the Sibylline Titans in this part of the text, the difference in treatment stands out. In Enoch the Watchers are bound deep under the earth until judgement day and are then cast into the fire

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<sup>129</sup> A.J. Koster, *Plutarchus: Bloemlezing uit de Moralia* (Amsterdam 1954) 192.

<sup>130</sup> Sacchi, *Jewish apocalyptic*, 124.

<sup>131</sup> Evans and Flint, *Eschatology, Messianism and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 82.

<sup>132</sup> Lightfoot, *The Sibylline Oracles*, 126.

right away, while the Sibyl holds that souls that drowned in the Flood, i.e. the Titans, are brought back before the general resurrection and the final judgement.<sup>133</sup>

## Conclusion

The representation of judgement in sources has everything to do with the age and the cultural background of the writer. At a very early stage in Jewish tradition, prosperity was promised during lifetime for the person leading a just life. Retribution in afterlife for deeds committed on earth appeared in *Daniel* and *1 Enoch* and was adapted in its Jewish context in the *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*, *Revelations*, *L.A.B.* and the *Sibylline Oracles*. Judgement in Greek tradition is less orientated as a trial including all humanity. Plutarch does subscribe the importance of justice that has to be done to for example the victims of criminals, but punishment can also be laid upon children of the sinner. The personal judgement is less urgent in this Greek tradition. Emphasis is placed more upon the moral lessons society can take from judgement. In Old Testament Jewish tradition, it had been common too to picture the Day of the Lord as a collective judgement of Gods Chosen People (the whole of Israel), who would all be saved, against everyone else, who was rejected simply for not being part of Israel. With the emergence of *Enoch*, the personal judgement is introduced. The judgement scene itself contains some elements that occur in most of the texts. These elements include the use of books, the presence (and cooperation) of angels, the eventual conquering of evil powers and the glimpse of a world of eternal bliss. This last element can also be seen in the *Hodayot*, that is virtually without judgement scene, apart from the notion that members already have been accepted into paradise, but the sinful outside world has yet to be punished. The *Golden Tablets* are much more practical than all the other texts, these are lists to remember what to do in afterlife. Judgement only plays a role when the goddess of the Underworld Persephone has to decide whether or not the initiate is suited for a life beyond the cycle of reincarnation.

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<sup>133</sup> Another reading of this story is the *Apocalypse of Peter*, where the fetching of the Flood victims occurs after the general resurrection and ordeal.

## Chapter 4: revelations: gaining knowledge

In this chapter, we will have a look at the way in which, according to ancient stories, humans gained insight into heavenly issues and human problems of existence: the revelation of secret knowledge. I will focus on the various points of view that authors of our sources take when it comes to receiving and interpreting the mysteries they deal with. Some of the writers describe a heavenly journey or visions, while others are keener to give directions on how to behave in heaven or the Underworld. This all depends on the purpose of a text.

We will see the geographical foundations, the creatures or beings that the writer meets and we will look at the symbolic background of numbers, precious metals and stones and other devices that are used. The main question of this chapter will be: *'what knowledge is revealed in the text and how can it be used according to the author?'* In addition to the previous chapters on afterlife and judgement, we will now focus on the revelations that are discussed in the texts, and how it affected thinking about afterlife and judgement.

In *Semeia 14*, alienation from the present is said to be characteristic of apocalypses, because of the emphasis on otherworldly revelation. The historical and eschatological events happen on a horizontal level, a so-called temporal axis, and the otherworldly journey takes place on a vertical, spatial axis. These axes contribute to the attempt in *Semeia 14* to formulate a method of classification for apocalypses.<sup>134</sup> Once the apocalypses have been classified according to structure and content, it is possible to compare these to other text containing eschatological features.

Some scholars seek to place apocalyptic texts in their time and connect these texts to existing myths and events. Wassmuth for example states that the myth of the return of Emperor Nero was such a strong and alarming thought to Jews and early Christians, that this myth found its way into apocalyptic texts, such as 1 and 2 *Sibylline Oracles* and *Revelation*.<sup>135</sup> According to this myth, Nero would rise again and come from the East to destroy the Roman Empire. In Jewish and Christian tradition, he was disguised as a monster and sought to destroy the entire world.

Apocalypses and texts with mythical content are often written in reaction to some social crisis or distress, as Vielhauer claims. This immediate cause cannot always be pointed out and may differ according to time, location and severity.<sup>136</sup> Heavenly journeys can be means of acquiring divine knowledge that can be used to demonstrate justification to

<sup>134</sup> Collins, *Morphology*, 5, 11. This definition can also be found on page 7 of this paper.

<sup>135</sup> O. Wassmuth, *Sibyllinische Orakel 1-2: Studien und Kommentar* (Leiden 2011), 280.

<sup>136</sup> Collins, *The apocalyptic imagination*, 38.

oppressed people or minority groups in society. When a crisis emerges, authority is needed, so the divine message had to be brought by an illustrious figure from the ancient past.

In biblical context, in the Old Testament, three one-way heavenly journeys are mentioned. These are the ascensions of Enoch, Moses and Elijah. In contrast to the apocalyptic texts, there is no detail of any kind about the journeys in the bible.<sup>137</sup> Despite the silence on their adoption in heaven, these three men are invested with enormous influence within Jewish and later Christian tradition, which continues when they are in heaven. Enoch became somewhat mysterious and obscure in Christian times, but Moses and Elijah continued to play an important role. In *Matthew* 17:3, Jesus meets Moses and Elijah and talks to them. In the next verse God validates the authority of Jesus, because he is his Son.

### *Jewish sources*

#### L.A.B.

The purpose of pseudo-Philo in writing the *Antiquities (L.A.B.)* is different from the eight other sources I compare, because it describes biblical events. It is a rewriting of the first part of the bible, stopping at a very specific point: the death of Saul. James however believes the age of Saul would not have been the conclusion of the author of *L.A.B.*, but that more chapters followed, until the Babylonian captivity, and perhaps even beyond.<sup>138</sup> *L.A.B.* presumably comes closest to 1 and 2 of *the Sibylline Oracles* in structure. Both *L.A.B.* and the *Sibylline texts* seek to describe history from the beginning and explain creation and the emergence of evil to some extent. However, the *Sibylline Oracles* are composite texts that altered through time and contain digressions and explanations that are entirely lacking in *L.A.B.*

There is no heavenly journey present in *L.A.B.* in the apocalyptic sense. However, there are some traits that Enoch described when he is on his way to heaven, that are used in *L.A.B.* to signify the chaotic state of the earth before God established the Law and Covenant with Israel.<sup>139</sup> Another example of God showing his omnipotence by pointing out the ingenious workings of nature and God's control over it is in *L.A.B.* XXIII, 10. Here it reads: "...I bowed the heavens and came down and I congealed the flame of the fire, and stopped up the springs of the deep, and impeded the course of the stars..."<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> L. Carlson, *Round trips to heaven: Otherworldly travellers in early Judaism and Christianity*. Lund studies in history of religions 19 (Lund 2004) 17.

<sup>138</sup> James, *The Biblical Antiquities*, 65.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibidem*, 44, 107.

<sup>140</sup> James, *The Biblical Antiquities*, 143.

Dreams in some cases serve the same purpose as heavenly journeys. In *L.A.B.* XXIII, 6, Abraham receives a dream, in which God shows him the place where people that committed iniquity are going. These evil people are set against the righteous, who are enlightened by torches of fire. This story of Abraham resembles the biblical story of *Genesis 15* to some extent, but the details and purpose are different. Instead of the emphasis on the establishment of the Covenant (in *Genesis*), the purpose of the first century A.D. author is to comment on ideas about afterlife.<sup>141</sup>

### Zephaniah

As we have seen, several texts describe heaven as a temple. *Zephaniah* also explains heaven in terms of features that normally define the temple.<sup>142</sup> The division of the Holy and Holy of Holies is the same as different compartments of heaven with the throne room as the most sacred in heaven.

In the *apocalypse of Zephaniah*, the visionary is not, like in other heavenly journey-texts taken to heaven during his lifetime. Zephaniah is instead a soul himself who experiences the possibilities souls have in afterlife. He is guided by an angel, but on several occasions in the story, he relies on his own interpretation and jumps to wrong conclusions, especially in book VI. The beautiful city he sees, for instance, turns out to be not that beautiful after all. And when he is rescued from the terrible angel of doom, he thinks his saviour is God himself. All of these mistakes however, are not used against him, and when the scroll containing his sins is being read, he is found to be righteous. The confusion of Zephaniah can even serve a higher purpose when taking the readers of this text into account. Because of his imperfectness, they can relate to Zephaniah more than to the men of God who are flawless and therefore less human.<sup>143</sup>

The heavenly journey texts treat visionaries in different ways, but always transform something about the person. This can be the angelic robe that Zephaniah receives to be able to sing in the angelic chorus or the transformation of Enoch (2 and 3*Enoch*) into an actual angel.

### Revelation

Unlike *Daniel*, *Revelation* as a text entirely consists of visions with only the shortest introduction to historical surroundings. The *Book of Revelation* is neatly divided into seven

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<sup>141</sup> Ibidem, 142. In *Genesis 15*, there is an oven and there are burning torches, just as in *L.A.B.* The author of *L.A.B.* however, interprets these signs of the Covenant using the common Jewish ideas of his own time.

<sup>142</sup> Himmelfarb, M., *Ascent to heaven in Jewish and Christian apocalypses* (New York 1993) vii.

<sup>143</sup> Ibidem 53-55.

series of seven parts, followed by six series of six parts, in which in the middle of the six series (book 4) a seventh part is added. The division of *Revelation* in this manner points to an editor who consciously arranged the visions to form a complete and fitting structure. The first series consists of a personal message to seven congregations.<sup>144</sup> After that, the visions become less geographical specific and are about heavenly judgement, revealing secrets and the time to come. Especially regarding *Revelation* it is important to note the time it is written in.

Sporadically, humans are called to heaven to perform a task or receive knowledge. Angels, however, are permanent inhabitants of the heavenly sphere. Himmelfarb interprets the angels serving in heaven as priests who have duties in the temple.<sup>145</sup> As we have seen in previous chapters, the heavenly priests have many responsibilities, for example in the case of judgement.

Although in *Revelation* the Lamb in the visions is in Christian tradition explained to be the Christ, it is a Jewish motive to depict a (righteous) human as an animal, preferably a sheep.<sup>146</sup> In the *Animal Apocalypse* for example, a book belonging to the *1 Enoch* corpus, all biblical history and future is explained using the allegory of animals, mainly bulls, sheep and predators.

The Lamb next to the throne of God is also remarkable in another way. *Ezekiel* (chapter 1) and *Daniel* (chapter 7) had seen an identical vision of the throne and someone standing next to it. The throne vision is indeed at the very heart of the Jewish mystical experience. However, in their visions it had been someone 'like a man'. They clearly had not used the animal allegory, but recognized this being as a human.<sup>147</sup>

In *Daniel*, there is fire around the throne and coming from the throne. Fire is often present close to God, and in *Revelation* for example, to the fire precious stones are added, in order to emphasize the splendour of God even more.<sup>148</sup>

Not all writers of sources we compare here were convinced the priests and leaders in Jerusalem had their best interests at heart. In *Revelation* for example, the local priesthood is depicted as the Beast from the earth (13:11)<sup>149</sup> In the Qumran community, sympathy for the priests and leaders in Jerusalem was not really present. Especially in the sectarian scrolls, the division between Sons of Light and Sons of Darkness represented the resentment the Community felt for everyone outside their own camp. They had retreated into the desert out

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<sup>144</sup> Ford, *Revelation: commentary*, 46-48.

<sup>145</sup> Carlson, *Heavenly journeys*, 18.

<sup>146</sup> Ford, *Revelation: commentary*, 51.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibidem*, 51.

<sup>148</sup> Haag, *Daniel*, 58; Ford, *Revelations commentary* 51.

<sup>149</sup> Ford, *Revelations: commentary*, 54.

of disagreement with the procedures executed in the temple. There, they kept to the ancient traditional Jewish ideal of leadership in three parts: kingship, priesthood and prophecy.<sup>150</sup> Revelations that occurred in Qumran, should be seen in the light of this leadership division.

## 1 Enoch

In *1 Enoch*, the *Book of the Watchers*, Enoch goes to the region Dan, southwest of Hermon, a place that was known from the bible for its early religious activities.<sup>151</sup> Descending to earth during a heavenly journey implies great eschatological significance. Another example is when the secret place of the replanted tree of life is shown to Enoch (*1 Enoch* XXIV, 4-7).

A unique feature in the *Book of the Watchers* is that Enoch appears to be alone during at least part of his heavenly journey. Normally, visionaries are accompanied at all times by a guiding angel. Enoch however seems to play an intermediate role himself, bringing messages from the Fallen Angels to God and the other way around. Carlson suggests that the ‘independent’ role of Enoch may point to a much older origin than the other apocalypses.<sup>152</sup>

It was possible to be both scribe and priest. We can observe Enoch as an example of the combination of these functions. During his heavenly journey, he performs tasks belonging to both professions.<sup>153</sup> This is important because a conflict was visible in the Second temple period in the Palestine area between priests and scribes. Although scribes knew exactly how rituals and laws should be kept, due to their ability to read the legal corpus that was now (after the exile) written down, only the priests were able to enter the temple and perform the rites. The combination of professions Enoch is invested with, can be seen as a statement in this time of conflict.

In *1 Enoch*, the make-up of heaven corresponds to the layout of the earthly (Second Temple period) temple in Jerusalem. Enoch crosses the Holy and reaches the Holy of Holies.

In the place where the Ark of the Covenant would be, is the throne of God and God himself. The angels are the heavenly replacements of the priests. Enoch takes the role of high priest, for he is the only one allowed to approach God.<sup>154</sup>

Enoch’s encounter with God in heaven stands in a long tradition of earlier biblical texts. *Ezekiel* 43 for example also describes God on his throne. He describes heaven and God in it, but it becomes clear that it is actually impossible to describe.<sup>155</sup> It is, however, the

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<sup>150</sup> Flemming and Radermacher, *Das Buch Henoch*, 72; Reventlow, *Eschatology*, 142.

<sup>151</sup> Carlson, *heavenly journeys*, 36,37.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibidem*, 40,41.

<sup>153</sup> Himmelfarb, *Ascent to heaven*, 23-25.

<sup>154</sup> Carlson, *heavenly journeys*, 43.

<sup>155</sup> Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch*, 260.

commandment of God that Ezekiel should describe to the people of Israel what the true temple should look like.

In the *Book of Watchers*, Enoch is, unlike Ezekiel, afraid of God's temple, not of God himself. *Enoch* describes some of the compartments as 'places of terror'.<sup>156</sup>

The temple (and previously the tabernacle) had always taken a central position in Jewish religion. In Ezekiel's time, however, the temple seems to be too polluted for God to dwell in. The temple in Jerusalem then comes to be seen as a mere copy of God's true temple in heaven. Enoch's ascent to heaven in that case is a journey to the true temple.<sup>157</sup>

The connection between the temple on earth and heaven as the true temple can be seen in another aspect. In *Ezekiel* and the *Book of the Watchers*, a special role is appointed to the Cherubim, the angels that are depicted on top of the Ark of the Covenant. These Cherubim on the Ark kneel to form a throne, and in *Ezekiel* and the *Book of the Watchers* they are present in the throne room to wait upon God.

A new heaven and earth are promised by God in *Isaiah* 65:17. This will not occur in an apocalyptic setting however, where cosmological renewal is preceded by the cosmos' dissolution. The new creation of all things from *Isaiah* is in line with the old creation, but then much more splendid and in harmony, so the suffering from the old world will be forgotten.<sup>158</sup>

The *Astronomical Book of Enoch* is incorporated into the *1Enoch* corpus, but is older than the other texts. The preoccupation of this book with astronomical phenomena and calendars mainly has to do with providing a monotheistic answer to the Babylonian astronomy with its emphasis on divination and fatalism.<sup>159</sup> Calculations and numbers in line with the Jewish linear view of history make this book a celebration of God's creation.

Carlson states that the visionary, the main character of the apocalypses, sometimes undergoes a change of identity. When the journey starts, he receives new clothes or even transforms into an angel (*2Enoch* and *3Enoch*) to mark the transition from earthly to heavenly life. Enoch in *1Enoch* however, does not need any transformation before entering into the presence of God. In later apocalypses, this transformation becomes necessary.<sup>160</sup> As we have seen in previous chapters, the companionship with angels was of particular practical importance to the members of the Qumran community. Here we see a link to the apocalypses

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<sup>156</sup> Himmelfarb, *ascent to heaven*, 16.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibidem*, 13.

<sup>158</sup> Fishbane, *Biblical interpretation*, 354.

<sup>159</sup> K. Koch, "The astral laws as the basis of time, universal history and the eschatological turn in the *Astronomical Book* and the *Animal Apocalypse of 1Enoch*", in: G. Boccaccini and J.J. Collins, *The early Enoch literature*, 2007, 119-139, 127.

<sup>160</sup> Himmelfarb, *ascent to heaven*, 29.



that emphasize the heavenly companionship between angels and the visionary, for example Enoch.<sup>161</sup>

## Daniel

The dream of king Nebuchadnezzar and later the vision of writing on the wall under king Belsassar, are explained by Daniel with help of God. Starting from chapter seven, Daniel describes his heavenly journeys. He receives visions during his dreams, during prayer or when he is grieving and abstaining from food. The visions confuse and frighten him.

As in many other texts containing (dream) visions, Daniel is accompanied by a guiding angel, who explains the meaning of the vision to him.<sup>162</sup> In the case of *Daniel*, this is made explicit in the text (8:15): ‘When I, Daniel, saw the vision, I sought understanding and behold, one in the likeness of a man stood before me. I heard a human voice in the midst of the Ulai, and it called out and said, “Gabriel, explain the vision to this person”’.

The use of numbers to explain and forecast future events is almost unique (Dan.7:25-a time, times and half a time). On account of *Daniel*, scholars have ever since tried to calculate the end of time. However, these numbers have to be taken symbolically rather than literary, for example ten horns or seventy weeks. Nevertheless, quite some *Daniel apocalypses* have been written, most of them pseudepigraphs. From the number of copies of *Daniel* and pseudepigraphic literature, it becomes clear that Daniel was a highly popular text at Qumran.

<sup>163</sup>

## Hodayot

The songs of the *Hodayot* are meant to worship God and his great deeds. It primarily focuses on the present and the past, and does not have the same purpose or audience as an apocalyptic text. There is no heavenly journey described and no mention of the End of days or eschatological war. The author of the *Hodayot* claims the mysteries of God are revealed to him, and he praises God for his revelations in most of the psalms.<sup>164</sup>

Comparing the *Hodayot* to the *Biblical Antiquities (L.A.B.)* provides us with an interesting picture in terms of historical interpretation of biblical texts. While the *Hodayot* were probably written in the second century B.C., *L.A.B.* was written in the first century A.D., when the political and religious circumstances had changed significantly. Both texts take

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<sup>161</sup> Ibidem 49.

<sup>162</sup> DiTommaso, *The Book of Daniel*, 2.

<sup>163</sup> Hogeterp, *Expectations of the End*, 353.

<sup>164</sup> Collins, *The apocalyptic imagination*, 151.

biblical texts as point of reference, but emphasize different sections and lines of thought. *Hodayot* is mainly concerned with the Psalms. Some are even completely incorporated and then re-written. The structure of the *Hodayot* texts is obviously highly suitable for its aim, because Psalms and *Hodayot* are both hymns. *L.A.B.* re-writes part of the ancient biblical books, but between the lines, he incorporates his own interpretations.<sup>165</sup>

The author of the *Hodayot* can in some parts of the hymns be traced to be the Teacher of Righteousness. He is thought to be the charismatic leader who joined this community and educated the members in the second century B.C. The divine knowledge he claimed, should have been revealed to him in one way or another, but nowhere is it stated that he experienced a heavenly journey. Revelations made by God are the more remarkable, because the Qumran community did not even confess that mankind was created according to God's image.<sup>166</sup> Human beings were completely unworthy in their eyes, and yet, God revealed mysteries and let angels be in their midst.

### *Greek sources*

#### Golden Tablets

We cannot state that the journey described on the *Golden Tablets* is heavenly, but it certainly is an otherworldly one. Individuals who live in the margin of society may be more likely to oppose an existing mainstream religion. In the case of ancient Greek society, the network of relationships that was so important to citizens who were full members of society, may not have appealed that much to people that were not too tightly bound into this web. A countercultural movement stressing individuality could have been a religious solution for these people.<sup>167</sup>

It is remarkable that in the *Golden Tablets*, there are no real preconditions mentioned in terms of virtuous behaviour, to be able to enter the Underworld as a 'good soul'.<sup>168</sup> As opposed to Second Temple period Jewish preconditions, where conflict arose because of purity measures, the *Golden Tablets* emphasize quite other characteristics.

The words written on the *Golden Tablets* can be used as indications on how to 'survive' in the Underworld and provide the deceased with something like a secret formula (for example: tablet from Pharsalus L4).<sup>169</sup> Passwords were not uncommon in antiquity, and

<sup>165</sup> James, *The Biblical Antiquities*, 65.

<sup>166</sup> Holm-Nielsen, *Hodayot*, 277.

<sup>167</sup> Edmonds, *Myths of the Underworld Journey*, 43.

<sup>168</sup> Graf and Johnston, *Ritual texts for the afterlife*, 104.

<sup>169</sup> Bernabé and Jiménez san Cristóbal, *Instructions for the Netherworld*, 11.

sometimes coins or gold were used as an ‘object to pass’ too, namely to hand over to the boatman. In the case of passwords, Bernabé for example states that the present tense that one particular sentence is written in, combined with the knowledge of the soul that it should drink from the fountain of Mnemosyne, provides a password for the soul to identify itself as an initiate.<sup>170</sup>

A motive that can be explained in a symbolic way is the thirst that occurs when people are dying. In the Greek *Golden Tablets*, we can read about the thirst of the deceased (tablet from Eleutherna L5a-f). This is the ground motive for writing the *Tablets* anyway, because the directions for guidance through the Underworld are based on drinking of water. The first possibility for drinking is to be left aside, an initiate should walk on and drink later on, of the spring of Mnemosyne.<sup>171</sup> The motive of life-giving water is visible in *1Enoch* too. Later on, Christian theology elaborates on the life-giving water in stating that Christ is the spring of living water.

#### Plutarch

The context of the heavenly journey in the Plutarch texts is totally different from that of the Jewish perspective. The audience and goal of the text differs greatly. Instead of a religious purpose, the Plutarch heavenly journeys serve as an example in a broader text that seeks to educate the reader in moral perspective.

Even the state of the visionary during his otherworldly journey is described in other terms, depending on Greek or Jewish background. Thespesius in *De sera numinis vindicta* (563, 23) leaves his body behind on earth with only part of his soul. This is meant as an anchor, to still be in touch with the normal world of the living. The other part of his soul ascends and thus experiences the journey.<sup>172</sup> In Jewish apocalypses, the visionary ascends entirely, for example Enoch, because God took him away, or he is already dead as is the case with Zephaniah. The last option is to have a dream, like some of the visions of Daniel, which comes closest to the Greek example of the anchor.

In contrast to the guiding angel in heavenly journeys, a Greek idea about divine guidance on earth is the *daimon*. In Plutarch’s *De genio Socratis*, the *daimon* is explained as an external part of a soul that is connected to a body like a cork.<sup>173</sup> There is some discussion

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<sup>170</sup> Bernabé and. Jiménez san Cristóbal, *Instructions for the Netherworld*, 47.

<sup>171</sup> Ibidem, 46.

<sup>172</sup> Plutarch *Moralia* VII, 177.

<sup>173</sup> The idea of the body as an anchor could be opposed to the idea of part of the soul as a cork. While the body keeps the person connected to the mortal world, the soul as a cork guides the connected person in the immortal realm.

between the main characters whether or not the gods favour some men and therefore provide them with signs about future events, with *daimons* to guide them or allowing them to break the cycle of rebirth and become *daimons* themselves.<sup>174</sup>

### Sibylline Oracles

The *Sibylline Oracles* do not contain a heavenly journey, but have another structure and purpose. These oracles stem from a tradition of Greek and Roman *Sibyls* that were used in a political way. It is just another structural possibility that implies something about the content.

The third *Sibylline Oracle* for example tells the story about the integration of Cronos and the Titans into the ancient history of mankind (book III, B21-55), thus demythologizing them. In accordance to historical apocalypses, this *Oracle* divides history into different kingdoms, either eight or ten. The last kingdom in this case is the future kingdom founded by God. However, this text differs from the historical apocalypses in the sense that it is written to be missionary propaganda. The purpose is to convert, but it is all described in terms tangible for pagan readers. The usual vertical axis of apocalypse, as described earlier in this chapter, and which is concerned with heavenly journeys and activities, is missing.<sup>175</sup>

The motive of revelation is a key point in the *Sibylline Oracles*. Warnings with regard to future doom are mixed with references to classical myths and together make up a set of remarkable texts.

### Conclusion

There are several themes that can be seen to be under the umbrella of revelation. There is for example the heavenly or otherworldly journey and the vision or dream. Some texts are combinations of these themes and in other cases, it is not clear what kind of revelation is claimed by the author. We can now answer the main question of this chapter: ‘*what knowledge is revealed in the text and how can it be used according to the author?*’

Revelations of any kind reveal something about the author’s and the audience’s frame of reference and traditions. In *Daniel, Revelations, I Enoch and Zephaniah*, heaven is depicted as the temple in Jerusalem, stressing either the importance of this temple of Jerusalem, or replacing the polluted earthly temple by a heavenly one. Within this heavenly temple, angels take the role of priests. These four texts take features from the biblical book of *Ezekiel*. The

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<sup>174</sup> Plutarch *Moralia* VII, 369.

<sup>175</sup> Collins, *The apocalyptic imagination*, 119, 125.

need for authority of texts in this Second temple period is satisfied by using prophets, scribes and other noble figures from the past to serve as the pseudepigraphic author of a text. Within these texts, a conflict can often be detected in Jewish writings about the use of power between politically orientated scribes and religious priests.

The structure of any given text depends on purpose of the author, the circumstances in time and the identity of the audience. The structure of the apocalypses differs from *L.A.B.* because of the broad range of subjects the author of *L.A.B.* tries to cover and the *Golden Tablets* deviate because of the nature of the *Tablets*, namely to serve as a guide in another world and thus meant to be used in practical ritual. The purpose of *Hodayot* is clearly to praise God by means of these sectarian songs and these songs are therefore also used in a practical way. Plutarch's *Moralia* have the purpose of morally educating, so these texts are not religiously focused.

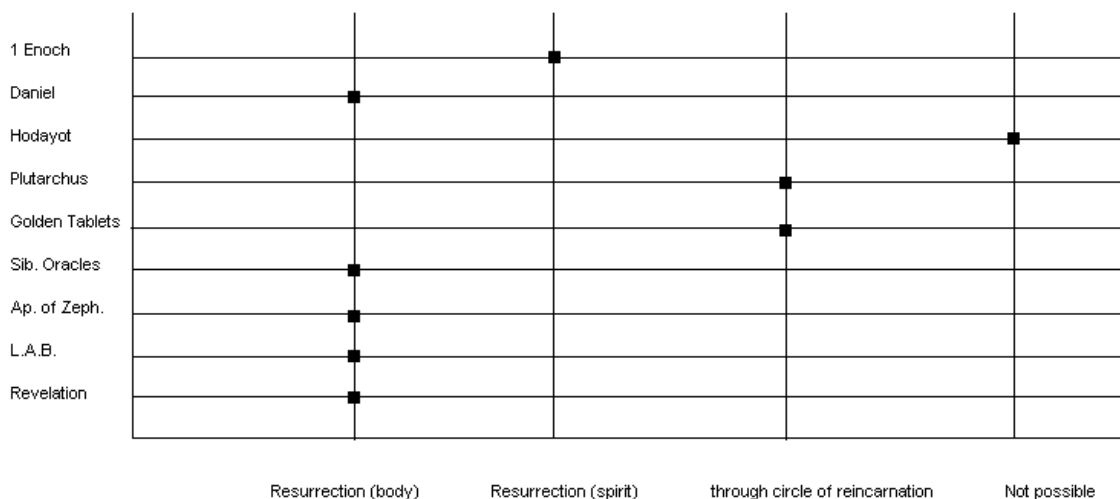
The symbols and images that are used, give away the tradition a text comes from. The use of an animal analogy in *Revelation* for example, firmly links it to a traditional Jewish background. (Something like) fire in heaven and the throne room of God is also Jewish. The language connected to reincarnation on the other hand, can be connected to Greek thinking in cycles of life.

## Conclusion

Based on information from the comparative research in this paper, there are several characteristics that can be said to belong to certain sources. And it is also possible to discover a certain line and broader distinction between sources. Let us first start by recalling the main research question: *How can Jewish and Greeks texts containing eschatological elements between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D. be compared?* To some extent, it is certainly possible to compare all of these texts on eschatological grounds. The structure of the Golden Tablets and the Hodayot is a bit different, but the eschatological elements in these texts can be compared to the other texts. I took different themes for the chapters to compare the sources by, which made it easier to split the texts into smaller subjects and compare these. When analysing the outcome, I will insert tables into the text that will provide an overview and summary of the sources.

Within the theme ‘afterlife’ there were similarities to be seen in thinking on resurrection (bodily or spiritual) in texts of Jewish and sectarian Jewish background. Authors of all texts in some way tried to reach immortality, but the roads towards this end were different in the various texts.

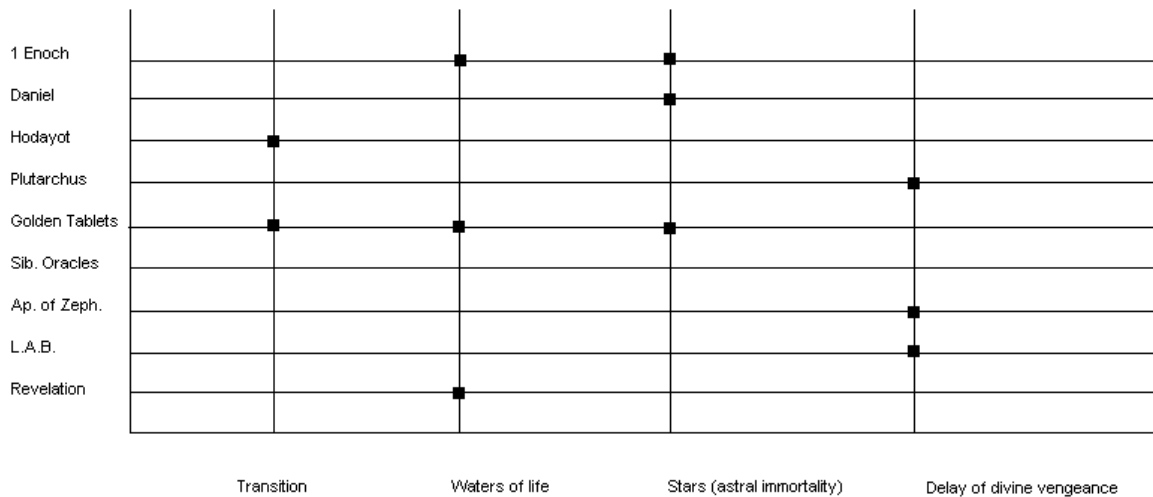
### How can immortality be reached?



Similarities were also present between Greek and Jewish sources. For example the emphasis on transition in both the *Hodayot* and the *Golden Tablets*, the mentioning of water of life in the *Golden Tablets* and *1 Enoch*, and stars connected to astral immortality in *Daniel*,

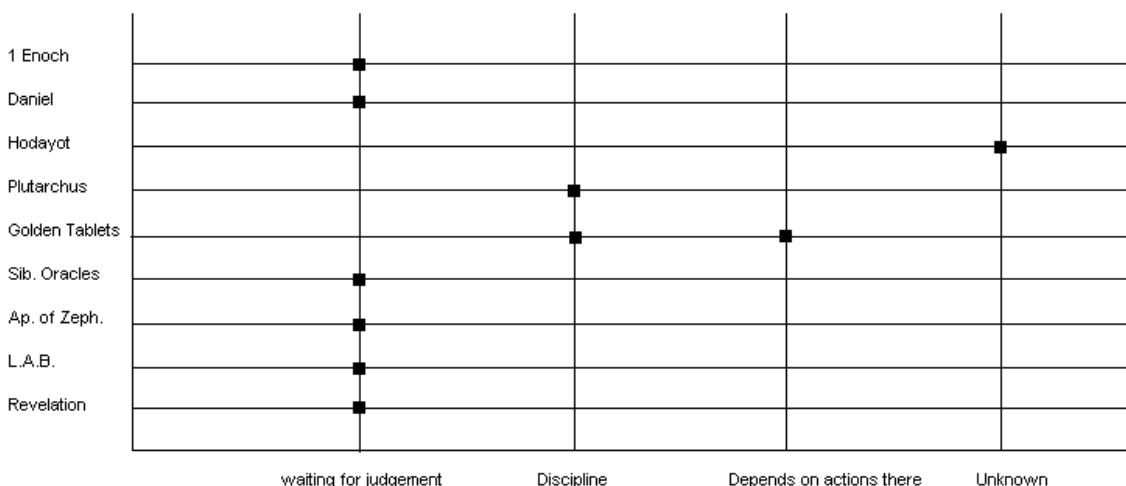
*1 Enoch and the Golden Tablets.* Waiting because divine vengeance is delayed can be seen in the texts written by Plutarch, in *L.A.B.* and in *Zephaniah*.

### What motives can be compared?



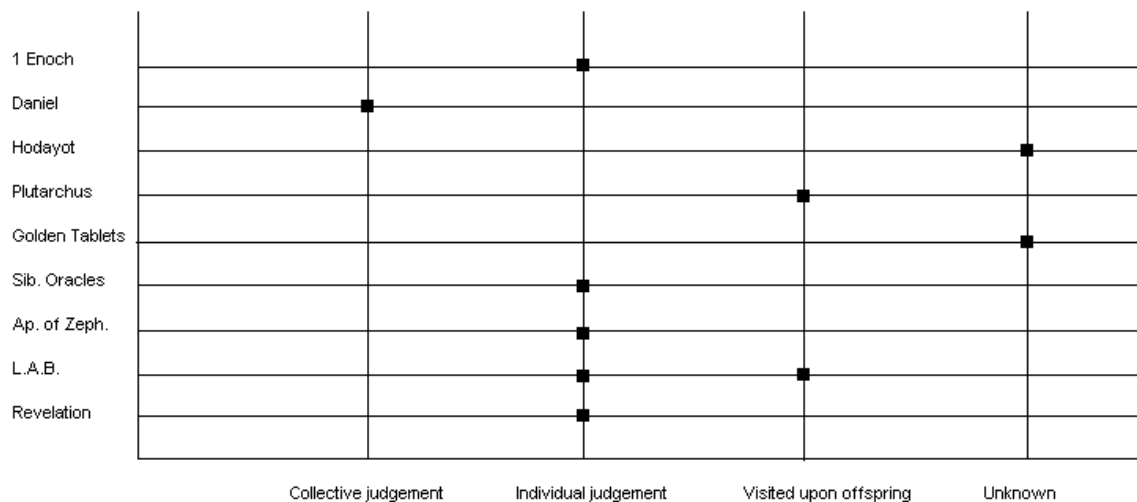
However, in the end it is clear that more differences than similarities can be discerned between Jewish and Greek sources. An important difference that can be seen is the Jewish emphasis on souls that are resting or sleeping, while in Greek tradition, souls are disciplined during their time away from the world. This is due to an even more fundamental difference, namely the Greek belief in reincarnation, and therefore in a cyclical movement of the world, against the Jewish linear worldview that consists of succeeding empires or kingdoms and results in the day of final judgement.

### What happens in afterlife?



The Greek tradition of reincarnation is certainly not an end in itself. On the contrary: initiates into one of the mystery cults and wise individuals can supposedly break through the cycle of reincarnation to reach eternal bliss.

### How is judgement executed?



In the *Golden Tablets*, the memory of the initiate plays a vital role. Not only is he supposed to remember the directions given to him concerning the surroundings in the Underworld, he also has to utter the secret formula in order to gain access to the desired Waters of Mnemosyne. This water will help the initiate to remember. If a soul is sent back to earth for reincarnation after all, the wise soul does not drink too much of the mandatory Waters of Forgetfulness, so he remembers more the next time.

As we have seen, memory plays an important part in the transition from life to death. Judging from the *Golden Tablets*, the confidence that a deceased person would remember the necessary formulas on the other side of death was not too high. Memory, it seemed, was liable to error and had to be helped by pieces scribbled gold. This expensive reminder would bridge the past and future of the deceased and can have been a sign for the human incapability to find his way on his own. He had to be able to trust something or someone else.

In case of the Jewish-Christian tradition, the certain factor in this life and the next is God. There is a direct link between the moral quality of a person's life on earth and the reward he receives in the afterlife, but the final decision is beyond the person's control. Only



God's grace will save him. So in both the Greek and the Jewish tradition, help is needed, one could not overcome death on his own.

We have seen the transition from ancient Judaism and its belief in the reward for righteous behaviour in the present until the changed theology that can for the first time be seen in Enoch and consists of reward or revenge in the afterlife to achieve more balance for inequality in life on earth.

Although *Daniel* is generally thought to contain the first proof for Jewish theology on bodily resurrection, more examples can be found in older biblical books such as *Ezekiel* and *Isaiah*. The phrases in these texts, however, are usually explained metaphorical as the renewal of the people of Israel.

There is little difference between the Jewish texts and the sectarian Qumran texts regarding approach of afterlife, judgement and revelation. The reason that I took *IEnoch* and *Daniel* into account as Qumran texts, was that multiple versions that were found in the caves around the Dead Sea, indicating that these texts were important for the Qumran community. However, these texts can also be seen as Jewish books that were read in wider circles, although the critical attitude to some of the (Jewish) leaders at several moments in time (for example Zadokite rulers during the editing process of several Enochian books and Antiochus Epiphanes during *Daniel's* composition) may have limited the number of readers.

The *Biblical Antiquities* are an interesting collection of books that certainly can be said to belong to the Jewish tradition. It incorporates the same well-known issues of afterlife and judgement. Only the structure is fundamentally different from other Jewish texts, since pseudo-Philo seeks to rewrite the biblical stories.

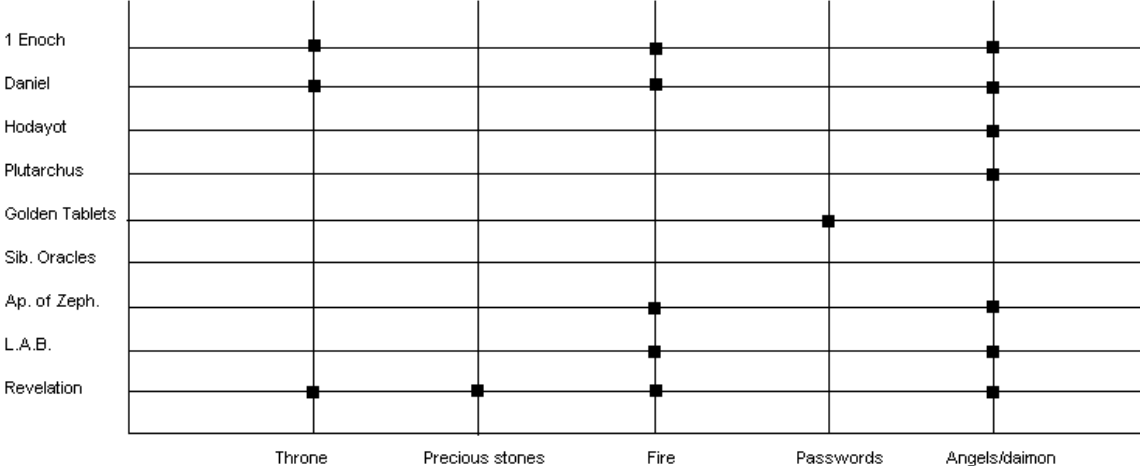
I grouped the *Sibylline Oracles* together with the Greek texts, because of the many Greek traits that occur in these *Oracles*, but it turns out that these are very closely connected to the Jewish texts as well. This is clearly visible in the tables, because when looking at certain traits that are mainly Jewish, the *Sibylline Oracles* fit into the same category. Since the *Sibylline Oracles* unite both Jewish and Greek characteristics, it is important to take some of these books into account.

The *Hodayot* is also less easy to insert into this comparison than I had previously imagined. This sectarian text explained part of the mindset of the Qumran community, regarding their own functioning. The role of angels in this respect is quite extraordinary, because based on this text, angels are present among the members of the community to form a congregation of holy people. Although there is no sign of belief in afterlife in the *Hodayot*, it is very likely that the Qumran community did believe in afterlife and even resurrection, for

example because of the texts of *Daniel* and *1 Enoch* that are found in the vicinity. Other sectarian scrolls from Qumran also hint at an afterlife.

There are several elements playing a part in the apocalyptic texts that contain a judgement scene, for example: the throne of God, books containing names or deeds, the help of angels in executing judgement, impressive features such as fire and precious stones, and sometimes the presence of the Chosen One. In the Greek sources we compared in this research, no judgement is visible in the manner of a trial, in which humans are divided according to the deeds of their former life.

What experiences are encountered in the Other World?



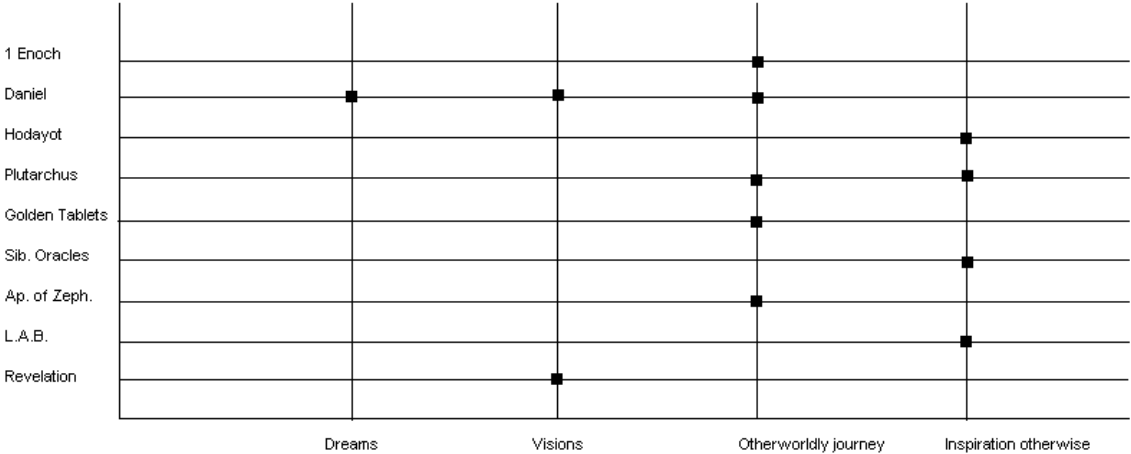
Within the sources that contain a judgement scene, there is the distinction between collective and personal judgement. Collective judgement had been a more ancient form of Jewish theology concerning judgement that could be discerned in ancient biblical books. In these books, the people of Israel was compared to other peoples and was rewarded or punished as a whole. Another, slightly deviating line that also occurred in ancient biblical books, was the idea of visiting sins of the fathers upon their offspring. In his *Delay of divine vengeance*, Plutarch also discusses this transition of sins to one’s offspring. In addition however, he proposes the option of moral education, the possibility of delay of punishment to learn from mistakes.

A difficult point when studying the texts of Plutarch is that his text about an otherworldly journey is a story within the text, serving another purpose. In the texts we studied, Plutarch and his friends are discussing the theological problem of the delay of the divine vengeance and the question of lunar inhibition. Otherworldly journeys merely serve as

examples for Plutarch or his companions to prove their point. However, the Late Hellenistic mindset regarding afterlife, judgement and revelations can be reconstructed from it.

Revelations can be divided into visions, dreams or texts containing an otherworldly journey. Combinations of these themes are also possible. Many Jewish apocalypses contain several of these traits. Otherworldly journeys are common in the Greek tradition as well.

How are revelations received?



Heaven is depicted as a temple in several Jewish apocalypses. This can be because the author of a text thinks the temple in Jerusalem is especially holy, or because he thinks a new temple is necessary because of pollution that has entered this temple. Priests perform duties in the temple on earth, but in heaven, angels take the role of priests. The *Revelation of John* is one of the most exquisite examples of an apocalypse that contains visions and an elaborate description of heaven as a temple. The text pictures judgement scenes and incorporates many Jewish eschatological traits.

I consciously decided in this paper to concentrate on comparison, instead of trying to unravel the tradition of eschatological tendencies through the ages. The main lines of what I found will be clear by now, and especially the changing idea about afterlife and resurrection is remarkable.

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