Christian Apocalyptic Rhetorolect
Part I: Empire, Destruction, and Transformation

Introduction
The primary internal dynamic of early Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect is God’s dramatic transformation of the created world into a totally righteous and holy space with the assistance of heavenly beings who perform various tasks for God. Some Mediterranean discourse presented a range of processes that would cause the universe eventually to become a fiery mass where all created things would be destroyed.\(^1\)

Biblical (Jewish) apocalyptic discourse emerged in the form of information that existed in heaven that God made available in various ways to humans on earth. A basic message of the information was that God would ultimately change the nature of the created world through divine actions from heaven.

Biblically-oriented apocalyptic focuses on evil in the world that results from actions that violate divinely established boundaries throughout the entire universe. In other words, apocalyptists believe that evil is not something that exists in certain limited regions of God’s universe. Rather, there is evil in the universe that is so aggressive and comprehensive that it corrupts God’s entire world. As apocalyptists attempt to understand how such widespread evil could exist in a world that God intended to be good and righteous, most of them focus on the activities of one or more of the following: (1) the angel spirits God created in heaven; (2) the first human God created on earth; (3) humans who tried to build a tower into the heavens; (4) nations that have tried, or are currently trying, to rule over all humans on earth. Apocalyptists are not unified in their account of how the incredible, horrendous evil that exists in the world came into existence. They do agree, however, that evil has somehow aggressively pervaded and corrupted God’s good universe, that the way this happened is so complex that the answers lie

outside the realm of the usual human means and capacities for understanding, and that these answers exist in the heavens, where they are mysteriously hidden.

For apocalyptists, then, there is no way that even the most intelligent, perceptive human can understand the nature of evil in the universe by careful observation, meditation, and reflection on things that are visible to the eye and audible to the ear in God’s created world. The only possibility for understanding lies outside God’s visible, created world. Fortunately, apocalyptists believe, there have been very special people whom God has allowed on certain unusual occasions to see dreams or visions, or to hear picturesque pronouncements by angels, that reveal heavenly mysteries. These people were shown the origins, internal nature, and pandemic proportions of evil, and they were shown God’s plans for redemptive transformation. Perhaps the most fortunate thing, however, is that, at the time these special people saw and heard what they did, either God or an angel told them to write everything down so other people could learn about these things by having someone read to them what they wrote.

In the context of the multiple answers apocalyptists give for the origins and proportions of evil in God’s universe, two major streams of apocalyptic emerge by the first century CE that are important for understanding apocalyptic conceptuality in early Christian literature. The first stream can be called angel-spirit apocalyptic and the second can be called earth-material apocalyptic. Angel-spirit apocalyptic focuses on the ministering spirits God created to oversee all things in God’s universe and how specific actions of these heavenly angel-spirits with human blood and flesh produced evil, unclean spirits on earth led by a master rebel against God. Major topics in this tradition are blood desire and decay that leads to death. The emergence of evil, unclean spirits creates counter-spheres of actions by good, holy, and eternal angel-spirits and evil, corrupt demon-spirits that raise difficult questions about the relation of beings in the realm of human life to beings in the realm of heaven. Earth-material apocalyptic, which represents a shift in focus in the context of spirit-angel apocalyptic, focuses on the manner in which both heavenly and earthly beings take on characteristics of earthly substances as they carry out their roles in the heavens and earth that God created. Major topics in this tradition are political power and wealth. The “earthly” characteristics focus both on the earthly “materials” of clay, metal, and stone and on earthly kinds of “flesh,” both wild and domesticated. Just as clay, metal, and stone cover a span from “ordinary” forms to sculpted, refined, and “precious” forms, so flesh covers a span from “wild” animals to domesticated animals of value in the agricultural-city domain of human society. Major topics in the earthly
“material-flesh” tradition are power and wealth. The presence of beings both in heaven and on earth whose earth-material bodies, instruments, and possessions exhibit their power to build and destroy raises perplexing questions about the nature of both heavenly and earthly realms. As this stream of tradition develops within spirit-angel apocalyptic, it focuses on cities, both in the heavens and on earth, as spaces where either that which is good, holy, and eternal or that which is evil, unholy, and temporary exists. In other words, the earth-material apocalyptic stream, in particular, exhibits a focus on “urban” worlds which rulers use as bases for local power and far-reaching destruction of others, and where people accumulate wealth in a manner that causes large numbers of people to live in poverty and starvation. The “answer” from the heavens is the creation of an “alternative city” with everlasting protection, eternal health and food, and wealth characterized by “refined” and “precious” earth materials which are pure and holy.

Both the angel-spirit tradition and the earth-material tradition embedded in it make visible to humans, who are a blend of spirit-blood-flesh and earth material, the complexity of “embodiments” of both good and evil throughout the entire universe. Embodiments both in heaven and on earth reveal the nature of blood desire and political power, which preserve and protect their own sphere and devour and destroy other spheres. The relation of the spirit-body nature to the earth-material nature of both heavenly and earthly beings in apocalyptic literature reveals that God’s “created” world, whether it be the heavens God created or the earth God created, has ironies, paradoxes, and conflicting forces internal to its inner fabric. God’s world is, then, truly puzzling. Why would God create a world that is so problematic? One basic answer apocalyptists give is God’s love of creating order. Another is God’s desire to be praised through worship and song. Apocalyptists wrestle with these questions in the midst of many other related questions and provide answers of various kinds on the basis of what they have seen and heard in the heavens. As this present chapter unfolds, we will see how the book of Daniel in the Hebrew Bible contains a blend of traditions that becomes especially important for understanding apocalyptic in first century Christian writings. In the language of cognitive scientists, the book of Daniel becomes an “emergent structure” of great importance for the blends that occur during the first century CE. Our approach will focus on what happens to angel-spirit and earth-material apocalyptic when first century Christians present God’s Messiah Jesus as a major personage in the apocalyptic story of the world.

As we continue this discussion of early Christian apocalyptic, it is important to distinguish, in a manner slightly different from previous chapters, among apocalyptic speech genres (oral and written), "biblical" apocalypses, "biblical" apocalyptic literature, apocalyptic discourse, and early Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect. The placement of the term biblical in quotation marks points to literature and streams of tradition related to the Hebrew Bible and the Christian Bible that are not actually in either biblical canon. Much of this literature, then, exists in what is regularly called "the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha."

In contrast to wisdom and prophetic literature, multiple instances of "typical" apocalyptic literature do not exist in the Hebrew Bible. When John J. Collins described in 1979 what he considered to be "a general consensus among modern scholars" about "a phenomenon which may be called 'apocalyptic,'" he presented "an ill-defined list" that included "the Jewish works Daniel (chaps. 7-12), 1 Enoch, 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch and the Christian book of Revelation." One notices immediately that there is reference to six chapters of one book in the Hebrew Bible (Daniel), one deuterocanonical or apocryphal book (4 Ezra), two pseudepigraphical writings (1 Enoch, 2 Baruch), and one NT writing (Revelation). Here we see that apocalyptic was an emerging phenomenon after the fall of the nation of Israel, rather than a centripetal "form-shaping ideology" in Israelite culture that produced multiple instances of apocalyptic writings in the Hebrew Bible. Here we recall Paul D. Hanson's distinction between prophetic and apocalyptic literature, and his explanation for it:

After 587 the picture changes. Israel's political identity as a nation comes to an end. The office of kingship ends. The prophets no longer have the events of a nation's history into which they can translate the terms of Yahweh's cosmic will. Hence the successors of the prophets, the visionaries, continue to have visions, but they increasingly abdicate the other dimension of the prophetic office, the translation into historical events. At that point we enter the period of the transition from prophetic into apocalyptic eschatology. Apocalyptic literature emerged when the people of Israel were ruled over by "nations of the world." As "Ezra" states in 4 Ezra 4:22-23: "I

3 Hanson, The Dawn of Apocalyptic, 16.
do not wish to inquire about the ways above, but about those things that we daily experience: why Israel has been given over to the nations in disgrace; why the people whom you loved has been given over to godless tribes, and the law of our ancestors has been brought to destruction and the written covenants no longer exist. In this context, apocalyptic visionaries envisioned God’s reign as rule over the entire world as a cosmic empire. God’s focus is not simply on a particular “kingdom” on earth, but on ruling over all the nations and empires in the world. But there is also another dimension. When apocalyptic visionaries have their special experiences of receiving knowledge that has been mysteriously hidden in the heavens, either an angel or a voice from heaven tells them to write down what they have seen and heard. In the words of Jonathan Z. Smith, building on Paul D. Hanson’s insights:

In the Near Eastern context, two elements are crucial: scribalism and kingship. The situation of apocalypticism seems to me to be the cessation of native kingship; the literature of apocalypticism appears to me to be the expression of archaic, scribal wisdom as it comes to lack a royal patron.5

As apocalyptic literature expanded the Israelite prophetic focus on God’s cosmic will for God’s kingdom on earth to a focus on God’s status as eternal emperor over the entire cosmic world as God’s empire, it also emphasized the role of the seer as a writer. This produced a view of apocalyptic literature as authoritative writing that communicated new, previously hidden, heavenly knowledge in a direct manner that not only supplemented, but in important ways superseded, all other “scripture,” including the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings. Apocalyptic literature, and along with it apocalyptic discourse, functioned as an “all-consuming” mode of writing and conceptualization. Apocalyptists brought all the authoritative dimensions of wisdom, Torah, and prophecy into the service of a “totalistic” way of viewing all the actions of God in every time and space in the universe.6

In The Apocalyptic Imagination, which was published five years after the Semecia volume that reported the results of the SBL Literary Genres Project on apocalyptic, John J. Collins reiterated the definition of an apocalypse advanced by the members of the Project:

Specifically, an apocalypse is defined as “a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an other-worldly 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."

Then he asserted that “this definition can be shown to apply to various sections of 1 Enoch, Daniel, 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch, Apocalypse of Abraham, 3 Baruch, 2 Enoch, Testament of Levi 2–5, the fragmentary Apocalypse of Zephaniah, and with some qualification to Jubilees and the Testament of Abraham (both of which also have strong affinities with other genres)” and “to a fairly wide body of Christian and Gnostic literature and to some Persian and Greco-Roman material.” One notices five important shifts in the list as he applies the definition of apocalypse “to various sections” of writings. First, the Hebrew Bible book of Daniel is placed after 1 Enoch. Whether this positioning was conscious or unconscious, this ordering reflects the manner in which 1 Enoch in the Pseudepigrapha, of which major 2nd century BCE fragments were found at Qumran, was emerging as a model for apocalyptic literature that was either as important as or more important than Daniel in the Hebrew Bible. Second, the list of Pseudepigraphic writings is expanded beyond 2 Baruch to include Apocalypse of Abraham, 3 Baruch, 2 Enoch, Testament of Levi 2–5, and the fragmentary Apocalypse of Zephaniah. This expansion exhibits an awareness of how apocalyptic literature proliferated in Jewish culture outside of Christian circles. Third, the inclusion of Jubilees and Testament of Abraham indicates a growing awareness that some apocalyptic literature rewrites and reconfigures biblical tradition in a manner designed to exhibit “the real cosmic story” that was occurring during the time of biblical history, which sheds light on “the real significance of contemporary persons and events in history.” Fourth, the list adds Christian apocalypses, including Revelation in the NT, and Gnostic literature. This addition exhibits an awareness that there is an extensive Christian history of apocalyptic literature from the first through the fifth centuries CE and that a significant amount of Gnostic literature participates in this history. Fifth, the list adds Persian and Greco–Roman literature. This addition shows how apocalyptic literature was a widespread cultural phenomenon in the Mediterranean world. It was not limited to Jewish and Christian tradition, but for various reasons it was produced, valued, and promulgated in many regions of the world of late antiquity.

In the context of this wide range of apocalyptic literature, interpreters regularly do not present a taxonomy of apocalyptic speech genres,

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2. Ibid.
like they do for wisdom and prophetic discourse. Christopher Rowland, however, uses three primary apocalyptic speech genres whereby “knowledge of God and secrets of the world above, [are] revealed in a direct way”: (1) dreams; (2) visions; or (3) angelic pronouncements. These three speech genres, he proposes, regularly occur in a literary form that can be called “an apocalypse,” which contains a narrative introduction (sometimes called a “legend”) that establishes a context for the dream, vision, or angelic pronouncement. Often the seer who receives the communication engages in dialogue with the intermediary, asking questions and sometimes offering an interpretation that the intermediary evaluates as significantly lacking in understanding. Many times the intermediary presents an explicit interpretation of the dream, vision, or pronouncement to the seer. Sometimes there are admonitions after the visionary disclosure.

By the first century CE, apocalyptic had emerged as a cultural system of belief within Judaism. In other words, in the language of cognitive science it had become an idealized cognitive model (ICM). As we recall, an ICM contains argumentative-enthymematic structuring, image-descriptive structuring, metaphoric mapping, and metonymic mapping.

In the case of apocalyptic, it is important to discuss the image-descriptive structuring before the argumentative-enthymematic structuring. In apocalyptic, the discourse introduces theses, rationales, and conclusions to the hearer/reader through exceptionally picturesque scenes. The specificity and concreteness of apocalyptic discourse lies in revelation to specific people, display of very detailed descriptions of beings (God, beasts, evil personages, good personages), display of spaces (bountiful gardens, beautiful cities, spaces of punishment, spaces of worship, altars, temples, walls), and display of procedures (programmatic destruction of portions of the earth, specific procedures of torture, specific processes of journey of a righteous soul into heaven and then into the paradise of jubilation, specific processes of journeys through the heavens and throughout the cosmos). Through these

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11 Ibid., 49-52.
visual descriptions, apocalyptic discourse creates vivid pictures of personified desire, evil, sin, death, etc. Evil is not simply hardness of heart; it is personified in “the devil.” Desire is not simply something in the heart; it is personified as “angels of God impregnating beautiful maidens on earth.” Sin is not simply a state of disobedience; it is pictured as estrangement from the glory of God, which produces nakedness that requires people to cover their bodies with clothes. In turn, death is personified as something fierce, violent, and evil, and it can be destroyed and thrown into a burning fire in the depths of the earth.

In the context of the image-descriptive structuring, argumentative-enthymematic structuring configures all time (past, present, and future) and all space (cosmic, earthly, and bodily) in terms of good and holy or evil and corrupt. This argumentative structuring occurs through a combination of theses and rationales that summarize attributes and actions of God in the past, present, and future in relation to the actions of humans and good and evil spirits both on earth and in the heavens in the past, present, and future. The effect of these theses and rationales is to make God’s actions in all time (past, present, and future) and all space (heaven, earth, Sheol, etc.) into the Rule that governs Cases and Results. In other words, the rule is not limited to God’s giving of Torah (wisdom discourse), God’s choosing of particular individuals or groups (prophetic discourse), God’s intervention in particular unusual circumstances (miracle discourse), or God’s removal of sin through sacrificial offerings (priestly discourse). Rather, the Rule in apocalyptic discourse evokes all of God’s actions at all times and in all spaces. All past, present, and future events (human and divine) are “God’s story” that creates a universe where righteousness is preserved and unrighteousness is destroyed. The Cases feature “the identification” of those who are righteous and those who are evil. The Results feature the manner in which the righteous will be preserved and the unrighteous will be destroyed.

In the context of this argumentative-enthymematic structuring, regularly there is an explicit command to the seer to write down what he has seen and heard. Sometimes there also are commands that what is written down must be read to others, and occasionally there are prohibitions against anyone changing any of the wording of what is written down. This has caused Jonathan Z. Smith and others to emphasize that one of the major effects of apocalyptic as a speech genre is its “scribalization” (making into written “letters” [grammata] or “scripturalization”
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The overall result of apocalyptic discourse, then, is that “the entire biblical story” becomes “scripture”: God’s written “Word” that produces the Rules for being preserved or being destroyed. This means that the story of God in the Hebrew Bible is simply the beginning of God’s story. God’s story continues into the present and into the future as a promise of transformation of evil into destruction and good into redemption. Thus, apocalyptic discourse authorizes not only its own interpretation of the past biblical story but also its interpretation of post-biblical events as “scripture,” since all of God’s ongoing story is “Rule” that enacts “Results” on “Cases.”

The experience of Jews, and then of Christians, of imperial rule over them created a new metaphoric mapping, namely a mapping of eternal emperor onto God and eternal empire onto the cosmos. God was not simply the cosmic king in the heavens. Apocalyptic visionaries pictured God as an eternal emperor who ruled over “God’s empire,” which was the entire universe. Apocalyptists do not regularly refer to God as “King” either of the heavens or of the earth, as is often present in prophetic literature. Rather, God is “the Most High” (ho hypsistos), the one who is above everyone and everything, including time. Various apocalyptic writings list a series of titles for God in their attempt to communicate this “highest” status. Daniel 2:47, for example, refers to God as “God of gods, Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries.” 1 Enoch 1:3 refers to “the God of the Universe, the Holy Great One”; 1 Enoch 37-71 refers regularly to “the Lord of the Spirits” and “the Antecedent of Time”; 1 Enoch 63:2 refers to “the Lord of the Spirits, the Lord of kings, the Lord of rulers, the Master of the rich, the Lord of glory, and the Lord of wisdom.” 1 Enoch 63:4 adds: “Now we have come to know that we should glorify and bless the Lord of kings – him who rules over all kings.”

In the place of the sage or the prophet, then, came the visionary, the seer who had seen, heard, and written down what is mysteriously hidden in the heavens. The primary social-cultural-ideological location and institution that produced a valuing of the apocalyptic seer was the experience of an empire, which made multiple nations subservient to it. The conceptuality in apocalyptic moves beyond “kingdom,” which has limited boundaries on earth, to “eternal empire,” which includes all time and all space. In a context, then, where all of scripture was being “sapi-

15 The “Commander-in-chief” (archistratēgos) Michael, is being elusive with Abraham when, in Test. Abraham 2:6 (Rec. A), he tells Abraham that he has come from “the great city,” sent by “the great king.”
entialized” and selected portions of scripture were being made into “prophetic story,” apocalyptic literature introduced “scribalization” or “scripturalization” that made writings into authoritative communications directly from God.16 These writings presented a “totalistic” view of God’s power in a context where God had created a world that introduced “visible” time and space into the universe. The earthly institution of “imperial government,” namely a form of rule that potentially extended over all nations, people, and regions of the earth, provided the metaphoric mapping. God’s eternal empire is the context for visible, bodily, earthly, experience-based images for communicating knowledge about God in apocalyptic literature and discourse.

Metonymic mapping in apocalyptic discourse occurs in the form of assertions, words, or phrases that invite people to recruit totalistic, picturesque scenes in their mind. Apocalyptic literature features scenes that contain explicit action, imply action, or are the result of action. Some of the prominent metonymic assertions for these scenes are: (1) the heavens “opened” or “split apart”; (2) a fiery throne became visible (perhaps with the Lord God sitting on it); (3) “the dead were raised” or “the earth gave back those who sleep in it”; (4) the righteous were victorious over death; (5) this age gave way to the coming age; (6) tribulations were worse than at any time since God created the earth; (7) a new earth or paradise came into view; (8) a new city came down to earth from heaven; (9) the Lord sat on the throne of judgment and books in heaven were opened. Any one of these assertions may invite a hearer or reader to recruit the entire conceptual system in their mind. Over time, many of these assertions were abbreviated into single metonymic words. Some of these words are: revelation, resurrection, tribulations, paradise, judgment, and end-time.

The time-space (chronotope) of early Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect is “partitioned” time in a context of “eternal empire” time. This partitioning creates at least the following “parts” of time: (1) before creation; (2) creation; (3) Adam; (4) Noah; (5) Abraham; (6) Moses; (7) David, Solomon, and the kings of Israel; (8) the time of the nations; and (9) “that time” (the end of times or the end of “time”).17 The great sea, the heavens, mountains, cities, and spaces of sleep have special importance in the context of these parts of time. For humans, this means that “the time” in which one lives is important, and the space in which one lives is important in relation to the time. Since time exists in “parts,” it is important for humans to know the part of time in which they are living in a certain space. If a person misunder-

17 See the twelve parts of “that time” or “the end of times” in 4 Ezra 14:11-12 and 2 Bar 27: 53-70. Also, see 4 Ezra 14:10-18 for the concept that time grows old and weak.
stands the part of time in which they are living in a certain space, they may quite unknowingly do wrong things. One of the problems can be taking for granted there will be more time, when in fact time has “run out.” Another problem can be thinking time has run out in this space, when in fact there is a considerable amount of time left. Knowing the part of time in which one is living in a certain space is a way of knowing if there is a significant amount of time left, even if one does not know exactly how much time there may be. This concept of time and space requires, first and foremost, that a person be “alert to time” in their specific space. Earthly time and space are not something that simply last forever. Therefore, a person must “use” time in a particular space carefully and faithfully, because both time and space are limited. This makes time and space “precious” possessions, something to be valued highly and to be lived in wisely. To understand how precious they are, one must have help from people who have had the special opportunity to see into the special mysteries of time and space and to hear special interpretations of them. Simply looking at God’s created world might give a person the impression that in God’s world there is always plenty of time and space. If a person knows the insights of those who have seen into the special nature of God’s time in the context of all space in the universe, one will know there is a limited amount of time and space on earth and one must use them wisely in order for there to be any chance of receiving as an inheritance “the kind of time and space that never ends.”

Apocalyptic discourse functioned centrifugally in first century Christian writings, producing Gospels and Letters that contain many different kinds of apocalyptic features and dimensions. Sometimes there are only a few “conceptual” dimensions that appear here and there in a NT writing. At other times, there are assertions, word patterns, or phrases that foreground apocalyptic reasoning, if only for a moment in the discourse. In still other instances, one or more primary apocalyptic speech genres appear.

There are two NT letters in which apocalyptic words, phrases, and conceptuality are so prominent that they can appropriately be called apocalyptic letters: 2 Thessalonians and Jude. In addition, there are seven apocalyptic letters in Rev 2:1-3:22. Beyond this, there are important apocalyptic “moments” or “highpoints” in other letters: 1 Corinthians 15; 2 Corinthians 5, 12; 1 Thessalonians 4-5; 2 Peter 2-3; 1 John 2-4. Among the Gospels, Matthew contains the most explicit, sustained apocalyptic phrases and images, even though many interpreters consider Mark, with its ending in 16:1-8, to present a more “radical” apocalyptic view of the life of Jesus than Matthew.
Apocalyptic discourse was such an important aspect of first century Christian culture that centripetal forces nurtured it into a “form-shaping ideology” in the “Apocalypse to John” which, within four centuries, was placed in a position of “the final word” in the NT. Unlike any other known apocalypse prior to it, this writing uses the Greek word *apokalypsis* (revelation) like a title in the first verse:

1 Revelation of Jesus Messiah, which God gave him to show to his servants what must soon take place; and he made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, 2 who bore witness to the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Messiah, even to all that he saw. (Rev 1:1-2)

The apocalyptic discourse that follows this opening is earth-material apocalyptic embedded in angel-spirit apocalyptic. In the context of God as “the Alpha and the Omega,” “the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty (pantokratőr)” (1:8), Jesus Messiah (1:1-2, 5) is:

one like the Son of Man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash across his chest. 14 His head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; his eyes were like a flame of fire, 15 his feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of many waters. 16 In his right hand he held seven stars, and from his mouth came a sharp, two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining with full force. (Rev 1:13-16)

This is Jesus Messiah in the mode of earth-material apocalyptic. Jesus Messiah, who is a heavenly being, has characteristics of earthly substances. These characteristics portray Jesus Messiah in an apocalyptic tradition that focuses on political power and wealth, in which cities regularly play a major role. In this context, the earth-material is a blend of descriptions of “the Ancient of Days” in Daniel 7 and the angel Gabriel in Daniel 10. It will be necessary for us to explore this in detail in the next chapter. In this present chapter, it is necessary for us to set the stage for understanding the highly complex combination of apocalyptic images, concepts, arguments, and forms in NT writings. In the context of first century Christian literature, the Lord’s Messiah Jesus rules from heaven over Christ’s kingdom, until the end when everything is turned over to God. Apocalyptic literature expanded the Israelite prophetic focus on God’s cosmic will for God’s kingdom on earth to a focus on God’s status as eternal emperor over the entire cosmic world as God’s empire. First century Christian apocalyptic rhetoroelect used both the angel-spirit and earth-material streams of Jewish apocalyptic as it added Jesus as God’s Messiah to the conceptual system. The use of the two streams of tradition adds a complexity to first century Christian apocalyptic that presents a special challenge to NT interpreters. Since most interpreters do not approach the presence of apocaly-
tic in the NT from the perspective of these two related, interactive streams of tradition, a significant amount of new analysis and interpretation needs yet to be pursued. This chapter and the following one will start this new approach.

The Early Christian Apocalyptic Story-Line
In early Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect, special issues arise over the nature and times of God’s transformation of Jesus Christ when he is in various spaces in God’s universe. Since a primary emphasis of apocalyptic discourse is on time in particular spaces, early Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect focused on the nature of Christ from the time of his birth through the time when he became a heavenly being until the time when he will end all time in the future. We will see in the next volume that precreation discourse reconfigured apocalyptic discourse into an emphasis on Christ as a person who comes from non-time prior to the creation of the world, lives temporarily within human time and space, and then returns to the realm of non-time with God the Father. Early Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect, in contrast, focuses on Jesus Christ within human time and space. When human time and space is the realm of focus, the issue is the apocalyptic conception and birth of Jesus and successive transformations of Jesus into various forms as a personified agent of God’s holiness and power until the time when he will come to earth in the future to overcome all evil in the world.

Writings in the New Testament focus especially on six moments in the Hebrew Bible as they create an apocalyptic story of God’s world:

- The successful tempting of Adam and Eve by Satan, who is understood to be an evil angel cast out of heaven by God. Satan, working through Eve, caused God to cast Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden, and Satan continually causes people to go astray in the present;
- God’s taking of Enoch into heaven, where he oversaw God’s destruction of the world through a flood and the rescue of Noah by means of an ark that floated on the water;
- God’s destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah with fire from heaven;
- God’s sending of ten plagues against the Egyptians;
- God’s empowerment of “one like a son of man” in the heavens to have authority and power over kingdoms on earth;
- God’s development of a process of resurrection of the dead as a way to transport faithful people who have died away from an environment of divine destruction into an environment of eternal well-being.
One of the goals of early Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect is to answer the question: “How was evil able to invade the fabric of God’s good world with such force and power that God could decide at a future time to destroy everything he created, except some righteous people?” The schemes of Satan become one resource for answering this question. Sexual activity by heavenly beings and by humans becomes another resource for answering this question. The creation of idols for worship becomes yet another resource for answering this question.

For the Christian apocalyptic story, a series of moments within time became important for God’s apocalyptic transformations of Jesus. Mary’s conception of Jesus was an apocalyptic moment of transformation in which God created a heavenly being to be born into the world to oppose all personifications of evil both in the earthly realm of human life and in the realms of the heavens above and the abyss below. The baptism of Jesus was a special apocalyptic moment of transformation, when Jesus became a personification of God’s holy spirit who could withstand all testing by Satan and drive demons out of people who were possessed by evil spirits. The moment when God transformed Jesus into a brightly shining being while he was on top of a mountain with three of his disciples was a decisive apocalyptic moment that previewed his resurrection into heaven. One of the most important apocalyptic moments in Jesus’ life was his death, when God raised him from burial into eternal life and power. Another really decisive apocalyptic moment in Jesus’ activity, of course, will happen in the future when he subdues all evil powers and reigns victoriously over everything in God’s world, before turning it over to God. Any combination of these views work together in first century Christian discourse to present Jesus from an apocalyptic perspective. One of the focuses of transformation in early Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect, then, is on Jesus himself. Within this reasoning, one of the issues can be the combination of events that present God’s transformation of Jesus Christ into a personification of God’s holiness and power while he was on earth and when he is in the heavens after his death.

Not only Christ but also believers were a focus of God’s transformation in early Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect. Here various questions emerged. Does God transform believers into people who live in the benefits of an apocalyptically transformed world already at baptism? Does participation in the Lord’s Supper continually renew a believer’s participation in the benefits of an apocalyptic sphere of the world transformed by God? Does a believer enter the benefits of an apocalyptically transformed world at death or does a believer receive all the benefits of God’s transformed world only at a later time when all the
dead will be resurrected? Thus, believers also are a focus of God’s powers of transformation in early Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect.

In addition to Jesus Christ and believers, the world is a focus of God’s activities of transformation in early Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect. Did God begin to transform the world apocalyptically with the appearance of the angel Gabriel to Zechariah to announce to him the birth of John the Baptist who would prepare the way for Jesus? Was the dramatic beginning of God’s apocalyptic transformation of the world the conception of Jesus in the womb of Mary while she was still a virgin? Did God’s apocalyptic transformation of the world begin with John the Baptist’s preaching of the coming judgment of God? Did God’s apocalyptic transformation of the world begin with Jesus casting demons out of possessed people? Did God’s apocalyptic transformation of the world begin with Jesus’ crucifixion? Did God’s apocalyptic transformation of the world begin with Jesus’ resurrection from the dead? Will God’s apocalyptic transformation of the world begin only when Jesus comes from heaven to earth in the future? Will God apocalyptically transform the world only after Jesus returns to earth and rules over it 1,000 years? Thus, the world itself is a focus of God’s powers of transformation in early Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect, and points of view varied among early Christians concerning exactly how God’s powers worked to effect these changes.

Early Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect is dramatically focused on God’s transformation of special people like Jesus, believers and unbelievers, the world, and even time itself. This means that God’s activities of transformation are not limited to the abilities or efforts of humans to transform themselves through repentance and obedience, nor are they limited to the abilities or efforts of humans to transform themselves during their time of life on earth. Rather, early Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect focuses on powers of transformation that lie outside the realm of human life and outside the realm of time itself. The processes of transformation come from the realm of God and concern God’s transformation of humans, the world, and time itself into “heaven-like” personages and spaces, and into eternal “non-time.” Time is transformed beyond the cycle of conception, birth, life, and death into eternity.

Early Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect moves toward its goals by blending human experiences of living in an empire, which inhabitants of the empire perceive to extend over the entire inhabited world and to be ruled by an emperor who lives far away in an imperial household, with God’s heavenly world, where God rules as emperor over the heavens, the earth, the seas, the abyss, and personified agents of good and evil in the cosmos. This conceptualization emphasizes that God is ultimately in control of all things everywhere. Nothing visible
or invisible to humans escapes God’s power of righteousness and holiness.

**Emperor, Empire, and Imperial Agents as Spaces for Apocalyptic Rhetorolect**

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As early Christianity extended its presence throughout the Roman empire, its apocalyptic rhetorolect emphasized the eternal nature of God’s rule over everything, in a context where kingdoms rise and fall through war, famine, earthquake, disease, and other disasters. This created a special emphasis on eternal time, which apocalyptic rhetorolect refers to as ages, epochs, or eras. These ages, epochs, and eras transcend the time periods of various kingdoms on earth. This focus gives new meaning to references to God as Almighty or Most High, now emphasizing the nature of God as a divine being who transcends concepts of kingship. In early Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect, God is not simply King of kings and Lord of lords. In Revelation, God is the Almighty, the one who was, is, and ever will be. In turn, the heavenly Jesus Christ is the King of kings and Lord of lords. Jesus Christ is the highest personified agent who will assist God with the establishment of divine rule over all that exists. In the view of early Christians, God is the powerful one beyond all kingly powers, including the powers of Jesus Christ. For them, God has authorized and empowered the heavenly Jesus Christ to rule over all earthly kings and powers, until they are entirely under his control. When Jesus Christ has established this control over all earthly powers, he will turn “his kingdom” over to God, the Almighty (Pantokrat ρ), who rules over all things eternally.

In early Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect, God transforms Jesus into different bodily and heavenly forms as he functions as the highest personified agent in God’s establishment of divine rule over all that exists. When Jesus is an earthly being, God transforms him into a human form to ascend into heaven. Jesus is then transformed into a divine heavenly form to establish God’s rule over everything. This transformation highlights the dual nature of Jesus, as both human and divine, emphasizing his role as the Messiah who will fulfill God’s divine plan.

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personage with the ability to drive evil spirits out of humans, and at certain moments God transforms Jesus into a shining angel-like being or a being who can walk on water while he is on earth. After Jesus dies, God transforms Jesus into a heavenly being. Once Jesus becomes a heavenly being, he is able to take various personified forms like an angel, a heavenly blend of God and angels, a judge who sits on a throne, a lion, a ram, or a warrior. Indeed, through various processes of transformation, the heavenly Christ becomes a being whose powers are greater than all the eternal ministering angel spirits God created on the first day of the creation of the world. In other words, early Christians “Christianize” Mediterranean apocalyptic discourse by placing Jesus Christ in various roles where God has transformed him into a personage who embodies the transformative powers that God puts into play at the end of time. Through multiple transformative processes, God gradually but faithfully overcomes all forms of evil power in the universe to create a realm where righteous and holy people can be eternally in the presence of God, the heavenly Jesus Christ, and angels and saints who continually praise and worship God.

As a result of its emphases, early Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect does not allow a localization of focus on “the heart,” as in prophetic rhetorolect, but focuses on the heart as part of the holiness or unholiness of the entire human body. This will bring us to a discussion of priestly rhetorolect in the next volume. The transformation of the body includes the entire human body, and apocalyptic rhetorolect entertains the possibility of the transformation of the entire body through destruction as well as redemption. This focus produces two central topoi of apocalyptic discourse: “flesh” and “blood.” Entire flesh and blood bodies may be destroyed through fire and disintegration, or they may be redeemed through ritual or other physical processes that destroy physical, temporal, or sinful aspects of flesh and blood bodies. From the perspective of the reasoning internal to apocalyptic discourse, these processes are related to “refinement by fire,” an image that regularly hovers nearby in apocalyptic discourse. A primary result of apocalyptic processes is movement either toward the transformation of a human body into a heavenly-like being or into destruction. There may be a stage in which a human body is transformed into a new creation while it is still on earth. Or a human body may only be partially transformed, with complete transformation only occurring at the time of death. In fact, apocalyptic discourse itself is a rhetorical ritual. Through its assertions and argumentation, it recreates all regions of time and
space in the body and in the world on the basis of their relation to the sacred or the profane.\textsuperscript{20}

Apocalyptic discourse sometimes transforms humans into heavenly beings without any special process of destruction. Especially as a result of God’s destruction of evil through the story of Noah and the flood, believers may perceive rituals with water to be a special means for people to experience transformation from flesh and blood beings into beings living in an apocalyptically transformed sphere in the world. At other times, apocalyptic discourse transforms people through processes of destruction. God is the one, of course, who decides such things. Apocalyptic discourse simply reports them. Humans are the recipients of God’s decisions, in a context where everything God decides was preordained before the ages. The discourse reports the effects of God’s actions through its assertions and argumentation.

The focus on the eye in early Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect emphasizes seeing beyond the earthly realm into the mysteries of the heavens. In contrast to wisdom rhetorolect, which focuses on what is visible to the eye in the realm of earthly life, apocalyptic rhetorolect considers it not very helpful to look at the created world to understand the mysterious ways of God. Since the created world is so filled with evil, the primary things the eye may see are chaos, destruction, hatred, and division. To understand the nature of God, therefore, a person must gain vision into the heavens. Only by seeing what is happening in the heavens can one see the ways in which God is transforming the world and its people at present, and will more dramatically transform the world and its people in the future.

The effect of apocalyptic rhetorolect in early Christian discourse was primarily threefold. First, early Christians produced scenes focused on processes initiated by God from the heavens that had produced in the past, were producing in the present, or would produce in the future dramatic transformations of the created world. Second, early Christians revised biblical story-lines into eras in which personified agents of evil continually and aggressively invaded God’s created order since the time of creation to produce disorder, suffering, violence, destruction, and death. Third, they created new story-lines that presented the actions of personified agents of God’s holiness and power who played a role in the past, play a role in the present, and will play a role in the future to create well-being for believers.

Extra-Biblical Apocalyptic Reconfiguration of Biblical Stories and Story-Lines

For the story-line of apocalyptic discourse, it is necessary to put writings outside the biblical canon in a primary position for interpretation. The reason is that a major rhetorical effect of apocalyptic discourse is a rewriting of the biblical story in a manner that sets good, holy, righteous spirits in opposition to evil, polluted, unrighteous spirits from the beginning of creation until the end of the ages. An interpreter can see how this rewriting worked only by including a wide range of Jewish literature that began to play a significant role in Jewish life during the second century BCE and continued to be written throughout the time of the emergence of Christianity. For reasons that will be explained below, it is important for us to begin with the pseudepigraphical writings entitled *Jubilees* and *1 Enoch*.

*Jubilees* could be called “The Revelation to Moses,” except that the writing does not feature the kinds of “heavenly events” throughout that interpreters regularly expect in an apocalyptic writing. The apocalyptic dimensions of the writing emerge from the reconfiguration of Moses’ forty days and forty nights on Mount Sinai. Instead of the Lord giving to Moses only the “two stone tablets of the Law and the commandment,” the Lord revealed to him what (was) in the beginning and what will occur (in the future), the account of the division of all the days of the Law and the testimony (*Jub.* 1:4). In other words, the Lord revealed to Moses an apocalyptic account of the beginning of time until the end of time. Since time began with God’s creation of the world, the story-line God tells Moses begins with this event. As the story unfolds, the “earthly” end point in view is Israel’s conquest of the land of Canaan. The story is an angel-spirit apocalyptic story. Every event in the story-line stands under the “Day of Judgment” that will come at the end of time, after events in history in which good and evil spirits have played a major role.

Since *Jubilees* reconfigures only certain events in the biblical story into events that are properly interpreted as apocalyptic, it is important to start with its story-line and to correlate various events in its story-line with accounts in *1 Enoch* as the story-line unfolds. Overall, stories in which good and evil spirits are actors can appropriately be identified as stories the writer has reconfigured into apocalyptic events. The inability of good spirits to rule decisively over evil spirits is a result of

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21 Since major portions of both *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees* were found among the manuscripts of the Qumran writings, it is clear that they were composed by 100 BCE; see George W.E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1* (Hermeneia: Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001); James C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees* (Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001); Carey, *Ultimate Things*, 69-76.

22 Exod 31:18; Deut 9:11; Exod 32:15; *Jub.* 1:1;
complications built into God’s decision to include flesh and blood living creatures who communicate through language in the created world, both through internal processes in their “flesh” and “blood,” and through their vulnerability to influence by evil spirits. Flesh and blood living beings continually are agents of evil in God’s created world. One of the rhetorical effects of the reconfigured story is a confidence that God’s good spirits really do have the upper hand, even though they regularly function under conditions in which their powers are limited by the activities of evil spirits in God’s created world.

1 Enoch is a highly complex apocalyptic writing, containing a large number of scenes and discussions that provide information about apocalyptic writings prior to and during the second century BCE. 1 Enoch 1-36 is important for helping us understand how angel-spirit apocalyptic discourse reconfigured biblical story-lines both in and beyond the story-line of the Torah. While it would be good to have the space to work with apocalyptic sections in Isaiah and many other prophetic writings, it will be necessary for us to limit our discussion to writings that shed light on specific developments in early Christian apocalyptic discourse. For this, Daniel is especially important, and we will include portions of a few other writings in addition. The goal of this section is to provide a basic account of Jewish apocalyptic reconfigurations of the biblical story-line of God’s world by the first century CE, when Christianity emerged in the Mediterranean world.

God’s Creation of Good Angels on the First Day of Creation
One of the keys for understanding the inner workings of angel-spirit apocalyptic rewriting of the biblical story is God’s creation of good angels on the first day of creation. In Jub. 2:2-3, the angel of presence rehearses to Moses the decisive reconfiguration of Genesis 1 in the following manner:

2:2 For on the first day he created the heavens, which are above, and the earth, and the waters and all of the spirits which minister before him:
the angels of the presence,
and the angels of sanctification,
and the angels of the spirit of fire,

According to 1 En. 3:28, all living creatures spoke “with one another with one speech and language” until the serpent led Eve astray. After that, God stopped all the animals from speaking.

The chapter on early Christian priestly rhetorolect in the next volume will discuss how flesh and blood living beings can, through sacrificial activities, become agencies for redemption. This creates a context where even humans, as flesh and blood living beings, have the potential to be agencies for redemption.

and the angels of the spirit of the winds,
and the angels of the spirit of the clouds and darkness and snow and
hail and frost,
and the angels of resoundings and thunder and lightning,
and the angels of the spirits of cold and heat and winter and spring-
time and harvest and summer,
and all of the spirits of his creatures which are in heaven and on
earth.
And (he created) the abysses and darkness – both evening and night –
and light – both dawn and daylight – which he prepared in the
knowledge of his heart. Then we saw his works and we blessed
him and offered praise before him on account of all his works be-
cause he made seven great works on the first day. (Jub. 2:2-3 OTP
II: Wintermute)

On the first day, God created seven things: the heavens, the earth,
the waters, all the spirits that minister to him, the abysses, the darkness,
and light. At the end of the day, the spirits that minister to the Lord
God, rather than the Lord God himself, saw all the works God had
created. When they saw all of it, they “blessed him and offered praise
before him on account of all his works because he had made seven
great works on the first day” (Jub. 2:3). Apocalyptic reconfiguration
of the biblical story features God’s creation not only of all things includ-
ing the waters and the abysses, but it also features God’s creation of
“angel spirits” on the first day of creation. This creates a context
where, from the beginning, angel spirits “see” God’s creation and wor-
ship God for what God has created. It is important to notice that the
apocalyptic account of creation in Jubilees does not feature God as see-
ing everything that was created and calling it good. This leads to the
next observation.

One of the characteristics of apocalyptic discourse is an awareness
that not all of the created order is, in fact, good. There is no question
that it is “great”; but the reader soon begins to see that goodness does
not hold sway throughout all of it. It is not clear, for example, that the
waters, the abysses, and the darkness are good. It also becomes apparent
that not all of the ministering angel spirits God creates are good. On
the first day of creation, then, the judgment is that the creation God
made was “great.” It is a symbol of God’s remarkable power, a truly
remarkable feat of making things out of nothing. But is it good? The
unfolding story-line shows how the great creation God made had in-
ternal complications in it that provided multiple opportunities for evil
to begin, grow, and aggressively invade the wonderful world God had
made. On the first day, God created “great things,” which includes not
only the “good” things featured in Genesis 1, but also the waters, all of
the spirits that minister to him, the abysses, and the darkness (Jub. 2:2).
The important thing, from the perspective of Jub. 2, is that all these
things God “prepared in the knowledge of his heart” (Jub. 2:2), and the angel spirits saw God’s works, blessed God, and offered praise before God for these great works (Jub. 2:3). In other words, an apocalyptic account begins with created beings worshiping God. These activities by the angel spirits evoke inner workings of priestly discourse focused on the holiness of God, rather than with God’s seeing of goodness, which evokes inner workings of wisdom discourse focused on the production of goodness and righteousness in the world.

In apocalyptic discourse, actions that exhibit the greatness of God lead to a “sanctification” of the creation which finally makes everything “holy.” It will be necessary for us to pursue this in detail in the chapter on early Christian priestly rhetoric in the next volume. In this chapter and the next on early Christian apocalyptic rhetoric, it is important for us to see how difficult it is for God to work with flesh and blood living beings in the created world. In other words, the writers of apocalyptic literature perceive the most difficult problems within God’s creation to be a result of dealing with flesh and blood living beings in the world. But the problems do not simply “reside” in these flesh and blood beings. The overall problem resides in the relation of ministering angel spirits, all of whom have certain powers, to flesh and blood beings. When certain good angel spirits become evil in the context where they are carrying out their responsibilities of overseeing flesh and blood beings in the world, an interaction among evil spirits, good spirits, and flesh and blood beings sets the stage for all of the terrible things that cause God’s great creation to be an environment of evil spirits pitted against good spirits.

Ministering spirits are able to cause trouble within flesh and blood living beings, since there are so many ministering spirits and each one has a different role and different powers. In Jubilees, there are eight kinds of ministering spirits: (1) angels of presence; (2) angels of sanctification; (3) angels of the spirit of fire; (4) angels of the spirit of the winds; (5) angels of the spirit of the clouds and darkness and snow and hail and frost; (6) angels of resoundings and thunder and lightning; (7) angels of the spirits of cold and heat and winter and springtime and harvest and summer; and (8) all the spirits of his creatures which are in heaven and earth (Jub. 2:2). All of these ministering spirits should continually focus on the greatness of God. But what if they begin to use some of their powers to satisfy desires of their own, rather than simply to fulfill God’s work in the created world? What if their desires begin to focus more on things in God’s created world over which they are watching than on God who gave them the responsibility and power to watch over those things? This leads to the next important event in the reconfigured biblical story.
Sexual Violation of the Boundaries of Heaven and Earth by Sons of God

Angel-spirit apocalyptic contains a “cosmological” story that blames heaven for the aggressive evil that pervaded the entire world that God created. Angel-spirit apocalyptic discourse reconfigures Gen 6:1-5 into the major event when evil powers engaged in actions that began to create evil, disorder, unrighteousness, violence, destruction, and death in the world God had created to produce life. This apocalyptic reconfiguration is recounted or referred to in many places in Jewish literature after the second century BCE. First, let us look at the biblical account of the event in Gen 6:1-5 that apocalyptic discourse reconfigured:

1 When people began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them,
2 the sons of God saw that they were fair; and they took wives for themselves of all that they chose.
3 Then the LORD said, "My spirit shall not abide in mortals forever, for they are flesh; their days shall be one hundred twenty years."
4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days – and also afterward – when the sons of God went in to the daughters of humans, who bore children to them. These were the heroes that were of old, warriors of renown.
5 The LORD saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually. (Gen 6:1-5 NRSV)

This strange story in the Hebrew Bible presents sons of God, who are divine beings in heaven, violating boundaries between heaven and earth by developing sexual desire for beautiful daughters of men on earth, giving in to that desire, and bearing children with these human women. Angel-spirit apocalyptic discourse reconfigures this story on the basis of God’s creation of eight types of angel spirits on the first day of creation. Jub. 5:1-2 describes it this way:

5:1 And when the children of men began to multiply on the surface of the earth and daughters were born to them, the angels of the Lord saw in a certain year of that jubilee that they were good to look at. And they took wives from themselves from all of those whom they chose.

And they bore children for them; and they were the giants. 5:2 And injustice increased upon the earth, and all flesh corrupted its way; man and cattle and beasts and birds and everything which walks on the earth. And they corrupted their way and their ordinances, and they began to eat one another. And injustice grew upon the earth and every imagination of the thoughts of all mankind was thus continually evil.

There are six points of reconfiguration of the biblical story in Jub. 5:1-2 that are important for our understanding of apocalyptic discourse in this chapter and the next.

First, instead of referring to the heavenly beings as “sons of God,” Jub. 5:1 refers to them as “the angels of the Lord.” This exhibits a change from widespread Ancient Near Eastern mythology that recognizes the existence of many gods and children of gods. Apocalyptic discourse replaces the concept of many gods with the concept of many spirit beings. Within time, some of these spirit beings either become “false gods” or themselves help people to create false gods in the form of idols. Apocalyptic discourse reconfigures the concept of the existence of many gods in the world by having God create many ministering spirit angels of all kinds on the first day of creation.

Second, apocalyptic discourse presupposes that the birth of the giants to the children of men corrupted “all flesh,” which included “man, cattle, beasts, birds, and everything which walks on the earth” (Jub. 5:2). In apocalyptic discourse, humans are simply one of the many kinds of flesh and blood living creatures on earth. According to Jub. 3:28, all flesh and blood living creatures on earth shared two basic relationships at the beginning of creation. On the one hand, all had bodies of flesh and blood, unlike God’s ministering spirit angels, who had spirit bodies and did not procreate, because they possessed eternal life. On the other hand, all flesh and blood earthly creatures spoke “with one another with one speech and language” (Jub. 3:28). This changed after the serpent led Eve astray, which we will discuss below. After the serpent led Eve astray, God stopped all the flesh and blood living creatures except humans from speaking. This meant that after humans were cast out of the Garden of Eden, they still shared with animals “living

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27 In apocalyptic discourse, it was necessary for God to create all the ministering spirit angels on the first day of creation, because angels were created as eternal beings and not beings that procreated (see 1 En. 15:6-7). This creates a context were the angel of the Lord’s use of “we” throughout Jubilees means “we ministering angel spirits” who help God by performing all kinds of tasks for God.
flesh and blood on earth,” but animals could no longer converse with one another using one language, nor could they have conversation with humans.\footnote{This conflicts, of course, with the view that certain animals, like Balaam’s ass, could talk to certain humans!}

Third, the violation of the boundaries of heaven and earth by the ministering angel spirits produced “corruption of all flesh.” In a context where humans and creatures already were separated from one another by not being able to speak to one another with one speech and language, they became further separated from one another by special desires that developed “within all flesh.” As God says to the ministering spirit angels who had become evil:

You [used to be] holy, spiritual, the living ones, [possessing] eternal life; but now you have defiled yourselves with women, with the blood of the flesh begotten children, you have lusted with the blood of the people, like them producing blood and flesh, (which) die and perish.” (1 En. 15:4)

God explains that wives had not been created among the ministering spirit angels, because, being “spiritual, (having) eternal life, and immortal in all the generations of the world,” they did not need to procreate. Indeed, God had created the ministering spirit angels to dwell as eternal beings in heaven and not to dwell on earth (1 En. 15:6-7). All earthly living creatures, in contrast to them, were created as procreating flesh and blood creatures. They need to procreate, because flesh and blood lose their “living properties” and “perish,” that is, they disintegrate into “stuff like the earth” after a certain period of time when they have life.

Fourth, the reasoning about “all flesh” corrupting its way after the heavenly angels procreated with the earthly women appears to be based on a presupposition about the nature of spirit and spirit beings. In 1 En. 15:8-9, God explains that the giants born from the union of the angel spirits and the women are “evil spirits upon the earth.” The nature of these earthly evil spirits is that “evil spirits come out of their bodies” and travel around, doing evil both “on the earth and inside the earth.” The reasoning appears to be that “spirit,” in contrast to “flesh,” can travel anywhere and penetrate through anything and everything in God’s world. “Spirit breath” is necessary for all flesh and blood beings on earth to live. When angel-spirit entered into blood and flesh beings, angel-spirit mixed with blood inside flesh. Since “spirit” is not limited to the confines of a blood and flesh body, it can travel around anywhere on the earth or inside the earth. But now the “spirit” of these beings born to women are “eternal spirit” corrupted with blood, which dies. In other words, what was previously spirit-breath in hu-
mans had become “eternal spirit-blood” in flesh and blood beings on earth. This created earthly beings who possessed “eternal spirit that breathed with blood.” Prior to their existence on earth, these spirit beings had breathed with praise and worship of God (Jub. 2:3). The mixture of this heavenly spirit-breath with blood created “evil spirits on the earth,” because the breath of these beings sought the presence of blood and flesh rather than the presence of God. These evil spirits started pursuing flesh and blood beings rather than pursuing the tasks God had assigned for them in the world. As God explains:

“11 The spirits of the giants oppress each other; they will corrupt, fall, be excited, and fall upon the earth, and cause sorrow. They eat no food, nor become thirsty, nor find obstacles. 12 And these spirits shall rise up against the children of the people and against the women, because they have proceeded forth (from them). (1 En. 15:11-12)

The nature of these evil spirits is that “they will corrupt until the day of the great conclusion, until the great age is consummated, until everything is concluded (upon) the Watchers and the wicked ones” (1 En. 16:1). These spirits do not die “a natural death,” because they are impregnated with eternal spirit. The only way they will die, then, is if God destroys them. From the perspective of apocalyptic discourse, the birth of these giants brought “eternal evil” both onto the earth and inside the earth. The only way this eternal evil can be destroyed is if God at some time destroys it. In the meantime, this evil continually spreads into “all flesh” on the earth.

Fifth, a primary symptom of the corruption of “all flesh” was that all flesh and blood creatures began to eat one another. This means that flesh and blood animals began to eat other flesh and blood animals including humans, and humans began to eat flesh and blood animals including other humans. This was a violation of Gen. 1:29-30, where “every green plant” was given to flesh and blood creatures to eat and “every plant yielding seed” and “every tree with seed in its fruit” was given to flesh and blood humans to eat. This is important information since, according to apocalyptic discourse, evil spirits themselves do not eat food or become thirsty. Once God’s angel spirits entered into the flesh and blood of female flesh, however, “all flesh” on earth began to desire the pleasure of eating flesh and blood living beings (humans and all creatures became carnivorous, and humans even became cannibals). In other words, sexual desire within eternal spirits for flesh and blood spread into unrestrained desire within all flesh on earth to eat flesh and

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29 See 1 En. 7:4-5: So the giants turned against (the people) in order to eat them. 5 And they began to sin against birds, wild beasts, reptiles, and fish. And their flesh was devoured the one by the other, and they drank blood.

30 See 1 En. 15:11.
drink blood (1 En. 7:5). But the desire did not stop with eating and drinking. People began to kill each other simply to make the blood of other humans flow out onto the ground. In other words, “injustice grew upon the earth and every imagination of the thoughts of all mankind was thus continually evil” (Jub. 5:2). Respect among flesh and blood living beings, both among humans and between humans and other creatures, disappeared. All flesh and blood earthly beings began to eat one another and to drink each other’s blood. This disrespect grew into killing one another simply as a way of life. According to 1 En. 8:1, the ministering spirit angel named Azazel helped this process along by teaching “the people (the art of) making swords and knives, and shields, and breastplates.” This created a situation where Michael, Surafel, and Gabriel “saw much blood being shed upon the earth” and great “oppression being wrought upon the earth” (1 En. 9:1). In other words, sexual desire within heavenly beings caused the birth of earthly beings who not only desired to eat flesh and drink blood but also desired simply to cause the blood of other flesh and blood beings to run out on the ground.

Sixth, apocalyptic discourse embeds a statement by God about a short length of life by humans in Gen 6:3 into this overall story. As a result of the corruption of “all flesh” in the realm of God’s created world, God made a decision in the following words: “My spirit will not dwell upon humans forever; for they are flesh, and their days will be one hundred and ten years” (Jub. 5:8; Gen 6:3). This, of course, is a disastrous result and circumstance. It means that humans will not be blessed with long life, like they are promised in wisdom discourse, but will have short lives that end after one hundred and ten years.

In the apocalyptic story of the world, God regularly reveals another plan through another command, and in this instance God does two things. On the one hand, God commanded that all of his corrupted angels on earth “be uprooted from all their dominion” and bound by the good angels “in the depth of the earth” (Jub. 5:6). Second, God “sent his sword” among his corrupted angels, with the result that “they began to kill one another until they all fell on the sword and were wiped out from the earth” (Jub. 5:9). Then Jubilees adds:

10 And their parents also watched. And subsequently they were bound in the depths of the earth forever, until the day of great judgment in order for judgment to be executed upon all of those who corrupted their ways and their deeds before the Lord. 11 And he wiped out every one of them from their places and not one of them remained whom he did not judge according to all his wickedness. (Jub. 5:10-11)

31 Gen 6:3 gives the number as 120 years.
This event is recounted in early Christian apocalyptic rhetoric in two places. Most interpreters consider Jude 6 to be the earlier statement:

And the angels that did not keep their own position but left their proper dwelling have been kept by him in eternal chains in the nether gloom until the judgment of the great day. (Jude 6)

Then 2 Pet 2:4 presents the event as follows:

God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of deepest darkness to be kept until the judgment. (2 Pet 2:4)

According to the apocalyptic story, God cast those ministering angel-spirits who had become evil into a pit in the darkness in depths of the earth. God’s answer to the action of those ministering angel-spirits who turned evil was to uproot, destroy, bind, and imprison them in the depths of the earth.

Human Violations of Boundaries of Knowledge and Power between Heaven and Earth

As apocalyptic versions of biblical stories emerged from the second century BCE onward, a new emphasis was placed on boundaries God ordained for humans at the time of Noah. These boundaries existed in a context where God created a new and righteous nature in humans. This new and righteous nature was a gift that God gave. The people who received this new and righteous nature did not earn it through good actions, but they were simply given this nature as part of God’s ordaining of all things in the world. Jub. 5:12-13 explains it as follows:

12 And he made for all his works a new and righteous nature so that they might not sin in all their nature forever, and so that they might all be righteous, each in his kind, always. 13a And the judgment of all of them has been ordained and written in the heavenly tablets without injustice. (Jub. 5:12-13a)

Along with this new and righteous nature came God’s ordaining “without injustice” of judgment on all beings. These judgments are kept eternally in written tablets that are in heaven.

This ordaining of all things in the world changes the context for belief and action by humans. Once a person has a new and righteous nature, the emphasis is not on receiving a long life as a result of producing righteousness but on a necessity not to violate boundaries that God ordained for all things in the universe. Sins that bring about doom, therefore, are sins that violate boundaries God has ordained. Jubilees 5:13b-15 continues with this emphasis on boundaries:
And (if) any of them transgress from their way with respect to what was ordained for them to walk in, or if they do not walk in it, the judgment for every (sort of) nature and every kind has been written.

And there is nothing excluded which is in heaven or on earth or in the light or in the darkness or in Sheol or in the depths or in the place of darkness. And all their judgments are ordained, written, and engraved. (jub. 5:12-15)

From the side of heaven, the ministering angels violated boundaries between heaven and earth through sexual activity with blood and flesh humans on earth. How do the boundaries function from the side of the earth? It is important first to go to the story of Noah to see how it works there.

From the perspective of apocalyptic discourse, God saved Noah from the flood because God showed partiality to him for the sake of his sons. Once God shows partiality by creating a new and righteous nature in Noah, Noah’s “heart was righteous in all of his ways just as it was commanded concerning him. And he did not transgress anything which was ordained to him” (jub. 5:19). Most of the time, that is! Throughout the centuries, the stories of Noah alternate between accounts that emphasize his generosity to accounts that emphasize his focus on material things for himself. In a framework where interpreters struggled with Noah’s righteousness in relation to his transgressions, like his drunkenness (Gen 9:21), they agreed that God simply decided to change things through Noah. In contrast to the prophetic storyline where God chooses Abraham and Abraham demonstrates his righteousness by believing God’s promises, the apocalyptic storyline pays special attention to an emphasis that Noah simply “found favor in the sight of the Lord” (Gen 6:8). As apocalyptic writers struggled with how this could be, they solved the problem by reasoning that God had already at the time of Noah, prior to the time of Abraham, ordained that certain people of Israel would be righteous in all their ways. The people ordained by God to be righteous, however, continually faced the responsibility not to transgress the boundaries God had established throughout the universe. If they violated these boundaries, even they themselves would face doom.

In the context of the boundaries God established throughout the universe at the time of Noah, 1 Enoch 65 emphasizes that instead of God calling out to Noah, like he did to Abraham, Noah “went to the extreme ends of the earth” and cried out to his great grandfather Enoch in bitterness, “Hear me! Hear me! Hear me! … Tell me what this thing is which is being done upon the earth … perhaps I will perish with her in the impact” (1 En. 65:2-3). Immediately after a “tre-
mendous turbulence upon the earth” and a “voice from heaven,” Enoch came to Noah and asked him why he was crying out “so sorrowfully and with bitter tears” (1 En. 65:4-5). Instead of a story-line like prophetic discourse, where God speaks to Abraham, Moses, or Elijah, in the apocalyptic story-line a heavenly personage regularly speaks to the human on earth. In this instance the heavenly person is Noah’s great grandfather Enoch, whom God took into heaven at the end of his life (Gen 5:24). When Enoch comes to Noah and talks with him, the conversation again is characteristic of apocalyptic discourse. They talk about what has gone wrong with the entire earth and how God will judge all who dwell on earth to correct the situation. Enoch explains that an order of doom has been issued from heaven on all who dwell on earth (1 En. 65:6), because humans have acquired and are using a long list of secrets and powers they should not be using:

they have acquired the knowledge of all the secrets of the angels, all the oppressive deeds of the Satans, as well as their most occult powers, all the powers of those who practice sorcery, all the powers of (those who mix) many colors, all the powers of those who make molten images, how silver is produced from the dust of the earth, and how bronze is made upon the earth – for lead and tin are produced from the earth like silver – their source is a fountain inside (which) stands an angel, and he is a running angel. (1 En. 65:6-8)

Here we see how a major boundary between heaven and earth in apocalyptic discourse works from the side of humans on earth. In this account, humans have acquired heavenly knowledge and power that God ordained to remain secret from humans on earth. The personages who have taught these forms of knowledge and power to humans, naturally, are the evil angels, who, according to the apocalyptic story are also under an order of doom from God for violating this boundary of knowledge and power, as well as the sexual boundary of blood and flesh (1 En. 65:11). Noah will be spared from the doom that other humans face, Enoch tells him, because he is “pure and kindhearted” and “detests the secret things” (65:11). It is not, then, that Noah has righteously performed deeds according to Torah, since God has not yet given Torah to Moses. Rather, Noah did not transgress the boundaries between heaven and earth by desiring the secret knowledge of the angels.

Here, then, we see another side of the boundaries between heaven and earth. Angels are not to desire things that are particular to living beings on the earth, namely blood and flesh. In turn, humans are not to desire knowledge that is the particular wisdom of the angel-spirits in

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33 Rabbis had various opinions concerning how Noah did or did not fulfill certain stipulations of the Torah of Moses: see Ginzberg I:145-170.
charge of overseeing the entire universe. The irony, of course, is that apocalyptic discourse reveals secret knowledge in the heavens and tells stories about the ways in which a long list of humans acquire this knowledge through heavenly beings whom God gives the task of transmitting the knowledge. But the knowledge these good heavenly beings transmit to humans is secret knowledge God wants humans to have, rather than the secret knowledge that spirit angels have about the inner workings of the created world. As we will see below, there are two problems here. First, since angel-spirits are ordained to oversee every aspect of the universe, there is a boundary between the knowledge God ordained them to have and the knowledge God ordained humans to have. Second, when some angel-spirits became evil, they had the knowledge and power to do special things like sorcery, magic, mass rebellion against God, etc. In apocalyptic discourse, then, God is perceived to have ordained a boundary between heaven and earth concerning not only blood and flesh but also multiple kinds of knowledge and power. The story of the world, therefore, is an account of multiple kinds of violations of God’s boundaries both from the side of heaven and from the side of the earth.

The Flood and Reappearance of Evil Spirits in the Apocalyptic Story-Line

As apocalyptic discourse reconfigures the biblical story of the flood itself, certain angels are put in charge of releasing the waters of punishment underground (1 En. 66:1). Other angels make the ark out of wood for Noah (1 En. 67:2). Meanwhile, evil angels are imprisoned underground and tortured in water that becomes a fire that burns forever (1 En. 67:13). After the Flood occurs, all of the “purified” earth is assigned to the three sons of Noah. Shem was assigned to the middle of the earth (Jub. 8:12-16), Ham was assigned all the portion to the south and west (Jub. 8:22-24), and Japheth was assigned all the portion toward to the north and east (Jub. 8:25-29). Here the difference between the “kingdom” in view in prophetic discourse and the “world” in view in apocalyptic discourse is clearly evident. The perception is that the three sons of Noah are assigned to “all the land in the world,” since God is ruler of all the world. Our proposal above has been that this is a move beyond the concept of a kingdom like Canaan, namely a particular area of land ruled by a king, to an “empire” that people perceive to be all the region of the earth that is occupied by humans.

After all the purified earth has been assigned to the three sons of Noah, each of the sons has children, which leads to subdivisions of all the land to them (Jub. 9:1-13). A signal of problems in the future emerges when Noah asks his sons to swear an oath of curse:
And Noah made them all [the sons of Noah and their children] swear an oath to curse each and every one who desired to seize a portion which had not come in his lot. And they all said, “So be it and so let it be to them and to their sons forever in their generations until the day of judgment in which the Lord God will judge them with a sword and with fire on account of all the evil of the pollution of their errors which have filled the earth with sin and pollution and fornication and transgression.” (Jub. 9:14-15)

Again one sees the centrality of boundaries in apocalyptic discourse. So long as the sons of Noah and their sons do not transgress the boundaries of the particular area of land “ordained” to them, all will be well. When any one of them “desires” a portion outside his lot, on the day of judgment “the Lord God will judge them with a sword and with fire,” because what they have done causes “all the evil of the pollution of their errors” to fill “the earth with sin and pollution and fornication and transgression.” Here one sees yet one more means by which the earth becomes filled with sin, pollution, fornication, and transgression, rather than with all the good things God intended to fill the earth at the time of creation. This means that at least three kinds of “coveting” cause the earth to be filled with sin, pollution, fornication, and transgression. The first is the coveting of blood and flesh sex on earth by the sons of God; the second is coveting by humans of secret knowledge and power that God ordained only for the ministering spirit angels; and the third of coveting by humans for land that is ordained by God to be possessed by other humans. Coveting (desire for), then, is the source of sin, pollution, fornication, and transgression both in heaven and on earth. Apocalyptic discourse perceives actions of coveting to emerge both from heaven and from earth. The result of this universe-wide coveting is the filling of the entire universe with sin, pollution, fornication, and transgression.

According to the story-line of apocalyptic discourse, all of God’s attempts to disable the power of the evil spirits through imprisonment in the depths of the earth do not prevent the evil spirits from once again creating havoc on the earth. Just when one should expect that all the evil spirits were absent from the earth, they reappear in the affairs of humans:

1 In the third week of that jubilee the polluted demons began to lead astray the children of Noah’s sons and to lead them to folly and to destroy them. 2 And the sons of Noah came to Noah, their father, and they told him about the demons who were leading astray and blinding and killing his grandchildren. (Jub. 10:1-2)

In the context of the oath of a curse that Noah made his sons make, the reader could expect an implication near at hand that the demons
would be able to reappear when the sons of Noah began to seize each other’s land. The problem becomes so severe that the Lord God finally directs his good angels to bind all the evil spirits on the earth (Jub. 10:7). At this point, the chief of the evil spirits, Mastema (Satan), enters the story-line. He requests that God allow one-tenth of the evil spirits to remain on the earth under his control and place nine-tenths of them down in “the place of judgment” (Jub. 10:8–9). The reasoning of Mastema is that the ordained task of evil spirits is “to corrupt and lead astray” humans according to the judgment of Mastema. They have been ordained to do this “because the evil of the sons of men is great” (Jub. 10:8). In other words, even the task of the evil spirits has been ordained in the context of the evil inclination in humans, so some of the evil spirits should be allowed to continue their work under the guidance of Mastema! God agrees to this, and the good angels bind nine-tenths of the evil spirits in the place of judgment and leave the other one-tenth on earth “subject to Satan upon the earth” (Jub. 10:11). Here we see the remarkable turn in the apocalyptic story-line. The incredible evil that exists throughout the centuries of the world is a result of God’s willingness after the flood to leave one-tenth of all the evil spirits on earth under the command of Satan. God did this, according to the story, because Satan and evil spirits were ordained to perform a task of corrupting and leading humans astray in the context of the evil inclination in humans.

Once apocalyptic discourse introduces the conceptual framework that God ordained demons to corrupt and lead astray humans in the context of the evil inclination in humans, the stage is set for apocalyptic reconfiguration of all parts of the biblical story-line both before and after the flood. In other words, a major rhetorical effect of the apocalyptic concept of God’s ordaining of all events throughout history is the potential reconfiguration of all biblical stories from the beginning to the end into stories of conflict between God’s good spirits and the evil spirit-demons on earth led by Satan. The only question is which stories will be reconfigured by whom once the process of reconfiguration begins in the second century BCE.

**Apocalyptic Reconfigurations of the Garden of Eden**

Christian readers in particular might imagine that the story of Eve and the serpent in the Garden of Eden would be one of the first stories to be reconfigured into an apocalyptic story that features the serpent as Satan. This is not the case, however. In the earliest apocalyptic versions of the Garden of Eden, the serpent remains “the wisest of all creatures” in a context where good angel-spirits play a key role in overseeing the Garden. In Jubilees, the story of the Garden of Eden is reconfigured on
the terms of apocalyptic discourse only by including actions by good ministering angel-spirits of God. Forty days after Adam was created by God, the good angel-spirits brought him to the Garden of Eden from 'Elda, the land where God had created him (Jub. 3:32), and then eighty days after Eve had been created, they took her also to the Garden of Eden (Jub. 3:9, 12). Then later the good angel-spirits taught Adam how to till the land in the Garden of Eden (Jub. 3:15). When the serpent comes one day to the woman in the Garden and begins to talk with her (Jub. 3:17-19), he is simply the wisest of all the earthly creatures God created on the sixth day of creation. The serpent is not, according to the story in Jub. 3, the leader of the evil spirits on earth (Satan) who tricks the mother of all humans on earth, nor is he himself an evil spirit. Rather, he is simply the creature among all other creatures who is wise enough to know that if Adam and Eve eat the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden, their “eyes will become opened” and they “will become like gods” and “will know good and evil” (Jub. 3:19). Thus, even though good ministering angel-spirits are in charge of the Garden, the serpent is neither an evil ministering angel-spirit nor a creature who has been influenced by an evil angel-spirit.

Angel-spirit apocalyptic reconfiguration of the story of Eve in the Garden so that evil angel-spirits play a role, however, is close at hand. 1 En. 69:6 mentions, simply as an off-hand remark, that the angel Gader’el misled Eve. In addition, Gader’el showed humans how to kill people by hitting them and how to make instruments of death like “the shield, the breastplate, the sword for warfare, and all (the other) instruments of death to the children of the people” (1 En. 69:6). It is noticeable once again that there is no reference to Satan, the leader of the evil spirits on earth, as the one who persuaded Eve to eat from the tree. Rather, in this instance the evil angel-spirit who had detailed knowledge about warfare misled Eve.

Apocalyptic reconfiguration of the story of the Garden of Eden in a manner that is closer to the Christian story that emerged is present in The Life of Adam and Eve (Latin) and The Apocalypse of Moses (Greek), which were probably written sometime between 100 BCE and 200 CE.34 Both writings feature good angel-spirits and the devil, who sometimes takes the form of an angel.35 According to this version of the story, when Eve tells her children and her children’s children what happened in the Garden, she starts by saying that God divided the Garden between Adam and herself to guard over different parts of it. All the male animals were in Adam’s part, and all the female animals were in Eve’s part. Satan went into Adam’s part and tempted the ser-

34 OTP 2:252.
35 OTP 2:258-295.
pent to participate in a plan that would allow him to eat of the fruit of Paradise rather than the weeds that all the other animals ate. The primary thing the serpent would have to do was allow Satan to speak through his mouth at the proper time (ApMos 15:1—16:5). The serpent finally agreed to cooperate. When the angels of God went up to worship, Satan came in the form of an angel and sang hymns to God. Satan bent over the wall, like an angel, and asked Eve what she was doing in Paradise. When she told him God had placed her and Adam in Paradise to guard it and eat from it, the devil answered her through the mouth of the serpent. When the serpent tells her he knows they do not eat from every plant, she tells him about God’s command not to eat from the tree in the midst of the Garden (ApMos 17:1–5). Satan tells her there is no need for them simply to eat the food that the animals eat. In fact, when they eat of the tree, their eyes will be opened and they will be like gods, knowing good and evil, and this is why God had told them not to eat of it. Eve is still afraid to take of the fruit, even though she sees how beautiful it is (18:1–6). But after the serpent convinces her to open the gate and the serpent comes into Paradise, Satan, through the mouth of the serpent, tells her he has changed his mind and will not let her eat of the fruit. Then he makes her swear an oath that she will not eat of the fruit unless she also gives some to her husband. After she makes the oath, the serpent climbs the tree, sprinkles “his evil poison” of “covetousness” (desire) on the fruit, bends the branch down, and Eve takes it and eats it. At this point, Eve explains to her children that covetousness (desire) is the origin of every sin (19:1–3).

As Eve continues her story, she says that when her eyes were opened and she saw her nakedness, she realized she was “estranged from her glory,” and she wept about the oath she had taken. Meanwhile, the serpent comes down from the tree and vanishes (20:1–5). After covering herself with leaves from the tree from which she has eaten, Eve calls to Adam, “shows” him the “great mystery” of the tree, and quickly persuades him to eat. After he eats and sees what happens to him, he says, “O evil woman! Why have you wrought destruction among us? You have estranged me from the glory of God” (21:1–6). In the same hour they hear the archangel Michael sound his trumpet, calling the angels who watch the Lord God pronounce sentence on Adam. God came to Paradise seated on a chariot of cherubim, with angels praising him. All the plants of the Garden bloomed forth when God came, and “the throne of God was made ready where the tree of life was” (22:1–4). After God interrogates Adam at some length (23:1–5), God pronounces three sentences. Adam’s sentence is hardship tilling the earth and having the animals rising up in disorder against him
(24:1-4), Eve’s sentence is birth pangs when bearing children and being ruled over by her husband (25:1-4), and the serpent’s sentence is eating dust every day, crawling on his belly, having no hands, feet, ear, wing, or limb, and being hated by humans “until the day of judgment” (26:1-4).

This apocalyptic version of the story of the Garden of Eden retains many features of the biblical version in Genesis 3. There are six things, however, we should observe about reconfiguration of the story. First, in a context where good angels primarily spend their time worshipping God, Satan, the “angel of evil,” spends his time devising ways to convince humans to disobey commandments of God. Second, the greatest sin is “desire” (covetousness), a compulsion to have something that is on the other side of a boundary one is not supposed to transgress. Third, covetousness (desire) is called the “evil poison of Satan” and considered to be the origin of every sin. Fourth, God names Eve’s giving in to desire (covetousness) “the sin of the flesh” (25:3). Fifth, the results of the sin of desire (covetousness) are many. Humans are not only estranged from the glory of God, but men and women are put in difficult relationships to one another. Men must suffer great hardship to get food and women must suffer great pain to give birth to children. In addition, a hierarchy is established between men and women, with men ruling over women. And still more, animals rise up in disorder against humans, and there is hatred between certain humans and animals. Sixth, God’s punishment of Adam, Eve, and the serpent is told in the form of an official judgment scene in the presence of God’s throne and angels worshipping God.

It is not clear that this fully apocalyptic configuration of the story of the Garden of Eden had occurred by the first century CE when Christianity was first emerging. Virtually all of the topoi were present in first century Christian discourse, but sometimes they played a role in discourses other than apocalyptic discourse. Jas 1:13-16 is a prime example of the topoi in early Christian wisdom rhetorolect:

13 No one, when tempted, should say, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself tempts no one.
14 But one is tempted by one’s own desire, being lured and enticed by it; then, when that desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and that sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death. 15 Do not be deceived, my beloved. (Jas 1:13-16)

When Jas 1:13-16 speaks of being tempted by evil, it names the primary evil as one’s own desire, and it asserts that desire gives birth to sin and sin to death. But there is no mention of Satan and no mention of a day of judgment. As a result, Jas 1:13-16 is early Christian wisdom rhetorolect, rather than early Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect. This
rhetorolect, however, personifies one’s own desire, sin, and death, making all of them subjects or objects of verbs of action. One’s own desire not only tempts, lures, and entices a person, but, like a woman, it is able to conceive and give birth. Sin, which is the offspring of one’s own desire, grows up, and gives birth to death. Death, in turn, is the offspring of sin. This is the kind of personification that provides a bridge from wisdom discourse to apocalyptic discourse. If this were early Christian apocalyptic discourse, evil would be personified as Satan, one’s own desire would be called the poison of Satan, sin would be called the sin of flesh, and death would be something that could “lose” the contest between life and death, so that something could be “victorious” over it. As wisdom rhetorolect that personifies desire, sin, and death, Jas 1:13-16 is ready to “be completed,” as it were, by “filling in the blanks” with early Christian apocalyptic conceptuality and language.

A similar situation exists in Rom 7:7-25, which is an even more complex passage. Sin seizes an opportunity in the commandment, “You shall not covet,” and produces all kinds of covetousness in a person (7:7-8). Sin can die, since “Apart from the law sin lay dead” (7:8). Sin can come back to life (7:9). Sin can deceive and kill (7:11). Sin works death until it becomes sinful beyond measure (7:13). It is natural that many interpreters will consider this personification of sin to be apocalyptic discourse. Perhaps, however, it is more informative to talk about it as a type of early Christian priestly rhetorolect. There is a restraint in the mode of personification in these verses that keeps them from being full-blown apocalyptic discourse. In priestly discourse, sin is something that can be removed and perhaps even “sent somewhere else.” This kind of personification, like the kind we saw above in Jas 1, creates a natural bridge to apocalyptic discourse. One might appropriately call Rom 7:7-25 early Christian wisdom rhetorolect that has been energized both by priestly and apocalyptic discourse.

Paul’s letter to the Corinthians asserts, in one of only two references to Eve in the NT:

But I am afraid that as the serpent (ophis) deceived Eve by its cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. (2 Cor 11:3)

Here there is no reference to Satan. Rather, it is the serpent who deceives Eve, not Satan. Paul could be presupposing, of course, that Satan


37 The other reference is 1 Tim 2:13-15: “For Adam was formed first, then Eve; 14 and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. 15 Yet she will be saved through childbearing, provided they continue in faith and love and holiness, with modesty.”
spoke through the mouth of the serpent, but he does not say so. One can argue that Paul is following the biblical version of the story, rather than an apocalyptic version. In 2 Cor 11:14, however, Paul asserts that “even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.” The close proximity of this statement to Paul’s assertion about Eve’s deception easily raises the question if Paul is thinking of a version of the story of the Garden of Eden close to the version in The Apocalypse of Moses, where Satan takes the form of an angel and sings hymns to God (ApMos 17:1).

**Apocalyptic Dream Visions of History featuring Animal Creatures**

In the context of the angel-spirit apocalyptic reconfigurations of biblical stories in extra-biblical Jewish literature from the second century BCE onwards, earth-material apocalyptic dream vision accounts emerged that depicted eras of history through animal creature imagery. This mode of apocalyptic discourse moved beyond imagery of good and evil angel-spirits into imagery of good and evil animal creatures. In other words, while the angel-spirit apocalyptic discourse discussed above reconfigured biblical stories by introducing imagery from the conceptual domain of heavenly bodies, which were perceived to be spirit bodies, the apocalyptic discourse we will now discuss presented eras of history through stories of animals, namely “earth-material” creature bodies. The most famous account is the Animal Apocalypse in 1 Enoch 85-90. This apocalypse presents an earth-material version of the “cosmological” account of the origin of evil in God’s created world that provides a rhetorical bridge from apocalyptic angel-spirit stories focused on flesh and blood to apocalyptic earth-material stories focused on “earthly-substance” beings, both heavenly and earthly, who wield political and material power and possess wealth of great value. The Animal Apocalypse account is part of a sequence of two dream visions by Enoch. The sequence and their relationship are important for understanding the nature of dream vision accounts and the earth-material creature symbolism in them.

In 1 Enoch 83-90, the heavenly Enoch recounts to his son Methuselah two dream visions he had while he lived on earth, the first when he was learning to write and the second before he was married to Methuselah’s mother Edna (1 En. 83:2). The first dream revealed to Enoch the nature of the end time: Enoch saw heaven thrown down on earth

38 Martinus C. de Boer does not discuss the earth-material apocalyptic version of cosmological apocalyptic eschatology, which attributes pervasive evil in the cosmos to angels who descended to earth as stars and became big and dark cows who impregnated the heifers of the cows descended from the first bull and cow (Adam and Eve): “Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology” and “Paul and Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology.”
and the earth swallowed up in the great abyss, along with mountains, hills, and trees (83:3-4). When Enoch told his grandfather Mahalalel the dream vision (83:6-7), his grandfather told him to “make supplication to the Lord of glory” that a remnant may remain upon the earth and that God may not obliterate the whole earth (83:8). In response to his grandfather’s instruction, Enoch first blesses God at length for his magnificent creation (83:11-84:2), acknowledges God’s unlimited rule, power, and wisdom (84:3), and admits that the angels of God’s heaven are doing wrong and that God has wrath upon human flesh until the day of judgment (84:4). Then Enoch requests that God “not obliterate all human flesh and devastate the earth,” but that God remove from the earth the flesh that has aroused His wrath and “raise up as a seed-bearing plant forever” the righteous and true flesh (84:5-6). There is no response from heaven to Enoch’s supplication at the end of the first dream vision. Rather, later in life when Enoch was soon to be married he had a second dream vision that provided God’s answer to his supplication.

Enoch’s second dream reveals to him the nature of the world from creation to the end time and God’s judgment, which would occur in the context of the Maccabean Revolt and rule (167-161 BCE). It is important to notice that the first dream vision ended with Enoch’s use of an image internal to wisdom discourse when he asked God to raise up righteous and true flesh “as a seed-bearing plant forever” (84:6). In the second vision, God answers Enoch’s supplication with animal creature imagery rather than vegetation imagery. In other words, the goal for humans in the Animal Apocalypse is to become snow-white cows, rather than eternal seed-bearing plants or trees of life. This answer is unusual in biblical tradition, since it does not feature the vegetational metaphorical sphere to picture goodness and righteousness, which is so prominent in biblical wisdom discourse. Rather, it features the metaphorical sphere of animal creatures who come forth from the earth.

The animal creature metaphorical sphere is not unknown, by any means, in biblical discourse, since Israel often is referred to as God’s sheep, rather than God’s vineyard. But it comes as a surprise when the Animal Apocalypse presupposes that Israel’s nature as sheep is a lesser mode of human being than Israel’s nature as cattle. According to the Animal Apocalypse, humans came forth from the earth as cows, but later through Jacob they became sheep! The challenge for God is to restore humans to their original nature as cows. In other words, the Animal Apocalypse presupposes that humans are part of God’s animal creature world that emerged out of the earth, rather than God’s world of vegetation. This point of view seems reasonable enough from the perspective of Genesis 2 in the biblical story of creation. But the domi-
nance of vegetation imagery in wisdom discourse put imagery of fruit-bearing plants in the foreground for picturing human thoughts and actions of goodness and righteousness, rather than pure white cows. The Animal Apocalypse puts the metaphorical sphere of animal creatures created from the earth in the foreground to depict pure, righteous humans, rather than the metaphorical sphere of bountiful vegetation. God first created humans from the earth as pure white cows. After they became sheep, the challenge for God was to transform them back into pure white cows. The drama of the Animal Apocalypse unfolds as cows become not only sheep but other kinds of animals before God uses special means to transform them back into cows at the end time. While this may sound very strange, as the plot unfolds various aspects of the account begin to resonate closely with portions of Daniel in the Hebrew Bible, and with the Revelation to John in particular in the New Testament.

Enoch’s second dream vision (1 Enoch 85-90), “the Animal Apocalypse,” does not simply focus on the end of time. Rather, it presents an apocalyptic account from Adam to God’s judgment of the world and God’s transformation of all humans (who exist in the form of all kinds of animals) into snow-white cows (the pure, righteous “earth-material” animals God intended them to be). The first era in the Animal Apocalypse extends from Adam to the flood (1 En. 85:3-89:9). In this first era, good people from Adam onward are depicted as animals that are beneficial to humans (cows, sheep, etc.) and evil people are depicted as wild animals, birds, or beasts. The story unfolds as the heavenly Enoch, the great grandfather of Noah, tells this second dream vision to his son Methuselah (the grandfather of Noah). George W. Nickelsburg divides this first era into four segments:

1. Adam and Eve and their Children (85:3-9)
2. The Fall of the Watchers and the Violence of the Giants (86:1-6)
3. Divine Judgment (87:1-88:3)

In the initial segment of the first era, a white bull (Adam) comes forth from the earth, and then a young heifer (Eve) comes forth (1 En. 85:3; Gen 2) with a black calf (Cain) and a red calf (Abel: 1 En. 85:3; Gen 4:1-2). The black calf strikes the red calf and pursues it over the earth, causing it to disappear, and the black calf grows big, mates with a heifer calf that comes to it and produces many cattle (1 En. 85:4-5; Gen 4:3-24). After the first heifer (Eve) searches for the red calf and mourns when she cannot find it, the first bull (Adam) comforts her,
and together they produce many cows including a white bull (Seth) and many black bulls and cows (1 En. 85:5-10; Gen 4:17-26).

There are four observations about these initial events that are important for our discussion. The account begins with Genesis 2:7, omitting God’s creation of the world, which includes God’s creation of vegetation in Genesis 1. This means that the account begins with God’s creation of living animal creatures out of the earth. As the account continues, it moves directly to Genesis 4, omitting the story of the Garden of Eden. In other words, the story again omits the account of the abundant vegetation in God’s world and moves directly on to the story of the living animal creatures God formed from the earth, which include humans. There are two observations about this that are important for our discussion. First, apocalyptic story-lines are highly selective, with one account omitting events that another account may feature as important for the apocalyptic story of the world. Second, Enoch’s second dream vision focuses on God’s animal creature world to tell its apocalyptic version of the relation of humans to God, rather than on God’s world of abundant vegetation. This mode of storytelling moves away from the focus on vegetation in wisdom discourse to a focus on earth-made animal creatures in the world, which often is present in prophetic discourse. In this context, a third observation provides a key to understanding the account. Where the creatures remain the same, their color regularly is symbolic of an important aspect of their meaning. In the words of Nickelsburg:

Adam’s whiteness suggests his purity, and hereafter it will be an identifying characteristic of the line that continues through Seth (vv 8-10), Shem (89:9), Abraham (89:10), Isaac (89:11), and Jacob (a white ram, 89:12) and that will reappear in the eschaton (90:37-38). Abel’s red color is symbolic of his blood (cf. 89:9, “red as blood”), or perhaps his bloody sacrifice. At the very least, the black or dark color attributed to Cain foreshadows his murder of Abel (cf. Job 6:16, of the treachery of Job’s enemies); it also allows the reader to identify the non-Sethite progeny of Adam. The image might possibly reflect the haggadic notion later attested in Jewish, Christian, and Gnostic literature that Cain was begotten by Satan.⁴⁰

In other words, when the account presents a number of people in the same earth-made animal species (e.g., cow), the color of the animal regularly is an important indicator of its meaning in the story. Fourth, it is important to remember that this account is dream vision apocalyptic discourse. To put this another way, the portrayal of persons in the form of earth-made animal creatures does not occur regularly in accounts that claim to be straightforward information from a heavenly

⁴⁰Nickelsburg, 1 Enoch 1, 371.
figure to a person on earth, like one sees in Jubilees, but in accounts of
dream visions by a person on earth. This does not mean that all dream
visions contain animal creature imagery, since even Enoch’s first dream
vision does not contain animal creature imagery. But when animal
creature imagery occurs in apocalyptic discourse, it regularly occurs in
dream visions. Let us now continue with the next portion of the first
era.

The second segment of the first era in the Animal Apocalypse con-
tinues beyond its account of the birth of many white cattle (1 En.
85:10) to the story of the sons of God who impregnated the daughters
of humans in Gen 6:1-4. The account in the Animal Apocalypse de-
picts the sons of God as stars that fell from heaven (1 En. 86:1-6). After
a number of the stars fall from heaven, they become cattle among the
cows (86:1-3), impregnate the cows with their “sexual organs like
horses,” and cause the cattle to produce “elephants, camels, and asses”
who bite the cattle, gore them with their horns, and begin to eat them
(86:4-6). In this segment it is important to see the transformation of
heavenly bodies into earth-material animal creature bodies, and to see
the transformation of good animal creatures (cows) into animal crea-
tures that begin to fight, destroy, and eat one another. These transfor-
mations are part of the internal nature of apocalyptic discourse. A
major focus in much apocalyptic discourse is the transformation of
earth-material human bodies into heavenly bodies. In the Animal
Apocalypse, in contrast, God transforms heavenly bodies into earth-
material animal creature bodies (which will include human-like bodies)
and then transforms one kind of animal creature body into other kinds
of animal creature bodies as the story unfolds.

The third segment features seven white men coming down from
heaven and three of these men taking Enoch 41 “from the generations
of the earth,” lifting him up to a high place, and telling him to stay there
until he sees everything that will happen to the elephants, camels, asses,
stars, and cattle – all of them (87:4). While Enoch watches, one of
the four other beings from heaven seizes the first star that fell, binds its
hands and feet, and throws it into an abyss (88:1). 42 One of the other
beings draws a sword and gives it to the elephants, camels, and asses,
and they begin to attack one another, causing the entire earth to quake
(88:2). Still another of the beings throws stones from the sky on the
fallen stars, gathers and takes away all the stars with sexual organs like
horses, binds them hand and foot, and casts them into the pits of the
earth (88:3). This, of course, is an earth-material dream vision account

41 “Me,” the narrator of the story.
42 See Nickelsburg’s comment on this in 1 Enoch 1, 374-375.
of the apocalyptic version of Gen 6:1–4,\textsuperscript{43} which tells how certain evil angels called the Watchers (of humans) impregnated the daughters of earth-material humans, gave birth to evil demons on the earth, and were subsequently bound and cast into a pit in the bowels of the earth by good angels. It is important to observe the introduction of heavenly beings into the animal creature account not only as stars who transform into cows but also as earth-material humans, or human-like beings. In addition, Enoch himself becomes a human actor in the account, watching the events that occur. In other words, animal creatures, heavenly bodies like “stars,” heavenly “human-like” beings, and real earth-material humans participate in the story and either become transformed or are participants in transformations that occur in some way in the story (like stars who become cows causing other cows to produce elephants, camels, and asses).

The fourth and final segment of the first era (89:1–9) presents a dream vision version of the flood. One of the four beings from heaven goes to the white bull (Noah) and teaches it a secret (89:1). Though this being was born a bull, it becomes a human who builds himself a boat and lives on the boat with three bulls (Noah’s sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth). Enoch watches while water cascades down in seven streams from heaven and rises from underground fountains until “water, darkness, and mist” cover the whole earth (89:4). All the cattle, elephants, camels, and asses sink to the bottom and drown (89:6). After a while, the water descends, the ground becomes visible, the boat settles onto the earth, the darkness vanishes, all becomes light, and the white bull (Noah) with the three bulls (Noah’s sons) come out of the boat (89:8–9). In this segment, we see the first animal creature (a white bull) in the account become a human. We will see a few (but very few) other transformations of animal creatures into humans as the story continues.

In this final segment of the first era, one notices once again the remarkable selectivity of the account. There is no mention of animals of every species on the ark, birds that are sent out to see if there is land somewhere, sacrifices that Noah and his sons offer, a rainbow, or other details of the story of the flood. Rather, the dream vision condenses the story-line into an account of earth-material animal creatures, of an earth-creature who is transformed into a man (Noah), of heavenly beings who come to earth in the form of earth-material men to perform various tasks, and of fallen stars who become earth-material cattle who cause other cattle to give birth to elephants, camels, andasses and then are bound hand and foot and cast into pits in the earth.

The second era in the Animal Apocalypse account extends from the renewal of creation after the flood to the great judgment after the Maccabean Revolt (89:9-90:27). Nickelsburg has divided this into seven segments:

1. From the Disembarkation to the Exodus (89:9-27)
2. From the Exodus to Moses’ Death (89:28-38)
3. From the Entrance into the Land to the Building of the Temple (89:39-50)
4. The Apostasy of the Two Kingdoms (89:51-58)
5. The Commissioning of the Seventy Shepherds and the Angelic Scribe (89:59-64)
6. The First Period: The Twelve Shepherds until the Exile (89:65-72)
7. The Second Period: The Twenty-Three Shepherds from the Return to Alexander (89:72b-90:1)
8. The Third Period: The Twenty-Three Shepherds from Alexander into the Second Century (90:2-5)

The second era is so long, and has so many details, that it is not feasible to give a full account of it here. Instead, a few special characteristics of this era will be highlighted to exhibit the nature of the earth-material animal creatures, the heavenly beings, and the occasional humans (!) in this earth-material animal creature apocalyptic account.

In the first segment of the second era (89:9-27), the three bulls (sons of Noah) with the white bull who had become a man (Noah) beget wild beasts and birds. In turn, the beasts and birds beget “lions, leopards, wolves, dogs, hyenas, wild boars, foxes, squirrels, pigs, falcons, vultures, kites, eagles, and ravens” (89:10: Gentiles). But also a white bull is born (89:10: Abraham), who begets a wild ass (89:11: Ishmael) and a white bull (Isaac). The bull then bears a black wild boar (89:12: Esau) and a white ram (89:12: Jacob). The boar begets many boars and the ram begets twelve sheep (89:12: the twelve sons of Jacob). When the twelve sheep grow up, they give one of their members (Joseph) to the wild asses (Ishmaelites’), who give him away to the wolves (Egyptians), with whom he then lives (89:13). The ram brings the eleven sheep to dwell with and pasture in the midst of the

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44 Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 354-55.
45 All occurrences of “ram” in *1 Enoch* follow Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 365, 368, n. 89:12b. In some instances there is a different translation in E. Isaac, “1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch,” *OTP* 1:5-89.
46 For Ishmaelites rather than Midianites, see Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 378.
47 Possibly hyenas: Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 378.
48 See note 45 on “ram.”
wolves, and they multiply and become many flocks of sheep (89:14: Israelite slaves).

At this point “the Lord” becomes a personage in the story. In 1 En. 89:15-90:40, “the Lord of the sheep” occurs twenty-six times; “the Lord” five times; “their Lord” four times; “our Lord” once; and “the Lord of righteousness” once. Sometimes the Lord is clearly the Lord God, as when the sheep “complain unto their Lord” (89:15); at other times the Lord is clearly Moses, as when “the Lord of the sheep” goes with them as their leader, with a face that is “glorious, adorable, and marvelous to behold” (89:22). At other times, it is not entirely clear if “the Lord of the sheep” is the Lord God or Moses. The uncertainty of reference has an intriguing relation to the uncertainty at times whether “the Lord” refers to the Lord God or to the Lord Jesus Christ in some of the writings of Paul in the NT.

The following account gives only a few highlights of a very detailed story. When the sheep “complain unto their Lord (God)” (89:15) and “pray to their Lord (God)” (89:16), the Lord of the sheep (Moses?) descends to them from a lofty chamber (89:16). The sheep go to the wolves and speak to them “in accordance to the word of the Lord (God?)” (89:18). Then the Lord (God) came to the sheep and began to strike the wolves (the plagues: 89:20). Once the sheep arrive in the desert, they begin to open their eyes and see while the Lord of the sheep (Moses?) “was pasturing them and giving them water and grass, and that sheep was going and leading them” (89:28). After the sheep become afraid and can no longer “stand before our Lord (God or Moses?) or look at him” (89:31), “the Lord of the sheep (God) was filled with great wrath against them, and that sheep (Moses) discovered it and went down from the summit of that rock and came to the sheep and found most of them blinded and straying” (89:33). Finally, “that sheep that had led them, that had become a man (Moses), was separated from them and fell asleep” (89:38; cf. 89:36). Once the sheep enter the land (Canaan) under the leadership of other sheep, “the dogs, foxes, and the wild boars began to devour those sheep” until the Lord of the sheep (God) raised up three rams in succession. The first ram (89:42; Saul) “began to butt and pursue with its horns” until it forsook its path (89:44). The Lord of the sheep (God) send a sheep (Samuel) to another sheep (David) to appoint it to be “ram and ruler and leader of the sheep” (89:45). This ram begat many sheep until it fell asleep. Then the third ram (Solomon), who was a little sheep, became a ram

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49 Following Nickelsburg, 1 Enoch 1, 364-67, 387-88, 402: “the Lord of the sheep”: 89:16, 22, 26, 29, 30, 33, 36, 42, 50 (twice), 51, 52, 54, 57, 70, 71, 75, 76; 90:14, 15, 17, 18, 20 (twice), 29, 33, 38; “the Lord”: 89:18, 54; 90:17, 21, 34; “their Lord”: 89:15, 16, 20, 24; “our Lord”: 89:31; and “the Lord of righteousness”: 90:40.
(89:48b). Then the house became large and broad, with a large and high tower built upon it for the Lord of the sheep (God: 89:50).

After the building of the house, the sheep began to abandon “that house of theirs” (89:51). When the Lord of the sheep (God) summoned some from among the sheep (prophets) and sent them to the sheep, the sheep began to kill them, but one of them (Elijah) escaped safely (89:51-52). Then Enoch says: “the Lord of the sheep saved it (Elijah) from the hands of the sheep and brought it up to me and made it dwell there” (89:52). At this point, language of “abandonment” begins. The sheep “abandoned the house of the Lord and his tower, they went astray in everything, and their eyes were blinded” (89:54). In turn, the Lord of the sheep (God) works “much slaughter on them” and abandons them into the hands of the lions, leopards, wolves, hyenas, foxes, and all the beasts, “and those wild beasts began to tear those sheep in pieces” (89:55). Although Enoch cried out (89:57), the Lord of the sheep (God) was silent and “rejoiced because they were devoured and swallowed up and carried off, and he abandoned them into the hands of all the beasts as fodder” (89:58).

After this, the Lord of the sheep (God) summoned seventy shepherds and an angelic scribe: twelve until the exile (89:65-72a); twenty-three shepherds from the return to Alexander (89:72b-90:1); twenty-three shepherds from Alexander into the second century BCE (90:2-5); and twelve shepherds until the end time (90:6-19). There is a debate in scholarship concerning the identity of the seventy shepherds and the scribe. Ezekiel 34 features shepherds who are in charge of Israel and abuse their power by making Israel suffer. This is a major theme in 1 Enoch 89-90. The twelve shepherds during the fourth period are worse than any who have come before them. As 1 Enoch 90:17-19 presents it:

17 And I looked at that man who wrote the book at the word of the Lord, until he opened the book of the destruction that those last twelve shepherds worked, and he showed before the Lord of the sheep that they had destroyed more than those before them. 18 And I saw until the Lord of the sheep came to them and took in his hand the staff of his wrath and struck the earth, and the earth was split, and all the beasts and all the birds of heaven fell (away) from among those sheep and sank in the earth, and it covered over them. 19 And I saw until a large sword (Judas Maccabeus?) was given to those sheep, and the sheep went out against all the wild beasts to kill them, and all the beasts and the birds of heaven (Hellenistic rulers?) fled before them. (1 Enoch 90:17-19)

50 See Nickelsburg on “abandonment,” 1 Enoch, 393.
51 Nickelsburg, 1 Enoch 1, 388-401.
52 Nickelsburg, 1 Enoch 1, 389-394.
53 Cf. 2 Macc 15:15-16, when Jeremiah appears in a vision to Judas Maccabeus and gives him a sword; see Goldstein, 2 Maccabees, 499.
The time of Maccabean rule appears to be the context for the final era, when God judges the world and establishes a new world. God’s striking of the earth, the splitting of the earth, and the sinking of the beasts and birds into the earth is a returning of destructive earth-material beings back into the earth from which they came.

The third era in the Animal Apocalypse features the Judgment and the New Age (90:20–42). Nickelsburg divides it into three segments:

1. The Judgment (90:20–27)
2. A New Beginning (90:28–38)
3. The Conclusion to the Vision (90:39–42)

The final portion of the Animal Apocalypse begins:

And I saw until a throne was constructed in the pleasant land and the Lord of the sheep sat upon it, and he took all the sealed books and opened those books before the Lord of the sheep. (1 En. 90:20)

The similarity of this scene with Daniel 7:9–10 is striking. The differences also are striking. Instead of “thrones” being set in place in the heavenly throne room (Dan 7:9), “a throne” is constructed “in the pleasant land” (1 En. 90:20). The focus on the land coheres with the account of Israel and the nations as an “earth-material” account. Similarities and differences are of equal interest in the description of God. Dan 7:9 describes God as “an Ancient One” who “took his throne, his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool… The courts sat in judgment, and the books were opened.” In turn, 1 En. 90:20 says “the Lord of the sheep sat upon it (the throne), and he (the one the Lord summoned to be a scribe in 1 En. 89:61–64) took all the sealed books and opened those books before the Lord of the sheep.” 1 Enoch 85–90 never describes the Lord of the sheep in the judgment scene as being clothed in white or having hair like pure wool. Rather, “the three” who come and take Enoch’s hand are “clothed in white” (1 En. 90:31), and “all those sheep” who are “gathered into that house” in the new age “were white, and their wool was thick and pure” (1 En. 90:32–34). It appears, however, that the “Ancient One” in Dan 7 has features that would be natural for “the Lord of the sheep” who is described in the Animal Apocalypse. When Moses is described as the Lord of the sheep leading Israel out of Egypt, “his face was dazzling and glorious and fearful to behold” (1 En. 89:22). After the Lord of the sheep goes up to the summit of a high rock” (89:29), “his appearance was majestic and fearful and mighty” 89:30). Then that sheep became a man (89:36, 38). After the Lord of the sheep causes rams (kings) to arise to lead the sheep (89:42–50), there are no descriptions of the appearance of the Lord of the sheep. It

54 Nickelsburg, 1 Enoch 1, 355.
is noticeable that the Lord of the sheep took the book from the hand of the scribe, read it, and set it down in 89:71 (cf. 89:77). When the Lord of the sheep “came upon them in wrath” (90:15), he “took in his hand the staff of his wrath and struck the earth, and the earth was split, and all the beasts and all the birds of heaven fell (away) from among those sheep and sank in the earth, and it covered over them” (90:18). In contrast, Dan 7 describes the action of the “Ancient One” with “the hair of his head like pure wool” with passive verbs:

11 And as I watched, the beast was put to death, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned by fire. 12 As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. (Dan 7:11-12)

We will discuss below the shift that occurs when political power and wealth, rather than earthly progeny, becomes the focus. The dramatic finish during the final era in the Animal Apocalypse occurs when, in the context of the judgment of the sheep, a white bull is born with large horns. After the wild beasts and all the birds of heaven are afraid of it and petition it continually, all their species are changed and they become white cattle (90:37-38). As Nickelsburg states:

the birth of this extraordinary human being triggers the transformation of the whole human race, Israelites and Gentiles, into primordial righteousness and perfection…. [T]he present text … juxtaposes the transformation with the birth of a figure, into whose image, so to speak, the human race is transformed. The closest analogy is in the two-Adams theology of the apostle Paul.55

In the Animal Apocalypse, once all the sheep including Enoch (90:31) are gathered into the new house brought by the Lord of the sheep (90:28-29), the end time messiah comes in the form of a white bull with large horns (90:37). All the wild beasts and birds of heaven are afraid of it and petition it continually (90:37) until, finally, all their species are changed into white cattle (90:38). Among the cattle is a large animal leader with large black horns on its head, and the Lord of the sheep rejoices over it and over all the cattle (90:38). At this point, Enoch awakes from his dream, blesses the Lord of righteousness and gives him glory, and weeps bitterly for everything that will come to pass on the basis of what he saw in his second dream and what he remembers about his first dream (90:39-42).

The importance of this dream vision mode of apocalyptic discourse will become more and more evident as we proceed through apocalyptic discourse in Daniel and in the New Testament. The account in this volume and the next will be incomplete in many ways. The goal is to

55 Nickelsburg, 1 Enoch 1, 407.
introduce strategies of analysis and interpretation that exhibit and analyze modes of blending that occurred during the Hellenistic-Roman era in which Christianity emerged. These strategies of analysis and interpretation have the potential to shed light on multiple aspects of biblical, Jewish, and Christian discourse that readers and interpreters know well in certain ways but do not understand well in other ways. The next step to help us understand some of the new challenges that lie before analysis and interpretation emerge as we turn to the book of Daniel in the Hebrew Bible.

Apocalyptic Discourse in Daniel
The book of Daniel in the Hebrew Bible helps to set the stage for understanding the nature of apocalyptic in the writings in the New Testament. The first six chapters of Daniel present angel-spirit apocalyptic narrative containing wisdom-story legends in contexts of powerful cities, kings, and kingdoms. These chapters share many emphases and themes with the three Synoptic Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles at the beginning of the New Testament. The last six chapters of Daniel (7-12) present earth-material apocalyptic visions, which share many emphases and themes with the Revelation to John at the end of the New Testament. In basic ways, then, the first and last parts of the book of Daniel have a deep and substantive relation to the writings that open and close the NT canon. It will be important to discuss this further below.

For a reader who approaches the book of Daniel in the Hebrew Bible as a prophetic book, it can be a surprise to discover that the first six chapters do not contain the word “prophet” (prophētēs) or any other formulations from the Greek stem prophēt-, which might mean “to prophesy” or might characterize someone’s activity as “prophesying.” There are four occurrences of the noun “prophet” in chapter nine of Daniel (9:2, 6, 10, 24), but none of them refers to Daniel or any other person in the Daniel narrative. Instead of words for prophet or

57 All the references to prophets in Daniel refer specifically or generally to prophets in the history of Israel with no specific reference to Daniel. Daniel 9:2 refers to the number of years (seventy) that Daniel perceived to be the length of time before the devastation of Jerusalem “according to the word of the Lord to the prophet Jeremiah.” Then in Dan 9:6, Daniel confesses to God in prayer: “We have not listened to your servants the prophets….” After this, Daniel confesses to God that “our kings, our officials, and our ancestors … have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God by following his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets” (9:9-10). Lastly, in Dan 9:24 “the man Gabriel” (9:21) tells Daniel that a period of seventy weeks (of years: 9:2) has been decreed to bring things to completion with both his people and his holy city in six ways: (1) to finish the transgression; (2) to put an end to sin; (3) to atone for iniquity; (4) to bring in everlasting righteousness; (5) to seal both vision and prophet; and (6) to anoint a
prophesying, Dan 1–6 contains eight occurrences of the word “wisdom” (sophía),58 and fourteen occurrences of the word “wise man” (sophos).59 This means that Dan 1–6 contains apocalyptically configured wisdom stories in a context of cities, kings, and kingdoms. The focus on wisdom in these stories creates angel-spirit apocalyptic rather than earth-material apocalyptic. In other words, in the first six chapters, angels have no earth-material form,60 and God communicates with the spirit of Daniel and kings through dreams and visions.61 Angels are spirit-beings who perform certain tasks for God to fulfill God’s plans for faithful human beings. Since dialogue with kings who rule over kingdoms is a central feature of prophetic discourse, Dan 1–6 is a blend of wisdom and prophetic discourse that functioned as an especially dynamic emergent structure for early Christian discourse. But there is more, since there is an emphasis on faithful prayer, worship, fasting, holiness, and purity that blends wisdom and prophetic discourse with priestly discourse in Dan 1–6. In the end, Dan 1–6 is a dynamic blend of wisdom, prophetic, priestly, and apocalyptic discourse in an angel-spirit apocalyptic mode of narration.

From the perspective of the two streams of apocalyptic in Judaism we have described above, Dan 1–6 presents angel-spirit apocalyptic events with some earth-material topoi blended into some of the activities of the kings. In other words, the dreams and events with statues to be worshipped in the angel-spirit apocalyptic stories in the first six chapters set the stage for Daniel’s earth-material dream-visions in Dan 7–12. One of the important differences between the first six chapters and the last six is that the angel-spirit apocalyptic dimensions in Dan 1–6 originate with dreams and actions of kings, while the dream-visions in Dan 7–12 originate with Daniel. A major topos in Dan 1–6 is each king’s interest in becoming the ruler of all nations and peoples on earth, and a major means toward this “total rule” is worship of some foreign god or idol. In the context of Jewish apocalyptic, of course, this worship is a violation of the daily practice of blessing and praising “the Most High” who created everything in the universe, which the angels established on the first day of God’s creation of the world (Jub. 2). When various kings in Babylon take actions to become the ruler of all nations and peoples on earth, Daniel emerges as a very special “wise man” who communicates the mistakes of these kings by interpreting dreams and other unusual things that happen to the kings. Daniel is

most holy place. The reference to sealing “both vision and prophet” naturally holds great interest for anyone interpreting the opening of the seals in Rev 5–8.

59 Dan 2:12, 13, 14, 18, 21, 24(2), 27, 48; 4:3, 15; 5:7, 8, 15.
60 Dan 3:25, 28; 6:22.
61 Dan 2:1, 3, 35; 4:8, 9, 18; 5: 11, 12, 14, 20; 6:3; 7:15 (cf. 10:17).
able to interpret these things as a result of “revelations” from the God of heaven.” This is communicated to the reader by verses like Dan 2:22, where Daniel praises and blesses the God of heaven, because “He reveals (ἀνακάλυπτων) deep and hidden things.” Then Daniel tells the king that “there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has disclosed to King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen at the end of days” (2:28).

The content of both dreams and actions by kings in the angel-spirit apocalyptic stories in Dan 1-6 set the stage for the earth-material apocalyptic visions of Daniel in Dan 7-12. King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in Dan 2 features a great statue made of gold, silver, bronze, iron, and clay, and in Daniel 3 the king builds a golden statue, which everyone should fall down and worship. These “earth-materials,” namely metals and clay, are the “substance” of political power and wealth in earth-material apocalyptic. The events themselves remain in the domain of angel-spirit apocalyptic narrative, since no heavenly being appears in the form of these earth-materials and no creature-like or beast-like beings emerge from the sea or are present on the earth.

Earth-material apocalyptic imagery continues to hover over the angel-spirit apocalyptic accounts in Daniel 3-6 when Daniel and his companions are protected from the raging flames in the fiery furnace by God’s angel (3:28). The implicit imagery is that they are not made of metals that would be refined by blazing fire but by pure and holy bodies that fire does not destroy. When King Nebuchadnezzar’s mind is changed into the mind of an animal as he lives among animals (4:15-16) and his hair becomes as long as eagles’ feathers and his nails become like birds’ claws (4:32-33), one is seeing imagery close to inner dimensions of the Animal Apocalypse in 1 Enoch 85-90. Likewise, the imagery of the political power of King Darius in lions who can “overpower” and “break all bones of people in pieces” (6:24) is imagery at home in earth-material apocalyptic. Daniel and his companions, however, are nurtured by angel-spirit modes of beings. No heavenly being comes in an “earth-material” form to destroy the king or any representatives of the king. Also, while King Nebuchadnezzar’s hair becomes as long as eagles’ feathers and his hair becomes like birds’ claws (4:33), which are images of political power in earth-material apocalyptic, he is not able in this “earthly-substance” form to rule over people like an eagle or destroy nations with his claws. The earth-material imagery in Daniel 2-6, then, presents topics of political power and wealth in a mode of angel-spirit apocalyptic. Daniel’s spirit is repeatedly informed by God’s direct revelations to him in contexts

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62 Apokalypt terminology is used to talk about these “revelations” in Dan 2:19, 22, 28, 29, 30, 47(2), 10:1; 11:35.
where an angel may come from heaven to protect him from a devouring fire (3:28) or shut the mouths of hungry lions (6:22). Nowhere does Daniel or any king contend with or see vicious beasts like dragons, many-headed serpents, or beasts with bodies composed of clay, metals, and body-parts of animals. Likewise, no angel that comes to Daniel’s aid displays a visibility that looks like earth materials. Rather, Daniel 1-6 contains wisdom-legends that have been configured into spirit-angel apocalyptic events dealing with political power and wealth. In the context of these spirit-angel events, iron, bronze, silver, and gold mixed with clay (2:31-35), as well as eagle feathers and bird claws, exhibit the nature of political power and wealth in all its glory and in all its vulnerability. In this mode, the story awaits earth-material apocalyptic visions to bring the plot to a dramatic apocalyptic conclusion.

Earth-material apocalyptic visions emerge suddenly in Daniel 7 and continue to the end of Daniel. In this portion of Daniel, dream visions appear directly to Daniel when he is sleeping, without any preceding dream, action, or experience of a king. These chapters contain earth-material apocalypses that function as a precedent for the earth-material apocalyptic scenes in the Revelation to John at the end of the NT. After King Darius has written “to all peoples and nations of every language throughout the world,” telling them they must “tremble and fear before the God of Daniel” (Dan 6:25-28), Daniel has “a dream and visions of his head as he lay in bed” (7:1). In a quintessential apocalyptic gesture, Daniel writes the dream down (7:1). The dream vision recounts the rule of various kingdoms in an earth-material apocalyptic mode until heaven intervenes. Daniel saw “the four winds of heaven” creating a hurricane in the great sea (7:2). As a result of the hurricane, four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another (7:3). The first animal creature is like a lion with eagles’ wings, and its wings are plucked off and it is lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a human being, and it is given a human mind (7:4). Here we see a variation on the angel-spirit dream vision in Dan 4:13-16, where a tree (who is a non-Israelite ruler) is destroyed and made into a human with an animal mind. The second animal creature from the sea looks like a bear with three tusks among its teeth, and it is told to arise and devour many bodies (7.5). The third animal creature is like a leopard with four wings and four heads, and it is given power to rule (7:6). Then a fourth animal creature, “terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong” (7:7) comes out of the sea. It has iron teeth, feet that destroy everything on which they stamp, and ten horns

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with a little horn, containing human eyes and an arrogant mouth, that comes up and plucks up three of the ten horns (7:7-8).

There are three observations about these powerful animal creatures that call for comment here. First, these beasts have a strong relation both to the lions, leopards, eagles, and other animals (Gentiles) who come forth from the sons of Noah (1 En. 89:10) and the lions, leopard, and other animals whom God allows to “tear the sheep in pieces” just prior to the exile in the Animal Apocalypse (1 En. 89:55). Second, the animal creatures in Daniel are not pictured as populations of people but as powerful rulers and kingdoms. Third, human characteristics emerge in relation to two of the animal creatures: (a) the lion-eagle that is made into a human with a human mind (Dan 7:4), and (b) the beast with iron teeth and ten horns in which a little horn emerges with human eyes and a mouth that speaks arrogantly (Dan 7:8). Again, the earth-material mode of apocalyptic storytelling in Dan 7 focuses on non-Israelite rulers and kingdoms rather than on populations of people that emerge from Adam and Eve and their descendants, as in the Animal Apocalypse in 1 En. 85-90. In other words, the focus is on political power and wealth, rather than on demographic or ethnic identity.

The sequence of political beasts in Daniel leads to a scene in heaven, where thrones are placed, the Ancient One takes his throne, fire streams out from the presence of the throne, thousands and thousands serve and attend the Ancient One, the court sits in judgment, and the books are opened (7:9-10). We have observed above how the Ancient of Days has hair like pure wool (7:9), which would be a natural characteristic of the Lord of the sheep in the Animal Apocalypse in 1 En. 85-90. After the destruction and burning of the fourth beast (Dan 7:11) and the disempowerment of the other beasts (Dan 7:12), “one like a human being” comes with clouds to the Ancient One, and he is given dominion, glory, and kingship over all peoples, nations, and languages, and his kingship will never be destroyed (7:13-14). This dream vision puzzles and terrifies Daniel so thoroughly that he asks one of the heavenly attendants to interpret it, which he does (7:15-17). Instead of everyone becoming white cows who will gather forever in the house of God (1 En. 90:32-38), “the holy ones of the Most High” will receive an everlasting kingdom “and all dominions shall serve and obey them” (Dan 7:27; cf. 7:18). This focus on political power remains through Daniel 11. Therefore, “redemption” until Daniel 12 takes the form of receiving an eternal kingdom to which all people on earth are subservient, rather than on an eternal gathering of all people in the house of God. The focus, then, is on political rule rather than on faithful worship. The narrative has shifted its focus from faithful worship
and praise of God (Dan 1-6) to God’s superiority over all political power and wealth on earth.

The fourth dream vision in Dan 8 is of special interest in relation to the Animal Apocalypse in 1 En. 85-90. In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar, Daniel saw a vision in which he saw himself in Susa, the capital of Persia (Dan 8:1-2). Looking up, he saw a ram with two horns, one longer than the other, standing by the river Ulai and then charging westward and northward and southward (8:3-4). Everything is powerless against the ram until a male goat with a horn between its eyes appears from the west, strikes the ram breaking its two horns, throws the ram to the ground, and tramples it (8:5-7). At the height of the power of this great goat, the great horn is broken and in its place rises up “four prominent horns toward the four winds of heaven” (8:8). Then a little horn comes out of one of the four and grows exceedingly great “toward the south, toward the east and toward the beautiful land” (cf. 1 En. 90:20). When this little horn grew as high as heaven and “threw down to the earth some of the host and some of the stars, and trampled on them,” it even acted arrogantly against “the prince of the host” (God) and “took the regular burnt offering away from him and overthrew the place of his sanctuary” (Dan 8:10-11).

Then Daniel heard two holy ones in conversation about how long this transgression could continue, and the answer is given of two thousand three hundred days before the sanctuary will be restored to its rightful state (8:13-14).

Here it is important for us to observe four things. First, Dan 8 depicts a non-Israelite king, rather than an Israelite king, as a ram. Second, Dan 8 identifies a non-Israelite ruler as a goat, an animal that surprisingly is not present in the Animal Apocalypse in 1 Enoch 85-90. Third, an animal (the goat) grows so high it is able to overpower even some of the heavenly powers (some of the host and the stars). Fourth, specific earthly events, namely an overtaking of the Jerusalem temple and a disruption of its regular burnt offering, are blended into the animal creature imagery, namely the growth, throwing down, and trampling activity of the goat.

After Daniel’s vision in Dan 8:1-14 a personage like a man, whom a human voice identifies as the angel Gabriel, appears to Daniel and interprets the vision for him. For our discussion here, the descriptions of Gabriel in Dan 8:15-18 and 10:4-6 are especially important. The issue is the potential for a heavenly being to be described not only in terms of earthly animal creature bodies, including human bodies, but also in terms of earthly substances, like metals, clay, and stone. In Dan 8:15 Gabriel appears “standing” before Daniel, “having the appearance of a man.” Gabriel’s appearance, however, is frightening, causing Daniel to
fall prostrate before him (8:17). As the scene continues, Gabriel speaks to Daniel, causing him to fall into a trance with his face to the ground. Then Gabriel touches Daniel and sets him on his feet (8:18). The experience causes Daniel to be “overcome” and “sick for many days” before he can return to the king’s business (8:27). When Daniel sees Gabriel a second time, Gabriel looks like a man clothed in linen, with a belt of gold from Uphaz around his waist. His body was like beryl, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the roar of a multitude. (Dan 10:5-6)

In this description, earthly substances characteristic of the statue in Dan 2:31-35 and the rulers and kingdoms in Dan 2:37-45; 4:15; and 7:2-7 are present in the body of the angel Gabriel. In other words, while on earth interpreting issues of political power, a characteristic of Gabriel’s body may be earthly substances characteristic of the “technological” nature of powerful kingdoms. In other words, when apocalyptic discourse in the book of Daniel describes heavenly beings from a political point of view, the “substance” of their “bodies” may be a blend of human characteristics and earthly substances like metals, clay (probably “ceramic clay”), and/or stone. In the context where Gabriel is described as “a man” with clothing and body parts that are described in relation to earthly substances, lightning, and flaming torches, and he speaks words that roar (Dan 10:5-6), he talks to Daniel about “the prince of Persia” opposing him and Michael helping him before he comes to explain to Daniel what is to happen to his people at the end of days (10:13-14). He tells Daniel there will be another vision for those final days (10:14) and that he must return “to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I am through with him, the prince of Greece will come” (10:20). Then he explains that only he (Gabriel) and “Michael, your prince” contend “against these princes” (10:21). In Dan 10, then, the reader sees what one might call “the fully political” Gabriel. When Gabriel is engaged in political battle on earth, his “body” is a blend of human features, heavenly powers (like lightning), and earthly substances characteristic of powerful rulers and kingdoms.

In the final chapter of the book of Daniel (Dan 12), the emphasis on the political power of heaven and heavenly beings changes into an emphasis on the ability of heavenly powers to transform earthly human bodies into bodies with heavenly characteristics. At the end of time, according to Dan 12, Michael the great prince will arise and all of Daniel’s people who are “found written in the book” shall be delivered (12:1-2). When many who sleep in the dust of the earth awaken, those who are wise “shall shine like the brightness of the sky” and those who lead many to righteousness will be “like the stars forever and ever”
In other words, the final goal of the book of Daniel lies beyond political victory in a transformation of wise and righteous people into heavenly-like beings. As we proceed, it will be important for us to keep in view the relation of the “politically” redemptive powers of heavenly beings to the “final” redemptive powers of heavenly beings in apocalyptic discourse.

Apocalyptic Discourse in the Mediterranean World as an Environment for First Century Christian Apocalyptic Rhetorolect

When Christianity emerged during the first century CE, apocalypticism was a widespread and growing phenomenon in the Mediterranean world. As is clear from Volume 1 of The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism, the widespread origins, the historical, social, cultural, and ideological dynamics, the number and nature of the streams of tradition, and the boundaries of apocalyptic with wisdom, prophetic, priestly, mystical, and astronomical or astrological traditions are highly contested in modern scholarship. It is obvious also, however, that any discussion of the emergence of Christian discourse in the Mediterranean world cannot avoid serious discussion of apocalyptic speech forms, literature, and discourse. Our argument is that a focus on inner sociorhetorical dynamics that attend to a combination of image-descriptive and argumentative-enthymematic structuring and of metaphorical and metonymical mapping in a context of sapientialization, scribalization, scripturalization, and canonization can help us to address certain issues concerning apocalyptic discourse in new and beneficial ways.

Since the arena of non-Jewish and non-Christian Mediterranean apocalyptic literature and discourse is so vast, it is more difficult than ever to decide what text or combination of texts to bring before a reader at the end of this chapter to help the reader move yet one step further toward a sociorhetorical understanding of the function of apocalyptic in first century Christian discourse. As a result of viewing first century Christian discourse in a context that reaches from hymns to Zeus and Isis and the rabbinic story-line of Pirke Aboth 1 to the Nicene Creed in the fourth century CE, the decision has been made to end this chapter with a focus on the Egyptian apocalypse of “The Oracle of the Potter.” The overall rhetorical movement of this text, its structuring of images and argumentation, and its metaphorical and metonymic mapping help to exhibit the remarkable challenges, and yet the inescapable necessity, of discussing the elusive nature of apocalyptic discourse in the Mediterranean world during the time of the emergence of Christianity during the first century CE.

An Egyptian Apocalypse: The Oracle of the Potter

The Oracle of the Potter is an account by “the Potter” of an epiphany that reveals a sequence of actions by gods in the context of evil and disorder in the world. The apocalyptic dimensions of the text are related to Jewish and Christian angel-spirit apocalyptic rather than earth-material apocalyptic, since there is no imaging either of gods or of political kingdoms in terms of clay, metal, stone, and/or animal. Instead of angel-spirits, however, there are gods who move from one place to another. In this way the text exhibits a world of Mediterranean gods and goddesses, rather than the angel-spirit tradition of Jewish apocalyptic.

When Jonathan Z. Smith presented a brief interpretation of this oracle as an apocalyptic text in 1975, he argued that a major reason one could see its apocalyptic nature was its existence in multiple versions. Because apocalyptic was such a scribal tradition, writing, rewriting, supplementing, reconfiguring, and reimagining the situation and meanings related to the text is central to its nature as apocalyptic discourse. Of special importance for Smith’s interpretation was the existence of a 2nd century CE narrative frame for the story, which is extant only in P. Graf 29787:

During the reign of king Amenhotep (18th Dynasty), a potter, at the command of Hermes-Thot, goes to the island of Helios-Re where he practices his art. But the people are upset by this sacrilegious action. They pull the pottery out of the oven, break it and drag the potter before the king. The potter defends himself by interpreting this action as a prophetic sign. Just as the pottery has been destroyed, so Egypt, and finally the city of the followers of the evil god Typhon-Set will be destroyed.

Smith explains that this text is “an epiphany of the ancient ram-headed deity Chnum who created the sun, the gods and man on his potter’s wheel.” This allows the interpreter to understand that “For Chnum to have his pots broken is to plunge the world into total de-creation and chaos…. The island of Helios-Re (in Egyptian, the Island of Flames) is the traditional birthplace of the solar deity and the scene of his defeat of the powers of chaos and darkness.”

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66 Smith, *Map is Not Territory*, 81.
68 Ibid., 82.
69 Ibid.
Attempting to read this text with understanding from beginning to end exhibits well the highly challenging nature of interpreting apocalyptic during the time of the emergence of first century Christianity. The text moves beyond the boundaries of wisdom and prophetic tradition into the mysterious, esoteric realm of apocalyptic discourse. The hearer/reader knows the text is somehow working with boundaries of “historical” meanings and understandings. Yet the meanings always lie beyond clear and definitive interpretation, because they present “cosmic” explanations for the events and actions. This is the realm of apocalyptic texts. They continually push beyond that which can be clearly understood into the inner, mysterious, cosmic nature of events in the world. One of the keys to its mode of understanding is the ordering of its assertions into sequences that give certain meanings to its images, arguments, metaphors, and metonymies. The meanings of the assertions, however, are continually elusive, moving interpreters into controversies that can never be resolved. From this perspective, let us approach the four sections and conclusion of the Oracle of the Potter as an example of apocalyptic discourse outside the realm of Judaism and/or Christianity in the Mediterranean world. The first section unfolds as follows:

**Earthly and Cosmic Evils during the Time of the Typhonians**

1. The river, 2 [since it will not have] sufficient water, [will flood] but (only) a little so that scorched will be 3 [the land – ] but unnaturally. 4 [For] in the [time] of the Typhonians 5 [people will say] “Wretched Egypt, [you have been] maltreated 6 by the [terrible] malefactors who have committed evil against you.” 7 And the sun will darken as it will not be willing to observe the evils (τα κακά) in Egypt. 8 The earth will not respond to seeds. These will be part of its 9 blight. [The] farmer will be <du>nned for taxes <for> what he did not plant. 9 There will be fighting in Egypt because people will be in need of food. 10 What one plants, [another] will reap and carry off. When this happens, 11 there will be [war and slaughter] which [will kill] brothers and wives. 12 For [these things will happen] when the great god Hephaistos will desire 13 to return to the [city], and the Girdlewearers will kill each other as they 14 [are Typhonians. – ] evil will be done (κακοθῆσεται). And he will pursue (them) on foot 15 [to the] sea [in] wrath and destroy many of them 16 because [they are] impious.

In the mode of apocalyptic partitioning of time, this initial section of the oracle describes the time of the Typhonians (1-16a). The image-descriptive structuring presents a sequence from insufficient irrigation of the land by the Nile river to darkening of the sun, absence of sprouts from seeds, unjust taxation by rulers, fighting and murder as a result of starvation, and flight to the sea in an attempt to avoid death and destruc-
tion. As the sequence unfolds, the text presents rationales that embed argumentative-enthymematic structuring in the narrative sequence. The lack of sufficient irrigation is not simply an ordinary phenomenon of nature, but it happens because “terrible malefactors” are committing evil (4-5) and because the great god Hephaistos wishes to return to the city (12-13). Who are the evildoers, that they can disrupt even the sun, earth, and ordinary family relationships (6-11)? Why can the great god not return to the city? Metaphoric mapping in the text transfers the domain of historical events to the domain of cosmic struggle between evil “Typhonians” and the great god Hephaistos. According to Stanley M. Burstein, the Typhonians are followers of Typhon (Seth), “the Egyptian god of the desert, storm and foreigners, and brother and mortal enemy of Osiris.”

This cosmic struggle emerges in a repetitive texture of evil-doing (κακοπράξον) in the text. Lines 4 and 5 use three present or perfect tense participles referring to “evil-doing” to describe the maltreatment by the terrible evildoers during this time. Line 6 characterizes the things happening during this time as “the evils in Egypt.” Then line 14 summarizes the terrible actions during this time as “evil that will be done.” While the metaphoric mapping makes the text highly challenging to interpret, the metonymic mapping of the evils in the text provide a pattern of understanding for the hearer/reader. These are the beginnings of a time of “tribulation,” a period of time that will eventually move into some kind of dramatic transformation. But how long will the tribulations last, and what will happen next? This leads to the next section of the Oracle:

**Social Tribulations during the Time of Foreign Kings**

<The king> will come from Syria, he who will be hateful to all men, and from Aithiopia there will come ... He (together with some) of the unholy ones (will come) to Egypt, and he will settle [in the city which] later will be deserted (ἐνθόθεσται). Their children will be made weak, and the country will be in confusion, and many of the inhabitants of Egypt will abandon (καταλειποῦσιν) their homes (and) travel to foreign places. <Then there will be slaughter among friends>; and people will lament their own problems although they are less than those of others. Men will die at the hands of each other; two of them will come to the same place to aid

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71 *ta en Aigyptai kaka.*
72 *kekakourgōmen hyparcheis deinois kata sou kekakourgōmenois kakourgēmasin* (“Wretched Egypt, you have been maltreated by the terrible malefactors who have committed evil against you”).
73 *kekōthēsetai.*
one. Among women who are pregnant death will also be common. The Girdlewearers will kill themselves as they also are Typhonians.

The image-descriptive structuring during this second era begins with a focus on hatred (16b) and continues with reference to death (25, 27), murder (23), and leaders destroying themselves (27-28). Unholy people come to Egypt (18); young and unborn children and their mothers experience evil and death (21, 27-28); friends not only destroy bonds of friendship but friends themselves (23, 26); and leaders do violence to other leaders (28a). Children will be made weak and the countryside will be in confusion (21); people will abandon their homes and travel to foreign places (22-23); friends will murder friends (23); people will lament their own problems even if they are less than those of others (24); men will die at each other’s hands (25); and pregnant women will die (27). The argumentative-enthymematic structuring in this section occurs in the form of a “when … then …” sequence in which the coming of the hateful and unholy people to the city are the rationale for the disruption of social relationships. All of these things happened, because hateful and unholy people came to the city. But who are these people? Metaphoric mapping is present in the repetition of the statement at the end of the previous section that the Girdlewearers (Greek and Macedonian rulers) will kill themselves, since they also are Typhonians, namely people who worship the evil god who is the mortal enemy of Osiris (13, 28). The “real” problem, according to the discourse, concerns worship of the right god. Again the discourse is on the boundaries of historical events and actions. Interpreters can always justifiably enter into debate concerning the historical context for this discourse. But again the metonymic mapping provides a cross-mapping of domains for the hearer/reader. This is the second period within the time of tribulations the text is describing. This is a time when foreign kings come from Syria and Ethiopia (16b-28a), and their coming produces violence that extends from households and friends to rulers and the entire countryside. Occupied by confusion, disorder, and self-interest, people destroy even their own friends and allies. Disorder and destruction are present from the bottom of the social order to the top, with abandonment of homes (22-23), killing of friends as though they were enemies, and rising up to destroy one’s own political allies (23-28). While the meanings of many of the details are elusive, they cause the hearer/reader to recruit the conceptual system of the partitioning of time within apocalyptic reasoning. While the first period of tribulation was caused by conflict between gods and allegiance to gods, the second period was caused by the arrival of hateful and unholy foreign rulers who continued to worship the wrong god. So what will happen
next? Will things get still worse? Probably so. This takes us to the next section of the Oracle:

**Desolation of the All-Nurturing City**

Then Agathos Daimon will abandon (*kataleipsi*) the city that had been founded and enter Memphis, and the city of foreigners, which had been founded, will be deserted (*exenμοθήσetas*). This will happen at the end of the evils (*epi telei tôn kakōn*) (of the time) when there came to Egypt a crowd of foreigners. The city of the Girdlewearers will be abandoned (*exenμοθήσetas*) like my kiln because of the crimes which they committed against Egypt. The cult images, which had been transported there, will be brought back again to Egypt; and the city by the sea will be a refuge for fishermen because Agathos Daimon and Knephis will have gone to Memphis, so that passersby will say "All-nurturing was this city in which every race of men settled."

The image-descriptive structuring during the third era (28b-38a) describes the desertion of "the city that had been founded" in the context of the transporting of the cult images to Memphis and asserts that the city by the sea will become a refuge for fishermen. The argumentative-enthymematic structuring asserts that these things will happen as a result of the movement of the god Agathos Daimon away from the city to Memphis. Also, the reason that the city by the sea becomes a refuge for fishermen is that the gods Agathos Daimon and Knephis move to Memphis. But exactly what meanings are associated with all the assertions? Metaphoric mapping is transferring historical events to the domain of movements of the gods from one city to another. "The city that had been founded" is Alexandria by the sea. When the god Agathos Daimon abandons Alexandria and moves to Memphis along with the god Knephis, Alexandria, the city of Girdlewearers, becomes a deserted place that becomes a refuge for fishermen. Memphis then becomes a city praised by passersby as "all-nurturing" for people who settle there from everywhere. The metaphorical mapping associates the movements of the gods to Memphis as the cause for the destruction of Alexandria, rather than as the result of Alexandria being conquered and Memphis being made the new capital. Moreover, the movement of the gods is related to the people’s destruction of the kiln of the potter whose work imitates the god Chnum, who is the "potter" creator. Again, metonymical mapping allows the hearer/reader to "know" that the destruction of Alexandria is the climactic part of the time of tribulations. This is "the end" of the evils (*epi telei tôn kakōn*) which occurred with the coming of foreigners to Egypt (30-32). Shifting from predictions of death and murder to abandonment and desolation, the oracle asserts that the All-nurturing city (Alexandria) will become a
wasteland when Agathos Daimon, the patron god of Alexandria, leaves it and goes to Memphis (28-29). What, then, will happen next?

**Prosperity when the King descended from Helios appears**

Then will Egypt flourish when the generous fifty-five year ruler appears, the king descended from Helios, the giver of good things (agathón), the one installed by the greatest goddess [Isis], so that the living will pray that the dead (proteteleutēkotas) might arise (anastēnai) to share the prosperity (agathón). Finally the leaves will fall. The Nile, which had lacked water, will be full and winter, which had changed its orderly ways, will run its proper course and then summer will resume its proper track, and normal will be the wind’s breezes which previously had been weak. For in the time of the Typhonians the sun will darken to highlight the character of the evils and to reveal the greed of the Girdleweavers. And Egypt [...].

The image-descriptive structuring of the final era (38b-49a) describes the leaves falling at their proper time, the Nile functioning properly during winter and summer because it is full of water, and the breezes of the wind being strong enough to do their work (43-48). The argumentative-enthymematic structuring presents the prosperity caused by the king descended from Helios (40) as the opposite of the “time of the Typhonians,” when nothing ran its proper course or was strong enough to do its proper work (43-49). The time of evils was caused by the Typhonians and Girdleweavers, and the time of prosperity is caused by the new king. The metaphoric mapping associates the experience of prosperity and cosmic order with the appointment of the king by the god Helios and the installation of the king to the goddess Isis. As David E. Aune describes it:

This vivid prediction of the collapse of the political, economic, and social order of Ptolemaic Egypt, followed by its reestablishment under the leadership of a savior-king, is based on the myth and ritual of the Egyptian enthronement ideology. The prophecies of the potter are patterned after the myth of Osiris: when the followers of Seth-Typhon revolt, Osiris kills Seth and a new king is installed as Horus by his mother Isis. This ancient native Egyptian tradition has been transformed into an apocalyptic scheme for the renovation of the cosmos.74

This metaphoric mapping creates the context for metonymic mapping, where the readers “know” the fourth era is time of the reversal after the times of tribulation, which brought natural and social disorders. When the king descended from Helios, the sun god Re, is in-

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stalled by the goddess Isis, the natural order of both the heavens and earth will be restored. This is the era of transformation into a renewed cosmic order, which even brings forth hopes of resurrection from the dead. The words and phrases work metonymically as they invite the hearer/reader to invite the entire conceptual system, in which times of tribulation move to a time of transformation into blessing and hope. When the new ruler appears, the living will pray that those who have already died may arise to share in the prosperity of this fifty-five year era (39–43). This is the end of the Oracle, but what will be in the conclusion of the text? Could one anticipate that there will be provision for the text to be written down?

Conclusion

Having spoken clearly up to this point, he fell silent. King Amenophis, who was grieved by the many disasters he had recounted, buried the potter in Heliopolis and placed the book in the sacred archives there and unselfishly revealed it to all men. Speech of the potter to King Amenophis, <translated> as accurately as possible, concerning what will happen in Egypt.

King Amenophis oversees the burial of the potter in the city that honors the god Helios and the placement of the book that records the oracle in the sacred archives, where these things can be revealed to all people. The internal sociorhetorical dynamics of this apocalyptic discourse exhibit structuring of images and argumentation, and mappings of metaphor and metonymy that persuade through pictorial narration in which metaphor communicates the cosmic nature of local events and metonymy invites the hearer-reader to recruit a cosmic drama of gods at work in the “ordinary,” daily events of humans.

Conclusion

Two modes of Jewish apocalyptic discourse emerged during the second century BCE and continued on through the succeeding centuries. This means that both modes were present during the emergence of Christianity and continued to be produced as Christianity continued. The Jewish angel-spirit apocalyptic mode features reconfigurations of biblical stories by introducing good spirit angels and evil spirit angels or demons into them. This mode of apocalyptic discourse is present in the first six chapters of Daniel in Hebrew Bible, without the presence of any evil, demonic spirits in the account. In extra-biblical Jewish literature from the second century BCE onwards, angel-spirit apocalyptic discourse is well-developed, with detailed accounts about evil, demonic angel-spirits as well as good, holy angel spirits. A second mode of Jewish apocalyptic discourse, which we call earth-material apocalyp-
tic, features dream visions in which good and evil forces are pictured in relation to earthly substances. When angels, and indeed God, appear in the accounts, there are descriptions of their visual form in relation to precious or ordinary stone, highly valued or less valued metals, domesticated or wild creatures, and/or clay. This earth-material mode of apocalyptic discourse, embedded in angel-spirit apocalyptic discourse, occurs in Daniel 7-12 in the Hebrew Bible and in the Revelation to John in the New Testament.

The Jewish angel-spirit mode of apocalyptic discourse, which is in Daniel 1-6, is the primary apocalyptic mode in Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts, and the letters in the New Testament. The Jewish angel-material mode of apocalyptic that personifies good and evil personages in “earth-material” form becomes a Christian mode of discourse only in the Revelation to John at the end of the New Testament. But things are never truly simple, of course. Many details and controversies await us as we move to the next chapter, which focuses on the nature of first century Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect as it functions throughout the NT writings.