Christian Apocalyptic Rhetorolect
Part II: Flesh and Blood versus Cities, Military Power, and Wealth

Introduction
The NT begins with three prophetic narrative Gospels that configure certain events in the life of Jesus according to angel-spirit apocalyptic, which features angels, Satan, demons, unclean spirits, and holy spirit. After the Gospel of John, which foregrounds early Christian precreation rhetorolect as a context for the story of Jesus, the Acts of the Apostles contains prophetic narrative that configures the “witness mission” of Jesus’ followers to the Gentiles in terms of angel-spirit apocalyptic. In the middle of the NT stands twenty-one letters attributed to Paul, James, John, Peter, and Jude, which embed angel-spirit apocalyptic in various ways in the time of Jesus and his followers. At the end of the NT stands an apocalypse that embeds an earth-material apocalyptic message focused on cities, military power, and wealth in an angel-spirit apocalyptic message.

First century Christians transferred the practice of angel-spirit apocalyptic “rewriting” of past biblical events, like one sees in Jubilees, to angel-spirit apocalyptic “telling” of the story of Jesus and his followers. Just as the practice of angel-spirit apocalyptic rewriting in Judaism was selective with regard to the events it reconfigured, so it is with first century Christian story-telling. In other words, as Jewish apocalyptists rewrote selective biblical events by highlighting the role of good and/or evil spirit beings in the stories, they recounted other events in a quite “biblically straightforward” manner. By biblically straightforward, we mean in the manner in which the story is told in the biblical account. A similar kind of selectivity exists in the NT writings that tell the story of Jesus and his followers. Many of the “Christian” events are told in a manner that can appropriately be called a quite straightforward “biblical” manner. In many instances in the NT, this is a “prophetic” manner, namely a manner characteristic of prophetic biblical narrative or speech. In the midst of prophetic stories and prophetic
speech, however, first century Christian apocalyptic storytelling features angels, Satan, and evil, demonic spirits who play significant roles, or are considerable topics of discussion.

One of the things that is “new” in the NT, therefore, is the recounting of events about Jesus and his followers in the extracanonical mode of apocalyptic “rewriting” of the Bible. This means that the Gospels, Acts, and Letters in the NT contain apocalyptic features much like they are present in extracanonical rewritten Bible, rather than like they occur in Daniel in the Hebrew Bible. As we said in the previous chapter, there is an uncanny relation between the first half and last half of the book of Daniel and the opening and closing of the NT canon. In many ways the book of Daniel in the Hebrew Bible is a Jewish “proto-configuration” of the overall framework of the NT, whereby narratives containing angel-spirit apocalyptic events at the beginning set the stage for earth-material apocalyptic visions of God’s judgment of the world at the end. In comparison to the book of Daniel, there are three Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles at the beginning of the NT that present prophetic narratives blended with wisdom stories and sayings, miracle stories, and angel-spirit apocalyptic events. As with Daniel, this blend creates a context for a focus on priestly issues of prayer, fasting, purity, holiness, and praise and worship of God. The NT enriches the apocalyptically configured prophetic narratives in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts with the Gospel of John and twenty-one letters as it moves toward its dramatic conclusion in an earth-material Apocalypse to John.

The Gospel of John and the twenty-one letters blend first century Christian wisdom, prophetic, precreation, miracle, and priestly rhetoric in a variety of ways with angel-spirit apocalyptic. The large corpus of letters plus seven apocalyptic letters at the beginning of Revelation function as a bridge from the apocalyptically configured narratives at the beginning of the NT to the earth-material apocalypse at the end. The Revelation to John at the end presents God’s heavenly Messiah Jesus as a blend of metals, head and hair like white wool, fire, sun, and voice with the roar of mighty waters who, as “one like the Son of man,” dictates seven letters for John to write down and send to seven churches in Asia Minor (Rev 1–3). After dictating the letters, this “one like the Son of man” appears as the Lion of Judah who is the Little Ram who was slain (Rev 5), and then as King of kings and Lord of lords who destroys evil nations with the two-edged sword that comes out of his mouth (Rev 17, 19). This change in form of God’s Messiah Jesus is startling, but as we have noted above, it has a deep relation to the apocalyptic dream-visions in the last six chapters of the book of Daniel in the Hebrew Bible. The dramatic differences be-
tween apocalyptic in most of the NT and in the Revelation to John has been, and still is, a topic of much concern and discussion among biblical scholars, theologians, clergy, lay people, and perhaps others. Rarely, however, is there an awareness of the real internal issue, namely the existence of two noticeably alternative streams of apocalyptic tradition both before and during the emergence of Christianity in the Mediterranean world, one focused on angel-spirit beings and their relation to flesh, blood, and desire, and another that embeds earth-material beings and their relation to clay, precious metals and stones, cities, military power, and wealth in the angel-spirit stream of tradition.

The centrifugal effect of apocalyptic discourse in first century Christianity was so pervasive that virtually every writing in the NT contains some dimension of apocalyptic conceptuality. Earth-material apocalyptic, however, is in the foreground only in the Revelation to John. All the other NT writings, to the extent that they contain apocalyptic conceptuality, present aspects of angel-spirit apocalyptic with very few events that qualify as “apocalypses.” This raises issues for interpreting “apocalyptic” in first century Christian writings with which many interpreters have grappled over many decades. During the last part of the twentieth century, the SBL Literature Genres Project on apocalyptic confronted interpreters with the issue of whether or not it was appropriate to refer to Mark 13 as a “little apocalypse,” and, as a consequence, Matthew 24-25 and Luke 22 as modifications that either strengthen or weaken the apocalyptic emphases in Mark 13.

The issue is that there is no angelic mediator to Jesus of the content in Mark 13 and parallels. Our approach is somewhat different. One of the characteristics of the angel-spirit stream of apocalyptic was “rewriting” biblical history in a manner that makes angels and demonic spirits (including their satanic leader) participants in the events of history. In other words, apocalyptists considered most biblical accounts of events to be told in a manner that did not reveal the true mysterious powers at work in the events. Apocalyptically informed writers knew how “unseen” powers were at work, because scenes in the heavens had revealed these dimensions of the events either to them or to previous apocalyptic writers. The “unknown dimensions” of the events regu-
larly involved the actions of good angel-spirits in relation to the actions either of evil humans or of rebellious angel-spirits who had become demonic, evil spirits on earth. Thus, a number of apocalyptists specialized in rewriting well-known biblical stories in a manner that revealed how various angel-spirit beings had been “invisibly” at work in the events.

As we observed in the previous chapter, apocalyptists divided the history of the world into parts. During the first century CE, both newly emerging Jewish apocalyptic literature and emerging Christian literature were presenting “special” apocalyptic understanding of various parts of this world history. In other words, each “part” of world history was a potential emergent structure for apocalyptic interpretation of the nature of this age, the end, and eternal time after the end. The best way for us to set the stage for understanding which parts of time emergent Christian literature configured apocalyptically and how they configured it is to begin with periodization of world history in The Animal Apocalypse (1 En. 85-90), The Apocalypse of Weeks (1 En. 93:1-10; 91:11-17), 4 Ezra 14, and 2 Baruch 53-70. As the chapter unfolds, it will not be possible to discuss all the literature in the New Testament. Rather, we will illustrate the points of view of this book by focusing on the undisputed letters of Paul, the Sayings Gospel Q, the Synoptic Gospels and Acts, 2 Thessalonians, Jude, 2 Peter, and the Revelation to John.

Apocalyptic Periodization in 1 Enoch 85-93, 4 Ezra, and 2 Baruch
We will begin with periodization in portions of two Jewish apocalypses that emerged between 70 and 120 CE, 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch, since scholars already have observed important relationships between these two texts and the undisputed letters of Paul. As the discussion develops, we also will include 1 Enoch 85-93. In 4 Ezra 14, a voice out of a bush, identifying itself by saying, “I revealed myself in a bush and spoke to Moses…” (14:3), tells Ezra that “the age of the world” (i.e., “this age”) has twelve parts. Without explaining the nature of each part, the voice asserts that nine and one-half of the parts already have passed, leaving two and one-half parts remaining (14:11-12). This sets the context for exhortations to Ezra about his own life (14:13-18) and instructions to Ezra about writing the visions in tablets, making some of the writings available to the general public, and giving some of the writings only “to the wise among your people” (14:19-48). 2 Baruch 53-70 subsequently presents the twelve parts of this history of the world (this age) as a series of six dark (evil) and six bright (righteous)

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waters between God’s creation of the world (53:1-2 [Gen 1]) and the end, which itself contains dark waters (70:1-71:2) and bright waters (72:1-74:4). A brief look at the twelve parts of this age and the evil and good parts of the end time can help us to understand, by comparison, how early Christian literature configured certain parts of time apocalyptically as it emerged during the first century CE.

For 2 Baruch, God’s creation of the world takes place through the word going out from God in the form of a great cloud coming up from the sea and covering the earth (53:1; 56:3). Through this process the length of the world “was established in accordance with the abundance of the intelligence of him who let it go forth” (56:4). As the angel Ramael (55:3) explains to Baruch, the length of the time of the world can be understood as twelve parts, with dark waters (evil parts) and bright waters (righteous parts) alternating with each other in a sequence. The following table displays the twelve parts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Periodization of This Age in 2 Baruch</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Adam, sinful angels, and the flood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Abraham and his family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Moses through Caleb and Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Judges/Amorites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) David, Solomon, and Zion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) Jeroboam, Jezebel, and Salmanassar, king of Assyrians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8) Hezekiah vs Sennacherib, king of Assyrians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9) Manasseh, son of Hezekiah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10) Josiah, king of Judah, and Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(11) Destruction of Zion/Jerusalem and Babylonian exile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(12) Rebuilt Zion/fall of nations</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A few brief observations can help us as we make a transition to the nature of parts of time in first century Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect. In 2 Baruch, the history of “this age” begins with a dark (evil) time that includes Adam, Enoch, the sinful angels, Noah, and the flood (56:1-16). The first part of time, therefore, includes the biblical events in Genesis 2-9. It is noticeable that there is no reference to Enoch or Noah, since this is a dark time and they are “bright” forces. Rather, there is reference to “the transgression which Adam, the first man, committed” (56:5), which brought “untimely death” and a long list of subsequent evils into being. The evils include mourning, affliction, illness, labor, and pride. In addition, “the realm of death began to ask to be renewed with blood, the conception of children came about, the passion of parents was produced, the loftiness of men was humili-
ated, and goodness vanished” (56:6). This began a process whereby “from these black waters again black was born, and very dark darkness originated” (56:10). This leads to a reference to angels who “came down and mingled themselves with women,” while other angels “restrained themselves,” in a context where “those living on earth perished together through the waters of the flood” (56:10-15). We will see below that this grouping of evils around the transgression of Adam is characteristic of Paul’s apocalyptic view of world history in the NT. Paul also does not mention Enoch or Noah during the first part of the history of the world, or in any of his letters. Rather, Adam is the focus of Paul’s attention for the emergence of death and all kinds of evil associated with blood, flesh, and desire in the history of the world.

In *2 Baruch*, the second part of time is a bright (righteous) time that includes “the fountain of Abraham and his generation, and the coming of his son [Isaac], and the son of his son [Jacob], and of those who are like them” (57:1). During this time, the unwritten law was in force, the works of the commandments were accomplished, belief in the coming judgment was brought about, hope of the world which will be renewed was built, and the promise of the life that will come later was planted (57:2). Again we will see below that Paul’s writings in the NT present the time of Abraham apocalyptically as a time of righteousness, belief, hope, and promise, as well as a time that defined the nature of the coming judgment.

After the time of Abraham in *2 Baruch*, there are five dark parts of time interwoven with five bright parts of time. The dark parts of time are Egypt, the judges, Jeroboam, Manasseh, and the destruction of Jerusalem, which results in the Babylonian exile. The bright parts of time are Moses, David, Hezekiah, Josiah, and the rebuilding of Zion. The dark parts of time are characterized by sins (58:1; 60:2; 62:2), death (58:1-2; 64:2), wickedness (58:1; 60:1; 62:7; 64:2), oppression (58:1), pollutions (60:1; 64:2), idolatry (62:1-3; 64:3-8; 67:2, 6), famine (62:4), exile (62:5-6; 64:5), killing (64:2), and abolishing priests and offerings (64:2; 67:6). In contrast, the bright parts of time focus on the Law, righteousness, promise, faith, removing idolatry, and trusting and hoping in God.

The bright parts of time are as important as the dark parts of time for understanding the manner in which early Christian literature presented its apocalyptic account of the time of Jesus and his followers until the end of time. For *2 Baruch*, in the time from Moses through Caleb “the lamp of the eternal law which exists forever” and “the promise” and “the fire” were present, and Moses showed the people detailed aspects

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7 Cf. the fire for Manasseh in *2 Bar.* 64:7.
of the end of time, the place of faith, the orders of the archangels, and many other things (59:1-12). We will see below that Paul viewed the time of Moses as a significant mixture of dark and bright features. During the time of David and Solomon in 2 Baruch, appropriate activities occurred in the sanctuary of Zion, rest and peace reigned, and “the righteousness of the commandments of the Mighty One was accomplished in truth” (61:1-8). Later Hezekiah, trusting upon the works of God and hoping upon God’s righteousness, prayed to God and received the power to save Zion from the attack of the Assyrian king Sennacherib (63:1-11). Josiah, “who was the only one in his time who subjected himself to the Mighty One with his whole heart and his whole soul,” purified the country from idols, restored priests and offerings, and destroyed evil ones throughout his kingdom (66:1-5). As a result, “he will receive reward forever and ever and be honored with the Mighty One more than many in the last time” (66:6). During the sixth bright time, Zion will be rebuilt and priests and offerings will be restored (68:5).

After describing the twelve parts of world history, namely “this age,” the angel Ramael describes to Baruch the contents of the dark waters and bright waters of the end time. The contents of the dark and bright waters of the end time are as follows:

**The Dark and Bright Waters of the End Time in 2 Baruch**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Coming of the Harvest: Dark Waters</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(13) 70:2 Coming of the harvest of the seed of evil ones and good ones after the time of the world has ripened</td>
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<tr>
<td>(14) 70:3 Hatred, fighting, despised rule the honorable</td>
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<tr>
<td>(15) 70:4 Poor delivered to the rich</td>
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<td>(16) 70:5 Wise silent, foolish speak</td>
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<tr>
<td>(17) 70:6 Tribulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(18) 70:7 Most High gives sign: prepared nations war against remaining rulers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(19) 70:8 Earthquake, fire, famine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(20) 70:9 People delivered into the hands of “my Servant, the Messiah”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(21) 70:10 Whole earth devours its inhabitants</td>
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<tr>
<td>(22) 71:1-2 Holy land protects its inhabitants</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Coming of the Anointed One: Bright Waters</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(23) 72:2a Coming of time of the Anointed One after the signs and the moving of the nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>(24) 72: 2b-6 The Anointed One will call the nations, sparing some and killing others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(25) 73:1 The Anointed One will sit down in eternal peace on the throne of the kingdom: joy will be revealed and rest will appear</td>
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<tr>
<td>(26) 73:2 Health, no illness, fear, tribulation, or lamentation; joy will encompass the earth</td>
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<tr>
<td>(27) 73:3 No untimely death, no sudden adversity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 2 Baruch, the angel Ramael describes the dark waters of the end time (70-71) before describing the bright waters (73-74). Overall, the dark waters are “the time of the coming of the harvest” (70:2) while the bright waters are “the time of the coming of the Anointed One” (72:2). It is noticeable that the time of the harvest identifies various evils on the earth (70:3-5) that reach a highpoint in tribulations (70:6) before the Most High gives a sign that puts good nations into action against evil nations, there is earthquake, fire, and famine, and then all people are delivered into the hands of God’s Servant, the Messiah (70:7-9). After this, the whole earth devours its inhabitants, but the holy land protects its inhabitants (71:1). In contrast to the time of the harvest, the time of the Messiah moves quickly through judgment of the nations (72:2-6) to the Messiah’s sitting on the throne of eternal peace (73:1), after which there is a list of evil things that will no longer exist and good things that will exist (73:2-7). The description ends with the earth generating its produce without tiring labor (74:1), with the end of that which is corruptible, and with the beginning of that which is incorruptible (74:2). The coming of the Messiah to judge the nations, then, is the means by which the final “bright waters” come into being.

When a person puts 2 Baruch 56-74 alongside The Animal Apocalypse in 1 Enoch 85-90, which we discussed in the previous chapter, and The Apocalypse of Weeks in 1 Enoch 93:1-10; 91:11-17, a person gets the following display:

Apocalyptic Times and Spaces in 1 Enoch 85-93; 2 Baruch 56-74

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 Enoch 85-90</th>
<th>1 Enoch 93:1-10; 91:11-17</th>
<th>2 Baruch 56-74</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) 85:3-9 Adam and Eve and their Children</td>
<td>(1) 93:3 First Week: Adam to Enoch; righteousness (good)</td>
<td>(1) 56:5-16 Adam, sinful angels, and the flood (dark)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) 86:1-6 The Fall of the Watchers and the Violence of the Giants</td>
<td>(2) 93:4 Second Week: deceit and violence; Noah saved (good); Conclusion: iniquity and law for sinners afterwards (evil)</td>
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<td>(3) 87:1-88:3 Divine Judgment of the Watchers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Title/Section</td>
<td>Textual Content</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:9-27</td>
<td>Noah’s Descendants; Abraham and his Descendants; Egypt; Moses to the Red Sea</td>
<td>(5) 89:9-27 Noah’s Descendants; Abraham and his Descendants; Egypt; Moses to the Red Sea. (3) 93:5 Third Week: Conclusion: Abraham, plant of righteous judgment; Abraham’s son [Isaac], eternal plant of righteousness (good) (2) 57:1-3 Abraham and his family (bright)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:28-38</td>
<td>From the Wilderness to Moses’ Death</td>
<td>(6) 89:28-38 From the Wilderness to Moses’ Death. (4) 93:6 Fourth week: [Moses]; Conclusion: visions of angels; eternal covenant; tabernacle (good) (4) 59:1-12 Moses through Caleb and Law (bright)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:39-50</td>
<td>From Entrance into the Land to the Building of the Temple</td>
<td>(7) 89:39-50 From Entrance into the Land to the Building of the Temple. (5) 93:7 Fifth week: [Solomon]; Conclusion: Kingdom; Temple (good) (6) 61:1-8 David, Solomon, and Zion (bright)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:51-58</td>
<td>The Apostasy of the Two Kingdoms</td>
<td>(8) 89:51-58 The Apostasy of the Two Kingdoms. (6) 93:8 Sixth week: [Kings of Israel]; blindness; straying hearts; Elijah ascends (good); Conclusion: Temple Destruction; Exile (evil) (7) 62:1-8 Jeroboam, Jezebel, and Salmanassar, king of Assyrians (dark)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:72b-90:1</td>
<td>The Second Period: The Twenty-Three Shepherds from the Return (Rebuilding) to Alexander</td>
<td>(11) 89:72b-90:1 The Second Period: The Twenty-Three Shepherds from the Return (Rebuilding) to Alexander. (7) 93:9-10; 91:11 Seventh week: Perverse generation; wicked deeds (evil); Conclusion: Elect ones of righteousness chosen from the eternal plant of righteousness (Abraham’s progeny); given sevenfold wisdom and knowledge to execute judgment on violence and deceit (good) (12) 68:1-8 Rebuilt Zion/full of nations (bright)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(14) 90:20–27</td>
<td>Judgment in the pleasant Land (of Israel)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(8) 91:12–13</td>
<td>Eighth week: Week of righteousness; wicked delivered into hand of the righteous;</td>
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<td>(15) 90:28–29</td>
<td>New Beginning: A New House</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusion: Building of Temple for Great King in glory for eternity (good)</td>
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| (9) 91:14 | Ninth week: Great Righteous Judgment over the whole earth. |
| (13) 70:2 | Coming of the harvest of the seed of evil and good ones of the whole world after the time of the world has ripened (dark) |
| (14) 70:3 | Hatred, fighting, despised rule the honorable (dark) |
| (15) 70:4 | Poor delivered to the rich (dark) |
| (16) 70:5 | Wise silent, foolish speak (dark) |
| (17) 70:6 | Tribulations (dark) |
| (18) 70:7 | Most High gives sign: prepared nations war against remaining rulers (dark) |
| (19) 70:8 | Earthquake, fire, famine (dark) |
| (20) 70:9 | People delivered into the hands of “my Servant, the Messiah” (dark) |
| (21) 70:10 | Whole earth devours its inhabitants (dark) |
| (22) 71:1–2 | Holy land protects its inhabitants (dark) |
| (23) 72:2a | Coming of time of the Anointed One after the signs and the moving of the nations (bright) |
| (24) 72:2b–6 | The Anointed One will call the nations, sparing some and killing others (bright) |
| (10) 91:15–16 | Eternal judgment executed by angels of eternal heaven. |
| (11) 91:17 | Eternal age of goodness and righteousness. Many weeks without number forever; a time of goodness and righteousness; sin shall no more be heard of forever. |
| (12) 91:18 | Eternal age of goodness and righteousness. Many weeks without number forever; a time of goodness and righteousness; sin shall no more be heard of forever. |
| (13) 70:2 | Coming of the harvest of the seed of evil and good ones of the whole world after the time of the world has ripened (dark) |
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A person readily sees that 2 Baruch is noticeable for its detailed description of aspects of the end time (Items 13–32). A person also can observe, however, a noticeable similarity in the scheme of periodization from the time of Adam to the kings of Israel. Once a person comes to the kings of Israel, there is considerable variation in emphases as the periods of time move to the exile and judgment at the end time. As we move to first century Christian literature, it will come as no surprise that its discourse contributed significantly to the apocalyptic focus on a special “Messiah,” “Elect One,” “Righteous One,” “Son,” or “Holy One” as a transition from the time of David (still a part of “this age”) to the coming age. It will be especially important in our account to observe how first century Christians told stories, made pronouncements, and developed arguments that presented the events of Jesus and his followers with angel-spirits, Satan, demonic spirits, and evil historical forces that created a transition from the time of David and the kings of Israel to the end time. In this process, Christians put such an energetic focus on Jesus as God’s Messiah that they acquired the name “Messianites,” which emerged in Greek as “Christians” (christianoi). Our special task in this chapter is to exhibit the ways in which certain “apocalyptic” parts of time functioned as emergent structures for first century Christians as they presented “their time” as a transitional apocalyptic part of “this age.” Various apocalyptic parts of time functioned as dynamic cognitive resources for first century Christians as they used, adopted, adapted, configured, and reconfigured stories and arguments to present their views of God, angelic spirit-beings, demonic spirit-beings, predecessors of Jesus, and others.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(29) 73:6 Wild beasts serve men; asps and dragons subject themselves to children (bright)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(30) 73:7 Women have no birth pangs (bright)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(31) 74:1 Reapers will not become tired; farmers will not wear themselves out, since the products will shout out speedily (bright)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(32) 74:2 End of that which is corruptible; beginning of that which is incorruptible (bright)</td>
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8. The word “messiah” means “anointed with oil”: meshiach (Hebrew); christos (Greek); see Marinus de Jonge, “Messiah,” ABD IV:777–88.

9. “Messianites” would be a Hebrew rather than Greek word form.

Jesus himself, followers of Jesus, and people who either competed with or opposed Jesus and his followers.

The Emergence of Forensic Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Context of Cosmological Apocalyptic Eschatology during the First Century CE

Martinus C. de Boer has discussed some of the things we have presented above in terms of a stream of apocalyptic tradition he calls “forensic apocalyptic eschatology,” which emerged during the first and second centuries CE in the context of “cosmological apocalyptic eschatology.” This emerging stream of apocalyptic eschatology, in his view, presented a special opportunity for Paul to appropriate Jewish apocalyptic discourse in a way that was interactive with emerging Jewish apocalyptic conceptions and writings. A major issue, as he explains, is that cosmological apocalyptic eschatology blames heavenly beings for the pervasive evil throughout God’s created world. Forensic apocalyptic eschatology, in contrast, holds humans from Adam to the present responsible for the pervasive evil throughout God’s created world. In his analysis, he identifies verses in first-second CE Jewish apocalyptic literature that launch a direct polemic against the idea that angels are to blame for the pervasive evil in the world. The blame lies decisively on Adam. As a result of the sin of Adam, not only are humans heirs of an evil, sinful inclination, but Adam’s sin was the act that led the angels astray! A key chapter for his analysis is 2 Baruch 56, discussed above, where the angel Ramael focuses on Adam. Key verses for de Boer’s observations are as follows:

1. And from these black waters again black were born, and very dark darkness originated. 9 For he who was a danger to himself [Adam] was also a danger to the angels. 10 For they possessed freedom in that time in which they were created. 11 And some of them came down and mingled themselves with women. 12 At that time they who acted like this were tormented in chains. 13 But the rest of the multitude of angels, who have no number, restrained themselves. 14 And those living on earth perished together through the waters of the flood. 15 Those are the first black waters. (2 Bar. 56:9-16)

M.C. de Boer observes that this apocalyptic description of world history creates a situation in 2 Baruch where humans are entirely re-

sponsible for the evils they perform and for belief that may lead them to glory:

For, although Adam sinned first and has brought death upon all who were not in his own time, yet each of them who has been born from him has prepared for himself the coming torment. And further, each of them has chosen for himself the coming glory. 16 For truly, the one who believes will receive reward. (2 Bar 54:15-16)

Another verse of support for de Boer’s approach lies in the Greek of 1 En. 98:4: “... sin has not been sent into the world. It is the people who have themselves invented it.” He chooses the word “forensic” to describe the special focus on Adam especially because of the contents of 2 Baruch 49-51. In these chapters, God’s act of holding humans accountable for their thoughts and actions produces a time of judgment that “is not a cosmic war against cosmological, angelic powers but a courtroom in which all humanity appears before the bar of the Judge.” We will argue below that 2 Baruch 57-59 are just as important for understanding Paul’s arguments, since they juxtapose the emergence of “belief in the coming judgment” during the time of Abraham and his descendants with the emergence of “the lamp of the eternal law which exists forever and ever illuminated all those who sat in darkness” during the time of Moses’ family and descendants. Paul presented a reconfigured apocalyptic story-line from Adam, Abraham, Moses, and David to the present and future on the basis of his view of God’s action of raising Jesus from the dead in the context of his crucifixion, death, and burial.

Our approach, then, considers M.C. de Boer’s analysis and interpretation to be the most helpful one available in present scholarship for understanding the relation of apocalyptic literature to Paul’s undisputed letters. The limitations of his work for our purpose are fourfold. First, his analysis and interpretation is limited to the undisputed letters of Paul. Our task implicitly includes all the writings in the NT. Second, his approach is limited by a focus only on time, rather than on both time and space in apocalyptic literature. Third, his focus on time needs to be supplemented by more attention to the “parts” of time in apocalyptic presentations of world history. Fourth, the dominant literary-historical approach in biblical studies perpetuates a limited environment for de Boer’s perception of how creatively Paul reconfigures the “sources” for his apocalyptic ideas. A sociorhetorical approach views what de Boer calls “sources” as “resources” that contain “emergent

12 De Boer, “Paul and Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology,” 178.
13 Ibid., 176; idem, “Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology,” 359-66.
structures” for Paul’s view of God’s activities and achievements through “the Lord Jesus Messiah.” M. C. de Boer leads the way with his following observation: “the crucified Christ whom God raised from the dead is Paul’s criterion for the appropriation of Jewish apocalyptic-eschatological categories” (367-68). In our view, Paul’s creative re-working of Jewish apocalyptic-eschatological categories requires that we speak of Paul’s “reconfiguration” rather than appropriation of Jewish apocalyptic-eschatological categories. In short, Paul was a more creative thinker than most literary-historical interpreters have been able to articulate. Using strategies of sociorhetorical interpretation, we will be able to build on de Boer’s work to show that Paul was not “limited” by first century Jewish apocalyptic-eschatological categories as much as many, perhaps most, interpreters presuppose. In the language of current cognitive scientists, apocalyptic-eschatological frames of understanding and reasoning functioned as “emergent structures” for Paul’s points of view and arguments. We will show below that in virtually every context of apocalyptic argument in Paul’s undisputed writings he was reconfiguring conventional apocalyptic-eschatological categories in significant ways. In our view, many interpreters have been trying to say this for at least a century, but literary-historical categories have either limited the language available to them to show the nature of Paul’s creativity, or the overall scholarly environment of analysis and interpretation has significantly limited or even silenced the insights they have presented.

Cosmological and Forensic Angel-Spirit Apocalyptic Rhetorolect in the Undisputed Letters of Paul
The apostle Paul created a Christian apocalyptic story-line through the earthly humans of Adam, Abraham, Moses, David, Christ, himself, fellow believers, and people of the nations rather than through the heavenly sons of God who lusted after the daughters of humans. It is important for us to know that Paul selected particular apocalyptic time periods and focused on them in particular ways to achieve his version of the apocalyptic story of the world. We have seen above the twelve parts of world history that emerged in 2 Baruch by the beginning of the second century CE, as well as the dark and bright contents of the end-time. It is important to be attentive to these parts of time as we interpret Paul’s letters. Paul’s apocalyptic argumentation in 1 Thessalonians (ca. 50–51 CE) focuses on the end-time, rather than on parts of time

in this age. In 1 Corinthians (ca. 53-55 CE), Paul adds an apocalyptic focus on Adam (15:20-58) and makes embryonic apocalyptic statements about Moses (9:8-12; 10:1-22). In 2 Corinthians (ca. 56 CE), Paul presents an apocalyptic view of Moses (3:4-18) in an overall context where he uses language about “a new creation” (2 Cor 5:17) and talks about his own “visions and revelations of the Lord” (2 Cor 12:1). In Galatians (ca. 52-56 CE), Paul focuses on his own revelations (1:12, 16; 2:2; 3:23) and Abraham (2:15-4:7; 4:22-5:1) in the context of an apocalyptic focus on “spirit,” which we will propose emerges out of his apocalyptic story-line from Adam to the Messiah. In Romans (ca. 56-57 CE), Paul includes David (1:3-5) in a statement that leads into further apocalyptic elaboration of the importance of the times of Adam (5:12-14, 18-21) and Abraham (4:1-15; 5:19-21) for understanding the relation of the time of Moses (2:12-29; 3:19-31; 5:14, 20-21) to the time of the Messiah, tribulations, and judgment. As our discussion of these letters unfolds, we will propose that an implicit dimension of Paul’s discussion is an apocalyptic interpretation of the exile as life in this age “among the nations.” Paul’s interpretation of the exile requires no reference to Babylon or Persia. Rather, it is a “part of time” in which God makes the gospel of faith, spirit, and righteousness available to all people in the world.

Paul’s focus on humans rather than heavenly beings in his apocalyptic story-line had the effect of emphasizing the rebellion of humans in a context of de-emphasizing the rebellion of heavenly beings. Focusing on specific humans, Paul blended multiple story-lines together into a new apocalyptic story-line in the Mediterranean world that focused centrally on God’s “Lord Jesus Messiah.” Once one sees Paul’s selective focus on conventional apocalyptic time periods, perhaps the most difficult limitation to overcome in current analysis and interpretation of the undisputed letters of Paul is the focus on apocalyptic eschatology, rather than on the overall conceptual system of apocalyptic discourse in Jewish tradition. The emphasis on history in 19th and 20th century investigations of the NT naturally led to a delimitation of apocalyptic to apocalyptic eschatology, which focuses on the movement of time from this age to the coming age. To put it another way, the last two centuries of NT interpretation have focused on time in a manner that de-emphasized space. Preoccupation with the nature of time led to a selective approach to apocalyptic literature that devalued the highly sophisticated approaches to spaces in apocalyptic literature. Interpretation of spaces is becoming much more important in 21st century account of apocalyptic rhetoric in the undisputed Pauline letters, see Carey, *Ultimate Things*, 125-41.
Along with it comes the possibility of being much more attentive to spaces throughout God’s universe in apocalyptic literature. A way to move forward, we suggest, is to remain attentive to the manner in which Paul’s argumentation in a particular context focuses on movement from earthly spaces upwards toward heaven in relation to movement from heavenly spaces downward toward earth.

The work of Martinus C. de Boer exhibits in a majesterial way how the focus on time has guided NT interpretation of apocalyptic in the writings of Paul. The investigations, discussions, and debates have been and are deeply informed, intellectually powerful, and theologically rigorous. In the end, however, the selectivity of the topics under investigation and discussion is truly remarkable. Topoi concerning time are continually in the foreground, and topoi concerning spaces, which include the human body, as well as all kinds of earthly and cosmic “bodies,” have been more difficult to bring into the foreground. With the writings of Rudolf Bultmann, the investigation and discussion of spaces focused heavily on “the personal body” of a human being under the rubric of “anthropology.”

During the last quarter of the 20th century, many kinds of “social” investigations have drawn attention to interrelated spaces in the world. “Mainline” interpretations, however, have quite successfully kept the focus on human bodies in “time,” rather than on human bodies in relation to all other kinds of “bodies,” animal and otherwise, in multiple spaces throughout God’s universe. We will see below that Christopher Rowland in particular wrestled with the relation of time to space in interpretation of apocalyptic in Jewish and Christian tradition, and a growing number of interpreters are now including many of his insights. It is important to rework these contributions in ways that allow us to see more clearly the creative ways in which first century Christian discourse reoriented Mediterranean apocalyptic traditions both spatially and temporally toward a “messiah-oriented” understanding of God, God’s emissaries, believers, and unbelievers throughout the history of God’s created world.

**Apocalyptic Times and Spaces in 1 Thessalonians: Persecution, Death, and Resurrection**

In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11, Paul presents “Christian wisdom” that contains three argumentative apocalyptic story-summaries. First there are two apocalyptic story-summaries that present an argument (4:14,
16–18) that God has a plan to take believers who are “in Messiah,” whether they have already died or still alive, into heaven “to be with the Lord forever” after “the coming of the Lord.” Second there is an argument (5:1–11) that believers “in Messiah” know about “the day of the Lord,” because they are children of light rather than children of darkness. In each part of the argument, Paul embeds one or more “argumentative apocalyptic story-summaries” (4:14, 16–17; 5:3) in an elaboration of early Christian wisdom rhetorolect. The following table, naming and numbering the items as they appear in 1 Enoch 90; 1 Enoch 93:9–10; 91:11–17; 2 Baruch 70–74, displays the contents of the end-time Paul interprets as he presents his argument:

### Apocalyptic Times and Spaces in 1 Enoch 90–93; 2 Baruch 70–74 and 1 Thessalonians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 Enoch 90–93; 2 Baruch 70–74</th>
<th>1 Thessalonians</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>World History (This Age)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(7a) 1 En. 93:9 Seventh week: Perverse generation; wicked deeds; cf. (12) 90:2–5 (evil);</td>
<td>Judeans killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, displease God and oppose everyone by hindering us from speaking to the nations so they can be saved, filling up the measure of their sins: 2:15–16; Lord Jesus Christ died: 5:10 (dark)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7b) 1 En. 93:10; 91:11 Seventh week Conclusion: Elect ones chosen from the eternal plant of righteousness (Abraham’s progeny); given sevenfold wisdom and knowledge to execute judgment on violence and deceit; cf. (13) 90:6–19 (good);</td>
<td>Jesus rose up from the dead: 1:10; 4:14 (bright)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>End Time</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Spirit: 4:8</td>
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20 en Christṓ
As we begin a discussion of the apocalyptic aspects of Paul’s undisputed letters, it is important to notice one very special characteristic of Paul’s early Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect. When Paul used the word “Messiah” (Christos), he regularly used it without the article “the.” This approach is present in 1 Thessalonians, which probably is the earliest writing in the NT (ca. 50–51 CE).\

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Text</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 En. 91:14</td>
<td>Ninth week: Great Righteous Judgment over the whole earth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Bar. 70:2</td>
<td>Coming of the harvest of the seed of evil ones and good ones after the time of the world has ripened (dark)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Bar. 70:6</td>
<td>Tribulations (dark)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Bar. 70:7</td>
<td>Most High gives sign: prepared nations war against remaining rulers (dark)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Bar. 70:10</td>
<td>Whole earth devours its inhabitants (dark)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Bar. 72:2a</td>
<td>Coming of time of the Anointed One after the signs and the moving of the nations (bright)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 En. 91:15-16</td>
<td>Eternal judgment executed by angels of eternal heaven.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Bar. 72:2b-6</td>
<td>The Anointed One will call the nations, sparing some and killing others (bright)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 En. 91:17</td>
<td>Eternal age of goodness and righteousness. Many weeks without number forever; a time of goodness and righteousness; sin shall no more be heard of forever; cf. 1 En. 90:30-39.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Bar. 73:1</td>
<td>The Anointed One will sit down in eternal peace on the throne of the kingdom: joy will be revealed and rest will appear (bright)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Bar. 73:3</td>
<td>No untimely death, no sudden adversity (bright)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

simply transliterate the Greek word *chrístos* as “Christ.” On the one hand, this can help modern hearers/readers understand how the discourse in the NT came to be identified as “Christian” discourse. On the other hand, modern hearers/readers regularly do not think about this as an unusual way of using the word “Messiah” that was highly important in first century Christian discourse. Our interpretations throughout this chapter regularly will exhibit this characteristic of NT discourse by translating the Greek word *chrístos* without the article as “Messiah” and with the article as “the Messiah.”

In 1 Thess 4:13-18, Paul begins with movement from earth up to heaven followed by movement from heaven towards earth that brings humans from earth up to heaven. Paul uses two major steps at the beginning of his argument to achieve this movement through space. First there is an introductory thesis and rationale about wanting the Thessalonians to be informed so they do not grieve like people who have no hope (4:13). This thesis and rationale begins with people on earth. Second there is an enthymematic apocalyptic story-summary thesis (Rule) about Jesus: “For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died” (14). This story-summary thesis, which contains repetitive use of the name Jesus and the verb “died,” begins on earth with movement into heaven that creates the context for God to act from heaven to move humans from earth to heaven. After his initial statement of the story-summary thesis, Paul restates the story-summary in an argumentative apocalyptic story-summary that presents a Case, Result, and Exhortative Conclusion:

**Apocalyptic Story (Case):** 16For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel’s call and with the sound of God’s trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Messiah will rise first.

17Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air;

**Apocalyptic Result:** and so we will be with the Lord for ever.

**Exhortative Conclusion:** 18Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Instead of using the name “Jesus,” this argumentative story-summary uses the name “the Lord” in relation to the archangel’s call, God’s trumpet, and being “in Messiah” to present its reasoning. In this instance, there is movement from heaven to earth that creates the context for humans to move from earth to heaven. The overall sequence

The NRSV usually translates *chrístos* without the article as “Christ” and with the article as “the Messiah.”
blends early Christian wisdom with apocalyptic rhetorolect as it presents an introduction, an enthymematic Rule, an amplified apocalyptic Case, a Result, and an exhortative conclusion. A major rhetorical effect of the sequence is to replace the repetitive emphasis on “Jesus” in 4:14 with a repetitive emphasis on “the Lord” in 4:16-17. This replacement changes the conventional meaning of “the Lord” from the Lord God to “Lord Jesus Messiah.” This meaning for “the Lord” coheres with Paul’s use of the name “Lord Jesus Messiah” alongside “God the Father” in the address to the Thessalonians at the beginning of the letter (1:1). Also, it coheres with Paul’s use of the name “the Lord” in 1:3, 6, 8; 2:15, 19; 3:8, 11, 12, 13; 4:1, 2 for the Lord Jesus. When Paul explains “the will of God” in 4:1-8, his reference to “the Lord” as “an avenger in all these things” (4:6) reverberates with conventional Jewish usage in a manner that could invite people to understand it either as a reference to the Lord God or to the Lord Jesus. As Abraham J. Malherbe says: “It is not clear whether he [Paul] has in mind God or Christ… The description of the judge as an avenger (ekdikos) makes it likely that he is referring to God, who was so described in the Jewish tradition … but Christ is equally described by him as judge …”23 In turn, Charles A. Wanamaker says: “The language is drawn from the OT (see esp. Ps. 94:1, which Paul may be quoting). But he probably has in mind here an apocalyptic image of the Lord Jesus as the coming avenger of God’s wrath who will inflict severe punishment on wrongdoers who violate the demands of the gospel.”24 In first century Christian discourse, the phrase “the Lord” acquires “multistability.”25 This means that people could hear the title “the Lord” as referring either to the Lord God or to the Lord Jesus Messiah. This does not mean that reference to “the Lord” was “unstable” for first century Christians, whereby it could refer to any number of different personages. The title had “multistability” between God and Jesus. It could refer either to the Lord God or to the Lord Jesus, but people were to limit the term “the Lord” to these two beings. One of the rich dimensions of early Christian discourse is various kinds of multistability, which allow hearers/readers/interpreters to understand assertions within a range of conceptual systems. In Paul’s writings, a significant issue can be if “the Lord” refers to the Lord God or to the Lord Jesus. The rhetorical effect of the multistability is to introduce a close relation between God and Jesus that creates a context for lively discussion, debate, and disagree-

24 Wanamaker, The Epistles to the Thessalonians, 156.
ment during the second through the fourth centuries CE concerning the humanity and divinity of Christ, and concerning the “Trinitarian” nature of God.

Most interpreters agree that the multistability concerning “the Lord” as an avenger in 4:6 disappears in Paul’s apocalyptic story-summary in 4:15-17. In other words, the rhetorical effect of 4:13-18 is to make “Lord Jesus Messiah” the central actor throughout the scene. There is agreement that “the Lord” in 4:15 is a reference to “a word of the Lord” Jesus, although interpretation varies whether this “word” is an actual statement or transmitted saying of Jesus, a saying of Jesus supplemented by Jewish apocalyptic speculation, a prophetic word from the exalted Lord Jesus, or Paul’s own midrash on the tradition.26 Likewise, there is agreement that the “earliest” written use of “parousia in its technical meaning” of “the coming of the Lord” in 4:15 is a reference to the coming of the Lord Jesus.27 This means that “the Lord himself” who will descend from heaven (16) and “the Lord in the air” (17) also are references to “the Lord Jesus” that “Christianize” Jewish apocalyptic tradition.28 Thus, Paul’s statement that “we shall always be with the Lord” (17) is a reference to living forever with the Messiah, which is a conventional topos in Jewish apocalyptic literature.29

The manner in which Paul ends with an exhortative conclusion shows how early Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect functions in early Christian wisdom rhetorolect in 1 Thessalonians 4-5. The goal of this apocalyptic argumentation is to convince believers “in Messiah” in Thessalonica to live in “wise,” supportive, and “comforting” community with one another. The rhetorical nature of the passage is to embed apocalyptic story-summaries in an argumentative sequence that presents early Christian wisdom that is a basis for exhortation to live supportively with one another. In this instance, then, Paul’s early Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect is a blend of wisdom argumentation and argumentative apocalyptic story-summary.

When Paul moves to the second part of his presentation of apocalyptic wisdom in 1 Thess 5:1-11, he moves directly from an introductory statement that they do not need anything written to them (5:1) to a thesis that they know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night (5:2). This introduction creates the context for

29 Malherbe, The Letters to the Thessalonians, 277-78.
Paul’s argumentative apocalyptic story-summary in 5:3: “When they say, ‘There is peace and security’, then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape!” After this, Paul presents “apocalyptic wisdom” in the rhetorical form of a typical elaboration of early Christian rhetorolect. 

At least five points are important for our discussion of first century Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect in 1 Thess 4-5. First, apocalyptic discourse is first and foremost “story-like.” Often this “story-like” discourse summarizes events from the past in a manner that moves into events in the future. The story-like nature of the discourse invites hearers/readers to recruit images that create picturesque sequences in the mind. These sequences can appropriately be called “scenario events,” namely events that exhibit a “script” of action from the past or a “pre-script” of or for future action. A script is a program that has emerged from past actions or has been designed for future actions. This program may exist as a sequence of instructions both for sequences of actions and for timing of actions in certain places and spaces in the future. Second, apocalyptic discourse presents “the inside story” of

50 Cf. Wanamaker, The Epistles to the Thessalonians, 177-90; Duane F. Watson, “Paul’s Appropriation of Apocalyptic Discourse: The Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Thessalonians,” in Greg Carey and L. Gregory Bloomquist (eds.), Rhetorical Dimensions of Apocalyptic Discourse (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1999) 73-78. One way to characterize Paul’s rhetorical elaboration is as follows:

5:1 Thesis: Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you.
Rationale with Analogy: 'For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.
Restatement of Thesis: 'But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief;
Rationale with Contrary: 'for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness.
Exhortative Conclusion: 'So then, let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober;
Rationale with Analogy: 'for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night.
Restatement of Exhortative Conclusion: 'But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

Summarizing Conclusion:
Thesis: 'For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Messiah, 
Rationale: so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him.
Exhortative Conclusion: 'Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

51 These definitions of scenario event, script, and program have emerged during the last half century especially in contexts for producing films and programming computers. Once these models exist for us, they can be beneficially used to understand social, cultural, ideological, and religious processes of cognition in antiquity as well as the present. See Gilles Fauconnier, Mental Spaces: Aspects of Meaning Construction in Natural Language
whatever it talks about, whether the subject is something that happened in the past, is happening in the present, or will happen in the future. In other words, the narrator does not simply know “obvious” things about the past, present, and future. The narrator knows the “inner meanings” of things that have happened in the past, are happening in the present, and will happen in the future. Third, apocalyptic discourse works as vigorously with space as with time. The issue is space in time and time in space. Fourth, in Paul’s undisputed letters the crucified Messiah who died and rose from the dead is the frame that guides the reconfiguration of conventional Jewish apocalyptic traditions. Fifth, the inside apocalyptic story blends a bright side of God’s plans with a dark side. As Wanamaker says, “Christ’s coming will be a glorious manifestation of the Lord for his obedient followers, but the day of judgment for unbelievers and the disobedient.”

It is not clear exactly what conventional apocalyptic tradition might be most closely related to 1 Thess 4-5. In this letter, the overall governing principle (Rule) for Paul is: “you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come” (1:9-10). This conceptual movement from earth to heaven with implications for God’s movement of humans from earth to heaven presents a picturesque apocalyptic scenario “to make clear to his readers what it is that the Lord [Jesus] will do at his coming in which they can take comfort.” Interpreters regularly cite a wide range of texts to exhibit the intertextual nature of the descent of “the Lord himself,” the command, the voice of an archangel, and the trumpet of God. But exactly what the version of that apocalyptic tradition might be is not clear. As Malherbe says: “His elaboration will make use of apocalyptic imagery, but whether he derived it directly from Judaism or from early Christian apocalyptic tradition is impossible to determine with certainty and fortunately is unimportant. What is important is that Paul presents the apocalyptic scenario as a message from the Lord that he offers in a way designed to address his readers’ immediate needs.”


50 Wanamaker, The Epistles to the Thessalonians, 190.
51 For the range of literature, see Hester, “Apocalyptic Discourse in 1 Thessalonians,” 149-59.
54 See ibid., 273-75.
55 Ibid., 273.
The Invention of Christian Discourse

For our purposes, the important point is that Paul reconfigured Mediterranean traditions into a series of apocalyptic “Messiah” story-summaries that feature Jesus first as an earthly being who became a heavenly being and second as a heavenly being who would descend from heaven to a place where he would be somehow visible, and at this time people who are dead “in Messiah” will rise, people who are alive “in Messiah” will be “snatched up” (harpazein) together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord Jesus in the air, and all of these people “in Messiah” will be with the heavenly Lord Jesus Messiah forever. Apocalyptic traditions make it possible for Paul to conceptualize (1) the transformation of a dead flesh and blood Messiah in earthly space into a heavenly being through “resurrection from the dead”; (2) the transformation of both dead and live humans “in Messiah” into beings that can fly up from earthly space into the air; (3) a command from the heavens, the voice of an archangel, and the trumpet of God as events in heavenly space that start the events; and (4) an unspecified space where all people “in Messiah” can be with heavenly Messiah Jesus forever. 38

1 Thessalonians has a highly limited apocalyptic focus in relation to the full range of topics and issues in apocalyptic literature. To deal with the issue of death in the community at Thessalonica, Paul addresses their concerns over death as a time of “emotional” tribulation. His assertion is that God would address their tribulation with a sequence of actions by his Messiah, in which these people, who had been directed “to believe,” would be delivered from their time of tribulation. “Community” tribulation rather than “cosmic” tribulation is the context for Paul’s apocalyptic reasoning in 1 Thessalonians. As a discourse designed to guide and comfort, this early Christian apocalyptic rhetorical is a special kind of early Christian wisdom rhetoric. All of the picturesque dimensions of the discourse serve the purpose of instructing and nurturing people into productive relationships and activities. There is no perceived need to refer to any other parts of time than the past death and resurrection of Jesus, the turning of the hearers from idols to the true and living God, the present as it leads into the future, and a series of scenario events in the future. Inasmuch as the present is a time of tribulation, even though it is a “mild” time of tribulation in apocalyptic terms, the tumult it creates for the community is a natural context for a first century “messianic” apocalyptic answer.

38 Whether that space is somewhere in the heavens or on earth is a matter of debate: ibid., 277-78; Furnish, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 103-104.
Apocalyptic Times and Spaces in 1-2 Corinthians: Adam, Moses, Christ, Apostles, and Believers

Paul’s letters to the Corinthians expand “Christian” apocalyptic periods of time and space back to an era that begins with Adam. Again there is an apocalyptic story-summary of Christ’s crucifixion, death, resurrection, and coming of the future as Paul presents his argumentation. These letters create a context in which Paul presents apocalyptic argumentation that includes more information about past time and space as well as more information about future time and space.

Apocalyptic Times and Spaces 2 Baruch 56–74 and 1-2 Corinthians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2 Baruch 56–74</th>
<th>1-2 Corinthians</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>World History (This Age)</strong></td>
<td>Adam: 1 Cor 15:20–58; [2 Cor 1:21-22; 3:17-18; 5:5, 17-21; 6:14-7:1] (dark) Man and Woman: 1 Cor 11:8-9, 12 Serpent deceived Eve: 2 Cor 11:3 (dark)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(1) 56:5–16 Adam, sinful angels, and the flood (dark)</td>
<td>Moses: 1 Cor 9:8-12; 10:1-22; 2 Cor 3:4-18 (dark) Lord Jesus betrayed: 1 Cor 11:23 Cross: 1 Cor 1:17-25; 2:2, 8 Lord Jesus Christ died: 1 Cor 11:26; 15:3; 2 Cor 5:14-15 Christ buried: 1 Cor 15:4</td>
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<tr>
<td>(4) 59:1–12 Moses through Caleb and Law (bright)</td>
<td>First Fruits of End Time (Christ; Apostles; Believers) God raised Christ (first fruits of the dead): 1 Cor 15:4, 12-20; 2 Cor 5:15; the Lord: 1 Cor 6:14; Lord Jesus: 2 Cor 4:15 New Adam: 1 Cor 15:20–58; [2 Cor 1:21-22; 3:17-18; 5:5, 17-21; 6:14-7:1] (bright) Christ appeared: 1 Cor 15:5-8 Revelation to Apostles (apokalypsis/apkalypt): 1 Cor 2:9–10; 14:6, 26, 30; 2 Cor 12:1-7 Mystery: 1 Cor 2:1, 7; 4:1; 13:2, 14:2; 15:51; of unbeliever’s heart: 1 Cor 14:25 Flesh: 1 Cor 3:3-4 God chose to reduce to nothing things that are: 1 Cor 1:28-31 Satan (time of the Apostles): destruction of the flesh: 1 Cor 5:5; tests: 1 Cor 7:5; outwits: 2 Cor 2:11; disguises self as angel of light: 2 Cor 11:14; given a thorn in the flesh to torment: 2 Cor 12:7; Beliar: 2 Cor 6:15 (dark) Spirit: 1 Cor 2:10–16; 6:19; 12:3, 11, 13; 2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; 7:1 Transformation of believers: 2 Cor 3:18; 4:16 New Creation of humanity: 2 Cor 5:17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Completion of End Time</strong></td>
<td>Resurrection of dead: 1 Cor 15:12–19, 21, 29, 32, 35–57; believers: 1 Cor 6:14; 15:14, 17-19,</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Paul's use of the word “Messiah” ( christos ) without the article “the” continues in 1 Corinthians 15. The rhetorical effect of this use of the word results in assertions that “Messiah died” (15:3); “But if Messiah is proclaimed as raised from the dead” (15:12); “If there is no resurrection from the dead, then Messiah has not been raised, and if Messiah has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain” (15:13-14); “We testified of God that he raised Messiah” (15:15); “For if dead are not raised, then Messiah has not been raised” (15:16); “If Messiah has not been raised, your faith is futile.
and you are still in your sins” (15:17); “Then those who have died in Messiah have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Messiah, we are of all people most to be pitied” (15:18-19); and “But in fact Messiah has been raised” (15:20). The word Messiah is the special name for Jesus, and this name establishes a special relation between “believers” and God’s Messiah that creates a context for Christians to participate in apocalyptic formulations of “salvation.”

It is noticeable when Paul occasionally uses the article “the” when he refers to “Messiah.” In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul uses an article when he refers to Messiah as the second Adam. Thus, Paul asserts: “for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in the Messiah. But each in his own order: Messiah as first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to the Messiah” (15:22-23). Here one sees a clue to Paul’s thinking about “God’s Messiah” that underlies his arguments about “Lord Jesus Messiah.” In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul presents an inversion of the cosmological apocalyptic story whereby eternal angel-spirits “created” eternal demonic spirits on earth by impregnating daughters of humans. How, he asked himself, could God transform breathing flesh and blood humans into beings with a “heavenly-created” nature? The answer for Paul was in a “life-creating” (zōiōpōioun) spirit (pneuma) Messiah (1 Cor 15:22, 45; 2 Cor 3:6; Rom 8:11).” God, in Paul’s view, transformed a “breathing (psychikon)” flesh and blood Messiah into an imperishable heavenly-spirit being. While in the far distant past “sons of god” came down to earth and bore children with daughters of men, creating “undying evil” in the world, in the recent past “Messiah” went from earth up to heaven, creating “undying spirit” in which “fleshy” humans could participate through resurrection. According to the apocalyptic version of the story in the distant past, pervasive, eternal, “demonic” evil entered into God’s created realm when heavenly-created, eternal, holy spirit bodies “procreated” with earthly-created flesh and blood bodies. The result was “blood-breathing” demonic eternal-spirit bodies characterized by “lust” (desire, covetousness) for all kinds of “evil things,” including eating of blood and spilling of blood through murder. According to Paul’s apocalyptic story of the recent past, God created eternal, “holy” spirit in his flesh and blood Messiah through resurrection, and this action by God set in motion the reversal of the perpetuation of eternal evil from Adam by transforming believers into children of God through Spirit of God (Gal 3:2-3, 26; Rom 8:9-17). In 1 Corinthians, belief in Messiah’s resurrection is the context in which God works this remarkable mystery (1 Cor 15:42-45, 51-52).

In other words, Paul created a cosmological Messiah-spirit story-line by inverting the conventional cosmological sinful angel-spirit story-
The resources for this inversion came from Jewish apocalyptic conceptuality. Paul asserted that God transformed an earth-dwelling flesh-Messiah into an eternal, imperishable heavenly spirit-being Messiah when he raised Jesus Messiah from the dead. God’s resurrection of Messiah from the dead produced a “new Adam” in the earthly realm who is a “life-creating” (ζωοποιουν) eternal-spirit (πνεuma) Messiah. The point is that just as God had created eternal angel-spirit beings in heaven who were able to “procreate” eternal-spirit flesh and blood body with earthly beings, so God created an eternal-spirit Messiah out of a flesh-Messiah who is able to “procreate” eternal-spirit heavenly body with believing flesh and blood humans on earth. What is required for the process to work is that people be “in Messiah.” When people are “in Messiah,” they are, as Paul states, “a new creation”: “So if anyone is in Messiah, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled (katallaxantos) us to himself through Messiah, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation (katallassōn)... For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor 5:17-19, 21).

In Paul’s view, God provided “new creation” on earth by inverting the process of the continual procreation of “evil and corruption” on earth that had occurred when the sinful angels violated God’s boundaries between heaven and earth. To invert the process, God created a life-creating eternal-spirit Messiah “on earth” who reversed the process for those who become “in Messiah.” In other words, as God had created angel-spirits in heaven who possessed “eternal spirit,” and they were able to generate eternal, evil demonic spirits “through flesh and blood” on earth, so with Jesus God had created an eternal-spirit Messiah on earth through “resurrection from the dead,” and he is able to generate eternal, sanctified “human” bodies “through spirit of holiness.” As Anthony C. Thiselton has put it: “For Paul new creation and transformation came from beyond and were constituted by the agency of the Holy Spirit, not an immanent human spirit.”

One of the implicit points of 1 Cor 15:44-47 is that the first man was not made of a combination of clay, metal, and stone. In other words, Paul is not thinking in the stream of earth-material apocalyptic tradition but in the stream of angel-spirit apocalyptic tradition. Paul is not trying to work out issues of military power and wealth, but issues concerning the relation among spirit, flesh, and blood. This becomes clear in 1 Cor 15:50 where Paul asserts that “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,” nor does the perishable (breathing

earthly-creation flesh and blood body) inherit the imperishable (eternal spirit in a heavenly-creation body).

Paul produces his Messiah-spirit inversion of the sinful angel-spirit story-line with an apocalyptic argument that, once again, embeds apocalyptic story-summaries in the argumentation. In this instance, Paul begins with a story-summary that introduces seven scenario events about “Messiah” to the hearer/reader: Messiah: (1) died; (2) was buried; (3) was raised on the third day; (4) appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve; (5) appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time; (6) appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and (7) appeared to Paul last of all (1 Cor 15:3-8). This apocalyptic story-summary introduces a sequence of scenario events about a flesh-Messiah who, through resurrection, became a heavenly being who appeared to a large number of people in an order that begins with Jesus’ specially chosen disciples, continues with a large number of believers, moves to the head of the church in Jerusalem and people sent out into mission, and ends with Paul, to whom the heavenly Messiah appeared after a period of time in which Paul had persecuted believers in Jesus as God’s Messiah. This apocalyptic story-summary creates the context for an elaborate argument about how this sequence of scenario events produced a “life-creating spirit” who overcame the heritage of death produced by the first human, Adam (1 Cor 15:45). We can discuss only a few parts of Paul’s elaborate argument here.  

The story-summary Paul introduces in 1 Cor 15:3-8 is an expansion of only the first part of the story-summary he had introduced in 1 Thess 4:14: “we believe that Jesus died and rose again.” In the context of the expanded story-summary, Paul presents an argument to counter the opposite argument: “there is no resurrection of the dead” (1 Cor 15:12-19). This argument creates the context for Paul to introduce his interpretation of the relation of the apocalyptic time period of Adam to the apocalyptic time period of Messiah’s death, resurrection, and appearances (15:20-28). Paul embeds in this argument, which is based on apocalyptic periodization of world history, an expansion of...

41 For a rhetorical analysis of 1 Cor 15:3-11 as a narration, see Anders Eriksson, Traditions as Rhetorical Proof: Pauline Argumentation in 1 Corinthians (CBNTS 29; Stockholm: Almquist & Wiksell, 1998) 253-55.
43 For the enthymematic chain of argumentation in 1 Cor 15:12-19, see Eriksson, Traditions as Rhetorical Proof, 255-61.
the second part of 1 Thess 4:14: “through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died.” Paul’s expansion in 1 Cor 15:21-28 is an argumentative story-summary containing ten apocalyptic scenario events: (1) death came through a human being [Adam]; (2) the resurrection of the dead has come through a human being [Messiah]; (3) all die in Adam; (4) all will be made alive in his own order in Messiah; (5) Messiah was made alive as the first fruits; (6) at Messiah’s coming those who belong to Messiah will be made alive; (7) when the end comes, Messiah will reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet, because God has put all things in subjection under his feet; (8) Messiah will destroy every ruler and every authority and power; (9) the last enemy Messiah will destroy is death; (10) after destroying all powers opposed to God including death, Messiah will hand over the kingdom to God the Father.”

One readily observes that the scenario events in Paul’s story-summary in 1 Cor 15:21-28 are not what one would call “ordinary” events. These events are not the kinds of happenings that people can “see” as ordinary observers of human activities. Rather, this is an apocalyptic “inside account” of scenario events of world history from the first man Adam to Messiah’s handing of his kingdom over to God in the future. One of the challenges for interpreting this section of 1 Cor 15 is that Paul’s argument does not introduce the scenario events of the apocalyptic story in a “historical sequence.” The reason is that apocalyptic story-telling regularly uses repetitive, cyclic presentation interspersed with exhortative argumentation, rather than historical sequencing, to produce its rhetorical effects. We have seen the repetitive, exhortative nature of apocalyptic argumentation above in the elaborate recycling of world historical events in different modes in 1 Enoch, and we will see this again in the Revelation to John at the end of this chapter. In apocalyptic scenario events, inside meanings are as important as observable sequences of actions. A major reason is that the “causes” for apocalyptic scenario events always are a blending of God’s preordained plans for the world and “historical” events that produce sequences of activities in God’s created world. This means that aspects of God’s judgment and redemption have always been present in events that humans regularly have perceived to be “sequences of time” in world history. Indeed, a major point of apocalyptic periodization of world history is to show that God’s plans for redemption and judgment in the world have always been present in “historical” events and they always will be. In other words, apocalyptists presuppose that God’s time and space has always been present and interactive with time and space in God’s created world. This is why, for instance, the writer of

“For 1 Cor 15:20-34 as the rhetorical amplification of a theme, see ibid., 261-67.
Jubilees 1 could presuppose that God had “revealed” to Moses “both what (was) in the beginning and what will occur (in the future), the account of the division of the all of the days of the Law and the testimony” (1:4). Since ordinary people regularly do not see the presence and interaction of all of God’s space and time in every era of time, it is necessary for apocalyptic narrators to explain it. This is what Paul does in 1 Corinthians 15. As a narrator with inside apocalyptic knowledge, he is able to explain the deep and mysterious aspects of time and space from the time of Adam to the time when God’s Messiah will hand the kingdom over to God.

After Paul’s explanation of the relation of Messiah to the time of Adam, he explains the relation of resurrection to spaces in God’s world (15:35-41). To explain this, Paul uses analogies from different spheres of God’s created world. The human body on earth is like a seed of grain (15:37), but God gives each kind of seed its own body in relation to its spatial context and function. Animals have flesh that serves them well in contexts were there are no houses, no special clothes to wear, etc. Birds have a special flesh for flying through the air, and fishes for living in water (15:38). Heavenly bodies, in turn, have non-flesh properties appropriate to their particular “glory” (sun, moon, stars: 15:39-40). Of special importance for apocalyptic thought is the relation of spirit and body. As it states in Testament of Naphtali 2:2: “the Lord forms the body in correspondence to the spirit, and instills the spirit corresponding to the power of the body.” As Paul says, “God gives it a body as he has chosen … It is sown a physical [breathing] body, it is raised a spiritual body” (1 Cor 15:38, 44). Perhaps even more important, however, is the principle in apocalyptic conceptuality that the human body is changeable. According to 2 Baruch 21:16-17, the nature of humans is always changeable: “For as we were once, we are no longer, and as we are now, we shall not remain in the future. For if an end of all things had not been prepared, their beginning would have been senseless.” In Paul’s word’s, “We will not all die, but we will all be changed” (1 Cor 15:51). In 1 Corinthians, Paul explains his understanding of the process by presenting yet one more argumentative story-summary. In this instance, the story-summary contains three basic scenario events: (1) the last trumpet will sound; (2) the dead will be raised imperishable; and (3) we will be changed (1 Cor 15:52). These scenario events are the rationale that supports his thesis that “We will not all die, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkle of an eye, at the last trumpet” (15:51-52). Once again we see how apocalyptic story-summary functions internally in support of

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45 For 1 Cor 15:35-49 as refutatio and confirmatio, see ibid., 267-72.
46 For rhetorical analysis and interpretation of 1 Cor 15:50-57, see ibid., 272-75.
Paul’s reasoning about the nature of earthly life, resurrection, and the imperishable, spiritual body that God has established for believers.

In the overall context of 1 Corinthians, Paul introduces the ironic nature of the time of Moses as a mixture of brightness and darkness, but he does not correlate the time of Moses with the time of the first and last Adam. In Paul’s story-summary of the time of Moses (1 Cor 10:1-5), all of the ancestors of believers in God’s Messiah first “were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (1 Cor 10:3). For Paul, the brightness of this baptism lies in the realm of God’s spirit. All the people “ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ” (10:4). This internalization of God’s spirit, from Paul’s perspective, is a preconfiguration of spirit that “proclaims the Lord’s death until he comes” through the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor 11:23-32) and unites believers with Christ in death and resurrection through baptism (Rom 6:3-5). But the brightness of the working of the spirit during the time of Christ was not present during the time of Moses. Instead, despite the spiritual baptism, eating, and drinking during the time of Moses, “God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness” (1 Cor 10:5). In contrast to Jewish apocalyptic literature like 2 Baruch, then, Paul does not emphasize the coming of “the lamp of the eternal Law which exists forever and ever illuminated all those who sat in darkness” (2 Bar 59:2) during the time of Moses. Rather, Paul’s story-summary emphasizes God’s striking most of the Israelites down in the wilderness (1 Cor 10:5).

Paul’s reasoning in 2 Corinthians 3 extends his perception of the time of Moses as a dark time by describing the law as a “ministry of death” whereby “the letter kills,” in contrast to a “ministry of the Spirit” that “creates life” (2 Cor 3:6). In this context, Paul’s argumen-


48 Ibid., 97-103, 106-12.


tative story-summary extends from the time of Moses to the time of Christ, containing four major scenario events: (1) Moses put a veil over his face to keep the people of Israel from gazing at the end of the glory that was being set aside (3:13); (2) their minds were hardened; (3) to this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, that same veil is still there, since only in Christ is it set aside (3:14); (4) all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit (3:18). This argumentative story-summary covers a span of time from Moses to the ongoing present. Once Paul presents this argument, he moves through a focus on the presence of the Spirit among believers (3:17-18; 4:13) gradually to a focus that restates the argumentative story-summaries in 1 Thess 4-5 and 1 Cor 15. This time Paul’s story-summary contains three scenario events: (1) the one who raised the Lord Jesus; (2) will raise us also with Jesus; and (3) will bring us with you into his presence (2 Cor 4:14). This argumentative story-summary sets the stage for Paul to discuss the time when “the earthly tent we live in is destroyed” and “we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Cor 5:1). All of these things are possible, according to Paul, because: “He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee” (5:5). It is noticeable in this instance that Paul’s assertions move “we” and “us” into the center of the discussion. This focus causes the “story” part of his argument to move into a supportive role rather than to be at the center of the argument, as it is in 1 Thess 4-5 and 1 Cor 15. Still, however, Paul’s understanding of the Spirit in all of this is an inversion of the cosmological story of the sinful angels who introduced eternal spirit of evil into the world through lust, desire, and sin. In Paul’s view, God has intercepted this ongoing story of sin and death, which he perceives to be from “the time of Adam,” with the cosmological story of God’s resurrection of his flesh-Messiah into an eternal-spirit Messiah in the heavens. God’s resurrection of his Messiah made him into a life-creating spirit. In all of this, it is the Spirit given by God that is the guarantee.

Apocalyptic Times and Spaces in Galatians and Romans:
Adam, Abraham, Moses, Christ, Paul, and Believers

In Paul’s letters to the Galatians and Romans, the power of the Spirit in his cosmological eternal-spirit Messiah story takes center stage. In Galatians, Paul moves decisively to an apocalyptic story-line from Abraham to Messiah, developing the eternal-spirit insight of his first Adam/last Adam inversion of the cosmological story of the angel-spirits. Moses is
on the horizons as Paul refers to “the law of Messiah” in Gal 6:2, but Paul never refers directly to Moses in Galatians. In Romans, Paul adds the time of David to the “Christian” apocalyptic story-line from Adam to Moses that he had developed in 1–2 Corinthians and Galatians. An overview of the scope of Paul’s apocalyptic vision in Galatians and Romans is present in the following table:

**Apocalyptic Times and Spaces in 1 Enoch 85–93, 2 Baruch 65–74, Galatians, and Romans**

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<td><strong>World History (This Age)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Adam</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(1) 1 En. 85:3–9 Adam and Eve and their Children; cf. (2–4) 1 En. 86:1–89:8</td>
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<td>(1) 1 En. 93:3 First Week: Adam to Enoch; righteousness (good); cf. (2) 1 En. 93:4</td>
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<td>(1) 2 Bar. 56:5–16 Adam, sinful angels, and the flood (dark)</td>
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<td>Adam to Moses: Rom 5:14</td>
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<td>The judgment following one trespass: Rom 5:16 (dark)</td>
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<td><strong>Abraham</strong></td>
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<td>(3) 1 En. 93:5 Third Week: Conclusion: Abraham, plant of righteous judgment; Abraham’s son [Isaac], eternal plant of righteousness (good); cf, (5) 1 En. 89:9–27 (2) 2 Bar. 57:1–3 Abraham and his family (bright)</td>
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<td>Children of promise like Isaac, child born according to the Spirit: Gal 4:28–29; Rom 9:7–13 (bright)</td>
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<td>Sodom and Gomorrah: Rom 9:29 (dark)</td>
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<td><strong>Moses</strong></td>
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<td>(4) 2 Bar. 59:1–12 Moses through Caleb and Law (bright); cf. (6) 1 En. 89:28–38; (4) 1 En. 93:6</td>
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<td>Moses: (never mentioned by name in Galatians); Rom 5:14; 9:15–18; 10:5, 19</td>
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<td>ian: Gal 3:23; is holy: Rom 7:12</td>
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<td>God imprisoned all in disobedience: Rom</td>
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<td><strong>Entire law: Gal 5:3, 14</strong></td>
<td>10:21; 11:30-32; 15:31</td>
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<td>David: Rom 1:3; cf. 9:5 [4:6; 11:9] (bright)</td>
<td>(6) 2 Bar. 61:1-8 David, Solomon, and Zion (bright); cf. (7) 1 En. 89:35-50; (5) 1 En. 93:7</td>
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<td>Every kind of wickedness: Rom 1:28-32</td>
<td>(7) 1 En. 93:9-10; 91:11 Seventh week: Perverse generation; wicked deeds (evil); Conclusion: Elect ones of righteousness chosen from the eternal plant of righteousness (Abraham’s progeny); given sevenfold wisdom and knowledge to execute judgment on violence and deceit (good); cf. (11-13) 1 En. 89:72b-90:6-19</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Beginning of End Time: Christ</strong></td>
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<td>Birth of Jesus at fullness of time: Gal 4:4; descended from David according to the flesh: Rom 1:3; 9:5</td>
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<td>God’s Son born under the law: Gal 4:5; Christ is end of the Law: Rom 10:4</td>
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<td>God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh: Rom 8:3; gave him up for all of us: Rom 8:32</td>
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<td>Christ became a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy: Rom 15:8-9</td>
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<td>Cross: Gal 5:11; 6:12, 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lord Jesus Christ died: Rom 4:25; 5:6, 8, 10; 6:3; 8:34; 14:15</td>
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<tr>
<td>God raised Lord Jesus Christ from the dead: Gal 1:1; Rom 1:4; 4:24-25; 6:4; 7:4; 8:34; 10:7-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord of dead and living: Rom 6:10; 14:9, 15</td>
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<td><strong>Fruits of End Time: Apostles</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Paul crucified with Christ: Gal 2:19; 6:14</td>
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<td>Christ lives in Paul:</td>
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<td>Galatians welcomed Paul as angel of God: Gal 4:14</td>
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<td>Mystery: Rom 11:25, 16:25</td>
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<td>Invisible: Rom 1:20 (cf. Col 1:15-16; 1 Tim 1:17)</td>
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<td><strong>Fruits of End Time: Believers</strong></td>
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<td>Spirit: Gal 3:2-5; 4:6; 5:5, 16-26; 6:1, 8; Rom 1:4; 5:5; 7:7; 8:2-17, 23, 26-27 (first fruits); 14:17; 15:13, 19</td>
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<td>Reversal of sinful angel myth: Rom 8:1-17 (Rom 8:11: If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his spirit that dwells in you.)</td>
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<td>Believers baptized into Christ’s death and resurrection, dying to sin and death: Rom 6:1-23; died to the law to bear fruit for God: Rom 7:4-6</td>
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<td>Believers crucified the flesh: Gal 5:24</td>
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<td>New Creation of humanity: Gal 6:15</td>
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<td>Newness of life: Rom 6:4; 7:6</td>
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<td>Law, sin, death: Rom 7:1-25; 8:2</td>
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<td><strong>Obedience of faith:</strong> Rom 1:5; 6:16-19; 10:16-17; 16:26 (cf. obedience: 2 Cor 7:15; 10:5-6; Rom 5:19; 15:18; 16:19) (bright)</td>
<td><strong>End Time</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Resurrection of dead:</strong> Rom 4:17; 11:15</td>
<td><strong>God of peace will crush Satan:</strong> Rom 16:20</td>
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<td><strong>Coming of the harvest of the seed of evil ones and good ones after the time of the world has ripened</strong> (dark)</td>
<td><strong>Coming of the Wrath:</strong> Rom 1:18; 2:5-11; 3:5-6; 4:15; 5:9; 9:22; 12:19; [13:4-5]; <strong>Appointed Time/Day:</strong> Rom 13:11-12; <strong>Judgment seat of Christ:</strong> Rom 2:16; <strong>Harvest:</strong> Gal 6:8-9 (cf. Rom 1:13); <strong>Sudden destruction:</strong> Rom 9:28-29 (dark)</td>
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<td><strong>Tribulations (dark)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tribulations:</strong> Persecution, distress, sufferings: Rom 8:19 <strong>Birth pangs: in Paul until Christ is formed in believers:</strong> Gal 4:19 [4:27]; of creation and ourselves: Rom 8:18-23; sudden destruction: 1 Thess 5:3 (dark)</td>
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<td><strong>Coming of time of the Anointed One after the signs and the moving of the nations</strong> (bright)</td>
<td><strong>Coming of Christ:</strong> Gal 1:1, 3-4; Rom 5-6 (bright)</td>
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<td><strong>The Anointed One will call the nations, sparing some and killing others</strong> (bright); cf. (10) 1 En. 91:15-16</td>
<td><strong>Lord Jesus Christ set believers free from the present evil age:</strong> Gal 1:4 (bright)</td>
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<td><strong>The Anointed One will sit down in eternal peace on the throne of the kingdom; joy will be revealed and rest will appear</strong> (bright); cf. (16) 1En. 90:30-39; (11) 1 En. 91:17</td>
<td><strong>Kingdom as inheritance:</strong> Gal 3:18, 29; 4:1, 7, 30; 5:21; Rom 4:13-14; 8:17 (bright) <strong>Christ Jesus at the right hand of God:</strong> Rom 8:34 <strong>Peace: Rom 5:1; and joy: Rom 14:17; God of peace will crush Satan: 16:20 (bright)</strong> <strong>With love of God in Lord Jesus Christ:</strong> Rom 8:35-39 (bright)</td>
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<td><strong>Health, no illness, fear, tribulation, or lamentation; joy will encompass the earth</strong> (bright)</td>
<td><strong>Riches of his glory:</strong> Rom 9:23; 14:17 (bright)</td>
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<td><strong>Uprooting of judgment, condemnations, contentions, revenges, blood, passions, zeal, hate, and all such things</strong> (bright)</td>
<td><strong>Spirit (working in Kingdom of God) opposes desires of flesh:</strong> Gal 5:16-26</td>
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<td><strong>End of that which is corruptible; beginning of that which is incorruptible</strong> (bright)</td>
<td><strong>Imperishable begins:</strong> Rom 6:22; 8:23 (bright)</td>
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Paul’s Letter to the Galatians

Paul’s apocalyptic argumentation in Galatians begins with an emphasis that God was pleased “to reveal (apokalypsei) his Son” (Gal 1:16) to him (Paul) to equip him to proclaim the gospel of Christ (1:7) among the Gentiles. The issue for Paul is whether the Galatians “received the Spirit” when Paul preached to them (3:2). Having started with the Spirit, it is important that they continue in faith in such a manner that they receive the benefits of God’s transformation of his flesh-Messiah into an eternal-spirit Messiah through resurrection. In Galatians, this reasoning takes Paul back to an apocalyptic understanding of the time of Abraham. As one can see in the table above, Paul’s apocalyptic view of the time of Abraham has a close relation to the positive view of this era in 1 Enoch 93:5 and 2 Baruch 57:1-3. For 1 En. 93:5, Abraham was chosen by God as “the plant of righteous judgment,” and the one “after him will go forth” as “the plant of righteousness forever and ever.” The assertions in this passage cohere with the view of the era of Abraham as a bright time in 2 Baruch 57. This time brought forth “the fountain of Abraham, and the coming of his son, and the son of his son, and of those who are like them” (57:1), and during this time “the unwritten law” was in force among them (57:2). Indeed the time of Abraham, according to 2 Bar. 57:2, brought forth “belief in the coming judgment,” built “hope of the world which will be renewed,” and planted “promise of the life that will come later.”

It is noticeable that the apocalyptic topoi of belief,52 hope,53 and promise,54 which are prominent features of the time of Abraham in 2 Baruch, also are prominent features of the time of Abraham in Galatians and Romans. Paul’s focus on the era of Abraham is part of an overall positive view of the time of Abraham in Jewish apocalyptic literature. In Galatians, Paul produces a story-summary containing four apocalyptic scenario events he had not discussed in 1 Thessalonians and 1–2 Corinthians: (1) Abraham believed God; (2) it was reckoned to him as righteousness; (3) the scripture declared the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “All the Gentiles shall be blessed in you”; and (4) those who believe are descendants of Abraham and are blessed with

Abraham who believed (3:6–9). To explain the effect of this story-summary, Paul uses language about the Spirit. For Paul, “the blessing of Abraham” that can come to the Gentiles “in Christ Jesus” is “the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Gal 3:14). Paul’s presentation of his argument for this promise (3:15–18) brings him to a discussion of “the law” without mentioning Moses (Gal 3:19–29). For Paul, the time of the law is a blend of brightness and darkness. On the one hand, the law is not opposed to the promises of God (3:21). On the other hand, it was simply an addition “until the offspring [of Abraham] would come to whom the promise had been made” (3:19). God’s Messiah Jesus is, according to Paul, that offspring. God gave the law through angels by a mediator because of transgressions (3:19). But the law as scripture was imprisoned “under the power of sin” (as a result of the time of Adam) “so that what was promised through faith in Jesus Messiah might be given to those who believe” (3:22).

As Paul explains in Galatians how all “in Messiah Jesus” are “children of God through faith,” clothed “with Messiah” through baptism, and “heirs according to the promise” (3:26–27, 29), he comes to another story-summary that leads, once again, to language about the Spirit. This argumentative story-summary has six scenario events: (1) the fullness of time came; (2) God sent his Son; (3) God’s son was born of a woman; (4) God’s son was born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that believers might receive adoption as children; (5) believing Galatians became children of God; and (6) God sent the Spirit of his Son into the hearts of the Galatians, making them heirs of the promise (4:4–7). This argumentative story-summary gives the time of Abraham full stage without introducing the death and resurrection of Christ. In other words, in this section of Galatians an apocalyptic story-summary from Abraham to the present “overmaps” Paul’s usual story-summary about Jesus’ death and resurrection. This new story-summary moves from Abraham through the law to Gentiles as children of God through “the Spirit of his Son” whom God sent into the Galatians. The “force” that changes people into children of God is the Spirit that God sent from the heavens into humans through Christ. In this instance, Paul’s overmapping of the usual story-summary about Christ’s death and resurrection with the effect of the Abraham story-summary produces a story-summary that leaves out all reference to death or resurrection. This new language of “children” of God leads to a special discussion of “the promise” of Abraham in relation to Hagar, a slave woman who produced a child “according to the flesh,” and a free woman who produced a child “born through promise” (4:22–23). This creates the context for Paul to identify “children of the promise, like Isaac” (4:28) as children “born according to the Spirit”
Again, for Paul the Spirit is the true agency of the promise, able to transform people into children of God. For this reason, Paul returns once again to a reference to the Spirit when he discusses the possibility of returning to circumcision (5:2-6). As Paul explains, circumcision has no potential for producing the transformation of the flesh that is essential for redemption. It is “through the Spirit, by faith” that “we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness” (5:5).

After referring to circumcision, Paul turns to “faith working through love” (5:6), for the purpose of explaining how the Spirit, which at the end of time will transform people into eternal-spirit beings, already functions in the believing community to “enliven” them with “fruit of the Spirit” (5:22, 25). In this context language of Jesus’ death, which was absent from the discussion of the time of Abraham, appears in the form of reference to “the cross.” Paul begins with reference to “the offense of the cross” (5:11) and moves to a discussion of having “crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” through “belonging to Messiah” (5:24). The effect of Paul’s inversion of the cosmological story of the sinful angels with the story of God’s eternal-spirit Messiah is even more evident here than in many places in Paul’s writings. In Gal 5:16-17, Paul explicitly opposes “the desires of the flesh,” which stand at the center of the conventional cosmological story of the sinful angels, with “living by the Spirit.” Living by the Spirit bypasses the law (5:18), because it “fulfills the law of Messiah” (6:2). The issue, then, is not law itself, which helps to define the righteousness of God within God’s promise (3:17). The issue is the “enlivening” of the body with the Spirit in a manner that removes “the works of the flesh” (5:19-21) and produces “the fruit of the Spirit” (5:23). In this context, Paul reformulates his previous story-summaries about Messiah’s death, resurrection, and transformation of believers through resurrection (1 Thess 4-5; 1 Cor 15; 2 Cor 4-5) in terms of crucifying the flesh with its passions and desires through “belonging to Messiah Jesus” (5:24-25). Through his argument in this section, Paul proposes that already in the present age it is possible for believers to experience an “earthly” form of “spiritual” transformation. “Living” by the spirit and being guided by the Spirit (5:25), Paul asserts, is an action of “sowing to the Spirit” that “reaps eternal life from the Spirit” at “harvest time” (6:8-9). Paul’s argument exhibits deep relationships to Jewish apocalyptic literature through its metaphors, its concepts of transformation, its focus on periods of world history, and its concerns with spirit, eternal life, desire, flesh, and righteousness. But Paul creates his own point of view through a special focus on God’s Messiah, who died as a flesh-Messiah,

was raised as an eternal-spirit Messiah, and who offers benefits to believers of transformations that the Spirit of God can give to humans both during the present age and in the age to come.

**Paul’s Letter to the Romans**

In contrast to Galatians, which contains no story-summary of God’s action through the Lord Jesus Messiah’s death and resurrection in the context of world history, Paul’s letter to the Romans begins with a story-summary containing four scenario events: (1) Jesus Messiah was descended from David according to the flesh; (2) Jesus Messiah was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead; (3) apostles received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles; and (4) Gentiles, including “God’s beloved in Rome,” have been “called to belong to Jesus Messiah” (Rom 1:3-7). This apocalyptic story-summary omits any explicit reference to Lord Jesus Messiah’s appearance to believers (1 Cor 15:5-8), rescuing of believers from the coming wrath (1 Thess 1:10; 4:14-17; 5:10), or destruction of all enemies including death (1 Cor 15:23-28). Instead, the summary moves directly from the Lord Jesus Messiah’s descent from David and status as a result of resurrection to benefits that result for apostles and believing Gentiles. Paul’s “gospel” in this context presents a new revelation-story, namely the revealing (apokalyptetai) of the righteousness of God “from faith to faith”\(^{56}\) that occurs in the context of the revealing (apokalyptetai) of the wrath of God from heaven “against all impiety and wrongdoing” (Rom 1:16-17).\(^{57}\) In other words, in Romans there is a change of focus from some kind of revelation of the Lord Jesus Messiah (1 Cor 1:7; 2 Cor 12:1; Gal 1:12)\(^{58}\) to a revelation sequence based on new terminology. As the sequence is presented by Paul in Romans 1-8, the sequence contains five blended scenario events:

1. a “revealing” of the righteousness of God from faith to faith (Rom 1:16);
2. a “revealing” of the wrath of God from heaven (1:17);
3. a “revelation” of the righteous judgment of God (2:5);
4. a “revealing” of the future glory (8:18);
5. a “revealing” of the sons of God (8:19) who have “the first fruits of the Spirit” (8:23).


\(^{57}\) Cf. 1 Thess 2:16; 4:6; 5:2, 9-10; 1 Cor 2:6; 3:13; 11:32; Gal 6:8.

In this sequence, we see Paul’s more fully developed inversion of the cosmological story of the sinful “sons of God” (angels) who brought eternal desire, sin, and death into human flesh, and thus into God’s created world. In Romans, Paul reformulates his 1 Corinthians inversion of the cosmological sinful angel story, which is a story of God’s Messiah as the last Adam who became a “life-creating spirit” (1 Cor 15:45), into an inversion of the cosmological sinful angel story that “overmaps” the sinful “sons of God” with “first-fruit Spirit” sons of God (Rom 8:23) who are “revealed” (Rom 8:19) in the context of the “revealing” of the future glory (8:18). This new revelation of sons of God occurs in the context of the “revelation” of God’s righteous judgment (2:5), which occurs in the “revealing” of the wrath of God from heaven against all impiety and wrongdoing of humans who are suppressing the truth by unrighteousness (1:18). Paul’s shorthand for all of these “revelations” is the revealing of the righteousness of God from faith to faith (1:17). In other words, the apocalyptic center of Paul’s argumentation in Romans is the revelation of the righteousness of God from faith to faith, rather than the revelation of the Lord Jesus Messiah in all his glory.

This means that a primary challenge lies in an interpretation of what Paul means by “from faith to faith” (Rom 1:17) when he talks about the righteousness of God. Recent interpreters have presented three somewhat different views. James D.G. Dunn, reading the phrase theologically, has argued that it means “from God’s faithfulness (to his covenant promises) to man’s response of faith.” Leander E. Keck, reading it Christologically as “through faith for faith” along with Richard Hays and others, understands it to mean that God’s righteousness/rectitude is being revealed through Christ’s faithfulness for the purpose of the revelation igniting Christian faith. Robert Jewett, reading it from the perspective of Christian mission, understands it to mean from faith community to faith community. In his view, God’s righteousness “is being revealed” through “preaching the gospel to establish faith communities, rather than force of arms or apocalyptic military miracle… In the establishment of faith communities as far as the ends of the known world, God will be restoring arenas where righteousness is accomplished, thus creating salvation.”

Our view is that the answer lies in the realm of “embodied” reasoning. Paul’s argument in Romans is: “there is a revealing of the righteousness of God from God’s faithfulness, embodied in Christ through death and resurrection, to faith embodied in believers through the Spirit’s producing

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of its fruit through community, mission, and intercession. Dunn is right that faith is grounded in God’s faithfulness and righteousness. Keck, following Hays and others, is right that Paul understands God’s faithfulness Christologically. Jewett is right that the believer’s faith is enacted by the Spirit through community, mission, and intercession that produces reconciliation among God, the world, and believers. In other words, for Paul the source of faith through righteousness is grounded theologically and embodied Christologically, and the action of faith through grace is grounded spiritually and embodied communally. The embodiment of God’s faithfulness and righteousness in his Messiah makes the embodiment of faith and righteousness available to humans through the Spirit’s enlivening of love through grace in community. The complexity of this is as remarkable as the creativity of it in Paul’s thinking and in first century Christian communities. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of this formulation by 60 CE in first century Christian discourse. Let us look at how this argument unfolds in Romans.

As Paul develops his argument in Romans 1, he does not focus on all kinds of enemies, including death, that must be overpowered (1 Cor 15:23–28). Rather, his focus is on people whose mind is “unfit” or “disqualified” (adokimon). The issue is how God has created a sequence of scenario events that has overcome the sequence of scenario events from idolatry to lusts, dishonorable passions, and an unfit, disqualified mind. For this reason, Paul first presents a dark storyline with five major scenario events after he has introduced his thesis about the righteousness of God (Rom 1:16–17) and his thesis about the wrath of God (1:18):

1. God created the world, in which his eternal power and divine nature are invisible but have been understood and seen through the things God made;
2. claiming to be wise, humans became fools, exchanging the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles;
3. God handed humans over to the lusts (epithymiai) of their hearts (1:24);
4. God handed humans over to dishonorable passions (pathē-atimia: 1:26);
5. God handed humans over to an unfit, disqualified mind (adokimon nous) (1:28).

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63 Ibid., 181–83; Keck, Romans, 71.
64 Dunn, Romans 1–8, 66.
65 Jewett, Romans, 136–53.
The result, as Paul explains, is that humans were filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, covetousness, and malice (1:29-32).\(^{66}\)

As is readily observable, Rom 1:22-32 is a generalized summary of world history from the creation to the time of Paul, rather than an apocalyptic summary that distinguishes periods of time from one another. In this generalized form, the “story” has an important relation to the attack on idolatry in Wisdom of Solomon 13:1-9.\(^{67}\) Rather than building on usual apocalyptic “eras,” the summary presents the ways in which God “handed humans over” (NRSV: gave them up) to lusts, dishonorable passions, and an unfit, disqualified mind once they engaged in idolatry. In apocalyptic terms, the reference to lusts sounds like the time of the sinful angels,\(^{68}\) and the reference to dishonorable passions sounds like Sodom and Gomorrah.\(^{69}\) But Paul’s formulation in Romans resonates with widespread Mediterranean views of vices and perversions among humans.\(^{70}\) The story-line presents a sequence of the darkening of wisdom in the world as a result of idolatry. This is certainly an overall part of the Jewish apocalyptic “plot” of world history,\(^{71}\) but Paul presents it in a generalized manner, rather than as a sequence focused on specific apocalyptic eras of time. In Romans 1:22-32, Paul starts with an assertion that humans “claimed to be wise” and presents a sequence that describes how humans “became fools.” An important part of Paul’s formulation occurs in the language of being “handed over” or “given up” (paradothē). This language is repeated three times as Paul asserts that God “handed humans over” to lusts (1:24), dishonorable passions (1:26), and an unfit, disqualified mind (1:28), reaching a point where: “Though they know the righteous decree of God that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do such things but also applaud those who practice such things” (Rom 1:32).

After Paul’s presentation of the gradual movement of humans downward through depraved actions into an unfit, disqualified mind, his presentation of God’s intervention in world history does not take the form of apocalyptic story-summaries. Instead, his arguments become highly “creedal,” focused on benefits to believers in such a manner that the “narrative” embedded in them is in the background rather than the foreground. The movement away from narrative-like statements to belief statements occurs through a focus on the time of Abraham, when (1) Abraham believed God, and (2) it was reckoned to him

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\(^{66}\) For details, see ibid., 183-91.
\(^{67}\) Ibid., 154.
\(^{68}\) Cf. 1 En. 15:4; Jude 6; 2 Pet 2:4.
\(^{69}\) Cf. Jude 7; 2 Pet 2:6-10.
\(^{70}\) See Jewett, Romans, 163-91.
\(^{71}\) Nickelsburg, 1 Enoch 1, 52, 423-24.
as righteousness (Rom 4:3). This two-step story-summary becomes a “belief” story that affects the language of Paul’s subsequent story-schemes in Romans. After the story of Abraham in Romans, Jesus’ death and resurrection function in the background as support for creedal statements about faith, justification, sin, and death. Rather than functioning in the foreground to present God’s transformation of his flesh-Messiah into an eternal-spirit Messiah in the heavens, the death and resurrection of Jesus become background scenario events that bring powers of transformation into the lives of believers substantively in the present and definitively at the end of time. The effect of this shift is so substantive for Paul’s discourse that the entire book of Romans contains no statements about Christ’s coming again. Rather than emphasizing the Lord Jesus Messiah’s coming again, Paul emphasizes the coming of the righteousness of God into the world for the purpose of overcoming sin and death in the lives of believers.

The first formulation of a creedal summary in Romans after Paul’s presentation of the “belief-story” of Abraham occurs in Romans 4:24-25. The opening assertion, “It will be reckoned to us who believe in him,” signals the emphasis on the “story” as a creedal summary. The summary contains three statements: (1) God raised Jesus our Lord from the dead; (2) Jesus our Lord was handed over (NRSV: given up) for your trespasses; (3) Jesus our Lord was raised for your justification.

There are at least four important observations for our discussion. First, the summary begins with God’s resurrection of the Lord Jesus, rather than with Jesus’ death. Second, there is no actual reference to Jesus’ death in the summary, though English translations (e.g., NRSV, RSV, and NIV) regularly give this impression. The Greek says that Jesus was “handed over (\textit{paradothē}) for the sake of our transgressions.” Occurring at this point in Romans, the emphasis on “handing over” is a reversal of God’s handing over or “giving up” of humans to lusts, dishonorable passions, and an unfit, disqualified mind in Rom 1:24-28. The absence of reference to Jesus’ death results from Paul’s focus on the effects of God’s actions on believers rather than on Jesus. In other words, the focus is not on the transformation of a flesh-Messiah through death and resurrection into an eternal-spirit being with glory, power, and authority, but on the effect of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus on believers. Third, the last clause refers a second time to God’s raising of the Lord Jesus for the purpose of focusing on right-

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{Keck, \textit{Romans}, 35.}
\footnote{Jewett, \textit{Romans}, 322; Dunn, \textit{Romans 1-8}, 196, 241.}
\footnote{Jewett, \textit{Romans}, 341: “There is certainly no place for allusions to the last judgment or eschatological fulfillment in this discussion of current belief in Christ’s resurrection and atonement (4:24-25), which is followed in 5:1 and 9 by references to justification as an accomplished fact.”}
\end{footnotes}
eousness ("rightness" or "vindication": dikaiōsin) for believers (cf. Rom 5:18) as God's goal. The result is a reconfiguration of Paul's usual story-summaries about Jesus' death and resurrection into a summary about belief in relation to transgressions and righteousness.75

The effect of Paul's shift to creedal summaries continues in Rom 5:8-10, which contains five statements that describe how "God proves his love for us":

1. while we were still sinners Messiah died for us;
2. we have been justified by his blood;
3. we will be saved through him from the wrath of God;
4. while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son;
5. we will be saved by his life.

These five statements are elaborations of the thesis: "For while we were still weak, at the right time Messiah died for the ungodly" (5:6). Here it is noticeable that the subject of every statement except "Messiah died for the ungodly" is "we." In other words, the believer is the subject of the belief statements that elaborate the statement about Messiah's death. In this context, "we" become the enemies, rather than the apocalyptic authorities and powers to which the apocalyptic account in 1 Cor 15:25-26 refers. With this shift to "us" as the enemies, the solution to the problem lies in reconciliation (katallastō)77 rather than submission (hypotassō). It was not sufficient simply for God to devise a way to overpower and destroy unrighteous humans. As a result of God's love (Rom 5:8), God predefined a means by which his righteousness could become available to believing humans through reconciliation.

As Paul continues, he blends assertions about "sin" and "death" with assertions about Adam, Moses, and the law:

1. sin came into the world through one man;
2. death came through sin;
3. death spread to all because all have sinned (5:12);
4. sin was in the world before the law;
5. sin is not reckoned when there is no law (5:13);
6. death ruled (ebasileusan) from Adam to Moses;
7. Adam is a type of the one to come (5:14).

In this context, Paul's assertions have moved away from believers ("we") to sin, death, law, Adam, and Moses. In other words, Paul has blended his apocalyptic understanding of the era from Adam to Moses with the era of God's resurrection of the Lord Jesus Messiah. The disastrous nature of the era from Adam to Moses was death's "rule"
which allowed sin also to “rule” (5:21) through Adam. Paul does not argue in Romans that God’s response to the “rule” of sin and death was simply the transformation of a flesh-Messiah into a powerful eternal-spirit Messiah who destroyed sin and death as enemies (cf. 1 Cor 15:20–28). Rather, Paul “completes” his earlier frame of understanding by inverting the rule of sin and death with the “rule” of “the grace (charis) of God and the free gift (charisma) in the grace of the one man Jesus Messiah” (Rom 5:21). This means that Paul creates a reversal of the “rule” of death and sin with a “future glory” story (Rom 8:18) containing the following “unfolding” scenario events about the “rule” of grace and the free gift of righteousness:

1. those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness will rule (basileusōsin) in life through the one man Jesus Messiah (5:17);
2. grace will rule (basileusōn) through justification, leading to eternal life through Jesus Messiah our Lord (5:21).

It is not enough for Paul in Romans, then, to have the Lord Jesus Messiah rule over everything in the world including death until he turns the kingdom over to God (1 Cor 15:20–28). Rather, in Romans Paul presents God and the Lord Jesus Messiah working together to establish the rule of the grace of God and the free gift of righteousness over sin and death.

As one faces the challenge to describe Paul’s reformulation of the apocalyptic story of the death, resurrection, and coming of the Lord Jesus Messiah into the story of the coming of the righteousness of God through a blend of the wrath and grace of God, one recalls Rudolf Bultmann’s view of Paul’s “demythologizing” of Jewish apocalyptic mythology and Ernst Käsemann’s criticism of anthropology that resulted from it. The intervening years of scholarship suggest that it is necessary to try to describe Paul’s reconfiguration of Jewish apocalyptic mythology in new ways. Our way is to use understandings of conceptual blending (integration) theory based on current cognitive science. Our proposal is that Paul has “overmapped” the apocalyptic cosmological story of the sinful angels with an apocalyptic cosmological story of a resurrected flesh-Messiah. This overmapping “inverts” the “corruption” of blood and flesh that occurred through eternal, lustful spirits with the “redemption” of blood and flesh through eternal, spirit of holiness at work in the resurrection of Lord Jesus Messiah from the dead (Rom 1:4). Paul describes the inversion quite clearly in Rom 8:3–

79 See de Boer, “Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology,” 361–68 on Rudolf Bultmann, Ernst Käsemann, and Albert Schweitzer.
80 Fauconnier and Turner, *The Way We Think*. 
4: “by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” A key to this argument is that God’s resurrection of his flesh-Messiah into an eternal-spirit Lord Messiah inaugurates spirit-transformation of humans already in the present age and will effect full spirit-transformation at the end of time.

The challenge for believers, then, is to have “the Spirit of God” within one’s body. As Paul asserts in Rom 8:11: “If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.” As many interpreters currently are saying, through all of Paul’s “reformulation” of Jewish apocalyptic conceptuality he never truly “moves away” from apocalyptic thinking, but he dramatically reconfigures Jewish apocalyptic understanding Christologically. This is clear from his statement toward the end of his discussion of “justification” in Rom 4-8. At Rom 8:34, Paul presents a new story-summary containing four scenario events: Messiah Jesus: (1) died; (2) was raised; (3) is at the right hand of God; and (4) intercedes for us. The first three scenario events are Paul’s conventional “apocalyptic” story-summary. The last scenario event, which is a new feature in Paul’s formulations, emphasizes the effect of the risen Messiah’s place in heaven on believers at the present time, rather than emphasizing Jesus Messiah’s destruction of all enemies including death when he is in the heavens (1 Cor 15:23-28). The issue is if Paul’s reconfiguration of an enemy-destroying heavenly Messiah into a heavenly Messiah who reconciles enemies to God through intercession is a “moving away” from apocalyptic thinking.

The answer, we suggest, lies in Paul’s further “completion” of his thinking about the Lord Jesus Messiah at the right hand of God. All interpreters agree that Rom 8:34, which says that “Christ Jesus intercedes for us,” has an important relation to Rom 8:26-27, which concludes with the assertion that “the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.” Dunn has appropriately called attention to the relation of Rom 8:34 to the scenes of heavenly intercession and withholding of intercession in 1 Enoch 13:4; 14:4-7. In the midst of the sinful angel story in 1 Enoch 1-16, which is a part of the early text found at Qumran, the sinful angels beg the heavenly Enoch to inter-

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81 See the importance of the “yes” or “rather” (mallon) in Jewett, Romans, 541-42.
82 Cf. the actions of the heavenly Adam in Testament of Abraham 11; Dunn, Romans 1-8, 504.
83 In contrast to 1 Enoch 37-71, the Similitudes, of which no fragments were found at Qumran.
cede for them by offering a memorial prayer for them to the Lord of heaven (1 En. 13:4). The problem was that, as sinful beings, they were not able to speak or raise their eyes to heaven (13:5). Enoch wrote a petition of forgiveness and longevity for them and recited it to God until he (Enoch) fell asleep (13:6-7). When visions came in his dreams, a voice from heaven asked him to tell the sinful angels “the words of truth” about their situation (13:8-10). After telling the words of truth and reprimand to the sons of heaven, he explains that the petition will not be successful, because judgment has been consummated against them (14:1-7). His vision then takes him to the great house in heaven built of tongues of fire, with its glory, splendor, and majesty, to the lofty throne on which the Great Glory sat (14:8-23). At this point the Lord calls Enoch forward and instructs him to go and tell the sinful spirits of heaven that they should petition in behalf of humans, rather than to have humans petition in behalf of them (14:24-15:2). After Enoch rehearses to the sinful spirit-sons of heaven an account of their wrongdoing and its results in the world (15:3-16:4), Enoch is taken beyond the edge of earth to the end of heaven, and there he is shown the place beyond the chasm where the sinful angel-spirits will be imprisoned until the time of the consummation of all sins (17:1-19:3). 84

Careful comparison of this story in 1 Enoch 13-19 with Romans 8:26-39 exhibits how Paul “completed” his Christological inversion of the sinful angel cosmological story with the story of Messiah Jesus’ death, resurrection, seat at the right hand of God, and action of intercession for humans in Rom 8:34. The key for interpreting Paul’s argument in Rom 8:26-39 is an apocalyptic understanding of the presence, role, and function of the Spirit within believers. Paul’s argument moves from an assertion that “the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God” (8:27) to Messiah Jesus at the right hand of God who intercedes for “us” (8:34) to an argument that nothing in the universe can “separate us from the love of God in Messiah Jesus our Lord” (8:38-39). Raising a series of questions can help us understand how it works. First, how does the Spirit help “us”? Paul’s answer is that it prays petitions of intercession “with sighs too deep for words” when “in our weakness” we do not know how to pray as we ought (8:26-27). Second, how does the interceding of the Spirit do its work? The answer is through what “we know” (8:28). The mind of the believer is not unfit or disqualified (1:28), because it is “set on the things of the Spirit” rather than on the things of the flesh (8:5-11), and this is the means by which believers have been made into “sons of God” and “heirs of God” (rather than sons of sinful angels and heirs of eternal-spirit sin and death) (8:12-17). Third, how are believers transformed

84 For details, see Nickelsburg, 1 Enoch 1, 234-93.
into beings for whom the Spirit intercedes? Believers have been “conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family” (8:29). In other words, God’s resurrection of Jesus Messiah set in motion “procreative” powers for believing humans that overpowered the procreative powers of the sinful angels (through Adam) that created the rule of sin and death within humans in the world. These procreative powers of the Spirit bring not only righteousness into the lives of believers but also glorification (8:30) as elect (8:33) children of God (8:21). As Jewett states: “Believers are in the process of being glorified to the image of Christ, as in 2 Cor 3:18, made radiant with righteousness.” The procreative powers set in motion by God’s resurrection of Jesus Messiah inaugurate a process of transformation in believing humans that begins during their earthly life and reaches the stage of “full glorification” in the coming age. Fourth, if the Spirit intercedes for the believer, who will be the accuser? Here it is noticeable that Paul does not answer: “Satan.” The reason is that Paul’s apocalyptic scenario presupposes that the Lord Messiah’s position at the right hand of God brings “all” evil powers into submission (1 Cor 15:24-28). In Romans, Paul has extended this reasoning into “positive advocacy” by Messiah Jesus for believers, because the Spirit is at work in them transforming them through the powers of righteousness into “justified” and “glorified” beings (8:30). Fifth, what is the possibility that believers will, after all, be separated from God, like the sinful angels were imprisoned in a place beyond earth and heaven until their condemnation at the end of time? Paul’s answer is that believers will never be separated from the love of Messiah Jesus their Lord, and this will keep them from being separated from the love of God (8:35-39). Again, Paul’s questions and answers are Christological. Whereas the sinful angels had to depend on the heavenly Enoch to try to intercede for them, believers in Christ have Lord Jesus whom God resurrected from his flesh-Messiah into eternal-spirit Messiah at the right hand of God as their intercessor. In this context nothing – which includes hardship, distress, peril, sword (8:35), death, life, angels, rulers, things present, things to come, powers, height, depth, and anything else in creation (8:38-39) – can separate believers from the love of God in Messiah Jesus their Lord.

After Romans 1-8, Paul enters into a long argument about the place of Israel in God’s plan of salvation for Gentiles in Romans 9-11. It is not possible for us even to summarize with some detail the “apocalyptic” nature of Paul’s argument in these chapters. But we cannot leave Romans without one suggestion for Rom 9-11. When one reviews

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85 Jewett, Romans, 530.
86 Dunn, Romans 1-8, 502.
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the Jewish apocalyptic literature available to us at present and approaches it in the manner we have in this chapter and the previous one, the probability lies close at hand that we should think of the argumentation in Romans 9-11 as Paul’s way of working out an apocalyptic view of the time of the exile. This would mean that Paul’s apocalyptic periodization of time in his undisputed letters focused on the eras of Adam, Abraham, Moses, David, and the exile. While working with and writing to early Christian communities, Paul spent most of his time blending the eras of Adam, Abraham, and Moses with the era of God’s Messiah and those who believed in this Messiah. In Romans, Paul also introduces the time of David when he describes God’s Son as “descended from David according to the flesh” (Rom 1:3). In the background of all of this reasoning about God’s will for “the children of promise” (Rom 9:8), Paul was working out, we suggest, God’s view of the era of the exile, which was an era that extended from the time after the kings of Israel (when the kingdom of David was destroyed) down into Paul’s time. In the context of the exile, Paul argues that Gentiles are “grafted” as a wild olive shoot onto the root of the olive tree (Rom 11:17). We suggest that this image exhibits Paul’s blending of the time of Abraham with the time of the exile in Jewish apocalyptic literature. As Nickelsburg explains, the image of Israel as a plant became especially prominent in Jewish apocalyptic literature. The blending of Israel as a “plant of truth” with the emergence of “an eternal plant of righteousness” in the context of “the plant of righteous judgment” in 1 En. 93:1-10 is particularly suggestive for the movement of Paul’s discussion of the righteousness of God into the Gentiles as a wild olive shoot grafted onto the root (Rom 11:17-18). As Nickelsburg states: “Striking throughout the Apocalypse [of Weeks] is the notion that Israel will endure – according to v. 3, because it is a firmly rooted plant.” The endurance of Israel, in Paul’s view in Romans, occurs through the “revealing” of the righteousness of God from God’s faithfulness, embodied in Christ through death and resurrection, to faith embodied in believers through the Spirit’s producing of its fruit through community, mission, and intercession.

Conclusion

The apocalyptic story-summaries in Paul’s undisputed letters do not simply produce story-lines from the past into the present for purposes of extending the actions of an important prophet beyond the time of

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88 Nickelsburg, 1 Enoch 1, 444-45.
89 Ibid., 445.
Israel’s history into the present and future. The story-summaries in Paul’s letters that have been discussed in this chapter are apocalyptic accounts of world history that tell “the inside story” of the relation of various epochs of history to one another. The major challenge in world history, from Paul’s perspective, was reversal of the time of Adam, which introduced desire, sin, and death into humans. We accept the view, advanced by M.C. de Boer, that Paul’s view of the time of Adam coheres with the view in portions of 1 Enoch, 4 Ezra, and 2 Baruch that the full effect of the sin of Adam became evident in the actions of the sinful angels described in Genesis 6 that necessitated the flood that destroyed the world. The question for Paul, then, is how God could reverse the presence of eternally perpetuating evil-spirit in human flesh that produces desire, sin, and death. For Paul, the answer lay in God’s actions through the death and resurrection of his Son, Lord Jesus Messiah. For Paul, the story of God’s Messiah is the story of God’s transformation of a flesh-Messiah into an eternal-spirit Messiah through resurrection. The creative solution by Paul was to conclude that God reversed the effect of the sin of Adam with a cosmological Messiah story that inverted the cosmological actions of the sinful angels. Once God’s action of resurrecting his flesh-Messiah intercepts the eternal perpetuation of death in human flesh, God’s redemption of flesh-dwelling humans was set in place. Through belief in the resurrection of Jesus Messiah, humans can acquire a status of being “in Messiah.” In the context of this belief, God is able to send the Spirit into them to enliven them to produce fruit of the Spirit while they dwell on earth and to transform them into heavenly spirit-beings at the end of time. Finally in Romans Paul reformulates this into God’s righteousness coming into the world.

Paul does not discuss the time of Abraham in 1 Thessalonians and 1-2 Corinthians, but this time period becomes prominent in both Galatians and Romans. While Paul discusses Moses in 1-2 Corinthians and Romans, he talks only about the law and not Moses in Galatians. Only in Romans does Paul refer to the time of David, asserting that God’s Son was descended from David according to the flesh (1:3) and that David had important things to say about God’s reckoning of people as righteous (4:6-8) and about the hardening of hearts within Israel (11:9). In all of this, Paul avoids the time of Enoch, Noah, and the flood. If Paul had gone there with his reasoning, it would have been difficult for him to avoid a story-line from Enoch to Jesus based on God’s taking of Enoch into heaven. As 1 En 65:12 argued that “the seed of Enoch” would be saved through the flood, so Christians would be “seed of Enoch.” Paul does not go there, because he found, instead, an answer.

Cf. 2 Tim 2:8.
to the cosmological story of the origins of desire, sin, and death in his first Adam/last Adam apocalyptic story-line. As he developed the details of this apocalyptic story-line, he blended the eras of God’s promises to Abraham and God’s sharpening of the consciousness of sin and death through Moses and the law with the era of God’s transformation of his Davidic-flesh Messiah into an eternal-spirit Messiah through resurrection from death into heaven. The blending of these eras together, in a context of the era of the exile, where Gentiles needed to be reconciled to God, clarified for Paul that the resurrected Christ was seated at the right hand of God not only for the purpose of bringing all cosmic enemies into submission but also for the purpose of bringing reconciliation among God, the world, and humans through God’s faithfulness and righteousness.

Apocalyptic Times and Spaces in the Sayings Gospel Q

After the creative apocalyptic thinking of the Apostle Paul appeared in letters written 50-60 CE, Christian Gospels on the life of Jesus appeared during 70-100 CE. In the intervening period between the death of Paul and the appearance of the Gospels, a Roman military campaign against Jews in Galilee and Judea brought destruction to the Jerusalem temple and its surrounding environs 66-70 CE and the end of a Jewish military outpost at Masada in 73 CE. The military conflict and destruction in Galilee and Judea during 66-73 CE created a context in which Christian writings began to include explicit apocalyptic imagery of war between nations, which had not appeared in the writings of Paul. Christians did not, however, place military imagery in the foreground of their apocalyptic presentation of the life of Jesus. Rather, they gave the story of Jesus’ life apocalyptic dimensions by including angels, Satan, demons, the splitting open of the heavens, a voice from heaven, and a focus on resurrection from the dead in certain events and conversations. Perhaps the most dramatic new feature was the introduction of an apocalyptic forerunner, John the Baptizer, to the story of Jesus. All of these apocalyptic dimensions and features had the rhetorical effect of making the apocalyptic time period of Jesus Messiah larger than simply his death, resurrection, and exaltation into heaven. In the Gospels, aspects of apocalyptic conceptuality blend into narrative accounts of Jesus’ birth, Jesus’ experiences as a young adult, and Jesus’ public life prior to his death and resurrection.

Though there is dispute about the exact oral and literary process in which it occurred, it is clear that some first century Christians gave special apocalyptic dimensions to the time of Jesus by placing his life in the context of apocalyptic teaching by a person named John the Bap-

The presence of extended portions of apocalyptic teaching by John the Baptist in Matt 3:1-12 and Luke 3:1-17, which are not in the Mark 1:2-8 or John 1:19-34, revealed to scholars that a collection of sayings of John the Baptist and Jesus was emerging in early Christianity during the period of 40-80 CE. For many scholars, though not all, this teaching by John the Baptist was the beginning of what is now called “The Sayings Gospel Q.” It is obvious from various references by the apostle Paul to “words of the Lord” that an early collection of sayings of Jesus existed during Paul’s lifetime. Paul, however, does not refer in his letters to John the Baptist, nor does he refer to Jesus as “the Son of man,” both of which are special characteristics of the Sayings Gospel Q. Paul’s declaration “by the word of the Lord” that when the Lord comes believers who are alive will not go up into heaven before believers who have already died (1 Thess 4:15) is not present in any NT Gospel. His assertion that “the Lord will come like a thief in the night” (1 Thess 5:2), however, is possibly an allusion to a saying in Q (Luke 12:39). It seems obvious to many scholars, though again not all, that early Christians were adding explicit apocalyptic dimensions to Jesus’ teaching during the time of the Jewish-Roman wars of 66-70 CE and its immediate aftermath. For the purposes of this chapter, it is important to discuss some special aspects of the Q material (special sayings in common in Matthew and Luke) in relation to the letters of Jude and 2 Peter. First, we will look at the apocalyptic use of eras in the special sayings in common between Matthew and Luke. Second, we will look at the relation of apocalyptic topos in the Sayings Gospel Q and the letters of Jude and 2 Peter.

Of special interest for our approach in this chapter is the absence of military imagery from the apocalyptic teaching in the special sayings in common between Matthew and Luke. John the Baptist pictures “the wrath to come” as “an ax” that will cut the root of every unfruitful tree before it is thrown into the fire (Luke 3:7-9/Matt 3:7-10). Then John describes Jesus as coming with a “winnowing fork in his hand” to gather the wheat into his granary and burn the chaff with...

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92 For the implications of calling the Q material a Gospel, see Kloppenborg Verbin, Excavating Q, 398–408.
unquenchable fire (Luke 3:17/Matt 3:12). This is traditional angel-spirit apocalyptic imagery, which uses fruit-bearing trees and harvest-time to describe the time of judgment. When the special sayings in common between Matthew and Luke feature apocalyptic imagery in sayings of Jesus, eras in apocalyptic world history are present that Paul does not feature in his letters: Noah, the Queen of the South (era of Solomon), and Jonah (era of kings of Israel after David and Solomon).

Rather than focusing on the Lord’s coming to take people up into heaven, like 1 Thess 4-5, the special sayings in common in Matthew and Luke describe either “the coming (parousia)” or “the day(s)” of the Son of Man in relation to Noah and the flood, and to lightning that flashes across the entire sky from east to west. Jesus’ saying about the time of Noah and the flood begins with a “comparison thesis”: “Just as it was in the days of Noah, so too it will be in the days (coming) of the Son of man.” Then there is a story summary containing four scenario events: (1) before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage; (2) Noah entered the ark; (3) the flood came; and (4) the flood swept them all away. Matt 24:38 adds that “they knew nothing until the flood came.” Nickelsburg observes that 1 En. 93: 4 presents the flood as “the first end,” “which reflects a typology between the flood and the judgment” that “recurs explicitly in Matt 24:36-44 and Luke 17:26-27.” A major issue surrounding the story-summaries is the degree to which people knew the ‘inside’ story of the sequence of actions that would occur.

Luke 17:28-30 expands the comparison with the coming of the Son of Man to include “the day that Lot left Sodom,” and Luke 17:32 discusses the importance of fleeing in relation to Lot’s wife. The story-summary about Lot contains four scenario events: (1) they were eating

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105 Nickelsburg, 1 Enoch, 444-44; cf. also 1 En. 10:1-3; 10:16-11:2; 93:9-10; and ch. 91.
and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building; (2) on the day that Lot left Sodom, it rained fire and sulfur from heaven; (3) it destroyed all of them; and (4) anyone in the field must not turn back; remember Lot’s wife (Luke 17:28-29, 31-32). This is compared in Luke 17:30 to “the day that the Son of man is revealed (apokalyptetai).” In this instance, the comparison expands beyond the destruction to an elaboration on circumstances various people may face on that day. The circumstances include being on a housetop, in a field, or grinding meal. Luke 12:39-40/Matt 24:43-44 also add a comparison of the Son of Man’s coming to a thief breaking into one’s house, and they compare the destruction to a Master of a household who cuts a slave into pieces when he unexpectedly returns and finds the slave beating other slaves and getting drunk (Luke 12:46/Matt 24:51). In these instances, the issue is the nature of the destruction when the Son of Man comes, and there is exhortation to act quickly to escape the destruction by fleeing or by constantly remaining vigilant to one’s duties. Also the sayings describe the context of the end as a time when son rises up against father, daughter against mother, and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law (Luke 12:53/Matt 10:35). In addition, the end is a time when more will be given to one who already has, and to those who do not have, even what they have will be taken away from them (Luke 19:26/Matt 25:29). There is also fear of being cast into Gehenna (Luke 12:5/Matt 10:28). Satan plays a role in two contexts in the sayings common to Matthew and Luke. One is the testing of Jesus in the wilderness before he begins his public ministry (Luke 4:1-13/Matt 4:1-11). The other is in Jesus’ discussion with people who accuse him of casting out demons by Beelzebul (Luke 11:15-20; Matt 12:24-28). In the special sayings common to Matthew and Luke, there is no reference to Adam’s bringing of sin and death into the world, the law of Moses as God’s means of bringing a consciousness of sin and death, or of Jesus as God’s Messiah descended from David according to the flesh.

As the focus in the special sayings in common in Matthew and Luke moves beyond the sudden destruction in the days of the Son of Man to the circumstances of people during this time, there is an important reference to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets who will be allowed to enter into the Kingdom of God, while others will be thrown out (Luke 13:28/Matt 8:11-12)\(^\text{108}\). There is, however, no special reference to Abraham’s faith by which God reckoned him as righteous. Beyond this, there is reference to Sodom (Matt 10:15 also

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\(^\text{107}\) Luke 17:35/Matt 24:41.
includes Gomorrah), the coming of the Queen of the South to visit Solomon\textsuperscript{109} and the repentance of the people of Nineveh\textsuperscript{110} during the time of Jonah. All of these are warnings to people in the towns of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum\textsuperscript{111} in comparison to the positive response of people in Tyre and Sidon.\textsuperscript{112} In addition, Jonah becomes a “sign” either of proclamation that brings repentance or of the resurrection of the Son of man after three days and nights.\textsuperscript{113} The times of Noah, Abraham, Sodom, Solomon (Queen of the South), Jonah, and all the prophets, then, play a role in the apocalyptic view of world history in the special sayings in common in Matthew and Luke. These traditional apocalyptic eras were emerging during the first century CE as “types” of events of the end time, and the people who focused on Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah of the end time played a creative role in bringing these past eras into the foreground through scenario events they interpreted in relation to the Messiah Jesus and his return as Son of Man.\textsuperscript{114}

Beyond the focus on the days of the Son of Man, there is special focus on the disciples of Jesus in two ways. First, there is reference to Jesus’ disciples sitting on twelve thrones in a position of judgment over the twelve tribes of Israel in the Son of Man’s kingdom (Luke 22:30/Matt 19:28). While this is imagery of political power, there is no military imagery associated with it. Second, there is a series of scenario events in the life of Jesus’ disciples that are interpreted in relation to the destruction of Sodom (and Gomorrah). These scenario events interpret the activities of Jesus’ followers as a “harvest story,” which creates a special time for mission activity of followers in the apocalyptic history of the world. The story begins in Luke 10:2/Matt 9:37-38 with Jesus defining the activities of his followers as “the harvest”: “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into the harvest.”\textsuperscript{115} This imagery, as the reader will know, is traditional apocalyptic description of the end time. In Matthew and Luke, the time in which followers of Jesus are involved in mission to others becomes “apocalyptic” through Jesus’ use of a conventional image of the end of time as “harvest time” for their activities.\textsuperscript{116} This emphasis comes from

\textsuperscript{109} Luke 11:31/Matt 12:42.
\textsuperscript{116} Luke 10:1-16 makes this “harvest” a mission time for the seventy; Matt 9:37-10:42 a mission time for the twelve disciples.
the special sayings in common in these two Gospels. After Jesus’ definition of the mission of his followers as “the harvest,” he presents seven scenario events they are commanded to perform: (1) go on your way as lambs into the midst of wolves; (2) carry no purse, nor bag, nor sandals, nor stick, and greet no one on the road; (3) into whatever house you enter, first say, “Peace to this house!”; (4) if a son of peace be there, let your peace come upon him; but if not, let your peace return to you; (5) remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move from house to house; (6) cure the sick there, and say to them, “The Kingdom of God has come near to you”; (7) into whatever town you enter and they do not welcome you, on going from that town, shake off the dust from your feet.” Two of the scenario events (3, 6) are scripted to the point where they tell the traveler what to say as well as what to do. Luke 10:11 adds scripted speech for the scenario event of rejection at the end: “Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.” The apocalyptic configuration of these scenario events in the special sayings in common in Matthew and Luke creates a special era of time in the future for any believer who accepts a task of “mission” in the name of Messiah Jesus. Apocalyptic rhetorolect in the Q sayings, then, moves beyond paranesis for creating peaceful believing communities, like one sees in the letters of Paul. First century CE Gospel literature correlates early apocalyptic eras with the time of Jesus in a manner that creates an apocalyptic era for the disciples themselves. This era exists from the time of Jesus until the end of time. A major apocalyptic effect of the Synoptic Gospels is to create scenario events for “the work” of all followers of Jesus in the future. While various aspects of these events lie implicitly in certain statements in the letters of Paul, the Synoptic Gospels create explicit scenario events spoken by Messiah Jesus that create a future program for followers of Jesus in mission until the coming of the Son of Man.

In the special sayings in common in Matthew and Luke, there is no military imagery in the portrayal of the coming of the Son of Man, the plight of people, or the mission activity of Jesus’ followers. The closest the special sayings come to military imagery occurs when Luke 11:22 has Jesus compare the coming of the kingdom of God to a strong man who attacks and overpowers an armored person guarding a house, taking away the guard’s armor and dividing the plunder (cf. Matt

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12:29). While the guard has armor, there is no attack by an army on the man, nor is it clear that the guard is a military soldier. The most prominent imagery in the special sayings concerns fruit-bearing plants, households, fields, and work in which people harvest and grind grain into meal. In one instance there is imagery of political power in the hands of Jesus’ disciples, namely when they sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. There is, however, no implication that the disciples will either engage in or authorize any military activity to carry out their role of judging. All of the imagery, then, is natural in the stream of angel-spirit apocalyptic as we have defined it in the previous and present chapter. The apocalyptic imagery in the special sayings common to Matthew and Luke does not shift into the earth-material imagery characteristic of Revelation, which focuses on cities, wealth, and military power.

Apocalyptic Times and Spaces in the Synoptic Gospels

The Gospel of Mark

The Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) were written ca. 70–90 CE. Most maintain that Mark is the earliest Gospel, written ca. 70 CE. Since the Gospel of Mark does not contain the Q material discussed above, there are no references in it to Noah, Sodom, Lot, Gomorrah, Solomon, Queen of the South, Jonah, or the Ninevites. Also, there is no reference to Adam in it. There is one reference to Abraham, and it is present in an intriguing response by Jesus to Sadducees, who, the narrator says, do not believe in the resurrection. Jesus responds to them by reciting that God said to Moses, “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” Then Jesus says, “He is God not of the dead, but of the living” (Mark 12:26-17). This is an argument from the Torah for belief in the resurrection. The issue, of course, is that the Sadducees traditionally did not find argument for resurrection in the Torah. This verse (Exod 3:6) is understood apocalyptically by first century Christians to mean that if God “is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – as he disclosed himself to Moses the great lawgiver – then life, not death, will surely be the destiny of all those linked to him in faith.” Again, there is no reference in Mark to the faith of Abraham through which God reckoned him as righteous, like one finds in

119 For a basic discussion of apocalyptic rhetoric in the Synoptic Gospels, see Carey, Ultimate Things, 102-16.
the letters of Paul. There is, however, reference to Abraham among “the living,” which presupposes his presence in heaven along with Isaac and Jacob.

In the context of an absence of focus on past eras for its apocalyptic presentation of Jesus, one of the most important contributions of the Gospel of Mark to first century Christian discourse is its formulation of two dramatic apocalyptic events in which a voice speaks from heaven: (1) the baptism of Jesus (1:9-11); and (2) the transfiguration of Jesus (9:2-13). The account of the baptism is very brief, describing three events as Jesus was coming out of the water in which he had been baptized: (1) he saw the heavens splitting apart; (2) he saw the spirit descending like a dove on him; and (3) a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased” (1:10-11). The splitting of the heavens apart is a conventional feature of apocalyptic, which allows the seer to observe things in heaven that reveal special information about God’s plans and activities with the world. But there is no view of detail in the heavens in the scene. The spirit descends from heaven into Jesus like a dove, and this has been very difficult for scholars to interpret, since there is no other scene in literature directly like it. In our view, Hans Lohmeyer was right when he indicated that a major issue in the context of Mark’s account of Jesus’ baptism is the manner in which apocalyptic literature describes the visibility of heavenly manifestations to earthly beings. Leander E. Keck’s extensive investigation of the issue caused him to conclude that the phrase “like a dove” (hōs peristeran: 1:10) is adverbial, and we agree. Mark describes “the Spirit coming with dove-like descent” into Jesus in an apocalyptic context where the heavens have split apart and a voice from heaven declares to Jesus, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.” As Keck has indicated, one of the closest similarities can be found in Sir 43:13-14, 17, which asserts that “By his (God’s) command … the storehouses are opened, and the clouds fly out like birds … The voice of his thunder rebukes the earth … He scatters the snow like birds flying down … and its descent is like locusts alighting.” It is this kind of description in Jewish wisdom literature that apocalyptic literature reconfigured into vivid depictions of spirit beings of various kinds in the heavens, and Christian discourse is a major participant in this apocalyptic movement during the first cen-
tury CE. What is so noticeable in the context of our discussion is the topos of the Spirit in the foreground of the scene, accompanied by the authoritative voice of God from the heavens. As we have seen above, one of the central issues in apocalyptic cosmology was the manner in which heavenly, eternal spirit enters into human beings on earth. While Paul’s letters assert that the procreative, “renewing” spirit of God entered into humans through God’s resurrection of his Messiah Jesus from the dead, the Gospel of Mark proposes that the procreative, renewing spirit of God entered into Jesus at his baptism. This movement of the descent of the Spirit into Jesus during his lifetime set in motion a conceptuality that blended with prophetic literature in Matthew and Luke to move the time of the descent of the Spirit into Jesus backwards into the time of Jesus’ presence in the womb of Mary (Matt 1:20-25; Luke 1:26-38). Again one can see an overall effect of the stream of angel-spirit apocalyptic on first century Christian discourse. Literary-historical interpreters have contributed in a majesterial way to a description of all the “influences” it is possible to find upon Christian discourse in the literature of the time. The fact is that first century Christians were full participants and contributors to emerging apocalyptic conceptuality during the first century CE. For this reason, it is not possible to find precedents in Jewish or other Mediterranean literature of the time for every phenomenon in early Christian literature and discourse. Early Christians used emergent, blending structures of conceptuality in Mediterranean literature, culture, and society of the time as frames within which to tell their “stories” about Jesus and his followers. Their stories and arguments recontextualized, reconfigured, and blended anew the concepts and convictions of people of their time, including their apocalyptic concepts and convictions.

In Mark, the descent of the Spirit into Jesus at his baptism equips him to renew people by casting unclean spirits and demons out of them. After calling four fishermen to be his disciples (1:16-20), Jesus begins his public ministry by casting an unclean spirit out of a man in the synagogue at Capernaum (1:21-28). After this, Jesus performs three additional exorcisms (5:1-20; 7:24-30; 9:14-29)\(^\text{125}\) in an overall context where the narrator summarizes scenes of wide-reaching healings and exorcisms by Jesus and his disciples, as well as debate about Jesus’ ability to cast them out.\(^\text{126}\)

In the middle of an overall “gospel” story that features an apocalyptic splitting of the heavens open at Jesus’ baptism to inaugurate the


\(^{126}\) See Robbins, ibid., 22-29.
testing of Jesus prior to his adult ministry (1:9-11), the Gospel of Mark presents a scene of the transformation of Jesus momentarily into a heavenly form while he is on a mountain (9:2-8). This momentary transformation of Jesus creates a context for blending the apocalyptic descent of the spirit into Jesus at his baptism with Jesus’ rejection, death, and resurrection after three days. The scene features Jesus on a high mountain at a dramatic turning point in his adult ministry, talking with the heavenly Moses and Elijah (9:4-5). On the one hand, comparison of the scene with the fully apocalyptic version of the Transfiguration in the Apocalypse of Peter 15-17 shows how the Markan version is only an apocalyptic glimpse into the nature of Jesus’ body in his future heavenly state. 127 On the other hand, the momentary “metamorphosis” (metemorphōthē: Mark 9:2) of Jesus in a context of the appearance (ophthē: 9:4) of the heavenly manifestations of Elijah and Moses is a truly remarkable moment in the story. In the midst of this moment, the heavenly voice speaks again, this time saying to the three disciples (Peter, James, John): “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him” (9:7). Thus, in Mark an apocalyptic moment at the beginning of the story features the heavenly voice speaking to Jesus and in the middle of the story features an apocalyptic moment when the heavenly voice speaks to three of Jesus’ disciples. This apocalyptic framing of the adult life of Jesus prior to his death and resurrection contributed yet another dimension to the apocalyptic story early Christians were able to tell. Now it was not simply the resurrection and return of Jesus after his crucifixion and burial that were apocalyptic events in the story about God’s Messiah, but there was an “inside” story at work even during the adult life of Jesus.

It is remarkable how the Markan account of the transfiguration of Jesus exhibits the process of blending an apocalyptic account of the life of the adult Jesus with the apocalyptic account of his resurrection and glorious return in the future. When Jesus is going down the mountain with his disciples after his momentary transfiguration before them, he tells them they must tell no one about the event “until after the Son of Man has risen from the dead” (9:9). William Wrede emphasized that this exhibits how the Gospel of Mark blended the non-messianic account of Jesus, which existed during Jesus’ lifetime, with the messianic account that emerged after Jesus’ death. 128 It is important to realize that apocalyptic conceptualization enabled early Christians to make the moves they did in a gradual expansion of the “era” of Jesus back to his adult life and finally even back to his conception. In Mark, there is not yet an apocalyptic configuration of Jesus’ birth. Rather, there is an

127 Robbins, ibid., 34-35.
apocalyptic configuration of Jesus’ adult life through scenario moments at his baptism and his transfiguration prior to his journey to Jerusalem, where he is killed. The Gospel of Mark blends the apocalyptic account of Jesus’ adult life with his resurrection and return after his death through Jesus’ programmatic teaching to his disciples in Mark 8:31-10:45 that the Son of man “must” be delivered up, beaten, killed, and rise up in three days (8:31; 9:9, 31; 10:32-34). According to Mark, then, there is an “inside, apocalyptic story” about Jesus’ life and death, which explains how and why Jesus’ life continued after his death in the form of a resurrected heavenly being who would return in the future to gather his elect together “from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven” (Mark 13:27). This brings us to Mark 13, which in modern times regularly has been called either “the Markan apocalypse” or “the little apocalypse.”

In Mark 13, a speech by Jesus to four of his disciples (Peter, James, John, and Andrew: 13:3) explains the sequence of time before the coming of the Son of Man. In the context of our present chapter, this means that the Gospel of Mark creates a scene beyond the baptism (1:9-11) and transfiguration (9:2-13) in which Jesus presents a sequence of events to an inner circle of disciples that includes the destruction of the Jerusalem temple (13:1-2, 14) and the coming of the Son of Man (13:26-27). Again from the perspective on early Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect we are taking in this chapter, Jesus’ speech contains ten scenario events. First, Jesus describes four scenario events that he calls “the beginning of the birth pangs” (13:9): (1) many will come in the name of Jesus claiming, “I am he!”, leading many astray (13:6); (2) there will be wars and rumors of war (13:7); (3) nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom (13:8); (4) there will be earthquakes in various places. Second, there are four scenario events about the disciples’ preaching of the gospel to all nations (13:10), in a context where they are exhorted to “endure to the end” so they will be saved (13:13): (5) Jesus’ disciples will be handed over to councils, beaten in synagogues, and brought before governors and kings for the sake of Jesus (13:9); (6) Jesus’ disciples are not to worry what they will say when they are brought to trial and handed over, because the Holy Spirit will give them speech (13:11); (7) brother will betray brother to death, a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death (13:12); (8) Jesus’ disciples will be hated by all because of Jesus’ name (13:13). Third, there are five scenario events that begin with the setting up of “the desolating sacrilege,” which is wording from Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11 that refers to the desecration of the Jerusalem temple: (9) Jesus’ disciples will see the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not to be (13:14); (10) those in Judea must flee to
the mountains (13:14); (11) there will be suffering such as has not been from the beginning of creation to the present (13:17-19); (12) the Lord will cut short the days of suffering so the elect can be saved (13:20); (13) false messiahs and prophets will appear, producing signs and wonders to attempt to lead the elect astray (13:21-22). Four, there are four scenario events associated with the coming of the Son of Man: (14) after the suffering, the sun and moon will become dark, stars will fall from heaven, and the powers in heaven will be shaken (13:24-25); (15) people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory (13:26); (16) the Son of Man will send out the angels and gather his elect from “the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven” (13:27). In the context of these sixteen scenario events, Jesus teaches his four disciples that “heaven and earth will pass away,” but his words will not pass away (13:31). Also, he teaches them that no one except God the Father knows the day or hour when the time will come (13:32-33). At this point, Jesus compares the sequence to a man going on a journey, leaving slaves and a doorkeeper in charge until he returns, and they must stay awake, because no one knows when the master will return (13:34-36). The message to all then is, “Keep awake” (13:37).

In the context of the present chapter, it is not feasible to interpret Mark 13 in any detail. What we must observe is Jesus’ presentation of sixteen scenario events about the time of the coming of the Son of Man. This sequence presupposes a context in which his disciples are preaching the gospel to all nations, which overlaps with Paul’s insistence that he must preach the gospel to Gentiles. The sequence also presupposes that the disciples will suffer in the context of the mission they are commanded to perform, which overlaps both with teaching by Paul and teaching by Jesus in the special sayings in common in Matthew and Luke. In addition, the sequence presupposes there will be wars, but there is no suggestion that the disciples or the Son of Man participate in any way in military activities. After violence and destruction become so great that homes and nations are destroyed, and even the sun, moon, stars, and powers in heaven lose their ability to run the cosmos in an ordered manner, the Son of Man will come on clouds accompanied by angels. The total focus of the Son of Man when he comes is his gathering of the elect from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven, which has an important relation to the emphasis in 1 Thess 4-5. In other words, Mark 13 does not refer to any dark activities of judgment or destruction by the Son of Man when he comes.

The Gospel of Matthew

In contrast to the Gospel of Mark, since the Gospel of Matthew contains the Q sayings, it places the story of Jesus in an apocalyptic context in which the eras of Noah, Sodom, Lot, Gomorrah, Solomon, Queen of the South, Jonah, and the Ninevites play an important role. Again there is no reference to Adam in the story. Both Abraham and David become more prominent in the early Christian Gospels as Matthew opens with: “An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham” (1:1). After a genealogy that moves from Abraham to David to the exile to the birth of Jesus (1:2-17), there are only three more references to Abraham in Matthew: (1) John the Baptist’s reference to Abraham as the ancestor of Pharisees and Sadducees (3:9); (2) the reference to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob eating at the table in the kingdom of heaven from the Q material (8:11); and (3) Jesus’ recitation to the Sadducees that God is “the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” from Mark (22:32). Even though the Gospel of Matthew begins the genealogy of Jesus with Abraham, there is no special development of the time of Abraham as a time that shows special “inside” information about Jesus. There is a significant development of David in relation to Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew.130 All of the contexts, however, perpetuate prophetic and miracle rhetorolect in early Christian discourse more than they perpetuate apocalyptic discourse.

In the short span available to us in this chapter, we will focus on an apocalyptic sequence during the early ministry of Jesus. Jesus’ expansion of the Markan apocalypse about the Son of Man, and the time of Jesus from the crucifixion to his appearance to his disciples after his resurrection. First, we will look at the apocalyptic sequence during the early ministry of Jesus. As Günther Bornkamm has shown,131 when Jesus gets into the boat the first time in his ministry and his disciples follow him into the boat, the storm that arises at sea is a great earthquake (seismos megas: 8:24). The disciples’ distress at sea, then, is a glimpse of tremors of the end time that are already beginning in the life of the disciples during the ministry of Jesus.132 In Matthew’s account of the sending out of the twelve later in the story, then, Jesus tells the disciples: “truly I tell you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes” (10:23). This verse has, of course, caused considerable debate in discussion among scholars, with Albert Schweitzer playing a key role with his assertion that Jesus

expected the return of the Son of Man before the end of his ministry, but he was forced to change his mind when the Son of Man did not come.\footnote{Albert Schweitzer, \textit{The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of Its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede} (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998) 358-64.} For our purposes in this chapter, the important thing to notice is how the Gospel of Matthew extends the end time back into the ministry of Jesus and the mission of his disciples. As we have seen above, the seeds for this development already existed in the interpretation of the mission of the disciples as “the harvest” in the Sayings Gospel Q. Matthew includes an initial earthquake during the time of Jesus’ ministry (8:24) and an expectation that the Son of Man would come before his disciples returned from a mission to all the towns of Israel (10:23), prior to other events that present even more of an “inside” apocalyptic story at work during the time of Jesus.

In Matthew’s version of the coming of the Son of Man from Mark 13, Jesus speaks to all of his disciples rather than to only four of them (Matt 24:1-4; cf. Mark 13:3). After presenting the Markan information with some significant variations (Matt 24:4-35), Jesus continues with Q material about Noah (24:37-39), people who will be taken quickly away (24:40-41), and the day of the Lord that is coming like a thief in the night (24:42-44). But this is simply the beginning of the Matthean expansion of Jesus’ apocalyptic discourse. Matthew also includes a sequence of parables about the end of time (24:45-25:30) which ends with a worthless slave being thrown “into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (25:30).\footnote{Cf. Matt 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51.} At this point, Jesus tells of the coming of the Son of Man in a manner that is unparalleled in any other Gospel.

Jesus’ account of the coming of the Son of Man in Matt 25:31-46 includes both a dark and a bright side. The account features the Son of Man coming and sitting on “the throne of his glory” (Matt 25:31) for the purpose of judging “all the nations” who will be gathered before him (25:32). In this context, the Son of Man tells “the sheep at his right hand” that they inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world (25:34), while the goats on his left hand are sent “away into eternal punishment,” rather than “into eternal life” (25:46). In Matthew, then, the function of the Son of Man is both to gather the elect and to send the unrighteous into eternal punishment. Still, however, there is no military imagery in the description of the Son of Man. The Son of Man is concerned to know if people fed the hungry, clothed the naked stranger, and visited those in prison (25:35-45), rather than if anyone became a military ruler over a major city and region, gathered wealth to himself in a manner that caused him to turn
away from worship of God, and deprived people of food and water in a context of sexual excess and ungodliness. Apocalypticism in the Gospel of Matthew, then, extends the stream of angel-spirit apocalyptic that is so dominant in the New Testament, rather than moving into the stream of earth-material apocalyptic that focuses on military power, cities, and wealth.

When the Gospel of Matthew presents the end of the story about Jesus’ time on earth, it contains significant apocalyptic dimensions in the account of Jesus’ crucifixion, resurrection from the tomb, and appearance to his disciples. When Jesus dies in Matthew, the curtain of the temple is torn in two and there is an earthquake (ἡ γῆ σείσθη) that causes the tombs to be opened and many saints who had died to be raised (27:51-52). Then the narrator says that after Jesus was resurrected “they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many” (27:53). Then after Jesus has been buried in a tomb, there is a great earthquake (σείσμος μεγας: 28:2) and the descent of an angel of the Lord from heaven with the appearance of lightning who rolls back the stone (28:2-3). After the angel tells the women that Jesus has been raised from the dead (28:7), Jesus appears to the eleven disciples on “the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.” When Jesus appears in this form, the disciples worship Jesus, though some doubt (28:17). Then, telling them he has been given “all authority in heaven and on earth,” he commands them to “make disciples of all nations” through baptism and teaching (28:19). These additional apocalyptic scenes and features in the Gospel of Matthew have the rhetorical effect of making the entire time from Jesus’ conception in the womb of Mary until his appearance to eleven disciples on a mountain after his resurrection into a special apocalyptic era in world history.

The Gospel of Luke

The Gospel of Luke also, of course, includes the eras of Noah, Sodom, Lot, Gomorrah, Solomon, Queen of the South, Jonah, and the Ninevites in the apocalyptic dimensions of its account of the life of Jesus. Also, it includes a dramatic appearance of the angel Gabriel to Zechariah the father of John the Baptist (1:11-20) and a dramatic scene with Mary (1:26-38) that describes how the Holy Spirit came into her to cause her to conceive and bear a son named Jesus (1:30-37). There are multiple references both to Abraham\(^{135}\) and to David\(^{136}\) in Luke. In a recent sociorhetorical investigation of apocalyptic intertexture in

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Luke,\textsuperscript{137} L. Gregory Bloomquist identifies five units with apocalyptic dimensions containing references to Abraham,\textsuperscript{138} and one unit containing a reference to David.\textsuperscript{139} Traditions of God’s promise to Abraham (1:55, 73) and Abraham’s righteousness (13:28; 16:22-31; 20:37) certainly are evident in these units, but again there is no specific emphasis that Abraham’s faith caused God to reckon him as righteous. The one unit containing reference to David (1:68-79) refers to “a mighty savior” who has been raised up “in the house of his servant David” (1:69). These references play a role in thickening the apocalyptic intertexture of the story of Jesus in early Christian discourse. There is, however, a more specific apocalyptic focus in the Gospel of Luke to which we must turn.

Putting insights together from the study mentioned above and from another investigation focused specifically on Luke 21, Bloomquist concluded that a major focus of apocalyptic discourse in the Gospel of Luke is on Jerusalem, to which Jesus travels in 9:51-19:44 and teaches daily in the temple in 19:45-21:38.\textsuperscript{140} One very important observation is that a significant number of apocalyptic sayings from Q, plus other apocalyptic sayings and parables, are present in the long account of Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem. According to Bloomquist’s count, sixteen sections of text in Luke 9:21-19:44 contain significant apocalyptic emphases.\textsuperscript{141} Within these sections, a significant number of verses in chapters 10-14, 17, and 19 are Q tradition\textsuperscript{142} in the context of Lukan special tradition or redaction\textsuperscript{143} and a few verses of Markan tradition.\textsuperscript{144}

From the eras of biblical tradition, one notices within special Lukan tradition or redaction references to Abraham’s living in a comfortable


\textsuperscript{139} Luke 1:69 (1:68-79); ibid.


\textsuperscript{144} Mark 9:23-27; 12:1, 12, 50; 17:25; 19:28-40.
place in Hades (Luke 16:23-31); Abraham’s reference to Moses and the prophets in a context of reference to resurrection from the dead (Luke 16:29-31); reference to Lot’s wife as well as to Lot (Luke 17:32); and a request by disciples of Jesus to bring fire down from heaven to destroy people, like Elijah did when he had enemies (Luke 9:54: 2 Kgs 1:9-16). Then from the time of Jesus until the end, one notices in special Lukan tradition or redaction Jesus seeing Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning (Luke 10:18); an intensification of emphasis on division in households (Luke 12:52-53); Pilate’s spilling of the blood of Galileans (Luke 13:1-3); people dying when the tower of Siloam falls on them (Luke 13:4-5); a king slaughtering citizens of his country who hated him (Luke 19:27); people who expected the kingdom of God to come immediately when they arrived in Jerusalem (Luke 19:11); and coming days when enemies of Jerusalem will set up ramparts, surround the city, hem everyone in, and crush the city and everyone in it, because they did not “recognize the time” of their “visitiation from God” (Luke 19:44). As Bloomquist has observed, “Luke seems to regard Jesus’ approach to Jerusalem and his time there as the rhetorical forum par excellence for apocalyptic discourse.”

The Acts of the Apostles

When Bloomquist turns to a sociorhetorical interpretation of apocalyptic in the Acts of the Apostles, he concludes that in the context of a “pattern of waning apocalyptic intertexture” there is an apocalyptic focus on “mission to the Gentiles.” In his view, the apocalyptic moment has not passed in Acts. Rather, “it is taking place as a witness to Jesus and under his authority.” Bloomquist’s point is that “we can see Lukan apocalyptic not as the short-lived, revolutionist, and liminal cultural moment usually associated with a cataclysmic inbreaking, but as an enduring ‘revolutionist’ and countercultural overthrow.”

Bloomquist’s analysis of Acts led him to nine sections of Acts which he considers to contain significant apocalyptic discourse. We can only look briefly at a few of them here. Acts 1:7 reconfigures the apocalyptic topos of the day (hēmera) or hour (hōra) when the Son would come to earth (Mark 13:32 par.) into a “time” (chronos) or “period” (kairos) when followers of Jesus must be the risen Lord Messiah’s “witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (1:8). In other words, the apocalyptic time-space conceptuality

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146 Ibid. 67.
147 Ibid., 67.
148 Ibid., 67.
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(chronotope) in Acts reconfigures “the harvest” mission of the seventy in Luke 10:1-16 (Luke’s configuration of Q tradition) into a mission of “witnesses” from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. As Bloomquist has stated, the movement of mission to the Gentiles in Acts is not a sign that “the apocalyptic moment has passed,” but a sign that it has been reconfigured in terms of a new time and space. “The Father has set by his own authority” times and periods in which the Lord Messiah’s witnesses will go to the Gentiles at “the ends of the earth” (1:7-8). Exactly how long these times and periods will last it is not for them to know (1:7). The apocalyptic moment now is not the return of the Son of Man, the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, or the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. Rather, the apocalyptic moment is the mission of witness, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to the nations of the world (Gentiles). Only God the Father knows how long these times and periods will last, and when they will come to an end!

There are two additional observations that are especially pertinent for this chapter. First, Bloomquist has drawn his conclusions about apocalyptic discourse in both Luke and Acts on the basis of careful enthymematic analysis of argumentation that regularly takes the form of chreia elaboration. If there were time and space in this chapter, it would be appropriate to identify story-summaries and scenario events in the argumentation he has identified as apocalyptic. His analysis and interpretation richly exhibit “embodied reasoning” in the texts, which is a central focus of sociorhetorical interpretation. For this reason, his approach feeds naturally into the analysis and interpretation of this chapter on apocalyptic. Second, Bloomquist’s analysis deftly identifies the intertextual importance of the times of “Noah, Abraham, Lot and Lot’s wife, Jonah, the Ninevites, David, the Queen of the South (and, through her, Solomon), Elijah, and Elisha” for the apocalyptic focus on Jerusalem in the Gospel of Luke. It does not, however, fully exhibit the nature of the eras from the past that play an important role in the apocalyptic “witness” mission in Acts. For our purposes in this chapter, it is important to discuss certain important aspects in this “apocalyptic” shift.

In all of Acts, there is no reference to Noah, Lot, Lot’s wife, Jonah, the Ninevites, the Queen of the South, Elijah, or Elisha. In the apocalyptic units Bloomquist identifies in Acts, however, Abraham, Moses, and David are present. The time of Abraham is the least defined, but it helps to signal the nature of the previous eras of biblical time in the apocalyptic view of world history in Acts. There are seven references to Abraham in Acts (3:13, 25; 7:2, 16-17, 32; 13:26). Acts 3:13 identi-

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150 Bloomquist, enthymeme and chreia elaboration.
fies the time of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as an era that signaled the “glorification” of God’s servant Jesus in apocalyptic world history. When God told Abraham, “And in your descendants all the families of the earth [the Gentiles] shall be blessed” (Acts 3:25), the era of Abraham became a bright time for the Gentiles in God’s plans. The dark side is that certain people of Israel (3:12) “rejected the Holy and Righteous one” and “killed the Author of life” (3:14–15). These people are, of course, “descendants of Abraham’s family” (13:26). The bright side is that God raised the Author of life from the dead, creating a context for witnesses to show the power of God at work through faith (3:15–16). The key to the “inside apocalyptic story,” then, is to know the relation of the dark side to the bright side in the eras of world history, like knowing that Noah was rescued when all other people on earth were destroyed. One might think, on the basis of God’s promises to Abraham, that all the descendants of Abraham would be blessed. One of the inner dimensions of apocalyptic knowledge, however, is special insight into the exact way God’s plans have worked and are working in history through Abraham.

There are nineteen references to Moses in Acts, and five of them appear either in or near units Bloomquist has identified as containing apocalyptic discourse in Acts: 3:22; 6:11, 14; 7:20, 22, 29, 31, 32, 35, 37, 40, 44; 13:39; 15:1, 5, 21; 21:21; 26:22; 28:23. A similar dark and bright side are present in the time of Moses. The bright side is that Moses said, “The Lord your God will raise up for you from your own people a prophet like me. You must listen to whatever he tells you” (Acts 3:22). This is a blend of prophetic and apocalyptic discourse, since the person who knows the “inside apocalyptic story” knows that God raised up this prophet “from the dead”! The dark side of the era of Moses is, of course, that “the law of Moses” could not set people free from their sins (Acts 13:39). “Everyone who believes in the one whom God raised up,” however, “is set free from all those sins” (13:37–39). Thus, Paul asserts before King Agrippa: “... I stand here, testifying to both small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would take place: that the Messiah must suffer, and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles” (26:22–23). The time of Moses, then, was a very important era in apocalyptic world history. Moses knew, from the perspective of the story in Acts, that God would raise Messiah Jesus from the dead. But there is a dark heritage as well as a bright heritage from the time of Moses. The key for early Christian apocalyptic knowledge is to know how the bright side of that era works through the story of God’s Messiah Jesus.

There are ten references to David in Acts,\(^\text{153}\) and six of them occur in units Bloomquist has identified as containing apocalyptic discourse: 2:14-36; 13:26-43; 15:16. Bloomquist interprets only the dark side of the era of David: “Contrasting with the positive light cast on the others – Gentiles or prophets to the Gentiles – David, as king, prophesies only how unlike his fate is to that of the one who is his Son!”\(^\text{154}\) Again, however, this is only one side of the story. From the perspective of Acts, David was granted an apocalyptic vision of Messiah Jesus, causing him to say, “I saw the Lord [Messiah] always before me, for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken” (Acts 2:25). The dark side, indeed, is that David himself did not ascend into the heavens (2:34). The bright side, however, is that David heard “the Lord” say to the Lord Messiah, “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool” (2:34). In the context of the apocalyptic nature of David’s seeing and hearing, it is important to see, first, that Peter’s sermon presents a dynamic blend of prophetic and apocalyptic discourse and second, that the era of David has both a dark and bright side. Again, the nature of apocalyptic discourse is that it helps the hearer/reader know the “inside story” about the dark and bright side as one faces the challenges of the time in which one lives.

The nature of apocalyptic discourse in Acts, then, shifts the focus beyond the eras that were important in the Q material and the Gospel of Luke. Attentive readers may already have noticed that the three eras that play such an important role in the apocalyptic construal of the mission to the Gentiles in Acts are highly important eras in the apocalyptic view of the world in Paul’s undisputed letters, namely Abraham, Moses, and David. Only the era of Adam is missing from Acts. There is no mention of Adam in Acts,\(^\text{155}\) so there is no emphasis that Adam brought sin and death into the world. There are, however, some important statements about sin, like the assertion that everyone who believes in the one whom God raised up is set free from sin (13:37-39), that create an environment of blending apocalyptic emphases in Paul’s undisputed letters with apocalyptic emphases in Acts in early Christian discourse.

**Apocalyptic Times and Spaces in Jude and 2 Peter**

The letters of Jude and 2 Peter, written some time after the middle of the first century CE,\(^\text{156}\) are interesting for their relation to the special

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\(^{155}\) The Gospel of Luke has one reference to Adam, namely 3:38, which refers to Jesus as “Adam, son of God.”

\(^{156}\) Jerome H. Neyrey, 2 Peter, Jude (AB 37C; New York: Doubleday, 1993) refers to the date of Jude as “a mystery, with scholars suggesting a date as early as the late apostolic
sayings in common in Matthew and Luke. For this reason, we will discuss them next in this chapter. For interpretation of apocalyptic in 1 Peter, which emphasizes the suffering of Jesus Messiah without the same relation to the Q sayings, see the detailed investigation by Robert L. Webb. Like Jewish apocalyptic literature of the time, first century Christian apocalyptic literature often has relationships and differences from one another that are very difficult to explain. Apocalyptic attention to Noah, the flood, Sodom, Gomorrah, and Lot was widespread in apocalyptic literature during the first century CE, so it is natural that the Q Sayings, Jude, and 2 Peter which do not emphasize eras of apocalyptic time with a specific Pauline focus or a focus like one sees in Acts would work intertextually with eras of time readily available in Jewish apocalyptic environments.

**Apocalyptic Times and Spaces in Jude**

Like the Q sayings, Jude features Sodom and Gomorrah as an era of time with a special relation to the end time (Jude 7). Jude begins the dark eras with the time of Cain (Jude 11), refers specifically to the sinful angels who are “kept in eternal chains in deepest darkness until judgment (Jude 6), and continues with destruction of disbelieving Israelites during the time of the exodus, adding that the Lord “once for all” saved a people out of Egypt (Jude 5). Then Jude adds Korah’s rebellion (Jude 11), Balaam’s prophecy (Jude 11), and Satan’s contending with Michael for the body of Moses (Jude 9). There is reference to Adam and Enoch in the context of a prophecy that the Lord will come with ten thousand holy ones to judge all people (Jude 14-15). In the midst of this, there is no reference to Abraham, Lot, the law, David, Solomon, the Queen of the South, or Jonah. A major focus is on ungodly intruders in the believing community before the end (Jude 4, 8, 10, 16-19). Again, this letter contains no reference to the Son of age (50-60 CE) and as late as mid-second century” (30), and to the date of 2 Peter as after Jude, with the author using Jude as a source (120-22).


Ibid., 190-92.

Scholars regularly consider Jude 14-15 to be a reference to 1 Enoch, and some consider it to contain a recitation of 1 En. 1:9: Neyrey, 2 Peter, Jude, 79-82; Watson, ibid., 193-94.

Watson, ibid., 194-97.
Man. There is, however, significant apocalyptic overlap in particular with the Q material which, of course, is in both Matthew and Luke.

**Apocalyptic Times and Spaces in 2 Peter**

The letter of 2 Peter contains so many similarities to the letter of Jude that modern scholars regularly consider Jude to have been a literary source used by its author. 2 Peter emphasizes the plight of the sinful angels (2 Pet 2:4) and the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes (2:6), and it expands on the influence of the wrongdoing of Balaam (2:15–16). In addition, it refers to Noah and the flood (2 Pet 2:5) and adds the rescuing of Lot to a story-summary about Sodom and Gomorrah (2:7). 2 Peter does not contain, however, any reference to the way of Cain (Jude 11), God’s destruction of disbelieving Israelites (Jude 5), Korah’s rebellion (Jude 11), or Satan’s contending with Michael over the body of Moses (Jude 9). In fact, there is no reference to Moses in 2 Peter, just as there is no mention of Adam, Enoch, Abraham, Lot, David, Solomon, the Queen of the South, or Jonah. The following table exhibits the eras of world history in common among the Sayings Gospel Q, Jude, and 2 Peter:

**World History (This Age) in Q; Jude; 2 Peter**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sayings Gospel Q</th>
<th>Jude</th>
<th>2 Peter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Way of Cain: Jude 11 (dark: Gen 4:9)</td>
<td>Sinful angels kept in eternal chains in deepest darkness until judgment: Jude 6 (dark)</td>
<td>Sinful angels cast into hell until judgment: 2 Pet 2:4 (dark)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

162 Neyrey, ibid., 120-22; Watson, ibid., 187.
163 See Watson, ibid., 197-213.
In the context of a significant number of eras of world history in common among Q, Jude, and 2 Peter, the letters of Jude and 2 Peter describe the time in which they are written as the last “time” (Jude 17-19) or “days” (2 Pet 3.3), when ungodly scoffers who indulge their own lusts have come into their community. For both of them, the apostles lived in a special era when they were equipped with knowledge to predict that such people would come into believing communities at the end time (Jude 17-18; 2 Pet 3:2-4). As Jude addresses the situation, there is no reference to the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, nor is there reference to his place at the right hand of God. Rather, the letter focuses entirely on the time of judgment.

through a recitation of 1 En. 1:9 that presents four scenario events: (1) the Lord is coming with ten thousands of his holy ones; (2) to execute judgment on all; (3) to convict everyone of all the deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way; and (4) to convict everyone of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him (Jude 14-15). In the face of these scenario events in the future, the narrator exhorts the hearers/readers to maintain themselves in community through faith, prayer, love, and mercy as they look forward “to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life” (20-23).

Although 2 Peter presents many items similar to Jude, it signals at the beginning that the hearers/readers “have received a faith … through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ” (1:1). This leads to a focus on the time when the narrator himself, along with others, was a witness of the “majesty” (megaleiotētos) of Jesus on the holy mountain, when they heard the voice of “the majestic Glory” from heaven saying, “This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased” (1:17-18). Seeing this, the narrator says, assures “the power and coming (parousia) of our Lord Jesus Christ” in the future (1:16). In 2 Peter, then, the transfiguration of Jesus is recounted in an argumentative story-summary that confirms knowledge about “the power and coming” of the Lord Jesus Messiah.165

As 2 Peter continues, it moves in the final chapter to two story-summaries of the end time. The variations between them are similar to variations one sees in story-summaries that focus on the death and resurrection of Jesus. The first story-summary has four scenario events: (1) the day of the Lord will come like a thief; (2) the heavens will pass away with a loud noise; (3) the elements will be dissolved with fire; and (4) the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed (3:10). After this story-summary of the “day of the Lord,” there is a version with some slightly different emphases describing the “day of God” with three scenario events: (1) the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved; (2) the elements will melt with fire; and (3) in accordance with his promise, there will be new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home (3:12-13).166 Again there is no reference to the death and resurrection of Jesus. There is, however, an account of the transfiguration of Jesus, which is perceived to point to “the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1:16). The focus on the end time is supported by significant rehearsal of the time of the sinful angels, Noah, Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot (2:4-10), and by reference to Balaam (2:15). The focus on the end time leads to two story-summary

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165 Watson, ibid., 199-201.
166 Ibid., 203-10.
formulations, one using the terminology of the day of the Lord (3:10) and one of the day of God (3:12-13), each of which points toward a future time when the heavens will pass away, all the elements will be dissolved with fire, and there will be new heavens and a new earth. Here one can see angel-spirit apocalyptic moving into the arena of earth-material apocalyptic. There is a consciousness of the substances of which the earth are made, and the setting of the heavens ablaze to destroy them appears to presuppose that even the heavens have earthly substances in them that will need to be dissolved. 2 Peter, then, contains features that move beyond angel-spirit apocalyptic toward the kind of earth-material apocalyptic one finds in the Revelation to John.

Apocalyptic Times and Spaces in 2 Thessalonians: Rebellion, Lawless One, Lord Jesus Destroyer

2 Thessalonians, attributed to Paul in the NT canon, has an unusual relation to other writings in the NT. It “presupposes and even reproduces some of the contents of 1 Thessalonians,” but “in several places identical or similar wording is not matched by a correspondence of thought.” 167 The overlap in highly similar wording is not apocalyptic in nature. Rather, it features blessings on the community (2 Thess 2:16-17) and commands that they not be idle (3:6, 10-12) in the name of Paul. In 2 Thess 2:1, however, there is reference to “the coming of our Lord Jesus Messiah and our being gathered together with him,” which sounds like a story-summary of 1 Thess 4:15-17. But the apocalyptic focus of 2 Thessalonians is very different from 1 Thessalonians. The apocalyptic focus of 2 Thessalonians is on “the righteous judgment of God” (1:5). This will occur “when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus” (1:7-8). Here the emphasis is not on the Lord’s taking of believers up to be with him forever (1 Thess 4:17) but on fiery destruction of unbelievers. This emphasis continues with a description of the “coming of the rebellion,” the “revelation of the lawless one” (2 Thess 2:3), and the Lord Jesus’ annihilation of the lawless one with the breath of his mouth (2:8) in the context of God’s sending of “a powerful delusion” to them (2:11). The description refers to “the working of Satan, who uses all power, signs, lying wonders, and every kind of wicked deception” to lead the ungodly astray (2:10). Here, again, one sees aspects that move beyond angel-spirit apocalyptic toward earth-material apocalyptic. The emphasis on flam-

167 Furnish, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 128-29: “In addition to the prescripts and closing benedictions, the most striking of these are between 2 Thess 2:16-17 and 1 Thess 3:11-13; 2 Thess 3:8 and 1 Thess 2:9; and 2 Thess 3:10-12 and 1 Thess 3:4 + 4:1, 10b-12.”
ing fire that accompanies the Lord Jesus, and the emphasis on his in-
flicting of “vengeance,” sounds like actions of destruction that may be
concerned with political issues of power.

As 2 Thessalonians addresses the situation, it presents a detailed pic-
ture of the end time: (1) the rebellion comes first and the lawless one is
revealed, the one destined for destruction (2:3); (2) there is a time
when the lawless one is restrained, “so that he may be revealed when
his time comes” (2:6); (3) then the lawless one will be revealed, whom
the Lord Jesus will destroy with the breath of his mouth, annihilating
him by the manifestation of his coming (2:8). In this scenario, the
breath of the mouth of the Lord Jesus appears to be like the breath of
the Man from the Sea in 4 Ezra 13:10-11, namely “something like a
stream of fire” (13:10) so that “suddenly nothing was seen of the in-
numerable multitude but only the dust of ashes and the smell of
smoke” (13:11). There is no actual reference to fire that comes out of
the mouth of the Lord in 2 Thess 2:8, but the manner in which his
breath annihilates the lawless one again moves toward the imagery one
finds in earth-material apocalyptic.

There is not only a dark side to the coming of the Lord Jesus in 2
Thessalonians. In this letter, the righteous judgment of God repays
“with affliction those who afflict you” and gives “relief to the afflicted
as well as to us” (1:5-7). This occurs “when the Lord Jesus is revealed
(en tēi apokalypsēi) from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire
(1:7-8). In this context of “the coming (parousia) of our Lord Jesus
Christ,” believers will be “gathered together (episynagogēs) to him”
(2:1). The time of God’s righteous judgment, then, is a blend of the
dark and the bright that is internal to the apocalyptic story of the
world, namely a story where God destroys all evil and preserves all
goodness and holiness.

Earth-Material Apocalyptic in Revelation:
Military Son of Man, Lion of Judah, Slain Little Ram of God
The Revelation to John is, as many have observed during the last few
decades, the only true “apocalypse” in the NT. Its most striking as-
pect, however, is the dramatically different mode of apocalyptic it uses
to communicate its message. A major reason is its point of view toward
space. Rather than wrestling with the challenges of living on earth
from a perspective on earth, which is characteristic of every other book
in the NT, Revelation focuses on the earth from the perspective of
heaven. When Revelation views humanity from the perspective of

168 Rowland, The Open Heaven, 11; Collins, The Apocalyptic Imagination, 269; Carey,
heaven, ordinary people living in the daily contexts of agricultural villages, towns, and households throughout the world do not come into view. Instead, the focus is on stylized contexts in cities, where people horde wealth, where arrogance discourages people from worship and praise of God, and where gluttony and sexual indulgence produce poverty, suffering, and death. Along with these cities come political leaders who use precious metals and weapons of warfare to acquire crowns, thrones, and precious gem-stones. Longing for imperial rule, they create contexts of destruction and suffering accompanied by fire, death, grief, and despair. The focus of Revelation, then, is not on guidelines for people to build up one another into communities of love, peace, and hope, but on replacing forces of arrogance, hatred, and ungodliness in cities that have wealth and power with an ideal environment of abundance of food, water, light, health, purity, and joy (Rev 21:22-22:5).

The shift in apocalyptic focus in Revelation produces a presentation of God, God’s Son, and God’s emissaries through earthly images of wealth and power that are able to destroy the military might of godless earthly rulers and the luxuries of inhabitants who benefit from and abuse the benefits of the power and wealth. An interesting aspect of this stream of apocalyptic is the manner in which God’s own space acquires military power, wealth, and abundance. Instead of using images of households, fields, thieves, servants, and masters to describe the nature of the end time, the imagery shifts to God’s throne room in the heavens, where “earth-like” gem-stones and metals, thunder and lightning, and heavenly beings and creatures with bodies of “earth-like” substances threaten to destroy anyone or anything that does not praise and worship the majesty, glory, and power of its domain.

One resource for the shift to God’s throne room in Revelation is the book of Ezekiel in the Hebrew Bible. In Ezekiel 1, the heavens open and Ezekiel sees visions of God (1:1). One of the most remarkable aspects of these visions is the presence of “earthly” substances in the heavens. The visions contain “fire flashing forth continually” (1:4) in contexts where some things look like gleaming amber (1:4, 27), the gleaming of beryl (1:16), shining crystal (1:22), and sapphire (1:26). Instead of seeing light, which characterizes the nature of God at the end of Revelation (22:5), one sees fire and precious gem-stones, which have their natural place on earth. In addition, there are creatures with “human form” (1:5), composed of earthly metals and parts of earthly creatures. All have faces and wings (1:6). Their faces are like those of a human, a lion, an ox, and an eagle (1:10). Their legs are a blend of the sole of a calf’s foot and burnished bronze (1:7). In their midst is something that looks like burning coals of fire, torches moving to and fro,
and lightning, and when the creatures dart around they look like a flash of lightning (1:13–14). These descriptions use the earthly substances of metals, precious gem-stones, and burning coals, and they use parts of earthly creatures and fire and lightning in relation to human form to describe the nature of heavenly beings and spaces. As the description brings the hearer/reader toward the throne of God, there is a touch of military imagery when the thunder of the Almighty sounds like the tumult of an army (1:24). When God speaks to Ezekiel, the subject is Israel as “a nation of rebels who have rebelled against me” (2:3). After God’s commissioning of Ezekiel (1:28b–3:27), he instructs him to make “a sign for the house of Israel” (4:3). The sign, which he is to draw on a brick, is as follows:

On it portray a city, Jerusalem; and put siegeworks against it, and build a siege wall against it, and cast a ramp against it; set camps also against it, and plant battering rams against it all around. Then take an iron plate and place it as an iron wall between you and the city; set your face toward it, and let it be in a state of siege, and press the siege against it. (4:1–3)

One readily sees that the focus is on a city, in this instance the city of Jerusalem, and a military siege is the mode of confronting the city. In Ezekiel, then, the open heavens reveal heavenly beings and heavenly spaces described in relation to earthly materials of metal, gem-stone, and coal, human form, and parts of creatures like wings and feet. In this context, “people” on earth are “a rebellious nation,” and the means of dealing with them is military siege of the city that is perceived to be at the center of the rebellion.

Imagery from Ezekiel 1 was a substantive resource for the portrayal of God and the throne room in Revelation 4. The effect of this orientation, when it moves into apocalyptic discourse, is to bring imagery into the foreground that focuses on cities, military power, and wealth. We have chosen the phrase “earth-material apocalyptic” to describe this stream of apocalyptic tradition, which embeds an “earth-material” focus on cities, military power, and wealth into angel-spirit apocalyptic, which focuses on “spirit-blood-flesh” desire that disrupts communities through “fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing and things like these” (Gal 5:19–21). In earth-material apocalyptic, one finds virtually all of the emphases of angel-spirit apocalyptic. The emphases of angel-spirit apocalyptic, however, function as background for the depiction of “earth-like” manifestations of God and God’s assistants in the foreground. In other words, earth-

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material apocalyptic “overmaps” the emphases of angel-spirit apocalyptic with earth-like manifestations of God, God’s assistants, and God’s realm in the heavens. In earth-material apocalyptic, God uses “earth-like” materials and powers to destroy earthly cities and military powers that produce suffering and death through their indulgences, uncleannesses, and hording of wealth. Once these cities and military powers are destroyed, God replaces these cities and military powers with a new “heavenly” city that contains even greater “earth-like” wealth and abundance in a context of the absence of the indulgences and uncleannesses. The remarkable result is the intimate relation of the “inner nature” of God, God’s assistants, and God’s space in the heavens to the earth-materials that enable “earthly” nations to acquire imperial military power and might, and to amass hordes of wealth in the form of precious metals and gem-stones. In earth-material apocalyptic, in other words, those substances and forms of power that seemed to be “outside” of God in the realm of “rebellious humanity” in the created world are internalized in a “pure and holy” form “inside” of God, God’s assistants, and God’s realm in the heavens.

As has been noticed in recent scholarship, the Revelation to John is really a circular letter to seven churches in cities in Asia Minor. While many scholars consider its letter form to be “of very limited help in appreciating the content of the book,” it is important to recognize that its letter form establishes an internal connection between Revelation and twenty-one other writings in the NT! Indeed, seven of those twenty-one writings are addressed to cities in the Mediterranean world, and two of those cities (Ephesus; Colossae) are in Asia Minor. The seven letters at the beginning of Revelation establish an epistolary mode for apocalyptic communication with cities that continues until the apocalyptic destruction of “Babylon” (18:1-19:10) and the descent of “the holy city, the new Jerusalem” (21:1-22:7). In other words, Revelation is focused on cities as a context for belief. Its function as a letter to cities supports the urban orientation of its images, its focus, and its mode of communication.

In the context of the shift to earth-material apocalyptic, Revelation has no reference to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Lot, the Queen of the South, Solomon, or Jonah, and, ironically, no reference to Gomorrah. There are three references to David, identifying God’s Messiah as one who “has the key of David” (3:7), is “the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David” (5:5), and is “the root and descendant of David,

171 Collins, ibid.
the bright and morning star” (22:16). There is one reference to Moses in the title of a hymn sung by “those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name” (15:3–4). Also, there is one reference to Sodom, along with Egypt, as a prophetic name for Jerusalem, where the Lord was crucified and prophets were killed (11:8). In relation to our focus on the eras of world history that play an intertextual role in the apocalyptic discourse in a particular Christian writing, then, a question emerges concerning the major relationships of the apocalyptic discourse in the Revelation to John to eras in the past.

Beyond Ezekiel, one of the major resources for Revelation is Daniel in the Hebrew Bible, as we have indicated earlier in this chapter. With the use of Daniel, Babylon becomes the major city of focus, rather than Sodom or Gomorrah. Babylon is the city from which King Nebuchadnezzar came to besiege Jerusalem (Dan 1:1), and Babylon is the city of focus as the drama of Daniel unfolds. In Revelation, Babylon is the city that falls, because “She has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of fornication” (14:8). She is the city that God remembered “and gave her the wine-cup of the fury of his wrath” (16:19). “Babylon the great, mother of whores and of earth’s abominations” was written on the forehead of the great whore seated on many waters (17:1–5). And, of course, Babylon is the “dwelling place of demons” (18:2), whose judgment comes “in one hour” (18:10) as she is destroyed “like a great millstone and thrown into the sea” (18:21). The shift to earth-material apocalyptic in Revelation brings a shift beyond Sodom, Gomorrah, Nineveh, Tyre, Sidon, Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum to Babylon, the city that caused the exile of Israel and was the context for the apocalyptic drama in Daniel.

Another result of the relationship of Revelation to Daniel is reference to Jesus as “one like the Son of Man” (1:13; 14:14; cf. Dan 7:13), which is not present in any “other” letter in the NT. After the initial discourse of Revelation, which establishes the chain of communication from Jesus Messiah through his angel to John (1:1–2), who is to write it in a book and send it to the seven churches in Asia Minor (1:11), John sees “one like the Son of Man” in the midst of seven golden lampstands in heaven (1:12–13). In the context of all of the other descriptions of “the Son of Man” in the Gospels and Acts, as well as the descriptions of the coming “Lord (Jesus)” in the letters, the description of the Son of Man in Revelation 1 is truly amazing. The most constant feature of the Son of man and the coming Lord in the other NT writings is a reference to power, glory, clouds, and angels. In Revelation

172 See Isa 1:10; Jer 23:14; Ezek 16:46–56.
173 Dan 2:12, 14, 18, 24, 48, 49; 3:1, 12, 30; 4:6, 29, 30; 5:7; 7:1.
174 Cf. Mark 13:26–27, etc.
1, the visibility of the Son of man is “like” a blend of metals, white wool, snow, fire, stars, and sun, and his “audibility” is “like the sound of many waters” (Rev 1:12-16). Then in Revelation 14 he has “a golden crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand” (14:14). As this mode of apocalyptic presentation of Jesus as the Son of Man unfolds, Jesus acquires the image of a Lion who has conquered (5:5) and a Little Ram who has been slaughtered. When the kings of ten kingdoms make war on the Little Ram (17:14), the Little Ram takes the form of a rider on a white horse with eyes like “a flame of fire,” a head with many diadems on it, clothing of a robe dipped in blood, a mouth with a sharp sword extending out from it, and the name “King of kings and Lord of lords” inscribed on his robe and thigh (19:11-16; cf. 1:12-16). These transformations in visible form are characteristic of apocalyptic in the mode that uses earth-materials to describe heavenly beings and focuses on cities, military power, and wealth.

One of the special characteristics of “one like the Son of man” in Revelation is a blending of attributes of “the Ancient of Days” (God) and the angel Gabriel as they are described in Daniel. The head and hair of the heavenly Jesus Messiah is “white as white wool, white as snow” (Rev 1:14), like the Ancient of Days in Dan 7:9. These “creature” characteristics are a matter of making a being who shares attributes characteristic of God “visible” to humans. In addition, however, God’s heavenly Messiah Jesus has clothing of a long robe and a golden sash, eyes like a flame of fire, feet of burnished bronze, and a voice like the sound of many waters (Rev 1:13-15; cf. Dan 10:5-6). Beyond this, he has seven stars in his right hand, a sharp, two-edged sword from his
mouth (Isa 49:2), and a face like the sun shining in full force. This is a being whose heavenly attributes of glory, divinity, and cosmic power are visible by means of earthly materials and other phenomena commonly visible to humans on earth.

In the context of the “earthly” attributes of the “one like the Son of Man,” God has no human or creaturely “form” in Revelation. In the mode of earth-material apocalyptic, the nature of God is described in relation to earthly materials and things visible on earth, but these descriptions give no “form” to God, in contrast to the form of the one like the Son of Man and the form of other heavenly beings. The one seated on the throne in Revelation “looks like jasper and carnelian” and “around the throne is a rainbow that looks like an emerald” (4:3). Coming from the throne are “flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder” (4:5). In front of the throne burn “seven flaming torches, which are the seven spirits of God,” and there is also “something like a sea of glass, like crystal” (4:5-6). The description of God is related to earthly substances and to phenomena a person sees on earth, since the mode of presentation is earth-material apocalyptic. It is noticeable, for example, that the seven spirits of God are not “like doves flying around the throne of God” (cf. Mark 1:10). Rather, the spirits of God are described in relation to earthly materials that produce light, namely flaming torches like those that light the streets of cities in the evening. In the midst of all of these descriptions, God has no human or other creaturely form. Instead, all of the “human” and “creaturely” aspects associated with divinity are present in the “one like the Son of Man,” who is the primary agent who mediates God’s divine powers to the created world. All of the human attributes of God, the “Ancient of Days” (Dan 7), disappear from the portrayal of God in Revelation. These attributes, instead, are present in “the one like the Son of Man,” blended together with attributes of the angel Gabriel and other phenomena that give him glory, majesty, and power. God, in contrast, has no “visible” human attributes. Revelation cannot avoid certain images of action and power as it describes the effect of God on the world. For example, God “sits” (4:3; 5:1), has “a right hand” (5:1, 7), and even a face (22:4). But there is no description of them in relation to human form or material substance. God’s only visible characteristics are “like” precious stones (jasper and carnelian) that produce a rainbow that looks like an emerald (4:3), since the true nature of God is “glory,” which produces light (21:23; 22:5).

In the context of earth-material apocalyptic that brings the throne room of God, the “one like the Son of Man,” the one who is “the Lion of the tribe of Judah,” and “the slaughtered Little Ram” into

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177 See Aune, ibid., 90-99.
The actions of God toward the earth gradually lead to a focus on the city of Babylon. The actions of God unfold through the opening of seven seals by “the Little Ram” (6:1-8:1) and the blowing of seven trumpets by seven angels who stand before God (8:2-11:19). Instead of using imagery from Noah and the flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, or Jonah and the Ninevites, Revelation uses imagery from the ten plagues against Egypt as its major resource. The time of Moses, then, rather than the time of Noah, Abraham, Solomon, or Jonah, provides the typology for the events of the end time in Revelation. But it is not the imagery of the Red Sea, God’s giving of the law, or rebellion in the wilderness that stands in the foreground. Rather, it is the horrendous time of the ten plagues that God launched against the Egyptians who held the Israelites in slavery that come into the foreground in the account of the end of the world in Revelation. A simplified table displaying the relation looks as follows:

### Ten Plagues, Trumpets, and Bowls of Wrath

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ten Plagues: Exodus 7-12</th>
<th>Seven Trumpets: Rev 8-9, 11</th>
<th>Seven Bowls of Wrath: Rev 15-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Blood in river (7:17-21)</td>
<td>(1) Hail, fire, blood (cf. I, VII)</td>
<td>(1) Boils (cf. VI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Frogs (8:1-7)</td>
<td>(2) Fire, blood (cf. I, VII)</td>
<td>(2) Blood in sea (cf. I)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Gnats (8:16-19)</td>
<td>(3) Darkness, wormwood (cf. IX)</td>
<td>(3) Blood in rivers and springs (cf. I)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Flies (8:20-24)</td>
<td>(4) Darkness (cf. IX)</td>
<td>(4) Sun heat (cf. VII)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Boils (9:8-12)</td>
<td>(6) Fire, smoke, killing humans (cf. VII, X)</td>
<td>(6) Frogs (cf. II)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. Thunder, hail, fire (9:22-26)</td>
<td>(7) Lightning, thunder, earthquake, hail (cf. VII)</td>
<td>(7) Lightning, thunder, earthquake, hail (cf. VII)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. Locusts (10:12-20)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX. Darkness (10:21-29)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X. Death of firstborn humans and livestock (12:29-32)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the perspective we have been taking in this chapter on apocalyptic in early Christian discourse, it is informative that no other writ-


\[179\] Cf. the more detailed lists in ibid., 500-501.
ing in the NT uses the ten plagues against Egypt for apocalyptic typology. There is reference to “wonders and signs in Egypt” in Stephen’s speech at Acts 7:36, which clearly refers to the plagues. But nothing in particular is made of them. Rather, they are part of a “miracle” tradition that highlights wonders and signs “in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness for forty years” (7:36). Along with the shift to earth-material apocalyptic in Revelation comes a shift to God’s punishment of Egypt as the typology for the events of destruction (Rev 6-16) that lead to the dramatic destruction of Babylon (Rev 18-19), the city that furnished the military power to destroy Jerusalem and the nation of Israel in that fateful era of the past. For Revelation, the days that lead up to the end time are like the days when the people of Egypt and its Pharaoh ate and drank, married and gave in marriage, until the time when God sent Moses to destroy their power and free the people of Israel from their slavery. At the end of time, God’s releasing of plagues on the world, in the midst of which occurs the battle in heaven between Michael and the dragon (Rev 12), establishes the context for the destruction of the wicked city of Babylon (Rev 18-19).

After the destruction of Babylon, God’s Messiah, the Little Ram of God, takes the form of a rider named “Faithful and True” and “The Word of God,” on a white horse, although his name is known only to himself (19:11-13). In addition to eyes “like a flame of fire” and many diadems on his head, he is “clothed in a robe dipped in blood” (19:12-13). With the armies of heaven following him, a sharp sword from his mouth “strikes down the nations,” and he rules them with a rod of iron and “treads the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty” (19:14-15). On his robe and thigh are inscribed, “King of kings and Lord of lords” (19:16). His violent actions of judgment create “the great supper of God,” where birds come and eat the flesh of kings, captains, the mighty, horses, and their riders (19:17-19). One of the remarkable things about earth-material apocalyptic, then, is the depiction of God’s Messiah with military weaponry and dress, engaged in killing with a sword, like earthly armies kill and destroy. In this stream of apocalyptic, heaven itself possesses the earthly materials of warfare to counter the military power of earthly rulers.

After the great supper of God, the dragon, who is “the Devil and Satan,” is bound for a thousand years while the Messiah reigns (20:1-4). After the thousand years, the Devil is thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur to be tormented day and night forever (20:7), and Death and Hades are destroyed in the lake of fire (Rev 20). In this context, the

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181 Aune, ibid., 961-1040.
182 Ibid., 1069-1108.
first heaven and earth pass away, a new heaven and new earth appear, and the holy city, the new Jerusalem, comes down from heaven “like a bride adorned” (21:1-2). From the perspective of our approach in this chapter, another remarkable feature is the “earthly imagery” of wealth and abundance in the new space that arrives, namely the new Jerusalem from heaven. The city itself is pure gold (21:18), with walls and gates decorated with precious jewels (21:12-21). These walls do not primarily signify the ability of the city to protect its citizens from harm, since its gates will always be open during the day (21:25), but primarily to display its glory and radiance “like a very rare jewel, like jasper, clear as crystal” (21:11). Within this wealthy space is abundant water from “the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Little Ram through the middle of the street of the city” (22:1-2). Also, there is an eternal supply of food from “the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month” not only for food but also for “the healing of the nations” (22:2). In addition, the city is blessed with eternal light, “for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever” (22:5). In contrast to angel-spirit apocalyptic, which leaves the space where believers will “be with the Lord” undefined and undescribed, earth-material apocalyptic describes the new space and time in relation to abundant wealth, never-ending food and drink, and eternal light which even allows the people in the city to see the face of the Lord God (22:44)! In this apocalyptic vision, believers will be blessed in every way it is possible to describe an extraordinary environment of earthly blessing.

Conclusion
One of the most important aspects of apocalyptic in the New Testament is its emerging nature in the context of the ongoing production of Jewish apocalyptic literature during the first and second centuries CE. In contrast to wisdom and prophetic literature, which were conventional modes of biblical literature, apocalyptic was emerging in ways that were not accepted as “canonical” in many Jewish circles of leadership.

A major rhetorical effect of apocalyptic discourse is the periodization of world history. Apocalyptic literature regularly presents the events within these eras as story-summaries containing “scenario” events rather than “historical” events. Since scenario events regularly share structures of activities with one another, they can be told cyclically in different versions, or they may be presented in a manner that leaves


184 Aune, Revelation 6-16, 1108-94.
their exact sequence unclear. When apocalyptic discourse creates story-summaries, it is regularly presenting the “inside story” about the relation of periods of world history to one another. For this reason, these story-summaries become argumentative, giving them syllogistic and enthymematic form and force.

Analysis of apocalyptic discourse in major portions of the New Testament reveals a focus in Paul’s undisputed letters on the eras of Adam, Abraham, and Moses, with the era of David coming into view in Romans. There is no reference to or particular interest in the time of Noah, or to Sodom and Gomorrah. The effect of Paul’s argumentation about Jesus Messiah as the last Adam, it has been argued, was to reverse the devastating result of the cosmological myth of the sinful angels, which Jewish apocalyptic literature during Paul’s time was blaming on Adam. Paul argued that God reversed the devastating result by transforming his flesh-Messiah Jesus into an eternal-spirit Messiah who dwells in the heavens. Believers who become “in Messiah” enter into a “new procreative” environment grounded in God’s righteousness that allows the Spirit to enliven their bodies toward “fruit of the Spirit” while they live on earth and to transform them into spirit beings at the end of time.

The Sayings Gospel Q, which was emerging during and after the time of Paul, shows no special interest in the time of Adam or David. Its primary focus is on the eras of Noah and the flood, Sodom and Lot, the Queen of the South during the time of King Solomon, and Jonah and the Ninevites. In addition, it features Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob eating at table in the future kingdom of God, while traditional “sons of Abraham” are excluded from it. Introducing the time of “the Son of Man,” a title which never appears in the writings of Paul or any other letter in the NT, the Q sayings feature Jesus defining the time of the mission of his disciples as “the harvest.” This definition makes not only the time of Jesus a special apocalyptic era, but it also makes the “mission time” of followers of Jesus a special apocalyptic era.

The Gospel of Mark, in the absence of the Q material, has no reference to Noah, Sodom and Lot, the Queen of the South, or Jonah and the Ninevites. It also has no reference to Adam. Instead of featuring Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob eating at table in the future kingdom of God, it features Jesus using God’s identification of himself as “the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” as proof that God raises the dead. Instead of focusing on past eras, Mark develops a detailed set of scenario events that lead up to the coming of the Son of Man to rescue his elect from the four corners of the earth (Mark 13). In addition, Mark establishes the baptism of Jesus as an apocalyptic moment in which Jesus is sent into his adult ministry equipped with “the Spirit” that comes into
him from the open heavens, and he features a moment of transformation of Jesus into a heavenly-like being on a mountain in the middle of his ministry (9:2-8). This momentary transformation creates the context for Jesus to relate his rejection, suffering, death, and resurrection to his return as the Son of Man in the future. The rhetorical effect of these events and discussions is to make the time of Jesus’ adult life a special apocalyptic time, framed by Jesus’ baptism, transfiguration, and resurrection after his death and burial, in addition to the time of his coming in the future.

The Gospels of Matthew and Luke, containing the Q material, emphasize the eras of Noah, Abraham, Sodom, Gomorrah, Lot, the Queen of the South, and Jonah and the Ninevites. They also feature the time of David as a time of promise for the coming Messiah, especially using this imagery in a context where the spirit enters into Jesus at the time when he is conceived in the womb of Mary. Also as a result of the presence of the Q material, Matthew and Luke feature John the Baptist as a fiery apocalyptic preacher who sets the stage for an apocalyptic understanding of Jesus’ activity. Matthew features the Son of Man returning not only to rescue his elect, but also to judge the unrighteous by sending them to outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. In turn, Luke focuses apocalyptic discourse on Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem and death in the city. Then the Acts of the Apostles, focusing on Abraham’s promise to the nations, Moses’ prediction of a prophet like him who would come after him, and David’s apocalyptic vision of the Lord’s Messiah sitting at the right hand of God, features mission to the Gentiles as a special apocalyptic time. This focus gives Acts an important relation to Paul’s letters, even though there is no focus on the time of Adam in the narrative.

One especially interesting result of the focus on special eras of time within world history in NT writings is the relation of Jude and 2 Peter to the Q Sayings. All of them share a focus on Sodom, and Q and 2 Peter also share a focus on Noah. This also gives Jude and 2 Peter a special relation to Matthew and Luke. Jude and 2 Peter, like the Q sayings, do not place the death and resurrection of Jesus in the center of their apocalyptic focus. Instead of emphasizing Jesus’ death and resurrection, Jude and 2 Peter emphasize the ungodly influence of intruders into their community, and this signals turmoil prior to the coming of the Lord Jesus to punish those who are unrighteous. 2 Peter is also interesting for its focus on the destruction of all “elements” both in heaven and on earth at the end of time. This represents a transition beyond the stream of angel-spirit apocalyptic in other NT writings toward the earth–material mode of apocalyptic one finds in Revelation. Along with Jude and 2 Peter, 2 Thessalonians presents a mode of
apocalyptic that is transitional from the angel-spirit mode in the Gospels, Acts, and undisputed letters of Paul to the violent destruction characteristic of the earth-material apocalyptic in Revelation. In 2 Thessalonians, the Lord Jesus annihilates the lawless one with the breath of his mouth when he comes. This mode of visualizing the coming of the Lord Jesus, along with Jude and 2 Peter, exhibits a transition to the more violent depiction of the function of the Lord Jesus in the future that one finds in Revelation.

Distinguishing between an angel-spirit stream of apocalyptic that does and does not embed an earth-material stream of apocalyptic in it, the chapter ends with an analysis of Revelation as a dramatic instance of earth-material apocalyptic embedded in angel-spirit apocalyptic in first century Christian discourse. Instead of focusing on the eras of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Solomon, or Jonah, it uses extensive imagery from the ten plagues in Egypt during the time of Moses, along with imagery of the Lion of Judah, the Root of David, to present God’s powerful destruction of cities that symbolize godless military power and wealth on earth. In addition, it uses the imagery of the Ram of God, which is present in 1 Enoch and other apocalyptic Jewish literature, reconfiguring this image in terms of “the Little Ram who was slaughtered” as it presents its view of God’s destruction of the world from the perspective of heaven. One of the most dramatic images in Revelation, however, is its depiction of the Son of Man with dimensions of earthly substances that includes a two-edged sword coming out of his mouth. In the context of its use of Daniel 7 and 10 for the image of the Lord Jesus Messiah as “one like the Son of Man,” the focus on the past era of the ten plagues in Egypt blends with destruction that finally brings an end to the city of Babylon, the place of Daniel’s residence. Revelation envisions God bringing total destruction to the city of Babylon in the context of the destruction of the seven bowls of wrath, the seven trumpets, Michael’s victory over the Dragon in the heavens, and the great supper of God, which is brought about by the sword of “the King of kings and Lord of lords” riding on his white horse. All of these events create the context for the total destruction of Satan, Death, and Hades, and the emergence of a new heaven and earth, and a new holy city, the city of Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven. A remarkable feature of this new heavenly city is abundant “earthly” wealth and resources. This emphasis is a natural part of the earth-material stream of apocalyptic, but it is absent from the angel-spirit stream of apocalyptic in all other writings in the NT. The closest image to it, undeveloped in any detail, is the image of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in Q, Matthew, and Luke, eating at table in the Kingdom.
Overall, then, one can see that early Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect created a view of “world history” among first century believers in Jesus as the Messiah that focused on special eras of past time in relation to the end of time. Through multiple ways of relating the eras of Adam, Noah, Abraham and Lot, Moses, David, Solomon, Jonah, and Daniel in Babylon, first century Christians created highly complex, deeply intertextual apocalyptic story-summaries, scenario-events, and enthymematic arguments. These multiple ways of viewing world history supported a set of beliefs that extended from God’s plans for the entire universe before creation to God’s plans for the time after the end of this world and the heavens above it. In significant ways, then, early Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect, with its new configurations of God’s time and space, made substantive contributions to early Christian reasoning about God, God’s Messiah, and life in the world in relation to them, to other people, and to the world God created. If it had not been for the apocalyptic reasoning and argumentation of first century Christians, Christianity probably would not exist today. And indeed, if it did exist without apocalyptic reasoning and argumentation, it is very difficult to imagine what it could be like.