Distribution Agreement

In presenting this thesis or dissertation as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree from Emory University, I hereby grant to Emory University and its agents the non-exclusive license to archive, make accessible, and display my thesis or dissertation in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter known, including display on the world wide web. I understand that I may select some access restrictions as part of the online submission of this thesis or dissertation. I retain all ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis or dissertation. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis or dissertation.

Signature:

Jackie Wyse-Rhodes November 16, 2018

Reading the Cosmos in Second Temple Jewish Literature:
Nature as Model, Sign, Punishment, Witness, and Mystery

By

Jackie Wyse-Rhodes
Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Division of Religion
Hebrew Bible

_____
Dr. Carol A. Newsom
Advisor

_____
Dr. William K. Gilders
Committee Member

_____
Dr. Joel M. LeMon
Committee Member

Accepted:

_____
Lisa A. Tedesco, Ph.D.
Dean of the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies

_____
Date

Reading the Cosmos in Second Temple Jewish Literature: Nature as Model, Sign, Punishment, Witness, and Mystery

By

Jackie Wyse-Rhodes
M.Res., Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2007
M.Div., Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, 2002
B.A., Hiram College, 1997

Advisor: Carol A. Newsom, Ph.D.

An abstract of
A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in Religion
2018

Abstract

Reading the Cosmos in Second Temple Jewish Literature:
Nature as Model, Sign, Punishment, Witness, and Mystery
By Jackie Wyse-Rhodes

Within both biblical and post-biblical Jewish materials, the natural world plays a variety of roles: it appears, for example, within the context of theophanies and oracles, eschatological scenes of judgment, heavenly tours, and treatises concerning astronomy, uranography and cosmology. Perhaps because of this variety, scholars of the period have not generally explored "nature" as an independent category. As a result, the very pervasiveness of nature's presence throughout Second Temple literature is sometimes missed. This dissertation seeks to redress this imbalance, by examining exemplary texts in which nature occupies five particular categories of significance: nature as a model for humankind, nature as a sign of things to come (usually impending judgment), nature as an instrument of judgment, nature as a giver of testimony (or witness), and nature as a heavenly mystery and cosmic secret. In the end, these depictions of the natural world in Second Temple Jewish literature are dependent upon the assumption that nature is, above all, an orderly ecosystem, created and sustained by God. The chief point of departure for this project is to observe and describe the ways the literature itself presents the natural world to its readers, and to ask: How did Second Temple scribes make rhetorical appeals to the natural world in their religious writings, and why was it important for them to do so? In the end, in spite of the diversity apparent in this literature, in general the scribes assume the following: the natural world is orderly, and therefore praiseworthy; the natural world is predictable, and therefore any aberrations in its behavior require interpretation; the natural world is a mystery, and yet, within given boundaries, its secrets might be approached, though they may not always be fathomed.

Reading the Cosmos in Second Temple Jewish Literature: Nature as Model, Sign, Punishment, Witness, and Mystery

By

Jackie Wyse-Rhodes
M.Res., Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2007
M.Div., Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, 2002
B.A., Hiram College, 1997

Advisor: Carol A. Newsom, Ph.D.

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in Religion
2018

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to extend my gratitude to my advisor, Carol Newsom. From her I learned how to be a scholar, and her mark on this dissertation is indelible.

Thank you also to the many other teachers who shaped my thinking about this material and the field of biblical studies more broadly: especially Bill Gilders, Joel LeMon, and Brent Strawn at Emory University; Eep Talstra at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam; and Perry Yoder, Ben Ollenburger, and Mary Schertz at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

Thank you to my colleagues at Bluffton University, who were a wonderfully supportive community as I completed this project.

I am indebted to Barry, Nancy, and Jessica for their unflagging encouragement. Thank you to my family, especially my parents, for cheering me on. I am grateful to other friends and colleagues —too numerous to name—for the wisdom they offered along the way.

Finally, thank you, Brandon, for offering both intellectual companionship and emotional fortitude during this journey. It is to you that this dissertation is dedicated.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Ask the earth, and she will tell you.—4 Ezra 7:52; 8:2; 10:9

In one of the fragments of the Sibylline Oracles, God is depicted as one who sends showers, winds, earthquakes, lightnings, famines, pestilence, woes, snowstorms, and ice (1:32–34a).[1] Immediately following this characterization, God asks: "Why do I name them individually?" (1:34b). This question, which remains unanswered in the fragment, could be posed of much Jewish Second Temple literature, especially (though not exclusively) apocalypses. From the earliest apocalypses of 1 Enoch to literature composed in light of the events of 70 CE or later, lists and extensive descriptive passages are prevalent, and one of their usual subjects is the natural world. This dissertation will ask God's question, above, of Second Temple literature more broadly: Why might early Jewish writers exhibit such an enduring—almost obsessive—interest in the natural world? And, given their interest, why did they frequently express it by cataloguing nature's wonders in list form?

An answer may be broached, in part, by considering another question extant in the literature, again posed by the deity: "Baruch, why are you disturbed about that which you do not know?" (2 Baruch 23:2b).[2] At the conclusion of the divine speech, Baruch continues his

---

[1] Translation by John J Collins, "Sibylline Oracles," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha Vol. 1: Apocalyptic Literature & Testaments*, ed. James H Charlesworth (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1983), 470. Eight fragments from the Sibylline Oracles are extant, gleaned from quotations in other ancient documents. Fragment 1 is from Theophilis, *Ad Autolycum* 2.36. Collins writes that fragments 1–3 were probably originally a part of the "the lost book 2" (Collins, "Sibylline Oracles," 469). Books 1 and 2 of the Sibylline Oracles "are not separated in the manuscripts and, in fact, constitute a unit. The work consists of an original Jewish oracle and an extensive Christian redaction…. However, a considerable portion of the Jewish oracle has been lost, as there is no reference to the eighth or ninth generations." (Collins, "Sibylline Oracles," 330).

[2] Unless otherwise indicated, translations of 2 Baruch, here and following, are from Michael E. Stone and Matthias Henze, *4 Ezra and 2 Baruch: Translations, Introductions, and Notes* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2013).

incessant questioning, undeterred by God's rebuke. Other Second Temple writers exhibit a similarly enduring interest in the mysteries of the natural world. Like Baruch, the scribes themselves seem disturbed about that which they do not know. Perhaps a sense of anxiety undergirds the way they commission figures like Enoch and Abraham to go and observe earth and heaven, and to convey their observations to humanity. Usually, such figures do not remain earth-bound during their visions, but, rather, are bodily transported to the heavenly realm, where the seers' observations gain an immediacy grounded in their five senses. These apocalyptic intermediaries serve to authenticate as genuine observation what otherwise might be considered "mere" speculation. They have been chosen to observe that which normally remains hidden from humanity: be it storehouses for hailstones or the mechanics behind sunrise and sunset. By and large, these are earthly realities, many of which relate to the natural world; yet, the intricacies of these realities are unavailable to humanity without the revelation mediated by apocalyptic figures. These seers are sent to heaven in order to explain the mysteries of earth.[3] In other words, as Jonathan Moo has written about 4 Ezra, "heavenly realities are not for our author any less 'material' than anything else."[4]

In the pages that follow, I first briefly summarize one portion of "the state of the field" of apocalyptic literature, focusing especially on "the cosmic turn" in Second Temple research since the 1970's. Then I engage three recent monographs which ask questions about the natural world and apocalyptic literature which, in some ways, parallel my own. Third, I reflect on the ways in

---

[3] In this way, the apocalyptic imagination posits a cosmology in which earth and heaven are not opposites, but instead are intermingled to a striking degree. The storage places of meteorological phenomena (rain, snow, hailstones, frost, dew) are located in the heavens—which makes sense, considering that most fall from the sky. Furthermore, in 2 Enoch, among others, the various levels of heaven are populated with idealized elements of nature as it is known on earth: trees, rivers, plains. In 1 and 2 Enoch, only the heavenly prisons are devoid of anything resembling the natural world as it exists on earth.

[4] Jonathan A. Moo, *Creation, Nature and Hope in 4 Ezra* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 140. Moo is paraphrasing an insight by Michael E. Stone in *Features of the Eschatology of IV Ezra* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 200–04.

which my project fits into the current conversation and explain its role in advancing research into portrayals of the natural world in Jewish literature of Second Temple period. Finally, I provide a brief summary of the contents of the ensuing chapters.

A Brief History of Research: The Cosmic Turn in Apocalyptic Studies

An oft-cited[5] turning point in the history of scholarship on apocalyptic literature occurred in 1970, when Klaus Koch argued in *Ratlos vor der Apocalyptik*[6] that the study of apocalypticism was in the midst of a definitional crisis. Koch urged scholars to return to specific literary sources and to take seriously their nature as texts situated in history. Appearing soon thereafter (but written without reference to Koch), Paul Hanson's *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*[7] put forth the argument that apocalyptic literature grew out of late prophecy, with eschatology as its defining feature. In 1976, Hanson published two additional articles[8] in which he distinguished between "apocalypticism" as a worldview, apocalyptic eschatology, and apocalypse as a literary genre. In so doing, Hanson addressed some of Koch's definitional concerns: namely, that one should distinguish between studying apocalypticism as a social movement, studying eschatology as a key component of apocalyptic rhetoric, and studying apocalypses as literature.

Michael Stone was one of the first to push back against Hanson's (and others') emphasis on eschatology as a key to understanding "apocalyptic phenomena."[9] In 1976, Stone published a

---

[5] For example: John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 1, and George Nickelsburg, "The Study of Apocalypticism from H.H. Rowley to the Society of Biblical Literature" (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the SBL, San Antonio, TX, 21 Nov 2004), https://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/Nickelsburg_Study.pdf.
[6] Klaus Koch, *Ratlos vor der Apokalyptik* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1970).
[7] Paul D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979).
[8] Paul D. Hanson, "Apocalypse, Genre," "Apocalypticism," *IBDSup* (1976): 27–34.
[9] Adela Yarbro Collins, "Apocalypse Now: The State of Apocalyptic Studies Near the End of the First Decade of the Twenty-First Century," *Harvard Theological Review* 104, no. 4 (2011), 448.

now-famous essay in which he examined "lists of revealed things" in apocalyptic literature.[10] For Stone, these lists function as "catalogues of the subject matter of apocalyptic speculation"[11] which display both a common content (including elements of the natural world) and a common function:

> They all occur at the high point of a revelation, where a brief statement of its contents is desired, or else as a summary of what is revealed to the seer. It seems likely, therefore, that by examining in detail the information which the lists claim to have been revealed to the seers, a view can be reached of what the writers of the apocalypses thought to lie at the heart of apocalyptic revelation itself.[12]

It is noteworthy that the contents of these lists rarely include eschatological details, and focus instead on the created order, especially its astronomical and uranographical elements. Stone notes also various works within Second Temple Judaism that feature quite similar lists (including 1 Enoch, 2 Enoch, 2 Baruch, 4 Ezra, and Pseudo-Philo), suggesting that these lists may function as a stock catalogue lifted from other traditions. Of special interest is his examination of the relationship of apocalyptic speculative lists with "certain types of interrogative lists"[13] apparently derived from Wisdom passages like Job 38 and Ben Sira 1:1–10. In the end, Stone argues that the apocalyptic writers derived some of the material in these lists from pre-existing Wisdom categories, though he emphasizes that the writers imbued these borrowed categories with a peculiar speculative content which is absent from Wisdom literature. Stone casts this as "part of a general movement in the apocalyptic writings toward reinterpretation and reuse of Wisdom language."[14] Such a movement opens up new avenues for human knowledge: whereas some streams of Wisdom literature invoke the mysteries of heaven and earth only to name them as

---

[10] Michael E. Stone, "Lists of Revealed Things in the Apocalyptic Literature," in *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright* (New York: Knopf, 1976).
[11] Stone, "Lists of Revealed Things," 414.
[12] Stone, "Lists of Revealed Things," 418.
[13] Stone, "Lists of Revealed Things," 435.
[14] Stone, "Lists of Revealed Things," 426.

outside of humankind's perceptive capabilities, in apocalyptic literature, human inquiry regarding such mysteries is generally taken for granted. Even 2 Baruch, which displays a Joban pessimism about the human capacity for understanding, presents in Baruch a stubborn character who keeps posing speculative questions even when divine figures deny him satisfactory answers.

In the years since, others have followed Stone in emphasizing the complex origins of apocalyptic literature, against those who posit direct derivation from prophecy. For example, in 1982 Christopher Rowland located the hallmark of apocalyptic literature in its claims to revelation, many of which have little to do with eschatology: "…[i]n the apocalypses written towards the end of the first century AD the interest in eschatology is matched by another issue, the nature of man and the reason for the desperate straits in which the people of God found themselves."[15] Also, in 1995, Randal Argall sought to distance 1 Enoch from the genre of apocalypse, arguing instead that both 1 Enoch and Ben Sira are self-conscious works of Wisdom literature.[16] Argall then compared their treatment of the themes of revelation, creation, and judgment. In 1 Enoch, Argall focuses first on "observable aspects of creation," of which he notes two exemplars: 1 Enoch 2:1–5:4, which "contrasts disobedient sinners and the obedient works of creation,"[17] and 1 Enoch 101, which invokes "observable phenomena of creation … in a context of judgment."[18] Second, he examines the "hidden aspects of creation,"[19] which are more numerous, involving the phenomena Enoch encounters throughout his heavenly journeys. Regarding the created order, Argall's comparison of 1 Enoch to Ben Sira yields both similarities and differences: for example, in Ben Sira, personified Wisdom is a figure who, like Enoch, "has

---

[15] Christopher Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 135.
[16] Randal A. Argall, *1 Enoch and Sirach: A Comparative and Conceptual Analysis of the Themes of Revelation, Creation and Judgment.* EJL 8. (Atlanta: SBL Press, 1995).
[17] Argall, *1 Enoch and Sirach*, 105.
[18] Argall, *1 Enoch and Sirach*, 107.
[19] Argall, *1 Enoch and Sirach*, 112.

acquired her knowledge of the cosmos by means of walking throughout its expanse,"[20] though, unlike Enoch, she does not reveal her findings to humanity. Though Ben Sira and 1 Enoch differ in the calendars to which they subscribe, Argall concludes that "the conceptual framework for treating creation" is quite similar—namely, that God's works teach obedience, and that creation itself functions as a guarantor of judgment for those who disobey.[21]

Perhaps the most persuasive proposal for the origins of apocalyptic literatures can be found in John J. Collins's argument for a diverse "matrix" of influences upon the genre, which include post-exilic prophecy, mantic Babylonian wisdom traditions, and Persian materials, all of which coalesced in the period's Hellenistic milieu.[22] The "matrix" metaphor works well for the work I have done in this dissertation as well, though the body of literature I engage is broader than Jewish apocalypses, and the influences upon them are therefore even more varied. In this dissertation, I am indebted to Stone, Rowling, and Argall, among others, whose work has shone a spotlight on the cosmological interests of texts often regarded as apocalyptic in nature. Taking their work as a starting point, I seek to examine the natural world—a key topic of cosmic speculation—and its portrayal in Jewish literature of the Second Temple period. As will become apparent, apocalypses are one key to my investigation, but other genres of Second Temple literature play just as important a role. Across genres, Jewish literature of this period shows an interest in the natural world as a significant and (sometimes) licit subject of human inquiry which can reveal divine intentions.

---

[20] Argall, *1 Enoch and Sirach*, 164.
[21] Argall, *1 Enoch and Sirach,* 164.
[22] Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination,* 26–28.

Recent Monographs on Nature and Apocalypses

Several recent monographs on portrayals of "nature" in Second Temple literature are of particular interest to my project. I will address them below in order of their publication.

Published in 2006, Harry Hahne's monograph sets forth an argument that the Pauline perspective on the destruction and redemption of the cosmos, as revealed in Romans 8:19–22, is rooted in one of several particular Jewish apocalyptic perspectives—namely, one that locates the "corruption of creation" in human sinfulness and envisions its restoration as a redemption of the old creation (rather than an establishment of a new creation).[23] Hahne contextualizes the passage in Romans by examining depictions of one particular manifestation of nature within one particular genre: namely, cosmic catastrophe within apocalyptic literature. This dual focus is shared by Edward Adams, who in 2007 published a book exploring cosmic catastrophe as portrayed in the New Testament as a whole.[24] Adams's approach is broadly comparative, with chapters devoted to texts from the Hebrew Bible, "Jewish apocalyptic and related literature," and "Graeco-Roman sources."[25] In contrast to N. T. Wright's claim that New Testament passages like Mark 13 were understood by their original audiences as socio-historical metaphors,[26] Adams argues instead that such texts should be understood as imaginative construals of actual, anticipated cosmic catastrophe. When reading the New Testament in light of other Jewish apocalypses, Adams concludes that "there is much evidence for belief in the ultimate end of the present created world in Jewish apocalyptic and associated literature," and, furthermore, that

---

[23] Harry Hahne, *The Corruption and Redemption of Creation: Nature in Romans 8.19–22 and Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 226–28.
[24] Edward Adams, *The Stars Will Fall from Heaven: "Cosmic Catastrophe" in the New Testament and its World* (London: T&T Clark, 2007).
[25] Adams, *The Stars Will Fall*, v–vi.
[26] Adams addressed Wright's perspective in the introductory chapter of his work: Adams, *The Stars Will Fall,* 5–10. The works by Wright that he engages most often are N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (London: SPCK, 1992). and N. T. Wright, *New Heavens, New Earth: The Biblical Picture of the Christian Hope* (Cambridge: Grove, 1999).

"[i]n none of these writings is the thought of the present creation coming to an end connected with an anti-cosmic dualism, suspicious or contemptuous of the work of the creator."[27] The narrow focus on cosmic catastrophe, which is shared by Adams and Hahne, is appropriate for the purview of their work, considering that the New Testament texts at the heart of their studies are eschatological in nature and frequently feature a dis-ordered, unreliable, and ominous natural world. However, as a result, the selection of apocalyptic texts they consider are limited to those that speak of the destruction of the earth and its restoration, or of the eschatological woes alluding to such judgment. Therefore, the studies by Hahne and Adams present a (necessarily) incomplete overall picture of the various ways the natural world functions in the literature they survey beyond the New Testament.

In his 2011 volume, Jonathan Moo offers a broader exploration of the natural world as it functions in one particular apocalyptic book, 4 Ezra. Moo explores 4 Ezra's portrayal of the created order, arguing that, ultimately, this famously "pessimistic" apocalypse offers a hopeful vision for the future of the cosmos. Moo challenges the frequent portrayal of 4 Ezra as especially dualistic (even when compared with other apocalypses), arguing that instead, the world-to-come portrayed in Ezra's visions displays remarkable continuity with and respect for the present world, flawed though it may be. In Moo's view, 4 Ezra's portrayal of the natural world writ large—"parabolic," in Stone's words,[28] and thus presented as a model from which humans should learn––makes sense as a context for a less dualistic apocalyptic eschatology. Though the present created order is presented as corrupt in 4 Ezra, such corruption is "consistently linked not to an inherent deficiency in material creation but to human transgression (e.g., 7:10–12; 9:19)….

---

[27] Adams, *The Stars Will Fall*, 99.
[28] Michael E. Stone, "The Parabolic Use of the Natural Order in Judaism of the Second Temple Age," in *Gilgul: Essays on Transformation, Revolution, and Permanence in the History of Religions*, ed. S. Shaked et. al. (Leiden: Brill, 1987).

Nonetheless, even in this age, the natural order continues to testify to the creator."[29] In 4 Ezra, then, the *saeculum* to come is presented much like the post-flood earth of Genesis 6–9: a fresh start which is nonetheless intimately connected with the world that preceded it: a new creation in continuity with the old one, and certainly not fashioned *ex nihilo*.

Hahne, Adams, and Moo all wish to explore particular aspects of the natural world as they are portrayed in apocalyptic texts. However, "nature" is a modern category that requires elucidation. What is nature, and how should a modern reader identify it in ancient texts which have no word for the natural world as such? Though Hahne does not explicitly clarify his use of the term "nature," throughout his work he seems to use it as a synonym for the created order. Adams highlights the difference in how the word "cosmos" is likely interpreted by modern readers when compared with the assumptions of the early scribes: "The ancient understanding of the natural world was derived from what could be seen by the naked eye and worked out by mathematical calculation…. The 'cosmos' was essentially the immediate solar system, perceived from a geocentric perspective."[30] For Moo, the "created order" is co-terminus with the earth and heaven, or "the 'natural' world and material existence generally."[31] Like Moo, when I speak of the natural world, I am speaking of "material existence generally." However, I am self-consciously using the category of "nature" in the way a modern person would, to mean the non-human elements of the cosmos that one can observe simply by looking. I make no claims that such a category is at all sensical from an ancient point of view; rather, I seek to "map" the various ways that scribes categorized and portrayed elements of what modern people today read

[29] Moo, *Creation, Nature and Hope*, 86.
[30] Adams, *The Stars Will Fall*, 22.
[31] Moo, *Creation, Nature and Hope*, 9.

as "nature." In this way, I am using an etic category ("nature") to unearth the arguably emic categories this literature uses to make sense of the cosmos.

This project will certainly build on the substantial work done by Hahne, Adams, and Moo —as well as Argall, Stone, and Rowling before them—but it will also differ from these projects in several ways. First, unlike Hahne and Argall, I do not limit my study to one or two particular works of literature. In this project, I am interested in the role played by the natural world in early Jewish literature writ large, and I will trace its trajectory within the literature from the third century BCE, when the first Enochic books appeared, through the first half of the second century CE, with the appearance of literature seeking to make sense of the destruction of the Second Temple. In other words, my interest is in the various categorizations and rhetorical portrayals in Second Temple Jewish literature of what modern people call "nature." Second, unlike Hahne and Adams, I will not limit my study to the role nature plays in cosmic catastrophe —in other words, to the times when images of disordered nature are invoked as examples of eschatological woe. This category is indeed relevant to my project, especially in chapter three, but I will seek to contextualize cosmic catastrophe as only one of several ways that the natural world functions rhetorically in Second Temple literature. Third, unlike Hahne and Argall—and perhaps, to some extent, Moo—I am not interested in framing "nature" solely as "creation." Though Second Temple literature does conceive of the natural world as a part of creation, this dissertation will consider the fact that some texts highlight the "created-ness" of the natural world more explicitly than others, for instance, by using categories similar to those found in Genesis 1. Finally, I will not limit the texts I explore to those deemed "apocalyptic" in genre or outlook. Granted, apocalyptic texts frequently have much to offer the portrayals of nature explored in the pages which follow; however, as texts, they are markers in a larger literary landscape—chiefly, the

landscape of Jewish Second Temple literature broadly speaking, which is itself in conversation with other textual landscapes, some that are now considered "biblical" as well as a whole matrix of texts from Mesopotamian and Greco-Roman cultures.

The chief point of departure for this project, then, is to observe and describe the ways the literature itself presents the natural world to its readers. I endeavor to "think with nature" as I read texts from the Second Temple period. In essence, the driving question behind this study is: How did Second Temple scribes make rhetorical appeals to the natural world in their religious writings, and why was it important for them to do so? What was there to be gained, for these scribes, in so frequently attributing agency to natural phenomena, especially in texts in which human agency is also often portrayed as determinative for the fate of the cosmos?[32] The studies by Argall, Hahne, Adams, and Moo are similar in that they each ask one specific question about the natural world of a limited corpus. Within such bounded spaces, they too let the texts lead, and catalogue what they find. In order for my project to meet its objectives, it was necessary to expand my boundaries, both in terms of the questions I was asking of the natural world and in terms of the types of texts I was open to reading. When I began "thinking with nature" in the second temple period, observing the imagery that it so "naturally" seemed to inhabit, it soon became clear that the natural world's roots dug deep, beyond modern generic borders. These root systems led me, first, to biblical texts—to wisdom and prophets, but also to Torah. Other root systems fed into early Babylonian traditions about creation as well as Mesopotamian astronomy. The soil in which this literature is planted is Hellenistic, and the philosophies that reigned in the

[32] In this way, the approach I take in my work may have more in common with Liv Ingeborg Lied's exploration of "land" in 2 Baruch in *The Other Lands of Israel: Imaginations of the Land in 2 Baruch* (Leiden: Brill, 2008) and Kelley Coblentz Bautsch's mapping of Enochic geography in *A Study of the Geography of 1 Enoch 17–19: "No One Has Seen What I Have Seen"* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), even as my topic overlaps more with that of the previous scholars.

Second Temple period also leave their mark. In the end, this project is indebted to Collins's metaphor of a matrix—for my purposes, perhaps better thought of as an ecosystem—which offers a firm, if sometimes surprising, seedbed for Jewish Second Temple literature, with portrayals of the natural world that branch off in creative and occasionally unexpected ways.

The Scope of this Project

Within both biblical and post-biblical Jewish materials, the natural world plays a variety of roles: it appears, for example, within the context of theophanies and oracles, eschatological scenes of judgment, heavenly tours, and treatises concerning astronomy, uranography and cosmology. Nature sometime functions as a character, crying out to God; at other times, it is used rhetorically, its constancy held up as a model for human righteousness. Perhaps because of this variety, scholars have not generally explored "nature" as an independent category. As a result, the very pervasiveness of nature's presence throughout Second Temple literature is sometimes missed. As outlined below, this dissertation will seek to redress this imbalance. My project will not attempt to enumerate *every* reference to the natural world in the apocalyptic corpus and related literature. Rather, I will examine exemplary texts in which nature occupies four particular categories of significance: nature as a model for humankind, nature as a sign of things to come (usually impending judgment), nature as an instrument of judgment and a giver of testimony (or witness), and nature as a heavenly mystery and cosmic secret. These categories emerged from my readings of the primary literature, and, when taken together, they have provided an umbrella under which the majority of references to the natural world in Jewish Second Temple literature may find a place.

I have limited my investigation to Jewish texts which can be reliably dated to between the third century BCE and the mid-second century CE. These include the apocalyptic works 1 and 2 Enoch, 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch, the Sibylline Oracles, and the Apocalypse of Abraham; the Testaments of Naphtali and Abraham; wisdom literature such as Ben Sira and the Wisdom of Solomon; and other Second Temple works like the Psalms of Solomon and a variety of texts from Qumran. Passages that lie mostly outside the scope of this study are those in which nature is used to construct an allegory for history, such as the Animal Apocalypse (1 Enoch 85–90) and much of the allegorical nature imagery in the book of Daniel. Instead, I am interested in instances in which nature is more than a literary device. I want to study the natural world in terms of observable phenomena: when nature is depicted as behaving in certain ways, and when, from observing its behavior, the ancients assert that knowledge can be gained. In other words, I am interested in exploring the instances in which nature is treated by the literature itself as something worthy of "scientific" observation.[33]

Nature as Model

Within the literature of the Second Temple period, the references to nature in 1 Enoch provide one of the most sustained presentations of nature as an orderly model for humankind. In the book's opening chapters, humans are commanded to contemplate all God's works, which "do not alter their paths" (2:1)[34]—these include luminaries, seasons, trees, seas and rivers. In

[33] "Science" is another word loaded with modern connotations. In using this word for ancient speculative texts, I am following in the footsteps of Philip Alexander. See "Enoch and the Beginnings of Jewish Interest in Natural Science," in *The Wisdom Texts From Qumran and the Development of Sapiential Thought* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002).

[34] Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of 1 Enoch are from George W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1–36; 81–108* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2001) and George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. Vanderkam, *1 Enoch 2: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 37–82* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2011).

contrast, humans are critiqued for not standing firm; unlike nature, humans have strayed from the paths God intended for them. This paradigmatic approach to the natural world plays out again and again in the various works which comprise 1 Enoch. Throughout the *Book of the Watchers*, Enoch observes a universe in which heaven and earth are intricately connected, and in which nature—which seems so at home on earth—has its ultimate source in heaven. The natural world, as imagined by this book, is inherently orderly, and therefore, it can be explained. Chaos does sometimes ensue—but this happens chiefly when humans, angels, or the natural world depart from the courses which God has set forth for them.

In light of the significance of nature as model, in chapter two I consider the interplay of reliability and unreliability, orderliness and dis-orderliness in the portrayal of the natural world in Jewish Second Temple texts. I consider the debt owed to Babylonian astronomy by the *Book of the Luminaries*, the earliest Enochic work. I will then consider depictions of nature's constancy in Ben Sira 42–43, the Testament of Naphtali, and 2 Baruch 48. It will soon become clear that though much of Second Temple Jewish literature is adamant that God's intention for the natural world is orderliness, the reliability of nature is not depicted as absolute. Ben Sira 16–17 protests (too much?) that the natural world *never* disobeys, thereby opening up a conceptual space for the reader to entertain the possibility of cosmic disobedience. The eighteenth Psalm of Solomon contains similar rhetoric about the luminaries. In the *Book of the Watchers*, the illicit activities of stars result in violence upon the earth and a disruption of nature's courses. And yet, at the heart of each of these portrayals, the divine intention is for an orderly, predictable, reliable, constant, and obedient natural world, as envisioned in the nature hymn in 1 Enoch 2–5.

Nature as Sign

In Jewish Second Temple literature, the orderliness with which nature functions under normal circumstances is sometimes presented as mutable. Especially in apocalyptic sources, one sign of imminent destruction is the reluctance of the natural order to follow the paths and courses which God has set forth. Nature encompasses time as well as space, and when its ordered cycles are interrupted, it serves as a sign that the natural order is departing from God's intention. Likewise, in portions of 1 Enoch, various Sibylline Oracles, Jubilees 23, and 4 Ezra, disruptions in the natural order signal the prelude to the final judgment.

These sources seem to agree that the reliability or unreliability of the natural world can serve as a barometer for the well-being of humanity and the cosmos as a whole, but the question remains: Whence the unreliability? Is it a result of God's sovereign intervention, angelic misbehavior, or human sin? Differing answers reveal differing apocalyptic cosmologies. 4 Ezra is especially clear that such disruptions in the natural order are God's doing, though in the *Book of the Watchers* proper, it appears at times that nature merely embodies the suffering of the cosmos that the final judgment puts right. Indeed, since humankind is accused of unreliability and inconstancy in 1 Enoch and 2 Baruch, in these cases, the transformation of nature from reliable to unreliable makes sense as a foreshadowing of the judgment of humankind.

Within Second Temple literature, when nature functions as a sign, sometimes it indicates the recurring events within the general condition of the cosmos, and at other times it indicates a departure from those expected, orderly, "natural" occurrences. When nature functions as a signpost for recurring events, such depictions (such as Gen 1:14–16 and Ben Sira 43:6–7) emphasize its fundamentally orderly quality. In biblical texts, when the natural world functions irregularly, as a sign for contingent events, it is sometimes described as a "sign and wonder,"

often pointing back to the plague tradition in Exodus 7–11. In extra-biblical apocalyptic texts, when the natural world functions irregularly, it is most often cast as an omen: a category which is present but rare in biblical texts, but ubiquitous in Mesopotamian celestial divinatory texts and some Greco-Roman philosophical treatises. Second Temple depictions of the natural world as a sign are ultimately dependent on readerly assumptions of the natural world's inherent orderliness, which nature is often portrayed as again embracing in the future restored cosmos.

Nature as Punishment and Witness

In addition to being a moral exemplar and a means of communication with the heavenly realm, in Second Temple literature nature also plays certain forensic roles—specifically, by executing judgment against humankind or by giving testimony about human behavior. The use of nature as a courtroom witness is rare, but attested in the *Epistle of Enoch.* More common is the portrayal of nature as a covenant witness. In the Bible, "heaven and earth" are called to function as covenant witnesses in Deuteronomy, and this function emerges again and again in other biblical and extra-biblical materials. At the same time, the natural world is frequently depicted as an instrument of God's judgment—frequently the very judgment that follows covenant abrogation—and thus, nature occupies dual roles as a witness about covenant (dis)obedience as well as an instrument of the resulting blessing or punishment. Indeed, both roles have quite a "sticky" quality: they remain attached to the natural world in post-exilic prophetic literature, in which elements of nature are depicted as instruments of divine punishment, as well the *Epistle of Enoch*, which "upgrades" nature's role to courtroom witness in one brief scene of judgment.

Nature as Mystery

In chapter five, I explore the natural world as it relates to agency and secrecy in the Second Temple period. In this literature, the mysterious character of the natural world is rooted in the divine speeches of Job 38–41. While pessimistic about human capacity for knowing, the divine speeches nonetheless do offer insights to human readers by way of "wondrous" poetic imagery. The ascent apocalypses might be said to take up where the divine speeches leave off. When translated to the heavenly realm, Enoch, Levi, and Abraham function as eye-witnesses for the rest of humankind. In chapter five I explore the interplay between observation and speculation in Second Temple texts like 1 and 2 Enoch, the Testaments of Levi, and the Apocalypse of Abraham. The visionary figures—especially Enoch, who observes the most extensive set of heavenly secrets—serve to substantiate the astronomical, meteorological and theological speculation contained in the books as a whole. Through these figures, that which is not intended for human observation is made readily available to all readers.

After exploring "heavenly mysteries" as they are portrayed in various texts from Qumran —as part of a "unified field theory" of knowledge—I turn to the latest Jewish apocalyptic texts available, 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra, both of which maintain a Joban pessimism about the capacity of humankind to reach an understanding of the extravagant ways of God's cosmos. I argue that these two apocalypses also deny the natural world's agency, viewing it purely as an instrument in God's hands. Therefore, in the first half of the second century CE, at least two views of the natural world prevail: the instrumental position of 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra, and the agential position of the Apocalypse of Abraham, which maintains the Enochic stance that with a proper intermediary, there is much about the natural world that humankind can (and should) know. In light of the fall of the Second Temple, however, the Apocalypse's hope for the future is not

rooted in this shared heavenly knowledge (as 1 Enoch's arguably is, along with that of some materials from Qumran), but rather, it is delayed until the eschatological moment when justice will be done.

In the end, all five depictions of the natural world in Second Temple Jewish literature—as model, sign, punishment, witness, and mystery—are dependent upon the assumption that nature is, above all, an orderly ecosystem, created and sustained by God.

CHAPTER TWO

THE NATURAL WORLD AS MODEL FOR HUMAN RIGHTEOUSNESS IN SECOND TEMPLE JEWISH LITERATURE

In the *Timaeus* (c. 360 BCE), Plato posits that the orderliness of the universe is inherent to its rational construction by a divine Artisan (28a6).[35] The ordered cosmos does not exist merely for its own sake; rather, "the beautiful orderliness of the universe … is also the model for rational souls to understand and to emulate."[36] Approximately five hundred years later, Ptolemy argues in the *Almagest* that planets have souls and move voluntarily: each planet sends out emissions that direct its own motion, which Ptolemy compares to the way a bird emits signals to control the motion of its wings and feet.[37] These two thinkers roughly bookend the centuries during which apocalyptic literature was thriving in early Judaism, as well other genres of Jewish literature, such as testaments, wisdom literature, prayers, psalms, and odes. Like their Greek and Roman counterparts, Jewish scribes of the Second Temple period posed big questions about the origins and ends of the created order with an emphasis on the movement of the luminaries. In the ancient world, from Plato to Ptolemy, luminaries were often portrayed as "living"—in other words, they possessed a spiritual aspect. Therefore, it is not surprising that the luminaries would be among the elements of the natural world to become agential in Second Temple Jewish literature. If the luminaries were spiritual beings, then their actions could be, in some sense, interpreted as decisions, and their intentions, as benevolent or malevolent.

---

[35] R. G. Bury, trans., *Timaeus; Critias; Cleitophon; Menexenus; Epistles* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1981), 48–51.

[36] Donald Zeyl and Barbara Sattler, "Plato's *Timaeus*", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2017 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/plato–timaeus/.

[37] See Andrea Murschel, "The Structure and Function of Ptolemy's Physical Hypotheses of Planetary Motion," *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 26 (1995), 33–61; Otto Neugebauer, *A History of Ancient Mathematical Astronomy*. (Berlin: Springer, 1975), 923; Liba Chaia Taub, *Ptolemy's Universe: The Natural Philosophical and Ethical Foundations of Ptolemy's Astronomy*. (Chicago: Open Court, 1993), 117–21.

In this chapter, I explore the shifting relationship between orderliness and agency in Jewish Second Temple depictions of the natural world. I will first examine the way in which the Enochic *Book of the Luminaries* draws on Babylonian astronomy to offer detailed descriptions of the orderliness and predictability of the heavenly bodies. Then I investigate other texts that feature orderliness per se, extolling its inherent value: these include 1 Enoch 41, Ben Sira 43, and the Testament of Naphtali. Second Temple writers also plumbed the depths of why, sometimes, disorder occurs. Some suggested that disorder is inherent in the cosmos ("just the way it is"), either because God commands disorder and nature complies (as in the Psalms of Solomon), or because disordered nature is playing a different role than its ordered counterpart, functioning as a sign for humanity rather than a model (see chapter three of this dissertation). However, other texts interpret nature's occasional disorderliness as outright disobedience. The *Book of the Watchers* is a prime example, since it portrays the punishment of stars for their wandering ways (1 En 18:12–16 and 1 En 21:1–6). In these texts, disorderliness is a punishable offense, and as such, it suggests that orderliness too might have a moral dimension. Could orderliness be conceived of as more than simply "just the way it is"? Instead, could orderliness indicate an agential and obedient act—in fact, a choice?

One text that takes this moral leap is 1 Enoch 69, a "cosmic oath" involving God and the cosmos. I argue that the oath can be conceived of covenantally, which is unprecedented when compared with biblical covenants, all of which involve humankind. Even the Noahic covenant, which extends to "every animal of the earth,"[38] is forged first and foremost between God, Noah, and Noah's descendants (Gen 9:9–10). In 1 Enoch 69, nature's obedience is praised repeatedly; indeed, the text suggests that the natural world exceeds humankind in its faithfulness, though

[38] Unless otherwise indicated, all biblical quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version.

humans are not mentioned explicitly. I also investigate how similar covenantal overtones and nature's concomitant agency is present in an earlier portion of the *Book of Parables*, 1 Enoch 41 and 43.

Finally, I explore an extraordinary text: 1 Enoch 2:1–5:3, which explicitly links the orderliness, obedience, and agency of the natural world. First, nature is praised for its orderliness; its orderliness is then interpreted as obedience; and finally, the obedience of the natural world is juxtaposed with the disobedience of humankind. 1 Enoch 2:1–5:3 is a wisdom poem embedded in prophetic genres of theophany and oracle, thus making such a blatant comparison an intuitive rhetorical choice. Notably, the poem praises the luminaries less effusively than other elements of nature, which perhaps facilitates the narrativization of the punishment of the stars in the subsequent material. Nature's agency, portrayed so strongly in 1 En 2:1–5:3, crops up again in the later *Epistle of Enoch*, in which the sea is said to fear God, and thus responds to God's instructions with obedience. 1 Enoch 2:1–5:3 is the clearest example the natural world functioning as a model for human righteousness, but the image seems to inform other texts in 1 Enoch strongly, suggesting that "model" is one of the chief categories for the natural world within the Enochic imagination.

The *Book of the Luminaries*: An Ordered Natural World

Rooted in Mesopotamian astronomy, the *Book of the Luminaries* (1 Enoch 72–82) consists of detailed descriptions of the natural world's orderliness, with an emphasis on the movements of the stars. It is unique in biblical and later Jewish literature as a "revealed astronomical book."[39] In order to differentiate between the versions, James VanderKam calls the

[39] George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. Vanderkam, *1 Enoch 2: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 37–82* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2011), 367.

Aramaic version the *Astronomical Book* and the Ethiopic version (the text which is usually reflected in translations of 1 Enoch 72–82) the *Book of the Luminaries*.[40] Scholars generally agree that the *Astronomical Book* is the oldest of the Enochic compositions, dating from the end of the Third or beginning of the second century BCE.[41] The *Astronomical Book* was first translated into Greek, though few Greek fragments remain,[42] before then being translated into Ethiopic. The Aramaic and Ethiopic versions merit different names because "something drastic"[43] seems to have happened during the centuries which separate them. Namely, the calendrical portions of the *Astronomical Book* are significantly condensed (and consequently simplified) in the *Book of the Luminaries*. In addition, the *Book of the Luminaries* contains an eschatological section (80:2–8) which is not extant in the *Astronomical Book*, the content of which differs theologically from that of the calendrical material: namely, whereas 1 En 72:1 claims that nature will operate by the same laws both now and in the future, 1 En 80:2–8 depicts the natural world as dramatically changeable.[44] Most interpreters therefore attribute 80:2–81:10 to a later redactional hand.[45]

The *Book of the Luminaries* devotes its first seven chapters to detailed astronomical, uranographical, and cosmological observations. On the whole, its depictions of the natural world assume constancy and reliability. The order inherent in nature is presented to the reader vis-à-vis "lists of revealed things"[46] and intricate descriptive passages, introduced as follows:

---

[40] James C. VanderKam, *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1984), 335.
[41] Nickelsburg and Vanderkam, *1 Enoch 2*, 339.
[42] Nickelsburg and Vanderkam, *1 Enoch 2*, 345
[43] Nickelsburg and Vanderkam, *1 Enoch 2*, 357.
[44] Nickelsburg elaborates: "1 Enoch 72:1 speaks about laws of nature that are to remain valid until the new creation; 80:2–8 talks of changes in the laws of nature before that time" (Nickelsburg and Vanderkam, *1 Enoch 2*, 359). I examine 1 Enoch 80:2–8 further in chapter three of this dissertation.
[45] See, for example, Nickelsburg and Vanderkam, *1 Enoch 2*, 359–65.
[46] This term was made commonplace by Michael E Stone, "Lists of Revealed Things in the Apocalyptic Literature," in *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright*

> The book about the motion of the heavenly luminaries all as they are in their kinds, their jurisdiction, their time, their name, their origins, and their months which Uriel, the holy angel who was with me (and) who is their leader, showed me. The entire book about them, as it is, he showed me and how every year of the world will be forever, until a new creation lasting forever is made. (1 Enoch 72:1)

This list is reminiscent of the prologue to the book of Jubilees, which refers to the "divisions of the times of the law and of the testimony, of the events of the years, of the weeks of their jubilees throughout all the years of eternity."[47] Though the vocabulary is not identical, both introductions mention concern for "the times" and "years" and their progress from the present to far distant ("eternal") future. Whereas Jubilees goes on to explore the creation of the cosmos in 2:1–16, including that of the luminaries and their corresponding angelic guardians, the *Book of the Luminaries* instead proceeds to explore ways in which the luminaries move throughout time and space in each yearly cycle.

The scribes who recorded these observations were invested in tracking the courses of the stars. Their impulse to record such information was probably at least somewhat motivated by a concern for calendrical matters related to the timing of religious festivals. However, festivals are not explicitly named in the *Book of the Luminaries*,[48] and so beyond any implied cultic concerns, this oldest Enochic booklet may depict orderliness because of the inherent value in (and perhaps the sheer pleasure of) observing and recording details. The scribe writes as one delighted by knowledge, spurred on by the conviction that if an aspect of the natural world is observable, then it must also be meaningful and thus important to transcribe and interpret.

(New York: Knopf, 1976), 414–51.

[47] James C VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees: A Critical Text* (Leuven: Peeters, 1989), 2:23. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of Jubilees are from this volume.

[48] Unlike other astronomical texts at Qumran, the *Book of the Luminaries* does not sync its calendars to Jewish festivals or cultic life, but rather "may be a reflection of astrological traditions in which heavenly signs or omens were thought to predict happenings in certain parts of earth." Nickelsburg and Vanderkam, *1 Enoch 2*, 7.

The Influence of Babylonian Astronomy

By what knowledge, then, is the scribe delighted? It is not knowledge grounded in biblical revelation—at least, not very much of it.[49] Instead, the scribe expounds upon astronomical theories rooted in ancient Babylonian astronomy, with a few Iranian insights scattered throughout.[50] Among others, Matthias Albani[51] has noted several significant similarities between the *Book of the Luminaries* and early Babylonian works such as the MUL.APIN:[52] both use similar strategies to document the sun's annual journey, both emphasize the prominence of the stars, and both are characterized by the prevalence of meteorological and cosmological phenomena.[53] First, Albani draws on Johannes Koch's earlier observation that MUL.APIN correlates the paths of the sun with the "ways of the gods" (especially Enlil, Anu, and Ea), "ways" which refer not to a series of fixed points but rather to discrete sections of the horizon.[54] VanderKam elaborates:

> The way of Anu is intersected by a line pointing due east, Enlil is north of it, and Ea south of it. At the summer solstice, the sun rises in the way of Enlil, while it comes up in the more southerly way of Ea at the winter solstice. This is the background against which one should see the development of the Enochic gates. With the way of Anu already divided into two by the eastern point on the horizon, the other two ways could be similarly halved to make the three-way system conform to the monthly division of the year, because exactly six months separate the summer and winter solstices. Calling the segments of the horizon

[49] A possible exception is the book's reference to "a new creation lasting forever" in 72:1, which may allude to Isaiah 65:17 and its "new heavens and new earth."
[50] Jason M Silverman, "Iranian Details in the Book of Heavenly Luminaries (1 Enoch 72–82)," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 72, no. 2 (2013). Silverman argues for "a modicum of acquaintance with Iranian ideas in the earliest layers of Enochic literature," including angelology, the rather rare motif of the cold, and the "imperially linked geographic scheme" (Silverman, "Iranian Details," 208).
[51] Matthias Albani, *Astronomie und Schöpfungsglaube: Untersuchungen zum Astronomischen Henochbuch* (Neukirchener: Neukirchener Verlag, 1994).
[52] Hermann Hunger and David Pingree, *MUL.APIN. An Astronomical Compendium in Cuneiform* (Horn, Austria: Berger & Söhne, 1989).
[53] Albani cites eight topics shared by the *Book of the Luminaries* and MUL.APIN. Albani, *Astronomie und Schöpfungsglaube.* Here I am using VanderKam's distillation of these eight topics into three larger categories. James C VanderKam, "Sources for the Astronomy in 1 Enoch 72–82," in *Birkat Shalom: Studies in the Bible, Ancient Near Eastern Literature, and Postbiblical Judaism Presented to Shalom M. Paul on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 974–75.
[54] Johannes Koch, *Neue Untersuchungen Zur Topographie Des Babylonischen Fixsternhimmels* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 1989).

gates could easily follow from the Babylonian notion of the sun's gates. Thus, the Enochic gates are a reflection of MUL.APIN's ways of Enlil, Anu, and Ea.[55]

Chapters 72–74 and 78 of the *Book of the Luminaries* offer detailed discourses on the movements of the sun and moon through six eastern gates, transitioning on a monthly timetable. The heavens also contain "windows" which allow the sun's rays to reach the earth: "Each window at its time emits heat like those gates from which the stars emerge as he ordered them and in which they set according to their number" (75:7b). In turn, 1 En 76 examines the reliable movements of the winds through their twelve gates, three in each cardinal direction. The second of each of the three winds brings with it blessing, prosperity, fruitfulness, and life along with needful meteorological elements like dew, rain, and fragrant aromas. The other first and third winds affiliated with each cardinal direction bring with them, in both hot and cold weather, unpleasantness such as "burning destruction," locusts, and drought; cold weather also brings snow and frost. The following chart illustrates these winds and their effects, both for good and for ill:

North winds

Life, rain, dew

Mist, hail, snow, rain, dew, locust ↓ Dew, rain, locust, destruction

↓ ↓

West winds	**East winds**
Dew, [rain,] hail, cold, snow, frost →	← Cold, drought
Dew, rain, prosperity, blessing →	← *Rain, fruitfulness, prosperity, dew*
Drought, destruction, burning, devastation →	← Devastation, drought, heat, destruction

↑ ↑

Dew, rain, locusts, destruction ↑ Hot wind

Fragrant aroma, dew, rain, propserity, life

South winds

Figure 1. The 12 winds and their gates in 1 Enoch 76. Winds of "blessing and peace" are in italics.

[55] VanderKam, "Sources for the Astronomy in 1 Enoch 72–82," 974.

Second, the *Book of the Luminaries* and MUL.APIN share a keen interest in the stars themselves, though the *Book of the Luminaries* distances itself somewhat from astrological texts by placing gates (as explored above) where MUL.APIN placed constellations. VanderKam notes that while MUL.APIN associates the location of the four cardinal directions with specific constellations, 1 Enoch 75:1–2 associates them with the "heads of thousands who are over all creation and over all the stars."[56] Likewise, 1 Enoch 33:2–4—a text sometimes considered a miniature version of the *Book of the Luminaries* within the *Book of the Watchers*[57]—denotes the names, numbers, times, and positions of each star, and all of this information is told to Enoch by the angel Uriel. When the *Book of the Luminaries* associates angelic beings with stars, Albani argues that it is drawing from MUL.APIN.[58] VanderKam adds that in MUL.APIN, "the constellations or stars are subordinated to particular gods, while in Enuma Elish the stars are the images of the great gods."[59] These great gods have been placed by Marduk in their fixed places in the heavens, and from their "stands," they are each responsible for determining the stars' courses, "so that none of them could go wrong or stray," as indicated in the opening lines of Enuma Elish 5:

> He fashioned stands for the great gods.
> As for the stars, he set up constellations corresponding to them.
> He designated the year and marked out its divisions,
> Apportioned three stars each to the twelve months.
> When he had made plans of the days of the year,
> He founded the stand of Neberu to mark out their courses,
> So that none of them could go wrong or stray.
> He fixed the stand of Enlil and Ea together with it,
> Opened up gates in both ribs,
> Made strong bolts to left and right.

---

[56] VanderKam, "Sources for the Astronomy in 1 Enoch 72–82," 975.
[57] Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 330.
[58] See Albani, *Astronomie und Schöpfungsglaube*. Additionally, it is well known that, at least by the first century CE, Greek literature also affiliated stars with heavenly beings. See the introduction to this chapter, as well as Matthew Thiessen, *Paul and the Gentile Problem* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 146.
[59] VanderKam, "Sources for the Astronomy in 1 Enoch 72–82," 975.

> With her liver he located the heights;
> He made the crescent moon appear, entrusted night (to it)
> And designated it the jewel of night to mark out the days.[60]

Third, VanderKam notes that both books relate the sun's yearly journey to a variety of meteorological and cosmographical material, thus demonstrating that such topics, "as the cuneiform literature embodying older conceptions shows, are not foreign to an astronomical work."[61] Drawing on Mesopotamian traditions, the *Book of the Luminaries* elevates astral bodies while relativizing their power, making sure the reader knows that the stars are associated with angelic beings who are subservient to a greater power.

The dependence of the *Astronomical Book* and the *Book of the Luminaries* on MUL.APIN and other Babylonian texts has been argued by Henryk Drawnel[62] and Jonathan Ben–Dov,[63] as well as by Albani and VanderKam. Dennis Duke and Matthew Goff build on Drawnel's work and assert with him that some of the mathematical formulae of the *Astronomical Book* (namely the fractions) "constitute genuine astronomical knowledge."[64] However, Duke and Goff do not find evidence that the scribes who penned the *Astronomical Book* had any direct contact with centers of Babylonian astronomical learning. They point out the large gap in time between the production of documents like MUL.APIN (originating in about 1000 BCE) and the *Astronomical Book*. It is unlikely, they argue, that the authors of the *Astronomical Book* would directly consult such ancient Babylonian traditions. Indeed, Goff and Duke point out that if one

---

[60] Translation by Stephanie Dalley, "The Epic of Creation," in *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 255–56.
[61] VanderKam, "Sources for the Astronomy in 1 Enoch 72–82," 975.
[62] Henryk Drawnel, *The Aramaic Astronomical Book from Qumran: Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). In the introductory material, Drawnel also considers that astronomical knowledge may have been mediated through Aramaic scribes and texts.
[63] Jonathan Ben-Dov, *Head of All Years: Astronomy and Calendars at Qumran in Their Ancient Context* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).
[64] Dennis Duke and Matthew J. Goff, "The Astronomy of the Qumran Fragments 4Q208 and 4Q209," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 21, no. 2 (2014), 176.

compares the *Astronomical Book* to its contemporary Babylonian astronomical texts, the similarities pale, and the Babylonian texts proffer "a degree of complexity and sophistication not found" in the *Astronomical Book*.[65] Furthermore, Goff and Duke argue that Babylon's scribal community was a "relatively closed network" of scholars, and so any sharing of astronomical knowledge would likely happen indirectly.[66] Rather than envisioning Jewish students studying astronomy in Babylonian scribal schools, Goff and Duke posit that the *Astronomical Book*

> was written by someone who knew Aramaic and had accurate knowledge regarding lunar visibility that is similar to, but more advanced than, the long standing Babylonian astronomical knowledge that ultimately originated in Babylon…. Therefore, while some degree of Babylonian influence on the originator(s) of the Astronomical Book can certainly not be ruled out, it might be more reasonable to simply suppose that the basic astronomical knowledge and mathematical technique that we find in the *Astronomical Book* model… would generally be familiar to some fraction of the well–educated people in the ancient Near East in the period 250–200 BCE, and was used to construct the scheme that we find in the *Astronomical Book*.[67]

Whether Mesopotamian influence on the *Astronomical Book* was a direct phenomenon or a diffuse one, a shared interest in interpreting the movements of the heavenly bodies lies at the heart of the *Astronomical Book* and the *Book of the Luminaries*, and these movements are always interpreted as being orderly and predictable (with the exception of the later addition of 80:2–10).

In spite of the modern titles given to the works, the *Astronomical Book* and *Book of the Luminaries* downplay the stars somewhat when compared with Mesopotamian texts. In the Enochic works, it is the entire cosmos which is perfectly ordered according to God's design, not just the heavenly bodies. This point can be overstated. The celestial realm still possesses a dominant place in the *Book of the Luminaries'* cosmology, as demonstrated by their prominence in the description of the "four quarters" of the earth in 1 En 77, which follows on the heels of a

---

[65] Duke and Goff, "The Astronomy of the Qumran Fragments," 207. The *Book of the Luminaries* also shares similar concerns with the older Babylonian astronomical text Enuma Anu Enlil, dated from 1200 BCE.
[66] Duke and Goff, "The Astronomy of the Qumran Fragments," 208.
[67] Duke and Goff, "The Astronomy of the Qumran Fragments," 209.

depiction of the four cardinal directions and their relation to the twelve gates for the winds in 1 En 76.[68] The four quarters of the earth serve as a conceptual metaphor through which the scribe organizes the contents of the cosmos. In the Ethiopic tradition,[69] the luminaries occupy the western quarter of the earth by themselves. The southern quarter is reserved for the Most High, and humans fill the eastern quarter. The northern quarter is split three ways between more humans, the "garden of righteousness" (probably Eden), and the rest of the natural world. So, while luminaries occupy a full quarter of the universe, the rest of the natural order (seas/deeps/forests/rivers/darkness/mist) occupies merely one-twelfth. The following chart illustrates these divisions.

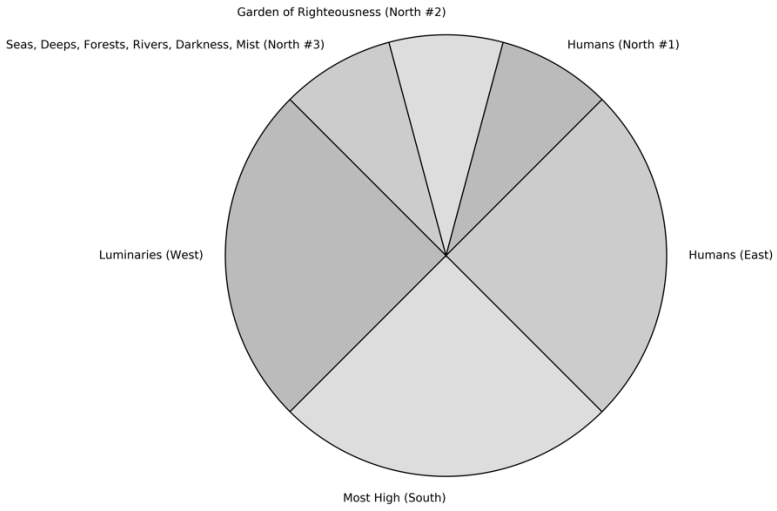

Figure 2. The four corners of the Earth in 1 Enoch 77; North is at the top.

[68] VanderKam notes that geographical texts such as this are also frequently found in Mesopotamian astronomy, which usually feature "four world regions." Dividing the world into quarters is therefore not unique to Enochic thinkers (Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2*, 483–84).

[69] The Aramaic versions, which are fragmentary, describe the contents of the divisions somewhat differently: "The Ethiopic texts provide a list of items found in three divisions of the north; the Aramaic copies offer a list of items located in divisions whose whereabouts is not specified in the small pieces of extant text…." Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2,* 5. The traditions agree that the eastern quarter is for human habitation, the western quarter is for the luminaries (though their descriptions are not parallel, and the Aramaic versions are riddled with grammatical and textual difficulties) and the southern is for the deity (though the Aramaic texts call God "Great One" instead of "Most High") [Nickelsburg and Vanderkam, *1 Enoch 2*, 484–95].

It is striking to note the clear separation of the luminaries from the rest of (what we today would call) "the natural world." The heavenly bodies are set apart from the earthly bodies with the same precision that the Most High is separated from mortals. This separation is understandable if one considers the ancient assumption that stars and divine beings are closely associated; therefore, even within "nature," the celestial sphere stands apart from the terrestrial. Additionally, the separation of the luminaries from the terrestrial sphere may also offer insights as to why the *Book of the Luminaries* claims that its study of the luminaries is actually a study of *everything*.[70] Enoch repeatedly emphasizes the completeness of what he has seen in the heavens and passed on to his son: the movements of all astronomical bodies during all times and every season (1 En 82:1–3). Just as Enoch emphasizes completeness when conveying his revelation to Methuselah, Uriel emphasizes it when conveying information to Enoch in 80:1: "I have now shown you everything, Enoch, and I have revealed everything to you so that you may see this sun and this moon and those who led the stars of the sky and all those who turn them—their work, their times, and their emergences." A complete understanding of the cosmos is thus equated with a complete understanding of the luminaries. This makes sense in light of the expansiveness of the luminaries' jurisdictions: The *Book of the Luminaries* relates the movements of the stars to the arrangement of the gates and windows in the heavenly realm, the twelve winds and their interaction with the gates, and the organization of the four quarters of the earth, in which all the rest of creation is given a place. Through this book, the reader is not

[70] Enoch tells Methuselah: "Now my son I have shown you everything, and the law of all the stars of the sky is completed. He showed me all their law for each day, each time in a jurisdiction, every year, its emergence, the command, every month, and every week.… This is the appearance and the likeness of each luminary that Uriel, the great angel who is their leader, showed me" (79:1–2, 6). Earlier, Enoch had regaled his son with tales of the twelve gates of the four quarters of the sky, "all their laws and all their punishment and prosperity—I have shown you everything, my son Methuselah" (76:14).

invited to gaze upward from a human perspective at the luminaries, but rather to gaze downward at the whole cosmos from the perspective of the stars.

The *Book of the Luminaries* concludes, in chapter 82, with a catalogue of the stars, their divine leaders, and the seasons that go along with their appearances. The text is fragmentary, only narrating two of the four seasons, though 4Q211 may preserve bits of the rest.[71] In this chapter, angelic beings are given charge over specific aspects of the natural order: one angel is in charge of each season (each of which is keyed to specific happenings in the natural order),[72] each month, and each of the 364 days of the year: that makes 380 angels in total. The *Book of the Luminaries* thus ends as it begins, with an emphasis on the orderly passing of time, which is directly related to the orderly functioning of the cosmos, which is in turn attributed to God's rule: "He has power in heaven over night and day to make light appear over humanity; the sun, the moon, the stars, and all the heavenly powers which revolve in their circuits" (82:8). The vision of the *Book of the Luminaries* is consonant with that of Jubilees 4:17–19, in which Enoch is depicted as the first scribe whose chief subject is astronomy. He writes "in a book the signs of the heaven according to the order of their months, so that the sons of men might know the (appointed) times of the years according to their order, with respect to each of their months" (4:17).[73] With such a description, one might imagine that Enoch is writing the *Book of the Luminaries* itself.

---

[71] Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2*, 115.

[72] Within the rule of Melkeyal, the following happens: "sweat, heat, and care; all the trees bear fruit and leaves come out on all the trees; (there is) a harvest of wheat, roses, and all the flowers that bloom in the field; but the winter trees are dried up" (1 Enoch. 82:16). Within the rule of Helememelek, the signs of the season are: "heat, drought, trees bearing their fruit ripe and yielding all their fruit ripe and ready; the sheep mate and become pregnant; people gather all the fruit of the earth and everything in the field and the winepress…" (1 Enoch. 82:19).

[73] Translation by O. S. Wintermute, "Jubilees," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Vol. 1: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments,* ed. James H Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 62.

2 Baruch 48: An Ordered Natural World without Agency

2 Baruch is one of the handful of apocalypses penned after the events of 70 CE but likely before the Bar Kokhba Revolt in 132–135 CE, since the book never mentions the latter.[74] In 2 Baruch, dialogues between Baruch and God predominate, and the question at hand is one of theodicy: why would God allow, for a second time, the temple to be destroyed and the people of Israel to be scattered? Baruch's speech vacillates throughout, swinging from protest to lament to academic argument. In chapter 48, the seer uses the orderliness of the natural world as a rhetorical device in his plea for God's mercy upon sinful humankind.

In 2 Baruch 48, the seer articulates a prayer for mercy in which the orderly natural world has pride of place. Baruch begins by listing all the things that God knows and does, much of which is related to God's mastery of the natural world. In this prayer, Baruch names God's exhaustive knowledge of (and complete control over) times, seasons, and generations, as well as the eschatological judgment. The subjects of God's inquiry and the recipients of God's commands are those elements of nature that lie beyond the ken of human knowledge, and yet respond flawlessly to the divine summons.[75] The times "stand before" God when they are called (48:2); the seasons "subject themselves" to God's guidance (48:2); at God's command, flames transform into spirits (48:8); and after God gives wisdom to "the astronomical spheres," they

---

[74] Michael E Stone and Matthias Henze, *4 Ezra and 2 Baruch: Translations, Introductions, and Notes* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2013), 11.

[75] In 2 Baruch 59:5–11, a similar list appears when an angel interprets one of Baruch's revelatory dreams. Ironically, some of the very items that Baruch claimed to be beyond are revealed to Baruch in his dream: "But then he also showed him the measurements of fire, also the depths of the abyss, the weight of the winds, the number of raindrops, the suppression of anger, and the abundance of long–suffering, and the truth of judgment, and the root of wisdom, the riches of prudence, the spring of knowledge, and the height of the air, and the greatness of Paradise, and the consummation of the ages, and the beginning of the day of judgment, and the number of the offerings, and the earths which have not yet come, and the mouth of Gehenna, the order of vengeance, and the place of faith, and the region of hope, and a model of the torment to come, and the multitude of innumerable angels, and the armies of flame, and the splendor of lightnings, and the sound of thunders, and the orders of the chiefs of the angels, and the reservoirs of light, and the changes of the times, and the investigations of the Torah." Note that references to the natural world are interwoven with references to more abstract concepts like judgment, vengeance, faith, and hope. Also, unlike 1 Enoch, in 2 Baruch the angel includes the Torah among the special revelations of God to the apocalyptic seer.

"serve in their orders" (48:9).[76] The seer does not explicitly praise the natural world in this prayer; instead, Baruch praises God for being in perfect control of nature. Baruch's prayer emphasizes God's power and knowledge, not the virtues of the natural world. Looking at the list of natural world elements and virtues in its immediate context, one might suppose that the purpose of the list is to construct a theodicy. However, as shown below, Baruch's ultimate rhetorical purpose here is to move God to be merciful to a sinful humankind, who cannot compete with nature's ordered perfection.

In this prayer, Baruch consistently speaks of nature as God's willing and reliable subject. Harry Hahne puts it this way: In 2 Baruch, "creation does what God wills," but still "lacks nature's moral responsibility" since it does not appear to have a choice in the matter.[77] Hahne's assertion might benefit from nuance. For example, in 48:2, the natural world "does not resist" God; this negative statement of obedience could suggest that nature has the ability to refuse God, but chooses not to do so. However, on the whole, Hahne's point holds: Baruch neither praises the natural world outright nor lifts it up as a model for humankind; rather, the behavior of nature is predictably perfect. Baruch's rhetoric may imply a different kind of comparison between nature and humankind, however. Baruch is impressed by the orderliness of the natural world, which is rooted in God's mastery of it. Baruch also sometimes speaks positively of humankind, likewise rooted in God's agential action: "For this is the people you have chosen, and these are the people of whom you have found no equal…. In you we trust, for see, your Torah is with us" (2 Bar 48:20, 22). Baruch's positivity is tempered by a touch of fatalism, highlighting the weak and ephemeral nature of human life and invoking humankind's ultimate lack of agency; strategically,

[76] Translations of 2 Baruch are from Matthias Henze, in Stone and Henze, *4 Ezra and 2 Baruch*, 2013.
[77] Harry Hahne, *The Corruption and Redemption of Creation: Nature in Romans 8.19-22 and Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 140–41.

Baruch pleads human helplessness as a reason for God to withhold judgment: “Therefore, be not angry with man, because he is nothing. Do not consider our works, for what are we? For see, by your gift we come into the world, and we depart not of our own will. For we did not say to our parents, ‘Beget us!,’ nor did we send to Sheol, saying: ‘Receive us!’” (2 Bar 48:14–16). It is not only nature whose agency is muted in 2 Baruch. Human agency is also relativized in light of the overwhelming power of divine agency—although humans can sin and indeed have corrupted the cosmos with their sin, so their agency is greater than that of nature.

Rather than using an orderly depiction of the natural world to move humankind toward obedience, as in 1 Enoch 2:1–5:3 (see below), 2 Baruch 48 invokes the orderly natural world to move God toward mercy. If the natural world is only orderly because it has little-to-no choice, then is it fair to punish humankind, given their weakness? Baruch’s argument ultimately fails. The next chapter depicts the end of days and the final judgment of humankind. Seemingly in spite of himself, Baruch records the obedience and integrity of the natural world in close proximity to disobedient humankind’s impending judgment; the juxtaposition between pristine nature and corrupt humanity remains, Baruch’s protests notwithstanding.

Despite being separated by at least 300 years, the *Book of the Luminaries* and 2 Baruch both depict an intrinsically ordered natural world. Even when the apparent rhetorical purpose of such texts is ultimately about something else (for example, the judgment of humankind in 2 Baruch), throughout the Second Temple period the natural world is consistently depicted as reliable and predictable. Additional texts which fit this mold include Ben Sira 42–43, the Testament of Naphtali 2–3, and Ben Sira 16–17.

More Texts Featuring the Orderliness of Nature

Ben Sira 42–43. Written in the early second century BCE in Hebrew and translated later that century into Greek, Ben Sira is a collection of wisdom poems, proverbs, and exhortations.[78] Sometimes regarded as a "handbook of moral behavior or code of ethics,"[79] its contents comprise observations about the nature of wisdom and its effect on those who seek it. These (often quite practical) observations are accompanied by a number of poems about wisdom itself and the character of the wise (chapters 1, 3, 6, 16–17, 19, 24, 25, 37) as well as a series of hymns in praise of the wise among the ancestors (chapters 44–50:21).

Just prior to the ancestor hymns, Ben Sira 42:15–43:33 extols the beauty and the orderliness of the "works of God"—namely, the created order. For Jeremy Corley, the emphasis on orderliness indicates that "everything created has a stable form of existence."[80] In 42:21, God's works (*ta erga*, *maʿăśāyw*) are equated with "the splendors of his wisdom" which God has "set in order" (*ekosmēse*, Hebrew absent).[81] After being so arranged by God, these works are described as enduring (they will remain "forever" [42:23]), purposefully created (every creature "meets a particular need" [42:23]), and dualistic ("all things come in pairs" [42:24]). Thus ordered, the universe exists for one purpose, familiar from the biblical Psalms: to show off God's glory (43:27–33).

---

[78] Ben Sira is dated to the second century BCE based upon internal evidence. First, in the prologue, Ben Sira's grandson states that he arrived in Egypt and began translating the book "in the thirty-eighth year of King Euergetes," most likely referring to Ptolemy VII Physkon Euergetes II, who ruled from 170–164 and 146–117. The translation into Greek is therefore thought to have been completed before 117 BCE. The original Hebrew text was probably written in the first quarter of the second century, however, because it does not mention the activity of Antiochus Epiphanes in 175–164, while it does praise a priest named Simeon (50:1–12), thought to be the high priest Simeon II, who served from 219–186 BCE. Patrick W. Skehan and Alexander A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: A New Translation With Notes* (New York: Doubleday, 1987), 8–9.

[79] Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 4.

[80] Jeremy Corley, *Sirach* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012), 119.

[81] The Hebrew manuscripts either omit this verb or are damaged here. In LXX 2 Chronicles 3:6, when *ekosmēse* is used to describe the order (or adornment) of the house of God, the Hebrew equivalent is from *ṣph* which means to "overlay" in the piel and "to arrange" in the indicative. In LXX Ezekiel 16:11, *ekosmēse* is used to mean "adorn," and the Hebrew equivalent this time is *ʿdh*.

One noteworthy aspect of the hymn is the way in which it relativizes the power of "God's holy ones" by depicting as limited their abilities to comprehend the wonder of the created order: "The Lord has not empowered even his holy ones to recount all his marvelous works which the Lord the Almighty has established so that the universe may stand firm in his glory" (42:17). Manuscript M[82] puts a finer point on it, as translated by Randal Argall: "Yet even God's holy ones do not suffice to recount all his wonders, though the Lord has given his hosts the strength to stand firm before his glory."[83] This manuscript emphasizes the limited nature of angelic knowledge, or perhaps even their disregard for earthly matters. As Argall notes: "… [I]t appears that in this introductory stanza the angels function as a foil to highlight the greatness of God's works. Even the angels who stand before God's glory are inadequate to the task ben Sira is about to undertake."[84] Ben Sira's paean to the natural world does not include divine beings (who are lauded as some of the first of God's creation in Jubilees 2:2). Indeed, when the hymn enumerates specific elements of God's orderly creation, starting with the luminaries, the scribe does nothing to link the astral bodies with angelic obedience. In this text, human perception of the wonders of God's created order are superior to that of God's messengers.[85] (Another possibility is that Ben Sira is presenting his praise modestly. If even angels cannot comprehend the wonders of God, then the reader should not have too high an expectation for Ben Sira's own verse.)

After introducing the heavens as the "pride of the higher realms" (43:1), the sun is given voice: it "proclaims as it rises what a marvelous instrument it is, the work of the Most High"

---

[82] Argall based his translation on manuscript M, as found in Yigdael Yadin, *The Ben Sira Scroll from Masada* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1965) 28–31, 43–44. His translation is also influenced by Strugnell. See Randal A. Argall, *1 Enoch and Sirach: A Comparative and Conceptual Analysis of the Themes of Revelation, Creation and Judgment* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 1995), 145.
[83] Argall, *1 Enoch and Sirach*, 143.
[84] Argall, *1 Enoch and Sirach*, 144.
[85] Perhaps this characteristic of Ben Sira's anthropology serves to resist the "angelification" of Enoch in the later Enochic books. If human perception of the cosmos is more reliable anyway, why make him an angel?

(43:2). The sun goes on to parch the land, scorch the mountains, and blind the eyes of humankind. It is "at God's words" that the sun "hastens on its journey" (43:5); its comings and goings are dictated by God. Starting in verse 6, the poem turns to the moon, which marks the changing seasons and the proper times for festivals. In 43:9–12, the Hebrew text as translated by Skehan and Di Lella continues to describe the moon's role, while the Greek tradition as reflected in the LXX and NRSV translates the verse as describing the stars. Compare the texts as follows:

> By the Lord's command it [the moon] keeps its prescribed place,
> and does not fade as the stars keep watch. (Skehan and Di Lella)[86]
>
> On the orders of the Holy One they [the stars] stand in their appointed places;
> they never relax in their watches. (NRSV)

The Hebrew text, translated by Skehan and Di Lella, portrays the sun and the moon as equal partners in their obedience to God's words, thus reflecting the poet's earlier point that "all things come in pairs" (42:24). In the Greek translation, the luminaries share this distinction with the sun, while the moon's role is relegated to the calendrical matters mentioned in 43:6.

Ben Sira 43 continues its recital of God's works, ordered by God's commands: God "stretches out" the rainbow (43:11–12), "sends" the snow and "speeds" the lightnings of judgments (43:13), and "gives clouds their strength" (43:15). In classic theophany imagery, God "rebukes the earth" with a thunderous voice (43:17a) and the mountains shake when God's appears (43:16). Wind, storm, and whirlwind blow because God wills it (43:16, 17b), and God scatters snow and pours frost over the earth "like salt" (43:18–19). God sends destruction vis-à-vis the natural world, but nature offers healing on its own terms, without direct divine instruction:[87] "He consumes the mountains and burns up the wilderness and withers the tender grass like fire. A mist quickly heals all things; the falling dew gives refreshment from the heat"

---

[86] Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 485.
[87] Though in the poem as a whole, all elements of the natural world are ultimately attributed to God's acts and will.

(43:21–22). The following three verses narrate God's ordering of the sea, the islands, and the sea monsters. Indeed, God is credited for the orderliness of "all things" everywhere: "Because of him each of his messengers succeeds; by his word all things hold together" (43:26). It is not only the sun and moon who are bound by God's words, but every element of the created order. The perspective of the scribe is invoked explicitly at the chapter's end:

> Who has seen him and will describe him?
> And who will magnify him as he is?
> Many things hidden are greater than these,
> for few of his works we have seen.
> For the Lord made all things,
> and to the pious he gave wisdom. (43:31–33)

Unlike Enoch, who observes nature's secrets on his heavenly journeys, the scribe of Ben Sira is circumspect about what he knows and what he is able to know (and indeed, less has been revealed to him). In Ben Sira, it is pious to know one's limits, and in the scribe's imagination these are delimited by wisdom, which is gifted by God in order to rightly interpret earthly realities. The scribe of Ben Sira admits that there are things beyond his observational skill, and in doing so, perhaps unwittingly makes allowances for works like 1 Enoch, which probe the "many things greater than these" (43:32) which remain hidden.

The *Books of the Watchers* and *Luminaries* had already taken shape by the time Ben Sira was writing; in these and subsequent works, readers might have encountered Enoch as a pious exception to Ben Sira's rule. In 1 Enoch 2:1–5:3, explored below, a poem extolling nature's orderliness leads to a rebuke of inferior human behavior. This then leads to an oracle of judgment and a call to repentance. In Ben Sira, human knowledge of an orderly natural world is juxtaposed with inferior angelic knowledge and insight. This consideration of humankind in their cosmic context leads first to praise of God (43:23–25) and then to a recital of Israel's faithful ancestors,

including the biblical Enoch.[88] It is ironic that Ben Sira's list of the faithful includes Enoch. The inclusion of Enoch could be read as an indication of the figure's sheer popularity as an antediluvian seer. However, Ben Sira's portrayal of Enoch might also be polemical, purposefully neglecting later Enochic lore by speaking of the patriarch only in biblical language. In either case, despite their differing opinions about Enoch and the appropriate purview of human knowledge, Ben Sira and 1 Enoch do agree that the natural world acts in an orderly manner, and as such, it has something to teach humans if they observe it carefully.

Testament of Naphtali. The dating of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs is contested. Thought by some to have been written as late as the second century CE,[89] James Kugel instead dates the Hebrew original[90] to the late second or early first century BCE. First, Kugel points out how the writer of the Testaments quotes extensively from the Aramaic Levi Document, which

---

[88] Ben Sira refers to Enoch twice. First, in 44:16: "Enoch pleased the Lord and was taken up, an example of repentance to all generations." Second, in 49:14: "Few have every been created on the earth like Enoch, for he was taken up from the earth." Each of these citations seems to be rooted solely in the biblical text. The reference to "repentance" is probably an interpretation of the righteousness implied by Enoch having "walked with God" (Gen 5:22).

[89] Robert Kugler, *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (London: T&T Clark, 2001); Martinus Jonge et al., *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Critical Edition of the Greek Text* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

[90] Fourteen Greek manuscripts of the T. 12 Patr. are extant, the earliest of these dating to the tenth century CE (Kugler, *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, 28). As mentioned above, a Hebrew Testament of Naphtali is also attested, with scholars divided as to whether it pre-dates the Greek versions (Kugel, Hultgard) or postdates them (de Jonge, Korteweg). For the purposes of this dissertation, de Jonge's critical edition of the Greek text and Kugel's translation thereof will serve as the basis for discussion, with reference to the Hebrew *Testaments* when relevant. Furthermore, there is one possibly relevant set of fragments at Qumran: 4Q215, formerly called 4QTNaph. However, the change in title indicates the change in scholarly consensus: namely, that this document is not a fragment of an earlier version of the Greek T. Naph., but rather, an early attestation of a common tradition. In any case, the Qumran fragments do not touch upon the discussion at hand, since they do not echo any portions of Greek T. Naph. "While the Qumran text may reflect a source, or better, a tradition used in the *Testaments*, and the Hebrew *Testament of Naphtali* material could be understood in the same way, both lack the characteristic narrative framework of a testament and do not otherwise parallel the *Testament of Naphtali*" (Kugler, *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, 29). In some manuscripts, T. Naph. is titled more fully as *The Testament of Naphtali Concerning Natural Goodness*. In this title and throughout the testament, "natural" and "nature" are translations of the Greek *phusis*. That which is natural (from *phusis*) corresponds for this author to that which is orderly or proportional (from *taxis*; so James L. Kugel, "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," in *Outside the Bible: Ancient Jewish Writings Related to Scripture* [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 2013], 1802).

was well–respected by the Hasmoneans, and thus boosted the collection's authenticity. Additionally, Kugel's argument for an early Jewish Hebrew original hinges on the following point:

> …[W]hen in the history of the period would an author have considered obedience to Levi to be an important matter? The answer is hardly unequivocal, but such a call would certainly seem unlikely after the Roman conquest of Judah by Pompey (63 C.E.). It was only before that time that obedience to 'Levi' (= the Jerusalem priesthood) could have been any kind of political issue—indeed, the call to obey Levi under any circumstances sounds as if it might belong to the time when the Hasmoneans were seeking to solidify their hold on political power…[91]

Like Ben Sira, in the Testament of Naphtali orderliness is a defining characteristic of the cosmos. In particular, the Testament draws on Greek notions of an ordered creation and combines them with a Jewish worldview.[92] T. Naph.'s vision for an ordered universe is worked out dualistically in its depiction of the human body (chaps. 2–3) and its exhortations for orderly human behavior, explicitly interpreted as obedience to God's commands (chap. 8). Like Ben Sira, T. Naph. idealizes human capacities. However, while Ben Sira 43 celebrates human powers of observation over and above that of angelic figures, T. Naph. celebrates the intricate workings of the human body as the pinnacle of God's ordered creation. Strength, work, achievement; heart, eye, mouth; soul and mind: all of these are tied either to "the law of the Lord or … the law of Belial" (2:6).[93] Additionally, the divisions between light and darkness, seeing and hearing; the differentiation of the sexes; the five senses (found nowhere in biblical literature but familiar from Greek sources[94])

---

[91] Kugel, "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," 1698–99.

[92] "[T. Naph.'s] concern with the individual's moral perfection and the rooting out of such bad traits of character as anger and hatred, drunkenness and licentiousness certainly had its precedents in the biblical book of Proverbs and the Wisdom of Ben Sira; but it would be equally appropriate to see here the traces of Greek philosophy, and in particular the influence of the then–popular school of Stoicism…. When the Hebrew text of the *Testaments* was translated into Greek, those parts most resonant with Hellenistic thought may well have moved the Greek translator to embellish upon them"(Kugel, "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," 1701).

[93] Translations of the Testament of Naphtali are by James Kugel ("Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," 1794–1802), based on the critical edition of the Greek text by Martinus de Jonge.

[94] For example, see 2.5–12 of Aristotle, *On the Soul*, *Parva Naturalia, On Breath,* translated by W. S. Hett, Loeb Classical Library 288 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), 94–139.

and the diverse functions of each part of the body: these are all related to the fact that "God made all things good" and "in order" (2:8). Within this context, readers are adjured to "be in order unto good, in the fear of God, and do nothing disorderly in scorn or out of its due season" (2:9).[95]

Chapter 2 invokes the order within the heart and sinew of the reader's own body; in chapter 3, however, the writer invokes the order of the cosmos outside the human body (though still within the bounds of human observation and perception). In 3:2, the luminaries are depicted as thoroughgoing in their obedience: "Sun and moon and stars do not change their order; so you also, do not change the law of God in the disorderliness of your activities." Here, in miniature, is the argument also attested in 1 Enoch 2:1–5:3: the luminaries are a model for human righteousness. Just as they do not "change their order," neither should the testamentary audience. Hollander and de Jonge note the similarities with 1 Enoch 2:1–5:3,[96] and indeed, relatively soon after this command is issued, the "holy book of Enoch" is cited as an authoritative source (4:1). Much like 1 Enoch 2:1–5:3 and Ben Sira 16 (explored below), orderliness is affiliated with immutability in T. Naph.:

> So do not be eager to corrupt your deeds out of greed, or to deceive your souls with vain words; for if you keep silent in purity of heart, you will understand how to hold fast to God's will and to throw off the will of Beliar. The sun and the moon and the stars do not change their order; so likewise, do not change God's Torah in the disorder of your deeds. For the nations were led astray and abandoned the LORD; they changed their order and went after wood and stone, becoming followers of Spirits that mislead. Not so are you, my children, who have recognized in the firmament, in the earth, the seas, and in all creatures the LORD who made them all; so that you will not become like [the population of] Sodom, which changed the order of its nature. So too did the Watchers change the order of nature, for which the LORD pronounced a curse upon them at [the time of] the flood, making the earth bereft of inhabitants and produce. I say these things, my children, because I have learned from the holy book of Enoch that you as well will turn aside from

[95] The descriptions of the human body, especially its dualistic embrace of opposites, is similar to the unique usefulness of each created being as portrayed in Ben Sira 42: "All these things live and remain forever; each creature is preserved to meet a particular need. All things come in pairs, one opposite to the other, and he has made nothing incomplete" (Ben Sira 42:23–24).

[96] H. W. Hollander, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 306.

> the LORD and go after all the wickedness of the Gentiles, and will act as with all the transgressions of Sodom. (3:1–4:1)[97]

Just as the sun, moon, and stars serve as a positive role model for humankind, foreign nations are lifted up as negative role models, as well as the city of Sodom and the Watchers themselves. The nations "changed their order" (*ēlloiōsan taxis*) by following "sticks and stones" and "spirits of deceit" rather than the God of Israel. Kugel notes that *taxis* can refer to either a sense of order or of proper proportion or measurement.[98] The Watchers and Sodom followed suit in slightly different ways. Sodom and the Watchers each "changed the order of its nature" (*enēllaxan taxin phuseōs autōn*), bringing to mind the relevant angelic characters: in both traditions, illicit sex between divine and human beings is at issue.[99] Not only improper worship (like that of the nations), but improper moral and sexual behavior (like that of Sodom and the Watchers) can "change the order" of nature[100] for these communities. Testament of Naphtali 2 addresses the audience directly, proclaiming "Not so are you!"[101] Indeed, unlike the Watchers and the residents of Sodom, the reader should be able to recognize God's handiwork in the firmament, the earth, the sea, and in all created things. The testament acknowledges the audience's ability to recognize God's works as a given. Even if the reader cannot recognize the orderliness of God within the

---

[97] Kugel, "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," 1705.
[98] Kugel, "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," 1802.
[99] It is not only here that the Watchers and Sodom are correlated. de Jonge notes that "in Abraham's farewell speech in Jub 20 the giants and Sodom are mentioned in the context of an elaborate warning against fornication and uncleanness" (Jonge et al., *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, 307).
[100] Later in T. Naph., the emphasis on sexual purity continues: "For there is a season (for a man) to have intercourse with his wife, and a season to abstain therefrom for his prayer: so there are two commandments and if they are not done in their order, they bring sin" (8:8–9a, translation by de Jonge et al., *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,* 318). In T. Naph., there are two commandments: proper sex and proper worship. Sodom and the Watchers, on the one hand, and the Gentiles, on the other, have demonstrated disobedience to these commandments. The cosmos as a whole (including the intricacies of one's own human body) demonstrate obedience.
[101] 1 Enoch 2:1–5:3 offers a mirror image of this text. On 1 Enoch, humans are rebuked for having acted in the ways that humans in T. Naph. emphatically have not: "But you have not stood firm nor acted according to his commandments; but you have turned aside, you have spoken proud and hard words with your unclean mouth against his majesty. Hard of heart! There will be no peace for you" (1 Enoch 5:4). Like in T. Naph., order is connected with obedience to God's commands.

human person, surely they will recognize it in the created order. Such knowledge is portrayed as a kind of vaccine: knowledge of the divine, as communicated through the natural world, protects the human spirit and body from capitulating to disorder and sin. In a manner reminiscent of 1 Enoch 2's command to "contemplate" the natural world, the Testament of Naphtali assumes that paying attention to the workings of the natural world will embolden humankind to remain faithful.

The Testament mentions the firmament, the seas, the earth, and all creatures as indicative of God's hand in the created order, but though these works are regarded positively, they are not presented as models—only the sun, moon, and stars are explicitly named as such.[102] When taken together, these non-astral elements of the created order in T. Naph. 2 might function as a shorthand for everything *except* the luminaries—for the rest of the cosmos, as it is described in Gen 1. The "firmament" was formed on Day 1, the "seas" on Day 2, the "earth" on Day 3, and these areas were populated on subsequent days by "creatures" as well as luminaries. The luminaries have already been mentioned as models for humankind; the rest of creation is given another purpose, namely, to authenticate the identity of the one who formed the cosmos.

In the Testament of Naphtali, the audience is expected to behave as the cosmos itself behaves: predictably and in order. Chapter 8 clarifies that for humankind, this includes living a life faithful to Torah: "For the Torah's commandments are twofold, and they must be carried out with care" (8:7). According to Kugel, the commandments' twofold nature indicates that "they can not only earn you merits, but also cost you demerits if you fail to perform them properly,"[103] and in this way, commandments are dualistic and "reflect the ordered nature of God's creation."[104]

---

[102] However, as was apparent in the *Book of the Luminaries*, the stars can sometimes stand in for "everything"—the whole natural order.
[103] Kugel, "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," 1802.
[104] Kugler, *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, 72.

From humankind, anything less than obedience to God's commandments, to which the ordered cosmos testifies, will result in a change in the reader's own "nature"—in other words, such actions are a denial of one's intended purpose as one of the many creatures fashioned by God.

Ben Sira 16:24–17:24. Ben Sira 16:24–17:24 comprises one of the most extensive wisdom poems in Ben Sira,[105] in which wisdom is linked to creation, and more specifically, to the orderly machinations of the natural world. This wisdom poem addresses the order of creation—including that of the natural world—and the place of humankind within it. Following a depiction of the fate of the wicked in 16:1–23, the scribe extrapolates expectations for human behavior vis-à-vis "negatively formed statements about nature's obedience"[106] in 16:24–30. Like the previous two

[105] Scholars disagree about where to begin and end the pericope. I am using the pericope as delimited by the NRSV and Ben Witherington III in his translation of Ben Sira ("Ben Sira," in *Outside the Bible: Ancient Jewish Writings Related to Scripture* [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 2013, 1802). Other possibilities have been suggested. Wischmeyer regards 16:24–18:14 as a long didactic poem in which humankind is situated within the created order as one of God's creatures, albeit a privileged creature who bears God's image and is entrusted with the responsibility to rule ("Theologie und Anthropologie im Sirachbuch," in *Ben Sira's God: Proceedings of the International Ben Sira Conference At Durham-Ushaw College*, ed. R. Egger-Wenzel [Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002], 25). Skehan agrees, reading 16:24–30 as the conclusion to chapter 16. Skehan regards 16:24 as the first verse of a long didactic passage regarding "divine wisdom and mercy as seen in the creation of humankind" which extends through 18:14. In chapter 17, the tone changes, as Ben Sira sounds a hymn of praise for God's creation of humankind, which speaks of human "power over all things of the earth" (17:2) as well as the way that humans bear the image of God (17:3). Wisdom and discretion are gifts offered to humans (17:6–7), as well as fear of the LORD (17:8). God's covenant with humankind is mentioned in 17:12, as well as God's gift of the commandments. In verse 25, humans are adjured to "return to the LORD and give up sin;" in chapter 18, God's role as judge who rightly dispenses mercy is highlighted, and the pericope (as Skehan defines it) ends in 18:14, a proclamation of God's mercy for those are "diligent in his precepts" (Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 277).

Alonso Schökel identifies "significant correspondences and oppositions" within the smaller unit of 16:24–17:14 ("The Vision of Man in Sirach 16: 24-17:14," in *Israelite Wisdom: Theological and Literary Essays in Honor of Samuel Terrien*, ed. John G. Gammie et al [New York: Scholars Press, 1978], 235). Schnabel names these correspondences as God's orderly creation made manifest first in the cosmos (16:24–30), then upon the earth within humankind (17:1–10), and finally among the wise and the chosen (17:11–14). Eckhard J. Schnabel, "Law and Wisdom from Ben Sira to Paul: A Tradition Historical Enquiry into the Relation of Law, Wisdom and Ethics" (diss., University of Aberdeen, 1983). Marttila delimits a pericope larger than that of Schnabel and Alonso Schökel but smaller than that of Wischmeyer: "…Sir 17:15–24…continues so firmly the contents of the preceding sections that it must be analyzed as a conclusion to the wider textual unit (16:24–17:24) which speaks of God's control in the universe" (Marko Marttila, *Foreign Nations in the Wisdom of Ben Sira: A Jewish Sage Between Opposition and Assimilation* [Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012], 43). Marböck largely agrees with Martilla, but suggests the unit end at 17:23 (Johannes Marböck, *Jesus Sirach 1–23* [Herder: Freiburg, 2010], 211, 220).

[106] Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 153.

texts, the elements of the natural order featured in these "negatively formed statements" are the luminaries.

Ben Sira 16:26 emphasizes the orderliness of creation, borrowing language from Genesis 1. The LORD created his works "from the beginning," recalling *bᵉrēshît* of Gen 1:1. God "determined [the] boundaries" of his works, which both echoes the implicit meaning of *bārāʾ* as argued by Ellen van Wolde,[107] and emphasizes the division and separation of light from dark, waters from waters, and later, waters from earth. In verses 27–28, the language becomes less specifically allusive, but returns in verse 30 to the rhetoric of Genesis by narrating how God fills the earth things with things God deems to be "good":

> When the LORD created his works [*kᵉbārāʾ ʾēl maʿăśāyw*] from the beginning,
> and, in making them, determined their boundaries,
> he arranged his works in an eternal order,
> and their dominion for all generations.
> They neither hunger nor grow weary,
> and they do not abandon their tasks.
> They do not crowd one another,
> and they never disobey his word [*apeithēsousin tou rēmatos autou*][108].
> Then the LORD looked upon the earth,
> and filled it with good things.
> With all kinds of living beings he covered its surface,
> and into it they must return. (16:26–30)

Such a pristine view of the cosmos, set in order on the day of creation, sounds familiar in light of the texts already considered. However, this poem goes a step further by explicitly conceptualizing the natural world's hypothetical capability for disobedience: the fact that they "never disobey his word" suggests they might have the capacity to do so. In the same way that T. Naph. suggested the possibility of disorder within nature by insisting that the sun, moon, and

---

[107] Ellen van Wolde, "Why the Verb Bara Does Not Mean 'to Create' in Genesis 1.1-2.4 a," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 34, no. 1 (2009).

[108] The extant Hebrew manuscripts are unavailable from 16:26–30:25, with the exception of a few verses (Witherington III, "Ben Sira," 2253).

stars "never change their order," and that Ben Sira 43 insisted that the stars "never relax in their watches," this poem also suggests the possibility of disobedience by vehemently disavowing it.

Is there a place for humankind in the orderly cosmos of Ben Sira 16? Though humankind is not explicitly mentioned in Ben Sira 16:24–30, an implicit comparison is at work: the natural world does not grow hungry and weary (but humans do); the natural world never abandons their tasks in order to eat and sleep (but humans do); the natural world never disobeys the words of the Lord (but humans do). In Ben Sira 16, humans are not *per se* adjured to behave as nature does, but the admonition pulses just under the rhetorical surface.[109] Just one chapter earlier, the agency of humankind to choose good or evil was highlighted:

> If you choose, you can keep his commandments;
> and to act faithfully is a matter of your own choice.
> He has placed before you fire and water;
> stretch out your hand for whichever you choose.
> Before each person are life and death;
> whichever one chooses will be given. (15:15–17)

Only the foolish think that God does not observe their choice to sin (16:20–23). The wise, on the other hand, look to the created order as they endeavor to choose good and not evil.

The second half of this wisdom poem explores God's creation of humankind in the context of a perfectly obedient natural world. God has gifted humankind with distinctive traits that distinguish them from other creatures. The creation stories in Genesis, including Adam and Eve's subsequent choices, are invoked below:

> The LORD created human beings out of earth,
> and makes them return to it again.
> He gave them a fixed number of days,
> but granted them authority over everything on the earth.
> He endowed them with strength like his own,
> and made them in his own image.

[109] Though God's works here are "not contrasted *explicitly* with examples of human disobedience, this section is followed by a description of the creation of humanity, God's command and covenant, and *the admonition to repent* (chap. 17)" [Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 153].

> He put the fear of them in all living beings,
> and gave them dominion over beasts and birds.
> Discretion and tongue and eyes,
> ears and a mind for thinking he gave them.
> He filled them with knowledge and understanding,
> and showed them good and evil.
> He put the fear of him into their hearts
> to show them the majesty of his works.
> And they will praise his holy name,
> to proclaim the grandeur of his works. (Ben Sira 17:1–10)

Above, the scribe reminds humankind of their origins, with generous allusions to Genesis. God fashioned humankind from the earth (alluding to Gen 2:7), and they are destined to return there again (Gen 3:19). Humans are therefore mortal and their days are limited (Gen 6:3). Even so, humans have been appointed as God's rulers and stewards over the rest of creation (Gen 1:26–28). They are, after all, made in God's own image (Gen 1:26), and God is the ruler of the cosmos. The scribe also names specific qualities God has given humankind: discretion, wisdom and knowledge, and fear (17:6–8). In subsequent verses, humans are reminded of the covenant and commandments (17:12) which govern their relationship with the deity. After reiterating that evil cannot be hidden from the ever–present divine sight, human obedience is depicted as precious to God: "A person's goodness God cherishes like a signet ring / a person's virtue, like the apple of his eye" (17:22).[110] The pericope ends with a warning for the wicked (17:23) and an assurance for God's mercies for the repentant (17:24).

Ultimately, this poem is most concerned about human behavior and the consequences of human choice, for good or evil. However, the proffered model for reliability is not a patriarch or a prophet (as in Ben Sira 44–50) but the cosmos itself. Orderliness and obedience are embedded into the workings of the natural order, and nature's subsequent faithfulness offers one source of

[110] It seems that the good behavior of humankind is a treasure to God because of its rarity, while the obedience of the natural world is something more reliable and intrinsic to the created order, and therefore to be expected.

hope to its readers. Ben Sira is certain that there is a right way to live—in harmony with the order of the universe itself—and that this order is inscribed both in Torah and in all of "God's works" (16:16). In the end, Ben Sira's cosmic orientation, in which orderliness and obedience are writ into the natural order, is "twinned" with the guidance offered in Torah commandments. In other words, the covenant is written down in Torah while also writ large in the cosmos with whom humankind is meant to live in harmony. Just as all living beings were created with an intrinsic fear of humankind (17:4), in the same way humans possess an intrinsic fear of the LORD (17:8), which should result in human proclamation of the grandeur of God's works (17:10)—works which include the living beings who fear humankind. In this way, the circle of respect is complete, meant to be enacted forever.

Problems with Orderliness

The previous set of texts opened up a conceptual space for disorder: the stars "never relax" in Ben Sira 43 while the sun, moon, and stars "do not change the order of their nature" in T. Naph. 3. Ben Sira 16 takes this argument a step further by insisting that God's works "never disobey" God's word. All three texts agree that the natural world—the created order—has been designed by God to function in a perfectly orderly manner. The insistence of these texts raises the question: do the sages protest too much? Have they observed problems with the much-acclaimed orderliness of nature, and do these problems worry them?

The next texts under consideration explicitly depict the natural world as capable of disobedience. Below, I explore Psalms of Solomon 18, which addresses this question by insisting that even when the luminaries behave badly, they do so at God's command. Then I turn to 1 Enoch, which takes a different approach. While allowing for the disorderliness of certain

elements of the natural world, the *Book of the Watchers* depicts errant nature as being punished, thereby interpreting disorder as disobedience which requires God's judgment.[111] By ultimately claiming that acts of disorder are forms of disobedience, the *Book of the Watchers* opens the door for reconsidering what it means when the natural world functions in an orderly manner:

Is orderly behavior actually agential obedience? Is *that* why the orderly natural world is worthy of praise?

Psalms of Solomon 18. A collection of 18 poems, the Psalms of Solomon are commonly regarded as the work of several authors and probably a redactor,[112] comprising a collection of prayers bound together by common themes like theodicy,[113] purity,[114] discipline, and hope.[115] Mika Pajunen argues that the overarching theme of the collection is theodicy: the justice of

---

[111] In other portions of 1 Enoch, various Sibylline Oracles, and 4 Ezra, disruptions in the natural order are not blamed on human or angelic error, but rather, they serve as signs, most often signaling impending judgment, and sometimes caused by God. These instances will be explored in chapter three of this dissertation.

[112] Robert B. Wright, *Psalms of Solomon: A Critical Edition of the Greek Text* (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 6. Scholars differ in the way they interpret this claim. On one end of the spectrum, Brad Embry hints at either a single author or a skilled redactor when he calls the book "a seamless, continuous narrative" (Brad Embry, "The Psalms of Solomon and the New Testament: Intertextuality and the Need for a Re-Evaluation," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 13, no. 2 [2002], 135). Hann, on the other end, essentially regards the Psalms of Solomon as a collection of unrelated hymns collated over a long period of time, much like the biblical Psalter (Robert R Hann, "The Community of the Pious: The Social Setting of the Psalms of Solomon," *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 17, no. 2 [1988], 169–89).

[113] "The authors of the Psalms of Solomon try to account for God's righteousness and at the same time explain why God has apparently abandoned them in their time of need. Their conclusion is that God has not forsaken them. God requires the devout to suffer. Moreover, God uses suffering to distinguish between the pious and the wicked" (Kenneth Atkinson, "Theodicy in the Psalms of Solomon," in *Theodicy in the World of the Bible*, [Leiden: Brill, 2003], 557).

[114] "…[T]he work of the Messiah is, first and foremost, a purification of Israel and Jerusalem. As such, an understanding of the concept of the Messiah in Pss. Sol. must begin with an understanding of the relationship between purity and the divine presence in the land" (Embry, "The Psalms of Solomon and the New Testament," 133).

[115] For Embry, the Psalms of Solomon is "a literature of assurance, one meant to produce hope in his readers and to encourage them to faithful adherence to the Torah in spite of recent historical events" ("The Psalms of Solomon and the New Testament," 134), as well as "an example of Jewish religious self–awareness in the first–century BCE during which the prophetic portions of the Law of Moses were being applied to a contemporary setting. The historical conquest of Jerusalem by Pompey, filtered through this 'prophetic paradigm', produces a 'future hope' (recorded throughout the document as the mercy of the Lord) and represents one of the primary theses of the document: the redemption of Israel" ("The Psalms of Solomon and the New Testament," 132).

God.[116] Brad Embry interprets the document's intent as "to encourage faithful adherence to the Law of Moses during a politically and socially unstable time."[117] While several portions of the book were likely written in the Pompeiian era (63–48 BCE), chapter 17 is more sensibly placed in the Herodian period, and the Psalms of Solomon as a whole may have been edited throughout the first century CE.[118] The book's depiction of a suffering Jerusalem without mention of its destruction suggests that the Psalms of Solomon reached its final form in Greek[119] prior to 70 CE, a theory strengthened by the claim that 1 Baruch 5 is copied from Psalms of Solomon 11.[120] Most scholars[121] attribute the collection to a group within Judaism, though which group in particular is unknown. Pajunen explains:

---

[116] Pajunen states: "Every single one of these Psalms is centered on this specific topic [the justice of God]. It is explicitly mentioned in most of the psalms, and is perceived, for example, as an object of thanksgiving (Pss. Sol. 3:3) and knowledge (Pss. Sol. 5:1). The author's aim is to show that God judges justly…." (Mika S Pajunen, *The Land to the Elect and Justice for All: Reading Psalms in the Dead Sea Scrolls in Light of 4Q381* [Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013], 81).

[117] Embry, "The Psalms of Solomon and the New Testament," 131.

[118] Since its re-discovery in the seventeenth century, the Psalms of Solomon has inspired a lively scholarly debate about dating, original language, authorship, and audience. As early as 1847, F. K. Movers recognized in this book allusions to the Pompeiian conquest of the Hasmoneans (63 BCE) in chapter 8, and a reference to Pompey's death (48 BCE) in chapter 2. In light of these findings, the entire book was frequently dated to Pompey's era; indeed, as recently as 1982, Robert Hann still did so. See Hann, "The Community of the Pious," 169–189. More recently, however, these assumptions have been challenged. Atkinson, Wright, and others have persuasively argued that the regime depicted in chapter 17 refers to Herod the Great. See Kenneth Atkinson, "Toward a Redating of the Psalms of Solomon: Implications for Understanding the Sitz im Leben of an Unknown Jewish Sect," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 9, no. 17 (1998); Wright, *Psalms of Solomon.*

[119] Eleven manuscripts of the Psalms of Solomon are extant in Greek (the earliest from the fifth century CE and the rest from the tenth century or later) and five in Syriac (all from the tenth century or later). Considering the frequent "Hebraisms" found in the Greek manuscripts, most contend that the book's original language was Hebrew before being translated first into Greek and later into Syriac (perhaps also from a Hebrew original). In 1868, Adolph Hilgenfeld argued for a Greek original, but his claims were contested by Wellhausen. Much more recently, Jan Joosten has argued that the collection's original language was Greek, and that its awkward Greek constructions can better be regarded as "Septuagintisms" rather than "Hebraisms." Eberhart Bons takes a mediating position on the question of language: "[I]t seems conceivable that the Psalms of Solomon is not (or not completely) a word-by-word-translation but that it has been rewritten or composed—at least partially—in Greek and not in Hebrew, though imitating Hebrew style and diction." See Bons, "Philosophical Vocabulary in the Psalms of Solomon: The Case of Ps. Sol. 9:4," *The Psalms of Solomon: Language, History, Theology*, (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 58.

[120] Wright, *Psalms of Solomon*, 3.

[121] There are exceptions. Atkinson hedges his bets. First, he states that the book "does not represent Judaism at large, given its belief in resurrection, worship apart from the temple and fasting"(Atkinson, "Toward a Redating," 109). (Psalm 3:12 mentions the resurrection of the dead, while Psalm 17 describes the hoped–for messiah.) But at the same time, Atkinson admits that there is "no definitive evidence linking the Psalms of Solomon with any defined sectarian group" (Atkinson, "Toward a Redating of the Psalms of Solomon," 112). Embry goes so far as to call the Psalms of Solomon a "mainstream" book with dual interests in Mosaic Torah and Messianism (Embry, "The Psalms

> There is general agreement among scholars that the *Psalms of Solomon* are the work of a specific group within Judaism…. This is shown for example by the use of specific group terms to address the psalmist's audience, and by the general division of the people of Israel into the sinners and the righteous. What can be said of the psalmist's group is that they are situated in Jerusalem, but are not a group in control of the land.[122]

Much like 4QMMT, the Psalms of Solomon depicts the Jerusalem temple as corrupt, and thus encourages prayer and fasting instead of sacrifice, much like many of the Hebrew prophets (e.g. Amos 5:21). This book's reliance on the Hebrew Bible suggests that the authors wished to stand firmly within the theological trajectory of deuteronomic and prophetic traditions as they sought to be faithful to Torah in spite of their inability to obey all Torah commands, as a result of living in diaspora.

Subtitled "About the Lord's Messiah," Psalm 18 (the collection's final chapter)[123] begins by invoking God's mercy and kindness, as well as the watchful presence of the people of Israel (vs. 1–2); it ends by invoking the unfailing obedience not of the people, but of the sun and the moon. In between these assertions, the psalm describes God's "compassionate judgments" over the whole world (18:3) as well as God's love and discipline "for the descendants of Abraham, an Israelite" (vs. 3). In 18:4, the psalmist compares God's discipline of Israel to that of a parent for "a firstborn son," and notes that discipline is intended "to dissuade the perceptive person from unintentional sins."[124] God is entreated to cleanse Israel so that the people might be ready for the Messiah's appearance (vs. 5), which is then described as follows:

---

of Solomon and the New Testament," 100–02).

[122] Pajunen, *The Land to the Elect and Justice for All*, 81.

[123] The first and last chapters of Psalms of Solomon are considered a later addition by Atkinson ("Toward a Redating"), Rodney Werline ("The Psalms of Solomon and the Ideology of Rule" in *Conflicted Boundaries in Wisdom and Apocalypticism*, [Atlanta: SBL Press, 2005], 69–87), and Wright (*Psalms of Solomon*), and instead attributed to the redactor and collector of these Psalms. If they are right, then chapters 1 and 18 could have been written as late as the mid-first century CE.

[124] The notes in Wright's translation indicate a more literal reading of verse 4b might be: "to dissuade one who hears from ignorance in incomprehension" (Wright, *Psalms of Solomon*, 205).

> Happy are those living in those days, to see the good things of the Lord,
> that he will do for the coming generation;
> that will be under the rod of discipline of the Lord's Messiah,
> in the fear of his God, in the wisdom of the spirit, and in righteousness and strength
> to direct people to righteous actions, in the fear of God,
> to confirm them all in the presence of the Lord.
> This will be a good generation living in the fear of God, in the days of mercy. (18:6–9)[125]

These verses portray the Messiah's "rod of discipline" as a joyful event. Atkinson has argued that, in the absence of temple worship, it is the community's discipline (made known in prayer and fasting) which atones for sin.[126] Without a pure temple where sacrifices can be offered, discipline is the only effective and available way to worship and atone. Though the Psalms of Solomon perceives the absence of effective temple worship negatively (and, in fact, prays for the temple's restoration), in fact the faithful among the Jewish people will still be in good stead to welcome the Messiah's judgment, for they are practiced in the discipline that accompanies it.

The final three verses of the Psalm 18 are of special interest for our inquiry into the natural world in Second Temple literature. Up until this point, the Psalms of Solomon has explored obedience in a time when the normal rules of conduct have been suspended by unusual circumstances. In the final three verses, the psalm invokes the sun and moon as examples and models of obedience in ordinary times as well as exceptional times. The image of obedient luminaries implicitly exhorts the reader to continue in faithfulness despite the circumstances:

> Our God is great and glorious living in the highest heavens,
> who arranged the sun and moon into orbits,
> to mark the times of the hours from day to day.
> And they have not deviated from their course,
> that he appointed for them.
> Their course each day is in the fear of God,
> from the day God created them and until forever.
> And they have not wandered from the day he created them,
> from ancient generations.

---

[125] Wright, *Psalms of Solomon*, 205–207. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of the Psalms of Solomon are by Robert Wright.
[126] Atkinson, *Theodicy*, 564.

They have not veered off their course
except when God commanded them by the command of his servants.[127] (18:10–12)

In verse 10, we learn that the two major luminaries have been arranged by God into their orbits for the purpose of keeping time. What follows is a threefold utterance regarding the steadfastness of sun and moon. First, in verse 10, we hear that the sun and moon have not "deviated from their course that he appointed for them"—in Greek, *kai ou parebēsan apo odou ēs eneteilō autois*. After clarifying that the motivation for solar and lunar obedience lies in a "fear of God" (an attribution which gives the sun and moon agency comparable to that of humans, who also fear God, e.g., Deut 6:2, Deut 10:12, 2 Sam 23:3, Ps 61:5), we are told for a second time in 12a: "And they have not wandered from the day he created them"—*kai ouk eplanēthēsav aph ēs ēmeras ektisen.* Notably, the Greek verb *planao* is related to the noun *planētēs*, which may suggest a critique of the "wandering planets." (Note that no stars are mentioned as praiseworthy in this psalm.) Then, for a third time, in 12b we hear: "They have not veered off their course except when God commanded them by the command of his servants." Curiously, this final assertion of the sun and moon's faithfulness allows for an exception. Earlier, the sun and moon never deviated and never wandered, but now we are told that they sometimes veer—but *only* when commanded to do so. Without this final qualification, the veering of sun and moon would undermine the logic of the psalm. But with it, the luminaries' surprising behavior becomes the exception that proves the rule. It is with this exception that the poem (and book) comes to an end.

What does one make of such an unexpected conclusion to Psalm 18? Wright finds the clause "harmonistic but intrusive" and argues that it may be the result of a later hand.[128] I agree that 18:12b probably serves to harmonize this psalm with familiar passages of scripture that

[127] Wright, *Psalms of Solomon*, 207.
[128] Wright, *Psalms of Solomon*, 207.

contradict the claim that the sun and moon never veer from their paths. Wright offers Josh 10:12–13 and Isaiah 38:4–8 as examples, in which, first, Joshua instructs the sun to stand still for a whole day, and later, Isaiah delivers an oracle that the Lord will make a sundial turn backward. However, the book's final phrase does more than merely reconcile the psalmist's claims with those of the Bible. In fact, I would suggest interpreting it as a rhetorical linchpin for Psalm 18, even if it reflects the interpretation of a later editor. More than a throw–away clause, 18:12b is a relevant claim for the book's immediate concerns of purity, discipline, and hope. As stated earlier, the Psalms of Solomon is concerned with perfect obedience to God's commands in a time when such obedience seems impossible. The Torah demands sacrifice, but such cannot be offered in an impure temple.[129] For this reason, the book advocates for disciplines which serve the same purifying function as Torah sacrifice: prayer and fasting and a watchful expectation for the Messiah's coming. In 18:10–12, the behavior of the sun and moon are interpreted as obedience to God's commands. The sun and the moon have agency, and they exercise it in a way which is praiseworthy, even when circumstances are not ideal. In this specific way, the sun and moon in their perfect obedience serve as a model for the people's own obedience in difficult times. The people's rejection of the sacrificial system could be viewed in parallel to the sun's occasional wanderings from the path God originally intended for it. Like the sun, Jewish communities can be obedient even when they "veer off" the expected paths of temple worship. In fact, what looks like disobedience can be, in exceptional circumstances, its very opposite.

Franklyn reads these final verses a bit more straightforwardly, arguing that the surety of the closing lines serves to offer a contrast to the unreliable human behavior addressed earlier.[130] This

[129] For verses depicting the Temple's defilement, see 1:8, 2:3, and 8:11–13.
[130] Paul N. Franklyn, "The Cultic and Pious Climax of Eschatology in the Psalms of Solomon," *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* 18:1 (1987), 4–5.

is a sensible reading, since the Psalms of Solomon contains plenty of admonitions against the wicked. However, within the context of Psalm 18 itself, which is brilliant in its optimism, a more potent interpretation may be that the sun and moon serve as a model specifically for Jewish communities seeking to be obedient outside the paradigm of traditional temple worship. In either case, what is most notable for our line of inquiry is that the sun and moon are depicted with the agency to choose obedience, and they do so, always and continually—even when appearances at first indicate otherwise. When faced with the conundrum of how disorder fits into an orderly universe, the writer of Psalm 18 opts for a simple solution and attributes occasional disorder to the will of God. Ultimately, the psalmist portrays the natural world as obedient in both its orderly and disorderly manifestations. By being faithful to alternative religious practices condoned by God, the people too can be obedient even while veering from Torah commands—as long as they are guided in doing so by God's servants, among whom the psalmist is undoubtedly numbered.

Book of the Watchers. Even though 1 Enoch 2:1–5:3 depicts the natural world as ever orderly and humankind as ever disorderly, within the *Book of the Watchers* proper, some elements of the natural world can and do disobey, and they are punished for it. The most compelling examples describe the places of punishment for disobedient stars which have erred from their intended courses:

> Beyond this chasm I saw a place where there was neither firmament of heaven above, nor firmly founded earth beneath it. Neither was there water on it, nor bird; but the place was desolate and fearful. There I saw seven stars like great burning mountains. To me, when I inquired about them, the angel said, "This place is the end of heaven and earth; this has become a prison for the stars and the hosts of heaven. The stars that are rolling over in the fire, these are they that transgressed the command of the Lord in the beginning of their rising, for they did not come out at their appointed times. (18:12–14a)
>
> I traveled to where it was chaotic. And there I saw a terrible thing; I saw neither heaven above, nor firmly founded earth, but a chaotic and terrible place. And there I saw seven of

> the stars of heaven, bound and thrown in it together, like great mountains, and burning in fire…. These are the stars of heaven that transgressed the command of the Lord; they have been bound here until ten thousand years are fulfilled—the time of their sins. (21:1–3, 6)

These places of punishment are described as "barren" and empty with the exception of fire, which may draw on Zoroastrian imagery of fire as an instrument of punishment and purification.[131] It is striking that 1 Enoch describes the natural world, when ordered, with precision and thoroughness (e.g., the details with which Enoch describes the heavenly geography of 1 Enoch 17–19; see chapter four); however, when disordered, the cosmos is described in a more perfunctory manner. It is almost as if disorder is inherently less "observable."

In each of the above cases where the stars are singled out for punishment it is because, in the words of 1 Enoch 18:15, "they did not come out at the appointed time," and in 21:6, "they transgressed the command of the Lord." In fact, these stars did the very things that stars *never* do in the previous texts examined: they err. In 1 Enoch, such aberrations are presented as acts of disobedience which are worthy of punishment. Psalms of Solomon excepted, sun, moon, and stars are given special consideration in most of the texts explored above as special exemplars of moral agency, but only in 1 Enoch do some of the luminaries disobey, undergo judgment, and receive punishment. These seven luminaries are probably either the planets or the Pleiades, which stubbornly move in their own arbitrary orbits rather than the ones God ordained for the heavens.[132] In this way, the *Book of the Watchers* and the Psalms of Solomon are grappling with

---

[131] See, for example, Norman Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos, and the World to Come: The Ancient Roots of Apocalyptic Faith* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 77–104.

[132] Black (*Book of Enoch*, 160) argues for the planets, drawing a parallel with the "wandering stars" of Jude 13. Albani instead suggests the Pleiades, which is itself a group of seven stars. The seven stars in Enoch are critiqued for not appearing "at the beginning of their rising," which Albani associates with the fact that the Pleiades appear in the eastern sky prior to the sun and before any other constellation (Albani, '"Der das Siebengestirn und den Orion macht" [Am 5,8] Zur Bedeutung der Plejaden in der israelitischen Religionsgeschichte,' *Religionsgeschichte Israels: formale und materiale Aspekte.* Edited by Bernd Janowski and Matthias Köckert. [Gütersloh: Chr. Kaiser/Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1999], 168.) Coblentz Bautsch agrees with Albani, adding that "the bound stars of 1 Enoch 18:3–6 and 21:3–6 greatly resemble Enmešarra's sons confined in the form of the constellation and the fettered Pleiades in Job" (Kelley Coblentz Bautch, *A Study of the Geography of 1 Enoch 17-19: "No One Has Seen*

a similar question, namely: How do we make sense of the natural world when it does not behave as expected? For the Psalms of Solomon, this concern arises from biblical interpretation, but for the *Book of the Watchers*, from careful observation of the skies by a righteous intermediary. Since the *Book of the Watchers* is passing on the verified observations from a trustworthy source, it may feel free to innovate in a way that the Psalms of Solomon does not. When the *Book of the Watchers* interprets disorderliness as disobedience that must be punished, it also raises the question: If disorderliness is punished, does that change the value of orderliness? Could orderliness be conceived of as an act of obedience, rather than merely the default setting for the natural world? Two texts from the *Book of Parables* shed additional light on this question by addressing problems with orderliness by heightening nature's agency.

1 Enoch 69. The *Book of Parables* is widely regarded as the latest addition to 1 Enoch, in part because it is not attested at Qumran. J. T. Milik argued that the Parables were a Christian composition from the third century CE, and his view constituted the scholarly consensus for some time. Since the 1970s, the consensus has shifted, with specialists arguing for the book's Jewish origins. James Charlesworth has recently made a case for its dating either during the Herodian period (40–4 BCE) or in the early decades after the turn of the era.[133]

The *Book of Parables* presents three parables for the reader's consideration. The first

---

What I Have Seen" (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 148).

[133] Charlesworth argues that the *Parables*' portrayal of Enoch as the Son of Man would have made it "unworthy" of Christian consideration. However, Jude 1:4 refers to Enoch as "the seventh from Adam," a designation that appears in only the *Parables*—so perhaps the NT does quote from the Parables after all (James H. Charlesworth, "The Date and Provenance of the Parables of Enoch," in *Parables of Enoch: A Paradigm Shift*. [London: Bloomsbury, 2013], 40). Against the argument that its absence from Qumran indicates a later dating, Charlesworth notes that, at most, 20 per cent of the Qumran scrolls have survived, so we do not know for certain that the *Parables* did not exist there in some form. However, he agrees that even if we could prove the *Parables* were not extant at Qumran, this does not mean that they did not exist. The lunar-solar calendar attested in 1 Enoch 41 may have made the book distasteful to Qumran's solar-calendar adherents. See Charlesworth, "The Date and Provenance of the Parables of Enoch," 44–46.

(1 Enoch 38–44) echoes the events of the *Book of the Watchers* by first exploring the heavenly throne room and then narrating Enoch's cosmic journeys, in which he learns of the coming judgment as well as the secrets of the luminaries and related phenomena. The second (1 Enoch 45–57) also begins with a vision of the heavenly throne room, after which Enoch is given another tour which includes the places of punishment for the errant Watchers. The third parable (58–69) is more difficult to sum up, since it contains what Nickelsburg argues are disruptive interpolations throughout. The most significant interpolation comprises "202 lines of Ethiopic text," from 65:1–69:1.[134] The rest of the third parable is equally difficult to account for. 1 Enoch 69 begins with two angelic onomastica which contradict each other, the second of which is likely original, because it features the forbidden knowledge shared with humanity in the *Book of the Watchers*—the only angelic offense mentioned in the *Parables*. Nickelsburg calls the following section "obscure" and thinks it may contain further interpolations, but also notes that 69:13–25 shares common themes with the preceding material: namely, "the angelic revelation of heavenly secrets."[135] In fact, some of this material "may be remnants of—or replacements for lost parts of—that earlier form of the Parables" without 64:1–69:1.[136]

1 Enoch 69:13–17 is almost unintelligible. It begins by invoking the inexplicable "number of Kasbe'el"—an angel whose name does not exist in the previous onomastica. Each of the angels in the preceding lists are associated with ordinal numbers; Kasbe'el is not, though there is an unnamed number affiliated with his name. Explanations have been proffered, but

[134] Nickelsburg and Vanderkam, *1 Enoch 2*, 15. In 65:1–68:1, the parable takes on a new narrator, Noah. Noah is concerned that the earth is tilting, speaks with Enoch about it, speaks with God about the ark and the coming flood, and is the recipient of a vision narrating angelic punishment. The secondary Noahic material ends with a fragmentary "conversation" between Gabriel and Raphael, in which Gabriel sympathizes with the soon-to-be-punished Watchers (Raphael does not utter a word). It is at this point that the 202-line interpolation comes to an end.
[135] Nickelsburg and Vanderkam, *1 Enoch 2,* 17.
[136] Nickelsburg and Vanderkam, *1 Enoch 2*, 18.

some interpreters felt they were grasping at straws.[137] Whatever his number is or means, Kasbe'el "showed it to the holy ones when he was dwelling on high in glory" (69:13). Nickelsburg sums up what we do and do not know about the subsequent verses: "Kasbe'el used some sort of cunning to extract from Michael some sort of secret information about the divine name and an oath, which he then passed on to the other rebel angels who transmitted heavenly secrets to humanity. Exactly how all this worked out is a matter of dispute among commentators."[138] This is the situation in which readers find themselves when encountering the text most relevant to this study—the Cosmic Oath of 69:16b–26.

Following the unsettling narrative of Kasbe'el, Michael, and the stolen oath, the text takes a poetic turn. The poem is preceded by the phrase, "And these are the secrets of the oath." The poem is extrapolating the information Kasbe'el apparently tricked Michael into revealing:

> And <through that oath>[139] the heaven was suspended….[140]
> before the age was created and forever.
> Through it the earth was founded upon the waters,
> and from the hidden recesses[141] of the mountains come forth the beautiful waters,
> from the creation of the age and forever.
> And through that oath the sea was created,
> and as its foundation, for the time of wrath, he placed for it the sand,
> and it does not pass over it from the creation of the age and forever.
> And through that oath the <pillars of the> deep were made firm,
> and they have stood and are not shaken from their place from of old and forever.
> And through that oath the sun and the moon complete their course,
> and they do not transgress their commands from of old <and forever>.
> And through that oath the stars complete their courses,
> and he calls their names,
> and they answer him from of old and forever. (69:16b–21)

---

[137] R. H. Charles said about vs. 13: "I do not pretend to interpret this and many of the following verses" (Robert Henry Charles, *The Ethiopic Version of the Book of Enoch (1906),* [Whitefish, MT: Literary Licensing, LLC, 2014], 138–139).
[138] Nickelsburg and Vanderkam, *1 Enoch 2,* 305.
[139] Here and throughout, words between brackets indicate a textual emendation (Nickelsburg and Vanderkam, *1 Enoch 2*, 304–05).
[140] The text is disturbed here, though at most a line is lost (Nickelsburg and Vanderkam, *1 Enoch 2*, 304–05).
[141] Curly brackets indicate words supplied by Nickelsburg to fill a physical lacuna (Nickelsburg and Vanderkam, *1 Enoch 2*, xxix).

This is a poem of creation, in which the origin of the cosmos is linked to the swearing of a divine oath. The sequence of events roughly echoes the order of creation in Genesis 1: first heaven, then earth, then the sea, and later on the luminaries. In Genesis 1, God created the sky on day 2, the earth and seas on day 3, and the luminaries on day 4.[142] This poem seems to be interpreting God's cosmos-building speech-acts in Genesis 1 as an oath by which God guaranteed that the world would endure (and indeed, such an oath is made explicit by God in Gen 8:22, also in poetic verse: "As long as the earth endures / seedtime and harvest, cold and heat / summer and winter, day and night / shall not cease"). Also, the creation poem in 1 En 69 emphasizes that God is responsible for not only the material substances out of which the cosmos was formed, but also the times in which the cosmos would function "from of old and forever." Nickelsburg notes resonances with Proverbs 8:22–31 as well as Gen 1: "The repetition of the introductory phrase 'through that oath' … emphasizes the instrumentality of the oath. On the one hand, this explicates *the divine speech* in Genesis 1…. On the other hand, the *oath* plays a role in creation similar to that of *Wisdom* in Proverbs 8" (italics his).[143] If one takes the divine speech in Genesis 1 as paradigmatic, then the oath in Enoch is one–sided: God swears an oath, and it is by that oath that creation comes into being and continues to exist. The cosmos would therefore not be an active participant in the process. However, if one views the Enochic oath through the lens of Proverbs 8, the creation of the cosmos seems relational, even covenantal.

I find that the text resonates more clearly with the wisdom logic of Proverbs 8, and therefore I interpret the Enochic oath as fundamentally covenantal: here, the cosmos enters into a contract with God. Beginning in verse 18, when God creates, that which is created responds with

[142] The nature hymn in 1 Enoch 2:1–5:3 proceeds similarly, beginning with "the works of heaven" before moving on to earth, trees (also created on day 3), and bodies of water.
[143] Nickelsburg and Vanderkam, *1 Enoch 2*, 307.

the now-familiar "negative statements of obedience": the sea does not breach the boundaries of sand; the pillars are not shaken; the sun and moon do not transgress their commands. Most convincing of the covenantal nature of the oath, however, is the fact that, when God calls the names of the stars, each one answers. This point is emphasized further in verses 22–24 (though Nickelsburg argues that these verses are secondary[144]), as the water, winds, and breezes are given spirits, and the thunder and lightning, voices. Each of these elements—along with hail, hoarfrost, mist, rain, and dew—is then attributed with the ability to confess, to give thanks, and to glorify God (69:24). In 69:25—which is no longer secondary, in Nickelsburg's view—the oath is said to preserve nature itself, as well as its paths and courses: "And over them this oath is mighty, and by it they are preserved, and their paths are preserved, and their courses will not perish." The secondary material strengthens an interpretation of the oath as a covenant, but even without verses 22–24, the reader is left with an image of seas, deeps, sun, moon, and stars which take action. The cosmos is God's contractual partner—the vassal to God's suzerain.

Hahne reads this oath covenantally too, arguing that this poem in particular "uses personification to describe the perfect operation of nature, even more than 1 En 2:1–5:3. Natural objects 'obey' God's commandments … sun and moon 'give thanks and sing praises' … God made a covenant with the natural world. Nature glorifies God by keeping this covenant."[145] Though I agree in general that this poem uses personification, it is also doing something more complex. The scribes are casting nature in a covenantal role usually reserved for humans, and as such, the natural world is here presented as the ideal covenantal partner. (Covenant blessings are in abundance, but not covenant curses.) Indeed, the survival of the cosmos depends upon the

[144] Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 310. If secondary, these verses provide insight into a moment in the transmission of the text in which it was read covenantally.
[145] Hahne, *The Corruption and Redemption of Creation*, 90.

natural world's cooperation; human readers and hearers of this work are similarly meant to take on the characteristics of the natural realm. In 1 Enoch 69, the natural world is taken seriously for what it *is*. It does not seem to me that this poem is meant to be received by its readers as solely a literary image which encourages human obedience. Rather, nature possesses communal power and moral agency; this role is authenticated by the assumed veracity of the claim that Enoch is the trusted intermediary for this vision. Why should humans obey? Not just because the beauty and symmetry of the natural world inspires them to. Humans should obey because the actual, observable behavior of the natural world serves to instruct them in proper religious and ethical behavior—namely, obedience to God's commands—and a failure to do so will not bode well for their ultimate future. This interpretation of 1 Enoch 69 is strengthened in light of the way the stars are portrayed in the parable explored below.

1 Enoch 41, 43. The second parable interprets the natural world's agency with even more specificity. In 1 Enoch 41, Enoch reports what he sees on his heavenly journeys. These include the "secrets"[146] of the lightnings, thunder, winds, clouds, and dew, as well as the storehouses for winds, hail, mist, clouds, sun, and moon. Enoch recounts in detail the fidelity of these astronomical bodies to their designated courses:

> And they [the sun and the moon] do not leave the course,
> and they neither extend nor diminish their course.
> and they keep faith with one another according to the oath
> that they have <sworn> (Eth to dwell),
> And first the sun emerges and completes its path
> according to the command of the Lord of Spirits—
> and his name endures forever and ever.
> And after that I saw the invisible and visible path of the moon,
> it completes the course of its path in that place by day and by night.
> And the one is opposite the other in the presence of the Lord of Spirits;
> and they give praise and glory and do not rest, for their praise is rest for them.

[146] I examine the element of secrecy in this text in chapter five.

> For the sun (makes) many revolutions for a blessing and a curse,
> and the course of the path of the moon is light to the righteous
> and darkness to the sinners,
> In the name of the Lord who distinguished between light and darkness,
> and divided the spirits of humanity,
> and strengthened the spirits of the righteous in the name of his righteousness.
> (1 Enoch 41:3–8)

In these verses, the natural world is being presented in an orderly manner that, by this point in the chapter, seems familiar: the sun and the moon remain on the courses designed for them by God; also, just as God divides light from darkness, the deity also divides the righteous from the wicked. This chapter explicitly links the movements of the sun and the moon (as they are ordained by God) to the behavior of humans: "the course of the path of the moon is light to the righteous and darkness to sinners" (41:7). Such a statement serves to, first of all, authorize Enoch as a trustworthy intermediary, since these visions are enlightening him as to the courses of the luminaries. It also invites the reader to accept Enoch's heavenly knowledge, which cements their place among the righteous for whom this vision is intelligible.

Chapter 43 (which directly follows 41 in Nickelsburg's reconstruction) also links human behavior with the activity of the luminaries, explicitly attributing moral agency to the stars:

> And I saw other lightnings and stars of heaven;
> and I saw that he called them by their names,
> and they listened to him.
> I saw a righteous balance,
> how they are weighed according to their light,
> according to the breadth of their spaces
> and the day of their appearing.
> (I saw how) their revolution produces lightning,
> and their revolution is according to the number of the angels,
> and they keep their faith with one another.
> And I asked the angel who went with me and showed me what was hidden:
> "What are these?"
> and he said to me:
> "The Lord of Spirits has shown you a parable concerning them;
> these are the names of the holy ones who dwell on the earth
> and believe in the name of the Lord of Spirits forever and ever. (43:1–4)

In 1 Enoch 69, God calls the stars by name and they answer; in 1 Enoch 43, God calls them, and they listen. In sapiential rhetoric, "to listen" is often used as a synonym for "to obey."[147] First Enoch 43:1 might also allude to Isaiah 43:1: "But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine." In Isaiah, God calls the people by name, indicative of their covenantal relationship, God's ownership of the people, and the people's obligations to obedience. When God calls the stars by name in 1 Enoch, a similar sense of relationship is implied, and in this text, astral obedience is also evaluated. In 43:2, God measures and weighs the stars who "listen" with a "righteous balance": weighing the light they produce, measuring their spatial organization, and keeping track of whether they appear at the appropriate times. In verse 3, Enoch is shown that the stars have passed the test: not only do the stars listen to God, but they "keep their faith with one another," performing their duties in a way that does not overreach their prescribed roles.

Enoch sees, yet does not understand. In 43:4, Enoch the angel a simple question: "What are these?" The angel tells him that he has seen a parable, which implies, in this instance, a comparison, which the angel then elucidates: the hidden behavior of the stars is presented as a trope for the desired behavior of the righteous on earth; the names of the stars are analogues for the "names of the holy ones." Nickelsburg interprets these stars as the "patron angels" of the righteous:

> Reference to "what was hidden" brings us back to the same motif in 41:3 at the beginning of this section. What *is* hidden is the correspondence between the heavenly and the earthly realms. The names of the "holy ones" who dwell on earth… are related to the names of the angels, the holy ones who reside in heaven. When the righteous look to heaven at night, they see the guarantee of their protection by their patron angels, with whom they will eventually dwell in heaven…[148]

[147] Two examples (of many) include Proverbs 1:8 and Ben Sira 16:24–25.
[148] Nickelsburg and Vanderkam, *1 Enoch 2*, 146.

Angels and stars are frequently viewed in tandem in 1 Enoch: angelic beings faithfully guide the stars in their heavenly courses in the *Book of the Watchers*, and the Watchers are allegorized as fallen stars in the *Animal Apocalypse*. Whether or not the astral bodies in 1 Enoch 43 are meant to be interpreted angelically, it is clear that the stars themselves are functioning both agentially and communally; they relate to God and to one another, and they are evaluated for the quality of both relationships. In this way, the stars function as an analogy for the community of the righteous. It is indeed striking that the angel correlates the luminaries with the names of the holy ones on earth. This indicates that the mark of a "holy one"—like that of a faithful star—is obedience to God's instructions. Though humans are not commanded to model their lives after the luminaries in this parable, the wisdom of doing so is implicit in light of the impending judgment for disobedient humankind described in detail in the second parable (chs. 45–57). Furthermore, this depiction primes the reader of 1 Enoch 69 to interpret the agential and faithful natural world as an idealized covenant partner to be emulated.

The portrayal of the natural world found in 1 Enoch 43 is in continuity with other Enochic portrayals, but also takes the agential character of the natural world one step further. Harry Hahne writes about 1 Enoch 43: "Nature is not a clockwork that God set in motion, but a collection of individual conscious personalities with the power of choice who obey the Lord perfectly and operate in complete harmony with each other."[149] Hahne's claims for "individual consciousness" may venture somewhat beyond those of the text. Rather than nature's individualized choices, it is precisely nature's uniformity of purpose that is praised by ancient writers. The natural world is a model for humankind insofar as it is *both* communal *and* orderly. God's plans and purposes are for nature (and the righteous) as a whole. Exceptions do occur

[149] Hahne, *The Corruption and Redemption of Creation*, 99.

occasionally in the *Book of the Watchers*, when stars are singled out and punished for disobedience—but even these disobedient stars are consistently portrayed as a community of seven (1 Enoch 18 and 21).

Nature as Model in 1 Enoch 2:1–5:3

So far, 1 Enoch 43 is the text which most emphatically portrays the natural world as agential. However, the text that most clearly presents the natural world as a model for human righteousness (and which has cropped up now and again in discussion already) is 1 Enoch 2:1–5:3, found in the prologue to the *Book of the Watchers*. The *Book of the Watchers* includes several passages with differing compositional backgrounds: a five-chapter introduction featuring prophetic theophanic oracles combined with the wisdom poem in 2:1–5:3; an alternative telling of the traditions behind Genesis 6:1–4 and the flood narratives in 6–11; the introduction of Enoch and his commissioning to serve as an intermediary between God and the fallen Watchers in 12–16; Enoch's heavenly journeys in 17–32; and finally, another journey in which Enoch visits the abode of the luminaries in 33–36, which is thought to summarize the larger *Book of the Luminaries*.[150] Scholars agree that the *Book of the Watchers* reached its present form as early as the mid-to-late third century BCE, so even though chapters 1–5 were likely written as an introduction to the earlier Watcher tales (with the likely exception of 1 En 6–11[151]), it is possible that these introductory chapters are still older than all of 1 Enoch but the *Book of the Luminaries*.

[150] Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch* 2, 2–3.

[151] These chapters do not mention Enoch, and Nickelsburg finds it likely that they were later inserted into a collection that included 1 En 1–5 and 12–36, perhaps concluding with 1 En 81 and some of the testamentary literature in 1 En 91–94. Nickelsburg notes the frequent repetition of vocabulary and themes when comparing the prologue and the *Book of the Watchers* proper, and therefore proposes that the prologue circulated along with the *Book of the Watchers* prior to the emergence of the five-part collection 1 Enoch (Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 132).

1 Enoch 2:1–5:3. 1 Enoch 2:1–5:3 offers a paradigmatic portrayal of the natural world as a model of righteousness which humans must emulate if final judgment is to be avoided. This poem is arguably exceptional[152] in the way it explicitly compares humankind with the natural world. In these four chapters, nature is extolled as a model for human righteousness and morality. The orderliness and obedience showcased in 1 Enoch 2:1–5:3 is rhetorically rooted in observable phenomena, readily available to all who will "contemplate" and "observe." The assumption of this text is that humans have access to the "fundamental principles by which nature operates. Only in this way would it be possible to appeal to natural laws as examples of obedience to the creator and as a spur to ethical conduct."[153] In contrast to the natural world, humans are harshly critiqued in 1 Enoch 2:1–5:3; unlike the elements of the natural world, humans have strayed from the paths God intended for them. The poem's comparison between nature and humanity reaches farther than biblical comparisons. Rather than praising God's mastery of the natural world (as in Psalm 65), or adjuring humans to praise God in concert with creation (as in Psalm 148), 1 Enoch extols nature itself for its inherent righteousness. The righteousness of the natural world is made known through its orderliness, which 1 Enoch 2:1–5:3 explicitly interprets as obedience to God's commands. The natural world cooperates with its "appointed times and orders" and "carries out God's word," indicating that nature follows regulations. The verbal statements that the natural world "does not transgress" and that it "carries out and does not alter his word" indicate obedience to commandments. The chosen language consistently implies agency, and therefore, the language of obedience is used to characterize what might otherwise (as in Ben Sira 42–43) be

[152] "An appeal to the realm of nature is not unknown in the prophets, but the long citation in 2:1–5:3 is without analogy and is probably related to the author's belief that 'the sinners' have violated God's laws about the times and the seasons…" (Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1,* 131).
[153] VanderKam, *Enoch and the Growth*, 120–21.

described as mere orderliness. The use of such language is a rhetorical choice on behalf of the writer, and it carries significance.

This wisdom poem appeals to human powers of observation to substantiate its claims. Humans are directly addressed and commanded to contemplate all God's works, which "do not alter their paths" (2:1)—these include seasons, trees, seas, and rivers. The poem's description of seasonal precipitation and the distinctive behaviors of various species of trees are offered with a striking verisimilitude. The writer appears concerned to speak accurately about the actual behavior of the natural world, which is rooted in observable phenomena, readily available to all who will "contemplate." The poem proceeds with a recitation of the specific "works" which the reader should observe, beginning with "the signs[154] of summer and winter"—specific examples of orderly seasonal changes. The signs of winter are largely related to the prevalence of precipitation: the earth is filled with water in the winter; "clouds and dew and rain" are said to "rest upon" the earth at this time (2:3).[155] Yet another sign of winter is the withered appearance of the trees, and the way in which they are "stripped" of their leaves (with the notable exception of the 14 coniferous varieties). Like the descriptions of seasonal precipitation which precede and follow, these depictions of the distinctive behaviors of various species of trees appear realistic. The reader's own experience is cited when she is asked to "observe the signs of summer… whereby the sun burns and scorches, and you seek shelter and shade from its presence, and the earth burns with scorching heat, and you are unable to tread on the dust or the rock because of the burning" (4:1). The key opposition between summer and winter correlates to the opposition between water (coolness) and sun (heat). Human experience serves as a lynchpin for the poet's

[154] The author's use of "sign" in this poem is explored further in chapter three.
[155] The movements of the clouds and the dispensing of dew and rain—the specific machinations by which they are dispersed—are of great concern later in 1 Enoch as well, particularly in the *Book of the Luminaries*.

description, with the second–person plural verbs calling to mind the experiences of the audience. Like the cosmic oath in 1 En 69, this is both a personification of the natural world *and* an interpretation—a "reading"—of nature from the perspective of the human eye. Indeed, personification becomes necessary if regularity is viewed within the interpretive category of obedience.

In 5:1, the reader learns that the reason she is being instructed to contemplate the natural world is so that she may "understand that he who lives for all the ages made all these works." The obedient behavior of the natural world is therefore not only a model for human righteousness; it is also a means of revelation. Contemplation of nature's steadfastness will reveal the signature of its creator. The command to "observe and contemplate" is comprehensive, temporally and spatially: not only are humans to observe the cosmos in its entirety, but they are to observe it throughout all of history, "from the beginning until the consummation" (2:2). All of time is linked with every work which God has made. 1 Enoch 5 extrapolates this connection: "And his works take place from year to year, and they all carry out their works for him, and their works do not alter, but they all carry out his word" (5:2).

Starting in 5:4, this wisdom poem's command to "contemplate" takes a sharp rhetorical turn into prophetic indictment. Here, nature's orderly behavior not only reveals something of God's intentions for the cosmos; it also serves as a foil for the disorderly behavior of humankind. In terms of genre and content, chapter 5:4–9 has more in common with the oracle and theophany of chapter 1 than it does with the wisdom poem that precedes it. In 5:4, the actions of the audience are critiqued as the opposite of those of the natural world: "But you have not stood firm nor acted according to his commandments; but you have turned aside, you have spoken proud

and hard words with your unclean mouth against his majesty." Here, the audience of this wisdom poem is implicated in its rebuke: the erring ones are the emphatic "you."

Though it is clear that the poem ends with a resounding critique of its audience, the identity of that audience remains ambiguous. Nickelsburg regards it as shifting: sometimes sinners are addressed, and sometimes the righteous.[156] In 1:2b, Enoch states: "Not for this generation do I expound, but concerning one that is distant I speak. And concerning the chosen I speak now, and concerning them I take up my discourse." From this statement, one would expect the proclamations that follow to narrate the fate of the future righteous only; however, the ensuing material speaks of both blessings for the righteous and curses for the wicked in a formulaic manner resonant with apocalyptic discourse and deuteronomic "two ways" theology. Additionally, rather than speaking only of "distant" generations, the wisdom poem itself observes the world as it is in the present readerly moment, in the current generation. Who then is rebuked in ch. 5—the wicked who will face judgment, or the potential righteous who must change their ways? It could be either, or both. By invoking nature as a model for humankind, the scribe unfurls an imaginative world in which all of humanity is called to remain steadfast in their observation and imitation of the natural world: the righteous, so that they will continue to be so; the wicked, so that they may change their fate.

When read as a prelude to the tale of the fallen Watchers, this wisdom poem—sandwiched in between the prophetic genres of theophany and oracle (chapters 1 and 5:5–9)—may serve to offer a mediating perspective on the problem of evil that combines prophecy's eschatological tendencies with wisdom's emphasis on the revelatory potential of the quotidian, both of which place the responsibility for evil firmly in the realm of human action. A prelude that emphasizes

[156] He cites Isaiah 65 as a stylistic model for such a shift in address during a prophetic pronouncement (Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 129–32).

the wickedness of humankind might gently guide readers of the *Book of the Watchers* away from blaming the presence of evil completely on the Watchers and their progeny. 1 Enoch 2:1–5:3 points to the one (apparently) incorruptible portion of the universe to which human beings have access—the natural world, which demonstrates that the way to peace is through obedience. In 1 Enoch 1–5, hope for the readers is anchored in two places: first, in the reliable sage and visionary Enoch himself, the giver of this message; and second, in the natural world as described in this text, and which they are invited to "read" all around them as a living commentary on the poem and its claims.

1 Enoch 101. The claims of 1 Enoch 2:1–5:3 reverberate later in the book, in the *Epistle of Enoch* (1 Enoch 92–105). The last of the five books which comprise 1 Enoch, the *Epistle* is commonly dated to the second century BCE. These chapters are preceded by a testamentary introduction in ch. 91, in which Enoch offers parting words to his children before his death. The *Epistle* serves to interpret the consequences of the visions Enoch has recorded previously in the *Book of the Watchers*: namely, judgment for the righteous and the wicked. The *Epistle* consists of an introduction (ch. 92), the Apocalypse of Weeks (93:1–10 and 91:11–17), a bit of "two–ways instruction" (94:1–5), and a recitation of woes for the sinners and exhortations for the righteous, in which the role of the natural world plays a key role. The woes and exhortations build up to a "dispute" in 102:4–104:8 regarding retribution and judgment, which will be explored further in chapter four of this dissertation. The conclusion of the epistle addresses the ways in which Enoch's teachings are to be disseminated throughout the generations.

In 1 Enoch 101, the natural world is presented as an instrument with which God judges (a category explored further in chapter four), but starting in verse 4, the rhetoric of the passage

shifts. The scribe relays an anecdote of sailors who fear the sea, and in the event of a storm, do not hesitate to throw their possessions overboard in order to secure a chance at survival. The scribe then posits that human fear of God must logically surpass the sailor's fear of the sea, since the sea is merely one of the works of God. It is at this point, in vs. 7, that the natural world exhibits an emotional reaction to God's commands, that of fear and obedience—a reaction that is instructive to humankind: "At his rebuke, [the sea and all its waters] fear and dry up, and the fish die and all that is in it; but you sinners on the earth do not fear him" (101:7). Here, the sea reacts both emotionally (in fear and terror) and with instantaneous action (it dries up). Hahne interprets this depiction as "instant obedience" to God's commands.[157] Such a reading is plausible, though this passage offers only an imperfect parallel to 1 Enoch 2:1–5:3. In the *Epistle*, sinners are instructed to behave like captains who fear the sea, while in 1 Enoch 2:1–5:3, the waters themselves are the model to be emulated. Implicitly, however, 1 Enoch 101 presents the seas themselves as most worthy of emulation, because the seas fear God (101:7) in much the same way that captains fear the sea. Additionally, 1 Enoch 101 alludes explicitly and repeatedly to the wisdom poem in the prologue.[158] 1 Enoch 101 thus presents a complex and multi–layered image of obedience, rooted in the natural world's behavior: humans should fear God like captains fear the sea, and in turn, captains fear the sea like the sea fears God—viscerally and promptly.

[157] Hahne, *The Corruption and Redemption of Creation*, 65.

[158] "Throughout chap. 101 the author employs the imagery and rhetoric of the wisdom tradition, particularly as it is used in chaps. 1–5. Here as in the prologue, the author cites the obedience of nature as a foil to the disobedience of the sinners and as grounds for the judgment that will befall them. Occasional phrases and the imagery in general recall the prologue and suggest ominous extension of its teaching: creation will respond obediently when the Creator calls on it to exact judgment from the sinners" (Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 507).

Conclusions

1 Enoch 2:1–5:3 depicts the natural world as a model for human righteousness that prioritizes nature's genuine ability to obey or disobey, thereby crediting nature with a significant measure of agency, matched (even surpassed) only in 1 Enoch 43 and perhaps also chapter 69. But, in Second Temple literature, nature is not solely a source of instruction for humanity, freely choosing its own destiny as humans do (but generally making much better choices): the natural world is more expansive than that, and more contradictory. Though nature is intended to be an orderly model for humankind, one can see how it might choose disorder (in the *Book of the Watchers*) or how it might be co–opted by the divine will (in the *Psalms of Solomon*). Taken together, all the texts examined here provide an especially "thick" depiction of the natural world and make claims that seem unfamiliar when compared with depictions of nature in earlier biblical texts. In the Second Temple texts explored in this chapter, the natural world is humanity's behavioral model as well as the earthly counterpart of heaven's deepest mysteries. In earlier biblical literature, the natural world is often cast as humanity's foe who is mastered by God, or as humanity's companion in praising God, but rarely as humanity's exemplar.[159] In the Second Temple period, and especially in Jewish apocalyptic literature, the natural world is defined—primarily so, I will argue later in this dissertation—as a model for human righteousness. All the other roles it plays—as a sign (see chapter three), as a witness and an instrument of judgment (see chapter four), as a heavenly mystery (see chapter five)—are rooted

[159] There is one biblical exception. In Job 12:7–8, Job exhorts his friends: "But ask the animals, and they will teach you; the birds of the air, and they will tell you; ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you." Here, the animal world is offered as an exemplar-instructor; however, it is not the orderliness and obedience of the creatures which is instructive. Rather, in Job 12, it is their knowledge of God that should teach humankind: "Who among these does not know that the LORD has done this?" (12:9). Job is insisting that God is the one with control over all life, for good or ill; the animals know this truth better than humans.

in its fundamental identity as God's orderly, obedient creation meant to function as an exemplar and model for all humankind.

Excursus: Sifre to Deuteronomy and 1 Clement

Portrayals of the parabolic capacities of the natural world endured through decades and centuries. First Clement, a Christian text usually dated to the end of the first century CE, lauds the commands of God that hold the obedient cosmos together, echoing the rhetoric of 1 Enoch 69. Likewise, Sifre Deuteronomy—complete by the third century CE but probably in formation earlier—explains that the natural world obeys the commands of God even though it is unmotivated by reward or punishment. Both texts have significant commonalities with the other texts explored in this chapter. I will begin with the Sifre.

Sifre Deut. 32:1. The Sifre to Deuteronomy preserves thirteen interpretations of Deuteronomy 32:1, a passage in which Moses invokes an oath formula, calling heaven and earth to be witnesses to his forthcoming speech, which recounts the story of Israel in brief and issues a call to renewed obedience.[160] The Sifre's sixth interpretation calls upon Israel "to observe heaven and earth, standing for nature as a whole, to learn from their exemplary compliance with God's laws."[161] The sixth interpretation follows in full:

---

[160] In fact, Moses compares his forthcoming words to elements of the natural world, specifically to dew, rain, and showers: "Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak; let the earth hear the words of my mouth. May my teaching drop like the rain, my speech condense like the dew; like gentle rain on grass, like showers on new growth. For I will proclaim the name of the LORD; ascribe greatness to our God!" (Deut. 32:1–3).

[161] Steven D. Fraade, *From Tradition to Commentary: Torah and Its Interpretation in the Midrash Sifre to Deuteronomy* (New York: SUNY Press, 1991), 137. The sixth interpretation's encouragement for Israel to learn from nature stands in contrast to the Sifre's first interpretation, which is unambiguous in its condemnation of Israel's ability to learn from any part of the created order, not even from "a lowly ant." In fact, in the first (and lengthiest) interpretation, Israel's behavior is presented as "becoming corrupt" in relation to each part of the natural world: the heavens, the earth, the roads, the nations, the mountains, the cattle, the wild animals, the fish, and the ant: Israel "became corrupt" in relation to each of these in turn. The result is that each element of the greater cosmos is

> [A] Another interpretation of "Give ear, O heavens": The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Moses: Tell Israel, "Look at the heavens which I created to serve you. Have they [ever] changed their [assigned] course (*middātām*)? Or has the sun said: 'I will not rise from the East to illuminate the whole world'? No, as it says, 'The sun rises and sets' (Eccl. 1:5). And what is more, it is happy to perform My will, as it is said, 'It is like a bridegroom [coming out of his chamber]' (Ps. 19:6)."
>
> [B] "Let the earth hear the utterances of my mouth": Look at the earth which I created to serve you. Has it [ever] changed its [assigned] course? Have you sown seed in it which it did not cause to sprout? Or have you sown wheat and it brought forth barley? Or has the cow said, "I will not thresh and I will not plow today"? Or has the donkey said, "I will not carry or go"? And similarly, concerning the sea it says, "Do you not fear Me, says the LORD; [will you not tremble before Me, who set the sand for a boundary to the sea?]" (Jer. 5:22). For from the time that I decreed it [to remain within its boundaries], has it changed its ways, saying, "I will l rise and flood the world"? No, for it says, "I broke it with my decree…and I said, 'This far you may come and no further; here your surging waves will be stayed'" (Job 38:10–11). Furthermore, the sea is distressed but is unable to do anything, as it is said, "Tough [its waves] toss, they cannot prevail" (Jer. 5:22).
>
> [C] We can argue a fortiori: If these, which are not liable to gain or loss, which when worthy do not receive reward and when sinful do not receive punishment, and which are not concerned about sons or daughters, do not change their [assigned] course, then you, who when worthy receive reward and when sinful receive punishment, and who are concerned about sons and daughters, how much more so should you not change your [assigned] courses!"[162]

Here, rather than acting only as a witness to the oath of Moses, the created order is presented as an incorruptible model for Israel, from whom the nation must learn. Unmotivated by reward or punishment, the natural world obeys God's orders in a disinterested manner. The implication is that if nature can behave in an orderly manner, how much more motivated should humans be to do so: unlike the natural world, humans are destined for judgment, and thus it is a matter of some urgency that they follow nature's good example.

Fraade notes the similarities between 1 Enoch 2:1–5:3 and the sixth interpretation of the Sifre commentary to Deut. 32:1, most importantly that "[b]oth texts implore Israel to attend

---

rendered unqualified to serve its divinely intended role as witness to Israel's covenant with God. Israel's hope exists now in an eschatological vision of a new heavens and new earth (cf. Isaiah 65:17, quoted in this first interpretation).

[162] Unless otherwise indicated, translations of Sifre Deuteronomy are from Fraade, *From Tradition to Commentary*. This particular translation is found on pages 136–137.

visually to nature, calling attention first to heaven ... and then to earth…."[163] Fraade also attends to the differences, one of which is as follows:

> Unlike the apocalypse, the [sixth interpretation of the] commentary raises a series of rhetorical questions (eight) and cites verses from Scripture (five) in response to those questions. If in both passages nature is portrayed as having personality, as choosing to obey God, then its animation is even more striking in the commentary where the elements of nature themselves speak (four times). In both of these ways the commentary may be said to be more dialogical–drawing together a variety of 'voices' that in turn draw the student of the text into engagement with its discourse.[164]

By literally putting words into the mouths of the elements of the natural world, the sixth interpretation does for the reader's inner ear what 1 Enoch 2:1–5:3 did for the reader's inner eye: the reader is here invited to listen to the obedient proclamations of the natural world. "Give ear" is the hallmark command of this sifre, just as "contemplate and observe" is of 1 En 2:1–5:3. Moses's commands that the natural world "give ear" in Deut 32:1 are transmuted to the human ear in Sifre Deut., which shares the rhetorical aim of 1 Enoch 2:1–5:3: to induce obedience in its audience, citing the natural world as the perfect and ultimate example.

1 Clement. 1 Clement, a Christian text dating from the end of the first century CE, paints a detailed picture of the obedient behavior of day and night, sun and moon and "dancing" stars, the earth, the abyss and nether regions, the sea and ocean and what lies beyond it, the seasons, and the winds. Chapter 20 is most relevant to these matters:

---

[163] Fraade, *From Tradition to Commentary*, 153.

[164] Fraade, *From Tradition to Commentary*, 154. Fraade goes on to note that the most significant difference between these two texts is that 1 Enoch addresses the unrighteous directly "from the perspective of the sectarian 'chosen': observe the regularity with which God's creation adheres to its appointed ways, for thereby you will recognize that you, unlike us, have been doomed to perdition for changing your ways in relation to God's immutable commands. The commentary, through its rhetorical questions and *a fortiori* argument (evoking concern for "your children"), reveals its exhortative rather than self–justifying rhetoric, calling on Israel to obey God's laws, rather than condemning those who have not" (154). Given Nickelsburg's "dual audience" theory for 1 Enoch 2:1–5:3 (see *1 Enoch 1,* 132–34), I do not agree with Fraade's assessment of the strictly sectarian nature of 1 Enoch 2:1–5:3. Yes, there is a dualistic differentiation between the righteous and the unrighteous. But 1 Enoch 1–2 is exhortative, not merely self–congratulatory. For this reason, I find the variety of voices drawn into Sifre Deut is actually the more interesting distinction between the passages.

> The heavens, which move about under his management, are peacefully subject to him. Day and night complete the racecourse laid out by him, without impeding one another in the least. Sun and moon and the chorus of stars roll along the tracks that have been appointed to them, in harmony, never crossing their lines, in accordance with the arrangement he has made. By his will and in the proper seasons, the fertile earth brings forth its rich abundance of nourishment for humans, beasts, and all living things that dwell on it, without dissenting or altering any of the decrees he has set forth. Both the inscrutable regions of the abysses and the indescribable realms of the depths are constrained by the same commands. The basin of the boundless sea, established by his workmanship to hold the waters he collected, does not cross its restraining barriers, but acts just as he ordered. For he said, "You shall come this far, and your waves shall rash down within you." The ocean, boundless to humans, and the worlds beyond it are governed by the same decrees of the Master. The seasons—spring, summer, fall, and winter—succeed one another in peace. The forces [*or: stations*] of the winds complete their service in their own proper season, without faltering. And the eternal fountains, created for enjoyment and health, provide their life-giving breasts to humans without ceasing. The most insignificant creatures associate with one another [*or: have sexual intercourse*] in harmony and peace. The great Creator and Master of all appointed all these things to be in peace and harmony, bringing great benefits to all things, but most especially to us, who flee to his compassion through our Lord Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the majesty forever and ever. Amen.[165]

In this chapter, the heavens are "managed" by God; the divine will orders their movements. The nourishment that the earth brings forth accords with God's directives; "the same commands" govern the abyss. The waters are obedient to the boundaries God sets for it. Seasons succeed one another "in peace"; winds and fountains neither falter nor fail. In 1 Enoch 69, the workings of the natural world—luminaries, waters, winds, and meteorological elements—are governed by an oath. Similarly, in 1 Clement, God "appointed all these things." In 1 Enoch, the language of oath implies two parties who enter into an agreement, and the agency of the natural world is highlighted by its ability to answer God, to speak forth God's praise (69:24). In 1 Clement, the mastery of God over the natural world is emphasized more than nature's obedience and agency, and yet the natural world obeys just as perfectly.

---

[165] Bart D. Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers, Vol. 1* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 73–75.

The next chapter elucidates humankind's potential for disobedience in light of nature's obedience:

> Loved ones, you should take care that his many acts of kindness do not lead to judgment against all of us. For this will happen if we fail to conduct ourselves worthily of him and to do the things that are good and pleasing before him, in harmony. For somewhere it says, "The Spirit of the Lord is a lamp that searches out the recesses deep within us." We should realize how near he is, and that none of our thoughts or the disputes we have had is hidden from him. And so it is right for us not to desert from his will. (21:1–4)[166]

Chapter 21 portends the possibility of God's judgment and adjures humans to live in obedience in order to avoid this condemnation. In 1 Clement 20, the natural world exemplified such perfect obedience, and though humans are not explicitly commanded to model their behavior after the natural world, a comparison is implicit—especially since the model behavior of the natural world is said to "[bring] great benefits to all things, but most especially to us [humankind]" (20:11). Indeed, the good behavior of the natural world results in practical benefits for humankind; the reliability of seasons and winds and harvest bring prosperity and well-being. However, 1 Clement 21 warns lest such blessings become condemnations by highlighting the way human behavior pales in comparison to that of nature.

In both 1 Clement and Sifre Deuteronomy, the natural world is portrayed as a model for humankind in texts that urge readers to adopt righteous behavior. Though nature's orderliness is important in biblical texts, the natural world is never portrayed as a model for human righteousness in the Bible, nor is it portrayed with enough agency that elements of nature can be said to obey God. The earliest extant example of an obedient and agential natural world is found in 1 Enoch. Nevertheless, the image of nature as obedient exemplar persisted not only throughout the literature of the Second Temple period, but is also occasionally present in some form in early rabbinic and Christian writings.

---

[166] Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 75.

CHAPTER THREE

THE NATURAL WORLD AS SIGN IN SECOND TEMPLE JEWISH LITERATURE

The natural world is frequently presented as predictable and orderly in Second Temple Jewish literature (i.e., 1 Enoch 2–5), but there are exceptions to the rule. In chapter 2 of this dissertation, I explored several texts which allow for the possibility of disorder and chaos within nature while maintaining that the usual character of the natural world is one of order and predictability. For instance, the stars "never relax" in Ben Sira 43 and the luminaries "do not change the order of their nature" in Testament of Naphtali 3. In both cases, by saying what heavenly bodies do *not* do, the texts open up a conceptual space within which the disorder of nature is one possible outcome. Even 1 Enoch 2–5, which wholeheartedly extols orderly nature as a model for human righteousness, includes the verbal statements "do not transgress" and "do not alter"—indicating obedience by naming its opposites. Ben Sira 16 cracks open the possibility of disorder further by insisting that God's works "never disobey" God's word, implicitly endowing the elements of nature with the capacity for choice. Such insistence on the good behavior of the natural world raises the question: did the scribes protest too much? Indeed, other texts do not hesitate to depict disobedience on the part of the natural world. *The Book of the Watchers* portrays the punishment of errant stars (1 Enoch 18:14–16; 21:1–6), thereby interpreting their disorder as disobedience which requires God's judgment. In 1 Enoch 2–5, human disobedience and disorder bring judgment. This view is echoed in late additions to the *Book of the Luminaries* (1 Enoch 80:1–8), in which the angel Uriel states that nature has become disordered as a result of human sin and inconstancy, as well as in 4 Ezra, which depicts a corrupted world resulting from human sin (9:18–20). In the *Book of the Watchers* proper, the

illicit activities of fallen angels and their progeny result in violence upon the earth, which disrupts nature's courses; in 1 Enoch 7 and 15, the earth itself "brings accusation" against those who corrupt it. Though the texts agree that nature can and does disobey, they are not unified in whom they blame for the natural world's disorderly conduct—the stars themselves, humans in their corruption, or the fallen Watchers. Psalms of Solomon 18:10–12 offers another option, stating outright what other texts might imply—that even when the luminaries behave badly, they do so at God's command. In other portions of 1 Enoch, various Sibylline Oracles, and 4 Ezra, disruptions in the natural order are not blamed on human or angelic error, but rather, when disordered, nature serves as a sign, most often signaling impending judgment, and sometimes caused by God. This chapter will explore the latter instances of disorder, in which the natural world functions as a sign. Like Psalms of Solomon 18, this set of texts does not suggest disobedience on the part of the natural world, but rather maintains the pristine character of the natural world as essentially reliable and whose behavior is more or less explicable. In these depictions, the natural world is an instrument in divine hands, downplaying any agency suggested by most of the texts examined in chapter one of this dissertation.

In the Bible and Second Temple Jewish literature, the natural world operates as a sign in at least three ways. First and frequently, nature is a signpost for the underlying orderliness of the cosmos. Nature as signpost indicates the advent of regular and recurring events. This category largely corresponds with the natural world when it is functioning in its intended orderly manner; notable exemplars include Genesis 1:14–16 and Ben Sira 43:6–7. In such cases, changes in the natural world (particularly the stars) are predictable, indicating the proper times for festivals or ushering in the seasons. Some of the texts featuring nature as a signpost focus on ritual or calendrical concerns, with proper worship being inextricably linked to its timing. When

functioning in this category, nature proceeds both as expected by humankind and in harmony with divine intention. Second, sometimes the natural world functions as one of the "signs and wonders" (*ʾōtōt wĕmōpᵉtîm*), an image most often associated with the divine contests between YHWH and Pharaoh in the plague narratives (Exod 7:14–11:10). In these cases, the deity intervenes in nature's usual orderly processes for the express purpose of demonstrating divine power. Third, especially in Second Temple apocalyptic literature, the natural world functions as an omen, its aberrant behavior usually indicating that judgment is near. In this chapter I will argue that, when nature functions as a sign in apocalyptic scenarios, it is participating in the ancient category of omina.

What does it mean for the natural word to function as a sign in early Jewish literature? The English word "sign" does not overlap perfectly with the Hebrew *ʾōt*, which has a diverse semantic range in biblical and Second Temple texts. Granted, both the Hebrew *ʾōt* and the English *sign* are bound by the idea of identification[167]—a sign is an identifier, a marker, a pointer. Biblical signs can point backward to a significant past event or forward to an anticipated future; they can also heighten the significance of divine intervention in the present moment. Biblical signs are sometimes concrete physical markers: military banners are "signs" that proclaim the allegiance of the troops (Num 2:2; Psalm 74:4); the mark of Cain is a "sign" that protects him from harm (Gen 4:15); Joshua and company set up stones as a "sign" of their deliverance and entry into Canaan (Josh 4:6).

The majority of biblical signs refer to miraculous works, or wonders,[168] which point toward the power of the deity, and sometimes more specifically, the deity's superiority over a

---

[167] F. Stolz, "ʾôt," in *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, ed. Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1997), 69.
[168] Robert Alden, "ʾôt," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1980), 19.

rival. In a related sense, signs sometimes work to authenticate a messenger. The angel of YHWH performs a sign at Gideon's request in order to prove the veracity of his claimed identity (Judges 6:17); YHWH turns back the shadow on a sundial in order the authenticate the prophetic message of Isaiah (Isa 38:4–8). The symbolic actions performed by prophets are also sometimes called signs, and as such, they serve to concretely enact the prophet's message. In the Bible, *ʾōt* is also frequently applied to recurring events or monuments that serve a memorial function. The Priestly source names both the rainbow (Gen 9:12–17) and the Sabbath (Exod 31:13; Ezek 20:12, 20) as signs that refer back to the covenant relationship between YHWH and Israel; though the first is an unpredictable natural phenomenon and the second a weekly calendrical ritual celebration, both indicate the same covenant relationship. Circumcision—a once-per-life-per-male event—is similarly portrayed as a covenantal sign (Gen 17:11). Festivals function as *ʾōtōt* when they memorialize significant past events in the timeline of Israel. Monuments are said to function as *ʾōtōt* for future generations, reminding them of the event thus memorialized. The covenantal blessings and curses of Deuteronomy 28 can function as *ʾōtōt* for the nation: whichever comes to pass points toward the past (dis)obedience that occasioned it. Similarly, the aggression of Israel's enemies is also sometimes called an *ʾōt* for Israel, presumably indicating divine disfavor or covenant disobedience (1 Sam 14:10).

At least once, biblical *ʾōtōt* refer to astrological phenomena functioning as omens. Jeremiah 10:2 reads: "Thus says the LORD: Do not learn the way of the nations, or be dismayed at the signs of the heavens; for the nations are dismayed at them." Here, the only time that the phrase "the signs of the heavens" is used in the Bible, the described phenomena are associated with the practices (and distress) of other nations, behavior which is not suitable for the audience. The *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* interprets Isaiah 44:25 as an astrological portent

as well,[169] but other sources[170] regard it as a sign more generally. At times in the history of interpretation, Genesis 1:14 has been interpreted in a similar light, as referring to the luminaries as astrological signs. However, the only uncontested example of biblical *ʾōtōt* as omina is in Jeremiah, and it is a discouraged practice among the implied Judahite audience.

In Second Temple extra-biblical Jewish literature, virtually all of the above resonances of *ʾōtōt* are preserved in one text or another: military banners in 1QM, 4QM, and 1QpHab; "wonders" in 4Q185 and other scrolls invoking the plague traditions; "structuring signs"[171] which point toward the inherent order of the cosmos in 1QH^a 20; Enoch himself is "a sign of knowledge" for all generations in Sir 44:16, as is the flood (rather than its antithesis, the rainbow) two verses later. One category of *ʾōtōt* which is scarce in the Bible is plentiful in extra-biblical texts: omina, in 1Q27; 4Q416; 1 Enoch 72, 80, 83; Sibylline Oracles 2 and 5; 4 Ezra 5–7; and 2 Baruch 25. It is striking that signs-as-omina occur chiefly in apocalyptic texts and almost always feature the natural world. In fact, in apocalypses, natural world omina become the chief category within which God's *ʾōtōt* are understood. The natural world itself functions more broadly in Second Temple literature, as the other chapters of this dissertation demonstrate; however, when the texts present an omen that foretells the coming judgment, the natural world is almost always the omen's preferred vehicle.

Signs in Mesopotamian and Greco-Roman Traditions

Conceptions of the natural world as sign and omen are far from unique to Jewish materials. Similar conceptions of nature are found in Mesopotamian divinatory texts, as well as

---

[169] Stolz, "ʾôt," 69.
[170] Alden, "ʾôt," 19.
[171] Michael Becker, "ʾôt," in *Theologisches Wörterbuch Zu Den Qumrantexten*, ed. Heinz-Josef Fabry and Ulrich Damen (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2013), 118.

Greco-Roman philosophical treatises. The practice of Mesopotamian divination centered on the interpretation of omens. The extant literature, most from the seventh century BCE,[172] is replete with formalized lists of signs, many of which are astronomical. According to the Enuma Elish, the celestial signs in particular, by which gods communicate with humankind, were set in place as part of the original structure of the created order: "[T]he norms had been fixed [and] all their portents" (Tablet VI 78).[173] In the Enuma Anu Enlil Tablet 22, the "celestial signs … are conceived as coming into being simultaneously with the creation of heaven itself."[174] In Genesis 1, though the luminaries are not created until the fourth day, they alone are called "signs," suggesting that also in a Jewish worldview, the luminaries are imbued with the potential to facilitate communication between the heavenly and earthly realms.

In Mesopotamian celestial divination, the common assumption is that the gods were physically manifest in the stars. Francesca Rochberg explains:

> …[I]solating the heavenly bodies, as purely physical things, from the gods, as agents immanent in those physical things or natural phenomena, is a modern manner of speaking that has no counterpart in the celestial omens. Our separation of the knowledge of the heavenly phenomena from the predictions derived from them, on the other hand, seems to be better supported by the bipartite form of the omens themselves, that is, the protasis, containing the "if-clause" in which the phenomena were described, followed by the apodosis, containing the corresponding "then-clause," or prediction.[175]

Within any given omen, the protasis and apodosis roughly correspond to the heavenly and earthly realms, with the protasis indicating the activity (assumed to be "caused" by the gods) in the heavenly realm, and the apodosis extrapolating its consequences for human sphere of

---

[172] Francesca Rochberg, "Heaven and Earth: Divine-Human Relations in Mesopotamian Celestial Divination," in *Prayer, Magic, and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World*, ed. Scott Noegel, Joel Walker, and Brannon Wheeler (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 173.
[173] Translation by Rochberg, "Heaven and Earth," 180.
[174] Francesca Rochberg, *The Heavenly Writing: Divination, Horoscopy, and Astronomy in Mesopotamian Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 198.
[175] Rochberg, "Heaven and Earth," 170.

experience and expectation.[176] Though gods produce signs in Mesopotamian thought, the future is not therefore utterly predetermined.[177] The consequences narrated by an omen's apodosis can sometimes be averted with proper apotropaic rituals.[178] In other words, divination is an act of communication which has the potential to change divine intention and avert judgment.[179]

Reading the stars is but one way to discern divine messages in Babylonian tradition. In some texts, the gods are also depicted as writing on the innards of animals for the sake of communicating with human diviners. In one psalm, Shamash "…write[s] upon the flesh inside the sheep [i.e., the entrails]; you establish [there] an oracular decision"[180] In another text, Shamash and Adad work via extispicy to reveal an omen in a sheep's liver for Esarhaddon.[181] It is thus not only in the heavens that the gods are thought to manipulate the natural world in order to communicate with humankind, but also within animal bodies on earth.

In addition to inheriting and adapting Babylonian ideas about celestial omina, Jewish apocalyptic literature also interacted with a number of influential streams of Greco-Roman thought, chiefly Epicureanism and Stoicism, which are themselves rooted in earlier Greek philosophical movements.[182] In Greco-Roman traditions, the efficacy of omina are rooted in the

---

[176] Rochberg, "Heaven and Earth," 176–77.
[177] Alan Lenzi also points out that "[o]f course, the apodoses of omens are not to be treated as simple historical fact. For early on… the apodoses were classified as either favorable or unfavorable and the specific circumstance to which they pointed became irrelevant to the purposes of the diviner. The apodoses were retained, however, for perhaps 'didactic' or 'paradigmatic' purposes" (Alan Lenzi, *Secrecy and the Gods: Secret Knowledge in Ancient Mesopotamia and Biblical Israel* [Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2008], 45).
[178] Rochberg, "Heaven and Earth," 182.
[179] Rochberg, "Heaven and Earth," 181.
[180] Translation by Stephen Langdon, *Babylonian Penitential Psalms to Which Are Added Fragments of the Epic of Creation From Kish in the Weld Collection of the Ashmolean Museum* (Paris: P. Geunthner, 1927), pl. 30 K.2824:12.
[181] This text is found in Erich Ebeling, *Die Akkadische Gebetsserie "Handerhebung"* (Berlin, Akademie-Verlag, 1953), 110. See Lenzi, *Secrecy and the Gods*, 83.
[182] The earliest Greek source to address the fate of the cosmos is Hesiod's *Theogonia*, a divine genealogy that interprets Zeus's reign as ushering in a state of permanent cosmic stability. The views of pre-socratic philosophers are only available as preserved in later sources, but according to Aristotle, they viewed the cosmos as having both beginning and end, as being both "generated and destructible." According to Aristotle, three Milesian philosophers of the sixth-century BCE—Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes—interpret the cosmos as itself a living organism,

indisputably orderly yet finite nature of the cosmos. Though little remains of Epicurus's own writings, Lucretius made Epicurean thought available to a wide readership in the first century BCE in his work *De rerum natura*.[183] Like the pre-Aristotelian Milesians, Epicureans viewed the cosmos as having a life cycle like any other biological organism, developing in three stages: first, a growth to maturity; second, a gradual decline; and third, a rapid decline.[184] According to *De rerum natura*, the cosmos was already thought to be in decline:

> [Lucretius] cites as evidence of the world's terminal decline the smallness of creatures produced by the earth now in comparison to times before (2.1150–1152). He mentioned too the complaints of the farmer that the land is less fruitful than in the days of his father and in times past, and the lament of the vine-grower that the vines are less productive than in days gone by (2.1160–1170).[185]

Lucretius's argument appears again in the work of Pliny the Elder, who writes that the stature of humans has declined over the centuries (*Naturalis historia* 7.73),[186] a claim echoed in 4 Ezra 5:50–55 as one of the signs of the coming judgment.

The Stoics articulated cosmic order in their own way. Emerging in the late third century BCE, Stoicism remained influential throughout the early centuries of the Common Era. Unlike the Epicureans, whose philosophy was entirely naturalistic, the Stoics argued that the source of cosmic order is found in a divine intelligence who is co-terminus with the matter that makes up the cosmos. As Edward Adams aptly writes, "this means that events in the history of the cosmos

---

thus abiding by the view that, like other life forms, the cosmos was both born and will someday die. Atomists such as Leucippus and Democritus advanced the idea of a true, cosmic "end of the world" while also maintaining that the present cosmos is one of many. The destruction of the one cosmos occurs "when one world collides with another in space." Plato takes an opposing view in the *Timaeus*, arguing against a future destruction of the cosmos; Aristotle argues along the same lines in *De caelo* and *De philosophia*, while also asserting that the universe was never generated, being fully eternal. See Edward Adams, *The Stars Will Fall From Heaven: 'Cosmic Catastrophe' in the New Testament and Its World* (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 103–08.

[183] Adams, *The Stars Will Fall*, 109.
[184] Adams, *The Stars Will Fall*, 110.
[185] Adams, *The Stars Will Fall*, 111.
[186] Adams, *The Stars Will Fall*, 111.

are at the same time events in the life of the providential deity."[187] The Stoics were adamant that the universe would never truly die; rather, the end of the cosmos (which was imaged as a conflagration) would initiate the generation of a new cosmos. The birth and death of the cosmos was thus part of an ongoing cyclic process of creation, destruction, and re-creation; each destruction was occasioned by the "growth" of a god until all matter was assimilated into the divine substance.[188] The early Stoics were also determinists, arguing that the events of world history were planned in advance to facilitate the cyclic nature of cosmic progress—and progress it was, the Stoics insisted. The conflagrations which brought one cosmos to an end were portrayed positively, as "a blissful occasion in the life of god."[189] Stoic views were influential in Second Temple Jewish writings, and the Stoic view of the end of the cosmos is especially influential in the Sibylline Oracles, as explored further below. Stoics and Epicureans agreed that the cosmos is destined for a catastrophic end; for Stoics, this was a purposeful divine event that initiated a new cycle of creation; for Epicureans, this was a wholly naturalistic event, a death of the cosmos that was regrettable and inevitable. All of these schools agreed that a close observation of the cosmos could lead one to discern exactly where one stood in the timeline of the cosmos' lifespan, an assumption reflected also in Second Temple Jewish sources which look to the behavior of the natural world as an ominous clue to the coming judgment or the imminent new creation.

The Regularity of Nature as Signpost for Recurring Events

As mentioned above, most ancient conceptions of divination were rooted in the assumption that the natural world was fundamentally reliable and predictable, and any deviation

[187] Adams, *The Stars Will Fall*, 114.
[188] Adams, *The Stars Will Fall*, 117.
[189] Adams, *The Stars Will Fall*, 121.

from its expected behavior was thus significant and possibly a means of communication from the heavenly realm. This assumption also undergirds the conceptions of nature as an orderly model for human righteousness explored in chapter one. Furthermore, the reliable character of the natural world is also woven throughout the Bible. Sometimes, such portrayals of the natural world's reliability overlap with its designation as a "sign"—and in these instances, nature functions quite specifically as a signpost for recurring events.

Genesis 1:14 is a paradigmatic biblical depiction of nature as a signpost for the underlying orderliness of the cosmos: "And God said, "Let there be lights [*mĕʾōrōt*] in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs [ʾ*ōtōt*] and for seasons [*mōădîm*] and for days and years." The luminaries in Genesis 1 are never explicitly named as sun and moon, a rhetorical move likely intended to delegitimize them as deities in their own right. Rather, the luminaries are simply called "lights" (*mĕʾōrōt* in 1:14–16, with the "greater" and "lesser" versions appearing in 1:16) or "stars" (*kōkābîm*, only in 1:16).[190] In the Torah more broadly, *mĕōrʾōt* refers to luminaries only occasionally (see below), but the term consistently describes lamps in the sanctuary of the tabernacle.[191] When considered as a pair, the two words Gen 1 uses for luminaries—*kōkābîm* and *mĕʾōrōt*—link the structure of the created order with temple worship. Even though the sun and moon's role is downplayed in Genesis 1, the luminaries' importance is underscored by the length at which they are described (surpassed only by the sixth day's description of land animals and humankind) and the crucial role they are given as orderers of *mōʿădîm* as well as "days and years." Translated "seasons" by the NRSV,

[190] von Rad goes so far as to call the fourth day's depiction of the luminaries "prosaic and degrading." Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis, Revised Edition: A Commentary (the Old Testament Library)* (Westminster John Knox Press, 1973), 55.

[191] Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 1: Genesis 1–15* (Thomas Nelson, 1987), 22. With von Rad, I can see how the move from deity to lamp is a downgrade in status, but Genesis 1 is ultimately depicting the created order as a macrocosm of the tabernacle or temple, the divine dwelling: not prosaic at all.

mōʿădîm is elsewhere associated with fixed times, often for the celebration of Passover or other festivals[192] (e.g., Exod 13:10; 23:15; 34:18; Num 9:2; Hos 9:5; Lam 2:7), and once for birds' migratory patterns (Jer 8:7). On days five and six, the sea and land creatures subsequently emerge not only onto a landscape but also into a timescape[193] within which the proper observance of festivals is as fundamental as days accumulating into weeks and years.

Many have pointed out the syntactical difficulty of Genesis 1:14. The lights are to be "for signs and for fixed times and for days and years"—with "years" being the only word not preceded by a lamed. Though it is apparent that "days and years" should be read as a pair, both governed by the same preposition, what of signs and fixed times? Are they also to be read as a pair? Though some have argued for a parallel reading,[194] others interpret *ʾōtōt* as indicative of omina[195] and thus read Gen 1:14 as a tripartite categorization of "heavenly portents, festal seasons, and days/year."[196] The ambiguous syntax was interpreted in varying ways in antiquity, as explored by Eibert Tigchelaar.[197] Tigchelaar compares Gen 1 with "the instalment of the moon" in the Enuma Elish (a text with at least some resonance with Gen 1, even if arguments for

---

[192] However, Croatto argues against translating *mōʿădîm* as "festivals," since biblical Hebrew has a perfectly good word for "festival" in *ḥag* (Severino Croatto, "Reading the Pentateuch as a Counter-Text," *Congress Volume: Leiden 2004* (2006), 398).

[193] "If all the functions of the sun and the moon indicated in the text are related with time in general, the 'order' of v. 14b relates to *sacred* time, whether in seasonal festivals or in the religious calendar in general…. The stars, as regulators of the festivals and as demarcators of the dates, are therefore highly relevant to priestly cosmology" (Croatto, "Reading the Pentateuch," 398).

[194] Speiser argued that the words form a hendiadys, translating them "signs of fixed times," while Westermann, Steck, and, tentatively, Wenham view signs as the overarching category with two subcategories: seasons and days/years (Wenham, *Genesis*, 22). Fretheim's interpretation follows the latter option when he writes: "In vv. 14–19—arranged in a chiasm—the heavenly lights are created to divide day and night, to give (additional) light, and to serve as signs (i.e., time markers) for days, years, and fixed seasons (the word for "season" is also the word for religious festivals)" [Fretheim, *Genesis* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 344].

[195] For example, von Rad writes: "'Signs' in Gen 1.14 are perhaps the sights in the heavenly vault which were not normal, as eclipses of the sun; in any case they were fixed astral points for regulating cult and work. Evidently the stars are not creators of light, but only mediating bearers of a light that was there without them and before them" (von Rad, *Genesis*, 56).

[196] Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 23.

[197] Eibert Tigchelaar, "'Lights Serving as Signs for Festivals' (Gen 1: 14b) in Enūma Eliš and Early Judaism," in *The Creation of Heaven and Earth: Re-Interpretations of Genesis 1 in the Context of Judaism, Ancient Philosophy, Christianity, and Modern Physics* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

influence have fallen by the wayside), which presents the moon as both "marker of time and provider of signs and omens."[198] He then analyzes texts from Ben Sira, Jubilees, and 1 QS, which each present at least one celestial body as a marker of festivals, and 4QInstruction, which "regards the luminaries as providers of signs for coming events."[199] I will further explore these texts below.

Though *mĕʾōrōt* usually refers to temple lamps, Psalm 74—a creation hymn—also uses *mĕʾōrōt* to indicate divinely-ordained movements of the luminaries:

> Yet God my King is from of old,
> working salvation in the earth.
> You divided the sea by your might;
> you broke the heads of the dragons in the waters.
> You crushed the heads of Leviathan;
> you gave him as food for the creatures of the wilderness.
> You cut openings for springs and torrents;
> you dried up ever-flowing streams.
> Yours is the day, yours also the night;
> you established the luminaries [*mĕʾōrōt*] and the sun.
> You have fixed all the bounds of the earth;
> you made summer and winter. (Ps 74:12–17)

More directly than Gen 1, Psalm 74 invokes divine combat traditions by describing God's might and victory over the sea, dragons, and Leviathan. The sun is named here, while the "lights" function as a substitute for the expected appearance of "moon" as the lesser light. Though this could indicate a polemic against the lunar calendar, the rest of the poem does not explicitly support such a conclusion. In this psalm, the lights and sun are viewed in parallel with day and night, a metaphor for the passing of time. The psalm lacks references to "signs" or religious festivals; instead, this psalm is concerned with divine combat on a cosmic plane, which probably functioned as an "indirect confrontation with Babylonian cosmogony and the occupying

[198] Tigchelaar, "'Lights Serving as Signs," 48.
[199] Tigchelaar, "'Lights Serving as Signs," 48.

power,"[200] if the Psalm is dated to the exilic period. The point here is that YHWH is the victor over Yamm and Leviathan; day and night are not the domain of these other powers, but rather, these temporal categories which relate to the natural world are presented as YHWH's own possessions, while the lights/sun function as signposts (though they are not named *ʾōtōt*) which indicate the transition from night to day and back again.

It is not only the luminaries that function as a signpost for recurring events in the Bible; other elements of the natural world do as well. Genesis 8:22 and Genesis 9:12–17 are often considered, respectively, as the culminations of the Yahwist and Priestly flood stories. In both, the natural world is interpreted as a signpost for the underlying orderliness of the natural world—an orderliness that may have been called into question by the narrative's destructive global floodwaters. In addition to serving as a signpost for the restored orderly status of the post-flood cosmos, the rainbow of Genesis 9 simultaneously functions as a sign[201] of future well-being:

> God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. *When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant* that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth." (Genesis 9:12–17, emphasis mine)

The rainbow is special kind of signpost insofar as its (dis)appearance cannot be predicted in the same way that, for example, the movements of the stars can be. As a signpost, the rainbow points

---

[200] Frank Lothar Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51-100* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2005), 249.

[201] In Exodus, the Sabbath is similarly depicted as a sign; though the Sabbath is not a part of the natural world per se, it is closely associated with the creation of the cosmos in Gen 1. Also in Exodus, the Sabbath is in turn a sign of God's sanctification of the people (20:12, 31:13); a sign of the revelation of God's name (20:20); and a sign that God engaged in creative work for 6 days but rested on the seventh (31:17). Jubilees also calls the Sabbath "a great sign" (2:17).

back to the covenant, but it also could be interpreted an omen of good fortune, pointing toward an integral future in which God will not destroy the world again with water. The rainbow thus straddles the categories of sign-as-signpost and sign-as-omen.

Genesis 8:22 signals the renewed order of creation with a brief verse which describes four ways in which the natural world can be expected to function in perpetuity: "For all the (rest of the) days of the earth: planting and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will not cease" (translation mine). There is no explicit covenant language in this version of the flood story, but this poetic fragment functions unconditionally, like P's covenant: the order intended for the natural world is restored forever. In the poem, four paired statements invoke the natural world writ large. Planting ("seedtime" in the NRSV) and harvest point to the importance of agriculture for human sustenance and assure the reader that the post-flood earth will be hospitable for human flourishing. Cold and heat indicate seasonal changes from the perspective of all living things who depend on the yearly cycle; these seasons are then named explicitly in the next line, and with their naming, the reader is reminded that seasons are measured in time as well as temperature. The emphasis on time continues in the final pairing of "day and night," which also brings the promise of renewed order and reliability to the present moment. Every day and every night, humans can remember that the ordered cycles of the natural world are guaranteed by God never again to be interrupted, nor to cease.

The language of Gen 8:22 resonates with 1 Enoch 2–5, with its emphasis on the orderly behavior of seasons, as well as the heat and cold. "Nothing on earth changes," claims 1 Enoch 2:2, and offers by way of evidence the reliable differences between winter (a time for water, dew, and rest) and summer (a time of insufferable heat). What follows is an image of trees, which bear fruit in season, and most of which (with the exception of coniferous varieties) lose

their leaves in winter. This image of trees is not exactly agrarian, as is the "planting and harvest" imagery of Gen 8; rather it could be depicting a wilder landscape (a forest) or a different kind of cultivated landscape (an Edenic garden). In 1 Enoch 5, the orderliness of time is praised with a mention of the reliability of the natural world from "year to year." Though day and night are not mentioned, the 24-hour cycle could be implied by 1 Enoch 2:1, which says of the stars that "they all rise and set" in their appropriate times. In this way, 1 Enoch 2:1 resonates with the ordered image of the luminaries in Gen 1:14.

1 Enoch 2–5 only uses the word "signs" once—in its depiction of seasons. "Observe the signs of summer," writes the scribe in 4:1, "whereby the sun burns and scorches, and you seek shelter and shade from its presence, and the earth burns with scorching heat, and you are unable to tread on the dust or the rock because of the burning."[202] Though the text is corrupt, Nickelsburg also reconstructs 3:1 as: "Observe <the signs of summer and winter. Contemplate the signs of> winter, that all the earth is filled with water, and clouds and dew and rain rest upon it." This nature hymn's affiliation of "seasons" with "signs" does not serve to displace luminaries' role as sign; it is not an exclusive sort of categorization. The scribe is probably using the word "sign" here as a synonym for signpost: when the weather behaves in the following way, it is a signpost letting humans know that the seasons are changing. When the nature hymn discusses the luminaries in 2:1, its language is partially analogous to Genesis 1:14: the luminaries "all rise and set, each one ordered in its appointed time; and they appear on their feasts and do not transgress their own appointed order." The Enochic emphasis on festal fidelity is consistent with an interpretation of *mōʿădîm* as "fixed times."

---

[202] This translation, and all following translations of 1 Enoch, are from the following commentaries: George W.E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1–36; 81–108.* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001) and George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 37–82* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2011).

Though it is not certain whether 1 Enoch 2–5 precedes or antedates the literary production of Genesis 1, a case can be made for the nature hymn serving as a quasi-midrash on Genesis 1:14. The luminaries are "for signs" (language which is used in 4:1 and perhaps also 3:1), "for seasons" (language which seems to parallel the emphasis on festal times in 2:1), "for days and years" (in 5:2, "his works take place from year to year"). Both texts point to the luminaries themselves as a locus for orderliness: a concentrated source of knowledge for the keen observer of the reliability of the cosmos. The luminaries are in some ways presented as paradigmatic for one's assessment of the rest of the created order.

The Luminaries as Paradigmatic Signpost in Second Temple Literature

In Genesis 1, the luminaries are the only works of nature that are dubbed "signs." This trend continues in Second Temple literature. Portions of 1 Enoch, Jubilees, Ben Sira, and several texts from Qumran all treat the luminaries as exceptional members of the natural order, whose special purpose has its source in God's decision to imbue them with a unique role on the fourth day of creation in Genesis 1:14–19. In general, Second Temple literature displays the conviction that, when it comes to the natural world, orderliness is expected and even intrinsic to nature's design. Many Second Temple texts gesture toward a shared assumption of why this is the case: in its order, nature functions as a cyclic series of signposts for the proper unfolding of time.

1 Enoch 2–5. As stated above, in 1 Enoch 2:1, the purpose of the natural world's regularity is explicitly stated to be the maintenance of calendrical and ritual order: "Contemplate all (his) works, and observe the works of heaven, how they do not alter their paths; and the luminaries <of> heaven, that they all rise and set, each one ordered in its appointed time; and they appear on

their feasts and do not transgress their own appointed order." It is only in 5:4 that the poem's further purpose is revealed: not only does the natural world serve as a signpost for seasons and festivals, marking the passage of time, but it also functions as a righteous foil for wicked humankind. This might suggest that the poem's rebuke of disobedient acts and unclean speech has calendrical and liturgical offenses in mind.[203] Additionally, if this poem were written or compiled as a prologue to an already-extant Book of the Watchers,[204] it may also function as a rebuke for wickedness broadly understood, as represented in the wide-ranging topics of the Watchers' forbidden teachings. The nature of evil in the myth that follows includes but is not limited to inappropriate astronomical (and thus calendrical) knowledge. In either case, this wisdom poem unveils two functions for its orderly portrayal of the natural world: first, when nature functions as signpost, it offers self-referential observations about the expected functioning of the natural world (the behavior of nature positively points to God's design for the natural world), and second, when nature functions as a foil for humankind, it offers a study in contrasts (the behavior of nature negatively points to God's design for humankind). The texts explored below build on the former portrayal of the luminaries as a signpost.

Book of the Luminaries. Orderliness as the fundamental characteristic of God's works lies at the heart of the *Book of the Luminaries*, the earliest extant pseudepigraphon associated with the figure of Enoch. The *Book of the Luminaries* devotes seven chapters (72–78) to detailed astronomical, uranographical, and cosmological observations, and—as explored in the previous

---

[203] "The general characteristics of the indicted sins are clear enough, although we can only speculate about the specific sins themselves…. The paradigm set forth in 2:1–5:1 and the general content of the Enochic corpus suggests that astronomical and calendrical matters are a major part of the violated torah presently under consideration" (Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1,* 158).

[204] Hartman has catalogued an extensive list of parallels between 1 Enoch 1–5 and 1 Enoch 6–36, suggesting that the first five chapters of 1 Enoch were written or compiled with at least some elements of intentional foreshadowing. See Lars Hartman, *Asking for a Meaning: A Study of 1 Enoch 1-5* (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1979), 139–41.

chapter—its depictions of the natural world assume constancy and reliability. At the conclusion of these seven chapters, Enoch indicates to Methuselah that complete knowledge of the luminaries is equivalent to (and perhaps a signpost for) complete knowledge of the cosmos:

> Now my son I have shown you everything, and the law of all the stars of the sky is completed. He [Uriel] showed me all their law for each day, each time in a jurisdiction, every year, its emergence, the command, every month, and every week…. This is the appearance and the likeness of each luminary that Uriel, the great angel who is their leader, showed me. (79:1-2, 6)[205]

In describing what he has seen in the heavens, Enoch emphasizes completeness. The knowledge conveyed by Enoch to Methuselah is comprehensive: it concerns all the movements of every astronomical body, as well as the full mechanics behind the passage of all time and every season. Presumably, when Enoch claims to show Methuselah "everything," he means all of the subjects which are of concern to the content of this particular book—everything that there is to know about the heavens, and in particular, about the stars themselves. However, there is room for a more radical interpretation, as I mentioned in the previous chapter—an interpretation which resonates with the geographical visions in the *Book of the Watchers*: namely, that in understanding the luminaries, Methuselah (and the reader) quite literally understands everything that exists—both materially and in time. The expansive language of 79:1 explains the purview of this timescape, including days, years, and months (terms used frequently throughout the *Book of the Luminaries*), as well as times, jurisdictions, emergences, and commands (terms used less frequently) and weeks (used for the first time here).[206] VanderKam delineates the meanings of these terms within the *Book of the Luminaries*: the luminaries rule over certain times and areas (jurisdictions) in chapter 82; the sun emerges in 72:2 and the moon in 80:1; the sun obeys

[205] VanderKam suggests that one consider verses 1–2 and 6 as a unit, since according to Aramaic evidence, "the lunar information now in 1 Enoch 79 actually preceded 79:1 at an earlier stage in the development of the text." The interpolated verses explain the moon's behavior in the sixth week (Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2,* 520).
[206] Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2*, 516–17.

commands in 72:2 and 35, while the moon does so in 73:1 and 74:1.[207] As for the word "week," (*sanbat* in Ethiopic), VanderKam considers its scarcity in the *Book of the Luminaries* "an eloquent indication that the focus of the work lies not in the sabbatical structure of time (or in the festivals) but in the rhythm of days, months, and years."[208] For the *Book of the Luminaries*, the stars thus relate primarily to the passing of "ordinary time." This focus underscores the possibility that knowing "everything" about the luminaries is in fact equivalent to knowing "everything" about the cosmos, for all other elements of the natural world depend upon the luminaries as signposts that provide the temporal framework they need in order to exist at all.

Though 1 Enoch 79 does not call the luminaries "signs," they are designated as such elsewhere in the *Book of the Luminaries*. In 75:3, Uriel is named as "the angel whom the Lord of eternal glory set over all the heavenly luminaries, in the sky and in the world" and he shows Enoch "the sign, the seasons, the year and the days"—calling to mind Gen 1:14–19.[209] The depiction of the luminaries in Gen 1 as the *only* portion of the created order described in temporal terms is consistent with the visions of the *Book of the Luminaries*, which regard the stars' temporal powers as foundational for cosmic order. A few chapters later, in a section thought to have been added to the *Book of the Luminaries* later, the language of "sign" is explicitly applied to seasonal phenomena, functioning as signposts for recurring events. 1 Enoch 82:9–20 lists the leaders of "four fixed parts" of the year (82:13), named Milkiel, Helememelek, Mele'eyel, and Narel, as well as the beings under their command. Starting in verse 15, the season governed by Melkeyal ("at the beginning of the year") is described as featuring the following

---

[207] Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2*, 516–17.
[208] Though it is possible to translate *sanbat* as "sabbath," VanderKam argues that "week" is a better fit here (Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2*, 517).
[209] The word "sign" is also used for solstices and equinoxes in the Book of the Luminaries [72:13; 72:20; 78:7] (Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2,* 424, 507).

"signs of the days"—"sweat, heat, and care; all the trees bear fruit and leaves come out on all the trees; (there is) a harvest of wheat, roses, and all the flowers that bloom in the field; but the winter trees are dried up" (82:16). The "signs of the days" of Helememelek include "heat, drought, trees bearing their fruit ripe and yielding all their fruit ripe and ready; the sheep mate and become pregnant; people gather all the fruit of the earth and everything in the fields and the winepress" (82:19). (The signs of the days of Mele'eyel and Narel are not extant.) Even though 1 Enoch 82 nowhere refers to stars as signs, it does depict angelic beings (whom are frequently associated with stars in Greco-Roman thought) governing seasons designated as such, emphasizing the connection between signs and the times associated with them.

In both the *Book of the Luminaries* and Genesis, the order inherent in the natural world is presented to the reader vis-a-vis intricate descriptions of the workings of sun, moon, and stars. The texts display differences in emphasis and nomenclature. Genesis 1 is not overtly concerned with a calendar any larger than a week; the *Book of the Luminaries* is concerned with months and years. Though not militant in its advocacy for the solar calendar—acknowledging the importance of the moon as well[210]— rhetorically, the book does privilege the sun above the moon. Also, while the *Book of the Luminaries* calls the sun and the moon by their names, Genesis designates them respectively as the "greater" and "lesser" of the lights. However, in both books, the movements of sun and moon are contextualized within a larger community of luminaries. In 1 Enoch, the sun and moon are subject to the more fundamental "law of the stars" (79:1)—a phrase which also encapsulates "everything" that has been learned.[211] In Genesis, though

---

[210] "[The] Astronomical Book is determined to present models applicable not only to the sun but also to the entire heavenly host: sun, moon, and stars. This ideology is conveyed in 1 Enoch 74:14 … This verse purportedly seeks to show that sun and moon equally traverse the same gates assigned to the sun in chap. 72, and that they do so according to the same time frame, thus yielding a correct … order of the universe (cf. 74:12)." See Jonathan Ben-Dov, "Tradition and Innovation in the Calendar of Jubilees," in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees*, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 290.

[211] "1 Enoch 79:5 expresses the writer's view that the sun and the stars define the same year…. The idea that the

distinguished from the stars by size designations, sun and moon are given no assignment which is not also shared with other luminaries. Both books privilege the whole community of luminaries above any individual star, and it is the interpretation of the orderly behavior of the group as a whole that functions as a signpost.

Jubilees 2:8-10; 4:17. In contrast to Genesis and the *Book of the Luminaries*, Jubilees takes a firm stand in favor of the solar calendar in its account of the fourth day of creation. In fact, the book goes so far as to insist that, among all the luminaries, it is only the sun that functions as a sign at all.

Usually dated to between 160 and 150 BCE,[212] Jubilees is a "heavily edited retelling"[213] of the book of Genesis and Exodus 1–24. Jubilees 2:8–10 narrates the fourth day of creation:

> On the fourth day the Lord made the sun, the moon, and the stars. He placed them in the heavenly firmament to shine on the whole earth, to rule over day and night, and to separate between light and darkness. The Lord appointed the sun as a great sign above the earth for days, sabbaths, months, festivals, years, sabbaths of years, jubilees, and all times of the years. It separates between light and darkness and (serves) for wellbeing so that everything that sprouts and grows on the earth may prosper. These three types he made on the fourth day.[214]

Differences between this account and that of Genesis 1 are apparent. First, the author of Jubilees does not hesitate to name the sun and the moon. Second, in Jubilees, the luminaries share a

---

year of 364 days is sidereal also comes to expression in 75:1–2 and more fully in 84:4–20. The phrase "in one period" in this verse refers to one-half year…. In the context, it is the span crossed twice in the course of the year, from a first to a sixth gate and then back to the first (Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2*, 519–20).

[212] R. H. Charles established the common view that Jubilees was written in the second century BCE. Charles thought the date could be pinpointed between 109 and 105 BCE, because he interpreted the book as referring to the Maccabean high priesthood among other events. Contemporary scholars give the book an earlier date within the second century BCE. James VanderKam has argued for an earlier date, between 161 and 152 BCE. George Nickelsburg and Jonathan Goldstein prefer shortly before 167 BCE, since they do not think Jubilees demonstrates knowledge of Antiochus' edict released in that year. See James C VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees: A Critical Text* (Leuven: Peeters, 1989), v. See also John S. Bergsma, "The Relationship Between Jubilees and the Early Enochic Books (Astronomical Book and Book of the Watchers)," in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees*, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 41–42.

[213] VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees: A Critical Text*, v.

[214] VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, 10–11.

threefold mission: to shine on the "whole earth," to rule over day and night, and to separate light and darkness. Such depictions are consonant with phrases from Genesis 1:15 ("to give light upon the earth") and 1:18 ("to rule over the day and over the night and to separate the light from the darkness"). The rest of day four in Jubilees is dedicated to the special role of the sun, greatly expanded, if Gen 1 is considered the source text. It is only the sun (and no other lights) which is called a "sign" in Jubilees—and the sun is not just any sign, but a "great" sign. Jubilees also clarifies that the sun signifies "days, sabbaths, months, festivals, years, sabbaths of years, jubilees, and all times of the years"—a significant expansion of Genesis 1:14, which mentions only seasons, days, and years. Third, in Genesis, it is not clear that the luminaries' function as a sign has anything to do with its function as a marker of time; in Jubilees, the sun's purpose appears chiefly calendrical. Fourth, in Jubilees the relationship between the sun and the flourishing of plant life is made explicit in a way not found in Genesis. And finally, the moon's role is downplayed significantly in Jubilees. While Genesis 1:16 makes clear that the "greater light" and the "lesser light" have dominion over day and night respectively, in Jubilees the moon is not distinguished from the other stars. In Jubilees 4:21, in what is probably a summary of the *Book of the Luminaries*,[215] the author emphasizes that the heavens as a whole belong to the sun alone: "[Enoch] was, moreover, with God's angels for six jubilees of years. They showed him everything on earth and in the heavens—the dominion of the sun—and he wrote down everything." The heavens are the dominion of the sun, which is the one luminary that functions as a sign—more specifically, a signpost for calendrical events that align with its preferred

[215] James L Kugel, *A Walk through Jubilees: Studies in the Book of Jubilees and the World of Its Creation* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 48.

calendar. Indeed, in the Jubilees' creation account, the sun is given credit for making the growth of plant life possible, while the moon has no such power or purpose.[216]

In Jubilees' description of Enoch's work as a scribe and sage, the link between the heavens and the calendar is once again enumerated. Jubilees 4:17 reads: "[Enoch] was the first of mankind who were born on the earth who learned (the art of) writing, instruction, and wisdom and who wrote down in a book the signs of the sky in accord with the fixed pattern of their months so that mankind would know the seasons of the years according to the fixed patterns of each of their months."[217] Here, "the signs of the sky" seem to function primarily as signposts, giving humankind access to calendrical accuracy only. Todd R. Hanneken notes: "…Enoch's astronomical learning is carefully limited to calendrical rectitude. Observing the signs of heaven for any other purpose is strictly forbidden."[218] This emphasis is consonant with Jubilees' depiction of Abraham, who, when pictured examining the luminaries as if they were omens, is gently corrected:[219]

> …Abram sat at night—at the beginning of the seventh month—to observe the stars from evening to dawn in order to see what would be the character of the year with respect to the rains. He was sitting and observing by himself. A voice came to his mind and he said: "All the signs of the stars and signs of the moon and the sun—all are under the Lord's control. Why should I be investigating [them]? If he wishes he will make it rain in the morning and evening; and if he wishes, he will not make it fall. Everything is under his control. (12:16–18)

According to Jubilees, Abram initially made two mistakes.[220] First, he thought luminaries could forecast the weather—an assertion that might make sense in the imagination exemplified in the *Book of the Luminaries* but is forbidden in Jubilees. Second, he sat down at night, to observe the

---

[216] Kugel, *A Walk through Jubilees*, 31.
[217] VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, 25–26.
[218] Todd R Hanneken, *The Subversion of the Apocalypses in the Book of Jubilees* (Atlanta: SBL, 2012), 249.
[219] Hanneken, *Subversion*, 250.
[220] These mistakes are no surprise to the astute reader, who would have noticed that Abram had been trained in these very arts by his father in Jubilees 11:8.

stars, when it is only the sun which is meant to serve as a sign—and even so, the sun points only to the calendar. Indeed, human observation is unnecessary in order for the sun's work as signpost to succeed; as the sun proceeds along its course, there is no room for human interpretation of its movements, except to say that God ordained it as the one and only "great sign." To say the least, in its depictions of Enoch and Abraham, Jubilees exemplifies a cautious (but fascinated) stance with regard to astrology.

As noted above, Jubilees is particularly polemical in its preference for the solar calendar. In contrast, Ben Sira associates the moon with calendrical movements. Ben Sira 43, a hymn in praise of the orderly beauty of the natural world (explored in chapter two), portrays the sun positively while also insisting that the moon is responsible for the changing times and seasons. Indeed, in Ben Sira, the moon is identified as a sign: "It is the moon that marks the changing seasons, governing the times, their everlasting sign. From the moon comes the sign for festal days, a light that wanes when it completes its course" (43:6–7).[221]

The texts explored thus far display a variety of attitudes toward calendrical concerns: from a polemical insistence that one luminary is chief in its function as signpost, to a more lenient assumption that all luminaries have their place. The following texts from Qumran take their place among the latter category, though rather than emphasizing the weekly passage of liturgical time, as does Genesis 1, they emphasize instead ways in which the luminaries can function as signposts for daily patterns of prayer.

[221] The Hebrew texts SirB 12:7 and Mas1h 5:23 both use *ʾōt* when referring to the moon. (See Pancratius C. Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew: A Text Edition of All Extant Hebrew Manuscripts and a Synopsis of All Parallel Hebrew Ben Sira Texts* [Atlanta: SBL Press, 2006].)

4Q408, 1QH^{a}. Several texts from Qumran support the notion that the movements of the luminaries are signposts for recurring events on the cultic calendar. Two in particular "exemplify the practice of praying in coordination with the luminaries."[222] In 4Q408 3+3b 8–10, God is blessed for being the one who created morning and evening, both of which are classified as "signs"—the morning "as a sign causing the appearance of the dominion of light for the area of day…," and the evening "as a sign of the appearance of the dominion of[darkness…]."[223] (Fragment 5:1 also likely testifies to morning being considered a sign.) In this text, morning and evening are themselves called signs, and that which they reveal are the boundaries marked out by "the dominion of light" and "the dominion of darkness." Though the text is fragmentary, the mention of "work" in verses 9 and 11 suggests that, in its full form, this prayer lauded the division of day and night as instructive for humans, who were created to serve God with their labor in the daytime, and rest from their toil at night. This trope is evocative of Psalm 104:19–23:

> You have made the moon to mark the seasons;
> the sun knows its time for setting.
> You make darkness, and it is night,
> when all the animals of the forest come creeping out.
> The young lions roar for their prey,
> seeking their food from God.
> When the sun rises, they withdraw
> and lie down in their dens.
> People go out to their work
> and to their labor until the evening.

If 4Q408 does echo Psalm 104, then morning and night, as signs, are pragmatic markers of the ways that the natural order functions as a time clock for humans in their daily and weekly labors, and not least of all, for their religious practices and times of prayer. 4Q503 likewise coordinates

---

[222] Jeremy Penner, *Patterns of Daily Prayer in the Second Temple Period Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 101.
[223] Translated by A. Steudel in Donald W. Parry and Emanuel Tov, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader: Part 3, Parabiblical Texts* (Leiden: Brill: 2005), 104–07.

daily prayer with the cycles of the luminaries, prescribing one month of twice-daily blessings for both evening and morning, to be recited on a yearly cycle.[224]

1QH[a] 20 is a detailed example of what Jeremy Penner calls "a prayer calendar"[225] in which day, night, light, darkness, and the luminaries are treated as signposts for recurring times of prayer. (A similar poem is preserved in 1QS IX 26b–X 8a.)[226] This thanksgiving hymn answers the question: if one is to pray in concert with the luminaries (and thus also in concert with the heavenly host), when exactly should one pray? Penner interprets 1QH[a] 20:7–14a to instruct prayer at the following moments: at morning (lines 7–8); at midday (line 8); in the evening (lines 8–9); later in the evening (line 9); at midnight (line 9); and again in the morning (line 10). By structuring the calendar in this way, Penner suggests a chiastic structure: morning—midday—evening—late evening—midnight—morning.[227]

> 7. [For the Instruc]tor: [th]anksgiving and prayer for prostrating oneself and supplicating continually at all times: with the coming of light.
> 8. for [its] domi[nion]; at the midpoints of the day with respect to its arrangement according to the rules for the great light; when it turns to evening and light goes forth
> 9. at the beginning of the dominion of darkness at the time appointed for night; at its midpoint, when it turns toward morning; and at the time that
> 10. it is gathered in to its dwelling place before (the approach of) light, at the departure of night and the coming of day, continually, at all the
> 11. birthings of time, the foundations of the seasons, and the cycle of the festivals (*mōʾădîm*) in the order fixed by their signs (*bĕʾōtōtām*), for all
> 12. their dominion in proper order, reliably, at the command of God. It is a testimony of that which exists. This is what shall be,
> 13. and there shall be no end. Apart from it nothing has existed nor yet shall be. Truly, the God of knowledge
> 14a. has established it, and there is none other with him.[228]

---

[224] Penner, *Patterns of Daily Prayer*, 107.
[225] Penner, *Patterns of Daily Prayer*, 137.
[226] Penner, *Patterns of Daily Prayer*, 139.
[227] Penner, *Patterns of Daily Prayer*, 145.
[228] Translation by Carol Newsom, from Carol A. Newsom and Eileen M. Schuller, *The Hodayot (Thanksgiving Psalms): A Study Edition of 1QH[a]* (Atlanta: SBL, 2012), 259. Unless otherwise noted, all translations of the Hodayot are from this volume.

In this hymn, one hears the familiar imagery of light and day having their own dominions—day and night—for which they are responsible. This is the case because, ultimately, "the God of knowledge has established it." The day is responsible to "the rules for the great light" — the sun. Notably, the night seems also to be responsible to the sun since it is the great light's departure (and not the lesser light's arrival) that ushers in the domain of darkness. It would be going too far to say that this prayer is concerned with the solar calendar in particular, but it is invested in the orderly nature of the 24-hour day which is governed by the movements of the sun.

In line 11, the text demonstrates its interest in blocks of time larger than the 24-hour day by mentioning "all the birthings of time, the foundations of the seasons, and the cycle of the festivals in the order fixed by their signs." This larger cosmic order—an order for the sake of faithful observance of religious festivals and correct worship—endows with great importance the continual daily transition from light to darkness and back to light again: this 24-hour rhythm is in fact the fundamental building block of the liturgical timescape of God's ordered cosmos.

It is noteworthy that the language of signs—here, presumably astrological signs indicating festal days—are affiliated with the larger seasonal changes, while the word translated "festivals" here is *mōʿădîm*, familiar from Gen 1:14. In this hodayah, the relationship between "festival" and "sign" is specified: it is the latter that fixes the order for the former. Stars seem to be the most logical antecedent for the "signs" of 1QH^{a} 20, but the text as we have it never makes the identity of the signs entirely clear. Because the 3mp suffix on *bĕʾōtōtām* seems to refer to *mōʿădîm* (also 3mp), the reader knows for certain that these signs determine the comings and goings of the festivals; but what *are* these signs? The most plausible interpretation is that the day/night or light/darkness, with their associated "great light"—described in such detail in the previous verses—would function in this way. Such an interpretation would be supported by

Gen 1:14, in which the luminaries' purpose is linked to *mōʿădîm* and *ʾōtōt* as well as day and night. It is not a reach to think that the early pray-ers of this hodayah would hear in its description of day, night, light, darkness, seasons, and signs a strong allusion to the fourth day of creation, in which the lights themselves are the only members of the created order that are explicitly expected to function as signposts for recurring events. Therefore, in the same way that ordinary worshippers join with angelic worship by following the specified prayer calendar, the astronomical signs ensure that communal celebration of festivals also happens in concert with heavenly worship.

Preliminary Conclusions

The natural world functions as a signpost for recurring events frequently in biblical and Second Temple literature. In fact, when combined with the texts that portray the natural world as a model for human righteousness, the orderliness which undergirds these portrayals seem to serve as an interpretive foundation for the other categories nature occupies in the early Jewish imagination. Though Second Temple sources agree about the fundamentally orderly character of the natural world, they disagree about whether any particular luminary should be privileged. Genesis 1 distinguishes sun and moon in name but not in role, while the *Book of the Luminaries* subjects the sun and moon to the greater "laws of the stars." Even though Ben Sira distinguishes the moon alone as a "sign," the scribe clearly held the sun in high regard as well. The texts from Qumran honor the sun more emphatically than the moon, but still consistently call both morning and evening "signs" to be heeded. It is only Jubilees that chooses decisively among the luminaries, favoring "the greater light" and disregarding the moon as just another star whose purpose is decidedly not calendrical.

The Irregularity of Nature as Sign for Contingent Events I: Signs and Wonders

When the luminaries function as a signpost, they communicate by way of their regularity. The texts explored above are not consistent in their claims of whether only certain luminaries, or all, serve as markers indicating the passing of seasons, the fixed times for festivals, and even the simple transition from day to night. However, the texts are unanimous that the luminaries' predictable (dis)appearances can be counted on to usher in regular temporal events. Even in 1 Enoch 2–5, which is chiefly concerned with humankind's failings, the natural world's regularity is its praiseworthy characteristic. Both when nature is presented as a model for humankind and when it is interpreted as a signpost for recurring events, readers would not be amiss to assume that nature's orderly behavior is completely predictable. But other texts tell a different story.

In biblical and Second Temple literature, the natural world also can function as a sign while straying from its expected character as reliable, trustworthy, and orderly. In these cases, without fail, nature demonstrates irregularity as a sign for contingent events. Such contingency takes two forms. Sometimes, instances of the natural world's irregularity are caused by God in order to demonstrate divine power. Such acts are either called simply *ʾōtōt* or, sometimes, *ʾōtōt wĕmōpĕtîm*. In other cases, instances of the natural world's irregularity are depicted as omens: portents of events which will unfold in the near or far future. Usually these omens foretell impending doom, though not always. It is worth nothing that, when the natural world functions as an instrument of judgment (as explored in chapter four), it is also in some sense functioning as a sign of God's displeasure and therefore a sign of doom. Nature as an instrument of judgment can also be described as an omen that inaugurates the very event it foretells.

The most famous example of the natural world functioning as a sign of God's superiority to other powers (human or divine) is the series of plagues in Exodus 7–13, which is recounted

again at various points throughout the book of Deuteronomy and once in Numbers. Isaiah and Jeremiah both allude to the plague narratives in their oracles, and several Psalms recount the events of the Exodus as well. Other references are found in Joshua and Nehemiah. Each of these texts is examined in more detail below. In all the biblical material, every time the phrase *ʾōtōt wĕmōpĕtîm* is used, it points in some way to the plague narratives originating in Exodus; at other times, the plagues are invoked with *ʾōtōt* alone.

The first and second *ōtōt* in the book of Exodus are, respectively, the transformation of Moses's rod into a snake and back again (4:1–4) and the transformation of Moses's hand from healthy to leprous and back again (4:5–7). God gives Moses the power to do these signs—both of which are irregularities of nature—in order to convince Pharaoh to heed Moses's instructions. God adds, "If they will not believe even these two signs or heed you, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground; and the water that you shall take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground" (4:9). Thus God offers Moses the power to perform yet another sign in order to convince the rival power to surrender to the God of the Israelites (though Moses later cedes that power to Aaron). When none of the signs outlined above are an effective show of God's power—at least not in Pharaoh's estimation—God says to Moses:

> See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go out of his land. But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and I will multiply my signs and wonders. When Pharaoh does not listen to you, I will lay my hand upon Egypt and bring my people the Israelites, company by company, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment. The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring the Israelites out from among them. (Exod 7:3–5)

This is the only instance in the book of Exodus where the plagues are referred to as "signs and wonders." Otherwise, the plague is presented without a title, or it is called simply a "sign" (8:23, 10:1–2). And yet, it is not difficult to see why "sign and wonder" was the stickiest term in the

history of interpretation. The passage above — the only one to name the plagues "signs and wonders"—serves as a literary turning point from ineffective signs (which could be copied by any magician) to divine acts of power so great that none could replicate them. The ultimate result of all these signs will be the release of the Israelites, which will effect new knowledge among the Egyptians—that "I am YHWH." These signs and wonders thus point to the identity of YHWH, one who is superior to Pharaoh and his magicians. Moreover, the plague of flies in particular is a sign that YHWH's people are themselves also superior to the Egyptians, according to 8:23: "Thus I will make a distinction between my people and your people. This sign shall appear tomorrow." These signs are not only for the Egyptians, but also for the Israelites. In chapter 10, Moses is instructed to once again go to Pharaoh to enact a sign, ultimately for the sake of Moses's descendants: "…you may tell your children and grandchildren how I have made fools of the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them—so that you may know that I am the LORD" (10:2). These signs are intended to educate the Israelites as much as they are to persuade the Egyptians (perhaps evidenced, in part, by God's inscrutable hardening of Pharaoh's heart). The Israelites must also be convinced that God's power is greater than Pharaoh's, culminating in the plague of the death of the firstborn, when the Israelites are asked to trust in one more sign: "The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt" (12:13). The language of "sign" continues to be used for the celebration of the Passover in chapter 13.[229] In Numbers, God expresses frustration to Moses that the people are disobedient "in spite of all the signs that I have done among them" (Num 14:11), ultimately resulting in God's decision that "none of the

[229] **"**It shall serve for you as a sign on your hand and as a reminder on your forehead, so that the teaching of the LORD may be on your lips; for with a strong hand the LORD brought you out of Egypt" (Ex 13:9); "It shall serve as a sign on your hand and as an emblem on your forehead that by strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt" (Exod 13:16).

people who have seen my glory and the signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness" will enter into the land of promise, with a few exceptions (Num 14:22).

Though the plagues are called "signs and wonders" only once in Exodus, in Deuteronomy the terminology appears frequently in relation to God's acts in Pharaoh's court (4:34, 6:22, 7:19, 26:8, 29:3, 34:11).[230] As a category, however, Deuteronomy's "signs and wonders" can include various phenomena, not all of which directly involve the natural world. Once, in Deuteronomy 28:46, the phrase is used to describe a completely different event—namely, the presence of foreigners in the midst of Israel:

> Aliens residing among you shall ascend above you higher and higher, while you shall descend lower and lower. They shall lend to you but you shall not lend to them; they shall be the head and you shall be the tail. All these curses shall come upon you, pursuing and overtaking you until you are destroyed, because you did not obey the LORD your God, by observing the commandments and the decrees that he commanded you. They shall be among you and your descendants as a sign and a portent (*lĕʾōt ûlĕmōpēt*) forever. (Deut 28:43–46)

One of the covenant curses for disobedience is Israel's subservience to other peoples who live among them. The fact that Deuteronomy names this a "sign and wonder" evokes a reversal of fortune for the Israelites—and how striking that, in this case, a group of people (and no elements of nature) is called a "sign and wonder." This rhetoric is not entirely new, however, since it brings to mind the plague narratives, in which the signs and wonders *are* elements of nature. Deuteronomy 28 imagines a scenario in which Israel itself is placed in the role of Pharaoh, witnessing the "signs and wonders" that demonstrate God's power over and against them, rather than in their defense. In Isaiah 8, the term "signs and wonders" is again associated with a people,

[230] In Deut 11:3, the expected terminology of "signs and wonders" is replaced by "his signs and his deeds." Other books echo the usual Deuteronomic usage of "signs and wonders" (Josh 24:17, Jer 32:20–21, Psa 135:9; Neh 9:10). In Psalms, references to "signs" featuring Egypt are presented in parallel with "wonders" in other places: "his signs in Egypt and his miracles in the fields of Zoan" (78:43); "They performed his signs among them [in Egypt] and miracles in the land of Ham" (105:27).

this time the favored party are once again the Israelites. In 8:1–2, the prophet commands the nations to "be dismayed… for God is with us." He continues in 8:18: "See, I and the children whom the LORD has given me are signs and portents in Israel from the LORD of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion." Not only are God's signs acting in Israel's favor, but the Israelites themselves are that sign. Thus the threatened covenant curse in Deut 28 is reversed in this oracle of hope for the people of Israel.

Ezekiel 32:1–16, a tongue-in-cheek "funeral lament"[231] for Pharaoh, describes the fall of Egypt at the hands of Babylon, and in so doing, it combines two traditions associated with *ʾōtōt*: creation and the plagues. The oracle is addressed to Pharaoh, and its contents are redolent with plague imagery such as blood, darkness, attacks by birds and wild animals, and the mass killing of livestock and humans—though the phrase *ʾōtōt wĕmōpēt* does not itself appear. In 32:7–8, the sun, moon, and stars are all directly named, and so are the *mĕʾōrōt* found also in Genesis 1: "When I blot you out, I will cover the heavens, and make the stars dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give its light. All the shining lights (*mĕʾōrōt*) of the heavens I will darken above you, and put darkness on your land." Considering its implied audience (Pharaoh) and explicit content (plague imagery), the oracle depicts the darkening of the lights as one of many wonders that hearken back to the divine contests of Exodus. It is noteworthy that luminaries are called "lights," which otherwise occurs only in creation texts. Ezekiel offers an interpretation of the *mĕʾōrōt* as signs that are distinct from fixed times and are rather more like the "signs and wonders" made famous in Exodus. In other words, Ezekiel seems to advance the idea that the luminaries were, in part, created to serve as God's instruments for expressing "signs and wonders" of God's own superior power. Indeed, in Ezekiel the sun and moon are mere

[231] Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1-24* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1979), 158.

instruments whose purpose is to demonstrate the power of another deity. In short, the term *mĕʾōrōt* is here used in a context of divine contest, portraying the "lights" as a "sign and wonder" explicitly meant to demonstrate the power and superiority of YHWH.[232]

Signs and Wonders in Other Second Temple Sources

In non-biblical Second Temple texts, portrayals of the natural world as a "sign and wonder" are relatively scarce, and most of the few extant references invoke the plague traditions. Unsurprisingly, 4Q422 (also called 4QParaphrase of Genesis and Exodus) uses the expected terminology in column III of fragment 10, lines 4–7a: "[and] He sent them Mo[ses and He appeared] in the vision of[the burning bush ?] with signs and wonders (*bᵉōtōt wĕmōpĕtîm*) [ ] ? [ ] and He sent them to Pharaoh, to let [their people] go." Later in line 11 of the same fragment, wonders appears again: "…and God har[dened] the heart of [Pharao]h so as not to let [them] go and in order to multiply wonders (*mōpĕtîm*)."[233] Fragments 1–2 of 4Q185 invoke the memory of the plagues to motivate the audience: "And now listen, my people, pay attention to me. Suddenly [ ] be *destroyed* by the [chast]isement of God, they shall remember the wonders [*niplāʾôt*] he did in Egypt and his portents [*ûmôpĕtāyw*] [ ] your hearts
[ ] terrified before his visitation" (I 13b–15).[234] 4Q392 recounts the dire fate of those who did not listen to God's miracles and wonders. The offender is probably Pharaoh, since "[… he made] him [si]nk in the depths like a sto[ne …]."[235] Finally, Ben Sira 36, a plea for mercy and

---

[232] Of this passage, Zimmerli writes: "In these apocalyptic features there is expressed the truth that where God raises up the terror of his judgment, even among the great leaders in the created world, even in the case of the sun, moon, and stars, there are no areas of aristocratic exclusion. The created world is as a whole, in every sphere, at the service of its creator and called to proclaim his work" (Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 162).
[233] Translated by T. Elgvin and E. Tov in Parry and Tov, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader: Part 3*, 570–75.
[234] Translated by J. M. Allegro in Donald W. Parry and Emanuel Tov, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader: Part 4, Calendrical and Sapiential Texts* (Leiden: Brill: 2004), 275.
[235] From 4Q392 f2 + 5 + 4Q393 1 Col. I, as translated by D. Falk in Donald W. Parry and Emanuel Tov, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader: Part 5, Poetic and Liturgical Texts* (Leiden: Brill: 2005), 181.

vindication from enemies, implores God to "[r]enew signs and repeat wonders."[236] Though Ben Sira does not otherwise refer to Egypt or the plague narratives, by using the term "signs and wonders" he evokes them indirectly, perhaps asking God to intervene in the audience's situation in similarly dramatic and effective ways.

Two Second Temple texts invoke "signs and wonders" in ways that diverge from straight-forward allusions to the plague narratives. In fragment 1 of 4Q392 (fragment 2 + 5 was explored above), the luminaries are praised as works of God: "He created darkness[and li]ght for himself. In his dwelling is most perfect light and all darkness rests in his presence. Apart from him there is no one to separate the light from darkness, but he separated them for the sons of [ma]n—the sun for li[ght] by day and by night the moon and stars" (f1 4b–6). In lines 7b–8, the scribe continues: "…for all the works of God are wonderful. We are flesh. Should we not ponder why (he is) with us to d[o mir]acles and signs ([…*nip*]*lāʾôt ûmô*[*p*]*ětîm*) without number? [For on] high [he made w]inds and lightnings [his messengers and s]ervants of an inner sanctu[ary.] From his presence go forth the lu[minaries]…"[237] It is notable that this text avoids the word *ʾōtōt* for the luminaries, an unusual choice in and of itself, compounded by the fact that, in fragment 1 of the same scroll, the traditional *ōtōt wĕmōpĕtîm* is used for the plagues. This fragment invokes the perfection and orderliness of God's own dwelling and insists that the cycle of day and night experienced by humans, with their accompanying luminaries, is but a side effect of the orderly cosmos that God created ultimately "for himself."

4QInstruction also invokes "signs and wonders" outside of the plague tradition. In what is usually considered the opening text of 4QInstruction, 4Q416 I, the orderly cosmic realm (as described in I:1–9) is juxtaposed with a scene of eschatological judgment (in I:10–17), a

[236] Translation mine, from חדש אות ושנה מופת, found in SirB 36:6 (Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew*, 62).
[237] Translated by D. Falk in Parry and Tov, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader: Part 5*, 178–81.

combination of themes reminiscent of the opening chapters of 1 Enoch, in which the hymn extolling the natural world's orderliness (1 Enoch 2–5) is preceded by an oracle of judgment.[238] Though the lines are fragmentary, the "universal scope of God's dominion"[239] seems to be the topic of lines I:4–5, with "the host"—a term that refers to stars in the Hebrew Bible (Deut 4:19, Isa 34:4) and, at Qumran, sometimes denotes angels—"assigned by God to guide the direction of the stars in the heavenly courses."[240] The text continues: "And the host of heaven he has established f[*orever* ... and luminaries] / for their wonders and signs (*l^{e}môpětêhemm[ah] w^{e}ōtōt*) of [*their*] se[*asons* ... they *proclaim*] / one after another. And all their assignments [they] c[omplete *and*] make known…" (I:7–9).[241] Along with fragment 1 of 4Q392, 4QInstruction also applies the language of "signs and wonders" to the orderly activity of the luminaries rather than the fantastic power of the plagues. These two texts therefore combine the sense of Genesis 1:14, that the luminaries are a signpost for recurring events, with the sense of the Exodus plague narratives, that "signs and wonders" are demonstrative of God's power. The semantic force of the two linguistic traditions regarded "signs" are thus combined. This is, however, a relatively uncommon category for the natural world to occupy in the literature of this period. As I will explore in the following section, in the extant Second Temple literature, the natural world is more often considered an omen or a portent: a sign of things to come.

[238] Goff points out that although Ben Sira also begins its instruction with "an assertion of divine mastery over the cosmos," the theme of eschatological judgment is not present in the same way (Matthew J. Goff, *4QInstruction* [Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013], 45).
[239] Goff, *4QInstruction*, 47.
[240] Goff, *4QInstruction*, 46.
[241] Translation by Matthew Goff, *4QInstruction*, 44.

The Irregularity of Nature as Sign for Contingent Events II: Omens

The Hebrew Bible has no patience for astral omina,[242] but sometimes allows for divination as a practice for discerning the will of YHWH. Perhaps the most famous example is that of Gideon (Judges 6:26–40), mentioned above, who lays out his fleeces for two nights in a row, seeking in their damp or dry condition divine guidance about whether he will be victorious in war. In Gideon's story, the word "sign" is not used, nor is any other vocabulary associated with omina. However, strictly speaking, Gideon is using divination to ascertain not only the will of God, but also future events. More often in the Bible, however, divine guidance is offered through the oracles, visions, or symbolic actions mediated by Hebrew prophets. If the prophets do mention astral omina, they condemn it. For example, an oracle against the nations in Jeremiah 10:2 warns the people of Israel against giving credence to the "signs of the heavens" as other nations do, associating astral omina with the worship of idols made of wood and precious metals, which have as much power as "scarecrows in a cucumber field" (Jer 10:5). This is the only instance in which the Hebrew Bible uses the phrase "signs of the heavens," but the sentiment is echoed in other texts which proscribe astrological curiosity.[243] Like Genesis 1, Psalm 8 names the stars "the work of God's fingers"— nothing more—while Psalm 147 makes clear that it is God who names the stars and determines their numbers. The divine speeches in Job insist that every part of the created order is subservient to God, including the constellations (Job 38:31–33).

The final vision report in Daniel imagines a high role for the luminaries, though not an ominous one: the wise are offered an astral (possibly angelic) afterlife (12:3). However, most of

[242] Deuteronomy 4:19-20 prohibits astral worship; a person who does so is to be stoned (17:3–5).
[243] Zephaniah 1:5 condemns "those who bow down on roofs to the host of heaven"; Jeremiah, "all the houses upon whose roofs offerings have been made to the whole host of heaven" (19:13); Ezekiel, "about twenty-five men, with their backs to the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east, prostrating themselves to the sun toward the east" (8:16). Manasseh is criticized for worshipping "the host of heaven" (2 Kgs 21:3).

the time, when it comes to apocalyptic or eschatological discourse in the Bible, the natural world more broadly—the luminaries excepted—functions ominously. The "day of the LORD" rhetoric of Zechariah 14 offers a prime example:

> On that day there shall not be either cold or frost.
> And there shall be continuous day (it is known to the LORD),
> not day and not night, for at evening time there shall be light.
> On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem,
> half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea;
> it shall continue in summer as in winter.
> And the LORD will become king over all the earth;
> on that day the LORD will be one and his name one.
> The whole land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem.
> But Jerusalem shall remain aloft….
> This shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the peoples
> that wage war against Jerusalem:
> their flesh shall rot while they are still on their feet;
> their eyes shall rot in their sockets,
> and their tongues shall rot in their mouths….
> And a plague like this plague shall fall on the horses, the mules, the camels, the donkeys,
> and whatever animals may be in those camps. (14:6–10a; 12; 15)

Zechariah 14 draws on three salient biblical traditions in its depiction of the natural world functioning as a sign of contingent events. First, the oracle depicts the suspension of the natural world as a reliable signpost, especially with regard to the weather and the transition from day to night—something which other texts have assumed to be an incorruptible function "programmed" into the luminaries' very nature. Cold and frost will disappear as will darkness: there will only be daytime—only labor, and no rest. The waters will flow, equally and in every direction from Jerusalem, in all seasons. This image crystallizes when the reader is told that only Jerusalem will be situated at a high altitude, with the rest of the earth flattened around it, enabling the flow of water from the mountaintop city to the rest of the earth. This image brings up the second biblical tradition invoked by the oracle: that of cosmic reversal. Prophetic texts throughout the Bible depict the future as a time when opposites will rule: the mountains made plains; the rich made

poor; the rulers brought down; the poor lifted up.[244] Third, the plague traditions are invoked in this passage, and, when combined with images of reversal, produce an image that conjures George Romero's zombies: the living dead, flesh and organs rotting while their bodies are yet mobile. Such is the fate for the enemies of Jerusalem, together with their livestock.

These alarming events are situated in the future, "on that day" when YHWH will rescue the exiled peoples of Israel and Judah. In Zechariah 14, the future natural world behaves in unexpected ways, often, in fact, in ways which oppose the cosmic order which they were created to maintain. Such disruptions in nature usher in the eschatological scenario which the text foretells. In other words, when the natural world starts behaving this way, "that day" has arrived. In Second Temple literature, however, omens often work differently. Sometimes—especially in apocalypses—the ominous behavior of nature points toward events which are yet to come.

Book of the Luminaries. Depictions of disorder in the natural world are rooted in the readerly expectation of the natural world's orderliness. Thus, when nature behaves unexpectedly, interpretation is required. When the interpretation forecasts impending judgment, then nature is being interpreted as behaving ominously.[245] For example, 1 Enoch 80:2–8 is a judgment oracle which follows swiftly on the heels of a meticulous eight-chapter-long account of the laws governing the luminaries.[246] In 1 Enoch 80, the orderly natural world is contrasted with its own future disorderly self (rather than being compared with disobedient humankind, as in 1 Enoch

[244] Examples include Isa 40:4, Hab 3:6, and Bar 5:7.
[245] Francesca Rochberg defines omens as follows: "An omen is a pair of interdependent elements, on the one hand a sign in the natural world or social environment, and on the other an event in social life" (Francesca Rochberg, ""If P, Then Q": Form and Reasoning in Babylonian Divination," in *Divination and Interpretation of Signs in the Ancient World*, ed. Amar Annus [Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2010], 19).
[246] This pattern is manifest in other texts as well: the natural world, presented as an ordered and reliable creation of God, is described either before or after an oracle of judgment (1 Enoch 2-5, T. Naph. 2-3) or a prayer for cleansing (Psalms of Solomon 18).

2–5). Uriel emphasizes completeness when revealing to Enoch the significance of astronomical knowledge, just as Enoch had done when conveying his revelation to Methuselah earlier in the *Book of the Luminaries* (see above): "I have now shown you everything, Enoch, and I have revealed everything to you so that you may see this sun and this moon and those who led the stars of the sky and all those who turn them—their work, their times, and their emergences" (80:1). According to Uriel, Enoch has mastered the workings of the luminaries, presented as complete knowledge of the cosmos and all it entails. But there is a catch. Enoch's knowledge is only accurate (or relevant) in times when the natural world behaves as expected. In verse 2, Uriel's tribute to the breadth and depth of Enoch's knowledge morphs into an oracle of judgment, in which "[e]verything on the earth will change and will not appear at their times" (80:2b). For the purposes of this oracle, it is safe to assume that "everything" refers to the luminaries themselves, since Enoch and Uriel use the words almost interchangeably. Enoch has learned *everything* about the workings of the *whole* cosmos—but *everything* is ultimately destined to change, rendering provisional even Enoch's specialized knowledge. There will come a time when Enoch's knowledge will no longer be accurate, when humans will no longer be able to "read" the luminaries because their "interpretation" (provided by Enoch) of the "text" (the natural world) will be corrupted. In full, the oracle reads:

> In the days of the sinners the rainy seasons will grow shorter,
> and their seed will become late on their land and in their fields.
> Everything on the earth will change
> and will not appear at their times,
> the rain will be withhold,
> and the sky will stand still.
> At those times the fruit of the earth will be late and will not grow at its normal time,
> and the fruit of the trees will be withhold at its (normal) time.
> The moon will change its order,
> and will not appear at its (normal) time.
> At that time it will appear in the sky
> and will arrive at … at the edge of the great chariot in the west

and will shine very much more (brightly) than its normal light. [247]
Many heads of the stars will stray from the command
and will change their ways and actions
and will not appear at the times prescribed for them.
The entire law of the stars will be closed to the sinners,
and the thoughts of those on the earth will err regarding them.
They will turn back from all their ways,
will err, and will take them to be gods.
Evil will multiply against them
and punishment will come upon them to destroy all. (1 Enoch 80:2–8)

Starting with agricultural imagery of seasons, planting, rain, and harvest, the imagery soon turns toward the luminaries, and remains there for the rest of the oracle. The initial statement "the moon will change its order" is shocking in an Enochic context, as explained by VanderKam:

> 1 Enoch 80:4 makes the remarkable and totally unexpected statement that the moon will change its order. The verb translated 'change' (*wallaṭa*) is understandably rare in the Book of the Luminaries…. The claim here is that in the days of the sinners the moon will alter the law or order that God had imposed on it at creation. The noun *serʿāt* ("order") …. denotes what is fixed, stipulated, ordained and is normally used regarding the stars in the Book of the Luminaries…. In no passage apart from chap. 80 is there a suggestion that the moon (or any other luminary) will alter its prescribed path.[248]

In this oracle, the natural elements are in fact no longer regular, a departure from the *Book of the Luminaries* proper, but a tradition with parallels in other textual traditions.

As explained in chapter two of this dissertation, these verses are absent from the Aramaic version of the book, and are thus considered a later addition to the *Book of the Luminaries*.

---

[247] 1 Enoch 80:5 is corrupt in all manuscript traditions. Nickelsburg and VanderKam sum up the arguments. First, J. Hallévi has argued that "sky" is a misreading of "sun" in the Semitic original, and that the verse thus addresses the sun's disorderly conduct. However, Hallévi's theory works well only if the base text is Hebrew, and it is now certain that it was Aramaic instead. Alternatively, M. Knibb and D. Olson both argue that vs. 5 still refers to the moon. VanderKam finds the textual evidence "frustrating." In the end he concludes: "1 Enoch 80:5 conflicts with the clear teachings elsewhere in the Book of the Luminaries that neither one changes its creational patterns. There is no provision in other passages for their shining more brightly than normal" (Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2*, 526–27). Another issue is the difficult ellipses "and will arrive at … at the edge." Hallévi suggests a misreading which transposes consonants from "the famine" (*hārāʿāb*) to "in the west" (*bĕʿarāb*), which would result in "famine" serving as the missing subject in place of the ellipses (and the deletion of the phrase "in the west" from the end of the clause). Though thematically, the presence of a famine would fit the earlier agricultural nature of the oracle, the proposed transposition is less likely now that the base text is known to have been Aramaic (Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2*, 526–27).

[248] Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2*, 525.

Whereas 1 Enoch 72:1 describes nature's constancy as immutable, 1 Enoch 80:2–8 depicts the natural world as changeable. In its regard for earthly, agricultural signs as well as heavenly ones, 1 Enoch 80 mirrors 1 Enoch 2–5. If the luminaries themselves signal the proper times for seasons, harvests, and the appropriate weather for each, then it makes sense that an oracle which portends the unexpected irregularity of stars (whether conceived of as disobedience to God's commands to be regular, or obedience to God's commands to be irregular, or whether such irregularity exists outside the realm of obedience altogether and functions instead as a sign of a cosmic shift) would also describe the resultant agricultural chaos. In 1 Enoch 80, nature's ability to depart from the laws which govern it is brought to light—an idea assumed to be outside the parameters of the natural world in 1 Enoch 72–79 as well as 1 Enoch 2–5.

The events narrated in 1 Enoch 80 are not called "signs," but this is not unusual when it comes to texts featuring the natural world as participants in the genre of omina. Omens are intended to cause dis-ease among the observer; they themselves do not necessarily bring about other phenomena on earth, but they do cause an emotional (and perhaps behavioral) reaction in the one who sees them, reads about them, or otherwise imagines them. Omina in ancient Jewish literature work to make sense of potential (and thus imagined) aberrant natural behavior. Though the scribes seldom call the natural world a "sign" in texts like these, the rhetoric used treats them as such: a lens through which one can view future events, both imminent and ultimate, both actual and hypothetical. For Enoch and Methuselah, as well the text's earliest readers, "the time of the sinners" (80:2) has not yet arrived. In the present moment assumed by 1 Enoch 80, the "entire law" of the stars has been made known to Enoch, and Enoch has passed this knowledge on to Methuselah, who will presumably ensure its survival for generations of reading

communities. In the present moment, everything that is, has been made known by the faithfulness of Enoch's testimony.

The First Dream Vision. Not every part of 1 Enoch is as optimistic about the stable state of the natural world as the *Book of the Watchers* and the *Book of the Luminaries* (1 Enoch 80 excepted). Though discussions of Enoch's Dream Visions (1 Enoch 83–90) are often dominated by the Animal Apocalypse (1 Enoch 85–90), a recital of history which begins at creation and culminates during the leadership of Judas Maccabeus in 160-164 BCE,[249] the first (and much shorter) dream vision speaks to the behavior of the natural world directly rather than allegorically, and is thus of more relevance to this investigation. In 83:2, Enoch tells his son Methuselah that he received both visions early in his life, before marriage. The chapter goes on to narrate how Enoch received the vision in his sleep, and afterward spoke with his grandfather, Mahalalel, about its contents. Mahalalel confirmed the veracity of Enoch's vision, and instructed him how to pray in response: namely, for God to save a remnant rather than destroying all flesh together with the earth. Mahalalel seems to be mentoring Enoch in proper vision interpretation and the practice of prayer, and perhaps also in the scribal arts. Enoch says that he received this vision at the same time that he was learning to write, which may have increased the audience's confidence in the trustworthiness of what they were reading. Enoch's memory of these long-ago visions can be trusted because he wrote them down.

[249] The *Animal Apocalypse* utilizes the natural world primarily as an allegorical trope. Various beasts stand in for figures in Israel's history: humans are cattle; giants are camels, elephants, and asses. The behavior of the natural world in the Animal Apocalypse does not represent nature per se. Instead, it conveys human history in allegorical form. As a historical recital, the Animal Apocalypse does not contribute to our investigation of the rhetoric around the observable natural world, with one exception: in 87:1, "the earth begins to cry out" at the violence wreaked upon it by the offspring of angels and humankind. In this one instance, the earth is indeed testifying to its own actions and its own pain.

The contents of the first vision are almost entirely concerned with the behavior of the natural world at the time of God's judgment:

> Heaven was thrown down and taken away,
> And it fell down upon the earth.
> And when it fell upon the earth,
> I saw how the earth was swallowed up in the great abyss.
> Mountains were suspended upon mountains,
> And hills sank down upon hills;
> Tall trees were cut from their roots,
> And were thrown away and sank in to the abyss.
> And then speech fell into my mouth, and I lifted up (my voice) to cry out and said,
> "The earth has been destroyed." (1 Enoch 83:3b-5)

Here, God's judgment is made known through the collapse of the cosmos, a symbolic analogue to the flood traditions, themselves images of un-creation which reverse the linguistic imagery of Gen 1.[250] The direction of this discourse is downward: heaven is thrown down upon earth; earth is swallowed up in the abyss; mountains and hills collapse in upon themselves, and together with trees, they too sink down. Even Enoch's speech "falls" into his mouth. It is only when Enoch cries out that his message is "lifted up," a poignant contrast to the verbs which have come before. In this vision, readers experience some imagistic overlap with texts that portray the natural world as an instrument of God's judgment (see chapter four), but in this case, the natural world is not God's instrument as much as it simply embodies the final judgment, or ushers it into existence. When nature functions as a sign, it generally points toward something cosmic; as an instrument of judgment, nature usually functions on a more human scale.

[250] Nickelsburg (*1 Enoch 2,* 349) elaborates: "Different from its narrative counterparts in Genesis 7, or even 1 Enoch 89:2–6, the vision does not describe the opening of the windows of heaven and the fountains of the deep. Instead, the cosmos reverts to primordial chaos. Heaven's canopy—stretched out at creation to separate the waters above from the deep—is torn off and hurled onto the earth, which collapses and sinks back into the abyss."

After conversing with Mahalalel about this daunting vision, Enoch prays, writes down his prayer, and then ventures outside. The vividness of what he sees—in the "real world" this time—rivals the power of his earlier eschatological vision:

> And when I went out below,
> and saw the heaven and the sun rising in the east,
> and the moon setting in the west and a few stars,
> and all the earth and everything as he <made> (Eth knew) it
> from the beginning,
> Then I blessed the Lord of judgment, and to him I ascribed majesty,
> for he made the sun go forth from the windows of the east,
> so that it ascended and rose on the face of the heaven,
> and he made it rise, and it traverses the path that it was shown. (83:11)

In this verse, Enoch builds upon his earlier role of visionary, interpreter of visions, and scribe-in-training. Here Enoch has become an observer of what is happening on earth in the here and now: the natural world, functioning in all its orderly glory. For Enoch—and for the reader—this is a moment of relief. Viewing the luminaries and their adherence to God's purposes causes him to bless "the Lord of judgment." It is striking that Enoch praises God for the regularity of nature directly after dreaming of its imminent destruction. Of this, Hahne writes: "After his terrifying dream, [Enoch] is greatly relieved to see that the sun still rises in the east, the moon sets in the west, the stars appear at their normal time and place, and the earth operates according to God's plan…. Nature presently operates consistently, as God designed it. The coming cosmic disaster does not negate the fact that God designed nature to work consistently and predictably."[251] Almost as if Enoch himself is heeding the words of 1 Enoch 2–5, he then "contemplates" the orderliness of the natural world before him, and it leads him to further prayer. After blessing God's majesty and acknowledging God's rule in 84:1–3, Enoch continues:

> And now the angels of your heavens are doing wrong,
> and upon human flesh is your wrath until the great day of judgment.

[251] Harry Hahne, *The Corruption and Redemption of Creation: Nature in Romans 8.19-22 and Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 156.

> And now, O God and Lord and great King,
> I make supplication and request that you fulfill my prayer,
> to leave me a remnant on the earth,
> and not obliterate all human flesh,
> and devastate the earth,
> that there be eternal destruction.
> And now, my Lord, remove from the earth the flesh that has aroused your wrath,
> but the righteous and true flesh raise up as a seed-bearing plant forever,
> And hide not your face from the prayer of your servant, O Lord. (84:4–6)

Enoch intercedes for a remnant, much like Abraham at Sodom, but this time, the fate of the whole earth is at stake. In praying for a remnant, Enoch is also interceding for the earth itself, for without the earth, there is no use for a remnant. Verse 4 makes it clear that angelic beings are to blame for wrongdoing; however, in an ironic twist, it is upon human flesh that God's wrath is poured out. Perhaps Enoch's intercession is not only pious but also a challenge for justice, a plea to remove "the flesh that has aroused your wrath" while preserving the "righteous and true flesh" that has not. It is vexing that Enoch does not indicate in which camp angelic flesh (or hybrid angelic/human flesh) belongs, and in which camp human flesh belongs, but perhaps the word "true" offers us a hint: true flesh is the flesh which God created, not the flesh wrought by the illicit unions of angels and humankind. In asking for a remnant, Enoch is challenging God to save the innocents: not only the humans who are faithful, but also the natural world, the model of righteousness and obedience.

The Sibylline Oracles. Several Sibylline Oracles offer an especially dim view of the natural world's ultimate fate, including the second oracle, dated to around the turn of the era,[252] the third, dated to the first century BCE,[253] the fifth, dated to the late first or early second century CE,[254]

---

[252] John J. Collins, "The Sibylline Oracles," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Vol. 1: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, edited by James H. Charlesworth, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 330–331.
[253] Rieuwerd Buitenwerf, *Book Three of the Sibylline Oracles and Its Social Setting* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 130.
[254] Collins, "The Sibylline Oracles," 390–93.

and the latter half of the eighth, which is thought to be a Christian composition originating as late as 300 CE.[255] For the purposes of this dissertation, I will focus on the data in the first three oracles, in which the language of omina is prominent.

In the third and oldest Sibylline Oracle, the end is heralded by "abnormal celestial phenomena"[256]—swords appear among the stars at night (line 798); the moon's light, and not the sun's, appears in daytime (lines 801–803). Such celestial abnormalities serve to warn that judgment is near, which is described in 3.80–92 as the annihilation of the cosmos: including heavens falling onto the earth, an all-consuming conflagration, and a complete absence of seasons and luminaries.[257] The second oracle follows a similar pattern, and part of it may be based on material in the third.[258] In 2.154–173, signs of the end are first enumerated. Those keyed to the natural order include: children born with gray hair (155); famine and pestilence (156); "changes of times" (157); infertility (164). The Most High will appear "when from the starry heaven / all the stars appear in midday to all / with the two luminaries, as time presses on" (184b–186).[259] Next, Elijah will drive his heavenly chariot through the heavens, and in his wake "a dark mist will cover the boundless world / east and west and south and north" (194–195). It is at this point in the oracle that the natural world takes center stage, though the rhetoric shifts from

---

[255] In the eighth oracle, the following occurs on judgement day: "the earth will sweat; the sun will be eclipsed; heaven will be rolled up; the moon will perish; ravines will be elevated; the heights of hills will be destroyed; the mountains will be made plain; the seas will not be able to bear voyage; the earth will be parched with its springs; the rivers will fail" (8:217).

[256] Adams, *The Stars Will Fall*, 89.

[257] The full text reads: "… then all the elements of the universe will be bereft, when God who dwells in the sky rolls up the heaven as a scroll is rolled, and the whole variegated vault of heaven falls on the wondrous earth and ocean. An undying cataract of raging fire will flow, and burn earth, burn sea, and melt the heavenly vault and days and creation itself into one and separate them into clear air. There will no longer be twinkling spheres of luminaries, no night, no dawn, no numerous days of care, no spring, no summer, no winter, no autumn. And then indeed the judgment of the great God will come into the midst of the great world, when all these things happen" (3:80b–92).

[258] Adams, *The Stars Will Fall*, 90.

[259] This and all following translations of the Sibylline Oracles are by John J. Collins in James H. Charlesworth, ed. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Vol. 1: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 335–472.

nature-as-sign to nature-as-punishment, with luminaries crashing together, stars falling from heaven, and eschatological language of fiery punishment of souls. The oracle then depicts the ultimate end of the cosmos in language which echoes Oracle 3:

> And then all the elements of the world will be bereft—
> air, land, sea, light, vault of heaven, days, nights.
> No longer will innumerable birds fly in the air.
> Swimming creatures will no longer swim the sea at all.
> No laden ship will voyage on the waves.
> No guiding oxen will plow the soil.
> No sound of trees under the winds. But at once all
> will melt into one and separate into clear air. (2:196–220)

Such imagery remains consistent in the fifth oracle as well, with its focus on the elements of the natural world that will no longer exist at the moment of judgment, most importantly, the sun and the moon (5:346–347).[260] The destruction of the cosmos is presented as the unalterable fate for this world, indeed, as the form which God's judgment must take. There is no act of divination that can reveal a way out; there is no call to repentance which will avert this fate. As explored above, such an attitude has much in common with that of the Stoics around the turn of the era. Stoics also spoke of "elements" which made up the natural world; they were determinists, who insisted that the world had a fixed beginning and a fixed end; the Stoics imagined the ultimate end as a conflagration. For Stoics, the end of the cosmos was also purposeful, and made room for the beginning of a new world. Though the Sibylline Oracles do not spill much ink describing hopeful post-judgment scenarios, it is implicit in the texts' worldview that such catastrophic events were the only way their faithful readership would ever be liberated from political and social oppression.[261]

---

[260] "The imperishable flames of the sun itself will no longer be, nor will the shining light of the moon be anymore in the last time, when God assumes command. Everything will be blackened, there will be darkness throughout the earth, and blind men, evil wild beasts, and woe. That day will last a long time, so that men will take note of God himself, the prince who oversees all from heaven" (5:346–52).

[261] John J. Collins, *The Sibylline Oracles of Egyptian Judaism* (Atlanta: Society Biblical Literature/Scholars Press,

4 Ezra. Written after the fall of the Jerusalem temple in 70 CE, and thus roughly contemporary with the fifth Sibylline Oracle, 4 Ezra also presents a sobering portrait of the natural world as a sign. When interpreting the natural world as an omen, 4 Ezra is chiefly concerned with signs that will herald "the end." Michael Stone notes that "the end" is a technical term in 4 Ezra which can refer to two different eschatological events: the day of judgment (7:112–133; 12:34) or an earlier point "in the cosmic timetable" (5:41; 6:26; 11:39–45; 12:9; 14:9).[262] The passages explored belong to the latter category.

At the end of 4 Ezra chapter 4, Ezra asks two questions of his angelic guide and in turn receives two answers: "Then I prayed and said, 'Do you think that I shall live until those days? or what will take place in those days?' He answered and said, 'Concerning the signs about which you ask me, I can tell you in part; but I was not sent to tell you concerning your life, for I do not know'" (4 Ezra 4:51–52).[263] Much of the ensuing two chapters comprise Uriel's preliminary knowledge about the signs of "those days,"[264] which in large part have to do with the aberrant behavior of the natural world. At first, Uriel describes abstract signs, those that stem from the inner life of humankind: great terror; hidden truth; an increase in unrighteousness (5:1–2). Soon thereafter, the angel turns to signs that encompass the natural world: the land will be "waste and untrodden" and "desolate" (5:3); the earth itself will be "thrown into confusion," one symptom of which will be, in familiar language, the moment when the sun shines at night while the moon appears during the day (5:4). Uriel continues:

> Blood shall drip from wood, and the stone shall utter its voice; the peoples shall be troubled, and the atmospheres shall be changed. And one shall reign whom those who

1972), 114–15.
[262] Michael E. Stone, *Fourth Ezra* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 103.
[263] This and all following translations of 4 Ezra are from Stone, *Fourth Ezra* (1990).
[264] About this verse, Stone comments: "Observe here that the angel asserts his lack of knowledge. Ezra's inability to know certain things was the main theme of 4:1–25. Knowledge also figured in 4:43. Ezra will learn what he desires at the eschaton. Even angels have limited knowledge, the present verse asserts and provides thereby a transition to the revelation of that which is permitted and known" (Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 105).

> dwell on earth do not expect, and the birds shall fly away, and the sea of Sodom shall cast up fish; and one whom the many do not know shall make his voice heard by night, and all shall hear his voice. There shall be chasms also in many places, and fire shall often break out, and the wild beasts shall roam beyond their haunts, and women shall bring forth monsters. And salt waters shall be found in the sweet, and all friends shall fight one another; then wisdom shall hide itself, and understanding shall withdraw into its treasury, and it shall be sought by many but shall not be found, and unrighteousness and unrestraint shall increase on earth. (4 Ezra 5:5–12)

Following the lead of the sun and the moon in 5:4, some elements of the natural world appear at the wrong time or in the wrong place. It is this dramatic out-of-placeness that alarms the reader: birds are absent from the sky and fish are (literally) out of water; wild beasts show up where domesticated beasts are expected; salt water is found where sweet is needed, and so on. In other cases, the natural world behaves in a way which personifies but also horrifies: wood bleeds, stones speak,[265] women give birth to monsters. This latter category of signs do not allude to the exodus tradition, but they certainly fit with the kind of disruption usually brought about by so-called "signs and wonders" (and indeed, the signs of the end are called God's "wonders" in 7:27).[266] Of the signs above, only four are related to the world outside of nature, touching on politics (the wrong person will rule), personal relationships (friends become enemies), and the elusiveness of wisdom and understanding, which are seemingly replaced with "unrighteousness and unrestraint." 4 Ezra 5:12 hearkens back to the first verse of the chapter, which describes how, in the coming days, truth will be hidden, faith will be absent, "and unrighteousness shall be increased beyond what you yourself see, and beyond what you heard of formerly." Still, the fact that numerous elements of the natural world are invoked in this imagery indicates the important role played by nature's regularity in ancient concepts of cosmic "normalcy."

---

[265] Perhaps this image is informed by the following line in Habakkuk's oracle of wine: "The very stones will cry out from the wall…" [2:11a] (Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 111).

[266] According to Michael Stone, in every instance in which the terms "marvel" or "wonder" is used in 4 Ezra refers to eschatological events. Those instances are 4:26, 7:27, 13:14, 13:50, 13:56, and 14:15 (Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 93).

In 4 Ezra 6:11–29, a comparable vision of the signs of the end appears:

> Infants a year old shall speak with their voices, and women with child shall give birth to premature children at three and four months, and these shall live and dance. Unsown places shall suddenly appear sown, and full storehouses shall suddenly be found to be empty; and the trumpet shall sound aloud, and when all hear it, they shall suddenly be terrified. And it will come to pass at that time friends shall make war on friends like enemies, and the earth and those who inhabit it shall be terrified, and the springs of the fountains shall stand still, so that for three hours they shall not flow. (6:21–24)[267]

These signs are similar to those named earlier, though some of the more "wondrous" developments are arguably positive (such as thriving premature babies and unexpectedly full storehouses, presumably for the poor). But even so, these signs again result in terror; even when errant nature brings with it blessings, it remains distressing that the world is no longer behaving as expected. A similar report of "signs of the end" is found in 2 Baruch 25:2–4, though nature features much less prominently.

In 4 Ezra 5–7, when disorderly, nature always functions a sign of impending judgment.[268] This image only works for the reader because the default paradigm assumes nature to be an orderly, obedient, and reliable model for human righteousness. To invert that paradigm is to invite disorder and chaos. Michael Stone famously explored the tension in 4 Ezra between the

---

[267] A similar report of "signs of the end" is found in 2 Baruch 25:2–4, though nature features much less prominently: "When astonishment will seize the inhabitants of the earth, and they will fall into many tribulations, and, furthermore, they will fall into great tortures. And when they will say in their thoughts because of their many tribulations, 'The Mighty One does no longer remember the earth!' and lose hope, then the time will awake." In chapter 27, earthquakes and fire are among the "twelve woes of the end" named for Baruch. "Signs" are also mentioned, but not described, in 72:2 as preceding the advent of the Messiah (Michael E Stone and Matthias Henze, *4 Ezra and 2 Baruch: Translations, Introductions, and Notes* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013], 100, 130).

[268] In 7:39–44, the angel reveals that when judgment occurs, the sun, moon, stars, clouds, lightning, wind, water and air will actually cease to exist. The temporal aspects of the natural world will also disappear—including darkness, evening, morning, summer, spring, harvest—as will meteorological ones—heat, frost, cold, hail, rain, dew. In 7:42, the angel emphasizes that there will be no light of any kind: no "noon or night, or dawn, or shining or brightness or light, but only the splendor of the glory of the Most High, by which all shall see what has been determined for them. In Revelation 21-22, the light of the sun is not needed in the New Jerusalem, because the presence of God will provide all the light and warmth the city needs. This is a post-judgment image, and as such, an encouraging one for the elect. However, in 4 Ezra 7, the sun is gone, and the light of God shines cold in judgment: "all shall see what has been determined for them" (7:42).

regularity of the natural world and the irregularity which Ezra and the angels anticipate.[269] As evidenced by the signs named above, in 4 Ezra the created order is eminently corruptible—yet the book still views the natural world positively. Indeed, Stone writes: "[W]hen the author seeks to stress the regularity of God's plan or of some aspect of cosmic order, he takes a feature of nature as his paradigm. From this we may infer that according to his notion, nature is the very best example of that which is regular, harmonious and orderly."[270] For this reason, the rhetorical "punch" of a disordered natural world is powerful, let alone the shock of a judgment day when nature ceases to exist at all. If the "best example of that which is regular" shall ultimately cease to exist, in what or whom can the seer place trust? These are the questions with which Ezra is obsessed. Much like Enoch in the first of the *Dream Visions*, the apocalyptic seer in 4 Ezra maintains a sense of deference for the natural world even in the face of its imminent demise. In 1 Enoch, there is still hope that a repentant humankind might avert the disastrous fate awaiting the natural world. In 4 Ezra, such hope is minimized (though Jonathan Moo argues vehemently that it is not absent).[271] In light of the temple's fall in 70 CE, this literature conveys a decline in confidence that anything created will last. And yet, even as Ezra's anticipated day of judgment is more severe than anything experienced by humankind in 1 Enoch, the seer and his interlocutors still employ Stone's "parabolic" use of the natural world, offering it again and again as the ultimate example of all that is permanent, reliable, and steadfast. Until the day of judgment actually arrives, the natural world is still primarily considered a reliable model for steadfastness

---

[269] Stone, "The Parabolic Use," 298–308.
[270] Stone, "The Parabolic Use," 305.
[271] "There is no doubt that the author pictures a radical transformation and the definitive end of the present world–order, but we have seen that there also remain important elements of continuity…. Indeed, if we take seriously those passages that point to continuity and that seem to assume that there is a future for the earth and for material creation, then the more strongly discontinuous statements, especially those concerning God's creation of two *saecula* from the beginning, need to be reassessed in their light" (Jonathan A Moo, *Creation, Nature and Hope in 4 Ezra* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011], 158).

and obedience. At that point, a new heaven and new earth are ushered in, and the old order—and its particular kind of ordered-ness—will cease. Despite other differences, Enoch and Ezra agree that if humankind does not alter its behavior to mimic that of the natural world, then the reliability of the natural world (and of the created order itself) will fall apart, and this will function as a sign that judgment is near.

Conclusion:
The Natural World as Sign of Restoration

In the apocalyptic texts examined in this chapter—1 Enoch 80 and 83; 4 Ezra 5–7; the Sibylline Oracles; Jubilees 23—the natural world was depicted as a sign of impending judgment. To be interpreted as a sign, the natural world is first required to behave in erratic and unexpected ways. Against the backdrop of the natural world as the structured backbone of the cosmos, holding everything together, it is not a surprise that such behavior is presented as alarming. In apocalyptic texts which foreshadow eschatological judgment, when the natural world acts as a sign, it is participating in the genre of omina by foretelling future events. Though the Sibylline Oracles sometimes present the natural world as ushering in the very judgment it predicts, the other texts seem to foretell events that will unfold over a longer period of time, only gradually leading up to the eschatological event in question.

In addition to foretelling doom and judgment, in some of these same texts, the natural world is also depicted as a sign of cosmic restoration, or even of divine love. The *Book of the Watchers* is especially adamant that the natural world will only remain in its disordered form temporarily. In 1 Enoch 10, a post-deluge earth is characterized as filled with righteousness as well as trees; blessings as well as vines; joy as well as measures of oil and baths of wine.

The images are hyperbolic in their depictions of orderliness and plenty. The fear and trembling reflected in the judgment oracle of 1 Enoch 1–5 are replaced with jubilation, and the devastation wreaked by the Giants and the flood are made right as the earth renews itself. Even 4 Ezra, with its dim view of the current material world, looks forward to a renewal of the world's original goodness in a re-made world-to-come.[272] Such an expectation is also evident in 1QS, in which the natural world as sign of restoration is linked back to its originally-intended role as signpost:

> He shall bless him at the times ordained of God: when light begins its dominion—each time it returns—and when, as ordained, it is regathered into its dwelling place; when night begins its watches—as He opens His storehouse and spreads darkness over the earth—and when it cycles back, withdrawing before the light; when the luminaries show forth from their holy habitation, and when they are regathered into their glorious abode; when the times appointed for new moons arrive, and when, as their periods require, each gives way to the next. Such renewal is a special day for the Holy of Holies; indeed, it is a sign that He is unlocking eternal lovingkindness each time these cycles begin as ordained, and so it shall be for every era yet to come. (1QS 9:26b–10:5a)[273]

In this way, when the natural world functions as a sign of things to come, in many texts, it brings the reader full circle: back to nature-as-signpost and model, back to the orderliness they might expect to see if, like Enoch, they look up from the devastating visions they are encountering and view instead, with startling clarity, the impressive orderliness of the world as it is functioning around them.

In light of the meanings of "sign" available to readers both ancient and modern, it is no wonder that Gen 1:14–18 is difficult to interpret. The luminaries are signs—but are they signposts, wonders, or omens? In the end, these categories are not so easily teased out from one another, in the same way that the disorderly behavior of the natural world can only be interpreted as such because of the overarching assumption that orderliness is simply "the way things work."

---

[272] Moo, *Creation, Nature and Hope*, 159.
[273] Translated by M. Wise, M. Abegg, and E. Cook in Donald W. Parry and Emanuel Tov, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader: Part 1, Texts Concerned with Religious Law*(Leiden: Brill: 2004), 37.

Indeed, when the natural world functions as a signpost, it is usually within a text that assumes orderliness and predictability as a given. When the natural world functions as a wonder, it is usually in reference to the plagues of Exodus, and it indicates a brief intervention in the orderliness and predictability assumed of nature. Even when the natural world functions as an omen, such depictions are dependent on assumptions about nature's reliability. When functioning as omina, elements of the natural world (usually) point toward the impending judgment of God, which might take a while to arrive. Unlike the Hebrew prophets, whose dramatic oracles of judgment almost always include a caveat that allows for repentance and the subsequent relenting of punishment, apocalyptic imagery is, on the whole, devoted to the inevitability of the end. Judgment will come; the natural world will herald it. When there is hope to be found in these texts, it is not hope on a human scale, though certainly many of the readers would have identified themselves among the righteous, and thus hoped for a favorable judgment. Rather, in apocalyptic scenarios in which the natural world functions as a sign, hope is a cosmic phenomenon, and texts which reflect such hope usually anticipate a transformed world on the other side of cosmic catastrophe.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE NATURAL WORLD AS INSTRUMENT OF JUDGMENT AND GIVER OF TESTIMONY IN SECOND TEMPLE JEWISH LITERATURE

In the previous two chapters, I explored several ways in which the constancy or inconstancy of the natural world is interpreted in Second Temple Jewish literature. When constant, the natural world is held up as a model for human righteousness (see chapter two) or presented as a signpost for recurring events (see chapter three); when inconstant, nature most often functions as a sign of things to come (also see chapter three). This chapter considers two additional, interrelated roles nature plays: an instrument of divine judgment and a witness who gives testimony about the deeds of humankind.[274] In my analysis, I am concerned with the ways that judgment is carried out by means of nature, as well as the identity of the witnesses from the natural world and the content of these witnesses' testimonies. Both roles emerge from biblical portrayals of the natural world as a covenant witness, in which nature is called upon to observe the legal agreement between Israel and God, and to participate in any covenant blessings and curses which may follow. Such covenantal imagery lays the foundation for the natural world to

[274] The more common model is one of angelic testimony. An example from 2 Enoch 19 is illustrative. In this passage, the final judgment offers an amplified role for angelic beings when compared with 1 Enoch 100. Though references to the natural world remain ubiquitous, in 2 Enoch nature is carefully monitored and controlled by divine beings. The archangels who reside in the sixth heaven are portrayed as regulating the movements of the stars, as well as possessing authority over seasons and years, rivers and oceans, fruits, grass, and living things in general. In 2 Enoch's long recension, these archangels also keep a record of the deeds of human souls, apparently collecting information for the sake of judgment. Even in the short recension, there are said to be "angels of all people, and all their life they organize and write it down before the face of the Lord." (19:5) The longer recension is more explicit about the content of the angelic records: they are "angels who record all human souls, and all their deeds, and their lives before the face of the Lord." (19:5) Furthermore, a particular group of angels is assigned the specific task of recording the deeds of humanity. Lesser angels are assigned defined tasks, all of which have to do with the natural world: overseeing seasons/years; managing the waters of the earth; caring for the earth's fruits and grasses; managing the food for every living thing. While one group of angels are portrayed as responsible for the preservation and regulation of the natural world, another group observes and records the deeds of humankind—and it seems that never the twain shall meet. In one way, the connection between judgment and natural world, though indirect in 2 Enoch, is maintained by these two groups of angelic intermediaries, who have their fingers in both pots. Translations of 2 Enoch by F. I. Andersen in Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Vol. 1:* 91–222.

function as an instrument of the divine will in the Bible—sometimes interpreted as God's judgment—when the natural world is withheld or unleashed to convey divine displeasure.

Moving into the Second Temple period, imagery related to God's judgment often occurs in a courtroom setting, with covenantal language present less often. Apocalyptic courtroom scenes featuring eschatological judgment frequently employ witnesses (sometimes inanimate, at other times living) who give testimony about the deeds of those on trial. In most of these cases, heavenly books play the witnessing role, or sometimes the angelic figures who consult them—but at least once, in the *Epistle of Enoch*, the natural world steps into the role of courtroom witness. In order to understand the intricacies of nature's role in the courtroom, it will help to explore the frequent witnessing role of books more closely. Leslie Baynes proposes four categories for how heavenly books function in Jewish and Christian biblical and apocalyptic literature: as a book of life, in which the names of individuals are registered; as a book of deeds, a "heavenly accounting of people's works, good or evil"; as a book of fate, which records future events; and as a book of action, whose "content is subordinate to its physical effects."[275] This chapter explores the way the natural world, when giving testimony, functions analogously to Baynes's book of deeds, in which it is the deeds themselves, but not the resultant judgments, which are written in the book which serves as a witness in the heavenly court.

This chapter culminates in an exploration of the *Epistle of Enoch*. In the *Epistle*, elements of nature function as witnesses—God's informants—regarding humankind at the final judgment. Such a depiction of the natural world builds on nature's constancy, as explored in chapter two. If the natural world is a collection of agential beings with the ability to obey or disobey, it can be trusted as a reliable source of information about human behavior. In particular, heavenly bodies

[275] Leslie Baynes, *The Heavenly Book Motif in Judeo-Christian Apocalypses 200 BCE–200 CE* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 7–8.

and meteorological elements are portrayed as observers of human action. In the *Epistle of Enoch*, other elements of the natural world function as instruments that render judgment after testimony has been given. Especially in the *Epistle of Enoch*'s fifth discourse, nature's roles easily shift depending on the genre of the text and the audience it is addressing. Not only is nature depicted as witness and instrument in the *Epistle of Enoch*, but also (to a lesser extent) as model and sign, all within the same eschatological scenario. By exploring the way nature occupies several categories of significance within one text, one can better understand the way that these categories may have sometimes overlapped in ancient Jewish scribal imaginations.

Nature as Covenant Witness in the Bible

The impulse to depict the natural world as a witness to covenantal obligations is rooted in biblical traditions.[276] In the Torah as a whole, the word *ʿēd* is used regularly for "witness" in case law.[277] In these law codes, the natural world is involved only occasionally, such as when a mangled beast is said to serve as a "witness" to the crime that resulted in its demise (Exod 22:13). The word also appears in the Decalogue's prohibition of "false witness" (*ʿēd šāqer*), found in Exod 20:16 and Deut 5:20. Less frequently, *ʿēd* is used in non-legal contexts, and each time, the text relates to the covenant between God and the Israelites, as explored below.

In Genesis, the first use of the word "witness" (*ʿēd*) appears in 21:30, in which Abraham settles a water dispute by negotiating a covenant with Abimelech, ruler of the Philistines (21:32). After giving Abimelech sheep and oxen as payment for water rights in the Philistine land where

---

[276] Lars Hartman makes a different move, arguing that the "*rib*-pattern" or covenant-lawsuit genre is the primary background to 1 Enoch 2-5, which presents the natural world as a model for human righteousness. His hypothesis seeks to make sense of the fact that the wisdom poem is embedded in a judgment oracle (Lars Hartman, *Asking for a Meaning: A Study of 1 Enoch 1-5* [Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1979], 81–92).

[277] For example, Numbers 35:30: "If anyone kills another, the murderer shall be put to death on the evidence of witnesses; but no one shall be put to death on the testimony of a single witness."

Abraham, Sarah, and Ishmael had settled, Abraham then set apart seven ewes, telling Abimelech to accept them so that there might be a witness to the fact that Abraham himself dug the well in question, and thus had rights to it. The NRSV translates 21:30 straight-forwardly, but a grammatical problem exists in the gender of the word "witness" (*lᵉʿēdâ*), a feminine singular noun: "These seven ewe lambs you shall accept from my hand, in order that you (2ms) may be a witness (fs) for me that I dug this well." To whom is Abraham speaking when he says that "you" (2ms) could be a witness? The intuitive choice (made by the NRSV) is Abimelech, the human character with whom Abraham has been speaking, but if so, it is puzzling that the word "witness" appears in its feminine singular form. The antecedent for "witness" could be the seven ewes, if Abraham is speaking of them collectively, but if so, it is odd that Abraham would address the ewes in the second person. The LXX solves this problem by pairing the plural noun "ewes" with a plural of the subjunctive "to be"— *ina ōsin moi eis marturion*, best translated "in order that they would be a witness for me"—thereby making the seven ewes the Bible's very first covenant witnesses. Later in Genesis, the word "witness" is invoked four times when Jacob and Laban forge a covenant in Genesis 31, with each utterance of *ʿēd* placed in the mouth of Laban; three of those times Laban is clearly referring to the pile of stones set up by Jacob as the witness to their binding agreement.[278] Like the story of Abraham and Abimelech, here one of

[278] First, Laban says: "Come now, let us make a covenant, you and I; and let it be a witness between you and me" (31:44). Laban could be naming the covenant as its own witness. However, based on the fact that Jacob responds to Laban's words by immediately setting up a pillar and calling his family to pile up stones, Laban's proclamation more likely anticipates the monument as a covenant witness, a possibility bolstered in verse 48, when Laban calls the heap "a witness" and also names God as one: "If you ill-treat my daughters, or if you take wives in addition to my daughters, though no one else is with us, remember that God is witness between you and me" (31:50). Later in the chapter, Laban refers to stones as witnesses a third time. Works made of stone are referred to as "witnesses" in several other places in the Former Prophets, though covenants are not explicitly mentioned in these cases. In Joshua 22:27-33, an altar built at one tribal border not for the purpose of sacrificing, but as a "witness" to the fact that the people are faithful in worshipping God with sacrifices and offerings. Two chapters later, in Joshua 24:27, Joshua sets up a stone as a witness against the people, reminding them of their promise to worship YHWH alone. Again, covenant is not mentioned explicitly. Finally, in 1 Samuel 6:18, a stone used for offering sacrifices is said to be "a witness to this day in the field of Joshua of Beth-Shemesh." In two of the three cases, the memorial "witnessing" stone has to do with offering sacrifices to YHWH, and even in Joshua 24, the stone serves to remind the people of

Israel's ancestors forges a covenant with a potential enemy,[279] and the identity of the covenant witnesses include elements of the natural world; whether flocks or stones, in Genesis these witnesses are essentially symbolic objects. In other words, when the natural world functions as a covenant witness in the book of Genesis, it does so by serving as a signpost, pointing to the ongoing covenant relationship between the parties involved.

The next depiction in Torah of the natural world functioning as covenant witness is found in Deuteronomy. In Deut 4:25-26, when Moses tells the Israelites what will happen if they abrogate their exclusive covenant with YHWH, he calls "heaven and earth" to serve as witnesses to his words:

> When you have had children and children's children, and become complacent in the land, if you act corruptly by making an idol in the form of anything, thus doing what is evil in the sight of the LORD your God, and provoking him to anger, I call heaven and earth to witness (*ha ʿîdōtî*) against you today[280] that you will soon utterly perish from the land that you are crossing the Jordan to occupy; you will not live long on it, but will be utterly destroyed.

Unlike the texts in Genesis, this depiction of covenant witnesses uses personification to emphasize the importance of their role. The pile of stones and the ewes do not ever actually speak, but in Deuteronomy, the sun and moon are personified as potentially being able to.

---

their worship allegiances. Though covenant is not mentioned explicitly, there are undertones of the loyalty demanded of the people by the Mosaic covenant. It is noteworthy that all three stones have something to do with Joshua, Moses' successor and the enforcer of the covenant in succeeding generations.

[279] The narratives depict the patriarchs distinctly, resonating with Abraham and Jacob's larger stories. Abraham has more perfect control of the situation than his grandson. He proposes the covenant and defines its form; God is not involved in the transaction. In Jacob's case, it is God's intervention that makes a peaceful covenant possible, since the God of Abraham appears to Laban in a dream, warning him against speaking "good or ill" to Jacob when they meet. Though Jacob is the one who enacts the covenant by building a monument, it is Laban who repeatedly defines the terms of the covenant and names the witnesses. Unlike the ewes, the stones are as much a memorial as a witness. They mark this covenant geographically, serving as a physical boundary between the two people groups. If either is tempted to break their covenantal obligations and pursue the other, on their way they would be forced to pass by these stones, a reminder of their agreement to leave one another in peace.

[280] The syntax of the NRSV is confusing, suggesting that heaven and earth might offer testimony on the day of Moses' speech. But it makes the most sense if "today" describes the moment of Moses' calling of witnesses, not a future moment of testimony.

Similar texts recur in Deuteronomy. Moses closes his two-chapter-long recital of the wilderness journey with the following proclamation:

> I call heaven and earth to witness (*haʿîdōtî*) against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the LORD swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. (30:19–20)

In chapter 31, the word "witness" appears three more times, first in reference to Moses's song, which God commands him to write in 31:19–21, and which is recorded in chapter 32. In Deuteronomy 31:21, God calls Moses's song a "witness" which will "answer" them in their suffering, "for it will not be lost from the mouths of their descendants."[281] Though this covenant witness is not an part of nature, within the song itself, nature plays its now-familiar role: the heavens and earth are invoked, although the word "witness" is not used for them this time: "Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak; let the earth hear the words of my mouth" (32:1). After the song concludes, Moses names his own words as yet another witness for the people;[282] then, a few verses later, Moses invokes yet another new covenant witness: the law.[283] Moses writes down the

---

[281] In full, Deut 31:19–21 reads: "Now therefore write this song, and teach it to the Israelites; put it in their mouths, in order that this song may be a witness (*leʿēd*) for me against the Israelites. For when I have brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey, which I promised on oath to their ancestors, and they have eaten their fill and grown fat, they will turn to other gods and serve them, despising me and breaking my covenant. And when many terrible troubles come upon them, this song will confront them as a witness (*leʿēd*), because it will not be lost from the mouths of their descendants. For I know what they are inclined to do even now, before I have brought them into the land that I promised them on oath."

[282] See Deut 32:46–47: "Take to heart all the words that I am giving in witness (*mēʿîd*) against you today; give them as a command to your children, so that they may diligently observe all the words of this law. This is no trifling matter for you, but rather your very life; through it you may live long in the land that you are crossing over the Jordan to possess."

[283] See Deut 31:24–28: "When Moses had finished writing down in a book the words of this law to the very end, Moses commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, "Take this book of the law and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God; let it remain there as a witness (*leʿēd*) against you. For I know well how rebellious and stubborn you are. If you already have been so rebellious toward the LORD while I am still alive among you, how much more after my death! Assemble to me all the elders of your tribes and your officials, so that I may recite these words in their hearing and call heaven and earth to witness (*weʿāʿîdâ*) against them. For I know that after my death you will surely act corruptly, turning aside from the way that I have commanded you. In time to come trouble will befall you, because you will do what is evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger through the work of your hands."

words of "this law" (presumably the book of Deuteronomy) and commands the Levites to keep it in the ark as a witness against themselves.[284] If the song of Moses is meant to serve as a grim reminder to future disobedient Israelites of the commitment they have abrogated, the book of law plays the same role for the priests. Finally, Moses calls upon heaven and earth as witnesses once again—references to these cosmic witness (31:28). That the Israelites will be held accountable for the covenant (dis)obedience is guaranteed by this threefold witness: a song performed by their descendants; the book of the law, perhaps to be equated with the words of Moses, ever-present in the cult center; and the heavens and earth themselves. The song and the law are bounded witnesses with particular relevance to Israel. The heavens and earth—the cosmos itself—is by definition universal. It is an ever-present witness of daily living, and as such, it is poised to give testimony not only about covenant stipulations as determined in the mythic past, but also about the ways in which the people will ultimately fail to keep these stipulations in the future (for the reader, this might point to the present reading moment). In Deuteronomy, therefore, covenant witnesses function in distinct ways: the written law is a standard against which the people's actions can be measured, while the song is a reminder of the early days of the covenant relationship which is meant to help answer later questions of theodicy. Heaven and earth, in contrast, are observers who seem to function forensically. These cosmic witnesses in some sense serve as a bridge between the Bible's covenant witnesses and the courtroom witnesses that are prevalent in Second Temple sources (see below).

The inclination to call upon heavens and earth occurs throughout the Hebrew Bible, most frequently in biblical prophecy. In prophetic literature the natural world is never named an *ʿēd*,

[284] The oracles of Isaiah are likewise presented as a witness in Isa 30:8: "Go now, write it before them on a tablet, and inscribe it in a book, so that it may be for the time to come as a witness forever."

though God is (Isa 19:20; Jer 29:23, 42:5; Mic 1:2; Zeph 3:8; Mal 2:14, 3:5).[285] Yet prophets do frequently call upon the cosmos to listen to their oracles. Isaiah's initial oracle calls heavens and earth to hear him recount the rebellion of the people ("Hear, O heavens, and listen, O earth" [Isa 1:2]). In Jeremiah, God instructs the heavens to react dramatically to the nation's behavior: "Be appalled, O heavens, at this, be shocked, be utterly desolate, says the LORD, for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water" (2:12-13). Among the prophets, only in Micah is the natural world mentioned in a legal setting. The prophet Micah asks "you mountains … and you enduring foundations of the earth" to hear God's lawsuit (*rîb*) against Israel (6:2). Though the mountains and foundations are not asked to speak, they are present in the divine courtroom and might even play an adjudicating role, since the two speeches which follow seem to function as testimony, first by God and then by the people, explaining both sides of the dispute in question. Psalm 50 also depicts the presence of heaven and earth as essential to divine litigation, but this time the cosmos bolsters God's own ability to judge the people (rather serving as one of several participants in the process of judgment):

> Our God comes and does not keep silence,
> before him is a devouring fire, and a mighty tempest all around him.
> He calls to the heavens above
> and to the earth, that he may judge his people:
> 'Gather to me my faithful ones,
> who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!'
> The heavens declare his righteousness,
> for God himself is judge. (50:3-6)

Even though *ʿēd* is not mentioned, heaven and earth serve a forensic role in this judicial psalm. In contrast to their role in Isaiah, the heavens do speak in the poem, serving as a character witness by "declar[ing] God's righteousness."

---

[285] God is also called *ʿēd* in Judges 11:10; 1 Sam 12:5–6, 20:23; and Ben Sira 36:20.

Portrayals of the heavens and earth as a witness to covenant disobedience recur in the Second Temple period, often in re-tellings of biblical events. Referring to events in Deuteronomy, 2 Baruch 84:2 reminds the reader: "Remember that Moses once solemnly called heaven and earth to witness against you and said, 'If you transgress the Torah, you will be scattered, but if you keep it, you will be planted.'" 1Q22 i5–6 (also called the Apocryphon of Moses) quotes Moses as saying: "[Explain] thorou[ghly everything] that I [deman]d of them and [call as witnesses against] them Heaven and [Earth, for] wha[t] I command [them will] not be to their [li]king, or to [their] descendants' liking, [all] the days that they [live on the la]nd..."[286] Though it does not refer to Moses, 2 Esdras 2:14 reads: "Call, O call heaven and earth to witness: I set aside evil and created good; for I am the Living One, says the Lord." Pseudo-Philo describes what these other texts only imply, when it depicts Moses as calling upon heaven and earth not as potential witnesses, but as givers of testimony "today":

> Today I call to witness against you heaven and earth (for heaven will hear, and earth will give ear) that God revealed himself from the end of the world so that he might place his majesty with you and he kindled within you an eternal light. Remember, O wicked ones; when I spoke to you, you answered saying, 'All that God has said to us, we will do and hear. But if we transgress or grow corrupt in our ways, you will call the witness against us, and he will destroy us.' (19:4)

Each of these texts hearkens back to Moses's words in Deuteronomy 28, preserving and building upon the tradition of Moses calling heaven and earth to serve as witnesses. In contrast, the Deuteronomic traditions of song, word, and law as witness are less enduring in the Second Temple period.

In the Bible, witnesses generally fit in one of two categories. Sometimes witnesses serve as signs or symbols of past events, which not only mark the geographical location where a covenant

---

[286] Translated by M. Wise, M. Abegg, and E. Cook with N. Gordon in Parry and Tov, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader: Part 3,* 93.

took place, but also attest to the fact of the covenant's existence. These witnesses are sometimes personified as "observers" of covenant agreements who can potentially be consulted to confirm the terms of the covenant as the need arises. At other times, witnesses are legal figures who play a role in courtroom settings, either in heaven or on earth, in which God is one of the parties (usually the prosecutor or judge). These two kinds of witnessing remain conceptually separate in the biblical material.[287] Covenant witnesses are involved in forging a binding legal agreement. Courtroom witnesses are involved in formal legal proceedings. Courtroom witnesses exhibit a greater level of agency than their counterparts, because as witnesses, they must give testimony during the court proceedings. Covenant witnesses have the potential to speak at a future time if called upon, but in the Bible, they are mostly depicted as observers (if animate) or signs/memorials (if inanimate). Though the Bible never portrays the natural world as a giver of testimony per se, biblical depictions of nature set the stage for such a rhetorical move.

Nature as Instrument of Punishment

In biblical texts, the natural world is frequently depicted as an instrument that enacts the divine will. Often this means that elements of nature serve as instruments of blessing or punishment. When functioning as covenant witness, explored above, the natural world is called upon to observe and/or memorialize treaties between the people and Israel. When functioning as instruments that enact the divine will, explored below, the natural world conveys the consequences of (covenant) obedience or disobedience. Portrayals of the natural world as blessing are straightforward enough. When the divine response to humanity is favorable, God grants them enough natural resources to meet their needs—for example, precipitation in its

[287] Though scholars have addressed the role of witnesses in both settings, I have not found detailed studies of the distinction between covenant and courtroom witnesses in the biblical and post-biblical material.

season and harvests in their time.[288] When the divine response is unfavorable, depictions of nature frequently draw, first, on theophanic imagery in which God's presence is made known through earthquake, storm, fire, or other earth-bound phenomena, and second, on the reversal of creation imagery. In other words, an unfavorable divine response can mean that God either withholds elements of nature necessary for survival, or overwhelms the earth with rain, snow, frost, cold, heat, etc. The flood of Genesis 6–9 is the Bible's paradigmatic example of the latter. Sometimes, elements of nature are even depicted as instruments of warfare wielded by God (Job 38:22, Psalm 18:7–15, Psalm 144:5–6). In the most extreme cases, nature punishes by way of its own destruction.

In each of these cases—nature withheld, nature unleashed, nature weaponized, nature destroyed—the natural world is depicted as a divine instrument of punishment. A number of Second Temple texts, by changing the literary setting from cosmos to courtroom, adopt the image of nature as a punishing instrument of judgment, but in these cases the judgment is forensic: the natural word's punishing forces are directed against individual sinners rather than expressing God's displeasure to all within range of divine wrath.

Punishment vis-à-vis Nature Withheld

It is a common biblical trope that God is in control of the elements of nature, especially the weather (see, for example, Zech 10:1 and Joel 2:23). At times such depictions are solely metaphorical. In Psalm 1 and Jeremiah 17:5–8, for example, the blessed are compared with flourishing trees and the cursed with withering shrubs, and entire nations are imagined as

[288] In fact, God promises such predictability in the wake of the flood: "As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease" (Gen 8:22).

flourishing (or felled) trees in Daniel 4 and Ezekiel 31.[289] God, the Israelite remnant, and benevolent kings are compared with the pleasantness of dew, respectively, in Hosea 14:5, Micah 5:7, and Proverbs 19:12. In Isaiah 55:10, God's words are compared to "the rain and the snow" which "come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater."[290] Such depictions communicate analogically, offering images from the natural world to help the reader understand the divine and human players in the world around them.

At other times, God's assumed control of the natural world is described in literal ways. In these texts, the reader is not offered a natural-world-metaphor in order to aid understanding of divine or human agency; rather, the reader is confronted with God's agency as it is enacted in the material realm for the reader, or within the setting surrounding the characters. The examples are many. In the wilderness narratives of Torah, God is present in pillars of cloud and fire (Exod 13:17–22). In Numbers, worship of other deities is punished with earthquakes that swallowed whole those who offend (26:10). Twice in the Torah, a rock produces water (Exod 17:1–7; Num 20:8–12). In Job, God inhabits a whirlwind (38:1). Perhaps the most compelling example is found in the covenant blessings and curses of Deuteronomy 28, in which the natural world's behavior is predicted hypothetically based on human behavior, so that going forward, one need not be surprised when nature behaves either harshly or kindly. Specifically, if the people are obedient, then "[t]he LORD will open for you his rich storehouse, the heavens, to give the rain of

---

[289] Walther Zimmerli describes how, in both books, this image invokes "the great world tree, whose roots lie in the depths of the subterranean ocean by whose waters it is nourished, whose top reaches up in to the clouds as far as heaven itself and whose shadow shelters all life on earth." In Ezekiel and Daniel, the "world tree" represents the present ruling power who regards itself as all-important, like the mythical tree, with similarly infallible protective and nurturing powers. The audacity and falsity of such self-regard is unveiled when the trees are felled (Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1983], 146–47).

[290] John Watts notes that the image could be received as a "comfort" to those who hear the prophet's oracle as targeting their enemies, but it would be interpreted "as a threat and a warning" to those whom the oracle targets (John D. Watts, *Isaiah 34–66, Revised Edition* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005], 819).

your land in its season and to bless all your undertakings" (28:12); if disobedient, "[t]he LORD will change the rain of your land into powder, and only dust shall come down upon you from the sky until you are destroyed" (28:24).[291] When favorable, God's response to Israel is to grant them enough of what they need—rain "in its season," as desired, neither too little nor too much (28:12). When unfavorable, God's response is to withhold rain, sending dust storms instead, along with "fiery heat and drought" (28:22).[292] The covenant curses reveal a classic Deuteronomic "two ways" interpretive lens for the workings of the natural world. Because of the covenant, in which heaven and earth are called as witnesses, the people are informed that disobedience will result in God's punishment as exercised through drought, storm, and famine.

Biblical texts like Deuteronomy 28 usually depict the withholding of nature's resources instrumentally, with God in control. Chapter 28 describes God's withholding of natural resources, the Hebrew words generally used for "withhold"—*klʾ* and *mnʿ*—do not appear there.[293] However, in passages that articulate the deity's withholding of the natural world (rather than merely threatening it), the vocabulary of "withholding" appears consistently, especially *klʾ*. The word is first used in Genesis, when "God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided; the fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained (*wayyikālēʾ*), and the waters gradually receded from the earth" (Gen

---

[291] In its presentation of blessings and curses, Deut 28 reflects Ancient Near Eastern treaty formulae which list the treaty's stipulations and what will occur if they are honored or violated. Language of drought is also found in the Esarhaddon Treaty: "Just as rain does not fall from a brazen heaven / So may rain and dew not come upon your fields / And your meadows; may it rain burning coals instead of dew on your land" (Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 21:10–34:12* [Nashville: Nelson, 2002], 685). Whereas ANE treaties typically enumerate curses first, Deut 28 enumerates the blessings first in verses 1–14. The curses, which perfectly mirror the blessings, are listed first briefly in verses 15–19, and then expanded upon in detail for the rest of the chapter, until 28:68 (Christensen, *Deuteronomy 21:10–34:12*, 666).

[292] Deuteronomy 14 includes a similar admonition. If obedient, God will "give rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain" (14:11). However, if the people stray, God will "shut up the heavens, so that there will be no rain" (14:17). Also, Deuteronomy 33:28 offers an additional example of precipitation as blessing: "So Israel lives in safety / untroubled is Jacob's abode / in a land of grain and wine / where the heavens drop down dew."

[293] Likewise, when David curses the murderers of Jonathan and Saul, withholding is described but not named: "You mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew or rain upon you, nor bounteous fields!" (2 Sam 1:21).

8:1b-3a). In Ezekiel, a divine oracle uses both *mnʿ* and *klʾ* when it imagines restraining Assyria: "On the day it went down to Sheol I closed the deep over it and covered it; I restrained its rivers (*wāʾemnaʿ*), and its mighty waters were checked (*wayyikālʾû*). I clothed Lebanon in gloom for it, and all the trees of the field fainted because of it" (Ezek 31:15). Even Qoheleth acknowledges God's potential restraint of the wind by flatly denying the rationality of such an expectation: "No one has power over the wind to restrain (*liklôʾ*) the wind, or power of the day of death" (Eccl 8:8a).

Haggai uses similar vocabulary, but departs from the usual depiction of nature withheld by attributing agency to nature itself. When the people's refuse to build God a house (all the while living in luxurious houses of their own), the deity speaks in the first person: "Therefore the heavens above you have withheld (*kālʾû*) the dew, and the earth has withheld (*kālʾû*) its produce. And I have called for a drought on the land and the hills, on the grain, the new wine, the oil, on what the soil produces, on human beings and animals, and on all their labors" (Haggai 1:10-11). God has called for the drought, but heavens and earth, as God's agential servants, are the ones withholding dew and produce.

The image of withholding extends to non-biblical Second Temple texts as well. Psalms of Solomon 17, likely composed and compiled in the first century BCE or the first century CE, depicts the heavens withholding rain in a time of covenant disobedience[294]—like in Haggai 1, the heavens have agency here.[295] The Psalm states:

---

[294] The psalm indicts the people for forsaking the Davidic covenant and adopting foreign religious practices, by rebuking the "children of the covenant" (17:15), and describing a diaspora in which they are "scattered over the whole earth by the lawless ones" (17:18a).

[295] The collection's longest (and penultimate) prayer, Pss. Sol. 17 "places … hope in a coming king from the line of David but also sets that hope over against recent political events." See Joseph L. Trafton, "What Would David Do? Messianic Expectation and Surprise in Ps. Sol. 17," in *The Psalms of Solomon: Language, History, Theology* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 162. As was discussed in chapter two, scholars disagree about whether this particular psalm emerged during the Pompeiian or Herodian eras, but in either case, the psalmists maintain their expectation for the return of a Davidic king, in spite of the "web of calamities" which characterized their recent past and even

> The heavens withheld (*aneschen*) rain from falling on the earth.
> Springs were stopped, from the perennial sources far underground
> to those in the high mountains.
> For there was no one among them who practiced righteousness or justice. (17:18b-19)[296]

The heavens are the only agent named explicitly; though "springs were stopped," it could have either been by the earth (like in Haggai) or by the deity.

Punishment vis-à-vis Nature Unleashed

In biblical texts, the withholding of needful elements of nature is not the only way that God's displeasure is made known vis-à-vis the natural world. At other times, the earth and its inhabitants are overwhelmed with what, in moderation, is otherwise a sign of blessing. As mentioned above, the flood of Genesis 6–9 is the clearest example of God choosing to overwhelm the earth with waters in order to punish violence and corruption. (In J, it is a simple case of the world being flooded with rain; in P, when the cosmic waters are released, the order that God set up by division in Gen 1 is undone.) The Enochic *Book of Parables*, dating from around the turn of the era, explicitly describes the biblical flood as an act of punishment for iniquity: "In those days, the punishment of the Lord of Spirits will come forth, and he will open all the chambers of the waters that are above the heavens, and the fountains that are beneath the earth…. And they will obliterate all who dwell upon the earth, and who dwell beneath the ends of heaven" (1 Enoch 54:7, 9). Psalm 147 offers a more subtle example of nature unleashed. The first 15 verses of the psalm celebrate the deity's might and provision for Israel. In verses 16–18, God's power takes a forbidding turn:

---

their present. See Trafton, "What Would David Do?", 163.

[296] The only solution to this problem, as becomes clear in the psalm's remaining 27 verses, is the defeat of "the Gentiles" by the Messiah, whose kingship will coincide with divine kingship. Though most of the psalm describes the character and actions of the coming Davidic Messiah, it ends with an emphatic declaration of divine kingship: "The Lord himself is our king forevermore" (17:46).

He gives snow like wool;
    he scatters frost like ashes.
He hurls down hail like crumbs—
    who can stand before his cold?
He sends out his word, and melts them;
    he makes his wind blow, and the waters flow.

The metaphors convey something of the danger inherent in God's might. God has the potential not only to withhold necessary elements of the natural world, like the seasonal rains; at a word, God might also send snow, frost, and hail—and too much of it. In this psalm it is the "muchness" of these elements which is most problematic, and not necessarily the presence of the wintry elements themselves. However, in later Second Temple literature, the wintry elements themselves are more often affiliated with curse than with blessing (see the conclusion to this chapter). In 147:18, God intervenes before damage is done: God's word, when sent out, melts the snow and ice until "the waters flow." In this psalm, flowing waters are an indication of blessing, both in verse 8, when God "prepares rain for the earth," and in verse 18.

In chapter two of this dissertation, I explored Ben Sira 42–43, a sapiential hymn[297] dating from the second century BCE, which depicts the natural world as pristine, orderly, and obedient to God's commands. Early in the hymn, creation takes center stage when its glory and orderliness—and at times, even its obedience—is interpreted as evidence of God's greatness. However, when the focus shifts away from proclaiming God's glory, the natural world is presented as an instrument in God's hands. In 43:13–22, no longer do we hear of the sun proclaiming its identity as one of God's works or the moon "hurrying" along the course God set out for it (43:1–5). Instead, action is exercised by God. Ben Sira 43:13 presents the reader with an arresting image: God "speeds the lightnings of judgment" which in turn open the storehouses

[297] Carol Newsom argues for its inclusion in this genre, along with Job 36–37 (Carol A. Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009], 223).

for the clouds, which bear the lightnings to earth. This is the only time that judgment is mentioned in this hymn. The sage seems to be drawing from a similar imagistic well as his precursor, the author of Elihu's speech in Job 36:27–37:13, in which Elihu foregrounds the use of nature as an instrument of judgment with a special focus on storm imagery. Carol Newsom observes, "The phenomenon of lightning seems to engage Elihu particularly, as he refers to it at least three times, describing God's spreading it about himself and covering his hands with it (36:30a, 32a). God causes the lightning-bearing clouds to go round about, scattering lightning (37:11-12), reaching to the ends of the earth (37:3b), and covering (or uncovering?) the roots of the sea (36:30b)."[298] For Elihu, the lightnings obey God's commands: "They turn round and round by his guidance, to accomplish all that he commands them on the face of the habitable world. Whether for correction [*lᵉšēbeṭ*−−literally "for a rod"], or for his land, or for love, he causes it to happen" (37:12-13). In both Job and Ben Sira, lightning in particular is associated with correction and judgment. In Ben Sira 43:17-20, the reader encounters an echo of Psalm 147:

> He scatters the snow like birds flying down,
> and its descent is like locusts alighting.
> The eye is dazzled by the beauty of its whiteness,
> and the mind is amazed as it falls.
> He pours frost over the earth like salt,
> and icicles form like pointed thorns.

The imagery in these verses is tamer than that of Psalm 147. Snow is "scattered … like birds" and does not suffocate the earth like wool; frost, gentler than hail, resembles poured-out salt. Though the dangerous aspects of the natural world are not entirely eliminated in Ben Sira,[299] the

---

[298] Newsom, *The Book of Job,* 229–30. On p. 225, Newsom also writes: "[O]ne of the distinctive features of this sort of poem is its modeling of a certain quality of attention."

[299] The human eye may be "dazzled" by the snow, but when it descends "like locusts" it threatens plague-like proportions, not to mention the fact that other biblical comparisons with locusts represent threats, often military ones (Isa 33:4; Jer 46:23; Jer 51:14. 27; Nah 3:17). Icicles may take on a menacing quality when compared with "pointed thorns." Ice freezes "like a breastplate" on the earth's bodies of water. The breastplate imagery might only describe the strength and smoothness of frozen pools. But the language of the water "putting on" a breastplate might also invite the reader to at least consider imagery related to defensive warfare.

primary emotion evoked by the text is one of sublime wonder.[300] In Ben Sira 43:13-22 God is one who acts, and the elements of nature are God's instruments. This is a sapiential hymn that Newsom calls "a type of spiritual practice,"[301] and its sage is rapt with the majesty of the created order, which is equal parts awe-inspiring and forbidding—depicting God as one who expresses power by unleashing the natural world.

In the verses which follow, however, God acts aggressively, "consuming" mountains, "burning up" the wilderness, and "withering" the grass. The overwhelming cold of harsh meteorological elements has given way to its opposite. As an afterthought, 43:22 comforts the reader with the image of a healing mist and dew that will restore "all things"—two lines that highlight both the positive function and the agency of dew and mist.[302]

> He consumes the mountains and burns up the wilderness,
> and withers the tender grass like fire.
> A mist quickly heals all things;
> the falling dew gives refreshment from the heat. (43:22)

In short, 43:13-22 depart significantly from the poetry which precedes it (42:1-43:12), in which God issues commands and the natural world obeys, and from that which follows (43:23-33), in which God the creator is praised effusively. Even though Ben Sira is writing a poetry of wonder, he also names some elements of nature that appear to be associated with violence and danger. In addition, Ben Sira refers explicitly to nature being used instrumentally for the purpose of punishment.

---

[300] Newsom reads the winter imagery in this poem as an expression of positive wonder: "Ben Sira struggles to express the fascination of the movement of snow, which evokes both the flight of birds in its swirling and the settling of locusts in its clustered fall. The color of frost is evoked by comparing it to salt poured out, but the strange crystalline shapes it forms are likened to blossoms. Ice on ponds is seen as a kind of armor. In an apparent delight in description itself, human playfulness responds with poetic richness to the divine creativity" (Newsom, *The Book of Job*, 225).

[301] Newsom, *The Book of Job*, 228.

[302] 2 Baruch 73:2 portrays dew similarly: "The healing will be descending in the dew, and disease will vanish, and concern and sorrow and groans will pass from among humans, and gladness will walk about the entire earth."

Withholding and Unleashing Nature for the Purpose of Warfare

Nature can also be used instrumentally by God as a weapon, and in some texts, certain elements of nature are stockpiled for the coming battle. In Job 38, heavenly stores of snow and hail are depicted as arsenals, being saved by God for the coming war: "Have you entered the storehouses of the snow or have you seen the storehouses of the hail, which I have reserved for the time of trouble, for the day of battle and war?" (Job 38:22). In Ben Sira 43 (explored above), the "lightnings of judgment" are specifically said to open storehouses of clouds, so that they might "speed toward earth." Thus the reader is granted some insight into the punishments enacted by God through the natural world, and into one possible relationship between withholding and unleashing: withheld elements (usually meteorological) are stored up for the express purpose of being unleashed at the proper time.[303] Sometimes, as in Job 38, the unleashing of these elements is spoken of in military terms. Other times, as in Ben Sira 43, the unleashing of these elements is associated with judgment more broadly.

Several psalms also pair explicit military terminology with nature imagery. In Psalms 17, 18, 35, 64, and 144, the natural world is controlled by God and its elements are used as instruments to demonstrate divine power, much as in Psalm 147. However, these psalms are not songs of praise for God's mercy and provision; rather, they are psalms depicting a warrior God who triumphs against Israel's enemies. As such, the psalms present the natural world as God's arsenal. Psalm 18:7–15 begins with classic theophanic imagery before depicting nature as God's weapon. Starting in verse 9, the natural world is no longer merely announcing the presence (and the wrath) of God; it is being manipulated by God's own hands.

[303] Similarly, God sometimes unleashes excessive heat from the sun, as in 1 En 2–5. This is sometimes linked to drought and the withholding of rain, but at other times, it is the heat itself which is portrayed as God's punishing force.

> He bowed the heavens, and came down;
> thick darkness was under his feet.
> He rode on a cherub, and flew;
> he came swiftly upon the wings of the wind.
> He made darkness his covering around him,
> his canopy of thick clouds dark with water.
> Out of the brightness before him
> there broke through his clouds
> hailstones and coals of fire.
> The LORD also thundered in the heavens,
> and the Most High uttered his voice.
> And he sent out his arrows, and scattered them;
> he flashed forth lightnings, and routed them.
> Then the channels of the sea were seen,
> and the foundations of the world were laid bare
> at your rebuke, O LORD,
> at the blast of the breath of your nostrils. (18:9–15)

In this psalm, God physically comes to earth, cloaked in darkness and cloud but preceded by light. "His clouds" send forth hail and fiery coals; God's voice is heard in the thunder; God's "arrows" are bolts of lightning. Marc Brettler notes how Psalm 144 re-works the language of Psalm 18 to make a similar point, as follows:[304] "Bow your heavens, O LORD, and come down; touch the mountains so that they smoke. Make the lightning flash and scatter them; send out your arrows and rout them (144:5–6). Along with Psalms 18 and 144, Psalm 64 depicts God as using an arrow—a human weapon. Brettler points out that God also possesses a sword in Psalm 17:13 and a javelin in Psalm 35:3. He elaborates:

> Outside of these examples, there are relatively few references to YHWH using these weapons in the Psalms; it is likely that many psalmists felt reluctant to extend the metaphor to YHWH to this extent. In any case, the use of … "your arrows" in our psalm [Ps 144] may reflect an intentional ambiguity. The parallelism to … "lightning" might suggest that it is a poetic reference to actual lightning….. If v. 6 is seen as containing references to both lightning and arrows within God the warrior's arsenal, it is especially interesting because this would represent a combination of human weapons that are projected onto God with the addition of the suprahman, heavenly lightning. This may be restated as the metaphor, "lightning is the arrow of YHWH.[305]

---

[304] Marc Brettler, "Images of YHWH the Warrior in Psalms," *Semeia* 61 (1993), 154.
[305] Brettler, "Images of YHWH," 155.

The psalmic tendency to imagine meteorological forces as divine weaponry offers a compelling context for Elihu and Ben Sira's association of lightning in particular (and storm imagery in general) with God's judgment.

A few additional texts portray nature as a weapon that specifically targets the wicked rather than the whole population. In this way, these texts may offer a kind of conceptual bridge from texts that view nature as punishment to those that depict nature as a presence in a judicial setting. A number of biblical texts fit this mold, including some stories featuring animals. A lion exercises God's judgment on a disobedient "man of God" in 1 Kings 13,[306] while a bear famously exercised bald Elisha's judgment in 2 Kings 2. Finally and most famously, in Exodus God's punishing power is made known to Pharaoh in the plagues. Second temple literature offers a few parallel examples. The Wisdom of Solomon highlights the punishing nature of the plagues with a specific focus on the natural world's function as, simultaneously, an instrument of judgment for Egypt and an instrument of mercy for Israel.[307] For instance, the water in the Nile changed to blood for the Egyptians, but Israelites were given water from a rock (11:1–4); the plague of the animals led to famine in Egypt, while Israelites were given quail in the wilderness (16:1–4); locusts and flies tormented the Egyptians, while a bronze serpent saved Israel (16:5–14). There are more examples, culminating in how the sea took the life of the Egyptians, while the Israelites were allowed to pass through it safely (19:1–9).

[306] See James K Mead, "Kings and Prophets, Donkeys and Lions: Dramatic Shape and Deuteronomistic Rhetoric in 1 Kings XIII," *Vetus Testamentum* 49 (1999); Kenneth C. Way, "Animals in the Prophetic World: Literary Reflections on Numbers 22 and 1 Kings 13," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 34, no. 1 (2009).
[307] For more details, see David Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon* (New York: Doubleday, 1979).

Ben Sira 39 also depicts elements of nature, including animal life, as targeting the wicked specifically.[308] Nature is explicitly named as having been fashioned for the purposes of punishment and judgment:

> There are storm winds designed to punish,
> which in their fury can dislodge mountains;
> When destruction must be, they hurl their force
> and appease the anger of their Maker.
> Fire and hail, famine, disease:
> these too were created for punishment (*l*^{e}*mišpāṭ*); [309]
> Ravenous beasts, scorpions, vipers
> and the avenging sword to exterminate the wicked:
> All these were created to meet a need
> and are kept in his storehouse for the proper time;
> When he commands them, they rejoice,
> and in their assignments they do not disobey his bidding.
> (39:28–31)[310]

It is striking that here, meteorological elements are listed together with wild animals and the (angelic?) sword as deliverers of judgment. The natural world is weaponized, similarly to the texts examined earlier. However, the weapons are not depicted as being hurled from God's own hand. Like in Haggai 1, the natural world has agency: it "hurls" when it is time for punishment and then "rejoices" in fulfilling its role as God's servant—or perhaps better, as God's army.

Punishment vis-à-vis Nature Destroyed

Some apocalyptic texts of the Second Temple period depict punishments that go beyond withholding nature, overwhelming with nature, or weaponizing nature. In these texts, nature's

---

[308] This distinction is explicit in Ben Sira 39:24: "To the faithful his ways are straight, but full of pitfalls for the wicked."

[309] In manuscript B of the Hebrew scrolls of Ben Sira, verse 29 is mostly extant, reading:

אש וברד רע ודבר
גמ אלה למשפט נ[….]

See Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew*, 68.

[310] Translation by Patrick W Skehan and Alexander A Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: A New Translation With Notes* (New York: Doubleday, 1987), 455.

own destruction inflicts punishment. In fact, in the second Sibylline Oracle, the destruction of the natural world inaugurates the final judgment:

> And then a great river of blazing fire
> will flow from heaven, and will consume every place,
> land and great ocean and gleaming sea,
> lakes and rivers, springs and implacable Hades
> and the heavenly vault. But the heavenly luminaries
> will crash together, also into an utterly desolate form. (2:196–201)[311]

This text features cosmic structures breaking down, much like the flood narratives in Gen 6–9; however, it is a more radical breakdown, since fire is flowing down from the heavens rather than water. This is more than a mere reversal of Gen 1 imagery; it is even more chaotic than an un-creation. Fire destroys and leaves little behind for re-creation. As explored in chapter three of this dissertation, in Jewish apocalyptic texts, the category of nature as a sign of impending judgment sometimes slides into the category of nature as an instrument of punishment which inaugurates judgement. This is one such example. Jubilees 23, explored below, is another.[312]

The third Sibylline Oracle offers a similar vision of the end with a more extensive list of that which shall be destroyed:

> Then when a widow reigns over the whole world….
> …then all the elements of the universe
> will be bereft, when God who dwells in the sky
> rolls up the heaven as a scroll is rolled,
> And the whole variegated vault of heaven falls
> on the wondrous earth and ocean. An undying cataract
> of raging fire will flow, and burn earth, burn sea,
> and melt the heavenly vault and days and creation itself
> into one and separate them into clean air.
> There will no longer be twinkling spheres of luminaries,
> no night, no dawn, no numerous days of care,

---

[311] Translation by Collins in Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,* Vol. 1, 350.

[312] "But the greater part of his time will be (characterized by) difficulties, toil, and distress without peace, because (there will be) blow upon blow, wound upon wound, distress upon distress, bad news upon bad news, disease upon disease, and every (kind of) bad punishment like this, one with the other: disease and stomach pains; snow, hail, and frost; fever, cold, and numbness; famine, death, sword, captivity, and every (sort of) blow and difficulty. All of this will happen to the evil generation which makes the earth commit sin through sexual impurity, contamination, and their detestable actions." (Jubilees 23:12b–14)

> no spring, summer, no winter, no autumn.
> and then indeed the judgment of the great God
> will come into the midst of the great world, when all these things happen.
> (3:77, 80–92)[313]

Because this event is historicized as having happened within the reign of Cleopatra,[314] the finality of the rhetoric is tempered by the reader's knowledge that the earth has, indeed, endured this particular judgment. However, if read from the perspective of the implied author of this *ex eventu* prophecy, the future that is described seems permanent. The author goes so far as to use rhetoric that undoes that of Genesis 8:22: day and night will be un-created, as will the seasons, and on the resultant blank slate, the drama of the last judgment will play out.[315] In Jubilees 23, a similar type of punishment is meted out to "the evil generation which makes the earth commit sin" (23:14) prior to the final judgment. The text continues: "The earth will indeed be destroyed because of all that they do. There will be no produce from the vine and no oil because what they do (constitutes) complete disobedience. All will be destroyed together—animals, cattle, birds, and all fish of the sea—because of mankind" (23:18). Unlike other second temple texts which presuppose that the natural world's eschatological and aberrant behavior will be temporary (see 4 Ezra, below)—not to mention biblical texts like Isaiah 24, which place YHWH's devastation (24:1) of the earth within a context that ultimately hopes for restoration—Jubilees assumes a final and ultimately destructive end of the natural world. The omens that lead up to the judgment will include a kind of death of the cosmos itself.[316] Like the generation leading up to the flood, the generations leading up to the eschaton will corrupt the earth irreparably.

---

[313] Translation by John J. Collins in Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,* Vol. 1, 317–472.
[314] See notes by Collins in Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,* Vol. 1, 365.
[315] Michael Stone names this and two other texts (Zech 14:6–7 and 4 Ezra 7:39) which seem to consciously reverse the imagery of Gen 8:22. He writes: "So the cancellation of these divisions is taken as a characteristic of the day of judgment. Their inception is stated by Gen 1:14 to be part of the process of creation and to be related to the luminaries" (Michael E Stone, *Fourth Ezra* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1990], 222).
[316] The death of the cosmos featured prominently in the works of Stoic philosophers in ways which mirror Sibylline rhetoric. See Adams, *The Stars Will Fall*, 114–24.

Fourth Ezra offers another version of the destruction of the natural world as a moment of un-creation. This time the destruction is depicted as a sudden absence; hauntingly, the natural world simply ceases to exist. There is perhaps no apocalyptic portrayal of the natural world with quite so much drama:

> The day of judgment will be thus: it has no sun or moon or stars, or cloud or lightning of thunder, or wind or water or air, or darkness or evening or morning, or summer or spring or harvest, or heat or frost or cold, or hail or rain or dew, or noon or night, or dawn, or shining or brightness or light, but only the splendor of the glory of the Most High, by which all shall see what has been determined for them. For it will last about a week of years. (7:39–43)

Similar rhetoric about the glory of God is found in Revelation 21:23, which states that the heavenly Jerusalem lacks a sun, since God's glory now provides light—but in Revelation, the text quickly looks forward to a new heavens and new earth, while 4 Ezra dwells in this moment of un-creation.[317] Stone argues that the list of un-created elements in 7:39–43 is "derived from an exegesis of Gen 8:22."[318] When the natural world ceases to exist in 4 Ezra 7:39–43, it seems to "make room"—both rhetorically and spatially—for the work of judgment itself: undistracted by the cosmos, human beings will see their fates clearly, elucidated by the light of God's glory. In this way, the absence of the natural world is a prerequisite for the possibility of judgment; the promise of Gen 8:22 must first be un-done. The natural world's withdrawal allows all eyes to see "what has been determined for them," thus functioning similarly to the elements of the natural world in the *Epistle of Enoch* that testify to the wickedness of sinners by their absence (see below). The situation which looks permanent in Jubilees and (possibly) the Sibylline Oracles is

---

[317] Both 4 Ezra and Revelation are likely be indebted to the following prophetic texts: "For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you" (Isa 50:2); "The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you by night; but the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself; for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended" (Isa 60:19–20); "On that day there shall not be either cold nor frost. And there shall be continuous day [it is known to the LORD], not day and not night, for at evening time there shall be light" (Zech 14:6–7).

[318] Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 222.

here clearly temporary: it will only last "a week of years." In the wake of the destruction of the Second Temple, a world had ceased to exist. In the scribe's apocalyptic imagination, the current world must also cease to exist before eschatological hope could begin to take root.

Preliminary Conclusions about Nature as Punishment

So far, I have explored texts in which elements of the natural world are used as instruments of wholesale divine punishment, either by withholding resources (e.g., Deut 28 and Pss. Sol. 17), by unleashing resources in order to overwhelm the earth (e.g., Gen 6–9, Psalm 147, and Ben Sira 43), by unleashing resources for the purpose of warfare (e.g., Psalm 18, Job 38, and Ben Sira 39), or by their own destruction (e.g., Sibylline Oracle 2–3 and 4 Ezra 7:39–43). The above Second Temple texts are rooted in the biblical notion that righteousness and natural flourishing are, in some sense, connected. Psalm 72 offers a prime example of this type of thinking, namely, that "the king's 'judging' and the 'blessings' of his office are complementary aspects or, to put it another way, increase in nature (cosmic dimension) is a consequence of royal administration of law (social dimension)."[319] The pairing of righteousness with natural flourishing is apparent in the literary movement of the psalm from praise of the king's righteousness to promise of blessing during his reign. "May he judge your people with righteousness and your poor with justice," writes the Psalmist (72:2); later, such a king's reign will be marked by "abundance of grain in the land" (72:16), as well as a flourishing crop of fruit (72:17). When the land is ruled in accordance with God's "ordinances" (72:1), it will become apparent in the flourishing of nature. It makes sense, then, that after God's final judgment of humankind—made possible by the dissolution of

[319] Bernd Janowski, *Stellvertretung: alttestamentliche Studien zu einem theologischen Grundbegriff* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1997): 41, as translated by and quoted in Frank Lothar Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51-100* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2005), 210.

the natural world—the cosmos would be restored to its pristine state. This link between the presence of righteousness with agricultural fertility and natural fecundity is assumed in numerous apocalyptic scenarios. Fourth Ezra's depiction of the time of judgment, and the resultant disappearance of the natural world, makes way for a re-creation that is also familiar to readers of Revelation: the new heavens and the new earth. Ezra's future is one in which "paradise is opened, the tree of life is planted, the world to come is prepared, delight is provided, a city is built, rest is appointed, goodness is established and wisdom perfected beforehand" (8:52). Revelation famously depicts the "river of the water of life" in the renewed Jerusalem, leading to the fruitful tree of life, whose leaves "are for the healing of the nations" (22:1–2).The *Book of the Watchers* likewise depicts a post-apocalyptic earth which is, in every sense, renewed. In 1 Enoch 10, Michael is instructed to supervise the earth's renovation: the earth will be "tilled in righteousness … and trees of joy will be planted on it" (10:18-19). The post-flood earth will be supernaturally fertile: every vine yields a thousand jugs of wine, every seed a thousand measures of grain, and every measure of olives ten baths of oil (10:19). This excess is pure blessing, the inverse of the overwhelming floodwaters that preceded it. In the imagination of these texts, any discomfort caused by the withholding of nature's bounty in the present will be made right in the eschatological future when the natural world, free any obligation to observe and react to human behavior, can concentrate on doing what it does best: flourishing.

The Role of Nature as Witness Expanded

At the beginning of this chapter, I explored how the natural world was called upon by human characters in the Torah to act as a witness to covenants—first between individuals in Genesis, and later between Israel and YHWH in Deuteronomy. As a covenant witness, nature is

commissioned to serve as a guarantor that the terms of the covenant are being honored. In the case of the patriarchs of Genesis, the ewes and rocks serve as symbolic objects, reminding the human actors of what is at stake should they be tempted to abrogate their treaties. In Deuteronomy, nature need only watch out for Israel's faithfulness, since the deity's is assumed. In Deut 28, the natural world is made to pivot from one role to another: first, heaven and earth are witnesses, making sure Israel is faithful; next, other elements of the natural world are called to ready themselves to function as God's instrument of blessings or curses, depending on what heaven and the earth ultimately observe. In this way, in Deut 28, nature serves a dual role as covenant witness and instrument of the divine will. The natural world is commissioned to enact the punishments (or rewards) resulting from the Deuteronomic covenant for which it also serves as a witness. What remains implicit in Deuteronomy is the act of witnessing itself. In Second Temple apocalyptic texts, the giving of testimony emerges more clearly and is elucidated.

The Role of the Witness in Heavenly Courtroom Scenes

In the material surveyed thus far, nature's role as an instrument of punishment and judgment remains distinct from its portrayal as a covenant witness—with the possible exception of Deuteronomy 28 (see above). In apocalyptic courtroom scenes, the role of "witness" and that of "instrument of judgment" for the most part also remain distinct, and are not usually performed by the same characters. The notable exception is the *Epistle of Enoch*, in which nature both testifies in heavenly courtroom *and* enacts the resultant judgments. In order to properly frame the *Epistle*'s depictions of the natural world, I will first survey three relevant Jewish apocalyptic texts of eschatological judgment which employ witnesses of some other sort: Daniel 7, 1 Enoch 89–90, and the Testament of Abraham 12–13. These three texts spend most of their narrative

energy on the process of judgment itself: the giving of testimony and the rendering of a verdict. In these texts, sinners are punished, often by fire; the means of judgment is mentioned or alluded to, but never described in detail. Next, I will turn my attention to Second Temple judgment texts in which the enactment of punishment is more extensively described. In these cases, sometimes the natural world itself is used to carry out God's judgment, but unlike the texts explored in the previous section, the setting is now explicitly forensic. The fact that biblical and other texts so frequently depict the behavior of the natural world as punishing most likely inspired the writers of apocalypses to draw on the natural world when an instrument of judgment was called for. Finally, I will return to the *Epistle of Enoch*, which combines forensic and cosmic interpretations of the natural world's roles as witness and instrument of judgment.

Eschatological Judgment in Apocalyptic Literature

Apocalyptic scenes of eschatological judgment draw on the biblical concept of the divine courtroom, which in turn builds on throne visions common in prophetic literature.[320] In apocalyptic literature, the place of judgment is usually located in the heavenly realm, though sometimes, God descends to earth in order to judge. Below I explore a number of the latter apocalyptic portrayals, which borrow from prophetic throne visions when establishing their setting, and from biblical depictions of a divine trial when fleshing out their plot.

Daniel 7, 4Q530, and 1 Enoch 89–90. One of the first courtroom scenes that incorporates a divine throne is found in Daniel 7. After observing four beasts rising from the sea, symbolizing the successive kingdoms of Media, Babylon, Persia, and Greece, Daniel's eyes are drawn to an

[320] For examples of throne visions, see 1 Kgs 22:19, Isaiah 6; Ezekiel 1, 3:22-24, 10 (John J. Collins, *Daniel* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993], 274).

event taking place nearby, presumably in the heavenly realm. Many thrones are "set up," and one of them—a burning throne with fiery wheels, issuing a stream of fire—is occupied by the "Ancient One." Similarities with the chariot-laden throne vision in Ezekiel 1 are apparent. At this point, the scene has been set: the Ancient One seated on a fiery throne, surrounded by attendants and servants on thrones of their own, assembled together for the purposes of holding court: "The court sat in judgment, and the books were opened" (7:10b). One is not informed of what is written in the books or if they were read aloud and by whom. Indeed, the role of the books in the judgment that follows is assumed rather than described. Baynes argues that the books are used as "an instrument of judgment"[321]—they are opened, and punishment follows seemingly automatically. One could also argue that the books are witnesses, implicitly giving testimony about the deeds of the nations, upon which the judgment that follows is based. In the following verse, the "arrogant horn" Antiochus IV is given over to the flames in punishment, while the other kingdoms are left bereft of power. Since the method of punishment (fire) matches the materials comprising the Ancient One's throne, the text suggests the Ancient One is both judge and executioner.

One encounters a similar scene in Ohyah's dream vision in the fragmentary *Book of Giants*, though here the parties who are judged are the giants themselves. In 4Q530 2 ii 16–20, God descends to earth and sets up a throne for judgment. The *Book of Giants* depicts dozens of beings standing before the throne (they do not have thrones of their own), and as in Daniel 7, books play a key role:

> And behold, [book]s were opened, and judgment was spoken. And the judgment of [the Great One] was [wr]itten [in a book] and sealed in an inscription. [ ] for every living being and (all) flesh, and upon [ ].*yn.* Here (is) the end of the dream." (lines 18b–20)[322]

[321] Baynes, *The Heavenly Book Motif*, 85.
[322] Loren T Stuckenbruck, *The Book of Giants from Qumran: Texts, Translation, and Commentary* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 120. Stuckenbruck uses the following sigla: an ellipsis means that "visible letters are

Though these two throne visions differ in some details, Daniel and the *Book of Giants* are drawing on a shared tradition in which an enthroned God exercises divine judgment in front of heavenly witnesses, and in each case, it appears that the testimony that condemns the accused is contained in a collection of heavenly books.[323]

Another comparable courtroom scene appears in 1 Enoch 90, near the end of the *Animal Apocalypse* (1 Enoch 85–90). This time, the trial takes place on earth, and there is but one throne, constructed before the reader's eyes, by unnamed workers and with unspecified materials, which is then occupied by the Lord of the sheep (90:20). Prior to the construction of the throne, a heavenly figure is commissioned to write down the deeds of seventy shepherds, representing the angelic leaders of Gentile nations. In Baynes's schema, this book functions as a book of deeds. The text reads:

> And another one he summoned and said to him, "Observe and see everything that the shepherds do against these sheep, for they will destroy more of them than I have commended them. Ever excess and destruction that is done by the shepherds, write down—how many they destroy at my command, and how many they destroy on their own. Every destruction by each individual shepherd, write down against them. And by number read them in my presence— how many they destroy and how many they hand over to destruction, so that I may have this testimony against them, that I may know every deed of the shepherds, that I may <measure> them and see what they are doing—whether they are acting according to the command that I gave them or not. And do not let them know it, and do not show them or rebuke them. But write down every destruction by the shepherds, one by one, in his own time, and bring it all up to me." (89:61–64)

After the construction of the throne in the next chapter, an unnamed divine attendant "took all the sealed books and opened those books before the Lord of the sheep" (90:20b). Among those summoned by the Lord of the sheep are the 70 corrupt shepherds. Though the scribe's response is

---

undecipherable" while brackets serve as "markers for the beginning and end of visible text (letters within these brackets are restored)" [Stuckenbruck, *The Book of Giants*, 42].

[323] Joseph L Angel, "The Divine Courtroom Scenes of Daniel 7 and the Qumran Book of Giants: A Textual and Contextual Comparison," in *The Divine Courtroom in Comparative Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 36. Angel argues that Daniel 7 and the Book of the Giants drawn on a shared traditional source, while Daniel 7 is also influenced by the throne-room scene of 1 Enoch 14. See Angel's discussion on p. 32 for a complete list of similarities and differences.

not recorded, the reader is immediately told to "look" and see the 70, bound and standing before the Lord of sheep. Along with stars (errant Watchers) and "blinded sheep" (renegade Israelites), the Lord judges the shepherds, throwing them into the abyss.

Daniel 7, 1 Enoch 89–90, and 4Q530 have much in common: the judge is seated on a throne, books are consulted, and judgment is fiery. In both, a limited number of beings are punished, and heavenly courtiers assist God in coming to a decision about the fate of those on trial based upon written testimony. Books are consulted; legal decisions are made based upon the testimony contained therein. In 1 Enoch, a more complicated — and perhaps more personal — judgment is portrayed. By first narrating the judgment of the fallen Watchers who misled humanity, then of the angelic shepherds who murdered their flocks, and finally of the renegade Israelites among the flocks themselves, the scene of judgment in the *Animal Apocalypse* zeroes in on the fate of humans themselves, thus opening up a space in the reader's imagination for his or her own ultimate fate in a way in which Daniel 7 does not. For the purposes of this study, the most important similarity is this: Daniel 7, the Book of Giants, and 1 Enoch 89–90 all feature courtroom contexts in which testimony about the deeds of sinners is implied in the form of books whose contents are accessible only to divine beings, not to the reader. None of these trial scenes states outright that the books' contents comprise testimony about the deeds of those being judged. The books could also contain the judgments themselves (thus functioning as "books of fate" rather than "books of deeds" in Baynes's schema). In the texts explored here, however, it is more likely—and in the case of Enoch, it is quite clear—that the books are functioning as witnesses, since the actual instrument of judgment in both Daniel and 1 Enoch is fire.[324] The

[324] Books play other roles in apocalyptic texts of judgment too. In 4 Ezra 6:19, the opening of the books will function as one of the signs that the current age is coming to an end (which parallels the role of the natural world explored in chapter three).

books explored above resemble the one read by the king in Esther 6:1, which reminds him of Mordecai's good deeds, and leads to reward—but does not itself instruct the king to reward him.

Other apocalyptic texts draw on the role of the book as a "container" of testimony. In the *Book of Parables*, the "holy ones" gathered around the heavenly throne to intercede on behalf of the murdered righteous on earth, praying for judgment on their behalf. In response, the "Head of Days" sits on a throne and "all the books of the living were opened in his presence, and all his host, which was in the heights of heaven, and his court, were standing in his presence" (1 En 47:3). The following verse implies that judgment is then executed in response to contents of the books. In 2 Baruch 24:1, the books opened at the final judgment are explicitly described as books which record the sins and righteous deeds of humankind: "The books will be opened in which are written the sins of all who have sinned, and furthermore also the reservoirs in which the righteous is gathered of all who have been found righteous in creation." In each of these cases, the books contain testimony that allows the subsequent judgments to unfold—although the giving of testimony itself is not displayed beyond the act of opening the books.

The Testament of Abraham. The Testament of Abraham, which could have emerged around the same time as Daniel and the *Animal Apocalypse,*[325] is consistent in its depiction of books at the heavenly judgment: they function as a record of deeds and written testimony of those being judged, similar to their use in 2 Baruch 24. But the Testament of Abraham takes the witnessing role of the books a step further by depicting the act of giving testimony itself — who asks for it, how it is given, and how judgments are made based upon the participation of the witnesses. The

[325] Though the earliest manuscripts date from the fifth century CE, Allison argues for a Jewish origin sometime between the second century BCE and the second century CE, largely because so many ancient texts seem to refer to or depend on the Testament of Abraham. See Dale C. Allison, *Testament of Abraham* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), 34-40. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of the Testament of Abraham cited below are by Allison.

Testament of Abraham survives in two Greek recensions, one significantly longer than the other.[326] Both recensions contain heavenly courtroom scenes, taking place during Abraham's tour of the celestial realm, and in each scene, testimony is explicitly sought from witnesses.[327] In both recensions, Abel serves as the judge of humankind and a heavenly book functions as a "book of deeds." In the longer recession, two angels are writing down the deeds of the soul to be judged, and their fate is determined in part by the contents of those books. In the shorter recension, it is Enoch, wearing three crowns, who functions as the author of the heavenly books as well as the one who reads aloud from them, thereby providing the testimony for Abel's judgments.[328]

When compared with other texts, the Testament of Abraham offers more insight to the reader about the contents of the heavenly books it portrays. In Daniel 7 and 1 Enoch 89–90, the opening of the books function as mythic symbols, filling the role of witness and allowing God's judgment to proceed. In this way, the books in Daniel and 1 Enoch operate similarly to Revelation's seven scrolls—"books of action" according to Baynes—which, when opened, release violent events of judgment. In the Testament of Abraham, however, it is not enough for the books to exist and to be opened: their words must be performed. The giving of testimony is no longer implied; rather, it is sought out, by Abel the judge and by God, his supervisor. God's judgments are backed by a reliable written record in all the texts explored so far, but in the

---

[326] Allison argues that neither recension is based upon the other. Instead, it is more likely that both are derived from a hypothetical Greek original (Allison, *Testament of Abraham*, 27). The status of the two recensions has long been contested. Two of the Testament of Abraham's first interpreters took opposing sides on the issue of priority. In the 1970s, George Nickelsburg and others argued against Francis Schmidt for the priority of the shorter recension. See George W. E. Nickelsburg, ed. *Studies on the Testament of Abraham* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1976). See also Allison for the history of scholarship on this question (Allison, *Testament of Abraham*, 12–27).

[327] In the Testament of Abraham, Abraham's heavenly journey is a death-bed request and a procrastinatory technique on Abraham's part. This differs from the Apocalypse of Abraham, in which the patriarch is taken on a heavenly tour early in his lifetime, when he was still living with his father Terah.

[328] However, Enoch's power is not absolute, for not all of his writing endures. Enoch writes down the good and wicked deeds that he observes, but his ink is only permanent if the soul is not redeemed. Enoch serves as a witness at the trial, giving testimony insofar as he is permitted to read from the available evidence, which he has also written down. However, God's role in the judgment of souls trumps Enoch's, whose eye-witness testimony is blotted out if the soul is to be acquitted.

Testament of Abraham, the reader knows what is written there.[329] Perhaps unsurprisingly, the *Epistle of Enoch* is closer to the Enochic and Danielic traditions in its portrayal of nature as giver of testimony at the final judgment of humankind.

The Natural World as Witness in the *Epistle of Enoch*

The Epistle of Enoch (1 En 92–105) recounts the projected outcome of the visions recorded in the *Book of the Watchers*—namely, eschatological judgment for the righteous and the wicked. Generally dated to the second century BCE, the *Epistle* may have been written as a conclusion to the earlier *Book of the Watchers*.[330] The *Epistle* begins with the *Apocalypse of Weeks*, which narrates world history from Enoch's birth to the eschaton, and proceeds with what Nickelsburg and VanderKam consider to be six discourses. The first is a series of woes and exhortations addressing "the paradox of historical injustice and belief in divine judgment,"[331] themes that are further fleshed out by the Epistle's concluding description of divine judgment in the fifth and sixth discourses (100:7-104:8). These last two discourses are of special interest to the present exploration of nature as a giver of testimony and instrument of judgment, as well as to this dissertation's larger interest in roles played by the natural world in Second Temple literature.[332] In the fifth and sixth discourses, the natural world is involved in the judgment of sinners in three ways. First, the sun and the moon will answer inquiries about the deeds of the sinners, presumably verbally (100:10). Second, the gentler meteorological elements will "testify"

---

[329] In 10:3–16 of the short recension, Abel questions one particular woman regarding the evil deed she committed — namely, sleeping with her son-in-law and murdering her daughter—but she denies all. Upon consulting the books, the veracity of the accusation against her is confirmed, and she is punished accordingly.

[330] George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch: The Hermeneia Translation* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2012), 12. All translations from 1 Enoch are taken from Nickelsburg and VanderKam.

[331] Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2*, 11.

[332] The fifth discourse in particular offers portrayals of the natural world as an instrument of judgment (101:2, 102:1), an exemplary model (the sea in 101:4-9), and even a sign of the judgment which is to come (102:2), in addition to nature as a giver of testimony.

(100:11) about the deeds of the sinners by failing to appear when expected. Third, the harsher (and colder) of the meteorological elements will "hurl themselves" (100:12–13) upon the sinners as punishment. In this text, then, both luminaries and meteorological elements are involved in giving testimony at the final judgment; however, only (some) meteorological elements are used in order to enact judgment. In sum, these discourses interweave depictions of the natural world as an instrument of judgment with portrayals of the natural world functioning as a giver of testimony, and I will explore both depictions as they arise.

Cosmic Judgment in the Epistle of Enoch

In the *Epistle of Enoch,* judgment does not happen in a throne room, and heavenly books are nowhere to be found. Instead, humans are tried in a cosmic space, and elements of the natural world function as full participants in the trial. The judgment of humankind does not include written testimony of any kind (though books do play a role late in the sixth discourse). Rather, the behavior of the natural world comprises the testimony offered to the cosmos. In short, the "cast of characters" involved in judgment differs from that of the other judgment scenarios examined above. Angels are invoked only once, and the only judge is God. Enoch is involved as the implied narrator, but not as a giver of testimony. Instead, the natural world takes up that role. Like the angels in the Testament of Abraham, various aspects of the natural world are named individually and granted specific tasks with regard to their dual function as givers of testimony and instruments of judgment. In the *Epistle*, the natural world is an agential force, while the roles played by God, Enoch, and the angels—though significant—are implicit and assumed.

The fifth discourse (100:7–102:3) begins with a series of three "woe" statements in which Enoch,[333] the implied narrator, critiques sinners for the way they treat the righteous. The first woe condemns "the unrighteous" for their "affliction" of the righteous and even for "burn[ing] them in fire"—and in turn, the sinners are warned of their own fiery punishment (100:7). The second woe lobs a critique at the "hard of heart" for "lying awake to devise evil" and claims that they will be "overtaken by fear" (100:8). The third and final woe criticizes sinners for words and deeds—particularly for straying "from the holy deeds"—and again predicts retaliation by fire (100:9). These woe statements have a dual function: first, they accuse sinners of past evils; second, they anticipate the subsequent judgment of sinners. The last woe's double emphasis on both the evil and the holy deeds of humankind prepares the reader for the next section of text, which sheds light on exactly how the deeds of sinners will be discovered and undone:

> 10a And now know that from the angels inquiry into your deeds will be made in heaven,
> 10b and from the sun and from the moon and from the stars, concerning your sins;
> 10c because on earth you execute judgment on the righteous.
> 11a And every cloud and mist and dew and rain will testify against you;
> 11b for they will all be withheld from you, so as not to descend upon you,
> 11c and they will be mindful of your sins. (100:10-11)

These verses offer a mix of traditional and unexpected imagery. In 100:10a, testimony will be sought (presumably by God) from the angels regarding the deeds of the wicked—on its own, a familiar trope. Consistently in Second Temple judgment scenes, either books or angelic figures function as witnesses in God's trial against humans. However, the next line surprises: in 100:10b, God will also ask the sun, moon, and stars to answer inquiries regarding human sin. In this scene, the role previously occupied by heavenly books is taken up by heavenly bodies. The motivation behind these inquiries is identical to that which undergirds the first of the preceding "woes":

---

[333] Though Enoch is not explicitly named, Nickelsburg titles 1 Enoch 100–102 "Enoch's Fifth Discourse" (Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1,* 503).

these sinners are being judged for the undeserved judgment they executed on the righteous. Though such astral behavior is unusual in Jewish literature, the luminaries are presented as observers of human behavior in some Hellenistic Second Temple literature.[334] Therefore, this text evokes similar imagery as the depiction of the lights "ruling" in Gen 1:14 while also adopting the common philosophical conviction that "the stars were living, sentient, and divine beings"[335]—convictions that were shared by most first-century readers, according to Matthew Thiessen.[336] The sentience of the luminaries, combined with their convenient location above the earth, made a compelling case for their ability to observe human behavior. The Jewish scribes behind the *Epistle of Enoch* likely shared these views, though perhaps their inclusion of non-meteorological witnesses from the natural world demonstrates some anxiety about giving the luminaries too much agency, lest they resemble gods. However, just as the lights are set apart for a unique set of functions in Gen 1:14, the sun, moon, and stars are also set apart with the angels as the elements of nature from whom "inquiry will be made" in 1 Enoch 100. The scribe's choices here might also reflect the common ancient Near Eastern association of the sun deity with matters of justice and law.

From a literary perspective, in 100:10-12, the role of the heavenly bodies and meteorological elements transcends (while also including) personification. First the sun, moon, and stars are presented in parallel with the angels; both heavenly beings and heavenly bodies answer God's inquiries about human behavior, implying that both will give testimony upon which humankind will be judged. Perhaps because the testimony given by angels and luminaries

[334] As examples, Matthew Thiessen cites Plato in the *Timaeus,* Aristotle in *On the Heavens,* and Chrysippus, a third-century BCE Stoic. See Thiessen, *Paul and the Gentile Problem* (Oxford University Press, 2016), 145-46.
[335] Thiessen, *Paul and the Gentile Problem,* 145.
[336] Thiessen, *Paul and the Gentile Problem*, 146.

is inaccessible (or inaudible) to earthbound humankind,[337] additional witnesses are called to give testimony on earth: cloud, mist, dew, and rain. Meteorological behavior could be perceived as a connecting force between the heavens and the earth,[338] and thus is readily available for human interpretation. In verse 11, these meteorological elements are attributed with an explicit testamentary role, and what is most striking is what their testimony entails: not words, nor deeds, but absence. As explored earlier in this chapter, when elements of the natural world are withheld in biblical texts, the purpose is generally to communicate God's negative opinion about current human behavior. In the *Epistle of Enoch*, the withholding of meteorological elements functions similarly, testifying to the guilt of sinners much like the withholding of rain indicates covenant disobedience in Deut 28.[339] The text continues with an image of the natural world as a potential instrument of judgment:

> Therefore, give gifts to the rain, lest it be withheld from descending to you,
> And to the dew and clouds and mist pay gold, that they may descend.
> For if the snow and the frost and its cold hurl themselves upon you,
> And the winds and their chill and all their scourges,
> Then you will not be able to endure before the cold and their scourges. (100:12-13)

In these verses, when rain, dew, mist, and clouds are withheld,[340] what remain are the elements of extreme cold: the freezing winds and snows. In a move which is almost certainly tongue-in-cheek, the scribe declares to the sinner: "Therefore, give gifts to the rain … to the dew and clouds and mist pay gold … " (100:12). The *Epistle of Enoch* has repeatedly critiqued the wealth

---

[337] Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1,* 506.

[338] Though I have not found others who explicitly claim such a role for meteorological elements, it seems to be a logical extension of the ubiquitous idea that events in the earthly realm mirror events in the heavens. After all, "weather" has its source in the heavens, but its "target" is earth.

[339] Later on, in the sixth discourse, Nickelsburg observes allusions to Deut 28 throughout (Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 525–27).

[340] In 101:1–3, the withholding of dew and rain is once again invoked as a consequence for human sin: "So contemplate, O human beings, the deeds of the Most High and fear to do evil in his presence. If he closes the windows of heaven, and withholds the dew and the rain from descending because of you, what will you do? If he sends forth his wrath against you and your deeds, will you not be entreating him? Why do you speak with your mouth proud and hard things against his majesty? You will have no peace."

of its audience, and here the scribe mocks those who think that their riches will ultimately make a difference in their fate. In oracles of judgment, it is customary for words of judgment to be followed by opportunities for repentance, or instructions which offer a way for the condemned to avert punishment. This oracle follows suit in form, but not in content. What does it mean for the sinners to "give gifts" to the rain, to "pay gold" to the dew, clouds and mist? Is there hope for the unrighteous? With Nickelsburg,[341] I would say no, reading these lines ironically. This depiction of judgment does not uphold the repentance of sinners as its rhetorical goal. Rather, in the *Epistle of Enoch*, the divisions between righteous and wicked are firmly established, and the scribe is primarily engaged in encouraging the righteous to persevere and to endure. Indeed, the righteous have already been promised angelic protection in 100:5. For sinners, the die has been cast. The elements of nature are given the final word in this judgment scene, and they cannot be bribed.

In 102:2, the natural world shifts from instrument of judgment to sign of imminent impending judgment (which is immediately executed by angels):

> The heavens and all the luminaries will be shaken with great fear;
> and all the earth will be shaken and will tremble and be thrown into confusion.
> All the angels will fulfill what was commanded them;
> and all the sons of earth will seek to hide themselves
> from the presence of the Great Glory,
> and they will be shaken and tremble.
> And you, sinners, will be cursed forever;
> you will have no peace. (102:2–4)

In this passage, the natural world is handled differently. Rather than being "hurled" at the wicked as an instrument of judgment, it is the natural world itself which experiences distress. The heavens and the luminaries are *themselves* shaken, as is "all the earth." Such rhetoric draws on

[341] Nickelsburg elaborates: "The sinners have been accused of taking money in judgment (94:7) and of perjury (95:6). Here they are told to use their vaunted riches to bribe the heavenly witnesses. The taunt underscores their helplessness before the cosmic forces and repeats in biting and dramatic form the assertion of 100:6: their wealth cannot save them when the structure of iniquity collapses" (Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1,* 507).

biblical theophanic imagery, in which earthquakes and thunderstorms are signs of the presence of God on earth. Just as theophanies were observable by all who are in the vicinity, in this passage, it appears that all humankind ("all the sons of earth") will experience the distress of nature and will go into hiding—a reaction similar to that of the ancient Israelites, commanded to keep their distance from Mount Sinai in Exodus 19, and to the kings of the earth in Revelation 6:15, hiding among the rocks from the plagues and destruction. In this way, the *Epistle*'s fifth discourse comes to a close, having depicted the natural world in all of the following ways: as a giver of testimony, either by speaking directly (the sun and moon) or by withholding their beneficial presence (dew, clouds, mist); as an instrument of judgment that overwhelms; as a weapon in the hands of God; and as a theophanic sign of imminent impending judgment. For the scribe, these roles were not distinct, but functioned as kind of collage, each image of the natural world overlapping with and therefore shaping the others.

The Observation of Sin by the Natural World

The sixth discourse also depicts the natural world as a giver of testimony, as a part of its larger project of seeking to motivate readers to continue in their piety with confidence in God's ultimate justice. In 103:9–104:8, the narrator explicitly addresses the righteous and the sinners who remain alive, reminding them that "the angels in heaven make mention of you [i.e., the righteous] for good before the glory of the Great One, and your names are written before the glory of the Great One" (104:1). In other words, angels present the defense, giving testimony about the goodness of the righteous, whose names are recorded, presumably in a Book of Fate. The righteous are then promised a future in which they "will shine and appear, and the portals of heaven will be opened for you"—much like the wise in Daniel 12, here the righteous will join

the stars.[342] In 104:4, inquiry is made once again, this time from the rulers and oppressors of the righteous, who mount the prosecution: God will ask them to testify about the "evils" suffered by the righteous. But the righteous are assured that all will be well, and that their future companions are none other than the angels themselves (104:6). It seems fitting that the righteous will ultimately join the angels and the luminaries, the communities who gave testimony in their defense both here and in chapter 100. In 1 Enoch 104, the "sinners" are reminded that resistance is futile, because the natural world is an ever-present observer par excellence:

> Do not say, O sinners, "None of our sins will be searched out and written down,"
> All your sins are being written down day by day.
> And now I show you that light and darkness, day and night, observe all your sins.
> (104:7-8)

Here, written record-keeping is paired with the identification of the "observers" of human sin: namely, light and darkness, day and night. Since an accounting of human behavior is accrued "day by day," it makes poetic sense to personify the bringers of each new day and night as ever-watchful observers. The references to nature could also function as a merism, in which "light and darkness, day and night" evokes all time and all places, emphasizing the impossibility of escaping judgment's watchful eye. But perhaps the most obvious source for the imagery here is Genesis 1:14, in which the sun and moon are set up as "rulers" over day and night—so who better to keep track of the deeds of humankind?

Near the end of the *Epistle of Enoch*, in 104:10–13, sinners are criticized for "altering and copying" the words of truth and instead "writing books in their own name." The books in question here seem to refer to the *Epistle* itself and imagined alternatives, comparable to the

[342] On Daniel 12 and 1 Enoch 104, Nickelsburg writes: "The passage has a number of significant parallels to Dan 12:1–3, sufficient to indicate a traditional connection between the two passages. The precise relationship, however, is difficult to ascertain. It is clear that the present author has used motifs common to Daniel for his own purposes and integrated them into the broader contours of his writing" (Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 528).

warning in Revelation for any who would "add or take away" from the book at hand (Rev 22:18–19). The final chapter of the *Epistle of Enoch* is self-referential: it is included among the books which will be given to the righteous, books that will not only instruct the righteous but "summon and testify against the sons of earth" (105:1). Does this *Epistle* function similarly to Baynes's heavenly books? It is purportedly written by Enoch, based upon his heavenly knowledge. Though there is neither throne nor judge nor court in these final chapters of the *Epistle*, books do testify in the end, even though they were lacking in the description of judgment in 1 Enoch 100. Ultimately, the reader is invited to realize that the *Epistle of Enoch* itself comprises the testimony it predicts. Perhaps such a "righteous" reader is thereby enjoined to give voice to Enoch's message—a message so reliable that the cosmos itself will testify in harmony with its claims.

Conclusions

Though the texts surveyed are by no means comprehensive, it might prove helpful to catalog the types of activities associated with specific elements of the natural world, and to observe whether patterns exist. First, temperate forms of precipitation—rain, dew, mist—seem to have a broad role. When they are withheld, they punish; when they are present, they bless. Rain can punish by overwhelming, as in the flood story, but dew and mist are always portrayed positively—either lacking and desired, or present and appreciated. Second, bodies of water—rivers, springs, pools—are similarly depicted: their lack can be a punishment, their presence a comfort, and though they are not affiliated with excess, they might participate in imagery related to warfare. Third, cold and wintry forms of precipitation are more often portrayed negatively. Snow, hail, and frost usually overwhelm or are used as weapons. At times, as in Ben Sira 43, wintry elements move the author to speak of their beauty—but even then, warfare metaphors are

used to express such wonder. Storms, darkness, and excessive heat are also presented almost exclusively as instruments of war. Winds often bring blessing (see fig. 2.1 in chapter two for an Enochic example), but they can also bring curses. Indeed, the presence of excess dust and wind often accompanies, as a threatening force, the lack of temperate precipitation.

In the one text in which nature functions as a courtroom witness, a small cast of characters is featured. The role of courtroom witness is preserved for the luminaries. Just as the luminaries hold pride of place in texts which portray nature's orderliness, so too are the sun, moon, and stars the only elements of the natural world—other than animals in 2 Enoch[343]—that are ever depicted as giving testimony about the deeds of humankind. In a number of texts explored thus far, the luminaries are the most agential of God's orderly, obedient creation, and they are also singled out for their capacity to speak (1 En 69:21–24). For this reason, perhaps it is unsurprising that the sun, moon, and stars are God's trusted witnesses in the *Epistle of Enoch*; only the angels are given a comparable task.

Excursus: Natural World as Witness in the Sifre to Deuteronomy

The natural world is also called as a witness in the Sifre to Deuteronomy. In the Sifre's first interpretation of Deuteronomy 32:1 ("Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak; let the earth hear the words of my mouth"), Israel's behavior is analyzed in light of various elements of nature (and culture): the heavens, the earth, the roads, the nations, the mountains, the cattle, the wild animals, the fish, and the ant. This interpretation depicts how Israel "becomes corrupt" in relation

[343] In 2 Enoch 58, animals are depicted as testifying at the final judgment about the way humans have treated them. In the longer recension: "And not a single soul which the Lord has created will perish until the great judgment. And every kind of animal soul will accuse the human beings who have fed them badly." In the shorter recension: "For the souls of the animals which the Lord has created will not be excluded until the judgment. And all those souls will accuse [man] [until judgment]. He who grazes the souls [of the beasts] badly commits iniquity against his own soul." Translation by E. P. Sanders in Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,* Vol. 1, 184–85.

to each of these in turn, and the disobedience of the Israel rubs off, corrupting each element in turn (except the lowly ant, which remains to remind the wise of their covenant responsibilities):

> [A1] R. Meir (ca. 150 CE) said: When Israel were blameless (*zakkayyîm*) they bore witness against (*mēʿîdîm bĕ-*) themselves, as it is said, "And Joshua said to the people, 'You are witnesses against yourselves'" (Josh 24:22). But they became corrupt in relation to (*qilqĕlû bĕ-*) themselves, as it is said, "Ephraim surrounds me with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit" (Hos. 12:1).

The pattern continues, with Moses calling the tribes of Judah and Benjamin to witness against Israel, but they become corrupt and cannot serve as witness; then Moses calls the prophets, who in turn cannot fulfill their role as witness because Israel becomes corrupt "in relation to" them (though the prophets themselves are not corrupted). This pattern continues throughout the rest of the interpretation, with Israel becoming corrupt "in relation to" each figure called to serve as its witness. The fourth and fifth candidates for covenant witnesses are the heavens and the earth:

> [A4] He called the heavens to witness against them, as it is said, "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today" (Deut. 4:26, 30:19). But they became corrupt in relation to the heavens, as it is said, "Do you not see what they do … the children gather wood and the fathers light the fire [… to the Queen of Heaven]" (Jer. 7:17–19)
> [A5] He called the earth to witness against them, as it is said, "Hear, O earth I am going to bring disaster [upon this people]" (Jer 6:19). But they became corrupt in relation to the earth as it is said. "Also their altars shall be as heaps on the furrows of the field (Hos. 12:12)

Moses continues to look for a witness that can speak on Israel's behalf, but systematically discovers that each element of the greater cosmos is rendered unqualified to serve its divinely intended role as witness to Israel's covenant with God, because when its relationship with Israel is corrupt, each witness is rendered incapable of reminding the people of their covenantal promises. In each case, it is a human action that breaks the ability of the cosmos to testify on Israel's behalf, but there is also some sense that these various elements of nature and culture become in some ways complicit by virtue of their act of witnessing Israel's covenant violations. As Fraade states, "The viability of the witnesses in both of these roles depends on their own

inculpability with regard to the violations for which they are to provide witness."[344] Since Israel's corruption seems to have rendered the cosmos incapable of fulfilling its own covenant obligations, the nation's hope now exists in an eschatological vision of a new heavens and new earth (e.g. Isaiah 65:17, as quoted in this interpretation), and a God whose "divorce" from the people will only prove temporary in the end. The first interpretation is pessimistic about the efficacy of relying on heaven and earth as witnesses of covenant obedience, but other interpretations differ (see the excursus at the conclusion of chapter one for another example). Together, the Sifre's thirteen interpretations portray the heavens and earth in a number of ways[345] that are analogous to depictions of the natural world more broadly in Second Temple literature.[346] The Sifre thus links the variegated roles played by the natural world to the biblical depictions of the heavens and earth as covenant witnesses.

[344] Steven D. Fraade, *From Tradition to Commentary: Torah and Its Interpretation in the Midrash* Sifre to Deuteronomy (New York: SUNY Press, 1991), 130.

[345] In the third, fifth, and seventh interpretations, the withholding of rain or the fruits of the harvest are images of judgment. In the sixth interpretation, heaven and earth are held up as a model of orderliness and obedience (see chapter two).

[346] "Heaven and earth keep a constant eye on Israel, they serve as God's agents in rewarding and punishing Israel, thereby bringing blessings or curses upon the world as a whole, they listen to Moses' (or God's) complaints about Israel, they serve as models to Israel of compliance with God's will, they bear witness to Israel's original acceptance of Torah, and together they provide the necessary two witnesses against Israel for their failure to observe God's commandments. This section repeatedly, but in different ways, stresses how appropriate it was for heaven and earth to have been assigned these witnessing roles, as well as how appropriate were the words with which Moses assigned them their charge" (Fraade, *From Tradition to Commentary*, 141).

CHAPTER FIVE

THE NATURAL WORLD AS HEAVENLY MYSTERY AND COSMIC SECRET IN SECOND TEMPLE JEWISH LITERATURE

So far in this dissertation, I have explored various ways in which the natural world is portrayed in Jewish Second Temple literature: as a model for human righteousness (e.g., 1 En 2–5), as a sign of impending judgment (e.g., 1 En 80; Sib Or 2–3; 4 Ezra 5–7), and as a giver of testimony at the final judgment (e.g., 1 En 100:7–102:3). My analysis thus far suggests that these portrayals exist along a shifting set of continua. The first continuum, explored in chapters 2 and 4, has to do with order and chaos. For the righteous, the natural world exists as a ready source of revelation—an orderly, measurable, and concrete witness to the inherently orderly nature of the cosmos. However, when the natural world is portrayed as a sign of things to come (most often judgment), its errant, chaotic behaviors and out-of-sync mannerisms are interpreted as a warning that God's judgment is on its way or has already begun. The second continuum, explored in every chapter thus far, has to do with agency. Sometimes the natural world seems to function agentially, with freedom to obey and disobey within a covenantal framework, while at other times, elements of the natural world are mere instruments in God's hands. The third continuum, to be explored in this chapter, situates secrecy and mystery at one pole and knowledge and revelation at the other. In other words, the natural world is variously presented as observable and hidden. Not only that, but the act of seeking knowledge about the natural world (among other things) is itself ambiguously portrayed: its pursuit is in turn lauded or forbidden, depending on its content, the way in which it is obtained, and by whom it is sought. Newly accessed knowledge is then either regarded as a gift to be passed down the generations or as a "stolen mystery" (1 En 10:16) whose conveyance can only result in disaster. In general, that

which can be observed from an earthly perspective is by its very nature licit, and that which cannot be observed might be obtained via a mediating figure, either licitly or illicitly, or it might be considered out-of-bounds. When the natural world is portrayed as a heavenly mystery and cosmic secret in Second Temple Jewish literature, it is always the case that, in one way or another, boundaries are in some way invoked—sometimes the presence of heavenly mysteries affirms or inscribes such boundaries, but at other times, the presence of mysteries offers the reader a chance to question them.

When broaching the topic of nature as heavenly mystery and cosmic secret, the ascent apocalypses are uniquely relevant sources. In these texts, early Jewish apocalyptic writers exhibit an enduring interest in the mysteries of the natural world, accessed via seers who undertake heavenly journeys. After a brief look at Job 38–39 as a precursor to the search for heavenly knowledge, I will explore ascent apocalypses in which the seer's search for heavenly mysteries yields information about the natural world. Enoch, Abraham, and Levi are all commissioned to go and observe the hidden heavenly realm and to convey their observations to humanity. By and large, these "secrets" are earthly, and many relate to the natural world; yet, the intricacies of these realities are unavailable to humanity without the revelation mediated by apocalyptic figures. In this endeavor, my textual conversation partners are the *Book of the Watchers*, the *Book of Parables*, 2 Enoch, the Apocalypse of Abraham, and the Testament of Levi.[347] I will also

[347] The "ascent apocalypses" also commonly include the Ascension of Isaiah, the Apocalypse of Zephaniah, and 3 Baruch (Martha Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993], 7). These texts are largely outside the scope of this chapter, chiefly because the natural world is not generally portrayed as a heavenly mystery in them, with the notable exception of 3 Baruch's solar imagery. However, even in 3 Baruch the sun is portrayed more specifically as a witness to human deeds. (See chapter four.) The Ascension of Isaiah is agreed to be a Christian work; Collins argues convincingly that the Apocalypse of Zephaniah and the first version of 3 Baruch both emerged in the post-70 CE Jewish diaspora. See John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 300–01; 311. Christian interpolations in 3 Baruch abound, leading Himmelfarb to posit that the work was originally Christian may have been written as late as the fourth century CE (Martha Himmelfarb, "3 Baruch Revisited: Jewish or Christian Composition, and Why it Matters," *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum/Journal of Ancient Christianity*

explore two texts from Qumran in which heavenly mysteries intersect with portrayals of the natural world, 4QInstruction and the Hodayot.[348]

In the course of this chapter, I will identify several trajectories that flow from the ascent apocalypses' consideration of the natural world as a heavenly mystery: the first, preserved in the Apocalypse of Abraham, maintains the earlier Enochic vision of the heavens as a container of heavenly mysteries made available to humankind through an intermediary; the second, in 2 Enoch, restricts the content of heavenly mysteries that are meant to be shared to God's original creative acts; the third, in 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra, distills the mystery of the natural world into "lists of revealed things"[349] that ironically serve to conceal (rather than reveal) cosmic secrets to the apocalyptic seer and, in turn, to the reader. As Michael Stone explains in his oft-cited "Lists of Revealed Things,"[350] the lists of heavenly knowledge function as catalogues of topics that are beyond the ken of humankind. These lists, however, also correspond in part with the licit knowledge shared freely with figures like Abraham, Levi, and Enoch in the ascent apocalypses. In this way, 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch share with Job the conviction that divine mysteries are "too wonderful" for human comprehension, but unlike God's expansive speeches in Job—which reveal at least some details of that which God knows but Job does not—the lists of Baruch and

---

20, no. 1 [2016]).

[348] Another relevant set of texts from Qumran is 1Q/4QMysteries (1Q27; 4Q299–300 and possibly 301) which contrasts good and evil mysteries, including elements of the natural world like stars, pools, rains, mountains, produce, and dust (See Parry and Tov, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader: Part 4,* 198–239.). In 4Q300, "magicians" are critiqued for being unable to interpret the mysteries properly, and one of these mysteries is in fact "the signs of the heavens." This set of texts makes the connection between the natural world and divine mysteries while also raising the question of authority. Who is capable of interpreting and comprehending the mysteries fully and accurately? Whose interpretation can be trusted? Without understanding, humans have little hope of being able to interpret correctly either good mysteries (of God) or transgressive ones (of Belial) (Samuel Thomas, *The "Mysteries" of Qumran: Mystery, Secrecy, and Esotericism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* [Atlanta: SBL Press, 2009], 224–31).

[349] Michael E. Stone, "The Parabolic Use of the Natural Order in Judaism of the Second Temple Age," in Gilgul: Essays on Transformation, Revolution, and Permanence in the History of Religions, ed. S. Shaked et. al. (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1987).

[350] Michael E Stone, "Lists of Revealed Things in the Apocalyptic Literature," in *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright* (New York: Knopf Doubleday, 1976), 414–451.

Ezra gesture toward forbidden knowledge without sharing details. It is noteworthy that, though the Apocalypse of Abraham is dated concurrently with (or after) 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch, the Apocalypse is more than willing to describe the heavenly mysteries to which it refers. The different ways that these texts treat the heavenly mysteries, therefore, does not indicate a simple change over time. Rather, several different ways of regarding the appropriate human response to mysteries survived and were nurtured across the centuries.

The content of the mysteries revealed (or concealed) in the above works varies, though the natural world plays a role in each. In Job, 2 Baruch, and 4 Ezra, the protagonists inquire about matters that are mysterious in the moral or historical realm; they are answered with rhetorical questions and rebukes that argue that if the protagonists cannot even understand natural mysteries, how much less are they able to understand the more esoteric things about which they have inquired. Only rarely in the ascent apocalypses do Abraham, Levi, and Enoch ask questions (though when they do, they are sometimes rebuked for it, revealing a consistent anxiety about human curiosity gone too far).[351] Instead, usually without requesting it, the apocalyptic figures are shown (some of) what is hidden. Indeed, they are permitted to experience it bodily; they are sometimes commissioned to write down what they have seen for others. Thus, heavenly mysteries about nature function differently in these two types of texts. In the ascent apocalypses, the reader experiences a more permissive attitude toward heavenly mysteries: namely, if the visionary is special and the timing is right, the divine impulse is to reveal cosmic secrets, and the human impulse to seek them is thus given bounded literary space in which to

[351] For example, when Enoch exclaims about the beauty of an especially fragrant and beautiful tree near the mountain-throne of God, Michael comments, "Enoch, why do you inquire and why do you marvel about the fragrance of this tree, and why do you wish to learn the truth?" (1 Enoch 25:1). Michael's question might have the air of a rebuke, but Enoch is insistent, and reiterates his desire to know "all things" and specifically about the tree (25:2).

flourish. This more permissive attitude is echoed in some literature from Qumran concerned with acquiring knowledge of various sorts of eschatological and cosmological mysteries. However, as the second part of this chapter will show, the Dead Sea Scrolls more frequently depict heavenly mysteries as matters relating to human behavior or piety than with the origins and sources of the natural world.

A theme that recurs in this chapter is one of boundaries. In 1 Enoch, the human seer Enoch is himself the boundary around the revealed knowledge that authorizes its accessibility. That is to say, he is the one and only approved conduit for access to and transmission of mysteries between heaven and earth. Moreover, this role is central to his mission. The apocalyptic seers in the Apocalypse of Abraham and Testament of Levi play similar roles, though the scope of the mysteries that they are authorized to see and to share is much more limited. In addition, in these two texts the importance of natural world mysteries is de-emphasized in comparison to historical matters or the prediction of eschatological judgment. In other literature of the time, boundaries around heavenly mysteries are maintained differently: either by chastising those who seek them and "blocking" their full view of mysteries (Job, 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch), or by elevating the mediator of knowledge so highly that he ceases to be human at all (2 Enoch). Analogously, in the Hodayot ordinary humans are deemed too impure and unworthy to acquire understanding, so that only through God's providential transformation of the speaker is he made worthy to receive heavenly mysteries. What is consistent throughout these books is the necessity of the boundaries themselves. Mysteries by their very nature are restricted information. The heavenly mysteries associated with the natural world can only be shared with humankind if the correct protocol for boundary-crossing is followed.

Divine Knowledge in Job

The book of Job is abundant in nature imagery, especially in the culminating divine speeches of chapters 38–42. These speeches offer Job a map of the cosmos from a god's-eye view, beginning with an architectural metaphor in chapter 38 in which God "sets up" the earth and its foundations,[352] and followed by inquiries regarding the waters of creation: the seas below, bounded by divine decree, and the sky above, including its concomitant meteorological elements and luminous inhabitants. In chapter 39, divine attention turns to wild animals and their ways. In the second divine speech of Job 41–42, the monstrous, magnificent pair of Behemoth and Leviathan take center stage. For the purposes of this chapter, the imagery in chapter 38 is of greatest interest.

In Job 38, divine knowledge of and power over the hidden mechanisms of the cosmos (and the human lack thereof) is repeatedly emphasized through the rhetorical questions directed to Job: were you there? Do you know? Are you able? Near the beginning of the divine speeches, God defines the boundaries of the cosmic geography over which God has dominion, moving from depths to heights; an invocation of the earth's foundations in 38:4 is followed by the song of the morning stars and the shouts of angelic beings in 38:8. The verses which follow fill out the map. Verses 8–11 present the sea as a chaotic force which is both bounded by God (an image familiar from Psalm 74:13–14, Psalm 89:9–13, and Isaiah 51:9–10[353]) but also "swaddled" by God with parental care, an image that resonates differently.[354] The poet gestures toward the heavens again in 38:12–15, asking Job if he has control over the morning and the dawn, and then delves deeper: "Have you entered into the springs of the sea, or walked in the recesses of the

[352] Carol A. Newsom, *Job* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 601–02.
[353] Carol A. Newsom, "Job," in *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 602.
[354] Newsom, *Job*, 602.

deep? Have the gates of death been revealed to you, or have you seen the gates of deep darkness? Have you comprehended the expanse of the earth?" (38:16–18a). Here, God asks Job "about his experience of the four dimensions of the world: the great deep (38:16), the underworld (38:17), the expanse of the earth (38:18), and the heavens (38:19–21; cf. 11:7–9; 28:14, 22). The vocabulary evokes a journey: enter, walk, see, gaze upon; recesses, gates, way, place, territory, paths."[355] God ironically suggests an impossible cosmic journey for Job, one that is similar, however, to those taken by the visionaries featured in the later ascent apocalypses. The heavenly journey language continues with a series of rhetorical questions that emphasize Job's limited earthly perspective. Again gesturing upward (from Job's perspective), God asks: "Where is the way to the dwelling of light, and where is the place of darkness…? Have you entered the store houses of the snow, or have you seen the storehouses of the hail…? What is the way to the place where light is distributed or where the east wind is scattered on the earth?" (38:19a, 22, 24a). God also inquires about Job's (lack of) power over the luminaries: "Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades, or loose the cords of Orion? Can you lead forth the Mazzaroth in their season, or can you guide the Bear with its children? Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you establish their rule on the earth?" (38:31–33). Although the later ascent apocalypses do take their seers on heavenly journeys, they never give the seer power over natural forces. Even Enoch could have answered yes to only the third of the four questions posed to Job; the *Book of the Luminaries* elucidates the "law(s) of the luminaries" (1 En 72:3) in chapters 72–73, and in 79:1b–2a, Enoch declares that "…the law of all the stars of the sky is completed. He showed me all their law for each day…." However, nowhere in 1 Enoch does the seer gain the power to command or control the stars. God's litany of meteorological questions in Job 38 ends with rain

[355] Newsom, "Job," 603.

and lightning, mediating forces that connect heaven to earth, thus rhetorically bringing the conversation back to Job's eye level. Here, too, the questions are framed in terms of power rather than knowledge: "Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, so that a flood of waters may cover you? Can you send forth lightnings, so that they may go and say to you, 'Here we are'?" (38:34–35).

Although God's incessant questioning sometimes addresses Job directly with second person pronouns (Have *you*...? Can *you*...? Do *you* know…?), at other times, God's questions open with more general queries (*Where*? *What*? *Who*?). In these cases, though God ostensibly questions Job, God seems to be also addressing a larger "off-stage" audience, who has by this time most likely come to identify with Job as the recipient of God's utterances. Thus the restrictions on knowledge and power articulated in the chapter are not simply about Job the character but about humankind in general. Nevertheless, even though the ostensible theme of the divine speeches is the limitations of human knowledge and power, the descriptions God gives about the cosmos provide some significant information about the nature of the mysteries of the natural world and may spark in the reader a desire to know more. This desire is addressed more directly in the ascent apocalypses.

Enoch among the Ascent Apocalypses

Ascent apocalypses feature heavenly journeys, in which a seer is bodily transported to another world in order to receive revelation. In Second Temple Jewish apocalypses, at least three pseudepigraphal figures[356] are translated to the heavenly realm: Enoch, the only antediluvian figure who did not die (Gen 5:24); Abraham, progenitor of the Israelites; and Levi, symbol for

[356] If 3 Baruch is dated to the late first or early second century CE, then the number of translated figures is four. For further information, see the first footnote of this chapter.

the priesthood. All three are taken on tours of the sources and workings of the natural world. In this way, the natural world functions as a kind of bridge between heaven and earth: in the case of Enoch it is a rather literal bridge, since elements of the natural world are the instruments by which he is translated to the heavens (1 Enoch 14:8). Modern readers sometimes read apocalypses with entrenched categories of "physical" and "spiritual" reality, but in fact, these texts suggest an apocalyptic reticence to distinguish between the material and the immaterial. Rather, the two categories that are of import for apocalyptic dualism are the heavenly and the earthly, or the cosmic and the local. In other words, when ancient apocalypses portray the heavenly sources for winds, trees, rivers, and mountains, they do not seem to have in mind some sort of ultimate spiritual "form" which is then reflected, like Plato's cave shadows, in the material realm. Rather, the natural world is "rooted" upward. It rains when the waters are released, in God's time. The sun rises when its gates are opened, as God intends. The material world—that is to say, the cosmos, or the only world there is—is itself bigger than human eye or imagination can fathom, and it includes the heavenly realm. In this literature, some of that expansiveness is revealed to chosen apocalyptic figures, who in turn are commissioned to unveil something of the natural world's heavenly mysteries to their descendants, both biological and literary. Enoch's heavenly tours are the earliest and the most expansive of the three, and for this reason, they will be treated first.

Licit and Illicit Knowledge in 1 Enoch

The oldest part of 1 Enoch, the *Book of the Luminaries* (1 Enoch 72–82), already examined in chapter two in relation to the theme of the orderliness of nature, presents astronomical knowledge as part and parcel of the heavenly mysteries that, when conveyed to

Enoch, convey privilege to him. Although the word "mystery" itself is not used in the *Book of the Luminaries*, 70:1 indicates that the knowledge made available in this book was impossible to access for anyone but Enoch, since it must be mediated through Uriel, the angel who also guides Enoch on some of his cosmic tours in the *Book of the Watchers*. In 70:1b Enoch describes the significance of the information disclosed to him: "The entire book about them, as it is, he showed me and how every year of the world will be forever, until a new creation lasting forever is made." When Enoch passes on the heavenly information to his son, he emphasizes its completeness and reliability: "Now my son I have shown you everything, and the law of all of the stars of the sky is completed" (79:1). The nature of such information as heavenly mystery or cosmic secret, however, is emphasized more thematically in the *Book of the Watchers.*

1 Enoch 6–16. A hallmark of 1 Enoch 6–16 is the illicit instruction conveyed by the Watchers to their human students. Especially when compared with the knowledge gained by Enoch licitly later on in the book, it is striking that the illicit instruction is entirely functional, advancing human technology. In this respect, it is similar to the type of knowledge that the titan Prometheus gives to humans in Greek mythology. This material also draws on Babylonian traditions. Henryk Drawnel has also shown how the Watchers' illicit teachings "easily fits the social context of the Babylonian temple in the second half of the first millennium B.C."[357] In particular, Drawnel notes that the teachings of Asael—the only instructions in the chapter accompanied by explanatory comments—are rooted in Babylonian temple practice. Asael's teachings are as follows:

> Asael taught men to make swords of iron and weapons and shields and breastplates and every instrument of war. He showed them metals of the earth and how they should work gold to fashion it suitably, and concerning silver, to fashion it for bracelets and ornaments

[357] Henryk Drawnel, "Professional Skills of Asael (1 En. 8:1) and Their Mesopotamian Background," *Revue Biblique* 119, no. 4 (2012), 529.

> for women. And he showed them concerning antimony and eye paint and all manner of precious stones and dyes. And the sons of men made them for themselves and for their daughters, and they transgressed and led the holy ones astray. And there was much godlessness on the earth, and they made their ways desolate. (1 Enoch 8:1-2)

Drawnel argues that Asael's curriculum, as enumerated above, "deals with a professional type of knowledge that denotes a group of craftsmen skilled in their craft." The forging and smithing described in 1 Enoch 8:1 not only echoes a scene in the Epic of Gilgamesh in which a group of smiths prepare the hero's armor (II.vi),[358] but also the work of artisans at the Babylonian temple in the Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods, including goldsmiths who maintained and embellished statues of the gods.[359] Parallels with the Babylonian temple complex continue to surface in the remainder of 1 Enoch 8. In 8:3, Shemihazah's area of instruction includes the "spells and the cutting of roots," likely relating to magical-medicinal knowledge, while Hermani teaches magic pure and simple: "sorcery for the loosing of spells and magic and skill." The subsequent instruction is astronomical and astrological in nature: Baraquel teaches humans "the signs of the lightning flashes;" Kokabel, "the signs of the stars;" Ziquel, "the signs of the shooting stars;" Artequoph, "the signs of the earth;" Shamsiel, "the signs of the sun;" and Sahriel, "the signs of the moon." Except for Hermani, all of the Watchers' specialties draw in some way upon the workings of the natural world. The assumption is that the natural world is a repository of power, but secret knowledge must be disclosed in order for humans to access it. Such is the knowledge conveyed by the Watchers.[360]

---

[358] Stephanie Dalley, trans., "The Epic of Creation," in *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 62.
[359] Drawnel, "Professional Skills of Asael," 525–526.
[360] "… [A] detailed analysis of the list of sciences in 1 En 8:3 allows a precise identification of the social group in Late Babylonian society that was disguised by a Jewish priestly scribe as fallen Watchers. The myth in 1 En 6-11 unequivocally connects the motif of knowledge transmission with the Watchers, and the analysis of single Aramaic terms that denote the content of the Watchers' teaching points to a priestly group of medico-magical scholars in ancient Babylonia called in Akkadian *āšipus* that served for the Jewish scribe as a model for the description of Watchers in the myth" (Henryk Drawnel, "Knowledge Transmission in the Context of the Watchers' Sexual Sin With the Women in 1 Enoch 6-11," *Biblical Annals* 2 [2012], 128).

It is not merely a matter of historical curiosity to claim that the angelic curriculum in the *Book of the Watchers* has its roots in Babylonian temple practice. Rather, such a claim illuminates possible motivations for the scribes who recorded and redacted these narratives. Drawnel conceives of the Asael material in particular as "a religious manifesto directed against those who were directly in charge of the Babylonian religion and economy."[361] And yet, the fact that Enoch is absent from these narratives opens them up to yet another layer of meaning:

> It is not an accident that in 1 En 6-11 the patriarch Enoch is not mentioned at all, because the narrative was written not to present a Jewish sage and scholar, but in order to indicate that although the Babylonian science is indeed rooted in pre-diluvian, mythological times, it was brought to humanity by a wrong channel of revelation: rebellious Watchers who commit the sin of fornication.[362]

Enoch's absence from 1 Enoch 6–11 thus opens the door for his role in the remainder of the *Book of the Watchers*: that of the licit scribe, divinely appointed to convey heavenly knowledge to humankind, in contrast to the Watchers, who did so without permission.

Most important for this study are two matters: first, that virtually all subjects of illicit angelic instruction have to do with knowledge of the natural world which results in the ability to access formerly unknown technologies, as explored above; second, that this knowledge is presented as a "mystery" in 1 Enoch 9–10: "You see what Asael has done, who has taught iniquity on the earth, and has revealed the eternal mysteries that are in heaven... And [what] Shemihazah [has done].... And they have revealed to them all sins, and have taught them to make hate-inducing charms."[363] In 1 Enoch 10, the subject of the Watchers' teaching is also called a "mystery" (10:7). Drawnel notes that "[t]he presentation of the Watchers' scribal knowledge as a

---

[361] Drawnel, "Professional Skills of Asael," 529.
[362] Drawnel, "Knowledge Transmission," 134.
[363] Shemihazah is not associated with "mystery" here, perhaps because his transgression is more often related to sex, while Asael's is more often related to instruction (VanderKam, *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition*, 124).

'mystery' … properly corresponds to what we know about scribal knowledge in Babylonia," even while it also "denigrates and demotes from their privileged position the Babylonian scribal arts in general."[364] Annette Yoshiko Reed notes that 1 Enoch 6–11 "deploys the rhetoric of secrecy in a wholly negative manner,"[365] a point-of-view that would exist in staunch tension with the claims of the *Book of the Luminaries* and the latter portion of the *Book of the Watchers* if not for the intervention of "the transitional chapters" of 1 Enoch 12–16, which—by positioning Enoch as an intermediary commissioned to rebuke the errant Watchers — is able to make sense of the "antispeculative" impulses in chapter 6–11 in the context of Enoch's successful and licit unveiling of cosmic secrets in the remainder of the *Book of the Watchers*.[366]

Near the end of the portion of the *Book of the Watchers* that re-introduces Enoch and thus bridges the gap between the story of the fallen watchers and narration of Enoch's heavenly journeys, the claims against the Watchers' handling of heavenly mysteries are placed in the mouth of God: "You were in heaven, and no mystery was revealed to you; but a stolen mystery you learned; and this you made known to the women in your hardness of heart; and through this mystery the women and men are multiplying evils on the earth" (16:3).[367] The text here is

---

[364] Drawnel, "Knowledge Transmission," 134–35.

[365] Annette Yoshiko Reed, "Heavenly Ascent, Angelic Descent, and the Transmission of Knowledge in 1 Enoch 6–16," *Heavenly Realms and Earthly Realities in Late Antique Religions* (2004), 58. Also: "When we consider 1 Enoch 6–11 as an originally independent unit, however, the association of these mysteries with the teachings of fallen angels raises an intriguing possibility: This tradition may have once been used to critique the same kinds of cosmological speculation and mantic wisdom that would later come to predominate in the redacted form of Book of the Watchers…. Here, it proves significant that 1 Enoch 6-11 inverts the conception of heavenly secrets as divine knowledge uncovered for salvific aims—a notion presupposed by the early Enochic pseudepigrapha in their transmission of secrets allegedly received by Enoch in heaven. This is perhaps most evident in 8:3h, which concludes the list of the Watchers' teachings with the summary statement: "And they all began to reveal mysteries/secrets… to their wives." When applied to heavenly luminaries and meteorological phenomena, "the language of secrecy [*rz*] and revelation [*glh*] simultaneously evokes and inverts the association of divine mysteries with cosmological wisdom in later Enochic books and other early Jewish apocalypses…." (Reed, "Heavenly Ascent, Angelic Descent," 57).

[366] Reed, "Heavenly Ascent, Angelic Descent," 59.

[367] Notably, the recipient of this divine speech is Enoch, in his role as one who must mediate between God and the Watchers. It is an interesting narrative choice that readers of the *Book of the Watchers* hear the words as God utters them, but not as Enoch repeats them.

curious. The term "stolen" does not actually appear in any extant Greek or Ethiopic manuscript. The Greek witnesses actually read "a mystery which was from God," which Nickelsburg deems "nonsense in its present context."[368] An Ethiopic manuscript, however, describes the mystery as "worthless" or "despised" (*bāṣaʾ*). Since the mysteries themselves are not worthless—they seem worth very much indeed —Nickelsburg concludes that "a better meaning is obtained by positing a confusion between the verbs *bāṣaʾ* ("despise") and *bāṣāṣ* ("plunder"), thus resulting in his chosen translation of "stolen mystery."[369]

The phrase might suggest that not only was this knowledge not intended for human consumption, but it was never intended for the Watchers either. However, it seems more likely that it was the illicit transport of the knowledge from heaven to earth that would result in the knowledge's stolen status. As residents of the heavens, presumably the Watchers would have access to its secrets. However, it remains puzzling to read, in 16:3, that "no mysteries were revealed to [the Watchers]" while they were in the heavens. If nothing was revealed to them, how did they learn the mysteries in the first place? Perhaps the answer is suggested by the connotations of the verb "to reveal." If the purpose of revelation is for the recipient to convey the knowledge to a further audience—as it is in every ancient work of apocalyptic literature, without exception—then what is most significant is that the Watchers received neither direction nor permission to share heavenly mysteries with humankind. The mysteries were smuggled across the border from heaven to earth and then disclosed in an illicit space. The result of the dissemination of the "stolen" mysteries is the multiplication of evil on earth, and, therefore, the Watchers must be held accountable for their mismanagement of heavenly knowledge.

---

[368] Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2*, 269.
[369] Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2*, 269.

1 Enoch 17–36. Consistently throughout the *Book of the Watchers*, the natural world is regarded as mysterious because it is hidden, ultimately beyond the reach of human observation or manipulation. Humans cannot access the natural world without an intermediary, be it the Watchers or Enoch with Uriel as his guide. The reader encounters Enoch as a legitimate revealer of heavenly mysteries in 1 Enoch 17–19, Enoch's first heavenly tour, as well as parallel texts that follow. Kelley Coblentz Bautch notes that in his journeys, Enoch encounters several different otherworlds, as well as a variety of earthly sites.[370] In each of these spheres, the natural world features prominently as a subject of revelation; its hiddenness is emphasized insofar as Enoch is the lone exceptional human being who is given access to it. Nevertheless, the word "mystery" is not used in the *Book of the Watchers* from chapter 17 onward. In the final redacted form of the *Book of the Watchers*, the word "mystery" seems only to be associated with the "stolen" secrets (16:3) passed on by the fallen Watchers. Once used as a name for the Watchers' illicit curriculum, perhaps the word "mystery" was considered inappropriate terminology for similar branches of knowledge gained licitly by Enoch. However, for the purposes of this study, I am not only interested in appearances of the word "mystery," but also in recognizing texts in which the attributes of the natural world are presented in ways congruent with the ancient conception of "the mysterious"—and one noteworthy attribute of a mystery is its hiddenness, its inaccessibility.

Enoch's first journey begins abruptly in 17:1, when an unspecified party takes him "away to a certain place in which those who were there were like a flaming fire; and whenever they wished, they appeared as human beings." Right away, Enoch is located in a place which is inaccessible to normal humans—the defining characteristic of an "otherworldly" place,

[370] Kelley Coblentz Bautch, *A Study of the Geography of 1 Enoch 17–19: "No One Has Seen What I Have Seen"* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2003).

according to Coblentz Bautch.[371] In the series of journeys that follow, it is sometimes difficult to untangle Enoch's earthly travels from his heavenly ones. Even to attempt such distinctions likely imposes modern dualisms on these texts; for the Enochic writers, it was more significant that he was traveling to places where *only he* had permission to go—places that required the accompaniment of an angelic travel agent—whether they technically exist on earth or in the heavens. As a literary character, Enoch clearly *can* undertake a more classical apocalyptic heavenly journey in which he is translated to the heavenly realm; indeed, he has just completed such a journey in chapters 12–16. Starting in chapter 17, however, his otherworldly journeys engage liminal spaces: edges and boundaries, sources and ends. It is the in-between spaces that garner Enoch's attention in the latter half of the *Book of the Watchers*, spaces that mediate between the heavens and the earth in the same way that Enoch the apocalyptic figure has been asked to do.

After viewing fiery beings in 17:1 (the first of several similar occurrences), Enoch continues to "a dark place" as well as "a mountain whose summit reached to heaven" (17:2): an earthly destination that bridges the boundaries between the earthly and heavenly realms. The text is ambiguous about where Enoch plants his feet, and in which direction his eyes are peering. It seems that, from his liminal vantage point, Enoch can see everything. He sees the heights—"the place of the luminaries and the treasuries of the stars and of the thunders"—as well as the abyss—"the depths of the ether where the bow of fire and the arrows and their quivers (were) and the sword of fire and all the lightnings" (17:3). Next, Enoch ventures west:

> And they led me away to the living waters and to the fire of the west, which provides all the sunsets. And I came to the river of fire, in which fire flows down like water and discharges into the great sea of the west. I saw all the great rivers. And I arrived at the

[371] Kelley Coblentz Bautch, "The Heavenly Temple, the Prison in the Void, and the Uninhabited Paradise: Otherwordly Sites in the Book of the Watchers," in *Other Worlds and Their Relation to This World. Early Jewish and Ancient Christian Traditions*, ed. E. M. M. Eynikel et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 37.

> great river and the great darkness. And I departed (for) where no human walks. I saw the wintry winds of darkness and the gushing of all the waters of the abyss. I saw the mouth of all the rivers of the earth and the mouth of the abyss. (17:4–8)

Several themes are evident. First, Enoch's journey so far has been entirely otherworldly, in Coblentz Bautch's sense of the word. Though the sights that he sees can be imagined in geographical relationship with the earth, they are places decidedly inaccessible to anyone but Enoch. Second, the vocabulary used here is reminiscent of biblical texts that invoke chaos traditions (Gen 1:1; Psalm 89): darkness, gushing waters, the abyss. There is also fire imagery, which recalls the burning heavenly temple of 1 Enoch 14 and anticipates the fiery punishment of fallen stars and Watchers whom Enoch will soon encounter. Third, that which Enoch witnesses here includes the sources of sunsets and "all the rivers of the earth" as well as the turbulent watery abyss. It seems that, from his vantage point in 17:1–8, Enoch's view is complete: from heights to depths, from gushing waters to roaring fire, that which Enoch sees encompasses the extremes of the created order.

Indeed, the imagery of chapter 17 brings to mind the watery chaos of Genesis 1:1, and in 18:1–5, Enoch is instructed in how exactly God mastered that chaos. Up until this point, Enoch saw a great deal of *what* was included in the natural order; in ch. 18, Enoch is given insight into *how* God creates and orders the natural world. Namely, Enoch sees "the treasuries of the winds," followed by a most stunning piece of revelation: "how through [the winds] God ordered all created things" (18:1)—in other words, how the *rūaḥ elohim* (Gen 1:1) ordered the chaos at the very moment of creation. In Genesis 1, God creates a dome to separate the waters from the waters; here, Enoch witnesses not only the dome, but also the earth's foundations (language reminiscent of Psalm 102:25 and 104:5) and its cornerstone (similar to Job 38:6). Next, Enoch discloses to his audience the mystery of *exactly how* the wind of God participates in creation. In

fact, Enoch reveals that the winds did not only order the chaos back then, at the *Urzeit*; they continue to have a structural role in sustaining the created order and they will evidently continue to do so until the *Eindzeit*. Enoch witnesses not just the storage places for the dormant winds, but also the activity of winds when released from their holding-places: “I saw the four winds bearing the earth and the firmament, how the winds stretch out the height of heaven: They are the pillars of heaven” (18:2b-3). It appears that, in the Enochic imagination, winds are the elements of the natural order that keep earth and heaven in place. The winds maintain the liminal space between earth and heaven, within which a segment of the natural world's activity is observable to the human eye: stars, sun, moon, clouds, precipitation. The winds not only maintain space; they also transport the sunset and all the stars, and they bear the clouds (18:4). At the same time, Enoch relates the winds’ activity to his observation of "the paths of the angels" (18:5), suggesting an otherworld in which angelic action and the workings of the natural world are inextricable, a vision consistent with that of the *Book of the Luminaries*, as well as Psalms 103–104. Similar to the way that luminaries are affiliated with divine beings (sometimes signifying one another in a way that makes stars and angels nearly interchangeable), the courses of the winds are obliquely identified with angelic pathways. In 1 Enoch 18, the movement of the winds is truly creative and sustaining; this speculative development on wind resonates with Genesis 1 by evoking a cosmos that continues to be dependent upon the orderly workings of the natural world for the sake of its own well-being.

After viewing the inner workings of luminaries and winds—aspects of the natural world that are by default affiliated with the heavens “up there”—Enoch also becomes acquainted with aspects of the natural world which, in and of themselves, do not evoke the sky or its trappings. Rather, these moments in Enoch’s journeys suggest a grounded, downward movement. As

mentioned above, Enoch's heavenly journey takes him to the extremities of the created order: the foundation and cornerstone of the earth. Notably, in Job 38:4, God asks Job, “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?” The rhetorical question demands one particular answer: that Job’s human status is too lowly for him to have been present. Just as Job’s lowly status is inscribed by God’s rhetorical question, when Enoch is shown the foundations of the earth (though not the exact moment when they were laid), a high status is ascribed to him—and also to the reader, who receives this knowledge second-hand.

The significance of Enoch’s sight-seeing within the boundaries of heavens and earth is given even greater weight by what he sees beyond those boundaries. In two versions of Enoch’s encounter with seven gemstone-encrusted mountains (one of which reaches from earth to the heavens), recounted in chaps. 18 and 21, what lies beyond is a liminal place marked by chaos. Here, Enoch witnesses “pillars of heavenly fire” descending into a great chasm, identified by the angel as the place of confinement of "the angels who mingled with the women" (19:1). Subsequently, in 18:12 (which follows 19:1-2 in Nickelsburg and VanderKam's reconstruction), Enoch sees a second “desolate and fearful” place which lacks firmament above and earth below, as well as water, bird, or beast. This is un-creation, as the place lacks both the structure of the cosmos in Genesis 1 and the creatures formed to fill it. Analogous to the first chasm, it contains “seven stars like great burning mountains” (18:13), the “prison for the stars and the hosts of heaven,” specifically, the “stars that transgressed the command of the Lord in the beginning of their rising, for they did not come out in their appointed times” (18:14-16). As discussed above in chapter two, these stars, exceptional in their lack of orderliness, may be identified with the seven planets or, more likely, the seven stars of the Pleiades. Because they were such disturbing anomalies, their lack of order is here treated as willful disobedience. Additionally, the stars’

special status is reflected by their location. Their prison is located where the world comes to an end, in a spaces nature cannot inhabit. This is non-nature, or extra-nature, and its "desolation" fills both Enoch and his angelic guides with unease if not outright terror.[372]

Enoch's lengthy second tour (chs. 20–36) includes some familiar sights from the natural world, repeated from his first tour, but also a number of new mysteries that are primordial or eschatological in nature. Though the natural world features strongly in Enoch's description of these places, their mysterious character has more to do with their status as liminal, mythic spaces. For example, Enoch encounters a storage area for the dead in 1 Enoch 22. The "hollow place" for the righteous contains light and a fountain, while the other hollows are dark and desolate. Habitation for the righteous is also lush in 1 En 26, in which Jerusalem is pictured as a dwelling place for the righteous featuring mountains, sprouting trees, and flowing waters. The cursed inhabit the surrounding wasteland which is, in contrast, desolate: "deep and dry," rocky, and lacking trees. In chapters 28–32, similarly lush imagery is extended to eschatological habitation for the righteous in "paradise," which is filled with water, trees, fruit, spices, and perfumes.[373] In the very next line, Enoch's journey comes to something of a climax as he

---

[372] A second account of Enoch's encounter with the burning stars occurs in 1 En 21. Many of the details are the same: Enoch travels to "where it was chaotic" (21:1) and sees "neither heaven above, nor firmly founded earth" (21:2). In the midst of extra-nature, the seven stars are bound and burning. This time, when Enoch inquires about this place's strangeness, the angel protests before ultimately providing an answer similar to one given in ch. 18.

[373] The book's only explicit reference to Adam and Eve occurs in 32:6, after Enoch remarks about the beauty of one particular tree, the "tree of wisdom, whose fruit the holy ones eat and learn great wisdom" (32:3). It has often been remarked that this reference to the events of Genesis 3 is remarkably attenuated. If Nickelsburg is correct about the identity of the "tree of life" in 1 Enoch 25, then it is noteworthy that both Edenic trees are in protected, inaccessible spaces. The latter tree is a source of great wisdom; the former is a source of long life. Notably, 1 Enoch 32:6 highlights the portion of the Edenic narrative which is about boundary-crossing. Gabriel explains, "This is the tree of wisdom from which your father of old and your mother of old, who were before you, ate and learned wisdom. And their eyes were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they were driven from the garden" (32:6). The first couple are not explicitly critiqued for seeking wisdom; however, after seeking it, they are exiled from paradise. Boundary-crossing leads to trouble unless it is part of God's orderly design. As a heavenly traveler, Enoch is skirting the boundaries of appropriateness; yet his journeys are clearly sanctioned. The sense of remoteness, the mystery associated with Enoch's quest for knowledge might be revealed in Enoch's comment about the tree of wisdom: "How beautiful is the tree and how pleasing in appearance." How very like Eve's words in Genesis 3. These words from "long and ago and far away" underscore that Enoch is visiting a place that others have only heard about. The angel responds not by offering Enoch its fruit, but by recounting a kind summary of Genesis 3 in which

encounters "the ends of the earth" (33:1): by definition, this place is a mystery, representing the ultimate journey. Such a journey is embedded in mythic quest narratives, such as Gilgamesh journeying to earth's end in his search for immortality. Enoch too seeks ultimate answers at the ends of the earth, an inaccessible destination which is more mystery than "place" in any ordinary sense of the word. It is also one of the rare times when Enoch encounters animal life on his journeys: he sees "great beasts, and they were different each from the other; and birds also, differing [in] their appearance and their beauty and their voices, each differed from the other. To the east of these beasts I saw the ends of the earth, on which the heavens rest, and the gates of heaven open…" (33:1–2). In this exceptional location, the beasts and birds cannot be named with confidence, unlike the cinnamon, aloe, and other fauna of paradise. Even though this border location is beautiful and not desolate, once again Enoch has difficulty in describing exactly what it is that he is seeing. This is another liminal space beyond the ordered cosmos, a place beyond places, which exceeds Enoch's categories and his vocabulary: it is a sublime space beyond his recognition. Recalling the language of 1 Enoch 18, in this liminal space heavens and earth seem to abut one another as the heavens "rest" on the ends of the earth (33:1), and it is at this joining-place that the gates between the heavens and the earth have been established and can be opened. Out of these gates come the stars (33:3-4).

The emphasis on the "ends of the earth" as a liminal place is underscored by the full circuit Enoch undertakes, going from the east to the ends of the earth in the north, where he observes the gates of the winds (ch. 34), to the west, where he sees portals corresponding to those in the east (ch. 35), and to the south, where he sees portals for dew, rain, and wind, corresponding to those of the north (ch. 36). Finally, Enoch returns to the east, completing his

---

the consequences for illicit boundary-crossing are made clear. Enoch does not eat from the fruit; therefore, Enoch can proceed with his journey.

circuit. The portals mark the boundary of the earth and explain the mechanisms behind the observable astronomical and meteorological phenomena, mechanisms that can only be grasped by means of his special revelatory journey.

Such knowledge is also the basis for a particular spiritual experience. Seeing these gates inspires Enoch to worship: “And when I saw, I blessed ... the Lord of glory” (1 En 36:4). What is it that takes Enoch to such spiritual heights? Perhaps it is simply the fact that Enoch sees that which no other can see, a sentiment expressed directly near the end of his first otherworldly journey: "I, Enoch, alone saw the visions, the extremities of all things. And no one among humans has seen as I saw" (1 En 19:3). At the ends of the earth and the gates of the heavens, we see with Enoch that the earth and the heavens are parallel worlds: the seen partnered with the unseen; the observable with the hidden. What holds it all together are the paths and circuits of the natural world, rains and stars flowing out from their heavenly sources and holding places in the heavens to their earthly destinations, and the winds providing the space and structure for them to do so.

The correlation between knowledge and worship is also found at Qumran. In the *Hymn to the Creator* in 11Q5 26.12, angels praise God for sharing knowledge with them. The content of the angel’s new knowledge concerns the mysteries of creation itself:

> Darkness He divides from light, preparing the dawn with the knowledge of His heart. When all His angels saw, they rejoiced in song—for He had shown them what they knew not: decking out the mountains with food, *vacat* fine sustenance for all who live. Blessed be He who by His might created the earth, who by His wisdom established the world. By His understanding He stretched forth the heavens and brought out [the wind] from [His] trea[sure stores.] He created [lightning for the ra]in and [from] the end of [the earth] made vapour[s] to rise. (11Q5 26.11b–15)[374]

[374] Translated by M. Wise, M. Abegg, and E. Cook in Parry and Tov, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader: Part 5,* 197.

Also in the Hodayot, the revelation of mysteries is cause for praise for the human hymnist, who thanks the Lord "that you have instructed me in your truth, and made known to me your wondrous mysteries" (1QH^{a} 15.29–30),[375] and later, in a hymn of praise, recounts how by "your holy spirit you have [o]pened up knowledge within me through the mystery of your wisdom and the fountainhead of [your] pow[er]" (1QH^{a} 20.16).[376] Granted, not all of the mysteries revealed in the Hodayot are mysteries which relate to the natural world; however, mysteries about nature —especially the creation of the cosmos—frequently play a role in the kind of revealed knowledge that leads to worship. Indeed, the granting of knowledge about the natural world as cause for praise is already attested in Job 38:4–7:

> Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?
> Tell me, if you have understanding.
> Who determined its measurements—surely you know!
> Or who stretched the line upon it?
> On what were its bases sunk,
> or who laid its cornerstone
> when the morning stars sang together
> and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy?

The poetic logic suggests that witnessing the foundations of creation itself is the cause of the luminaries' praise. Thus Enoch's response of worship belongs to this tradition.

The first mode in which Enoch encounters the natural world is worshipful; the second mode is functional, insofar as it conveys privilege to him and to his reading audience. For this reason, Enoch's reaction to revealed knowledge goes beyond praise and causes him to take action, to write things down. Through Enoch's scribal activity, God reveals "his great deeds" to humankind "so that they might see the work of his might and glorify the deeds of his hands and bless him forever" (36:4). In contrast, God gave knowledge of the natural world to Enoch freely

[375] Newsom, *The Hodayot*, 49.
[376] Newsom, *The Hodayot*, 63.

and generously. In turn, Enoch, having seen a great deal, writes it all down, and in so doing, he codifies knowledge he has not sought, but was given freely at God's initiative. These mysteries convey privilege to him and authenticate the knowledge passed on to the community of readers who affiliate themselves with the Enochic traditions. Job is merely *told about* the elements of the created order; the fact that Enoch himself *sees* the heavenly mysteries elevates his status in comparison.

Book of Parables. The mysteries of nature feature prominently in the *Book of Parables.* As mentioned in chapter two, the *Book of Parables* is, at least in part, a re-telling of the events of the *Book of the Watchers*, including a pithy summation of the descent of the Watchers and several chapters that feature aspects of the natural world already familiar from Enoch's otherworldly journeys. While the term "mystery" is only applied to the illicit angelic instruction in the *Book of the Watchers*, in the *Book of Parables*, the term is used exclusively to indicate that which Enoch sees on his heavenly journeys. Granted, the Watchers' story is summed up so economically in the *Book of Parables* that the lack of one term is not necessarily meaningful. However, it is still striking that, in the *Book of Parables*, the materials associated with Enoch's otherworldly journeys are specifically framed as "all the secrets of heaven," while the word "secrets" is *never* used during Enoch's travels in chapters 17–36.

The hiddenness of what Enoch witnesses is emphasized in 1 En 40–43. In what is essentially a throne vision without a throne, Enoch encounters "the presence of the glory of the Lord of Spirits" in 1 Enoch 40:1. Surrounding the deity are four chief archangels—Michael, Raphael, Gabriel, and Phanuel. Another angel, Enoch's tour guide, is present as well. Several times, Enoch refers to his guide as a revealer of hidden things. First, Enoch recounts learning the

names of the archangels: "And I learned their names, because the angel who went with me and showed me all the hidden things made their names known to me" (40:2). In both 40:8 and 43:3, Enoch describes his tour guide as "the angel of peace who went with me and showed me everything that is hidden." The theme of hiddenness appears again in 1 Enoch 41, which begins: "And after this, I saw all the secrets of heaven, how the kingdom is divided, and how human deeds are weighed in the balance" (1 En 41:1). What follows is a brief description of the judgement of sinners: thus, in the *Book of Parables*, as in the *Book of the Watchers*, some of the mysteries revealed to Enoch are eschatological in nature. Eschatological mysteries are also present in the literature about Levi and Abraham, discussed below.

Elements of nature make their appearance in 41:3, where Enoch narrates his newly-learned heavenly secrets, all of which relate to meteorological elements: "And there my eyes saw the secrets of the lightnings and the thunder, and the secrets of the winds, how they are divided to blow upon the earth, and the secrets of the clouds and dew."[377] In the verses that follow, one learns that what is "secret" about these meteorological elements is the orderly way in which they are stored and distributed, that is, the mechanics of their operation that simple observation cannot detect. As Nickelsburg points out, the elements of nature are categorized in a rather complicated manner: the winds, clouds, and dew are called secrets and kept in storehouses; lightning and thunder are referred to as secrets but *not* kept in storehouses; hail and mist are kept in storehouses but are *not* called secrets.[378] In biblical texts also, various natural phenomena are said to be kept in storehouses: hail and snow (Job 38:22); the deeps (Psalm 33:7); the wind (Psalm 135:7, Jer 10:13; 51:6); rain (Joel 1:17); and clouds (Ben Sira 43:14). These various meteorological elements seem to be consistently featured as the type of natural phenomena

[377] This pericope is explored further in chapter two of this dissertation.
[378] Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2*, 144.

whose origins evade human knowledge, unless that knowledge is revealed. As in the biblical texts, 1 Enoch informs the reader *that* Enoch saw these secrets but does not disclose other details.

The *Book of Parables* features two more chapters with similar content, emphasizing both the secret nature of meteorological phenomena (59:1–3) as well as the role played by storehouses in ordering, storing, and distributing the elements (60:12–21). 1 En 59:1–3 reads:

> In those days, my eyes saw the secrets of the lightnings and the luminaries
> and their laws;
> they flash for a blessing or for a curse, as the Lord of Spirits wills.
> And there I saw the secrets of the thunder
> and (how) when it crashes in the heights of heaven,
> its sound is heard <in> the dwelling places of the earth;
> He showed me the sound of the thunder for peace and blessing, or for a curse,
> according to the word of the Lord of Spirits.
> After that, all the secrets of the luminaries and the lightnings were shown to me,
> how they flash for blessing and for satisfaction.

Here, the lightnings, the luminaries, and the thunder are depicted as heavenly secrets. Though luminaries are not called secrets in chapter 41, their paths are praised as being fixed, orderly, and purposeful, even obedient to God's commands (qualities which are, in ch. 41, hallmarks of secrets). In chapter 60, Enoch witnesses a more extensive catalogue of storehouses: those which hold winds (60:12); the times of the lightning flashes (60:15); possibly frost (60:18); mist (60:19); and dew and rain (60:20–21). Intertwined in chapter 60's description of the storage places for these meteorological elements are descriptive passages praising the orderly way that all these things are divided, weighed, numbered, not separated, divided equally, checked, turned back, driven, drawn back, scattered, released, not mingled, etc. The most minute movement of each of these elements is purposeful. Again here, in 1 Enoch 60, the nature of the "secrets" revealed to Enoch involves organization: the secret is not only *where* the elements are kept, but the intentional—even deterministic—manner in which their movements are divinely ordained and organized. As Orlov notes, in the *Book of Parables*, the reader experiences a unity between

cosmological secrets and eschatological secrets.[379] In antiquity (as well as in modern scientific inquiry), the quest for what makes all phenomena "hang together" in a coherent and meaningful way is one of the goals of understanding.

2 Enoch. The book of 2 Enoch[380] begins with a narration of Enoch's heavenly journeys featuring natural world mysteries. 2 Enoch employs astral imagery that resonates with passages from the *Books of the Watchers* and *Parables*, as well as the *Astronomical Book*, though 2 Enoch places greater emphasis on the role of angelic beings who are portrayed as "managing" the natural world. In 2 Enoch 4, Enoch meets "the rulers of the stellar orders" who "showed me their movements and their aberrations from year to year" (4:1). Later, he encounters the treasuries of snow, ice, clouds, and dew, together with the angelic guardians of each (chaps. 5–6), as well as the movements of the sun and moon (chaps. 11–16). The first portion of 2 Enoch thus takes up Enoch's role as a privileged seer with authority to transmit knowledge, including the mysteries of the natural world, to the rest of humankind. Much like the *Book of the Watchers*, 2 Enoch does not label these disclosures "secrets" or "mysteries"—and yet it is clear that Enoch inhabits spaces and observes events that are inaccessible to anyone else.

In 2 Enoch 24–36, Enoch is ushered into the divine throne-room. In the *Books of the Watchers* and *Parables*, Enoch is privileged to observe the divine throne, but in 2 Enoch, the seer's status is higher. Along with Gabriel, Enoch is seated at God's left hand—in essence

---

[379] Andrei Orlov, "Secrets of Creation in 2 (Slavonic) Enoch," in *From Apocalypticism to Merkabah Mysticism: Studies in Slavonic Pseudepigrapha* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 181.

[380] The book of 2 Enoch was perhaps written at about the same time as the *Book of Parables*, though it is thought by some to be dated at least a century earlier. Because 2 Enoch survives only in medieval manuscripts, it is dated by an evaluation of the internal evidence. Arguments for an early dating argue that the texts "[reflect] sacrificial practices that still existed when the author was writing his book" (Andrei Orlov, "The Jewish Pseudepigrapha in the Slavic Literary Environment," in *Selected Studies in the Slavonic Pseudepigrapha* [Leiden: Brill, 2009], 10). On the other end of the spectrum, Ida Frölich dates 2 Enoch to the late first century CE (Ida Fröhlich, "Stars and Spirits: Heavenly Bodies in Ancient Jewish Aramaic Tradition," *Aramaic Studies* 13, no. 2 [2015], 18).

joining the heavenly court. After being seated, Enoch's heavenly journeys are interpreted by none other than God on the throne:

> And the LORD spoke to me: "Whatever you see, Enoch, things standing still and moving about and which were brought to perfection by me, I will explain it to you.
> **About the construction of creation.**[381]
> Before anything existed at all, from the very beginning, whatever is I created from non-being into being, and from the invisible into visible. And not even to my angels have I explained my secrets, nor related to them their composition, nor my endless and inconceivable creation which I conceived, as I am making them known to you today. Before any visible things had come into existence, and the light had not yet opened up, I, in the midst of the light, moved around in the invisible things, like one of them, as the sun moves around from east to west and from west to east. But the sun has rest; yet I did not find rest, because everything was not yet created. And I thought up the idea of establishing a foundation, to create a visible creation. (2 En 24:1–5)

The cosmological assumptions of this understanding of creation are significantly different than those of 1 Enoch. In particular, the categories of non-being and being, visibility and invisibility resonate with certain strands of philosophical speculation in contemporary Greek sources.[382] In their own way, however, they also speak to the features of liminality as an important aspect of what is mysterious about creation.

In the chapters that follow, God narrates the origins of the cosmos, sharing with Enoch an account of creation that is hidden even from angelic beings. Orlov sums up 2 Enoch's lengthy account of creation as follows:

---

[381] This rare chapter heading is in some manuscripts witnessing to the shorter recension. Translation by F. I. Anderson, "2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch" in James H. Charlesworth, ed. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Vol. 1: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* Doubleday & Company, 1983), 142.

[382] For example, some traditions seem to reflect the conviction that matter is indestructible, having neither beginning nor end—most famously espoused by Platonists and Peripatetics—while others, like the Epicureans and Stoics, insists that the cosmos had a beginning and will have an ending (Adams, *The Stars Will Fall*, 109, 126–29). The text in 2 Enoch reflects Greek influence while also remaining committed to an exegesis of Gen 1, with its focus on differentiation (Anderson, "2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch," 142, n24g). Matter is indestructible, thus something must have existed with God prior to creation; and yet this is differentiated from that which is created: from the invisible, God created the visible. The variety of manuscript evidence makes a definitive evaluation difficult, however. Anderson notes that, in contrast, some manuscripts are insistent that God was absolutely alone prior to the moment of creation (Anderson, "2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch," 142, n24f).

> 1. Prior to the Creation the Lord decided to establish the foundation of all created things;
> 2. He commanded one of the invisible "things" to come out of the very lowest darkness and become visible;
> 3. By [the] Lord's command a primordial "great aeon," bearing the name Adoil, descended and, disintegrating himself, revealed all creation which the Lord "had thought up to create";
> 4. The Lord created a throne for himself. He then ordered the light to become the foundation for the highest things;
> 5. The Lord called out the second aeon, bearing the name Arukhas, who became the foundation of the lowest beings;
> 6. From the waters the Lord "hardened big stones," establishing the solid structure above the waters;
> 7. The Lord fashioned the heavens and the sun;
> 8. From fire the Lord created the armies of "the bodiless ones";
> 9. The Lord created vegetation, fish, reptiles, birds, and animals;
> 10. The Lord created [humankind].[383]

After learning about cosmic origins, Enoch is given 30 days on earth before angels will return him to the heavenly realm. Orlov notes that, when compared with the depiction of heavenly secrets in 1 Enoch, in 2 Enoch the language of secrecy "is reserved only for the particular cosmogonic revelation of the Lord,"[384] and thus its content is always heavenly, never earthly. In contrast, the knowledge meant for dissemination is never labeled "secret." When Enoch returns temporarily to the earthly realm, he passes on only some of the knowledge he has gained, sharing the sights he has seen in the heavens (as recounted in chs. 1–19) but not the intricacies of God's creative processes. The reader, however, has access to everything that Enoch has been shown. This introduces a contradiction, since it is implied that the book of 2 Enoch is itself the testimony that Enoch left behind for his children. Perhaps this functions to heighten the sense of chosenness in the reader herself, who is privy to information which is, in fact, reserved for a select few.

Another way of understanding the above rhetorical strategy is to assume that 2 Enoch only gestures toward the heavenly knowledge that Enoch has gained, recounting it in outline form;

---

[383] Andrei Orlov, "Secrets of Creation in 2 (Slavonic) Enoch," in *From Apocalypticism to Merkabah Mysticism: Studies in Slavonic Pseudepigrapha* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 176–77.
[384] Orlov, "Secrets of Creation in 2 (Slavonic) Enoch," 194.

perhaps the reader is to assume that the intricacies of God's creative acts were known by Enoch but he only recorded them in the most general terms. In either case, the high status conferred on the seer in 1 Enoch is heightened exponentially in 2 Enoch. He is presented as both an idealized human and a human unlike any other, whose status exceeds that of angelic beings. In the Slavonic book, Enoch is not only seated at the hand of God next to Gabriel, but the deity also speaks with him directly—without intermediary—and freely shares restricted mysteries. When Enoch finally returns to the heavenly realm, his education in heavenly mysteries continues:

> …[A] place has been prepared for you [Enoch], and you will be in front of my face from now and forever. And you will be seeing my secrets, and you will be scribe for my servants, since you will be writing down everything that has happened on earth and that exists on earth and in the heavens, and you will be for me a witness of the judgment of the great age. (2 En 36:2–3)[385]

In 2 Enoch, the initial secrets that Enoch receives are those about cosmic origins; the final secrets he is given address the eschatological future. Enoch will continue "seeing secrets" indefinitely, enabling him eventually to act as "a witness" at the final judgment. The role that had been played by the natural world in the *Epistle of Enoch*—the natural world as a giver of testimony—is here taken over by Enoch, a more perfect witness who not only sees everything that happens on earth, but has the uniquely human ability to write it down, thus increasing the reliability of his testimony.

The Ascents of Levi and Abraham

In contrast to the Enochic literature, in the Testament of Levi (dated to the first-century BCE) and the Apocalypse of Abraham (dated to the first-century CE), heavenly mysteries primarily address judgment and only secondarily concern themselves with the created order. In T. Levi, very little is said about the natural world. Though more attention is given to nature in the

[385] Anderson, "2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch," 160.

Apocalypse of Abraham, comments about the cosmos are always contextualized within a comprehensive overview of history that culminates in the final judgment of humankind. In the Enochic materials as well as the apocalypses featuring Levi and Abraham, speculation about eschatology and the cosmos are both present. However, in the latter works, observations of the cosmos tend to serve eschatological interests, while in 1 Enoch, the cosmos is worthy of observation on its own terms.

Testament of Levi. Although most of the secrets revealed to Levi have to do with the eschatological judgment of unrepentant humankind (and unrepentant spirits), elements of the natural world that are stored up for use on the day of judgment are also present. The angel points out to Levi that the lowest level of heaven "looks out on all the sins of men; and it has fire, snow, ice, ready for the day of the judgment of God's righteous meting out of justice, for in it are all the Spirits of [various] afflictions [used] as punishments for the wicked" (3:1b–2).[386] This dark level of heaven, associated with judgment, is crowded with elements of nature—not only with water (within the holding places from which waters were released in the Noahic flood), but also with water's frozen counterparts, ice and snow, and with fire, water's apocalyptic opposite. In the lowest heaven, then, some of the elements that are unleashed for pre-eschatological judgment in other books are here kept in storage. Similarly, this level of the heavens also includes avenging spirits who enact punishment at the eschaton. In chapter 4, the angelic guide reveals that humans deserve judgment because they persist in unrighteousness, even though they were warned by the natural world to repent:

---

[386] James L. Kugel, "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," in *Outside the Bible: Ancient Jewish Writings Related to Scripture* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 2013), 1726. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs are from Kugel, "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," 1697–855.

> Now, therefore, know that the Lord will execute judgment on human beings, for when boulders are being split, and the sun is extinguished, and the waters are drying up, and the fire is trembling, and all of creation is in chaos, and the invisible Spirits are melting away, and the underworld is taking spoils at the suffering of the Most High, unbelieving people will [still] persist in their unrighteousness. That is why they will be sentenced to punishment. (4:1)

Similarly to *Epistle of Enoch*, which envisions the natural world as God's instrument of judgment, the Testament of Levi portrays the meteorological elements as instruments that angelic figures will wield at the appropriate time. Unlike the *Epistle's* portrayal of the natural world as a giver of testimony, however, in T. Levi, the natural world lacks the agency to act on its own volition. But as part of an ascent narrative rather than a didactic discourse, such as one has in the *Epistle*, these natural phenomena also function as a mystery revealed to the seer.

Apocalypse of Abraham. Drawing upon Enochic precedents, the Apocalypse of Abraham[387] offers a bird's-eye view of the cosmic sphere, including the workings of the natural world. Just as Enoch's heavenly journeys are depicted as taking place at the moment in Gen 5:24 when Enoch "walked with God" and "was no more," the Apocalypse of Abraham also chooses the most numinous moment in the Abraham cycle in which to situate Abraham's journey: namely, the covenant ceremony of Genesis 15.

---

[387] The Apocalypse of Abraham is preserved in six Old Slavonic manuscripts, the earliest from the fourteenth century, another from the fifteenth century, and the remaining four from the sixteenth century (R. Rubinkiewitz, "Apocalypse of Abraham," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Vol. 1: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, ed. James H Charlesworth [New Haven, London: Yale UP, 1983], 686). Four of these late medieval manuscripts contain only chapters 1–8, which narrate the events of Abraham's life. The other two are witnesses to the apocalyptic portion of the book, which begins in chapter 9. Only one of the two preserves the apocalypse in full; the other, a sixteenth-century manuscript, includes a different beginning and "a radically truncated ending" (Rubinkiewitz, "Apocalypse of Abraham," 681). The Apocalypse of Abraham is quoted in Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* 32–33, dated to the third or fourth century CE, but there are no other ancient witnesses (Alexander Kulik, "Apocalypse of Abraham," in *Outside the Bible: Ancient Jewish Writings Related to Scripture*, ed. Louis H. Feldman, James L. Kugel, and Lawrence H. Schiffman [Philadelphia: JPS, 2013], 1453).Though "[n]o decisive argument … has been given in support" of it, the Apocalypse of Abraham is commonly dated to the end of the first century CE; Rubinkiewicz argues that it was written after 70 CE since the events of that year are featured in ch. 27 (Rubinkiewitz, "Apocalypse of Abraham," 683), though Kulik suggests that the Apocalypse proper could very well have been written during the late Second Temple period (Kulik, "Apocalypse of Abraham," 1453).

Genesis 15 features only Abram and YHWH as characters: it is the Lord who appears to Abram in a vision, converses with Abram about his lack of progeny, and instructs Abram in setting up the elaborate sacrificial ritual which seals the covenant between them. In 15:9–10, God instructs Abram to find a heifer, a goat, a lamb, a pigeon, and a turtledove; the mammals are cut in half and sacrificed in an unusual way—not by being placed on an altar, but by "laying each half over against the other," leaving an aisle in the middle. The birds, however, are not halved, and the text in Genesis does not specify what happens to them, though in 15:11, the reader learns that other "birds of prey" attempt to eat the carcasses, but Abraham stops them.[388] After Abram falls into an induced visionary sleep in 15:12, God forges a covenant with him in a dream, and a smoking fire pot and flaming torch pass through the halved animals as a sign.

The Apocalypse of Abraham re-tells this story, answering the questions that Genesis leaves open. For example, what happened to the pigeon and the turtledove? Unlike Enoch, who ascends with the help of stars, lightning, and winds in 1 En 14:8–12, Abraham rides the seemingly-resurrected sacrificial birds to the heavenly realm. The angel instructs Abraham: "The turtledove and pigeon you will give me, for I shall ascend in order to show to you [the inhabited world] on the wings of two birds, in heaven and on the earth: the sea, and the abysses, and the depths, and

[388] The Apocalypse of Abraham expands upon Gen 15's portrayal of the threat that birds of prey pose to Abraham's obedience to angelic commands: "And an impure bird flew down on the carcasses, and I drove it away. And the impure bird spoke to me and said, "What are you doing, Abraham, on the holy heights, where no one eats or drinks, nor is there upon them food of men. But these will all be consumed by fire and they will burn you up. Leave the man who is with you and flee! Since if you ascend to the height, they will destroy you." And it came to pass when I saw the bird speaking I said to the angel, "What is this, my lord?" And he said, "This is iniquity, this is Azazel!" [13:3–7] (Alexander Kulik, trans., "Apocalypse of Abraham," in *Outside the Bible: Ancient Jewish Writings Related to Scripture*, ed. Louis H. Feldman, James L. Kugel, and Lawrence H. Schiffman (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 2013), 1465). When Abram chases away the birds of prey in Genesis 15, covenant efficacy is at stake. In the Apocalypse of Abraham, Abraham's impending heavenly journey (and his status as a seer) is at risk—a journey during which Abraham will not only be shown the full extent of the created order, but during which he will ultimately stand before God's throne. By identifying the bird of prey with Azazel, the threat is magnified from that of a natural predator to a supernatural one, with intent to lead Abraham astray. Azazel's tricky utterances bring to mind the serpent of Genesis 3—indeed, the Apocalypse identifies the serpent as Azazel in 23:1–11, and as Kulik points out, just as the serpent told partial truths to Eve, Azazel told partial truths to Abraham, for he does encounter danger in the form of fire and blinding light during his heavenly journey (Kulik, "Apocalypse of Abraham," 1465).

the Garden of Eden, and its rivers and the fullness of the inhabited world and round about it you will see everything" (12:10).[389] Within these instructions, the angel presents Abraham with an itinerary of his impending heavenly journey, for which the birds will function as "psychopomps," or modes of transportation between the earthly and heavenly realms.[390] Though the birds were not cut in half,[391] the fact that their riders sit on opposing wings shows a similarly dualistic and ordered impulse. Upon the wings of the birds, Abraham and his angel "ascended as if (carried) by many winds to the heaven that is fixed on the expanses" (15:5)—like Levi, Abraham's first stop is the firmament, a part of God's orderly cosmic structure and integral to ancient conception of the natural world, fixed by God on the second day of creation according to Genesis 1.

The apocalypse is not systematic in narrating what Abraham encounters on each of the seven firmaments. In chapter 19, without a great deal of fanfare, the reader is told that Abraham has been "directed" to the seventh firmament, and it is from this vantage point that the patriarch views the cosmos. Abraham narrates as follows:

> And while [God] was still speaking, behold, the levels opened, and there were the heavens under me. And I saw on the seventh firmament upon which I stood a fire spread out and light, and dew, and a multitude of angels, and a power of the invisible glory from the Living Creatures that I had seen above. But I saw no one else there. And I looked from the altitude of my position to the sixth expanse. And I saw there a multitude of incorporeal spiritual angels, carrying out the orders of the fiery angels who were on the eighth firmament, as I was standing on its suspensions. Behold, neither on this expanse was there any other power of other form, but only the spiritual angels, and they are the power that I had seen on the seventh firmament. And he commanded the sixth expanse to

---

[389] Kulik, "Apocalypse of Abraham," 1465. Here and following, translations of Apocalypse of Abraham are from Kulik, "Apocalypse of Abraham," 1453–81.

[390] In apocalyptic literature, this role is usually reserved for angelic beings. Andrei Orlov explores in detail the Apocalypse of Abraham's reticence to display divine beings anthropomorphically. For instance, Abraham's divine guide Jaoel is depicted as a griffin, while the enthroned deity does not have a body, but is a voice which emanates from fire. See Andrei Orlov, "The Pteromorphic Angelology of the *Apocalypse of Abraham*," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 71 (2009), 830–42.

[391] In fact, Apocalypse of Abraham 15:3 describes the birds as whole; they were "neither slaughtered nor divided." Whether this means that the birds were slaughtered before being resurrected, or never slaughtered, is not entirely clear (Kulik, "Apocalypse of Abraham," 1466).

> remove itself. And I saw there, on the fifth [level], hosts of stars, and the orders they were commanded to carry out, and the elements of earth obeying them." (19:4–9)[392]

Through Abraham's observations, the reader is taken on a visual descent[393] through three levels of the heavens. The seventh heaven contains certain meteorological elements familiar from the throne vision of 1 Enoch 12–16, but they are not part of "nature" as such. The head angels command the sixth firmament to move out of the way, and it does—thus making the fifth heaven visible to Abraham, from his perch on the seventh. This is the one place in the Apocalypse where one explicitly encounters the orderly elements of the natural world: hosts of obedient stars, who are in turn in charge of obedient "elements of earth." In this way, Abraham is shown the hierarchical structures that hold the cosmos together, and the clear ways in which the heavenly and earthly realms function in sync with one another. Though the word "mystery" is not used here, Abraham is viewing the workings of the cosmos otherwise kept hidden from humankind. Indeed, the fact that the contents of the fifth heaven were hidden from Abraham's sight until angelic commands intervened strongly suggests that the boundary between the fifth heaven (featuring elements of the natural world) and the upper heavens (featuring the abodes of divine beings) is usually impermeable.

At this point in the apocalypse, God asks Abraham to count the stars: "Look from on high at the stars which are beneath you and tell me their number!" This is an inversion of God's instructions in Gen 15:5, that Abraham "look up" and count the stars of the heavens as an illustration that his descendants will someday be just as innumerable; it is also inverted insofar as it occurs after, rather than before, the sacrifice.[394] That which Abraham is meant to see is

---

[392] Kulik, "Apocalypse of Abraham," 1469.
[393] "The unique feature of *Apocalypse* is Abraham's exploration of the heavenly world in a *downward direction* as the heavens open below (and only from the seventh to the fifth). Other visionaries either moved from lower to upper firmaments or wandered in a horizontal dimension" (Kulik, "Apocalypse of Abraham," 1469).
[394] Kulik, "Apocalypse of Abraham," 1469.

temporal as well as spatial. In looking "from on high," Abraham sees across the expanse of time in addition to seeing a cross-section of the contents of the cosmos, for God says to him: "Look now beneath your feet at the expanse and contemplate the creation *that was previously covered over.* On this level there is the creation and those who inhabit it and *the age that has been prepared to follow it*." (21:1, emphasis mine).[395] The next verses recounts Abraham's obedience, as well as all that Abraham sees. Alongside the works of creation ("the earth and its fruits" [21:2]), which were established in the primordial past and still persist, Abraham observes the sins of humankind in a way that spans time, from creation to judgment. Abraham's revelation thus unites concerns for time and history with cosmological interests (see below).

Although most of the interest in the passage is focused on humankind rather than the wonders of creation itself, as Abraham enumerates more of what he sees, he includes the elements of the natural world on the earth, many of which allude to Gen 1: "the sea, its islands, its animals and its fishes, and Leviathan and his spouse, his lair, his dens" (v. 4) and "the rivers and their overflows and their circles" (v. 5). At first, this list might not seem exceptional. After all, fruits, the sea, islands, animals, and fish would have been available for Abraham's consideration on earth. It is, however, the perspective that matters. Abraham's newfound ability to see the totality of these once-familiar objects from a heavenly vantage point renders them mysterious, even a bit strange. The list fully crosses over into the realm of the mysterious with its reference to Leviathan in its domestic setting (21:4). A reference to "upper reaches and circles" of rivers (21:5) also suggest the heavenly geographical features seen by Enoch, but hidden from the normal human purview.

[395] Kulik, "Apocalypse of Abraham," 1470.

Next, Abraham sees another mystery—Eden, both its natural elements and the humans who apparently reside there as reward for their righteous lives:

> And I saw there the tree of Eden and its fruits, and the spring, the river flowing from it, and its trees and their flowering, and I saw those who act righteously. And I saw in it their food and rest. And I saw there a great crowd of men, and women, and children, and half of them on the right side of the portrayal, and half of them on the left side of the portrayal. (21:6–7)

Eden is portrayed as a place where food and (Sabbath) rest are plentiful. Abraham's view of a utopian garden alongside a horrific abyss recalls the pits where souls await judgment in 1 En 22, one of which contains a garden and a fountain. Eden and paradise are not synonymous in apocalyptic and other Second Temple writings. Sometimes Eden does function as paradise, but frequently, especially in Jewish apocalypses, Eden is still a place on earth, though it remains inaccessible to all but the chosen few. In 1 Enoch 32, Jubilees 4, and also here in the Apocalypse of Abraham, Eden is this-worldly, and yet its inaccessibility and its contents vouchsafe its status as a mystery.[396] Its nature, its function, and its location are not available to just anyone. And even those who see it, like Abraham, are not certain as to its significance without divine explanations. Thus Abraham's question to God in Apocalypse of Abraham 22:1 echoes that of the reader: "Eternal Mighty One! What is this picture of creation?" God's reply is a bit cagey: "This is my will for existence in design, and it is pleasing to me" (22:2).[397] The divine reply alludes to the fact that Eden exemplifies the orderly cosmos as God intends it to function; it also suggests a

---

[396] Eden holds all of humankind, divided into two categories. God explains: "Those who are on the left side are a multitude of tribes who were before and who are destined to be after you: some for judgment and justice, and others for revenge and perdition at the end of the age. Those on the right side of the picture are the people set apart from me of the people [that are] with Azazel. These are the ones I have destined to be born of you and to be called my people" (22:4–5). Such a function for Eden is unusual in the literature of the time. In Jubilees, Eden is the dwelling place for Enoch in his priestly-scribal role as he awaits the culmination of human history. Frequently, Eden is equated with a paradise for the righteous after death (e.g., 4 Ezra 7:36). However, in the Apocalypse of Abraham, Eden is a place where people are sorted: all of humankind, throughout all of time. For Abraham, Eden is the stage upon which human history itself plays out. The human presence in Eden is marked primarily by the "impieties" and "justifications" and other "works." This mass of humanity is then separated according to their destinies.

[397] Kulik, "Apocalypse of Abraham," 1471.

determinism familiar to an apocalyptic worldview. God also explains to Abraham that the moment of creation inaugurated the unfolding of time and events within it: "And whatever I had determined to be had already been previously depicted and set before me in this, as you have seen, before they were created" (22:2). History, as well as the natural world, participates in a mysterious unity that can be revealed to the proper figure from the proper (heavenly) perspective. Indeed, space and time, as well as nature and history, intersect in a predetermined way in this apocalypse.[398] God thus explains why and how Abraham is seeing all of time condensed into the garden of Eden, from creation to judgment, including the fates of every generation of humankind. In the Apocalypse of Abraham, apocalyptic heavenly mysteries are part of "a unified field theory," in which cosmic secrets and the course of history cannot be properly understood unless they are understood together.

Though the word "secret" or "mystery" is never used in the Apocalypse of Abraham, it is clear that Abraham sees that which is beyond the ken of ordinary humankind. Similar to what Levi experiences, the hidden things revealed to Abraham are mostly concerned with judgment, set within a cosmic scene featuring God's created order. But that is precisely the difference between these apocalypses and one like 1 Enoch. Though in the Enochic materials, too, "eschatology becomes an unavoidable corollary to learning about the created order,"[399] the Enochic traditions consider the natural world to be, in and of itself, a secret worth pursuing on its own terms. When Levi and Abraham ascend, revealed mysteries as they relate to the created

[398] The predetermined status of space and time are emphasized by 1QS 3–4 and 4QInstruction in a similar manner, although at Qumran, the texts' foci remain on the mysterious character of history rather than the elements of the natural world.
[399] James C. VanderKam, *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1984), 140.

order tend to serve historical and eschatological rather than speculative ends, though the two cannot fruitfully be separated in Jewish apocalypses writ large.

"Mysteries" at Qumran

At Qumran, one sees a more self-conscious interest in the "unified field theory" of the nature of reality, with special interest in how humans might be able to grasp that unity as knowledge. This interest lends a particular nuance to the use of the term *rāz* at Qumran, which differs both from the way mysteries have been treated in the apocalypses explored above and from biblical usage. In biblical literature, *rāz* appears with certainty only in the court tales of the book of Daniel,[400] and usually refers to the disclosure of future events.[401] The word shows up much more frequently at Qumran: according to Samuel Thomas, *rāz* occurs "at least 140 times in at least twenty-eight different non-biblical compositions, including all of the major sectarian

---

[400] Some translators find an even earlier reference to "mystery" in Isaiah 24:16b: *vāʾomar rāzî lî rāzî lî ʾoy lî*. Samuel Thomas translates this: "But I say, "I have my 'mystery,' I have my 'mystery!' Woe is me…" Thomas, *The "Mysteries" of* Qumran, 106. Other translators derive *rāzî* from *rāzāh*, "to waste away" (Thus the JPS: "I waste away, I waste away!") Both solutions have difficulties: the former is more difficult to explain in context, and the latter is a *hapax legomenon*. Thomas argues that the "mystery" is "a special kind of revelation to which only Isaiah has access…. Isaiah mediates the significance of this revelation for understanding God's plan for history and for the cosmos, and yet the content of the revelations remains concealed. Contrary to, say, Dan 2, there is no explanation, in the context of the passage, of how and by what authority Isaiah 'sees' this 'mystery'" (Thomas, *The "Mysteries" of Qumran*, 109). If "mystery" is the correct translation here, then this portion of Isaiah, dated to the third or early second century BCE, would be the earliest extant use of *rāz* which, like Daniel, is used in an oracle envisioning a culmination of history (Thomas, *The "Mysteries" of Qumran*, 106–11).

[401] In Daniel, *rāz* can refer simply to something hidden *or* to cosmic mysteries (Newsom, *Daniel*, 71). Collins agrees, writing: "Initially, here, the connotation [of *rāz*] seems to be simply the puzzle of the dream, but the dream itself is found to disclose an eschatological mystery. The word *rāz* may imply the expectation that the dream contains some such significant revelation" (John Joseph Collins, *Daniel* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993], 159). Within Daniel 2, the meaning of *rāz* shifts from a mere representation of the secret nature of the king's dream to an indication of its eschatological content. The mystery which has been revealed to Nebuchadnezzar is a disclosure of a future in which his kingdom will be no more. Newsom notes, "Here and only here in these court tales does an eschatological horizon envision an end to the long succession of Gentile empires" (Newsom, *Daniel*, 63). This eschatological horizon returns in chapters 7–12, though *rāz* does not make an appearance outside of the court tales, possibly because the word is more at home in Aramaic than in Hebrew. However, secrecy remains an explicit theme in chaps. 7–12. Daniel is instructed to keep the words "secret" until "the time of the end" in 12:4. In spite of their differences in language and genre, chapters 2 and 12 ask the reader to adopt remarkably similar perspectives: in the former, Daniel receives the revelation first, and it is revealed to the reader (and the king) when Daniel speaks; in the latter, Daniel's revelation is made accessible to the reader only after he writes it down. "The reader is one of the 'many' who has become wise through the knowledge disclosed in this book" (Newsom, *Daniel*, 365).

texts and many of the otherwise well-attested compositions."[402] The language of *rāz* at Qumran finds its "most immediate roots" in the biblical material explored above, as well as 1 Enoch—though Thomas does not deny Greek influence, and generally supports the Persian etymology of the word itself.[403] When comparing the Scrolls with Daniel, 1 Enoch, and other Aramaic texts, one sees significant differences in usage. Generally, in the former group of texts, *rāz* appears in the absolute form and is unaffiliated with other terms. In non-Aramaic Qumranic texts, *rāz* usually appears either in construct or alongside "verbs of revelation, knowledge acquisition and understanding, concealing, etc."[404] As Thomas indicates, at Qumran, a *rāz*:

> must *do* something, or someone must do something associated with it. There are certain verbs that tend to provide for the action associated with mysteries, and these can also help to illuminate aspects of "mystery" and its corresponding religious and social functions. The verbal associations with "mystery" include verbs of revelation, of knowledge acquisition and understanding, and of concealing, among others.[405]

In most instances in which *rāz* appears in the Scrolls, the concept of "mystery" is so multivalent and flexible that it cannot by itself represent a meaningful category.[406] Most of the time, mysteries at Qumran demand further clarification and categorization, and rarely are they fully interpreted or "solved." Thus Qumranic mysteries are not "problems" with "solutions," as they are in Daniel, but rather, they are characterizations of certain aspects of the deep structure of reality. In the Scrolls mysteries are spiritual realities that demand vigilant pursuit by anyone seeking to live faithfully; therefore, *rāz* is most commonly used in a moral context.[407] Qumranic

---

[402] Also: "From a statistical point of view, 'mystery' language is rather prominent in the Qumran Scrolls, comparable in frequency to other characteristically sectarian expressions (or to words and concepts that appear to have been especially important to the Yahad) [Thomas, *The "Mysteries" of Qumran*, 129].
[403] Thomas, *The "Mysteries" of Qumran*, 129, 245–51.
[404] Thomas, *The "Mysteries" of Qumran*, 128.
[405] Thomas, *The "Mysteries" of Qumran*, 128.
[406] Additionally, *rāz* functions easily among ideas "typically associated with apocalypticism or apocalyptic eschatology alongside ideas typically associated with traditional wisdom, even though the former texts often pursue the revelation of mysteries while the latter texts typically emphasize the limits of human perception (Thomas, *The "Mysteries" of Qumran,* 154).
[407] Thomas, *The "Mysteries" of Qumran*, 154.

"mysteries" can gesture either toward good ("the mysteries of God") or evil ("the mysteries of Belial"), drawing on the cosmic dualism so characteristic of its sectarian literature.[408] Essentially, in the Scrolls, *rāz* is a relevant category for religious reflection and a container for moral content. Given that analysis, one might not think that the Qumran scrolls have much to contribute to an inquiry into the mysteries of nature. However, the ways in which the scribes fill this container can differ dramatically. Sometimes, as in 4QInstruction and the Hodayot, they fill it with mysteries regarding the natural world or the creation of the cosmos.

4QInstruction.[409] 4QInstruction unites imagery of God as creator and God as judge, and it does so via the concept of the *rāz nihyeh*. This phrase is usually parsed as a Persian loan-word combined with a *niphal* participle of the verb "to be." Matthew Goff considers it "the most distinctive term of the composition" and recommends the translation "the mystery that is to be," though he argues that its significance bears on the past and present as well as the future.[410] A problem with Goff's translation is its exclusive focus on the future; the participial form of the verb insists on a translation with more temporal wiggle room. Another possible translation is "the mystery of existence," but that term does not sufficiently reflect the dynamic, verbal temporality of the Hebrew phrase. A clearer (though wordy) translation might be "the mystery of what was,

---

[408] Thomas emphasizes in a footnote that, with Devorah Dimant and Shaul Shaked, he is not implying that Qumranic dualism implies "the opposition of good and evil forces that are evil in scope and power, as in the Zoroastrian system" (Thomas, *The "Mysteries" of Qumran*, 129).

[409] The longest sapiential text found at Qumran, 4QInstruction consists of five fragmentary manuscripts from Cave 4 (4Q415–418, 423) and one from Cave 1 (1Q26). The collection is thought to have been written in the second century BCE, roughly contemporary with Ben Sira. Some have argued that it is older, but in recent years, the text's apocalyptic features combined with the similarities it bears to the Hodayot and the Community Rule have persuaded most that a second century dating is likely (Matthew J. Goff, *4QInstruction* [Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013], 28). The history of scholarship on 4QInstruction is outlined succinctly in Goff, *4QInstruction*, 1. For arguments in favor of an earlier dating, see Torleif Elgvin, *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert XXIV: 4QInstruction (Sapiential Texts), Part 2*. John Strugnell, Daniel J. Harrington, and Torlief Elgvin, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[410] Goff, *4QInstruction*, 9. Goff also writes: "The mystery that is to be signifies a comprehensive divine scheme that orchestrates the cosmos, from creation to judgment, presented to the addressee as knowledge that can be ascertained through the study of supernatural revelation" (Goff, *4QInstruction*, 14).

is, and is to come." The expression *rāz nihyeh* appears more than 20 times in 4QInstruction, twice in 1Q27 (the Book of Mysteries), once in 1QS (the Community Rule), but never in biblical texts.[411] While "mystery" is affiliated with eschatological judgment in 1Q27 and with revealed knowledge in 1QS, in 4QInstruction, "[t]he phrase normally signifies something that should be studied, fronted with the *bet* preposition and accompanied by an imperative that encourages contemplation…."[412] For the purposes of this dissertation, it is most appropriate to study the references to *rāz nihyeh* as they relate to creation and the cosmos.

For this inquiry the most salient portion of 4QInstruction is 4Q417 1 i 6–13a, which makes the claim that, because God used the *rāz nihyeh* to create the world, humankind can in turn use the *rāz nihyeh* to truly comprehend the often-perplexing natural world.[413] In this text, the *rāz nihyeh* "has pedagogical potential because of its association with the created order."[414] The various lacunae sometimes make it difficult to tell when this text speaks particularly of creation and when it speaks more about eschatological events. Perhaps it is best to read the following excerpt assuming that both topics are of interest, and that the scribe wishes to link origins with eschatology:[415]

> 6. […day and night meditate upon the mystery that] is to be (*rāz nihyeh*) and study (it) constantly. And then you will know truth and iniquity, wisdom
> 7. [and foll]y. You … [their] deed[s] in all their ways together with their punishment in all the everlasting ages and the punishment
> 8. of eternity. And then you will know the difference between [go]od and [evil according to their] deeds, [f]or the God of Knowledge is a foundation (*sôd*) of truth. With the mystery that is to be (*rāz nihyeh*),
> 9. he spread out (*pārāš*) its foundation and indeed m[ade (it) (*ʿāsā*) with wis]dom and, regarding everything, [with cleve]rness he fashioned it (*yᵉṣārāh*). The dominion of its deeds

[411] Goff, *4QInstruction*, 14.
[412] Goff, *4QInstruction*, 14.
[413] Goff, *4QInstruction*, 170.
[414] Goff, *4QInstruction*, 15.
[415] Here and following, translations of 4QInstruction are by Matthew Goff in *4QInstruction*, 137–40.

10. for a[l]l … and all [wi]th a[l]l … He [has l]aid out (*pārāš*) for their un[de]rstanding every d[ee]d so that one may walk
11. in [the inclination of] his intelligence, and he spread out (*wapriš*) for A[dam]… for … and with precision of intelligence were made kn[own the sec]rets
12. of his plan, together with his walking [for (he is) per]fe[ct in all] his [d]eeds. These things seek constantly and understand [all]
13. their consequences.

Even though these lines chiefly address the deeds of humankind, both good and evil, some of the vocabulary appears to be drawn from various biblical passages that emphasize God's role as creator. In line 6, by meditating upon the *rāz nihyeh*, the reader will know "truth and iniquity, wisdom and folly"—dualistic wisdom language which would be at home in Proverbs. More specifically, 4QInstruction's portrayal of wisdom resonates with Proverbs 3:19, in which God creates "with wisdom," but stands in subtle contrast with Proverbs 8, in which wisdom is presented as the first of God's created beings who then takes part in the creative process. Creation language surfaces again in line 8, when the subject will also come to know "the difference between good and evil"—language that resonates with Gen 2–3, while also reflecting an apocalyptic worldview by alluding to the deeds of those destined for judgment in line 7.

In this portion of 4QInstruction, in order to come to an understanding of the *rāz nihyeh*, human subjects must contemplate its relationship to the deity. How does God interact with the mystery of existence? In line 8, one reads that it is with/through/by means of the *rāz nihyeh* that God "spreads out" (*pārāš*), "fashions" (*yāṣar*), and "makes" (*ʿāsā*). The explicit object of these verbs is the "truth," but the verbs themselves connote God's creative activity in biblical texts—certainly imagistically, and sometimes also lexically.[416] To my knowledge, *pārāš* is never used in

[416] "The verb that denotes the act of creation in 4Q417 1 i 8–9 is *pārāš*, which is parallel to the verb *yᵉṣārāh* ("he fashioned it"). Given the theme of creation, one might have expected, instead, a pairing of *yāṣār* with *bārā* as in Genesis 1. The root *pārāš*, however, is a preferred term in the texts of *4QInstruction* that discuss the nature of the cosmos" (Goff, *4QInstruction*, 151).

biblical texts to describe God's act of creation.[417] One the other hand, *yāṣar* and *ʿāsā* are rooted in biblical creation texts: *yāṣar* is used in Gen 2:7, when God is said to "fashion" the first human, and in Gen 2:19, for God's creation of the animals; in the prophets, *yāṣar* is also frequently used to indicate God's "fashioning" of humankind (Isa 42:6, 43:7, 45:9; Jer 1:5) or of the earth writ large (Isa 45:18; Jer 33:2); summer and winter are also "fashioned" by God in Psalm 74:17. Likewise, the second creation story begins by indicating that God made (*ʿăsôt*) the earth and the heavens (Gen 2:4), as do several Psalms (115:15, 121:2, 124:8, 134:3, 146:6) and Second Isaiah (44:24, 45:7). Therefore, the language of line 8 demonstrates a unified concern with *both* the judgment of humankind based on their deeds *and* the created order as established by God.

The language of this text is complex, using creation imagery as a metaphor for God's function as judge. Goff notes that the dual metaphor of God the creator and God the judge is expressed best in the use of *pārāš*:

> …[T]he *rāz nihyeh* denotes both God's act of creation and the means by which the addressee can attain knowledge of this deed. The root *prs/š* can mean both "spread out" (*prs*) and "expound/explain" (*prš*). 4QInstruction draws upon both meanings of the root. God spread out the foundations of the world *and* made them intelligible for the addressee. Both acts are associated with the *rāz nihyeh* and the verb *prs/š*. The first topic is evident in lines 8–9 and the second in line 10…[418]

In other words, just as God laid the foundations of the earth, so God also laid the foundations of the truth. The image again suggests a relationship between wisdom and the natural world similar to that of Proverbs 3:19–20: "The Lord by wisdom founded (*yāsād*) the earth; by understanding he established (*kônen)* the heavens; by his knowledge the deeps broke open, and the clouds drop down the dew." In the midst of a larger literary unit which seeks to educate young men to make

[417] In the Bible, *pārāš* is often used to indicate a net —either spread out for fishing (Isa 19:8) or as a trap set by one's enemies (Psalm 140:5)—or a cloak, spread out in acts of protection (Ezek 16:8, Ruth 3:9) or deception (2 Sam 17:19).
[418] Goff, *4QInstruction*, 151. I have replaced Goff's Hebrew script with transliteration.

wise choices about quotidian matters such as money and sex, Proverbs locates the wisdom that they need to do so within the fabric of the created order. Similarly, in 4QInstruction, the mysteries of God's wisdom are both cosmological and moral. Just as God "spread out" the elements of creation, so deftly does God also divide the righteous deeds from the wicked ones. The wisdom inherent in such discernment is offered to the reader by means of the *rāz nihyeh*.[419]

4QInstruction unites traditional wisdom concerns about the creation of the cosmos with classic apocalyptic tropes about judgment, functioning in Goff's words as "a wisdom text with an apocalyptic worldview."[420] The apocalyptic worldview is made known not only in the references to final judgment—presented as "an ordained and established feature of the natural order"[421]—but also by this text's implication that "full understanding of creation is only available through supernatural revelation."[422] It is only if "the God of Knowledge" grants understanding of "opposing concepts, including truth and iniquity, wisdom and folly, and good and evil"[423]—and ultimately, the created order itself—then humankind can access these things. In other words, one cannot understand anything unless one understands everything. Ultimately, what is most striking about the relationship between the *rāz nihyeh* and the created order in 4Q417 is that "[o]ne can use the mystery that is to be to understand the natural order in a more comprehensive way

---

[419] This juxtaposition of images suggests that the difference between good and evil will be made apparent to the reader because the deity is both a "God of Knowledge" and a "*sôd* of truth." Though *sôd* can also mean "secret," here it is best translated as "foundation," as in Goff's translation: "…[f]or the God of Knowledge is a foundation (*sôd*) of truth. With the mystery that is to be (*rāz nihyeh*), he spread out (*pārāš*) its foundation and indeed m[ade (it) (*ʿāsā*) with wis]dom." The "foundation" which God "spreads out" is not a *sôd*, but rather, comes from the rather obscure Hebrew root *'ws*. Its feminine singular suffix most likely refers to the earlier reference to the "truth"[419] of which God is the *sôd*. Thus, in this portion of the text, two different Hebrew terms both mean "foundation"—the first in a moral sense and the second in a structural sense. God is a *sôd* in the sense that God is the source or the point of origin; the *'ws* indicates the most fundamental building block of the created order. It seems that this passage is making a connection between God's function as a source for truth with the place where that truth flourishes: namely, in the creative moment in which God, with wisdom, formed the cosmos itself.
[420] Goff, *4QInstruction,* 19.
[421] Goff, *4QInstruction*, 17.
[422] Goff, *4QInstruction*, 151.
[423] Goff, *4QInstruction*, 169.

because God used this mystery to create the world."[424] In this way, 4Q417 is a more esoteric version of Proverbs 3, which asserts that, since God used wisdom to create the cosmos, one can better understand the cosmos by becoming wise oneself. In Proverbs as well as 4QInstruction, those who are (or wish to be) wise are invited to "read" the wisdom which is divinely written into the fabric of the created order, and the knowledge they gain will preserve their lives.[425]

Hodayot. In the Hodayot, the hymnist frequently reflects on the "wonders" of creation, and associates mysteries with the act of creation itself, often using the term *rāz*.[426] Here, *rāz* is not imbued with the same specialized meaning as the *rāz nihyeh* of 4QInstruction. Rather, the *rāz* by which God creates has less to do with eschatological judgment or the division between good and evil and more to do with the orderliness inherent in God's created order, a feature that connects its use here with some of the apocalypses, especially 1 Enoch. Ultimately, the hymnist sees human knowledge of creation—and the resultant desire to praise God for it—as a divine gift for which no one can take credit. In the Hodayot, this ability to praise is part and parcel of its mystery.

In 1QH^{a} 9:7–20, the hymnist explores the significance of the created order as a reason to give praise to God. Like portions of 4QInstruction, this hodayah resonates with Proverbs 3:18: "The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens." The act of creation is closely linked with wisdom, uniting God's creative action with God's foreknowledge and perhaps even fore-ordinance of each natural, angelic, and human action:

---

[424] Matthew J. Goff, "The Mystery of Creation in 4QInstruction." *Dead Sea Discoveries* 10 (2003), 170.
[425] "Correct conduct in 4QInstruction is predicated on a correct understanding of creation. This knowledge is obtained through the mystery that is to be" (Goff, "The Mystery of Creation in 4QInstruction," 172).
[426] Thomas, *The "Mysteries" of Qumran,* 139.

> And in your wisdom […] eternity, and before you created them, you knew all their deeds for everlasting ages. And [without you no]thing is done, and nothing is known without your will. You formed every spirit, and [their] work [you determin]ed, and the judgment for all their deeds. You yourself stretched out the heavens for your glory, and all […] you [de]termined according to your will, and powerful spirits according to their laws, before they came to be ho[ly] angels [and…]*m* eternal spirits in their dominions: luminaries according to their mysteries, stars according to [their] paths, [stor]m [winds] according to their task, shooting stars and lightning according to their service, and storehouses devised for th[eir] purposes […} according to their mysteries. (9:9–15a) [427]

In this passage, it is not enough that God has created; what is praised is the fact that God has created with orderly intention. As Newsom writes, "What is celebrated is the ability to intend, to plan, to effect…. No activity stands outside the divine plan. Everything that happens is simply the making visible of the divine plan in which everything was already known. What marks the created world as the expression of the divine plan is its obedient and rule-ordered activity."[428] (This point, implicit in 1QH^{a} 9, is explicit in 1QS 3:14–15.) God's wisdom is invoked as the means by which God creates the seas, deeps, and their inhabitants, and how God ordered them. Even the "human spirit" was fashioned with their service having been "allotted" by God "throughout all generations" (9:17). In God's wisdom, God established human destiny: "And in the wisdom of your knowledge you determ[i]ned their des[t]iny before they existed. According to your wi[ll] everything [comes] to pass; and without you nothing is done" (9:21b–22). In the end, the hymnist explores God's wisdom in creation, and comes to the conclusion that all that ever was, is, or is to come is—by virtue of God's wisdom—exactly as it should have been, or should be. Like 4QInstruction, this Hodayot passage also includes time and history in its scope as part of what God ordered at the moment of creation: because of God's orderly work in history as well as nature, wisdom emerges; simultaneously, the hymnist's knowledge of such things is

[427] Newsom, *The Hodayot*, 29–30.
[428] Newsom, *The Self as Symbolic Space*, 224.

deemed a gift of revelation from God. Again, the "unified field theory" of knowledge is recommended to the reader.

In the Hodayot the revelation of knowledge is portrayed somewhat differently than in the apocalypses, in which revelation occurs as an objective statement of "what happens" or "how things work." In the Hodayot, instead, the experience of revelation is described from a more subjective perspective. For example, in the next section of the hymn, the speaker proclaims his own inadequacy as "a vessel of clay" who is "without understanding" (9:23–24). The only reason that the hymnist could deign to proclaim the mysteries above is because God has made them known: "What could I say that is not already known, or what could I declare that has not already been told?" (9:25). Newsom states that here, "the nullity of the self is experienced even in the performance of praise, an act that had earlier seemed to place the speaker in a privileged, powerful position. Note, however, that the confession of personal lack merges almost imperceptibly into a confession of divine fullness."[429] In the end, the hymnist gives God credit for creating breath, words, and "the fruit of the lips" (9:30)—and like every other element of the created order, these things have also been created in a measured manner. The language of measurement and design is expressed in parallel with the language of mystery, though in line 31, the hymnist seems to be using "mystery" in a new way:

> You yourself created breath for the tongue. You know its words, and you determine the fruit of the lips before they exist. You set the words to according to the measuring line and the utterance of the breath of the lips by measure. And you bring forth the lines according to their mysteries and the utterances of the breath according to their calculus, in order to make known your glory and to recount your wonders in all the deeds of your faithful deeds and your righteous j[ud]ge[ments], and to praise your name with the mouth of all who know you. According to their insight they bless you for ev[erlasti]ng ages. (1QH^{a} 9:29–33a)

[429] Newsom, *The Self as Symbolic Space*, 226.

Here, human speech qualifies as a "mystery" which is analogous to the mystery of the organization of creation in lines 7–20. For the hymnist, the mysteries of God are rooted in their very orderliness, predictability, and in some sense, knowability. But even the ability to know these things—and therefore to make utterances regarding them—is itself divine gift for which no one but God can take credit. As the hymnist stated earlier, nothing can be said which is not already known.[430]

Later on in the collection, 1QH[a] 20:14–17 makes another new kind of claim about mystery, though it too is rooted in divine (rather than human) agency:

> And I, the Instructor, I know you, my God, by the spirit that you have placed in me. Faithfully have I heeded your wondrous secret counsel. By your holy spirit you have [o]pened up knowledge within me through the mystery of your wisdom and the fountainhead of [your] pow[er…]*h* in the midst [of those who fear yo]u, for abundant kindness, but also a zeal for destruction and you have made an end…. (20:14b–17)

The hymnist—here self-identified as "the instructor"—has access to knowledge because of God's intervention. God placed the spirit inside the teacher, and by means of this spirit, the teacher has been given access to God's "wondrous secret counsel." By means of God's own holy spirit, God has worked through "the mystery of God's wisdom and the fountainhead of God's power" to "open up" within the sectarian the knowledge that he shares. In this Hodayah, the foundational cosmic mysteries include both the workings of the natural world and the unfolding of time and history. These are made accessible to the hymnist because God has chosen to reveal it; just as wisdom made creation possible, so too wisdom continues to aid human understanding of divine truth. Thus the knowledge of the mysteries of creation, as well as the mystery that is the gift of the ability to know anything at all, turn out to be part and parcel of the same wonder. The

---

[430] "…[t]he important thing is that the speaker's speech is recognized as being ordered, ruled, subject to design, just like the phenomena of the cosmos described in the earlier part of the composition. Only as the speaker rejects any claim of autonomous speech does his discourse receive value" (Newsom, *The Self as Symbolic Space*, 228).

unity of creation, which has elsewhere served to connect the mysteries of the natural world with the mystery of history and eschatology, here serves to connect both the object of knowledge and the subjective capacity to know. The unity of such knowledge is the deepest expression of what Jewish apocalyptic literature explored as "mystery."

List-making as Codification of Mystery in 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch

If the unity of knowledge at Qumran is the deepest divine mystery to which humans are granted access, then the atomization of this knowledge in 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch depicts humans as cut off from such mysteries, which are deemed inappropriate for their consideration. The very elements of the natural world that are featured as heavenly mysteries in the ascent apocalypses re-appear in these two books as "lists of revealed things," the phrase famously coined by Michael Stone in 1976, which he defined as "catalogues of the subject matter of apocalyptic speculation."[431] Not only do these catalogs feign comprehensiveness; they also feign revelation. In this way, the mysteries of nature—though present in 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch—are made as inaccessible to humankind as the "stolen mysteries" of 1 Enoch were meant to have been.

One of the paradigmatic lists examined by Stone is 2 Baruch 59. An orientation to its larger literary context is essential for understanding the list's significance. In 2 Baruch 54–76, an angel offers Baruch an interpretation of his prior vision, in which a divine cloud rains many-colored waters upon the earth, varying between "black" and "bright." Each of these waters represents a period in Israel's history, from the sin of the first human to the coming of the Messiah. Baruch's guiding angel, Remiel, explains that the fourth iteration of "bright waters" indicates "the advent of Moses and of Aaron and Miriam, and of Joshua son of Nun, and of

[431] Michael E. Stone, "Lists of Revealed Things in the Apocalyptic Literature," in *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright* (New York: Doubleday, 1976), 414.

Caleb, and of all those who are like them" (59:1). The waters are bright because of the "lamp of the eternal Torah" (59:2), which God revealed to Moses. The chapter then suggests that Moses himself was taken on a heavenly tour: "For he showed him many admonitions together with the rules of the laws and the consummation of time, as also to you, and also the likeness of Zion and its measurements that was to be made after the likeness of the present sanctuary" (59:4). The angel continues with an extensive list of what Moses was shown that mixes elements of the natural world with the naming of specific virtues and eschatological imagery:

> But then he also showed him the measurements of fire,
> also the depths of the abyss,
> the weight of the winds,
> the number of the raindrops,
> the suppression of anger,
> and the abundance of long-suffering,
> and the truth of judgment,
> and the root of wisdom,
> the riches of prudence,
> the spring of knowledge,
> and the height of the air,
> and the greatness of Paradise,
> and the consummation of the ages,
> and the beginning of the day of judgment,
> and the number of offerings,
> and the earths which have not yet come,
> and the mouth of Gehenna,
> the order of vengeance,
> and the place of faith,
> and the region of hope,
> and a model of the torment to come,
> and the multitude of innumerable angels,
> and the armies of flame,
> and the splendor of lightnings,
> and the sound of thunders,
> and the orders of the chiefs of the angels,
> and the reservoirs of light,
> and the changes of the times,
> and the investigations of the Torah.
> These are the fourth, bright waters that you saw. (2 Baruch 59:5–12)

Of the "twenty-nine phrases composed of nouns in a genitival relationship,"[432] roughly half correspond to elements of the natural world which are features of the heavenly tours given to Enoch, Abraham, Levi, and (apparently) Moses. The other half are eschatological or moral in nature, having to do with judgment, wisdom and its attributes, or the Torah itself—traditionally, the other way that Moses received divine revelation. That they are all lined together here suggests that 2 Baruch operates with a unified sense of the nature of reality in which physical, historical, moral, and eschatological phenomena are part of one fundamental truth. However, unlike the ascent apocalypses and the Scrolls examined above, this one truth is held at a distance from the seer's comprehension. For 2 Baruch, it is enough that the truth exists; to wish to comprehend it is human hubris.

Apart from the emphasis on Torah, 2 Baruch's list could serve as an outline for other apocalyptic ascents, especially those of 1 and 2 Enoch. Yet in 2 Baruch, the seer is several steps removed from the elements of such a journey. Unlike Moses to whom the revelation is attributed, Baruch does not see these wonders. Rather, he has a vision that points to them. He is not capable of understanding this vision and is reliant on Remiel to interpret its meaning; Remiel tells Baruch that his vision is a coded review of history. Embedded within Baruch's vision, and then again within this historical review, is a heavenly journey undertaken by Moses, someone other than the apocalyptic seer for whom 2 Baruch is named. This text is like a set of Russian nesting dolls or a many-layered onion: a great deal stands between Baruch and that which the angel ultimately reveals to him. Furthermore, the "list of revealed things" are here not the point of the vision. Rather, they are bookended (a literary boundary) by references to Torah (59:4 and 59:12), suggesting that Baruch need not—indeed, must not—himself investigate such matters. The only

[432] Stone, "Lists of Revealed Things in the Apocalyptic Literature," 415.

proper place for Baruch to look is to Torah itself, which reveals the totality of what humans are intended to seek. The Torah itself is the proper boundary around heavenly knowledge, the alpha and omega of what the sage needs to know.

Liv Lied has shown how 2 Baruch keeps Torah central to life after 70 CE.[433] Lied argues that 2 Baruch "takes sides in an ongoing debate of the first centuries CE as to the universality of the law and the validity of the Law outside the former Land. 2 Baruch disconnects the law from its geographical dependence…"[434] Writing in the aftermath of the destruction of Jerusalem, the author of 2 Baruch attempts to bring the resources of apocalyptic literature together with a commitment to the Torah as a way to ground the future of a community. Tellingly, the account of the revelations to Moses concludes an apparently comprehensive list of all knowledge with "the investigations of the Torah." In this catalog, knowledge of the natural world, moral knowledge, and historical/eschatological knowledge are all brought together. In 2 Baruch, therefore, knowledge of the natural world has little independent status as a source of knowledge about God. But neither is it insignificant. The unity of knowledge, which becomes increasingly important in Second Temple Judaism, is here focused on the figure of Moses and thus upon the role of Torah, but it takes up within it knowledge of the cosmos as an important ingredient. Perhaps this strategy is practical. The author of 2 Baruch does not allow his readers to wonder too long about the mysteries outside of their grasp, but neither does he allow them to get lost in the grief of theodicy. Rather, the earth-bound scribe wants readers to stay "grounded" in Torah, the one legitimate link to both the primordial past and any future hope of vindication.

Similarly to 2 Baruch, in 4 Ezra a "list of revealed things" emerges in the midst of Ezra's dispute with the angel Uriel about theodicy and suffering. The setting of 4 Ezra is not unlike that

---

[433] Liv Ingeborg Lied, *The Other Lands of Israel: Imaginations of the Land in 2 Baruch* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 133.
[434] Lied, *The Other Lands of Israel*, 134.

of 2 Baruch in that it addresses the conditions after the Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish revolt in 70 CE. Thus the question of interest to this dissertation is how the phenomena of nature will figure in the ways in which this author attempts to negotiate the enigma of the destruction of the Jewish nation by pagan Rome. In 4 Ezra 3, the seer challenges the deity: "Now, therefore, weigh in a balance our iniquities and those of the inhabitants of the world … When have the inhabitants of the earth not sinned in thy sight? Or what nation has kept they commandments so well? Thou mayest indeed find individual men who have kept they commandments, but nations thou wilt not find" (3:34a, 35–36). Ezra seeks divine justification for the destruction of the temple, and in response, Uriel challenges Ezra to a riddle. "I have been sent to show you three problems," Uriel says. "If you can solve one of them for me, I also will show you the way you desire to see, and will teach you why the heart is evil" (4:3b). The dialogue continues:

> I said, "Speak on, my lord." And he said to me, "Go, weigh for me the weight of fire, or measure for me a measure of wind, or call back for me the day that is past." I answered and said, "Who of those that have been born can do this, that you ask me concerning these things?" And he said to me, "If I had asked you, 'How many dwellings are in the heart of the sea, or how many springs are at the source of the deep, or how many ways are above the firmament, or which are the exists of hell, or which are the entrances of paradise?' perhaps you would have said to me, 'I never went down into the deep, nor as yet did I descend into hell, nor did I ever ascend into heaven, nor did I enter Paradise.' But now I have asked you only about fire and wind and the day, things through which you have passed and without which you cannot exist, and you have given me no answer about them!" And he said to me, "You cannot understand the things with which you have grown up; how then can your vessel comprehend the way of the Most High? For the way of the Most High is created immensurable. And how can one who is corrupt in the corrupt world understand the way of the incorruptible" When I heard this, I fell on my face. (4 Ezra 4:5–11)

Unlike 2 Baruch 59, this text is a dispute, not a vision interpretation; in addition, it is a list of things "too wonderful" for human consideration, rather than a list of things revealed to Moses and conveyed to the rest of humankind only through Torah. Yet 2 Baruch 59 and 4 Ezra 4 both

refer to several of the same natural phenomena: fire, winds, the deep, and the places related to judgment. 4 Ezra 5 continues mapping the limits of human knowledge with more language similar to that of 2 Baruch:

> Count up for me those who have not yet come, and gather for me the scattered raindrops, and make the withered flowers bloom again for me; open for me the closed treasuries, and bring for me the winds, shut up in them, or show me the appearance of him whom you have never seen, or show me a picture of a voice; and then I will explain to you the travail that you seek to understand. (4 Ezra 5:36–37)

Both 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch are troping on the Joban conviction that cosmic mysteries are beyond the ken of human knowledge or capacity. 4 Ezra resembles Job more than 2 Baruch, in that its "lists of revealed things" are challenges to the seer's incessant questioning. However, in both cases, the apocalyptic lists are more formulaic than the Joban divine speeches. In Job, the poetic depiction of God's exhaustive knowledge of the created order is evocative and expansive. Though the length of God's speeches does overwhelm the human reader, and some of the passages resemble lists of divine knowledge, God spends considerable time describing in detail such pinnacles of the created order as Leviathan and Behemoth. Such detailed descriptions are absent from 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra. Also, when compared with the ascent apocalypses, these two books seem to obscure knowledge for the reader. Especially in 2 Baruch, but also in 4 Ezra, the angel serves as a kind of anti-tour-guide, turning the seer away from looking too deeply at the mysteries. Not only do Baruch and Ezra stay grounded on earth, far from the heavenly realm, but even their questions about cosmic mysteries are answered only in the reductive short-hand of apocalyptic list-making. True, in Job, God's rhetorical questions do, by their very genre, also serve to conceal—but they conceal differently than lists do. God's rhetorical questions double as poetic images which, almost in spite of divine intention, do serve to reveal something of the knowledge that God suggests is beyond Job's ken. On the other hand, the lists in Ezra and

Baruch point toward a category of knowledge that is forbidden, a rhetorical move that mirrors Ben Sira's admonition that "what is hidden is not your concern" (3:22). In summing up and thereby codifying this mysterious knowledge, the scribes feign completion and forbid further questioning. The eyes of the reader are pointed toward a locked door, inscribed with a manifest listing its contents.

Conclusions

At the beginning of this chapter, I laid out several continua along which Second Temple literature can be placed, and claimed that two of these continua are relevant for this chapter: first, the continuum of agency and determinacy, and second, the continuum of secrecy and revelation. As the earliest text considered in this chapter, Job portrays the natural world as having both ample agency and considerable secrecy, but its portrayal does not rest at the extreme end of either continua. The divine speeches reveal a world in which chaos is permitted; to some extent, nature exists within its own bounds, without divine or human order limiting its activities. Nevertheless, the basic foundation of creation, grounded in architectural imagery, suggests an underlying orderliness. Although God shows respect to Job by answering him, the force of the rhetorical questions is to present the natural world as inscrutable to Job, and thus his status is lowered. His inability to know marks his inferiority to God. If any text stands as the antithesis of Job, it is 2 Enoch, where the seer is seated next to God and is offered access to heavenly secrets —indeed, secrets that are withheld even from the angels. Since so little is known about the social location of 2 Enoch, it is difficult to say why this text might elevate the status of a human in relation to heavenly knowledge of the secrets of the cosmos. But in its extravagant claims, it does seem to position itself in conscious contrast to those texts that minimize the human ability to

understand. Perhaps it is not accidental that in 2 Enoch the natural world is presented non-agentially, simply as a collection of instruments manipulated by God and angelic beings as a part of maintaining divine cosmic order.

Chronologically, after Job, the next texts at hand are the early Enoch materials. The *Book of the Luminaries* portrays the natural world as fully revealed to Enoch the seer, but not agential. Perhaps this is what makes the natural world "safe" for revelation: its predictability and orderliness are taken for granted and assumed to be "scientific." The *Book of the Watchers* strikes a somewhat uneasy balance when it comes to agency and secrecy. The natural world is not agential in and of itself, but at least some of its mysteries are intended to be kept secret. Their unauthorized disclosure to people represents a serious breach. Once again, humans are defined as lacking in knowledge. The acquisition of knowledge deemed off-limits to them is framed as a transgression both on the part of those who disclose and those who receive.

In the latter part of the *Book of the Watchers* (chaps. 17–36) rather different elements of the natural world are presented as less secret, insofar as they are revealed fully to Enoch and therefore to the reader. The aspects of knowledge revealed to Enoch are less related to technology than those revealed earlier by the rebellious angels; instead, the elements of nature Enoch encounters testify to the power of God the creator. They also, significantly, focus on aspects of reality that exist at the very boundaries of creation: the "ends of the earth," the places where heaven and earth meet, and so forth. In this way, even as these heavenly mysteries elevate the status of Enoch who is shown the fact of their existence, they also serve to elevate even more the status of the creator who has established and controls them. When the *Book of Parables* re-tells the story of Enoch's heavenly journeys, the secrecy and hiddenness of what he observes is

emphasized far more than it is in the *Book of the Watchers*; therefore, Enoch's status is elevated too, though not nearly so high as in 2 Enoch.

In a number of the texts, knowledge of natural phenomena and knowledge of moral, historical, and/or eschatological events are drawn together. Both the Testament of Levi and the Apocalypse of Abraham unite cosmic observation with historical and eschatological concerns, arguably valuing knowledge of the natural world primarily insofar as it helps the reader comprehend the scope of history and the coming eschatological horizon. Some of the Scrolls are more egalitarian in their presentation of a unity of knowledge, with cosmic and moral concerns sharing more equal weight. One sees this in particular in the mysteries of creation as portrayed in the Hodayot and especially in the *raz nihyeh* ("the mystery of what was, is, and is to be") in 4QInstruction. Not surprisingly, given this more deterministic view of reality, mysteries are accessible only because God has gifted the speaker with insight, and the agency of the natural world is not really of concern to the writers.

The particular historical context of 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch, in the aftermath of the Roman destruction of Jerusalem, influences how they frame an understanding of nature and human access to it. Ezra's difficult questions about theodicy are deflected in part by the angel's challenge to the seer about his inability to understand natural phenomena. The strategy is evocative of God's deflection of Job's challenges. Second Baruch takes a different approach—namely, the mysteries of nature are explicitly described as part of God's ancient revelation to Moses. Because natural world mysteries are merely one part of the "torah" revealed to Moses, presumably, all of the inquiries that humans should seek to make, on whatever subject, would find their resolution through the study of Torah. Therefore, the seers are rebuked and rebuffed when they inquire about the matters of cosmic import by other means.

There is no simple chronological or even typological account to be given of the diversity of the ways in which nature as mystery is represented in these texts. Where, therefore, does this leave the reader of these texts? More importantly, where does it leave nature? When compared with the other literature explored here, 1 Enoch is rivaled perhaps only (and ironically) by Job in the details about natural world mysteries that each is ultimately willing to reveal. Whether or not modern readers find either book satisfying, each is attempting to resolve a question about theodicy, at least in part by offering the reader information about the natural world. In Job, nature may arguably serve as evidence that a measure of non-purposive conflict and even chaos is compatible with divine governance. In 1 Enoch, the natural world seems rather to serve as evidence that, even though rebellious elements may sow conflict, the underlying order evident in creation itself (including places for the punishment of disorder) indicates divine control. Thus, unlike the subject matter of the divine speeches in Job, much of what Enoch witnesses and describes is geographic: the natural world in its context as "scenery" for primordial or eschatological events, or the cosmos as a series of inaccessible and therefore mysterious "places" where important aspects of history have occurred or will unfold, like Eden, Gehenna, the mountain where God judges humankind, and the heavenly prisons for errant stars.

Though no aspect of 1 Enoch's portrayal of the natural world is entirely unique, the particular combination of its depictions results in an especially rich (and potentially singular) portrayal of the natural world among extant Second Temple Jewish writings. Ultimately, the relationship between licit and illicit revelation has to do with the persons who convey the secret knowledge, and their credentials and commissioning. Heavenly mysteries are licitly shared by intermediaries who are called and chosen, and who are trustworthy to act, like the natural world,

within God's plans.[435] Commissioned apocalyptic figures thus serve to authorize scribal speculation—this applies to the heavenly mysteries revealed in both the *Book of the Watchers* and the seven chapters which the *Book of the Luminaries* devotes to detailed astronomical, uranographical, and cosmological observations. Enoch, as a character and a literary device, serves to substantiate the astronomical, meteorological, and theological speculation contained in the book as a whole. His identity authorizes him to be the unique recipient of cosmic mysteries and its commissioned vessel, passing it along to humankind in a way which is in harmony with the cosmic order. Through Enoch, that which is not intended for normal human observation is made readily available to all readers. *The Epistle of Enoch* asks:

> For who is there of all men who is able to look at all the works of heaven? .... Or to see a soul and spirit and is able to tell? Or to ascend and see all their ends, and to consider them or make (something) like them? Or who is there of all men who is able to know what is the width and length of the earth; and to whom has the size of all them been shown? And who is there of all men who is able to know the length of the heavens, and what is their height and upon what they are founded? And what is the number of stars, and where all the luminaries rest? (93:11b-14)

Does such a person exist? 1 Enoch is especially optimistic in its answer. In that book Enoch remains a human being—he is no way deified—and yet he is commissioned to see, to know, and to communicate mysteries things to fellow humans. Indeed, he is commissioned to see, to know, and to communicate *everything*. In no other work is the search for heavenly knowledge so broadly authorized and the appropriateness of the observation of heavenly mysteries so unquestioned: Enoch is actually commanded to share all he has learned with those who dwell upon the earth. "Pure" speculation may have been suspect in the cultural milieu in which Enochic scribes penned the *Book of the Watchers* and the *Book of the Luminaries*. However, if

[435] "Regular" human beings without apocalyptic callings are also permitted to learn about the natural world either through a commissioned source or by means of their own (earthly) observations, vis-a-vis the five senses. 1 Enoch 2–5 is an exemplary passage in terms of the goodness of human observation of the natural world and its inherent instructiveness.

such speculation could be grounded in observation—as it is in 1 Enoch—and if that observation is portrayed as the result of gift rather than theft, then speculation seems to have been pruned of its danger, or at the very least, its presumption. Knowledge previously inaccessible is thus made available and authenticated by Enoch the eyewitness, and, therefore, it becomes knowledge licit for human consideration.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

The story of a dissertation is also necessarily the story of its writer. When examining these texts as a modern reader, I carry assumptions about nature that are foreign to the ancient scribes who wrote, collected, edited, and preserved them. When I began this project, my interest was piqued by the way an exploration of the natural world in early Jewish apocalyptic literature had the potential to de-stabilize "cosmic catastrophe" as the most popular image for the natural world within the genre. In the contemporary imagination, the very term "apocalyptic" conjures up scenes of nature collapsing in a dramatic fashion, and much of this destructive imagery is drawn from the distinctive way nature figures in the book of Revelation. Insofar as the modern world is one in which some readers imbue Revelation with a kind of authority that they deny 1 Enoch, my wish to relativize "cosmic catastrophe" as one image for nature among many remains relevant. But as my research grew, I found a better guiding question: "How can one read ancient religious texts without later canonical boundaries impinging upon the questions one brings to them?" This is one of the methodological questions at the heart of this project, and it was inspired by Eva Mroczek's work on literary imagination.[436] Mroczek writes that even as contemporary scholars "laud the vibrancy of nonbiblical traditions," on the whole "the Bible still sets the agenda for the questions we ask"—this in spite of the fact that the ideas of "book" and "Bible" are anachronistic when applied to Second Temple textual artifacts and traditions.[437] Mroczek's concerns about anachronism resonate with this project, in part because I endeavor to read "biblical" and "non-biblical" traditions on equal terms, and also because I rely on another anachronistic category:

---

[436] Eva Mroczek, *The Literary Imagination in Jewish Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).
[437] Mroczek, *The Literary Imagination*, 4.

nature. In this dissertation, the meta-category, nature, is modern and etic. The sub-categories, I argue, are emic to Second Temple material: model, sign, punishment, witness, mystery. Though the category of "nature" as a bounded entity would be nonsensical in a Second Temple context, I have claimed it as an etic category which I bring to this body of literature.

The work of this dissertation helps to illumine the place that scientific speculation about the natural world, as well as literary portrayals of nature, may have held in the moral and theological imaginations of the early Jewish and Christian communities that embraced these texts. In the course of my research, I have concluded that all of these depictions are rooted in nature's fundamental identity as God's orderly creation. When construed as a model for human righteousness, the natural world is often (but not always) imbued with a significant measure of agency. As a model, nature's orderliness communicates that it is functioning according to divine intention; in some Second Temple texts, such reliability is presented as a decision to be obedient, and in others, it the defining characteristic of nature as a signpost for recurring events. When categorized as a wonder or an omen, it is the natural world's departure from its expected orderly behavior which is (usually) meant to warn humans of impending judgment or to inaugurate that judgment; thus, it is *both* when nature behaves as expected *and* when its behavior is unexpected that humans are meant to learn from it. The natural world participates in humankind's judgment as an instrument of punishment and (occasionally) as a witness; it is "qualified" to do so because of its identity as humankind's reliable and orderly exemplar.[438] Finally, when characterized as a mystery, nature seems inaccessible—and yet, vis-à-vis the heavenly journeys of apocalyptic visionaries, the workings of the natural world are presented in vivid, careful detail. Even 2

[438] In 1 Enoch 2–5, humankind is adjured to observe and imitate the natural world. How appropriate, then, that at the final judgment, it is revealed that the natural world has been observing humankind all along. Just as God's will for human living can be discerned by watching the actions of the natural order, so too the fate of humanity is plain to see for all who can and do observe.

Baruch and 4 Ezra, books that insist that the mysteries of the natural world are hidden from humans, catalog these mysteries in list form, suggesting that the natural world, though inaccessible, is nonetheless exemplary in its orderliness.

The categories nature occupies in the Second Temple period are thus woven together by a common scribal assumption of nature's inherent character as orderly and even obedient. However, in other ways, Second Temple portrayals of the natural world are stunning in their diversity. In this dissertation I have attempted to map that diversity. Perhaps the most notable point of divergence is the question of agency. In Second Temple texts, the natural world is consistently presented as abiding by the divine will—however, sometimes such behavior is presented as a choice, while at other times, nature functions more mechanically or instrumentally. What difference does it make if nature does or does not have a choice? Broadly speaking, scribes who grant some measure of agency to the natural world are also more comfortable presenting a complex view of human agency and a less deterministic view of history writ large. Such books also generally disclose at least some cosmic mysteries to their readers. First Enoch is a prime example, especially when compared with 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra, in which mysteries are inaccessible and human agency is curtailed. Even the agency of Baruch and Ezra as seers is limited to the earthly (Joban) task of asking questions and hearing speeches in reply; Baruch and Ezra do not themselves directly witness the contents of the heavenly realm.

Much like the apocalyptic figures who take the reader on heavenly journeys, nature is also presented as a mediating force in Second Temple literature. Depending on the text, nature mediates different things to humankind, all of which can be roughly categorized under the umbrella of "revelation." Nature can mediate instructions to humans about righteousness or repentance; information about how the cosmos works; reports on human behavior to the

heavenly courtroom; the verdict of judgment to waiting human souls. Nature can also mediate a sense of the numinous sublime. Like apocalyptic intermediaries, nature was simultaneously present and absent for scribe and reader. The act of writing mediated knowledge about nature, and yet, there were always boundaries around that knowledge. Inquiry into the workings of the cosmos was therefore never complete. Enoch might be said to know everything (1 En 79:1), and some among the scribes and readers might have had confidence that in preserving or reading his works, they would be equally enlightened.[439] But even if the reader was confident that Enoch saw all, remembered all, and accurately recorded all, there is a difference between reading about revelation and being the recipient of it. Even in Second Temple texts which are more generous in their anthropologies—confident of the human capacity to seek and attain divine knowledge—the apocalyptic seer himself constitutes a mediating force and therefore a boundary around it. In Second Temple literature as a whole, knowledge of the natural world is simultaneously present and absent, accessible and inaccessible, predictable yet surprising.

By bringing the modern category of "nature" in conversation with ancient texts, I have attempted to engage ancient Jewish imaginations in ways that resonate with modern concerns about ecology, anthropology, and ethics—resonations that would be fruitful areas for further research. But before one can read ancient texts in light of modern concerns, one must comprehend the significance of these texts in their pre-biblical, pre-canonical context. This dissertation can be seen as a laboratory in which I have tried to explore ancient texts in the way

[439] Notably, in 1 Enoch 70–71, Enoch is the only human portrayed as measuring up to the good examples set by the natural world in the collection's opening chapters. Here, it is Enoch's path that humans are adjured to emulate. "All the secrets" (71:3) are revealed to Enoch as he witnesses the nature-laden heavenly temple, throne room, and even the Head of Days. Enoch's return to earth will inaugurate an idealized age. In this text, Enoch is exceptional *while also being* exemplary; though he is a model to be emulated, he is less accessible a model than the natural world of 1 En 2–5, just as the knowledge he gains is less accessible than the knowledge gained by ordinary human observation.

that Mroczek advises (see above). As Mroczek writes, one must do one's best—knowing that objectivity is impossible—to uncouple one's imagination from the even the most basic modern category like "Bible" and "book."[440] Instead, one must look to the literature itself to see how ancient writers conceived of and portrayed their own writing processes. Did Second Temple scribes use ideas scholars now consider "biblical"? Certainly—but Second Temple writers called upon all of the resources at their disposal: texts and traditions, both Jewish and non-Jewish; both "biblical" and otherwise; both religious and "scientific."

Ultimately, in this dissertation I seek to explore the ways in which the natural world, as portrayed in Jewish Second Temple literature, provides access to the literature's own most urgent questions. What does nature, in Second Temple garb, reveal about the ideas that motivated the production of the literature in the first place? In 2 Baruch 48:5, the seer says of God: "You investigate the end of the heights, and you scrutinize the depths of darkness." God's activity functions as a mirror for the desires of the Second Temple scribes who, by writing, editing, and preserving these traditions, sought to investigate and scrutinize the entirety of the cosmos—or at least the portion that proved accessible to humankind and licit for observation. Naturally, scribes disagreed on what constitutes the proper boundaries around such knowledge. However, they seem to agree about the exemplary character of what modern people call nature. In spite of the diversity apparent in this literature, in general the scribes assume the following: the natural world is orderly, and therefore praiseworthy; the natural world is predictable, and therefore any aberrations in its behavior require interpretation; the natural world is a mystery, and yet, within given boundaries, its secrets might be approached, though they may not always be fathomed.

---

[440] Mroczek, *The Literary Imagination in Jewish Antiquity*, 4–5.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abusch, Tsvi, and Karel van der Toorn, eds. *Mesopotamian Magic: Textual, Historical, and Interpretative Perspective.* Leiden: Brill, 2000.

Adams, Edward. *The Stars Will Fall from Heaven: "Cosmic Catastrophe" in the New Testament and Its World*. London: T&T Clark, 2007.

Albani, Matthias. *Astronomie und Schöpfungsglaube: Untersuchungen zum astronomischen Henochbuch*. Neukirchener: Neukirchener Verlag, 1994.

Alexander, Philip S. "Enoch and the Beginnings of Jewish Interest in Natural Science." Pages 223–243 in *The Wisdom Texts from Qumran and the Development of Sapiential Thought*. Edited by C. Hempel, A. Lange, and H. Lichtenberger. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002.

——. "From Son of Adam to Second God." Pages 87–122 in *Biblical Figures Outside the Bible*. Edited by Michael E. Stone and Theodore E. Bergren. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity, 2002.

——. "Physiognomy, Initiation, and Rank in the Qumran Community." Pages 385–401 in *Geschichte – Tradition – Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag*. Edited by Hubert Cancik, Hermann Lichtenberger, and Peter Schäfer**.** Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996.

Alexander, Philip S., and Geza Vermes. *Qumran Cave 4: Serekh Ha-Yahad and Related Texts*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1998.

Allison, Dale C. *Testament of Abraham*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003.

Angel, Joseph L. "The Divine Courtroom Scenes of Daniel 7 and the Qumran Book of Giants: A Textual and Contextual Comparison." Pages 25–48 in *The Divine Courtroom in Comparative Perspective*. Edited by Ari Mermelstein and Shalom E. Holtz. Leiden: Brill, 2014.

——. "Reading the Book of Giants in Literary and Historical Context." *DSD* 21.3 (2014): 313–46.

Annus, Amar. "On the Origin of Watchers: A Comparative Study of the Antediluvian Wisdom in Mesopotamian and Jewish Traditions." *JSP* 19.4, (2010): 277–320.

Argall, Randal A. *1 Enoch and Sirach: A Comparative and Conceptual Analysis of the Themes of Revelation, Creation and Judgment*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 1995.

Atkinson, Kenneth. *I Cried to the Lord: A Study of the Psalms of Solomon's Historical Background and Social Setting*. Leiden: Brill, 2004.

——. “Theodicy in the Psalms of Solomon.” Pages 546–575 in *Theodicy in the World of the Bible*. Edited by Antti Laato and Johannes C. De Moor. Leiden: Brill, 2003.

——. “Toward a Redating of the Psalms of Solomon: Implications for Understanding the Sitz im Leben of an Unknown Jewish Sect.” *JSP* 9.17 (1998): 95–112.

Aune, David E. *Apocalypticism, Prophecy, and Magic in Early Christianity: Collected Essays*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.

Bachmann, Veronika. “Rooted in Paradise? The Meaning of the ‘Tree of Life’ in 1 Enoch 24–25 Reconsidered.” *JSP* 19.2 (2009): 83–107.

Bakke, Odd Magne. *“Concord and Peace”: A Rhetorical Analysis of the First Letter of Clement with an Emphasis on the Language of Unity and Sedition*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001.

Bauckham, Richard. *The Fate of the Dead: Studies on the Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2008.

Bauckham, Richard, James Davila, and Alex Panayotov, eds. *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013.

Bautch, Kelley Coblentz. “The Heavenly Temple, the Prison in the Void, and the Uninhabited Paradise: Otherworldly Sites in the Book of the Watchers.” Pages 37–53 in *Other Worlds and Their Relation to This World: Early Jewish and Ancient Christian Traditions*. Edited by E. M. M. Eynikel, Tobias Nicklas, Joseph Verheyden, and Florentino Garcia Martinez. Leiden: Brill, 2010.

——. *A Study of the Geography of 1 Enoch 17–19: “No One Has Seen What I Have Seen.”* Leiden: Brill, 2003.

——. “What Becomes of the Angels’ ‘Wives’? A Text-Critical Study of 1 Enoch 19: 2.” *JBL* 125.4 (2006): 766–80.

Baynes, Leslie. *The Heavenly Book Motif in Judeo-Christian Apocalypses 200 BCE–200 CE*. Leiden: Brill, 2011.

Beentjes, Pancratius C. *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew: A Text Edition of All Extant Hebrew Manuscripts and a Synopsis of All Parallel Hebrew Ben Sira Texts*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2006.

——. *Happy the One Who Meditates on Wisdom (Sir. 14,20): Collected Essays on the Book of Ben Sira*. Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2006.

Ben Yosef, I. A. “The Concept of Nature in Classical Judaism.” *Theoria* 71 (1988): 47–59.

Ben Zvi, Ehud, and Christoph Levin. *Thinking of Water in the Early Second Temple Period*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014.

Ben-Dov, Jonathan. *Head of All Years: Astronomy and Calendars at Qumran in their Ancient Context*. Leiden: Brill, 2008.

——. "Tradition and Innovation in the Calendar of Jubilees." Pages 276–293 in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees*. Edited by Gabriele Boccaccini, Giovanni Ibba, Jason von Ehrenkrook, James Alan Waddell, and Jason Zurawski. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.

Ben-Dov, Jonathan, and Seth Sanders, eds. *Ancient Jewish Sciences and the History of Knowledge in Second Temple Literature.* New York: NYU Press, 2014.

Bergsma, John S. "The Relationship Between Jubilees and the Early Enochic Books (Astronomical Book and Book of the Watchers)." Pages 36–51 in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees*. Edited by Gabriele Boccaccini, Giovanni Ibba, Jason von Ehrenkrook, James Alan Waddell, and Jason Zurawski. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.

Bhayro, Siam. *The Shemihazah and Asael Narrative of 1 Enoch 6–11: Introduction, Text, Translation and Commentary with Reference to Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Antecedents*. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2005.

Bickerman, Elias Joseph. *The Jews in the Greek Age*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988.

Black, Matthew, James C. VanderKam, and Otto Neugebauer. *The Book of Enoch or I Enoch: A New English Edition: With Commentary and Textual Notes*. Leiden: Brill, 1997.

Boadt, Lawrence, and Mark S. Smith. *Imagery and Imagination in Biblical Literature: Essays in Honor of Aloysius Fitzgerald, F. S. C.* Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2001.

Boccaccini, Gabriele, ed. *Enoch and the Messiah Son of Man: Revisiting the Book of Parables.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.

Boccaccini, Gabriele, and John J. Collins, eds. *The Early Enoch Literature.* Leiden: Brill, 2007.

Bock, Darrell L. "Dating the Parables of Enoch: A Forschungsbericht." Pages 58–113 in *Parables of Enoch: A Paradigm Shift.* Edited by James H. Charlesworth and Darrell L. Bock. London: Bloomsbury, 2013.

Bockmuehl, Markus. *Revelation and Mystery in Ancient Judaism and Pauline Christianity*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1990.

——. “Natural Law in Second Temple Judaism.” *VT* 45.1 (1995): 17–44.

Bons, Eberhard. “Philosophical Vocabulary in the Psalms of Solomon: The Case of Ps. Sol. 9:4.” Pages 49–58 in *The Psalms of Solomon: Language, History, Theology*, edited by Eberhard Bons and Patrick Pouchelle. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015.

Boyarin, Daniel. “Daniel 7, Intertextuality, and the History of Israel’s Cult.” *HTR* 105.2 (2012): 139–162.

Boyce, Mary. *A History of Zoroastrianism: The Early Period*. Leiden: Brill, 1996.

Braaten, Laurie J. “Earth Community in Joel 1–2: A Call to Identify with the Rest of Creation.” *HBT* 28.2 (2006): 113–29.

Brand, Miryam. *Evil Within and Without: The Source of Sin and Its Nature as Portrayed in Second Temple Literature*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013.

Brettler, Marc Zvi. “Images of YHWH the Warrior in Psalms.” *Semeia* 61 (1993): 135–161.

Broadie, A., and J. Macdonald. “The Concept of Cosmic Order in Ancient Egypt in Dynastic and Roman Times.” *L’Antiquite Classique* 47.1 (1978): 106–28.

Brooke, George J. *Jewish Ways of Reading the Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Brown, Raymond E. “The Pre-Christian Semitic Concept of ‘Mystery’.” *CBQ* 20.4 (1958): 417–443.

Brown, William P. *The Seven Pillars of Creation: The Bible, Science, and the Ecology of Wonder*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

——. *Structure, Role, and Ideology in the Hebrew and Greek Texts of Genesis 1:1–2:3*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993.

Buccellati, Giorgio. “Wisdom and Not: The Case of Mesopotamia.” *JAOS* 101.1 (1981): 35–47.

Buitenwerf, Rieuwerd. *Book Three of the Sibylline Oracles and its Social Setting*. Leiden: Brill, 2003.

Burkes, Shannon. “Wisdom and Apocalypticism in the Wisdom of Solomon.” *HTR* 95.01 (2002): 21–44.

Bury, R. G., trans. *Plato’s Timaeus; Critias; Cleitophon; Menexenus; Epistles*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981.

Cadwallader, Alan H., ed. *Where the Wild Ox Roams: Biblical Essays in Honour of Norman C. Habel*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2013.

Carey, Greg. *Ultimate Things: An Introduction to Jewish and Christian Apocalyptic Literature*. Atlanta: Chalice, 2005.

Charles, Robert Henry. *The Book of Enoch: 1 Enoch Translated from the Editor's Ethiopic Text.* Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2011.

——. *Eschatology, the Doctrine of a Future Life in Israel, Judaism, and Christianity: A Critical History.* New York: Schocken Books, 1963.

Charlesworth, James H. "Jewish Astrology in the Talmud, Pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Early Palestinian Synagogues." *HTR* 70.3–4 (1977): 183–200.

Charlesworth, James H., ed. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Vol. 1: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983.

——. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Vol. 2: Expansions of the Old Testament and Legends, Wisdom and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms, and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985.

Chazon, Esther G. "Prayer and Identity in Varying Contexts: The Case of the Words of the Luminaries." *JSJ* 46.4–5 (2015): 484–511.

Chazon, Esther G., Michael E. Stone, and Avital Pinnick, eds. *Pseudepigraphic Perspectives: The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Proceedings of the International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature.* Leiden: Brill, 1999.

Christensen, Duane L. *Deuteronomy 21:10–34:12.* Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2002.

Cohn, Norman. *Cosmos, Chaos, and the World to Come: The Ancient Roots of Apocalyptic Faith*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.

Collins, John J. *Apocalypse, Prophecy, and Pseudepigraphy: On Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015.

——. *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016.

——. "Cosmos and Salvation: Jewish Wisdom and Apocalyptic in the Hellenistic Age." *History of Religions* 17.2 (1977): 121–42.

——. *Daniel*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993.

——. "How Distinctive Was Enochic Judaism?" *Meghillot: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls* 5–6 (2008): 17–34.

——. *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*. Minneapolis: John Knox, 1997.

——. *The Sibylline Oracles of Egyptian Judaism*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1972.

——. "The Third Sybil Revisited." Pages 3–19 in *Things Revealed: Studies in Early Jewish and Christian Literature in Honor of Michael E. Stone*. Edited by Edward Chazon, Esther Glickler, David Satran, and Ruth A. Clements. Leiden: Brill, 2004.

Collins, John J., ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Collins, John J. and George W. E. Nickelsburg, eds. *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism: Profiles and Paradigms*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1980.

Corley, Jeremy. "A Numerical Structure in Sirach 44:1–50:24." *CBQ* 69.1 (2007): 43–63.

——. *Sirach*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012.

Cornell, Collin Robinson. "God and the Sea in Job 38." *JHebS* 12 (2012): 1–15.

Croatto, J. Severino. "Reading the Pentateuch as a Counter-Text." Pages 383–400 in *Congress Volume: Leiden 2004*. Edited by André Lemaire. Leiden: Brill, 2006.

Daise, Michael A. "Biblical Creation Motifs in the Qumran Hodayot." Pages 293–305 in *The Dead Sea Scrolls Fifty Years After Their Discovery*. Edited by Emanuel Tov, Lawrence H. Schiffman, and James C. VanderKam. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society and the Shrine of the Book, 1997.

Dalley, Stephanie, trans. *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Davidson, Maxwell. *Angels at Qumran: A Comparative Study of 1 Enoch 1-36; 72-108 and Sectarian Writings from Qumran*. London: T&T Clark, 1992.

Davila, James R. "The Animal Apocalypse and Daniel." Pages 31–48 in *Enoch and Qumran Origins: New Light on a Forgotten Connection*. Edited by Gabriele Boccaccini. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.

de Bruin, Tom. *The Great Controversy: The Individual's Struggle Between Good and Evil in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and in their Jewish and Christian Contexts*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015.

de Jonge, Marinus. *Jewish Eschatology, Early Christian Christology and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: Collected Essays*. Leiden: Brill, 1990.

——. *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament as Part of Christian Literature: The Case of the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs and the Greek Life of Adam and Eve*. Leiden: Brill, 2003.

——. *Studies on the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. Leiden: Brill, 1975.

——. "The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and Related Qumran Fragments." Pages 63–77 in *For a Later Generation: The Transformation of Tradition in Israel, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity*. Edited by Randal A. Argall, Beverly Bow, and Rodney Werline. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity, 2000.

——. *De toekomstverwachting in de Psalmen van Salomo*. Leiden: Brill, 1965.

de Jonge, Marinus, H. W. de Hollander, H. J. De Jonge, and T. Korteweg. *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Critical Edition of the Greek Text*. Leiden: Brill, 1997.

de Troyer, Kristen, Armin Lange, and Lucas Schulte, eds. *Prophecy After the Prophets?: The Contribution of the Dead Sea Scrolls to the Understanding of Biblical and Extra-Biblical Prophecy.* Leuven: Peeters, 2009.

De Villiers, P. G. R. "Revealing the Secrets: Wisdom and the World in the Similitudes of Enoch." *Neot* 17 (1983): 50–68.

Dean-Otting, Mary. *Heavenly Journeys: A Study of the Motif in Hellenistic Jewish Literature*. Frankfurt: Lang, 1984.

DeConick, April D., ed. *Paradise Now: Essays on Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism.* Atlanta: SBL Press, 2006.

Dever, William G., and Seymour Gitin, eds. *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and Their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age Through Roman Palaestina.* Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003.

Dick, Michael B. "The Neo-Assyrian Royal Lion Hunt and Yahweh's Answer to Job." *JBL* 125.2 (2006): 243–270.

Doak, Brian. *Consider Leviathan: Narratives of Nature and the Self in Job*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2014.

Dobos, Károly Dániel, and Miklós Köszeghy, eds. *With Wisdom as a Robe: Qumran and Other Jewish Studies in Honour of Ida Fröhlich.* Sheffiield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2008.

Drawnel, Henryk. *The Aramaic Astronomical Book from Qumran: Text, Translation, and Commentary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

——. “Knowledge Transmission in the Context of the Watchers’ Sexual Sin with the Women in 1 Enoch 6-11.” *Biblical Annals* 2 (2012): 123–151.

——. “The Mesopotamian Background of the Enochic Giants and Evil Spirits.” *DSD* 21 (2014): 14–38.

——. “Professional Skills of Asael (1 En. 8:1) and Their Mesopotamian Background.” *RB* 119.4 (2012): 518–542.

——. “Some Notes on the Aramaic Manuscripts from Qumran and Late Mesopotamian Culture.” *RevQ* 102.26 (2013): 145–167.

Duke, Dennis, and Matthew J. Goff. “The Astronomy of the Qumran Fragments 4Q208 and 4Q209.” *DSD* 21.2 (2014): 176–210.

Ebeling, Erich. *Die Akkadische Gebetsserie “Handerhebung”.* Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1953.

Ehrman, Bart D. *The Apostolic Fathers, Vol 1*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003.

Embry, Brad. “Genre Categorization in the Psalms of Solomon.” Pages 59–78 in *The Psalms of Solomon: Language, History, Theology*. Edited by Eberhard Bons and Patrick Pouchelle. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015.

——. “The Psalms of Solomon and the New Testament: Intertextuality and the Need for a Re-Evaluation.” *JSP* 13.2 (2002): 99–136.

Erho, Ted M. “The Ahistorical Nature of 1 Enoch 56: 5-8 and Its Ramifications Upon the *Opinio Communis* on the Dating of the Similitudes of Enoch.” *JSJ* 40.1 (2009): 23–54.

Fairclough, H. Rushton, trans. *Virgil’s Ecologues; Georgics; Aeneid I-VI.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001.

Feldman, Louis H. *Philo’s Portrayal of Moses in the Context of Ancient Judaism*. South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007.

Feldman, Louis H., James L. Kugel, Lawrence H. Schiffman, and Angela Kim Harkins, eds. *Outside the Bible: Ancient Jewish Writings Related to Scripture.* Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 2013.

Fincke, J. C. “‘If a Star Changes into Ashes…’: A Sequence of Unusual Celestial Omens.” *Iraq* LXXV (2013): 171–196.

Fletcher-Louis, Crispin H. T. “Some Reflections on Angelomorphic Humanity Texts Among the Dead Sea Scrolls.” *DSD* 7.3 (2000): 292–312.

Fraade, Steven D. *Enosh and His Generation: Pre-Israelite Hero and History in Post-Biblical Interpretation*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 1984.

——. "Enosh and His Generation Revisited." Pages 59–86 in *Biblical Figures Outside the Bible*. Edited by Michael E. Stone and Theodore E. Bergren. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity, 1998.

——. *From Tradition to Commentary: Torah and its interpretation in the Midrash Sifre to Deuteronomy*. New York: SUNY Press, 1991.

Franklyn, Paul N. "The Cultic and Pious Climax of Eschatology in the Psalms of Solomon." *JSJ* 18:1 (1987): 1–17.

Fretheim, Terrence. *Genesis*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2002.

Fröhlich, Ida. "Enmeduranki and Gilgamesh: Mesopotamian Figures in Aramaic Enoch Traditions." Pages 59–86 in *A Teacher for All Generations: Essays in Honor of James C. VanderKam*. Edited by Eric Mason, Kelly Coblentz Bautch, Angela Kim Harkins, and Daniel A. Machiela. Leiden: Brill, 2012.

——. "The Figures of the Watchers in the Enochic Tradition." *Hen* 33 (2011): 6–26.

——. "Stars and Spirits: Heavenly Bodies in Ancient Jewish Aramaic Tradition." *AS* 13.2 (2015): 111–127.

Futato, Mark D. "Because it Had Rained: A Study of Gen 2:5-7 with Implications for Gen 2:4-25 and Gen 1:1-2:3." *WTJ* 60 (1998): 1–21.

Gammie, John G. "Spatial and Ethical Dualism in Jewish Wisdom and Apocalyptic Literature." *JBL* 93.3 (1974): 356–385.

Gil, Moshe. "Enoch in the Land of Eternal Life." *Tarbiz* 38 (1968): 322–337.

Ginzburg, Louis. *Legends of the Jews*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 2003.

Giulea, Dragoş-Andrei. "The Watchers' Whispers: Athenagoras's Legatio 25,1-3 and the Book of the Watchers." *VC* 61.3 (2007): 258–281.

Gladd, Benjamin. *Revealing the Mysterion: The Use of Mystery in Daniel and Second Temple Judaism With its Bearing on First Corinthians*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008.

Goff, Matthew J. *4QInstruction*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2013.

——. "Ben Sira and the Giants of the Land." *JBL* 129.4 (2010): 645–655.

——. *Discerning Wisdom: The Sapiential Literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Leiden: Brill, 2006.

——. “The Mystery of Creation in 4QInstruction.” *DSD* 10 (2003): 163–186.

——. “Qumran Wisdom Literature and the Problem of Genre.” *DSD* 17.3 (2010): 315–335.

——. *The Worldly and Heavenly Wisdom of 4QInstruction*. Leiden: Brill, 2003.

Grabbe, Lester L. *Judaic Religion in the Second Temple Period: Belief and Practice from the Exile to Yavneh*. London: Routledge, 2002.

Greenfield, J. C., and M. Sokoloff. “Astrological and Related Omen Texts in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic.” *JNES* 48.3 (1989): 201–214.

Grelot, Pierre. “La géographie mythique d’Hénoch et ses sources orientales.” *RB* 64 (1958): 33–69.

Gruen, Erich S. *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

Habel, Norman C. *Discerning Wisdom in God’s Creation: Following the Way of Ancient Scientists*. Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2016.

——. *Finding Wisdom in Nature: An Eco-Wisdom Reading of the Book of Job*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2014.

Hahne, Harry. *The Corruption and Redemption of Creation: Nature in Romans 8.19-22 and Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*. London: T&T Clark, 2006.

——. “Nature and Theodicy in the Book of Job.” Unpublished paper. (2007). http://www.balboa-software.com/hahne/NatureInJob(ETS2007).pdf

Halbertal, Moshe. *Concealment and Revelation: Esotericism in Jewish Thought and its Philosophical Implications*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007.

Ham, T. C. “The Gentle Voice of God in Job 38.” *JBL* 132.3 (2013): 527–541.

Hamm, Elizabeth Anne. “Ptolemy’s Planetary Theory: An English Translation of Book One, Part A of the ‘Planetary Hypotheses’ with Introduction and Commentary.” Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 2011.

Hammer, Reuven. *The Classic Midrash: Tannaitic Commentaries on the Bible*. New York: Paulist, 1995.

——. *Tannaitic Commentary on the Book of Deuteronomy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986.

Hammerton, H. J. “Unity of Creation in the Apocalypse.” *CQR* 168 (1967): 20–33.

Hann, Robert R. “The Community of the Pious: The Social Setting of the Psalms of Solomon.” *SR* 17.2 (1988): 169–189.

——. *The Manuscript History of the Psalms of Solomon*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 1982.

Hanneken, Todd R. *The Subversion of the Apocalypses in the Book of Jubilees*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2012.

Hanson, Paul. “Apocalypse, Genre,” “Apocalypticism,” *IBDSup* (1976): 27–34.

——. *The Dawn of Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979.

Harkins, Angela Kim. *The Watchers in Jewish and Christian Traditions*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2014.

Harlow, Daniel C. “The Christianization of Early Jewish Pseudepigrapha: The Case of 3 Baruch.” *JSJ* 32.4 (2001): 416–444.

——. *The Greek Apocalypse of Baruch (3 Baruch) in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity*. Leiden: Brill, 1995.

Harlow, Daniel C., Karina Martin Hogan, Matthew Goff, and Joel S. Kaminsky, eds. *The “Other” in Second Temple Judaism: Essays in Honor of John J. Collins.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011.

Harris, Robert Laird, Gleason Leonard Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke, eds. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament.* Chicago: Moody, 1980.

Hartman, Lars. *Asking for a Meaning: A Study of 1 Enoch 1–5*. Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1979.

Hayes, Katherine Murphey. *The Earth Mourns: Prophetic Metaphor and Oral Aesthetic*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2002.

Heger, Paul. “1 Enoch—Complementary or Alternative to Mosaic Torah?” *JSJ* 41.1 (2010): 29–62.

——. *Challenges to Conventional Opinions on Qumran and Enoch Issues*. Leiden: Brill, 2012.

Fabry, Heinz-Josef, and Ulrich Damen, eds. *Theologisches Wörterbuch zu den Qumrantexten*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2010.

Hempel, Charlotte, and Judith Lieu, eds. *Biblical Traditions in Transmission: Essays in Honour of Michael A. Knibb.* Leiden: Brill, 2006.

Hendel, Ronald. “The Nephilim Were on the Earth: Genesis 6:1–4 and Its Ancient Near Eastern Context.” Pages 11–34 in *The Fall of the Angels*. Edited by Christoph Auffarth and Loren T. Stuckenbruck. Leiden: Brill, 2004.

Henderson, Ian H., Gerbern S. Oegema, James H. Charlesworth, and Sara Parks Ricker, eds. *The Changing Face of Judaism, Christianity, and Other Greco-Roman Religions in Antiquity.* Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2006.

Henze, Matthias. *A Companion to Biblical Interpretation in Early Judaism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012.

——. “Enoch’s Dream Visions and the Visions of Daniel Reexamined.” Pages 17–22 in *Enoch and Qumran Origins: New Light on a Forgotten Connection*. Edited by Gabriele Boccaccini. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.

——. *Jewish Apocalypticism in Late First Century Israel: Reading Second Baruch in Context*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011.

——. “Qoheleth and the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch.” *VT* 58.1 (2008): 28–43.

Hilhorst, Anthony, Émile Puech, and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, eds. *Flores Florentino: Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honour of Florentino Garcia Martinez.* Leiden: Brill, 2007.

Hillel, Vered. “Naphtali, a Proto-Joseph in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs.” *JSP* 16.3 (2007): 171–201.

Himmelfarb, Martha. “3 Baruch Revisited: Jewish or Christian Composition, and Why it Matters.” *ZAC* 20.1 (2016): 41–62.

——. *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Hogan, Karina Martin. “The Meanings of Tôrâ in 4 Ezra.” *JSJ* 38.4 (2007): 530–552.

——. “The Mortal Body and the Earth in Ben Sira and the Book of the Watchers.” Pages 21–40 in *Christian Body, Christian Self: Concepts of Early Christian Personhood*. Edited by Clare K Rothschild and Trevor W Thompson. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011.

——. “Mother Earth as a Conceptual Metaphor in 4 Ezra.” *CBQ* 73.1 (2011): 72–91.

——. *Theologies in Conflict in 4 Ezra: Wisdom Debate and Apocalyptic Solution*. Leiden: Brill, 2008.

Hogeterp, Albert L. A. *Expectations of the End: A Comparative Traditio-Historical Study of Eschatological, Apocalyptic and Messianic Ideas in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*. Leiden: Brill, 2009.

Hollander, H. W. *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Commentary*. Leiden: Brill, 1997.

Horbury, William. "The Remembrance of God in the Psalms of Solomon." Pages 111–128 in *Memory in the Bible and in Antiquity: The Fifth Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium*. Edited by Loren T. Stuckenbruck, Stephen C. Barton, and Benjamin G. Wold. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007.

Horovitz, Saul. *Sifre on Deuteronomy (Hebrew Edition)*. New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary Press, 2014.

Horowitz, Wayne. *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1998.

Horsley, Richard A. "Social Relations and Social Conflict in the Epistle of Enoch." Pages 100–115 in *For a Later Generation: The Transformation of a Tradition in Israel, Early Judaism and Early Christianity*. Edited by Randal A. Argall, Beverly Bow, and Rodney Werline. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity, 2000.

Horsley, Richard A., and Patrick A. Tiller. *After Apocalyptic and Wisdom: Rethinking Texts in Context*. Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2012.

Hossfeld, Frank Lothar, Erich Zenger, Klaus Baltzer, and Linda M. Maloney. *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51-100*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2005.

Hughes, Julie A. *Scriptural Allusions and Exegesis in the Hodayot*. Leiden: Brill, 2006.

Hunger, Hermann, and David Pingree. MUL.APIN*: An Astronomical Compendium in Cuneiform.* Horn, Austria: Berger & Söhne, 1989.

Jackson, David R. *Enochic Judaism: Three Defining Paradigm Exemplars*. London: Black, 2004.

——. "Jubilees and Enochic Judaism." Pages 411–425 in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees*. Edited by Gabriele Boccaccini, Giovanni Ibba, Jason von Ehrenkrook, James Alan Waddell, and Jason Zurawski. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.

——. "Who is This who Darkens Counsel? The Use of Rhetorical Irony in God's Charges against Job." *WTJ* 72.1 (2010): 153–167.

Jacobson, Howard. *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum: with Latin Text and English Translation*. Leiden: Brill, 1996.

Janowski, Bernd. *Stellvertretung: alttestamentliche Studien zu einem theologischen Grundbegriff*. Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1997.

Jenni, Ernst and Claus Westermann, eds. *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1997.

Joosten, Jan. "Reflections on the Original Language of the Psalms of Solomon." Pages 31–48 in *The Psalms of Solomon: Language, History, Theology*. Edited by Eberhard Bons and Patrick Pouchelle. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015.

Kim, Daewoong. "Wisdom and Apocalyptic in 2 Baruch." *Hen* 33.2 (2011): 250–74.

Knibb, Michael A. "Christian Adoption and Transmission of Jewish Pseudepigrapha: The Case of 1 Enoch." *JSJ* 32.4 (2001): 396–415.

——. *Essays on the Book of Enoch and Other Early Jewish Texts and Traditions*. Leiden: Brill, 2008.

Koch, Johannes. *Neue Untersuchungen zur Topographie des Babylonischen Fixsternhimmels*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1989.

Koch, Klaus. *Ratlos vor der Apokalyptik*. Gütersloh: Mohn, 1970.

Kugel, James L. *A Walk through Jubilees: Studies in the Book of Jubilees and the World of its Creation*. Leiden: Brill, 2012.

Kugler, Robert. *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. London: T&T Clark, 2001.

Kulik, Alexander. *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha: Toward the Original of the Apocalypse of Abraham*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2004.

Kvanvig, Helge S. "Enochic Judaism—a Judaism Without the Torah and Temple?" Pages 163–177 in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees*. Edited by Gabriele Boccaccini, Giovanni Ibba, Jason von Ehrenkrook, James Alan Waddell, and Jason Zurawski. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.

——. "Jubilees—Between Enoch and Moses. A Narrative Reading." *JSJ* 35.3 (2004): 243–61.

——. *Primeval History: Babylonian, Biblical, and Enochic: An Intertextual Reading*. Leiden: Brill, 2011.

——. *Roots of Apocalyptic: The Mesopotamian Background of the Enoch Figure and of the Son of Man*. Neukirchener-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1988.

LaCocque, André. "The Deconstruction of Job's Fundamentalism." *JBL* 126.1 (2007): 83–97.

Langdon, Stephen. *Babylonian Penitential Psalms to which Are Added Fragments of the Epic of Creation from Kish in the Weld Collection of the Ashmolean Museum*. Paris: P. Geunthner, 1927.

Lange, Armin. "Dream Visions and Apocalyptic Milieus." Pages 28–31 in *Enoch and Qumran Origins: New Light on a Forgotten Connection*. Edited by Gabriele Boccaccini. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.

Lenzi, Alan. *Secrecy and the Gods: Secret Knowledge in Ancient Mesopotamia and Biblical Israel*. Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2008.

Levison, John R. "2 Apoc. Bar. 48:42–52:7 and the Apocalyptic Dimension of Colossians 3:1–6." *JBL* 108.1 (1989): 93–108.

Lied, Liv Ingeborg. *The Other Lands of Israel: Imaginations of the Land in 2 Baruch*. Leiden: Brill, 2008.

Macaskill, Grant, ed. *Revealed Wisdom and Inaugurated Eschatology in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* Leiden: Brill, 2007.

Marböck, Johannes. *Jesus Sirach 1–23*. Herder: Freiburg, 2010.

Marlow, Hilary. "'What Am I in a Boundless Creation?': An Ecological Reading of Sirach 16 and 17." *BibInt* 22.1 (2014): 34–50.

Marttila, Marko. *Foreign Nations in the Wisdom of Ben Sira: A Jewish Sage Between Opposition and Assimilation*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012.

May, Herbert G. "Cosmological Reference in the Qumran Doctrine of the Two Spirits and in Old Testament Imagery." *JBL* 82.1 (1963): 1–14.

McDonald, Lee Martin, and James H. Charlesworth, eds. *"Noncanonical" Religious Texts in Early Judaism and Early Christianity* New York: T&T Clark, 2012.

McDonough, Sean M. "Of Beasts and Bees: The View of the Natural World in Virgil's Georgics and John's Apocalypse." *NTS* 46.02 (2000): 227–244.

Mead, James K. "Kings and Prophets, Donkeys and Lions: Dramatic Shape and Deuteronomistic Rhetoric in 1 Kings XIII." *VT* 49 (1999): 191–205.

Meeks, Wayne A. "Apocalyptic Discourse and Strategies of Goodness." *JR* 80.3 (2000): 461–475.

Milik, J. T. *Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976.

Moo, Jonathan A. *Creation, Nature and Hope in 4 Ezra*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011.

Muller Lopez, Kathryn. "The Divine Council Scene in Second Temple Literature," Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 2002.

Muraoka, Takamitsu, and John Francis Elwolde, eds. *Sirach, Scrolls, and Sages: Proceedings of a Second International Symposium on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Ben Sira, and the Mishnah.* Leiden: Brill, 1999.

Murphy, Frederick James. *Pseudo-Philo: Rewriting the Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Murschel, Andrea. "The Structure and Function of Ptolemy's Physical Hypotheses of Planetary Motion," *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 26 (1995): 33–61.

Najman, Hindy. "Interpretation as Primordial Writing: Jubilees and Its Authority Conferring Strategies." *JSJ* 30.4 (1999): 379–410.

——. "Reconsidering Jubilees: Prophecy and Exemplarity." Pages 229–243 in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees*, edited by Gabriele Boccaccini, Giovanni Ibba, Jason von Ehrenkrook, James Alan Waddell, and Jason Zurawski. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.

——. "A Written Copy of the Law of Nature: An Unthinkable Paradox." SPhiloA 15 (2003): 54–63.

Nam, Roger. "Intertextuality and the Relationship of Humankind Among Fish, Birds and Creeping Things." *Quaker Religious Thought* 121 (2013): 22–30.

Neugebauer, Otto. *A History of Ancient Mathematical Astronomy*. New York: Springer, 2012.

Neugebauer, Otto, and Matthew Black. *The "Astronomical" Chapters of the Ethiopic Book of Enoch (72 to 82)*. Copenhagen: Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, 1981.

Neusner, Jacob. *A Theological Commentary to the Midrash: Sifre to Numbers and Sifre to Deuteronomy*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001.

Neusner, Jacob, and Alan Jeffery Avery-Peck, eds. *George W. E. Nickelsburg in Perspective: An Ongoing Dialogue of Learning* Leiden: Brill, 2003.

Newsom, Carol A. "Apocalyptic Subjects: Social Construction of the Self in the Qumran Hodayot." *JSP* 12.1 (2001): 3–35.

——. *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

——. “The Development of 1 Enoch 6–19: Cosmology and Judgment.” *CBQ* 42.3 (1980): 310–329.

——. “Genesis 2–3 and 1 Enoch 6–16: Two Myths of Origin and Their Ethical Implications.” Pages 7–22 in *Shaking Heaven and Earth: Essays in Honor of Walter Brueggemann and Charles B. Cousar*. Edited by Kathleen M. O’Connor, Christine Roy Yoder, Elizabeth Johnson, and Stanley P. Saunders. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005.

——. “Job,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, 317–638. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996.

——. *The Self as Symbolic Space: Constructing Identity and Community at Qumran*. Leiden: Brill, 2004.

Newsom, Carol A., and Eileen M. Schuller. *The Hodayot (Thanksgiving Psalms): A Study Edition of 1QH^a*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2012.

Newsom, Carol A., with Brennan Breed. *Daniel*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014.

Nickelsburg, George W. E. *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1-36; 81-108.* Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2001.

——. “1 Enoch’s Vague Visions of a Future Social Order: Foils to Its Vivid Portrayals of the Present Chaos.” Pages 51–88 in *Judaic and Christian Visions of the Social Order: Describing, Analyzing and Comparing Systems of the Formative Age*. Edited by Jacob Neusner. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2011.

——. “Apocalyptic and Myth in 1 Enoch 6-11.” *JBL* 96.3 (1977): 383–405.

——. “The Apocalyptic Message of 1 Enoch 92–105.” *CBQ* 39.3 (1977): 309–328.

——. “The Epistle of Enoch and the Qumran Literature in *Essays in Honour of Yigael Yadin*.” *JJS* 33.1-2 (1982): 333–348.

——. “Eschatology in the Testament of Abraham: A Study of the Judgment Scene in the Two Recensions.” Pages 23–64 in *Studies on the Testament of Abraham.* Edited by George W. E. Nickelsburg. Atlanta: SBL Press, 1976.

——. *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2005.

——. *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972.

—— .“Revisiting the Rich and the Poor in 1 Enoch 92-105 and the Gospel According to Luke.” Pages 547–71 in *George W. E. Nickelsburg in Perspective: An Ongoing Dialogue of Learning*. Edited by Jacob Neusner and Alan J. Avery-Peck. Leiden: Brill, 2003.

——. “Riches, the Rich, and God’s Judgment in 1 Enoch 92–105 and the Gospel According to Luke.” *NTS* 25.03 (1979): 324–344.

——. “The Study of Apocalypticism from H.H. Rowley to the Society of Biblical Literature.” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the SBL, San Antonio, TX, November 2004, https://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/Nickelsburg_Study.pdf.

Nickelsburg, George W. E., and James C. VanderKam. *1 Enoch 2: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 37–82*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2011.

Nir, Rivkah. *The Destruction of Jerusalem and the Idea of Redemption in the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch*. Leiden: Brill, 2003.

Nissinen, Martti, Robert Kriech Ritner, and Choon Leong Seow, eds. *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East.* Atlanta: SBL Press, 2003.

Noegel, Scott, Joel Walker, and Brannon Wheeler. *Prayer, Magic, and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010.

Olley, John W. “Animals in Heaven and Earth: Attitudes in Ezekiel.” *Colloq* 33.1 (2001): 47–57.

Olson, Daniel C. *A New Reading of the Animal Apocalypse of 1 Enoch: “All Nations Shall be Blessed” – with a New Translation and Commentary*. Leiden: Brill, 2013.

Orlov, Andrei. “Arboreal Metaphors and the Divine Body Traditions in the Apocalypse of Abraham.” *HTR* 102.4 (2009): 439–451.

——. *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition*. Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2005.

——. “The Flooded Arboretums: The Garden Traditions in the Slavonic Version of 3 Baruch and the Book of Giants.” *Scrinium* 3.1 (2007): 481–499.

——. *From Apocalypticism to Merkabah Mysticism: Studies in Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*. Leiden: Brill, 2007.

——. *Heavenly Priesthood in the Apocalypse of Abraham*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

——. “Melchizedek Legend of 2 (Slavonic) Enoch.” *JSJ* 31.1 (2000): 23–38.

——. “On the Polemical Nature of 2 (Slavonic) Enoch: A Reply to C. Böttrich.” *JSJ* 34.3 (2003): 274–303.

——. “Praxis of the Voice: The Divine Name Traditions in the Apocalypse of Abraham.” *JBL* 127.1 (2008): 53–70.

——. “The Pteromorphic Angelology of the *Apocalypse of Abraham*.” *CBQ* 71 (2009): 830–842.

——. *Selected Studies in the Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*. Leiden: Brill, 2009.

——. “The Watchers of Satanail: The Fallen Angels Traditions in 2 (Slavonic) Enoch,” Pages 133–164 in *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch: No Longer Slavonic Only*. Edited by Andrei Orlov, Gabriele Boccaccini, and Jason Zurawski. Leiden: Brill, 2012.

Pajunen, Mika S. *The Land to the Elect and Justice for All: Reading Psalms in the Dead Sea Scrolls in Light of 4Q381*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013.

Parry, Donald W. and Emanuel Tov, eds. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader: Part 1, Texts Concerned with Religious Law*. Leiden: Brill, 2004.

——. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader: Part 2, Parabiblical Texts*. Leiden: Brill, 2005.

——. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader: Part 4, Calendrical and Sapientiall Texts*. Leiden: Brill, 2004.

——. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader: Part 5, Poetic and Liturgical Texts*. Leiden: Brill, 2005.

Pearson, Birger A. “Enoch in Egypt.” Pages 216–231 in *For a Later Generation: The Transformation of Tradition in Israel, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity*. Edited by Randal A. Argall, Beverly Bow, and Rodney Werline. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity, 2000.

Penner, Jeremy. *Patterns of Daily Prayer in the Second Temple Period Judaism*. Leiden: Brill, 2012.

Perrin, Andrew. *The Dynamics of Dream-Vision Revelation in the Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015.

Pinker, Aron. “Meteorological Views in Qohelet 1: 6-7.” *OTE* 25.2 (2012): 383–405.

Poirier, John C. “The Ouranology of the Apocalypse of Abraham.” *JSJ* 35.4 (2004): 391–408.

Portier-Young, Anathea. *Apocalypse Against Empire: Theologies of Resistance in Early Judaism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011.

Pouchelle, Patrick. “Critique textuelle et traduction du treizème Psaume de Salomon.” *JSJ* 42.4-5 (2011): 508–530.

——. “Prayers for Being Disciplined: Notes on ΠΑΙΔΕΥΩ and ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑ in the Psalms of Solomon.” Pages 115–132 in *The Psalms of Solomon: Language, History, Theology*. Edited by Eberhard Bons and Patrick Pouchelle. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015.

Putnam, Michael C. J. *Virgil's Poem of the Earth: Studies in the Georgics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979.

Rau, Eckhard. "Kosmologie, Eschatologie und die Lehrautorität Henochs: traditions- und formgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Äth. Henochbuch und zu verwandten Schriften," Ph.D. diss., Universität Hamburg, 1974.

Reed, Annette Yoshiko. "The Construction and Subversion of Patriarchal Perfection: Abraham and Exemplarity in Philo, Josephus, and the Testament of Abraham." *JSJ* 40.2 (2009): 185–212.

——. *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of Enochic Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

——. "Heavenly Ascent, Angelic Descent, and the Transmission of Knowledge in 1 Enoch 6–16." Pages 47–66 in *Heavenly Realms and Earthly Realities in Late Antique Religions.* Edited by Ra'anan S. Boustan and Annette Yoshiko Reed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

——. "The Modern Invention of 'Old Testament Pseudepigrapha'." *JTS* 60.2 (2009): 403–436.

Reimer, Andy M. "Rescuing the Fallen Angels: The Case of the Disappearing Angels at Qumran." *DSD* 7.3 (2000): 334–353.

Reiner, Erica. "Astral Magic in Babylonia." TAPS 85.4 (1995): i–150.

Reymond, Eric D. "Prelude to the Praise of the Ancestors, Sirach 44: 1–15." *HUCA* (2001): 1–14.

Rochberg, Francesca. "Heaven and Earth: Divine-Human Relations in Mesopotamian Celestial Divination." Pages 169–185 in *Prayer, Magic, and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World*. Edited by Scott Noegel, Joel Walker, and Brannon Wheeler. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003.

——. ""If P, Then Q": Form and Reasoning in Babylonian Divination." Pages 19–28 in *Divination and Interpretation of Signs in the Ancient World*. Edited by Amar Annus. Chicago: Oriental institute of the University of Chicago, 2010.

Rogland, M. "Eggs and Vipers in Isaiah 59 and the Qumran Hodayot." *RevQ* 25:1 (2011): 3–16.

Rowland, Christopher. "Apocalyptic, Mysticism, and the New Testament." Pages 405–430 in *Geschichte – Tradition – Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag*. Edited by Hubert Cancik, Hermann Lichtenberger, and Peter Schäfer. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996.

——. *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity*. New York: Crossroad, 1982.

Rowley, Harold Henry. *The Relevance of Apocalyptic: A Study of Jewish and Christian Apocalypses from Daniel to the Revelation*. New York: Association Press, 1964.

Runia, David T., Gregory E. Sterling, and Hindy Najman, eds. *Laws Stamped with the Seals of Nature: Laws and Nature in Hellenistic Philosophy and Philo of Alexandria*. Providence: Brown University Press, 2003.

Russell, D. S. *Apocalyptic, Ancient and Modern*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978.

——. *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974.

Russell, David M. *The 'New Heavens and New Earth': Hope for the Creation in Jewish Apocalyptic and the New Testament*. Philadelphia: Visionary Press, 1996.

Sayler, Gwendolyn B. *Have the Promises Failed?: A Literary Analysis of 2 Baruch*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 1984.

Schmithals, Walter. *The Apocalyptic Movement: Introduction & Interpretation*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1975.

Schnabel, Eckhard J. "Law and Wisdom from Ben Sira to Paul: A Tradition Historical Enquiry into the Relation of Law, Wisdom and Ethics," Ph.D. diss., University of Aberdeen, 1983.

Schokel, Luis Alonso. "The Vision of Man in Sirach 16: 24-17:14." Pages 235–245 in *Israelite Wisdom: Theological and Literary Essays in Honor of Samuel Terrien*. Edited by John G. Gammie. New York: Scholars Press, 1978.

Scott, R. B. Y. "Meteorological Phenomena and Terminology in the Old Testament." *ZAW* 64.1 (1952): 11–25.

Silverman, Jason M. "Iranian Details in the Book of Heavenly Luminaries (1 Enoch 72–82)." *JNES* 72.2 (2013): 195–208.

Simkins, Ronald. *Creator & Creation: Nature in the Worldview of Ancient Israel*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994.

Simon, Bennett. "Ezekiel's Geometric Vision of the Restored Temple: From the Rod of His Wrath to the Reed of His Measuring." *HTR* 102.04 (2009): 411–438.

Singer, David G. "God in Nature or the Lord of the Universe?: The Encounter of Judaism and Science from Hellenistic Times to the Present." *Shofar* 22.4 (2004): 80–93.

Skehan, Patrick W., and Alexander A. Di Lella. *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: A New Translation with Notes*. New York: Doubleday, 1987.

Slingerland, H. Dixon. *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Critical History of Research*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 1977.

Soden, Wolfram von. *The Ancient Orient*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.

Stephens, Mark B. *Annihilation or Renewal?: The Meaning and Function of New Creation in the Book of Revelation*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011.

Sterling, Gregory E. "Universalizing the Particular: Natural Law in Second Temple Jewish Ethics." SPhilA (2003): 64–80.

Stock-Hesketh, Jonathan. "Circles and Mirrors: Understanding 1 Enoch 21–32." *JSP* 11.21 (2000): 27–58.

Stokes, Ryan E. "The Throne Visions of Daniel 7, 1 Enoch 14, and the Qumran Book of Giants (4Q530): An Analysis of Their Literary Relationship." *DSD* 15.3 (2008): 340–358.

Stone, Michael E. *Ancient Judaism: New Visions and Views*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011.

——. "The Book of Enoch and Judaism in the Third Century BCE." *CBQ* 40.4 (1978): 479–492.

——. *Fourth Ezra*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1990.

——. "Lists of Revealed Things in the Apocalyptic Literature." Pages 414–51 in *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright*. Edited by Frank Moore Cross, Werner M. Lemke, and Patrick D. Miller. New York: Knopf, 1976.

——. "The Parabolic Use of the Natural Order in Judaism of the Second Temple Age." Pages 298–308 in *Gilgul: Essays on Transformation, Revolution, and Permanence in the History of Religions*, *Dedicated to R. J. Zwi Werblowsky.* Edited by S. Shaked, D. D. Shulman, and G. A. G. Stroumsa. Leiden: Brill, 1987.

——. "Pseudepigraphy Reconsidered." *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 9 (2006): 1–15.

——. "A Reconsideration of Apocalyptic Visions." *HTR* 96.2 (2003): 167–180.

——. *Selected Studies in Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha: with Special Reference to the Armenian Tradition*. Leiden: Brill, 1991.

Stone, Michael E., Aryeh Amihay, and Vered Hillel, eds. *Noah and his Book(s)*. Leiden: Brill, 2010.

Stone, Michael E., and Matthias Henze, trans. *4 Ezra and 2 Baruch: Translations, Introductions, and Notes*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2013.

Strugnell, John, Daniel J. Harrington, and Torlief Elgvin, eds. *Qumran Cave 4: 4QInstruction (Sapiential Texts), Part 2*. Oxford: Clarendon, 2000.

Stuckenbruck, Loren T. *1 Enoch 91–108*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007.

——. *The Book of Giants from Qumran: Texts, Translation, and Commentary*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997.

——. "The Epistle of Enoch: Genre and Authorial Presentation." *DSD* 17.3 (2010): 387–417.

——. *The Myth of Rebellious Angels: Studies in Second Temple Judaism and New Testament Texts*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014.

——. "The 'Otherworld' and the Epistle of Enoch." Pages 79–94 in *Other Worlds and their Relation to This World: Early Jewish and Ancient Christian Traditions*. Edited by Tobias Nicklas, Joseph Verheyden, Erik M. M. Eynikel, and Florentino Garcia Maritnez. Leiden: Brill, 2010.

——. "The Throne-Theophany of the Book of Giants: Some New Light on the Background of Daniel 7." Pages 211–220 in *The Scrolls and the Scriptures: Qumran Fifty Years After*. Edited by Stanley E. Porter and Craig A. Evans. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997.

Suter, David Winston. *Tradition and Composition in the Parables of Enoch*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 1979.

Tate, Marvin E. *Psalms 51–100*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018.

Taub, Liba Chaia. *Ptolemy's Universe: The Natural Philosophical and Ethical Foundations of Ptolemy's Astronomy*. Chicago: Open Court, 1993.

Thiessen, Matthew. *Paul and the Gentile Problem*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Thomas, Samuel. *The "Mysteries" of Qumran: Mystery, Secrecy, and Esotericism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2009.

Tigchelaar, Eibert J. C. "'Lights Serving as Signs for Festivals' (Gen 1:14b) in Enūma Eliš and Early Judaism." Pages 31–48 in *The Creation of Heaven and Earth: Re-interpretations of Genesis 1 in the Context of Judaism, Ancient Philosophy, Christianity, and Modern Physics*. Edited by George H. van Kooten. Leiden: Brill, 2005.

——. *Prophets of Old and the Day of the End: Zechariah, the Book of Watchers, and Apocalyptic*. Leiden: Brill, 1996.

Tiller, Patrick. “Anti-Apocalyptic Apocalypse.” Pages 258–265 in *For a Later Generation: The Transformation of Tradition in Israel, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity*. Edited by Randal A. Argall, Beverly Bow, and Rodney Werline. Salem, OR: Trinity, 2000.

——. “The Sociological Settings of the Components of 1 Enoch.” Pages 237–256 in *The Early Enoch Literature*. Edited by Gabriele Boccaccini and John J. Collins. Leiden: Brill, 2007.

Timmer, Daniel. “God’s Speeches, Job’s Responses, and the Problem of Coherence in the Book of Job: Sapiential Pedagogy Revisited.” *CBQ* 71.2 (2009): 286–305.

Toomer, G. J. *Ptolemy’s Almagest*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998.

Trafton, Joseph L. *The Syriac Version of the Psalms of Solomon: A Critical Evaluation*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 1985.

——. “What Would David Do? Messianic Expectation and Surprise in Ps. Sol. 17.” Pages 155–174 in *The Psalms of Solomon: Language, History, Theology*, edited by Eberhard Bons and Patrick Pouchelle. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015.

Tromp, Johannes. “The Sinners and the Lawless in Psalm of Solomon 17.” *NovT* 35.4 (1993): 344–361.

Trotter, Jonathan R. “The Tradition of the Throne Vision in the Second Temple Period: Daniel 7: 9–10, 1 Enoch 14:18–23, and the Book of Giants (4Q530).” *RevQ* 25.3 (2012): 451–466.

van der Toorn, Karel. *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009.

——. “Turning Tradition into Eternal Truth: The Invention of Revelation.” *ST* 67 (2013): 3–27.

van Wolde, Ellen. “Why the Verb Bara Does Not Mean ‘to Create’ in Genesis 1.1-2.4a.” *JSOT* 34.1 (2009): 3–23.

VanderKam, James C. “1 Enoch 80 Within the Book of the Luminaries.” Pages 333–355 in *From 4QMMT to the Resurrection*. Edited by Florentino García Martínez, Annette Steudel, and Eibert Tigchelaar. Leiden: Brill, 2006.

——. *The Book of Jubilees: A Critical Text*. Leuven: Peeters, 1989.

——. *Enoch: A Man for All Generations*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008.

——. *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition*. Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1984.

——. *From Revelation to Canon: Studies in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Literature*. Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2002.

——. “The Scriptural Setting of the Book of Jubilees.” *DSD* 13.1 (2006): 61–72.

——. “Scripture in the Astronomical Book of Enoch.” Pages 89–103 in *Things Revealed: Studies in Early Jewish and Christian Literature in Honor of Michael E. Stone*. Edited by Edward Chazon, Esther Glickler, David Satran, and Ruth A Clements,. Leiden: Brill, 2004.

——. “Sources for the Astronomy in 1 Enoch 72-82.” Pages 965–978 in *Birkat Shalom: Studies in the Bible, Ancient Near Eastern Literature, and Postbiblical Judaism Presented to Shalom M. Paul on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*. Edited by Chaim Cohen, Victor Avigdor Hurowitz, Avi M. Hurvitz, Yochanan Muffs, Baruch J. Schwartz, and Jeffrey H. Tigay. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008.

von Rad, Gerhard. *Genesis, Revised Edition: A Commentary*. Minneapolis: John Knox, 1973.

Walker, Jeffrey P. “The ‘Cosmic Covenant’ in the Letter to the Hebrews,” Master’s thesis, Andrews University, 2006.

Watson, Rita, and Wayne Horowitz. *Writing Science Before the Greeks: A Naturalistic Analysis of the Babylonian Astronomical Treatise* MUL.APIN. Leiden: Brill, 2011.

Watts, John D. *Isaiah 34–66, Revised Edition.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.

Way, Kenneth C. “Animals in the Prophetic World: Literary Reflections on Numbers 22 and 1 Kings 13.” *JSOT* 34.1 (2009): 47–62.

Wenham, Gordon J. *Genesis 1–15*. Nashville: Nelson, 1987.

Werline, Rodney. “The Curses of the Covenant Renewal Ceremony in 1QS 1.16–2.19 and the Prayers of the Condemned.” Pages 280–288 in *For a Later Generation: The Transformation of Tradition in Israel, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity*. Edited by Randal A. Argall, Beverly Bow, and Rodney Werline Harrisburg, PA: Trinity, 2000.

——. “The Formation of the Pious Person in the Psalms of Solomon.” Pages 133–154 in *The Psalms of Solomon: Language, History, Theology*. Edited by Eberhard Bons and Patrick Pouchelle. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015.

——. “The Psalms of Solomon and the Ideology of Rule.” Pages 69–87 in *Conflicted Boundaries in Wisdom and Apocalypticism*. Edited by Benjamin G. Wright and Lawrence M. Wills. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2005.

Whitekettle, Richard. “One if by and: Conjunctions, Taxonomic Development, and the Animals of Leviticus 11,26.” *ZAW* 121.4 (2009): 481–497.

Willett, Tom W. *Eschatology in the Theodicies of 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra*. New York: Continuum, 1989.

Winitzer, Abraham. "'If a Star Changes into Ashes…': A Sequence of Unusual Celestial Omens." *JCS* 63 (2011): 77–94.

Winninge, Mikael. *Sinners and the Righteous: A Comparative Study of the Psalms of Solomon and Paul's Letters*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksel, 1995.

Winston, David. *The Wisdom of Solomon.* New York: Doubleday, 1979.

Wischmeyer, Oda. "Theologie und Anthropologie im Sirachbuch." Pages 18–32 in *Ben Sira's God: Proceedings of the International Ben Sira Conference at Durham-Ushaw College*. Edited by R. Egger-Wenzel. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002.

Wold, Benjamin G. *Women, Men & Angels: The Qumran Wisdom Document Musar leMevin and its Allusions to Genesis Creation Traditions*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005.

Wright, Archie T. *The Origin of Evil Spirits: The Reception of Genesis 6:1-4 in Early Jewish Literature*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2015.

——. "Some Observations of Philo's *De Gigantibus* and Evil Spirits in Second Temple Judaism." *JSJ* 36.4 (2005): 471–488.

Wright, Benjamin G. *Praise Israel for Wisdom and Instruction: Essays on Ben Sira and Wisdom, the Letter of Aristeas and the Septuagint*. Leiden: Brill, 2008.

——. "Wisdom, Instruction and Social Location in Ben Sira and 1 Enoch." Pages 105–121 in *Things Revealed: Studies in Early Jewish and Christian Literature in Honor of Michael E. Stone*. Edited by Esther G. Chazon, David Satran, and Ruth A. Clements. Leiden: Brill, 2004.

Wright, J. Edward. "The Social Setting of the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch." *JSP* 8.16 (1997): 81–96.

Wright, Robert B. *Psalms of Solomon: A Critical Edition of the Greek Text*. London: T&T Clark, 2007.

Yarbro Collins, Adela. "Apocalypse Now: The State of Apocalyptic Studies near the End of the First Decade of the Twenty-First Century." *HTR* 104.4 (2011): 447–457.

——. "Ascents to Heaven in Antiquity: Toward a Typology." Pages 553–572 in *A Teacher for All Generations: Essays in Honor of James C. VanderKam*. Edited by Eric Mason, Kelly Coblentz Bautch, Angela Kim Harkins, and Daniel A. Machiela. Leiden: Brill, 2012.

——. *Cosmology and Eschatology in Jewish and Christian Apocalypticism*. Brill: Leiden, 2000.

Zeyl, Donald and Barbara Sattler. “Plato's *Timaeus*.” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Edited by Edward N. Zalta. (Winter 2017): https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/plato-timaeus/.

Zimmerli, Walther. *Ezekiel 1*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1979.