

THE NECESSITY, PROBLEMS, AND PROMISE OF SECOND TEMPLE JUDAISM FOR DISCUSSIONS OF NEW TESTAMENT ESCHATOLOGY

LARRY R. HELYER*

I. THE NECESSITY OF SECOND TEMPLE JUDAISM

The study of Second Temple Judaism has reframed evangelical biblical theology. The reason is the presupposition of this paper: Jesus and his apostles read the sacred Scriptures of Israel through the lens of Second Temple Judaism.¹ As the world of Second Temple Judaism has become better understood, so has the background and thought of the NT.

NT writers, at numerous points, reveal that they are reading the OT in line with traditional readings derived from Second Temple Judaism. My esteemed mentor, Dr. David Hubbard, used to illustrate the point by saying that the train of revelation, at the end of the OT, enters an intertestamental tunnel. Upon reemerging in the NT period, it obviously carries additional cargo.²

For example, NT writers adopt an eschatological framework, which, though rooted in the OT, receives considerable development and elaboration in the literature of the Second Temple. Whereas the OT depicts God's saving activity as culminating in a climactic Day of the Lord by at least the first century BC, apocalyptic Judaism views redemptive history as unfolding in a two ages framework, "this age," inaugurated by creation, and "the age to come," inaugurated by the Day of the Lord (*1 Enoch* 71:15; cf. 48:7). The distinctive Christian modification of this framework, traceable to Jesus himself,

* Larry Helyer is professor of biblical studies at Taylor University, 236 West Reade Ave., Upland, IN 46989-1001.

¹ Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson make this observation: "What is crucial to note is that the use of Israel's Scriptures in all modes of Christian interpretation is often guided by intertextual connections inherited from the interpretive traditions of Israel. Particular quotations are used and allusions and midrashim are made because they were standard in Israel's interpretive traditions, which had already made the intertextual connections of Jewish tradition and created new ones, often through typological interpretation" ("Introduction and Overview," in *A History of Biblical Interpretation: Volume 1: The Ancient Period* [ed. Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003] 40).

² In the same vein, D. S. Russell says, "Christians believe that the New Testament is a continuation and fulfillment of the Old Testament, but the historical connection between the two, in respect of certain doctrines at any rate, is not always clear. The apocalyptic literature helps to bridge this gap and illustrate certain significant developments in religious belief, especially of an eschatological and messianic kind, which took place during the vital years between the two Testaments" (*The Method & Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964] 9).

is the notion of the overlap between the ages, whereby we have inaugurated eschatology, the concept of the “now, but not yet.”³

Already in 1930, Geerhardus Vos is alert to the importance of the two ages concept for Pauline eschatology.⁴ Did Paul inductively derive this concept solely from the Old and New Testaments? Not likely, since he was well aware of this strand of teaching deriving from extra-canonical Jewish apocalyptic. According to Vos, “The usage of both terms in Paul leaves the impression that the antithesis is not of the Apostle’s own coining.”⁵ After examining this expression in the teachings of Jesus, Vos concludes: “We would thus seem to be forced down to the Jewish period about contemporary to Jesus and Paul for reliable attestation of the existence of the terminology, always keeping in mind that it must be somewhat older than this time in view of the easy way in which Paul handles it.”⁶ Modern scholarship pushes the origins of this concept back into the second century BC, if not earlier. Furthermore, Vos was obviously influenced by the scholarship of men like Wilhelm Bousset, R. H. Charles, Gustaf Dalman, Hugo Gressmann, and Paul Volz, to name but a few, all of whom were well versed in Jewish literature of the Second Temple period and made use of it in explaining NT thought. Oscar Cullmann, Werner Kümmel, Herman Ridderbos, George Beasley-Murray, and George Ladd, among others, have continued to advocate this eschatological framework for understanding the NT. Many would now agree that Ernst Käsemann’s epigrammatic statement, “apocalyptic was the mother of all Christian theology,” contains a good deal of truth.⁷

George Ladd’s work, in particular, has been influential among evangelical NT scholars. Perhaps no single theologian has been more responsible for the shift from classic to progressive dispensationalism than Ladd. The reason is not hard to find. Classical dispensationalism’s airtight distinction between Israel and the church, exemplified, for example, in the distinction drawn between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God, seems oddly “out of sync” in light of the “now, but not yet” inaugurated eschatology of Ladd. Not surprisingly, classical dispensationalists criticize progressive dispensationalists on precisely this point. The notion that Jesus Christ is now reigning on

³ See further H. Sasse, “*aiōn*,” *TDNT* 1.206–7 and George E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (ed. Donald A. Hagner; rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993) 42–46.

⁴ Geerhardus Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology* (Princeton, NJ, 1930; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952; Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1994). See esp. p. 28 n. 36: “There is no escape from the conclusion that a piece of Jewish eschatology has been here by Revelation incorporated into the Apostle’s teaching. Paul had none less than Jesus Himself as a predecessor in this. The main structure of the Jewish Apocalyptic is embodied in our Lord’s teaching as well as in Paul’s.”

⁵ *Ibid.* 14.

⁶ *Ibid.* 16.

⁷ “The Beginnings of Christian Theology,” in *New Testament Questions of Today* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969) 102. But R. H. Charles had already made this point in 1899. See his *Eschatology: The Doctrine of a Future Life in Israel, Judaism and Christianity* (New York: Schocken, 1963) 193 (repr., 2d ed., London: A. & C. Black, 1913). See also D. C. Allison, Jr., “Apocalyptic,” *DJG* 19.

the Davidic throne undermines the foundation of classical dispensationalism, namely the sharp distinction between Israel and the Church.⁸

Second, exegetical traditions arising in the welter of Second Temple Judaism surface in NT texts. I can provide only a sketch. Jesus, Paul, and the elder John refer to the primeval Paradise as the place of the departed righteous (Luke 23:43; 2 Cor 12:4; Rev 2:7), a development traceable to Second Temple Judaism (*T. Levi* 18:10–11; *T. Dan* 5:12; *1 Enoch* 25:4–5 [pre-Christian]; cf. the later *2 Enoch* 13:27; 4 Ezra 7:36, 123; 8:52). Paul's rapture to the third heaven or paradise conforms to a traditional motif in Jewish apocalyptic.⁹ There is a consensus that Paul's Christology is greatly indebted to the pre-existent Wisdom traditions of Second Temple Judaism.¹⁰ Some NT writers apparently accept the interpretation, stemming from apocalyptic circles, about the identity of the "sons of God" in Genesis 6 and "the angels who did not keep their own position" (Jude 6; 2 Pet 2:4; cf. *1 Enoch* 6–11).¹¹ I think it likely that Paul's rationale for women having their heads covered in worship "because of the angels" (1 Cor 11:10) reflects a notion surfacing at Qumran in which the worship of the elect mystically joins or mirrors that of the angelic hosts.¹² We could, in fact, draw up a rather long list of theological ideas shared in common by the NT and Second Temple writings.¹³

While precise parallels in terms of genre are not abundant, there are some illuminating similarities. Luke's historiography affords numerous parallels to that of Josephus. The Pastorals, though not manuals on community behavior, nonetheless deal with matters of discipline and contain phrases that are reminiscent of the *Rule of the Community* at Qumran.¹⁴ More illuminating, however, are sections within NT documents bearing striking similarities to Second Temple literature. The books of Hebrews and Revelation provide plentiful examples, as do Paul's letters. Also, not surprising is the fact that the teaching of Jesus turns up many instances of shared diction, concepts, and motifs with the thought of Second Temple Judaism. A lengthy listing

⁸ For a brief sampling, see Tom McCall and Zola Levitt, "A Proper Biblical D.I.E.T.," <http://www.levitt.com>; Miles J. Stanford, "Pauline Versus Progressive Dispensationalism," <http://withchrist.org/MJS/paulvsprog.htm>; V. Vlach, "Progressive Dispensationalism," <http://mb-soft.com/believe/text/eschatol.htm>.

⁹ See A. T. Lincoln, "Paul the Visionary: The Setting and Significance of the Rapture to Paradise in 2 Corinthians 12:1–10," *NTS* 25 (1979) 204–20; idem, *Paradise Now and Not Yet: Studies in the Role of the Heavenly Dimension in Paul's Thought with Special Reference to His Eschatology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991) 71–86, 169–95; C. C. Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1982); J. D. Tabor, *Things Unutterable: Paul's Ascent to Paradise in its Greco-Roman, Judaic, and Early Christian Contexts* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986); J. F. Maile, "Heaven, Heavenlies, Paradise," *DPL* 381–83.

¹⁰ See, e.g. E. J. Schnabel, "Wisdom," *DPL* 967–73.

¹¹ For specific argumentation, see R. J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter* (WBC 50; Waco: Word, 1983) 50.

¹² See J. A. Fitzmyer, "A Feature of Qumran Angelology and the New Testament," *NTS* 4 (1957–58) 48–58; H. J. Cadbury, "A Qumran Parallel to Paul," *HTR* 51 (1958) 1–2; Morna Hooker, "Authority on Her Head: An Examination of I Cor xi,10," *NTS* 10 (1963/64) 412–13.

¹³ See, e.g. Larry R. Helyer, *Exploring Jewish Literature of the Second Temple Period: A Guide for New Testament Students* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002).

¹⁴ See E. E. Ellis, "Pastoral Letters," *DPL* 660, 664.

could easily be appended. In the words of Joseph Fitzmyer, “the amount of NT phrases that can be shown to be at home in Palestinian Judaism as a result of the discovery of the QS is almost numberless.”¹⁵ That number swells proportionately when we include the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Josephus, Philo, and rabbinic literature. At point after point, one discovers the threads of Second Temple Judaism woven into the fabric of our NT Scriptures.¹⁶

Evangelicals were relatively slow to recognize the indebtedness of the NT to Second Temple Judaism in part because of a legacy rooted in Reformation theology. The Second Helvetic Confession (Chapter I) and the Westminster Confession (Chapter I) relegate the Apocrypha to a non-factor in framing doctrine and practice. According to Westminster, all non-canonical books, of whatever character and provenance, may be read, as all other human books, *so long as they are not employed theologically to establish faith and practice*. Not until Johann Philipp Gabler’s famous inaugural address at Altdorf in 1787, do we hear a Protestant voice urging consideration of the Apocrypha in the process of doing biblical theology. “We are for many reasons not to despise the Apocrypha.”¹⁷ In 1646, when the Westminster Confession was completed, Josephus and Philo were widely known, but few of the Pseudepigrapha were, and the DSS would not come to light until three hundred years later.

Westminster’s stance on the Apocrypha is reflected in both covenant theology and classical dispensationalism. C. I. Scofield and Lewis Sperry Chafer were both reared in or fellowshipped in Presbyterian circles and had a high regard for the Westminster standards, even if, in the view of their Presbyterian contemporaries, they departed from some of its fundamental tenets. Consequently, biblical and systematic theology emanating from both covenant theology and dispensationalism, up until relatively recent times, made little or no use of Second Temple literature. Chafer and Ryrie, for example, make no use of this literature in their defense of dispensational premillennialism.¹⁸ Vos, as we have already seen, was aware of it, but makes only marginal use of it in his exposition of Pauline eschatology.

This has changed dramatically. Increasingly, evangelical NT scholars train at institutions where it is required that one have a good grasp of Jewish literature of the Second Temple. In short, these writings are now viewed as a valuable supplement for understanding our canonical Christian Scriptures. This is not to deny the essential point of the Reformed standards, namely,

¹⁵ *Responses to 101 Questions on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York/Mahwah: Paulist, 1992) 110.

¹⁶ See further Donald H. Juel, “Interpreting Israel’s Scriptures in the New Testament,” in *History of Biblical Interpretation* 283–303; Helyer, *Exploring Jewish Literature*; Richard Bauckham, “The Relevance of Extracanonical Jewish Texts to New Testament Study,” in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation* (ed. Joel B. Green; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995) 90–108 and Craig A. Evans, *Noncanonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992).

¹⁷ Cited by Werner Georg Kümmel, *The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of Its Problems* (trans. S. McLean Gilmour and Howard C. Kee; Nashville: Abingdon, 1972) 100.

¹⁸ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (8 vols.; Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947) 4.264–84; Charles C. Ryrie, *The Basis of the Premillennial Faith* (New York: Loizeaux, 1953). Ryrie has no references to Jewish literature of the Second Temple in his *Biblical Theology of the New Testament* (Chicago: Moody, 1959).

nothing outside the canonical books adds anything *necessary* for faith and practice. Still, there is much in the NT that can only be *fully* understood when seen in light of its larger Second Temple setting, and this includes theological and ethical matters. In my opinion, a full-orbed theology of the NT is not possible without the input deriving from the world of Second Temple Judaism; too many nuances in the canonical Scriptures escape us without this valuable context. Though it is not the purpose of the present essay to delve into this, the Greco-Roman background of the NT also merits careful examination. I am convinced, however, that the theological message of NT derives essentially from the OT as mediated by Second Temple Judaism and enriched by the “new wine” (Mark 2:22 and pars.) and “new treasure” (Matt 13:52) of the revelation of God in Christ.¹⁹

A sampling of contemporary, evangelical commentaries by scholars of both progressive dispensational or non-dispensational persuasion illustrates my point. The index of Scripture and other ancient writings in Darrell Bock’s two-volume commentary on Luke includes about a dozen pages of references to Second Temple literature.²⁰ In the preface to his commentary on Galatians, Richard Longenecker lists four features of his commentary that make it distinctive, among which is “its highlighting of Jewish themes and exegetical procedures.”²¹ His commentary makes copious use of Second Temple writings. Gregory Beale’s mammoth commentary on Revelation has an index of about 16 pages listing references to our literature. In his preface he justifies another commentary on Revelation and includes as one of these reasons the need to “study how Jewish exegetical tradition interpreted . . . Old Testament allusions and *how such interpretations related to their use in Revelation.*”²² As one illustration among many of how Second Temple Judaism assists us in better understanding NT morals and ethics, I mention David Instone-Brewer’s book on divorce and remarriage.²³ His entire thesis turns on understanding Jesus and Paul’s position from the vantage point of Second Temple Judaism.

I could easily give many other examples of current evangelical exegetical endeavor demonstrating the point.²⁴ In every case, the citation of Jewish literature of the Second Temple is not mere window dressing, but material viewed as throwing welcome light on the inspired NT text. Clearly, we are “now” in a new era of biblical exegesis and theology as evangelicals. But just as clearly, we are “not yet” reading the Holy Scriptures together in the New Jerusalem!

¹⁹ See my comment on p. 501, *Exploring Jewish Literature* and n. 30 on the same page listing several valuable resources for understanding Hellenistic culture.

²⁰ *Luke* (2 vols.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996).

²¹ *Galatians* (WBC 41; Dallas: Word, 1990) x.

²² *The Book of Revelation* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) xix.

²³ *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).

²⁴ For specific examples of how a “now but not yet” perspective throws light on Pauline theology in general and individual passages in particular see the helpful work of C. Marvin Pate, *The End of the Ages Has Come: The Theology of Paul* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995) 99–122, 217–36.

II. THE PROBLEMS OF SECOND TEMPLE JEWISH WRITINGS

One of the reasons evangelicals are still not “on the same page” exegetically and theologically has to do with precisely *how* the literature of the Second Temple period should function vis-à-vis the NT. This methodological and theological question is fraught with a number of problems. To illustrate the problems involved, I propose examining a particular issue that brings these problems to the surface, namely, the question of a temporary, messianic kingdom. This has proven to be a formidable barrier between most exponents of covenant theology and dispensationalism in all its permutations.

What contribution does the Jewish literature of the Second Temple make to this debate? Two questions are of utmost importance. First, is a temporary, messianic kingdom part of the core convictions of Second Temple Judaism, or is it a marginal belief confined primarily to apocalyptic circles? Second, is there continuity or discontinuity between Second Temple Judaism and the NT on this specific belief? This latter question, of course, involves us in a number of difficult hermeneutical issues and is a subset of the larger question of continuity and discontinuity between the Old and New Testaments.

We inquire first into the historical development of the idea of a temporary, messianic kingdom in Second Temple Judaism. R. H. Charles, an acknowledged master of this era from a former generation, concluded that the idea first appears in the extant literature in early pre-Maccabean times (ca. 168 BC). He theorized that the non-fulfillment of Jeremiah’s prophecy of the seventy years (25:11; 29:10 cf. 24:5–6; 23:5–6), the failure of Ezekiel’s prophecy of forty years (4:6 cf. 29:21), and Haggai and Zechariah’s failed vision of a restored Davidic kingdom, triggered a reinterpretation of the old prophecy of Jeremiah. Thus in Daniel 9:25–27, we now have *70 weeks of years*, or 490 years. According to Charles, in *1 Enoch* 83–90 (*The Dream Visions*), the 70 years of Jeremiah are equated with “the 70 successive reigns of the 70 angelic patrons to whom God had committed the care and administration of the world.”²⁵ From the vantage point of the real author of *1 Enoch* 83–90, “the sway of these angelic rulers was to terminate within the present generation, the Messianic kingdom was, therefore, at hand.”²⁶ Both chronologies expired, however, without fulfillment. This failure of prophecy, says Charles, led to still another reinterpretation of Daniel’s 70 weeks, this time a radical transformation of traditional expectations. In place of an eternal kingdom, we now have a temporary, messianic kingdom. This first manifests itself in *1 Enoch* 91:12–17 and 93:1–10, the so-called *Apocalypse of Weeks*, inserted into the *Epistle of Enoch* (91–107).²⁷

D. S. Russell more plausibly traces the rise of a temporary, messianic kingdom to a synthesis between two competing eschatological models, one

²⁵ R. H. Charles, *A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life in Israel, in Judaism, and Christian Eschatology from Pre-prophetic Times Till the Close of the New Testament Canon* (London: A. & C. Black, 1913); repr., *Eschatology: The Doctrine of a Future Life in Israel, Judaism and Christianity* (New York: Schocken, 1963) 188.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

rooted in a this-worldly conception and the other in a transcendental perspective.²⁸ The former was chronologically prior, seen, for instance, in the eighth-century prophets Amos (Amos 9:11–15) and Isaiah of Jerusalem (Isa 2:1–4; 4:2–6; 11:1–9), with the latter already appearing, in rudimentary form, in the Isaiah Apocalypse (Isaiah 24–27), Isaiah 56–66, Zechariah 9–14, and Daniel 9–12. The notion of an interim, messianic kingdom was thus a compromise between these two traditional eschatological schemes and testifies to the persistence of the older tradition.

As to the roots of apocalyptic eschatology, Paul Hanson and Ronald Clements join Russell in rejecting the contention that it arose primarily from foreign, mainly Iranian, influences. Instead, they trace it back to tendencies already inherent in Hebrew prophecy and maintain a genetic relationship between classical Hebrew prophecy and Jewish apocalyptic.²⁹ Gerhard von Rad sought to discover the roots of apocalyptic in the OT wisdom tradition.³⁰ While there doubtless are some connections here, and one may also discern Hellenistic and Eastern influences, apocalyptic, for the most part, arises from the matrix of Hebrew prophecy.

At any rate, the *Apocalypse of Weeks* provides us with a *terminus a quo* for the first literary appearance of the idea. The author organizes human history into ten weeks, or periods, with each week varying in duration.³¹ Six weeks have transpired with the seventh presently unfolding, which is the time of the author. The last three are yet future. The sequence is fairly transparent, following the biblical history. Enoch is born in the first week (*1 Enoch* 93:3), the fall of the wicked angels occurs in the second (93:4), Abraham arises at the end of the third (93:5), the Law of Moses is given at the end of the fourth (93:6), the Temple is built in the fifth (93:7), the apostasy of Israel, the destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar, and the exile take place in the sixth (93:8). The seventh week witnesses a period of great apostasy, but also the rise of a spiritual leader and a faithful community of followers (93:9–10). In my opinion, the faithful are the Essene community and the leader is the Teacher of Righteousness.³² During the eighth week, the

²⁸ *Jewish Apocalyptic* 297. But see already J. W. Bailey, "The Temporary Messianic Reign in the Literature of Early Judaism," *JBL* 53 (1934) 170–71.

²⁹ See Russell, *Method & Message* 18–20; Paul D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975) 1–31; Ronald E. Clements, *Old Testament Prophecy: From Oracles to Canon* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996) 182–88.

³⁰ *Wisdom in Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972).

³¹ I follow Charles, *APOT* 2.260, Russell, *Jewish Apocalyptic* 291, and J. T. Milik (*The Books of Enoch* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976] 267) in rearranging chapters 91–104. The proposed rearrangement is 93:1–10 and 91:12–17.

³² Nickelsburg comments, "The similarities [between the Enochian community and Qumran] are extremely close. At the very least we must attribute the writing to a sect with a dualistic theology that withdrew into the wilderness in order to escape what it considers to be a satanic cult in Jerusalem. Our closest analogy is the Qumran community, but this does not exclude the possibility of some other similar group within the general orbit of Qumranic theology and self-understanding" (*Jewish Literature Between the Bible and Mishnah* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981] 145). For the view that the Essenes were a splinter group from an earlier Enochian Judaism, see Gabriele Boccacini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis: The Parting of the Ways Between Qumran and Enochic Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

righteous wage war with the wicked and a great temple is built (91:12–13). During the ninth week, the righteous reign over the earth and sinners are removed and judged (93:14). During the tenth week, the angels are judged, the present heavens and earth pass away, and the new heavens and new earth appear (91:15–16). This ushers in an unending succession of weeks, that is, the eternal state (91:17).

In this scenario, Charles identified the eighth week with the temporary, messianic kingdom, and Russell followed suit.³³ Not all agree, however. Larry Kreitzer rejects this view on the following grounds: (1) following Ferdinand Dexinger, he believes the eighth and ninth weeks are describing the imminent revolt of the Maccabees against the Syrians;³⁴ (2) there is no specific reference to a messiah in the passage anywhere and thus the messianic nature of the kingdom is suspect; (3) no other passage from chaps. 91–104 teaches a temporary, messianic kingdom.

In response, the following should be noted. A major problem is the reference to “a house built for the Great King in glory for evermore” (*1 Enoch* 91:13). If one takes this as a reference to Herod’s Temple, the passage must be dated to no earlier than 20 BC, considerably later than the date assigned to the *Epistle of Enoch* by most scholars. One must accept Dexinger’s problematic theory of later redactional additions to account for this. More likely, the reference is to the eschatological temple of Ezekiel 40–48 and the *Temple Scroll* (cols. ii–xiii and xxx–xlvii). Furthermore, in my view, the “eternal plant of righteousness” (*1 Enoch* 93:10; cf. Isa 61:3) in the seventh week refers to the Qumran community (cf. *1QS* 8:4–5; *CD* 1:7) and thus the approximate time of the Maccabees. Furthermore, if I am right in identifying the Qumran Community with the Essenes, we can hardly expect a positive assessment of the Temple (“in glory for evermore”) and the Maccabean dynasty (“they shall acquire great things through their righteousness,” 91:13). Therefore, I conclude that the eighth week fits better with an interim, messianic kingdom, even though I admit there is no explicit reference to a messiah in the passage.

Kreitzer’s second and third objections raise a perennial methodological problem, namely, how much weight should be placed on “silences” in texts. *1 Enoch* 90:37–39, part of the *Dream Visions*, does, in fact, portray the messiah as a snow-white cow. Kreitzer apparently accepts Dexinger’s complex redactional history such that the *Apocalypse of Weeks* stands isolated from the remainder of *1 Enoch* and even represents a different community. But even if the *Apocalypse of Weeks* is a later insertion, something Dexinger does not prove, I think we should assume that the final editor of *1 Enoch* essentially agrees with its theology unless we have convincing proof to the contrary. In my judgment, we do not. Furthermore, we should also mention that *1 Enoch* 10:11–11:2, part of the *Book of Watchers*, assumes the same general scheme as the *Apocalypse of Weeks*, including an intermediate era of peace

³³ Russell, *Jewish Apocalyptic* 291–92.

³⁴ *Henochs Zehnwochenapokalypse und offene Probleme der Apokalyptikforschung* (StudBib 29; Leiden: Brill, 1977). See Kreitzer’s discussion, *Jesus and God in Paul’s Eschatology* (JSNTSup 19; Sheffield: JSOT, 1987) 32–37.

and righteousness followed by a great judgment and the eternal state. To be sure, neither is there any mention of how long the period lasts or of a messiah. The most that can be said is that it coheres with the framework set forth in *1 Enoch* 91:12–19; 93:1–10.

Our second source is the Book of *Jubilees*, dating to after 175 BC and prior to 100 BC. It may, in fact, antedate the *Apocalypse of Weeks*. This work has numerous connections with the sectarian literature of Qumran. Charles thought two passages made reference to a temporary, messianic kingdom, 1:27–29 and 23:26–31. The problem with the 1:27–29 passage is that, again, it nowhere explicitly mentions either a messiah or a temporary kingdom. One must read these features into the text on the basis of other texts. In 23:26–31, we do have a reference to men approaching 1,000 years in life span, but nothing about a 1,000-year kingdom, much less a temporary kingdom. The conception is rather of a gradual development of an eternal kingdom on earth preceded, seemingly, by “the great judgment” (23:11). Charles, however, reconciled this with a progressively-developing, temporary kingdom by assuming that 23:11 is a proleptic announcement of judgment rather than the final judgment itself, which is mentioned in 23:30.³⁵ There is the intriguing comment that “there will be no Satan and no evil (one) who will destroy” (v. 29), reminding us of Revelation 20:2 and its millennial setting. While it is possible that the author of *Jubilees* believed in a temporary, messianic kingdom, the evidence is even less certain than in *1 Enoch*.

That brings us to three apocalyptic works, two of which undoubtedly incorporate an interim, messianic kingdom into their eschatology, and a third that possibly does. We begin with the possible candidate, *2 Enoch*. Both date and provenance of *2 Enoch* are, unfortunately, problematic. I follow Nickelsburg and Stone in placing the work sometime in the first century AD.

Two passages might be cited in favor of an interim kingdom. Charles interpreted 32:1–33:2 to mean that earth history conforms to creation week in which each day represents a 1,000-year period. This assumes a literal understanding of Psalm 90:4 on the part of the author of *2 Enoch* (cf. 2 Pet 3:8): “For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past.” On this reckoning, earth history lasts 6,000 years followed by a seventh day, a millennial Sabbath. The seventh day gives way to an eighth, a new Sabbath of unending time. Furthermore, if this is read in conjunction with 65:6–10, we have the Lord’s “great judgment” (65:6) occurring just before “a single age” (65:8), presumably the eighth day, the eternal state, since “time will perish” (65:7), and it will consist of “indestructible light, and paradise, great and incorruptible” (65:10). So understood, the similarity to Revelation 20–21 is striking.

Will Charles’s interpretation hold up? We have a textual problem that must be faced. The above translation for 32:1–33:2 is the longer or “J” text of *2 Enoch*. A shorter version, however, the “A” text, does not contain this passage. Actually, there are twenty known MSS. of *2 Enoch*, each of which varies considerably from the others. Thus the question arises as to which text

³⁵ *The Book of Jubilees* (London: A. & C. Black, 1902) 150; *APOT* 2.9.

is closer to the original and whether the longer text is a Christian interpolation. F. I. Andersen's conclusion is not encouraging: "In the present state of our knowledge, the genuineness of any disputed passage is difficult to judge."³⁶

There is a slender bit of evidence, however, that might incline us to accept Charles's interpretation. In the Christian work *Epistle of Barnabas*, the author employs a similar approach to the creation week and likewise adopts a sex-septa view of history (15:4–9). It is not likely that Barnabas advances something novel here; he is probably incorporating an already existing Jewish tradition for Christian ends.³⁷ But even if he is not, this text witnesses to early Christian millennialism, all the more remarkable because of its pronounced anti-Judaic stance.

We conclude that *2 Enoch* may witness to a millennial tradition involving a temporary kingdom on the earth preceding the eternal state. To be sure, there is no explicit mention of a messiah and so we cannot, without qualification, say a temporary, *messianic* kingdom. Once again, we have the problem of how much weight should be placed on "silences" in the text.

Two Jewish apocalypses do clearly incorporate a temporary, messianic kingdom into their eschatology. The first of these is 4 Ezra (2 Esdras), a composite work betraying both Jewish and Christian sources. The earliest of the three sections (chaps. 3–14) is basically Jewish with only a few recognizable Christian interpolations. This section is arranged into seven visions. The third vision includes a description of the messianic era and is where our interest falls (7:26–44).

According to this passage, when the Messiah is revealed, he reigns on earth with the righteous for a period of four hundred years. There are textual variants for the number of years involved. An Arabic MS. and the Syriac MSS. read "thirty years," two Arabic MSS. read "one thousand years," and the Ethiopian and Armenian versions omit any number at all. After this period of messianic reign, death comes to all the living, including the Messiah, and primeval silence envelopes the earth for seven days, a sort of recapitulation of the original creation week. Then follows, much like *Jubilees* and *2 Enoch*, a period similar to an eighth day, in which we have the renewal of all things, resurrection and reward for the righteous, and resurrection and eternal punishment for the wicked. At their sentencing, the wicked are shown the delights of Paradise and the torments of Hell and reminded of the enormity of their disobedience. The final judgment of the wicked lasts seven years (7:43).

One is immediately reminded of Revelation 20–21 in which Christ reigns with his saints for a thousand years, followed by the second resurrection, the

³⁶ OTP 1.94.

³⁷ Charles E. Hill cites three passages in Pseudo-Barnabas that appear to be quotations from *2 Baruch* and 4 Ezra (*Barn* 11:9 cf. *2 Apoc. Bar.* 61:7; *Barn* 16:6 cf. *2 Apoc. Bar.* 32:4; *Barn* 12:1 cf. 4 Ezra 4:33; 5:5). Hill concludes, "Even though Pseudo-Barnabas is probably not to be regarded as a chiliast himself, his work is evidence for the influence of Jewish chiliastic texts on Christian writers of the early second century" (*Regnum Caelorum: Patterns of Millennial Thought in Early Christianity* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001) 63. I disagree with Hill's judgment that Pseudo-Barnabas is probably not chiliastic.

Great White Throne judgment, and the eternal state, depicted as a glorious New Jerusalem.

Our last text is the *Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch*. It, too, is late first-century AD and may even be from the first third of the second century, reflecting the tragedy of the Bar Kochba Revolt.³⁸ The work is extant in its entirety in only one Syriac MS., which claims to be a translation from the Greek. There is no consensus, however, on whether it goes back to a Hebrew original.³⁹

This composition gives the most detailed description of a temporary, messianic kingdom, though it must be confessed that there are a number of inconsistencies in this regard. It is revealed to Baruch that a time of great tribulation befalls the earth before the Anointed One comes. This tribulation is divided into twelve parts (2 *Apoc. Bar.* 27:1–15). The length of this period is said to be “two parts: weeks of seven weeks” (28:1). This cryptic time frame is obviously indebted to Daniel, but nearly impossible to interpret with any certainty. After this period of intense tribulation, however, a golden age on earth ensues, a time when “the Anointed One will begin to be revealed” (29:3). The mythical creatures Behemoth and Leviathan appear and serve as “nourishment for all who are left” (29:5). The earth becomes a Garden of Eden and productivity defies imagination. Though it hardly seems necessary, the “treasury of manna” reappears for the sustenance of those who are so fortunate to live in these halcyon days (29:8). “After these things,” the Anointed One returns in glory and both the righteous and wicked dead are raised to life, the former to “enjoy themselves,” the latter to “waste away” and “know their torment has come” (30:1–5).

In chapters 35–40, Baruch receives a vision and its interpretation. The vision is of a forest of many trees planted on a plain and surrounded by high mountains and rugged rocks. A vine with a fountain beneath it arose and swept away the forest in a deluge, leaving only a cedar tree. This cedar tree, designated as a remnant of wickedness, is eventually uprooted and burned with the rest of the forest (chap. 36). The vine, however, “became a valley full of unfading flowers” (37:1). The interpretation that follows is odd because it recasts the forest as a sequence of four world empires somewhat after the pattern of Daniel 2 and 7. Like Daniel, the fourth empire is the apex of evil and is destroyed by the arrival of the Anointed One whose kingdom is likened to the vine and fountain (39:1–8).

The interpretation ends with the Anointed One on Mount Zion, binding and putting to death the last ruler. The Anointed One’s dominion is said to last “forever until the world of corruption has ended and until the times which have been mentioned before have been fulfilled” (40:4). Charles, Russell, and Kreitzer all agree that this rule of the Anointed One or Messiah is of limited duration.⁴⁰

³⁸ See Helyer, *Exploring Jewish Literature* 423 for evidence.

³⁹ See Klijn, *OTP* 1.615–17.

⁴⁰ Charles, *APOT* 2.478–79; Russell, *Jewish Apocalyptic* 293–94; Kreitzer, *Jesus and God* 74–77. Klijn, *OTP* 1.619, rejects this interpretation (but see Kreitzer’s critique of Klijn).

This basic scheme reappears in chapters 53–72. This time Baruch has a vision of twelve clouds in succession coming up from the great sea. Each cloud is full of either black or bright water, the former being times of disaster and the latter times of blessing, with the clouds alternating between black and bright. Under this figure, chapters 56–68 rehearse the history of Israel beginning with the fall of Adam. The eleventh cloud of black water refers to the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem and the First Temple (chap. 67). After this, the twelfth cloud of bright water depicts the restoration of Judah and the Second Temple (chap. 68).

The twelfth bright water, however, is followed by black water darker than all that had gone before. This thirteenth cloud, a sort of odd man out, represents the great tribulation preceding the days of Messiah (chap. 70). A stereotyped description of end-time behaviors and disasters concludes with the coming of the Servant, the Anointed One. The entire earth is destroyed in one gigantic cataclysm, except, of course, for righteous Israelites and those Gentiles who either did not know Israel or did not oppress them. The latter survive subservient to Israel. Chapters 73–74 depict an era described as “the beginning of that which is incorruptible” (74:2). Though not explicitly stated here, presumably this gives way at last to the eternal state.

On the basis of texts so far considered, belief in a temporary, messianic kingdom appears to be confined to sectarian, apocalyptic circles. There are other texts, however, standing outside apocalyptic circles, that suggest this notion was more widespread. For example, the Samaritans apparently had a very old tradition of a temporary, messianic kingdom lasting 1,000 years.⁴¹ In the Talmud and Midrash, we run across statements discussing the length of the temporary, messianic kingdom, indicating that it had been incorporated into rabbinic Judaism.⁴²

The earlier Mishnah, on the other hand, is very reticent with regard to eschatological matters and does not mention it at all. Most scholars have inferred that the rabbis deliberately sought to remove the fire from simmering nationalism, erupting with such grievous consequences in two failed revolts, both of which were accompanied, if not propelled by, fervent messianism. The Mishnah is remarkable for many things, but none as curious as the arcane discussion that unfolds, in which one would scarcely know that Rome and her mighty legions even existed!⁴³ Everything revolves around the world of holiness and ritual purity; almost everything else is “beyond the pale.”

The situation changes markedly in the Talmud and other rabbinic works. Eschatological traditions resurface and, once again, we hear about a temporary, messianic kingdom (*Pes.* 68a; *Ber.* 34b; *Sanh.* 91b; 97a-b; 99a; *Shab.* 63a, 113b; *Abod. Zar.* 9a; *Sifre* [Deut 310]). In fact, discussions about the length of the messianic kingdom, variously computed to be 40, 70, 365, 400, 1,000, 2,000 and 7,000 years, are attributed to rabbis contemporary with or

⁴¹ See Bailey, “The Temporary Messianic Reign” 179 for references to scholarly studies of this issue.

⁴² See Joseph Gedalia Klausner, “Eschatology: In the Talmudic Era,” *EncJud* 6.879–80.

⁴³ Helyer, *Exploring Jewish Literature* 459.

not long after the Apocalypse of John.⁴⁴ If these attributions are reliable, the notion of a temporary, messianic kingdom was in fact more widespread in the first century than one might at first think. Apparently, apocalyptic fervor swept up many Jews during those turbulent times. Of course, many in modern Orthodox Judaism still affirm this teaching.⁴⁵ The fact that belief in a temporary, messianic kingdom has persisted for so long in Judaism is at least noteworthy.

Whereas the notion of an interim, messianic kingdom went underground in the late Tannaitic era, the apostolic and post-apostolic Fathers kept it alive in Christian writings (e.g. *Barn* 15.1–9; Papias, cited in Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 3.39.12; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 5.32–39; Justin, *Dial.* 80–81; Tertullian, *Marc.* 3.24; *Apol.* 48; Commodianus, *Instr.* 1.44; Victorinus, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* 1.5; 20.2; Lactantius, *Inst.* 7:24; et al.).⁴⁶ As Eusebius acknowledges in the fourth century, a majority of Christian theologians in his day were millenarians, even if he was not keen on it himself (*Hist. Eccl.* 3.39.11–13).

While providing helpful perspective and by no means to be dismissed, historical theology must not substitute for biblical theology. Again and again, the biblical theologian returns to the fundamental question, what did the biblical writers believe? The all-important question for NT exegesis and theology is whether this Jewish belief was taken over and Christianized by the followers of Jesus. In attempting to utilize texts from Second Temple Judaism to resolve this question, however, we must be alert to difficulties and problems, as already indicated in our above discussion. Let me summarize some of these problems.

1. *Textual and linguistic problems abound.* In our one, specific issue of a temporary, messianic kingdom, we encounter a number of these. As James VanderKam reminds us, for *1 Enoch* we only have complete MS. evidence in “an Ethiopic translation of a Greek rendering of the Semitic original (written in Hebrew or Aramaic).”⁴⁷ We do have about seven fragments of *1 Enoch* in

⁴⁴ These include Eleazar ben Hyrcanus (ca. AD 80–130), Joshua (ca. AD 90), Eleazar ben Azariah (ca. AD 100), Jose ben Galilee (ca. AD 110), and Akiva (d. AD 135). Bailey, “The Temporary Messianic Reign” 185 n. 27 provides a summary from Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrash* (6 vols.; Munich: C. H. Beck, 1922–1961) 3.826. See E. Rivkin, “Pharisees,” *IDBSup* 657–63 and M. J. Cook, “Jesus and the Pharisees: the Problem as It Stands Today,” *JES* 15 (1978) 441–60 for some guidelines in determining the authenticity of sayings attributed to a particular Tanna. For a quite different assessment, adopting a radical, historical-critical stance, see J. Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees before 70* (3 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1971).

⁴⁵ Louis Jacobs, “Messiah: In Modern Jewish Thought,” *EncJud* 11.1415.

⁴⁶ Hill, *Regnum Caelorum*, provides a thorough study of millennialism in the first three Christian centuries. His careful work deserves a much more extended response than I can give here. He clearly demonstrates non-chiliasm thought among orthodox Christians during this time. In my opinion, however, his “key” for determining the absence or presence of genuine chiliasm, when no explicit statements are forthcoming, namely a linkage of a subterranean intermediate state with chiliasm, is problematic. It assumes a system and consistency that is not present in either Jewish or Christian eschatology. He also too easily sides with Eusebius in discounting the testimony of Papias. In short, I think some of the conclusions he draws go beyond what can actually be claimed.

⁴⁷ James VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994) 37.

Aramaic from Qumran. Most of us will have to be content with relying on the expertise of others in textual matters. The situation is even worse for *2 Enoch*, which is only known from MSS. in Old Slavonic, translated from Greek of which there are no extant copies. There are, however, good reasons to think that *2 Enoch* goes back to Hebrew or Aramaic originals, but in this case we do not even have fragments from Qumran. The complete text of *2 Baruch* is known from only one Syriac ms., with 36 different texts in Syriac extant. An Arabic text from Sinai and one fragment in Greek are also known. In the case of *Jubilees*, we can be quite sure it was originally written in Hebrew as attested to by the 15 or 16 fragments found at Qumran. But, once again, the complete text survives only in Ethiopic, with fragments of Greek and Syriac, and approximately one-fourth of the text in Latin.

If one factors in further issues like evidence for redactional activity and Christian interpolations, our problems are only compounded. No wonder, then, that caution is the watchword in this area.

2. *Apocalyptic language refuses to conform to tidy patterns and schemes.* Systematic it is not. Inherent tensions seem almost constitutional.⁴⁸ One must be alert to this *even in NT texts*. Unfortunately, recalcitrant texts in the NT are too often treated like unruly cowlicks that must be attacked with hairspray and gel! A recurring temptation is to smooth out all tensions and difficulties. Dispensationalists have been prone to “distinguish between things that differ” and consequently introduce increasingly more complicated schemes in order to accommodate the text in all its variegation. Thus questionable distinctions have been drawn between the rapture and the revelation of Christ, between several postulated resurrections, and between various judgments and thrones. For their part, covenant theologians tend to retreat behind the observation that apocalyptic material is essentially metaphorical and symbolic. A rider quickly attaches, however: no doctrine should be extracted from apocalyptic texts not agreeing with propositions based on the epistles, Paul’s in particular. I cite Vos:

The minor deliverances [he is here referring to Revelation 20] ought in the harmonizing process be made to give way to the far-sweeping, age-dominating program of the theology of Paul. After the latter has been interpreted to a satisfactory degree of clearness and certainty, then, and not until then, will come the time to look the Apocalypse in the face, and to endeavor to bring it into consonance with the Pauline deliverances.⁴⁹

Both approaches, in my opinion, are flawed and one-sided. Spending more effort recovering the Jewish roots of the NT can serve as a corrective. We need to understand better how Second Temple literature functions, which, of course, includes the NT. We need to understand better how NT writers

⁴⁸ “The older discussions of the Messianism of Judaism suffered from a tendency to over-systematize the thinking and to overlook or minimize any apparent variations in the thought of the various writers. But more recent discussion has correctly distinguished between the points of view of various writers and periods” (Bailey, “The Temporary Messianic Reign” 171).

⁴⁹ *Pauline Eschatology* 226.

incorporate and modify shared traditions. At the end of the day, we may well have to allow some “loose ends” to exist in our biblical theology.

The question of whether a particular corpus of writings in the NT ought to be privileged is problematic. I am a great fan of Paul’s, and the placement of his epistles after the Gospels and Acts in our canon says something about the esteem in which he was held by early Christians, but does this mean the rest of the canon must be read through a Pauline filter? Is this not an evangelical version of adopting “a canon within the canon”?

3. *The question of continuity and discontinuity is fraught with difficulties.* Here one’s prior theological commitments become huge. Both parties in the debate keep appealing to exegetical arguments for the preferability of their view without “coming clean” on some underlying presuppositions dictating the outcome.⁵⁰ This can be frustrating, to be sure, and we are prone to slip into thinly disguised *ad hominem* arguments. I select two examples from men who are “present with the Lord” and presumably now “on the same page.” Geerhardus Vos includes the following in his rejection of chiliasm:

Chiliasm is a daring literalizing and concretizing of the substance of ancient revelation. Due credit should be given for the naïve type of faith such a mentality involves. It is a great pity that from this very point of view premillennarianism has not been psychologically studied, so as to ascertain, whence in its long, tortuous course through the ages it has acquired such characteristics.⁵¹

Thus we have it: premillennialism is permeated by a pathological psychology.

Not to be outdone, John Walvoord resorts to the following argument for his rejection of amillennialism: “A third influence in the present power of amillennialism is found in liberal Protestant theology.”⁵² He then proceeds to sketch the dangers of amillennialism for bibliology, theology proper, angelology, anthropology, soteriology, ecclesiology, and eschatology.⁵³ Thus we have it: guilt by association.

Actually, when one carefully reads Vos and Walvoord, it becomes clear they are both reacting to charges that their stance is harmful or heretical. Unfortunately, prolonged debate over the years, in an atmosphere of mutual suspicion and defensiveness, has poisoned the well of evangelical unity. We need to be forthright. These arguments are better mothballed than recycled.

⁵⁰ Vern S. Poythress, *Understanding Dispensationalists* (2d ed.; Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1994) 52–70 has some helpful observations here. Bruce K. Waltke’s response to the essays in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church* (ed. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992) 347–59 illustrates my point. His critique of progressive dispensationalists is razor-sharp in its acuteness and he skillfully exposes the hermeneutical presuppositions of his interlocutors. It would have been helpful, however, if he had clearly stated that he, too, interprets Scripture from the standpoint of a theological-hermeneutical system, namely, Reformed theology. A double-edged sword cuts both ways!

⁵¹ *Pauline Eschatology* 227.

⁵² *The Millennial Kingdom* (Findlay, OH: Dunham, 1959) 10.

⁵³ *Ibid.* 68–83.

We are fellow travelers on the way to Zion, our theology is “in process,” and what we share in common is infinitely more important and precious than our disagreements.

4. *The problem of silences bedevils historical studies.* All that can be offered here is a cautionary word. Direct evidence is essential for sound arguments. One should not, however, place undue weight on lack of evidence; it does not follow *necessarily* that we have evidence of a lack. It is a salutary reminder that had there not been disorders occurring during the Lord’s Supper at Corinth, we would lack direct evidence from Paul’s other extant letters that his congregations observed this ritual meal. Without the Corinthian correspondence, we might have inferred it from a few passing allusions in his other letters, and, of course, the book of Acts. But had the Corinthian letters not survived, I am convinced some scholars would have cast doubt on the observance of the Lord’s Supper in the Pauline communities, adding another bone of contention between Pauline and Petrine Christianity à la F. C. Baur!

Another example is from Qumran. For a number of years, majority opinion held that the Qumran community believed in immortality, but not bodily resurrection. Up until the release of Cave Four MSS., no unambiguous texts turned up affirming resurrection. To be sure, numerous copies of *1 Enoch* and Daniel at Qumran suggested that the community believed in bodily resurrection since the aforementioned texts do contain the notion. But now we have two texts from the Qumran community itself that probably do affirm bodily resurrection (*The Messianic Apocalypse* 4Q521 and *Pseudo-Ezekiel* 4Q386).⁵⁴ In this case, if one had held rigidly to a criterion of direct evidence before a teaching could be accredited, one would probably have been wrong.

Methodologically, we are better served if we openly admit instances where we have lack of clear evidence and qualify our findings in such cases with modifiers like “possibly” or “perhaps.” These latter qualifiers, however, should only be employed when we have inferential or indirect evidence to support it. A “perhaps” without inferential evidence is a phantom.

III. THE PROMISE OF SECOND TEMPLE JUDAISM

We need to roll up our sleeves and attend to the difficult question of continuity and discontinuity, not just between Old and New Testaments, but also between the thought of Second Temple Judaism and the Jesus movement. I suggest that we carefully document eschatological beliefs as they are encountered across the entire spectrum of Second Temple literature, which includes the NT, and then compare and contrast them. It goes without saying that the differing historical, literary, and cultural contexts should be

⁵⁴ For further discussion see George W. Nickelsburg, “Resurrection,” *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (2 vols.; eds. Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 2.764–67; J. J. Collins, “Eschatology of Late Antiquity,” *DNTB* 335.

appreciated and respected in this process. Instances of continuity discovered in NT literature invariably reflect Christological modifications. Jesus of Nazareth infuses Christian eschatology or it is not Christian at all. In my judgment, at the end of this process, we discover both continuity and discontinuity.

To assist us in this enterprise, we need to reconstruct, as best we can, the theology of the various sects in first-century Judaism.⁵⁵ What eschatological beliefs characterized Pharisees, for example, during the first half of the first century AD? This is a difficult undertaking, because we do not have any documents emanating from *unquestionably* Pharisaic circles during this period.⁵⁶ What we have are contemporary sources, like the DSS (4QpNah [4Q169] i 4–8; ii 1–10; iii 1–8), Josephus (*J.W.* 2.162–63 [8.14]; *Ant.* 13.171–73 [5.9]; *Ant.* 13.297–98 [10.6]; *Ant.* 18.11–18 [1.2–5]), and the NT (e.g. Mark 7:1–23; 15:1–20; 23:1–31; Acts 5:33–39; 23:6–9 and *passim*) that attribute certain traditions, beliefs, and doctrines to the Pharisees, though, unfortunately, very little of an eschatological nature. To these sources should be added works like the *Psalms of Solomon* and *Judith*, deriving, in my opinion, from proto-Pharisaic or Pharisaic circles.⁵⁷ The former is valuable for its vision of a Davidic messiah who will restore Israel and destroy the ungodly nations.

Methodologically, it would be unsound simply to assume that first-century Pharisees held the various and sundry eschatological beliefs encountered in the Pseudepigrapha and DSS. We are on safer ground if we include in our profile, provisionally, only those eschatological beliefs also attributed to Tannaim. In this procedure, however, we must constantly remind ourselves that Pharisaism probably did *not* have a systematic, uniform eschatology. Pharisees surely agreed on some core beliefs, but just as surely, heatedly debated the fine points. In that, they were much like modern Orthodox Jews and evangelicals. To borrow and adapt a proverbial saying, “If you have two evangelicals, you have at least three opinions!”

Once we have finished our provisional outline, we can then compare it in detail to NT eschatology. In this regard, since Jesus was theologically close to the Pharisees (cf. Matt 23:2–3) and Paul was a Pharisee (Gal 1:14;

⁵⁵ I am here thinking of the approach utilized by E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980); Michael Edward Stone, *Scripture, Sects and Visions: A Profile of Judaism from Ezra to the Jewish Revolts* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980); and N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992).

⁵⁶ See S. Mason, “Pharisees,” *DNTB* 782–87 for a discussion of the sources and difficulties in reconstructing Pharisaic thought.

⁵⁷ See Helyer, *Exploring Jewish Literature* 170–71, 389 for argumentation. Donald Hagner describes the *Psalms of Solomon* as “that superb compendium of Pharisaic worship” (“Pharisees,” *ZPEB* 4.749). In this he agrees with G. Buchanan Gray, *APOT* 2.627–30 and J. Schüpphaus, *Die Psalmen Salomos: Ein Zeugnis Jerusalemer Theologie und Frömmigkeit in der Mitte des vorchristlichen Jahrhunderts* (ALGHJ 7; Leiden: Brill, 1977). For reservations see R. B. Wright, “The Psalms of Solomon, the Pharisees and the Essenes,” *1972 Proceedings* (ed. R. A. Kraft; SBLSCS 2; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1972) 136–54; idem, “Psalms of Solomon,” in *OTP* 2.641. Unfortunately, *Judith* mentions little or nothing of an eschatological nature.

Phil 3:5–6; cf. Acts 23:6), it seems probable that some of Jesus and Paul's eschatological views were shared in common with the Pharisees. Our aim is to discover the degree of continuity and discontinuity between the respective patterns of eschatological thought. On the basis of our findings, we can then offer a tentative conclusion on the specific question under investigation.

Only a few eschatological teachings are directly attributed to the Pharisees in the NT, such as bodily resurrection (Acts 23:6–9; cf. Mark 12:18 and pars.), the appearance of Elijah before the coming of messiah (Mark 9:9–13; Matt 17:9–13), the birth of messiah in Bethlehem (Matt 2:4–6), and the Davidic ancestry of the messiah (Mark 12:35–37; Matt 22:41–46; Luke 20:41–44). Several other teachings, mentioned in the NT but not directly attributed to Pharisees, probably were also taught at least by some Pharisees, since they appear in latter rabbinic sources and are attributed to Tannaim. Among these I would include the regathering and restoration of the tribes of Israel (Matt 19:28–28; cf. Mark 13:27; Matt 24:31; cf. *Ps. Sol.* 11:2–9; 17:28–31, 50; *b. Meg.* 12a; *b. Pes.* 88a), a time of great tribulation preceding the coming of messiah (Mark 13:19–20; Matt 24:21–22; Luke 21:20–14; cf. *b. Abod. Zar.* 3b; *b. Ber.* 7b; [cf. the much later *Tg. Ps.-J.* Num 11:26]), an eschatological battle led by the messiah against the forces of evil headed up by a “lawless one” (2 Thess 2:3–10; Rev 16:12–16; 19:11–21; cf. *Ps. Sol.* 17:24; *b. Abod. Zar.* 3b; *b. Ber.* 7b [cf. also *Tg. Ps.-J.* Num 11:26]), and final judgment issuing in everlasting felicity of the righteous and everlasting punishment of the wicked (Matt 25:31–46; Rev 20:11–15 et al.; cf. *Ps. Sol.* 10:4; 11:6; 14:12–13; 17:26–32; *b. Rosh HaSh.* 16b, 17a; *b. Shab.* 152b, 153; *b. Ber.* 28b).⁵⁸ To these I would add the temporary, messianic kingdom since, as we have seen, rabbinic sources attribute this to sages descended from the Pharisees.⁵⁹ I concur with J. Massyngberde Ford, among others, that there is an implicit reference to the messianic interregnum in 1 Corinthians 15:23–28 and an explicit one in Revelation 20:4–6.⁶⁰

IV. CONCLUSION

In spite of considerable problems, a thorough acquaintance with Jewish literature of the Second Temple period holds great promise for NT exegesis and theology. I have attempted to illustrate its contribution by looking at one, small, debated issue, namely, the question of a temporary, messianic kingdom in NT eschatology. On the basis of this admittedly cursory exami-

⁵⁸ See Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (2 vols.; 8th ed.; New York: Longmans and Green, 1910) 1.160–79 and 2.710–41 for a convenient listing and discussion of relevant passages.

⁵⁹ See n. 44.

⁶⁰ “Millennium,” *ABD* 4.833. D. E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22* (WBC 52c; Dallas: Word, 2002) 1104, 1107–8 agrees that “the expectation of a temporary eschatological messianic kingdom is clearly expressed in Rev 20:4–6” (p. 1104), but sees no evidence of it in 1 Cor 15:20–28. In support of an interim kingdom in Paul, see Wilbur B. Wallis, “The Use of Psalms 8 and 110 in 1 Corinthians 15:25–27 and in Hebrews 1 and 2,” *JETS* 15 (1972) 25–29; idem, “The Problem of an Intermediate Kingdom in 1 Corinthians 15:20–28,” *JETS* 18 (1975) 233–37.

nation, I have concluded that such a belief was known in first-century Judaism and advocated by some Pharisees. Though I do not have the space to argue the case here, I will state my position with respect to the NT. I think statements compatible with such a view may be found in Jesus and Paul (e.g. Matt 19:28; Luke 13:29–30; 22:28–30; 1 Cor 6:2–3; 15:22–28),⁶¹ though it is not the only or exclusive eschatological scheme. For example, John, Ephesians, Colossians, Hebrews, and 2 Peter do not easily fit into a millenarian scheme. It clearly does appear in the Apocalypse⁶² (Rev 20:1–10) and early Christian eschatology.⁶³

Where does this leave us? Can we not admit that our eschatology is at times untidy and uncertain? A strong propensity in evangelical theology for a system devoid of any ambiguity and tension tends either to excessive harmonizing or unwarranted minimizing of eschatological texts. At any rate, the notion of an intermediate, messianic kingdom should not be elevated to a first-order doctrine. None of the great ecumenical creeds or Reformation confessions mentions it. In my opinion, evangelical confessions of faith should not either. We simply do not have enough indisputable evidence to make that kind of statement.

⁶¹ See, e.g., Larry R. Helyer, "Luke and the Restoration of Israel," *JETS* 36 (1993) 317–29; and idem, "Was Paul a Restorationist?" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Washington, DC, November 19, 1993) 1–22. Ben Witherington III, *Jesus, Paul and the End of the World: A Comparative Study in New Testament Eschatology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1992) 141 concludes that "Jesus also seems to have envisioned a territorial promise being fulfilled at least for some Jews at the eschaton, but Paul mentions nothing of this sort. What Paul does say does not exclude the possibility that God might fulfill some territorial promise to some Jews." See also the cautious statements of M. A. Elliott, "Israel," *DJG* 362–63 on Jesus' view and J. M. Scott, "Restoration of Israel," *DPL* 796–805, for Paul's stance.

⁶² Contra Beale (*Revelation* 972–1021) and Hill, *Regnum Caelorum* 220–42, 260–70.

⁶³ For a survey of the millennial issue in the Bible and church history, written from a premillennial perspective, see J. W. Montgomery, "Millennium," *ISBE* 3.357–61 and the classic work by George N. H. Peters, *The Greatness of the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1957) 1.494–96. Hill disputes some of those claimed as chiliasts by Montgomery and Peters and concludes that there were more non-chiliasts among the orthodox than has generally been thought by specialists in the field (*Regnum Caelorum*, esp. 249–53).