

Chapter Ten

New Religious Directions in Late Hellenistic Judaea

The second century BC was unusually important in the history of the scriptural religions. The Messianic fervor that would lead to Christianity began during the relatively brief Seleukid domination of Judaea. At almost the same time the sect of the Pharisees, which eventually would mature into rabbinic Judaism, made its appearance. Two other and short-lived sects - the Essenes and Sadducees - also first come into notice in the second century BC. Although the Sadducees may have been concentrated in Judaea, the Pharisees and the Essenes seem to have had adherents in the Diaspora, both east and west. What we know about these movements, nevertheless, pertains almost entirely to Judaea itself. Our principal sources are Josephus, Philo, the New Testament, and - more problematically - the Dead Sea Scrolls.

That our sources are limited to Judaea is unfortunate, because there is reason to suspect that the Essenes and Pharisees may have originated not in Judaea but in Mesopotamia.¹ Both sects seem to reflect influences from the east. The Essenes' spiritualism and rejection of materialism have vague echoes among the Mandaeans of southern Iraq, and in many ways - not only their spiritualism but also their monastic life, their eschewing of violence, and their emphasis on fellowship - the Essenes bore a remarkable resemblance to the Buddhist monks of India. So far as a possible Pharisaic connection with Mesopotamia is concerned, we have seen in Chapter Four that already in the middle of the fifth century BC the Judaeans of Mesopotamia were much more rigorous in their attention to the *torah* than were the Judaeans of Judaea. In Jerusalem the reliance on sacrifice at the temple removed much of the urgency from observing the Law of Moses in everyday life. The Mesopotamian emphasis on the individual's obligation to keep Adonai's covenant shows up not only in the careers of Ezra, Nehemiah and Hillel, but also in the non-canonical Book of Tobit (in this romance - set in Mesopotamia - Adonai rewards the pious Tobiah and Tobit for scrupulously following all of his commandments).

The Pharisees certainly and the Essenes evidently were preoccupied with "holiness," an abstraction that can also be equated with "purity" or with "cleanness." The opposite of the holy is the dirty, the sordid, the impure. The original idea was to make sure that when sacrifices were offered the god would not be offended by anything disgusting in the rituals performed for him or her. Bad smells, offensive foods, a corpse or recent contact with a corpse, unsightly garments, unwashed feet and other affronts to the appetite were sure to draw the ire of the god to whom the sacred meal was being offered. The need for purity was then extended from rituals (sacrifices) to daily life, and this was especially true for some Judaeans in Mesopotamia, who had no opportunity to display their purity at sacrifices for Adonai. It is also relevant that in Mesopotamia some Judaeans would have become acquainted with the acknowledged paragons of holiness and ritual purity: the *magoi*, or Magi, of Iran. The *magoi* were famous for their tireless avoidance of all "defiling" conduct, from touching a dead body to careless disposal of fingernail clippings, because any such defilement angered Ahura Mazda and the other gods of Iran. The rules followed by the *magoi* were orally transmitted until the fifth or sixth century CE, when they were finally written down to form the first section (the Vendidad) of the Avesta.

At least in part, the spawning of holiness sects was a result of the enormous success of Judaism. As the number of Judaeans grew dramatically in both the Aramaic and the Greek-speaking world, the “specialness” of being a Judaeans was somewhat diminished. When several million people claimed to share in the Lord’s Covenant, there was a good argument for setting the bar somewhat higher. The *real* partners in the Lord’s Covenant, so some teachers said, were not those who merely met the minimum requirements of circumcision, keeping the Sabbath and the written laws, and attending the great pilgrim festivals in Jerusalem. The man in whom Adonai was truly well pleased was the man who devoted himself wholeheartedly to living purely, or to keeping every one of the commandments that Adonai had once given to Moses.

The Essenes²

The Essenes were a small monastic sect (Philo’s opinion was that they numbered only about 4000). A somewhat similar society of heterodox Judaeans, known as *Therapeutai*, was present in Egypt in the first century CE.³ Ancient Greek writers supposed that the Essene name was somehow related to the Greek word for “holy men” (*hosioi*).⁴ Although the derivation from either *hosioi* or any other Greek word seems unlikely, it is not impossible that the name may have meant “holy men” in an Aramaic dialect: it has been suggested that in Eastern Aramaic (the Aramaic of Mesopotamia) a monastic group may have been referred to as *chasayyâ*, a rough equivalent of the Hebrew *hasidim*. It is surprising that so distinctive and pacific a sect would have been called by almost the same name as the pious militants of the Judaeans countryside, and an alternative suggestion is that in Eastern Aramaic the noun *’āsayyâ* meant “healers,” in which case the Essenes would have been a Semitic version of the Therapeutai in Egypt (cf. the Greek *therapeuein*). Josephus does say that the Essenes were known for their dependence on medicinal herbs and minerals and also for their longevity, many of them reputed to have reached a hundred years of age.⁵

Whatever the etymology of their name, the hallmarks of the Essenes’ sect were its spirituality and its *koinonia* or fellowship. The Essenes’ spiritualism included a belief in what Josephus calls a *psyche*, a soul.⁶ Josephus goes on to generalize that the Essenes’ teachings about the Afterlife were closely similar to those of some Greek philosophers: the Essenes, that is, saw the human body as base, and so directed all of their energies toward the salvation of the incorruptible souls that are temporarily imprisoned in our bodies. And like some of the Hellenes, the Essenes believed that at death the souls of the upright ascend to a blessed Afterlife, while the souls of the evil descend to a tempestuous netherworld. All three of the new sects - the Sadducees, Pharisees and Essenes - seem to have been much interested in the fantasy or reality of the Afterlife, an interest perhaps stimulated by Judaeans contacts with Hellenism and Mazdaism. While the Essenes looked forward to the immortality of the soul, the Pharisees pinned their hopes on a physical resurrection at the End of Time, an idea that the Sadducees ridiculed. In considering the identity of the Judaeans who wrote and hid the Dead Sea scrolls at Qumran it is important to note that the scrolls and fragments say very little about the Afterlife, whether of body or soul.⁷

The Essenes’ focus on the *psyche* and the Hereafter was mirrored by their disdain for the material world. Material deprivation was eased by the fellowship for which the Essenes were

known. An Essene lived with other Essenes in a communal house. On joining the sect a new recruit turned over to the commune all of his material possessions, and thenceforth owned no private property. Of course no Essene owned a slave, but more remarkable is that the Essenes - in this respect almost unique among the ancients - denounced slavery as an institution.⁸ Essene life was marked by frugality and austerity. Every member of the sect was furnished a wool cloak for the winter and a light tunic for summer. The communal houses tended to be located in the villages of Judaea (the Essenes usually avoided cities, because of the incitements to sin that cities offered). Essenes made their livelihood as agricultural laborers or as craftsmen. Some of the communes manufactured pottery or another commodity, while the residents of other communes worked as agricultural laborers and turned over to the group their daily earnings. The common meals were evidently the high point of Essene *koinonia*: the fare at these messes was simple, the prayers were long, and the conversation pious and edifying. At such times and on the Sabbath, which they kept scrupulously, the Essenes were clothed all in white.

The commune was for men only. Like the Buddhist monks in India,⁹ the Essenes insisted on celibacy for their initiates. They forbade marriage because they not only were suspicious of physical pleasure but also held women in low regard. A married man who wished to join the sect presumably had to divorce his wife before he could be admitted. Whether homosexual relations were allowed in the Essene communes is unclear but unlikely. Philo reports that the communes consisted only of older men, who had learned to tame their physical desires. Heterosexual relations were in any case forbidden in most Essene communities. Josephus mentions a splinter group that did permit marriage, but only for procreation:¹⁰ a member of this splinter group could live with his wife and have intercourse with her, but only to impregnate her, and not for the sake of sexual gratification. Apparently all Essenes saw women as divisive and comfort-loving, incapable of austerity and self-denial, and incompatible with the communal life that was at the heart of the Essene fellowship. Philo gives the following explanation of Essene misogyny:

(11.14) They repudiate marriage; and at the same time they practise continence in an eminent degree; for no one of the Essenes ever marries a wife, because woman is a selfish creature and one addicted to jealousy in an immoderate degree, and terribly calculated to agitate and overturn the natural inclinations of a man, and to mislead him by her continual tricks; (11.15) for as she is always studying deceitful speeches and all other kinds of hypocrisy, like an actress on the stage, when she is alluring the eyes and ears of her husband, she proceeds to cajole his predominant mind after the servants have been deceived. (11.16) And again, if there are children she becomes full of pride and all kinds of license in her speech, and all the obscure sayings which she previously meditated in irony in a disguised manner she now begins to utter with audacious confidence; and becoming utterly shameless she proceeds to acts of violence, and does numbers of actions of which every one is hostile to such associations; (11.17) for the man who is bound under the influence of the charms of a woman, or of children, by the necessary ties of nature, being overwhelmed by the impulses of affection, is no longer the same person towards others, but is entirely changed, having, without being aware of it, become a slave instead of a free man.¹¹

Because the Essenes were celibate, they presumably had some difficulty in replenishing their ranks, as old fellows died. Josephus reports that the Essenes adopted and raised male orphans or foundlings, but Philo says that there were no children in an Essene commune. The typical recruit seems to have been a Judaeian man who, for one reason or another, chose to leave his family and join the sect.

The Essenes were meticulous about some aspects of the *torah*. The Sabbath, for example, was a day of complete rest from physical labor, and on the Sabbath the Essenes would join with ordinary Judaeians at a synagogue in order to hear readings and explanations of the sacred texts. Philo and Josephus both note how careful the Essenes were about obeying the ancestral laws. Sacrifice, however, was evidently not part of Essene piety: Philo reports that the Essenes did not perform animal sacrifices.

That the Dead Sea Scrolls found at Qumran belonged to an Essene community is widely assumed but is not certain. The scrolls do speak of common meals and of ritual washings, and these things would fit an Essene monastery. Pliny the Elder reports that the Essenes had a community on the Dead Sea north of Ein Gedi, and many scholars have concluded that Qumran was the site of this community and that the Dead Sea Scrolls were therefore an Essene library. The scrolls, however, were deposited in the Qumran caves before the Judaeian-Roman War of 66-70, and Pliny seems to have made his observations about the Essenes on the shore of the Dead Sea several years after the war had ended.¹² One would assume that the Essenes of Pliny's day would have known about the scrolls and retrieved them from the caves, if they or their comrades had themselves hidden the scrolls away in the early stages of the Judaeian War. If an Essene community did live at Qumran before 66, it was much more militant than the Essenes are reported to have been. Essenes supposedly were such pacifists that they never hired out to make weapons or armor, but many of the Qumran scrolls looked forward to an apocalyptic war against the Sons of Darkness.

The Pharisees

Although Pharisees may have been present in Mesopotamia well before the second century BC, they did not make their presence felt in Judaea until the Hasmonaean period. Like the Essenes and Sadducees, the Pharisees were an all-male group. They seem to have called themselves *haberim* - "peers" or "equals" - but outsiders referred to them by the Hebrew adjective *perushim*. The word is usually thought to have meant "the separated" but it may also have meant "the distinctive" (the Hebrew verb *parash* meant "to divide, to distinguish, to be distinct"). By his utter devotion to the Torah, that is, the Pharisee may have been "distinguished" from run-of-the-mill Judaeians, the *am ha-aretz*. In any case, the adjective *perushim* soon became a technical term or proper name, and was transliterated rather than translated into Greek, the Greek term in Josephus and the New Testament being *pharisaioi*.

Like the Essenes, the Pharisees were a close-knit fraternity, although both in their living arrangements and in their attitudes to women and to property they seem to have been much more conventional than the Essenes. The Pharisees were an ultra-pious, urban, and learned counterpart to the rural *hasidim*. But while the *hasidim* were mostly poor men who spent six

days of the week tending their fields, fig trees and vineyards, the Pharisees made piety and purity almost a full-time job. Although they had much influence in Judaea by the first century BC, they were a relatively small minority of the population and even in the first century CE they numbered - says Josephus - only 6000, or a little more than one per cent of the adult population in Judaea. The Pharisees were much admired by the ordinary Judaeans, however, and so had an influence far greater than their numbers would suggest.

As an exemplar of ritual purity, every Pharisee was supposed to be expert in the *torah*, knowing not only the written texts but also the vast oral law that had been passed down to him by his teachers. Generations of Pharisees combed the sacred texts for *halakhoth* (“walkings” or “right conduct”), which served as guides for holiness in daily life. Their canon was not limited to the Pentateuch, but included all of the Former Prophets (Joshua through Kings), the Major and Minor Prophets, and eventually even many of the *kethubim* (“The Writings”). What were not *halakhoth* in these books were *haggadoth* (“narrations”). These “narrations” were useful and edifying, although somewhat less urgent than the *halakhoth*. Because of their devotion to the *torah* the Pharisees were natural allies of the *soferim* or “scribes.” The *soferim* were also steeped in the *torah*, written and oral, although for more practical reasons: they functioned almost as lawyers, advising in and adjudicating disputes, always according to “the laws of Moses.” In addition to studying the sacred texts and memorizing the almost endless oral precepts, the Pharisee also showed his piety through prayers - some short but some long - at specified times of the day. An array of rules guided the Pharisee to purity in all aspects of daily life: what to eat and what not to eat, what to wear, when and how to wash oneself, what to do and especially what not to do on the Sabbath, and much more.

Although in some respects the Pharisees were traditionalists, zealously keeping the *torah* that they supposed Adonai had given to Moses, in other respects they represented something very new in Judaism. Traditionally the covenant of Israel with Adonai had been kept by the corporate body or - during the monarchy - by the king. The Pharisees, contrarily, stressed the role of the individual in serving Adonai. This must have been long familiar among the Judaeans of Mesopotamia, where Judaeans were a minority in a Gentile state, but in Judaea itself the worship of Adonai was centered at the Jerusalem temple, and was especially the responsibility of the priests. The Pharisee was not a priest, and although he was careful to make the required sacrifices (unlike the Essenes, the Pharisees had no objections to the sacrifice of animals) and to go to the temple for the great festivals, he believed that Adonai was most pleased by the man who lived every day in strict accordance with the entire *torah*.

Equally novel and even more startling was the Pharisees’ belief in a bodily resurrection. The average person, so the Pharisees taught, would at death go down to *sheol* and never come back, but those who had faithfully kept Adonai’s law could expect that at the End of Time their bodies would recompose, and they would come back to life, arise from their graves, and live in bliss forever. However bizarre this doctrine was, it had immense potential. In its full-blown form - the universal resurrection of the dead at the End of Time - the doctrine was for a long time important in rabbinic Judaism and is still widely believed in Christianity and Islam.¹³ If the idea came to Ptolemaic or Seleukid Judaea from Mesopotamia it may have had some connection with the Mazdian promise of a blissful Afterlife for the righteous, but the ancient Mazdians are not

known to have believed in a physical resurrection at the End of Time. Wherever and however the idea originated, it is likely to have flourished among the Maccabean rebels (for example, the eight hundred who in 160 BC followed Judas Maccabaeus to death at Alasa), whose fanatic devotion to their cause may have depended in part upon the promise of reward in the Afterlife.

The history of Judaea in the middle decades of the second century BC was remarkably conducive to the spread of the Pharisaic sect in Judaea. Antiochos Epiphanes' attack on *Ioudaismos* was quickly followed by his death, by the cancellation of his Hellenizing reform, by the suppression of Hellenizing Judaeans in Jerusalem and the rest of Judaea, by the debacle of the Seleukid kingdom, and by the restoration of an autonomous Judaea. The Pharisees do not appear in our sources until the reign of John Hyrcanus, when we find some of them urging him to abdicate his high priesthood, but by that time their movement seems to have been already well established in Judaea. In their scrupulous obedience to the oral *torah* the Pharisees took a dim view of the "impiety" of some members of the Hasmonaean family, and especially of Aristoboulos and Jannaeus Alexander. But the Maccabean revolt and the ascendance of the *hasidim* were prerequisites for the starring role that the Pharisees were to play in the evolution of Judaism.

The Sadducees¹⁴

Unlike the Essenes and Pharisees, the Sadducees were not hyper-religious. They can, in fact, be best understood as a reaction to the Essenes and Pharisees. Typically, the Sadducee was wealthy and enjoyed the good life. The Sadducees regarded the oral law, which the Pharisees took very seriously, as a late invention. Nor did they accept an extensive written canon: they regarded as sacred texts only the Pentateuch, which of course they ascribed to Moses. So far as the books of "the Prophets" were concerned, both the Former Prophets (Joshua through Kings) and the Major and Minor Prophets, the Sadducees regarded them as edifying but not normative. Not overly concerned with purity in everyday life, the Sadducees supposed that by performing the stipulated sacrifices at the Jerusalem temple in the stipulated way Israel fulfilled its covenant with Adonai.

The Sadducees were more conservative and also more secular than the other sects, and less affected by Mesopotamian and Hellenistic influences. While the Essenes set great store by the soul and its immortality, and while the Pharisees embraced the promise of physical resurrection, the Sadducees stayed with the traditional belief that after death all people - rich and poor, good and bad - descended to *sheol*. Along with Paradise and Hell, other increasingly popular notions - such as Satan, angels and demons ("unclean spirits") - were regarded by the Sadducees as novel superstitions.¹⁵

It is certain that the Sadducees - the *Saddoukaioi* in Greek - took their name from a man named Zadok, a name which in the Septuagint is regularly spelled *Saddouk*.¹⁶ Matters are complex because the Zadokite name seems to have been attached to two very different groups, each of which looked back to its own Zadok. The smaller group, "the sons of Zadok," consisted of priests from certain families that claimed descent from the Zadok who had been appointed high priest by King David.¹⁷ The Sadducees with whom we are concerned here - the *Saddukaioi*

of Josephus and the New Testament - were a considerably larger group of “Zadokites.” They seem to have taken their name from a much later Zadok: a religious teacher and writer of the late third century BC. A rabbinic source claims that the Zadok who founded the Sadducees (*tzedukim*) was a renegade student of the devout Antigonos of Soko (Soko was a town in Judaea). Zadok, this source explains, could not accept the belief in a physical resurrection of the dead.¹⁸ A late but well informed Karaite source agrees that the Sadducean sect was named for Zadok, the student of Antigonos, and adds that this Zadok wrote books attacking “the Rabbanites” (i.e. the Pharisees).¹⁹ What this Zadok had written in the third century BC was evidently preserved among Karaite Judaeans until at least the tenth century CE. So it appears that the Sadducees of Josephus and the New Testament were just as much a religious sect (or - to use Josephus’ term - a “philosophical school”) as were the Essenes and Pharisees.²⁰

Apocalyptic and Messianic Judaism

A profoundly important development in Seleukid and Hasmonaean Judaea, which has not received from historians the attention it deserves, was the beginning of apocalyptic and Messianic Judaism. At its core was the belief that Adonai would soon overturn the empires of the Gentiles and establish a righteous kingdom, centered in Judaea but extending over all the earth and destined to last forever.²¹ In the first act of this earth-shaking drama Adonai would send from the heavens the Messiah, a ruler endowed with such powers as the world had never before seen.

The obsession with a triumphant future resulted from a disjunction between the Judaeans’ belief in a glorious and miraculous past and their living in a very ordinary present. Publication of the Septuagint had familiarized Judaeans with the miracle stories, when long ago Adonai regularly intervened in astounding ways to bring victory and dominion to his people. Worshipers in the synagogues thrilled with pride as they heard the stories about Moses’ parting of the Red Sea and the drowning of an Egyptian chariot host, about Joshua’s bringing the sun and the moon to a stand-still while the Israelites slew the Amorites, about Samson’s harrowing of the Palestinians, about Adonai’s sending of an angel to save Jerusalem by slaying 185,000 Assyrians on a single night, and even about the more pedestrian victories of David over the Gentile nations that surrounded Israel and Judah. In comparison to these stirring events and divine interventions in the distant past, the present left much to be desired. Many generations had evidently passed since Adonai had worked a miracle for his people, and as a result they were under the yoke of one Gentile regime after another. The revival of kingship by the Hasmonaeanes was some comfort but the Hasmonaeanes were vassals, first of the Seleukids and then of the Romans.

1. Terminology

The high hopes for the future were based on apocalyptic prophecies. The Greek word *apokalypsis* means “uncovering” or “revealing.” It is the first word in the last book of the New Testament, and it gave the name “apocalyptic” to the entire genre of texts that prophesy what will happen when God finally turns the world upside down and inaugurates a new and divine order. Prophecies along this line, although far more restrained, had been promulgated already in the Persian period: Deutero-Isaiah, Ezekiel and several of the “minor prophets,” especially

Zechariah, had with metaphorical language and fantastic imagery encouraged their listeners to expect a future far better than anything experienced in the past. An indispensable feature of this golden future was of course a king: the last king of Judah was Zedekiah, whose eyes had been put out by the Chaldeans after they took Jerusalem in 587 BC. That Judahites would some day again have a king of their own was promised already by Jeremiah, soon after Zedekiah's death, although Jeremiah's vision was quite restrained:

The days are now coming, says the Lord,
when I will make a righteous Branch spring from David's line,
a king who shall rule wisely,
maintaining law and justice in the land.
In his days Judah shall be kept safe,
and Israel shall live undisturbed.
This is the name to be given to him:
The Lord is our Righteousness (Jer 23:5-6 NEB)

Under the Persians Judah enjoyed more privileges than it had under the Chaldeans, but *Yehud* had no king: it was merely one district within a Persian satrapy, and a far cry from the proud and independent kingdom that Judahites remembered or imagined. The prophet Zechariah, perhaps in the fifth century BC, looked forward to the day when the Great King would rule not from Babylon, Susa or Persepolis but from Jerusalem. Although he would rule in humility and would be a man of peace, his kingdom would be grand:

Rejoice, rejoice, daughter of Zion,
shout aloud, daughter of Jerusalem;
for see, your king is coming to you,
his cause won, his victory gained,
humble and mounted on an ass,
on a foal, the young of a she-ass.

He shall banish chariots from Ephraim
and war horses from Jerusalem;
the warrior's bow shall be banished.
He shall speak peaceably to every nation,
and his rule shall extend from sea to sea,
from the River to the ends of the earth. (Zechariah 9:9-10, NEB)

In the second century BC the prophecies became much more vivid and still grander. They also had more defiant overtones, reflecting an intensified hostility between Judaeans and Gentiles. Most importantly, they were not content to prophesy the near or intermediate future but reached to the very End of Time or to the *eschata*, the "last things." The term "eschatology" refers to texts, doctrines, beliefs, and debates about what would happen at the End of Time. The apocalyptic and eschatological prophecies published from the second century BC to the early third century CE were *pseudepigraphical*: that is, they were falsely attributed to one of the several men - Enoch, Moses, Abraham, Ezra, and others - who were supposed to have been very

close to Adonai, and would therefore have been in an excellent position to know what the future held in store for Judaea and all of humankind. Judaeans and Christians continued to produce pseudepigraphical books until Judaeans and Christian bishops forbade the practice. Most of the Pseudepigrapha were not given canonical status in either rabbinic Judaism or orthodox Christianity and as a result were by Late Antiquity largely forgotten. Although for the last 1700 years the Pseudepigrapha have been ignored - generally in Christianity and completely in Judaism - we must have a close look at these texts for they shed a bright light on what was happening in Judaea from the Seleukid to the early Roman period.

Finally, the term *fanaticism* is appropriate, even though it has seldom been used, to describe a type of religious devotion or extremism in Judaea from ca. 170 BC to the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 CE. In Latin *fanatici* were those people who were devotees of a *fanum*: a shrine or temple. The *fanatici* were “possessed” by the god of the shrine, and so supposed themselves (and were supposed by others) to be in immediate touch with deity. The Greek language had no exact equivalent of the Latin *fanatici*, but a close synonym was *zēlōtai*, anglicized as “zealots.” The zealot displayed a single-minded “zeal” for his god and for what he understood to be his god’s instructions. In Judaea during the third century BC such single-minded devotion was very rare, but it grew significantly during the Maccabean revolt, when most people in Judaea put a very high value on zeal for Adonai, for his *torah*, and for *Ioudaismos*. In Galilee by the beginning of the first century CE “the Zealots” had emerged as a political and even a military force. By the late 60s CE the Zealots controlled the Jerusalem temple and ultimately brought about its and their own destruction.

Judaeans eschatology seems to have been stimulated by ideas from Iran and especially from Greece. The Judaeans author who ca. 200 BC composed the pseudepigraphical “Book of the Watchers” was apparently indebted to Plato’s *Phaedo* for the vivid picture that “Enoch” draws of the fiery torments that await the wicked.²² In Plato’s presentation Heaven and Hell are not assigned to the future, but are supposed to have existed all along, and to have been already experienced by everyone who had died. What Plato may have regarded as a myth or as whimsy was taken far more seriously by many Judaeans. Late in the Hellenistic period Judaeans apocalyptic transferred the divinely administered punishments and rewards to the future, and in fact to a particular moment in the future. Some Judaeans, as we shall see, focused their eschatological enthusiasm on an extra-terrestrial Heaven and Hell. But others imagined that the rewards and punishments at the End of Time would be enjoyed or suffered in familiar surroundings here on the earth.

2. The Book of Daniel

This branch of apocalyptic Judaism began toward the end of the reign of Antiochos Epiphanes with the publication of the Book of Daniel, the only apocalyptic work accepted into both the Jewish and the Christian canon.²³ Daniel had long been a legendary name in the Near East. In the Late Bronze Age an epic poem about the good King Danel and his son Aqhat was sung in the city of Ugarit. In the early sixth century BC the prophet Ezekiel (14:14) included Daniel alongside Noah and Job as paragons of righteousness, and elsewhere (28:2) used the expression “wiser than Daniel” as an almost proverbial saying.

In the Hellenistic period Daniel became a favorite of Judaeen story-tellers, especially in Mesopotamia. There he was made a wizard and an advisor to the greatest kings remembered in the folk history of Babylon: Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, and Darius. The story of Daniel, Bel and the Snake featured Daniel unmasking the lying priests of Bel Marduk, thereby convincing Cyrus to tear down the great temple of Bel (the temple, known as Esagila, and its ziqqurat had been in ruins since the fifth century BC, and in the Hellenistic period various stories in Mesopotamia explained when and how the great sanctuary had been ruined). Judaeans in Mesopotamia also turned Daniel into one of four young men who were stalwart in their worship of Adonai and who therefore refused to bow down to the image gods of Babylon. Although threatened by Babylonian or Persian kings with the most dire punishments - being thrown into a den of hungry lions, or into a furnace of raging fire - Daniel and his three fellows remain resolute and the Lord miraculously intervenes to save them from what seems certain death. The Gentile king, finally convinced that Daniel's god is mightiest of all, then regularly promotes Daniel to the loftiest of positions and decrees that everyone in the kingdom should worship the god of the Judaeans. These stories circulated among Aramaic Judaeans at least orally and perhaps in written form. Greek-speaking Judaeans also composed Daniel stories, but kept him in a Mesopotamian locale. In the story of Daniel and Susanna - which was evidently composed in the Greek language - the hero is again resident in the city of Babylon, where as a clever interrogator he rescues the beautiful and innocent Susanna from charges brought against her by two lascivious elders.²⁴

In Judaea Daniel became the protagonist of a remarkable book composed and published during the winter and spring of 164-163 BC, after Judas Maccabaeus' re-dedication of the Jerusalem temple but before the death of Antiochos Epiphanes.²⁵ These were intensely exciting months for the *hasidim* of Judaea, who had seen the underdog Maccabee army win a battle against Lysias at Bethsura, when Lysias made his first foray into Judaea late in the campaigning season of 164 BC, and then had seen the insurgents triumphantly enter Jerusalem and dismantle the altar on which the Seleukids and their Judaeen supporters had made sacrifices to Zeus. Seldom had Adonai kept his covenant promise in so dramatic a fashion, but the *hasidim* knew very well that the struggle was not over, and that when the next campaigning season began Lysias would return with a greater army than he had fielded at Bethsura. In this time of hope and anxiety a gifted and eloquent writer from among the *hasidim* gathered together various Daniel traditions and published - as a pseudepigraphon - his own Book of Daniel. This book incorporated the older Aramaic stories from Mesopotamia (Chapters 2:4 through 6:28 are in Aramaic) and added some new "revelations." The Maccabean author wrote Chapter 7 in Aramaic, as a bridge to the new material, and wrote Chapters 8 through 12 in Hebrew.²⁶ The additions were prophecies, revealed to Daniel in dreams. Most of these were *ex eventu* inventions, "prophecies" of things that had already happened. These *ex eventu* prophecies rehearsed in cryptic terms the history of empires from the sixth century BC through most of the reign of Antiochos Epiphanes, with great detail about the contest between the Ptolemies (the "kingdom of the south") and the Seleukids (the "kingdom of the north") from the reign of Antiochos II to the end of 164 BC.²⁷ The "prophecy" of what had already happened served to lend credibility to the author's actual attempt to predict what was yet to happen. Here he did in fact look to the future, both the immediate future (which he got wrong) and the ultimate future, prophesying what would happen at the End of Time.

This Maccabean Book of Daniel was to become one of the most influential books ever written. Initially it helped to rally the inhabitants of Judaea against Antiochos Epiphanes, in defense of their religious traditions and the temple of the Lord. For the long term the importance of Daniel was the way in which its author encouraged his countrymen: assuring them that in the past Adonai had miraculously defeated foreign kings who attempted to force Judaeans to worship other gods, Daniel promised that the Lord was soon to establish a Judaeans kingdom that would cover the entire world and would last forever.

Ever since the ninth century BC priestly writers had woven Yahweh into whatever they knew or imagined about the past of Israel and then of Judah. As a “god of history” Yahweh was unique in the ancient world: Marduk, Athena, Ahura Mazda and other gods were credited by their worshipers with lending a helping hand now and then, or punishing the wicked from time to time, but as seen by the priests at Jerusalem *all* of history was a story of what Adonai had done to and for Israel and Judah. From its inception, Judahite historiography had been the history of Adonai’s relationship with his people. With the publication of the Book of Daniel, the Lord’s story was completed. The past was already known, and Daniel now revealed the future: the mighty acts of God that would bring about the End of Time. Thus did the author of the book situate the reader in the midst of a divine historical continuum. The defeats and disappointments that the worshipers of Adonai had experienced in the recent past would be balanced by an unimaginably glorious future, as the Lord made his final intervention into history.

The Daniel prophecies greatly intensified the hostility between Judaeans and Gentiles. Late in the seventh century BC the Deuteronomist had imposed on the worshipers of Adonai a duty to root out from their midst all who did not worship Adonai, a group that included all resident Gentiles. Within a generation of its publication this grim commandment had fortunately to be set aside, as Judahites found themselves firmly in the grip of Nebuchadnezzar and his Chaldaean successors. For the next four hundred years Judahites not only co-existed but flourished in a Gentile world, administered first by Chaldaean, then by Persian and finally by Greco-Macedonian kings. Antiochos Epiphanes’ attempt in 167 BC to abolish Judaism in Judaea ignited a conflict between rebellious *hasidim* and their Seleukid rulers, but even that conflict was for short-term goals and for pragmatic ends in one small territory: reasonable Judaeans could hope that Epiphanes’ successors would be more traditional, or that Epiphanes himself would see the folly of his “reform” and return to the tolerant policies of his predecessors. The prophecies in Daniel and in subsequent apocalyptic texts made the coexistence of Judaism and Hellenism much more difficult. The immediate conflict between the Maccabean guerillas and the Seleukids, so the prophecies said, was only a prologue to a cosmic battle between Judaeans and Gentiles, or between the forces of Adonai and the forces of Satan. The attempt of Judaeans - some in Jerusalem and many in the Hellenistic Diaspora - to find common ground with Greek philosophy, theology and ethics was now fatally weakened. As the hope grew - first in Judaea and then in the Diaspora - that the entire world order was about to end, and that Adonai was about to establish a Kingdom of his own, accommodation with Hellenistic society began not only to seem short-sighted but to risk eternal punishment. In the wake of Daniel’s publication Judaeans who disliked Gentiles in general and Hellenes in particular began to grow confident that in the not-very-distant future Gentiles everywhere would be shattered, as Adonai himself

intervened to destroy Gentile society and to establish his Apocalyptic Kingdom.

3. Messianism and the “son of man”

This Kingdom would of course be ruled by an extraordinary man. The expectation of such a man is called “Messianism,” after the Hebrew word *mashiach*. A *mashiach* was, literally, an “anointed one” or “smeared one,” and its Greek translation was *christos*. Either the original Hebrew word or the Greek translation was familiar to all who had read or heard the stories of the kings of Israel and Judah. Saul, David, and Solomon ascended to the throne only after they had been chosen for kingship by Adonai and had been ritually anointed by his high priest. After Judah no longer had kings, and the high priest was de facto the political leader of Jerusalem and its environs, a priest would be anointed just before assuming the chief position. This long tradition of anointing, however, was only the prehistory of Messianism, which began in earnest in the second century BC. As the prophecies of Daniel became widely known, many of the inhabitants of Judaea anticipated not only a messiah, which is to say a king of their own (they had not had a king since 587 BC, a lapse of more than four hundred years), but the Messiah: the final Anointed One, who would wield supernatural powers. His kingdom, power and glory would be immeasurably greater than that of David and Solomon and would last until the End of Time.

The Daniel passage most responsible for inspiring Judaeans hopes of world-rule and the Messiah, even though the passage does not include that word, was Daniel 7:13-14. In the Aramaic portion of Daniel, which runs from 2:4 to 7:28, Daniel reveals the future by interpreting the dreams of King Nebuchadnezzar, and Daniel also has apocalyptic dreams of his own. In one such dream, narrated in Chapter 7, four great beasts emerge from the sea, each symbolizing an imperial power.²⁸ Daniel sees a lion with the wings of an eagle, a fanged bear, a four-winged leopard, and a dreadful beast - perhaps an elephant with many tusks - that tramples its victims underfoot and kills them with its iron teeth and eleven “horns.” This last beast is slain (the other three beasts were allowed to live for a bit longer) and its body burnt in a fiery stream that flows before the Ancient of Days. It is likely that the author intended the first three beasts as the Ptolemaic, the Roman and the Parthian empires, and it is certain that the fourth beast symbolized the Seleukids (if we count everyone who claimed to be a Seleukid king we can identify Antiochos Epiphanes as the eleventh king, or horn, of the Seleukid dynasty).²⁹ After this constellation of four beastly powers comes the apocalyptic culmination. The RSV translation of Daniel 7:13-14, a poetical passage, is as follows:

I saw in the night visions,
and behold, with the clouds of heaven
there came one like a son of man,
and he came to the Ancient of Days
and was presented before him.
And to him was given dominion
and glory and kingdom,
that all people, nations, and languages
should serve him;
his dominion is an everlasting dominion,

which shall not pass away,
and his kingdom one
that shall not be destroyed.³⁰

The infinite extent and duration of the kingdom that Daniel prophesied for “one like a son of man” (*kbar* > *enosh*: כְּבַר אִישׁ) gave to the term “son of man” an apocalyptic character: this “son of man” was to be a supernatural Messiah who would bring to an end all of the world’s secular kingdoms and empires. By the first century CE the term, Son of Man, had for many Judaeans become a title, and it was applied to Jesus by those who believed that he had arisen from the tomb and ascended into heaven, whence he would return through the clouds to receive from Adonai dominion over all the earth.

4. The immediate influence of Daniel, and the proliferation of apocalyptic texts

Daniel quickly became a favorite book of Judaeans, not only in Judaea itself but also in the Diaspora, east and west.³¹ The original composition in Hebrew and Aramaic was a pseudepigraphon, but Judaeans readily believed it to be an old work recently come to light, and it was assigned a place alongside the traditional prophetic books. For more than two hundred years Daniel was regarded as the last of the Major Prophets, immediately after Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Only after the disastrous wars of 66-70 and 131-35 was Daniel demoted in the Hebrew Bible, falling not only from its place among the Major Prophets but from the entire category of the Prophets (it was reassigned by the rabbinic academies to the inferior category of “the Writings”). In the Christian tradition, based on the practices of the Greek-speaking synagogues, Daniel remains as the fourth of the Major Prophets. The Greek translation of Daniel was read in the synagogues along with the older books of the Septuagint. At Matthew 24:15 Jesus quotes the book of Daniel, and allusions to the Messianic prophecy of Daniel 7:13-14 appear frequently in the New Testament.

The impact of Daniel in Judaea is reflected especially in the scrolls found at Qumran. The finds included many Hebrew and Aramaic fragments of the canonical Daniel, along with an almost complete scroll that appears to have been inscribed late in the second century BC, only fifty or sixty years after the book’s publication. The Qumran scrolls also included a Daniel story - the *Prayer of Nabonidus* - that was subsequently forgotten in both the Jewish and Christian religious traditions. More importantly, the Book of Daniel was fundamental for the text known as the *War Rule* or the *War Scroll*. This composition, a manual for the holy war that would bring all of history to an end, was a favorite of those Judaeans who hid away their scrolls at Qumran. In addition to the great scroll 1QM, over nine feet in length and including nineteen columns of text, excavators found fragments of other copies of the *War Rule*, copied in various hands. The *War Rule* takes as its starting point the apocalyptic battle sketched at Daniel 11:40-12:3. There Michael the Archangel leads the Judaeans to victory, after which many of the dead arise from their graves, some to everlasting joy and some to everlasting shame and humiliation. The *War Rule* specifies how and under what banners the apocalyptic battle between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness should be fought. The battle to which the text looks forward will find on one side the twelve tribes of Israel and all the angels of Adonai, and on the other side the angels of Belial or Satan and the forces of the Kittim (“westerners,”

perhaps originally understood as the Seleukids, but later as the Hellenes generally, and eventually as the Romans). The battle would finally end the rule of the Kittim and establish for the Judaeans a righteous theocracy over all the world.

Some Qumran scrolls expected not *the* Messiah, but at least two messiahs, along with a prophet. Neither the prophet nor the messiahs, however, were supposed to be the leaders of the apocalyptic war. Evidently these messianic but human figures were expected to appear after Michael and the Sons of Light had won their war against the Sons of Darkness and the Kittim. The Dead Sea scrolls suggest that by the first century apocalyptic Judaism had several forms. Messianism was one manifestation of it, but there evidently were others in which the Messiah or several messiahs played a smaller role. The one common thread, however, of Judaeen apocalyptic in the Hasmonaean, Herodian, and early Roman periods was the belief that the kingdoms and empires of the Gentiles were about to be smashed. For clues about that imminent event the authors of the Qumran scrolls combed the prophetic books of the Hebrew Bible - Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Habbakuk - and wrote commentaries on them: the prophecies in these books were assumed to pertain to the writers' own time and to the immediate future.

While many Judaeans expected a fully human Messiah or messiahs, among a few Judaeans the world ruler prophesied by Daniel was elevated to the status of "son of God." Such a description seemed indicated by a much older text, Psalm 2, in which Adonai promised to the king of Judah, his anointed (*mashiach*), power over all the Gentiles (*goyim*: "nations" or "heathen" in most translations) and a kingdom that stretched to the ends of the earth. Here the psalmist takes the role of Adonai's *mashiach* and taunts the Gentiles who plot against him:

Why are the nations in turmoil?
Why do the peoples hatch their futile plots?
The kings of the earth stand ready,
and the rulers conspire together
against the Lord and his anointed king.
"Let us break their fetters," they cry,
"Let us throw off their chains."
The Lord who sits enthroned in heaven
laughs them to scorn;
then he rebukes them in anger,
he threatens them in his wrath.
Of me he says, "I have enthroned my king
on Zion my holy mountain."
I will repeat the Lord's decree:
"You are my son," he said;
"this day I become your father.
Ask of me what you will:
I will give you the nations as your inheritance,
the ends of the earth as your possession.
You shall break them with a rod of iron,
you shall shatter them like a clay pot." (NEB)

Although Psalm 2 had been composed centuries before the revolt against the Seleukids, it was not until the second century BC that this vivid and bellicose text gave to the term *mashiach* its singular meaning: Judaeans now began to expect *the* Messiah, who would be a veritable son of Adonai, would shatter the Gentiles like a potter's vessel, and would then rule the world forever.

New Testament writers used Psalm 2 to show that Jesus (whom they supposed to have ascended into Heaven, whence he would soon return in glory) was nothing less than the Son of God,³² but other writers also described the expected Messiah as the son of Adonai. Judaeans who were not persuaded that Jesus was the world ruler prophesied by Daniel were nevertheless confident that when the Son of Man, or the Messiah, did finally appear he would be the Son of God. In the apocalyptic book known as Fourth Esdras the author has God promising that "my son the Messiah" will come in the last days, will rule for 400 years, and then will die, along with all living things. After seven days will come the resurrection, and then judgement by the Most High (IV Esdras 7:28).³³ And an Aramaic text found at Qumran looks forward to the Messiah, who "will be called the son of God, and they shall name him son of the Most High."³⁴

Although the great expectations created by Daniel's visions were of course not realized in the decades following the book's publication, the success of the Maccabees in the late 150s BC and the collapse of the Seleukid empire after 129 BC did call attention to the prophecy and seemed, in a way, to be at least a small first instalment of the coming glory. Especially was this true as the actual events of the 160s and 150s were forgotten, and as the popular imagination was caught by the sensational and miraculous "history" written by Jason of Cyrene, a summary of which can now be read in Second Maccabees (selectively elaborated in Fourth Maccabees). Jason's largely fictional work provided many devout Judaeans with the assurance that Adonai had indeed intervened, and very recently and miraculously, in the history of nations, and had repaid the wickedness of Antiochos Epiphanes by striking him down. In the mythologized history of the revolt the Judaeans victory was the reward that Adonai gave Judaea for martyrdom, whether of the Maccabean warriors or of civilians such as old Eleazar and the Mother and her Seven Sons. Thus the Maccabean revolt itself, and its culmination in an autonomous Judaea in 129 BC, instilled confidence that the worldwide and eternal kingdom promised by Daniel was soon to be unfurled.

In the aftermath of the Maccabean revolt other writers produced their own accounts of dramatic but fictitious Judaeans triumphs over seemingly invincible Gentiles. The romance of Esther was written in Hebrew, probably in the second century BC (Esther is the only book of the Hebrew Bible of which no fragment has been found at Qumran). The Book of Judith, originally composed in Aramaic,³⁵ is more certainly Maccabean in date and celebrates the beautiful Judith's slaying of Holophernes. The latter is a general of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Nineveh and ruler of the world,³⁶ and leads an immense Assyrian army to the Levant to slaughter the people of Judaea. The Judaeans had refused an order of Nebuchadnezzar, who fancies himself a god and demands that his subjects worship no god other than himself (Judith 3:8). Although the heroine has no scruples about getting Holophernes drunk and then beheading him, in adherence to the *torah* both Judith and her compatriots are meticulous, and reap their rewards when Adonai enables them to rout the monstrous Assyrian army.

The *soferim* may not have taken very seriously apocryphal books such as Judith and Second and Fourth Maccabees, the burgeoning pseudepigrapha ascribed to Ezra, Enoch, Moses and others who were especially close to Adonai, or even the Book of Esther, which was eventually accepted into both the Jewish and the Christian canons. And even the unschooled synagogue-goer may have wondered whether some of these books were recent compositions. All the books, however, had great popular appeal and soon became part of the Septuagint. In many Hellenistic synagogues the apocryphal and pseudepigraphical fantasies seem to have been accorded the same respect given to “Moses and the Prophets.” It is difficult for a modern student to imagine how distorted a view of the past and the future the average Judaeans must have had by the beginning of the first century CE.

The real present versus the apocalyptic future

John Hyrcanus’ rule turned out to be the zenith of Judaea’s political fortunes, and what happened thereafter was sadly at odds with what the people of Judaea were eagerly awaiting. The Romans moved into the power vacuum left by the Seleukids, and the Romans showed little sign of imminent collapse. Judaea grew significantly during John Hyrcanus’ rule, but in comparison to the Roman or Parthian state Judaea remained a strictly regional power. And although Aristoboulos in 104 and Jannaeus Alexander in 103 BC took the title of “king,” this was a far cry from the supernatural world ruler whom Daniel had promised. The Hasmonaean and Herodian monarchies as such were in fact a disappointment to those who were anticipating something altogether different, and the devout came to regard the real kings of Judaea as somehow delaying the arrival of the Messiah and the beginning of the Apocalyptic Age.

Soon after the death in 48 BC of the Roman proconsul Pompeius, who fifteen years earlier had desecrated the Jerusalem temple by walking into it, a Judaeans wrote eighteen bellicose psalms and attributed them to Solomon. These pseudepigraphical *Psalms of Solomon* were eventually discredited in rabbinic Judaism and so did not survive antiquity in their original language, whether (Western) Aramaic or Hebrew. They were, however, preserved by Christians in both Greek and Syriac translations. The main theme of the *Psalms* is that Pompeius has paid dearly for his sacrilege, and that other Gentiles who followed his example should expect the Lord to take the same vengeance on them. Two of the *Psalms* are Messianic, 17 strongly so and 18 to a lesser extent. These *Psalms* echo Psalm 2, and look forward to the coming of a Messiah who will also be a descendant of David. This Messiah will break the Gentile powers, smashing them like a clay pot dashed to the pavement. From *Psalms of Solomon* 17 come the following lines:³⁷

Behold, O Lord, and raise up unto them their king, the son of David
At the time in the which Thou seest, O God, that he may reign over Israel Thy servant,
And gird him with strength, that he may shatter unrighteous rulers,
And that he may purge Jerusalem from nations that trample (her) down to destruction.
Wisely, righteously he shall thrust out sinners from (the) inheritance,
He shall destroy the pride of the sinner as a potter's vessel.
With a rod of iron he shall break in pieces all their substance,
He shall destroy the godless nations with the word of his mouth;

At his rebuke nations shall flee before him,
And he shall reprove sinners for the thoughts of their heart.
And he shall gather together a holy people, whom he shall lead in righteousness,
And he shall judge the tribes of the people that has been sanctified by the Lord his God.
And he shall not suffer unrighteousness to lodge any more in their midst,
Nor shall there dwell with them any man that knoweth wickedness,
For he shall know them, that they are all sons of their God.
And he shall divide them according to their tribes upon the land,
And neither sojourner nor alien shall sojourn with them any more.
He shall judge peoples and nations in the wisdom of his righteousness. Selah.
And he shall have the heathen nations to serve him under his yoke;
And he shall glorify the Lord in a place to be seen of (?) all the earth;
And he shall purge Jerusalem, making it holy as of old:
So that nations shall come from the ends of the earth to see his glory.

Thus in the 40s BC many in Judaea expected a Messiah, from the stock of David, who would “destroy the godless nations with the word of his mouth,” and would “have the heathen nations to serve him under his yoke.”

More disappointments, and visions of the end of the world

The reign of Herodes the Great (37-4 BC) removed some of the urgency from the apocalyptic expectations, because Herodes provided Judaea not only with peace and prosperity but even with a measure of respect from the Gentile world. But whatever satisfaction the people of Judaea felt during Herodes’ reign came suddenly to an end in 4 BC. The bloody months known as Varus’ War, and Augustus’ breakup of the kingdom, left Judaea a small and damaged principality, ruled by an ethnarch who was merely a puppet of Rome. In this changed climate yet another apocalyptic work was produced, predicting calamities that included the end of the world: the dissolution of the heavens and the earth. This was a text known in antiquity either as the *Assumption of Moses* or the *Testament of Moses*. Probably composed in Hebrew or Aramaic, it survives only in a Latin translation from the sixth century. The author wrote this pseudepigraphon during the decade or so after 4 BC. In the *Assumption* “Moses,” who is about to leave this earth, prophesies to Joshua everything that was to befall the Lord’s worshipers. Here are all the disasters recorded in the Hebrew Bible, plus the more recent sufferings at the hands of Antiochos Epiphanes, the Hasmonaeans and Herodes (whose rule is precisely described as lasting 34 years). Last is the bloodshed of Varus’ War, when a “king from the west” would violate the temple and crucify the devout followers of Adonai. After this atrocity, so “Moses” foretold, many in Judaea would for a short time give themselves over to hedonism and wickedness, but then would come the End of Time, in which the world itself would be shattered:

And the earth shall tremble: to its confines shall it be shaken:
And the high mountains shall be made low
And the hills shall be shaken and fall.
And the horns of the sun shall be broken and he shall be turned into darkness;
And the moon shall not give her light, and be turned wholly into blood.

And the circle of the stars shall be disturbed.
And the sea shall retire into the abyss,
And the fountains of waters shall fail,
And the rivers shall dry up.
For the Most High will arise, the Eternal God alone,
And He will appear to punish the Gentiles,
And he will destroy all their idols.
Then you, O Israel, shall be happy,
And you shall mount on the necks and wings of the eagle,
And they shall be ended.
And God will exalt you,
And He will cause you to approach to the heaven of the stars,
In the place of their habitation.
And you will look from on high and see your enemies in Ge(henna)
And you shall recognize them and rejoice,
And you shall give thanks and confess thy Creator.³⁸

The author, or “Moses,” does not counsel the devout to take up arms against the Gentiles. They are to endure what sufferings they must,³⁹ and the Lord himself “will appear to punish the Gentiles.” The pacifism of the *Assumption of Moses* was perhaps directed at hotheads who late in the reign of Augustus were beginning to take it upon themselves to initiate what they thought would be the apocalyptic conflict with the Gentiles. It was in the years 5-10 CE that Judas the Galilean founded the group known as the “Zealots,” terrorists who targeted the Romans and those Judaeans who most openly cooperated with the Romans.⁴⁰ According to Josephus the Zealots otherwise agreed with the Pharisees, but whereas the Pharisees eschewed violence the Zealots specialized in it.⁴¹ Like other Pharisees, the author of the *Assumption of Moses* was not a political revolutionary. He was nevertheless certain that the Greeks and Romans were about to receive their just deserts, as Adonai scorched the earth, shook the heavens, elevated his worshipers to the stars and dispatched the idolaters to hell. Such was at least one writer’s expectation of what the very near future held, in the aftermath of Varus’ War and the Romans’ termination of the kingdom of Judaea.

It is important to note that although all of it looked forward to the future, the apocalypticism of Hasmonaean and Herodian Judaea took various and many forms. One school assumed that the people of Judaea were themselves to strike out against their enemies and initiate the *eschata*, the “last things,” while another school warned the people against taking things into their own hands. Some supposed that a universal kingdom based in Jerusalem was about to be established, others believed that heaven and earth were about to be dissolved and replaced by Paradise and Gehenna (Hell). Some looked forward to several human messiahs and some to *the* Messiah, whom Adonai would call his son. Still others counted less on one or more messiahs, and imagined that the End of Time would be ushered in by archangels such as Michael or Gabriel, or even by Adonai himself. But despite the variety of scenarios imagined, one thing agreed upon by most people in Judaea at the beginning of the first century CE was that Gentile rule was about to be overthrown and the world was about to be turned upside down.

By the early third century CE the anticipation of either a world-wide Judaeans rule or the imminent destruction of the earth and the heavens was discouraged both by the rabbinic schools within Judaism and by regional councils of Christian bishops. In modern times apocalyptic and Messianic Judaism has therefore been an embarrassment for Jewish and Christian scholars. But the historian cannot ignore this phase of Judaism, for without the apocalyptic fervor that began in Judaea in the second century BC neither rabbinic Judaism nor Christianity would have come into being.

Resurrection of the body and the Day of Judgement

Resurrection, like Messianism, was an important feature of apocalyptic prophecy. If they died before the Apocalyptic Kingdom arrived, it would do no good for those Judaeans who scrupulously kept Adonai's *torah* or even joined Judas Maccabeus' guerillas to fight against the idolatrous Gentiles. For such Judaeans, resurrection was indispensable, assuring them that they too would share in the glories of the Kingdom, no matter when it commenced. Likewise, it was important that Hellenizing Judaeans, who went to their graves without ever having suffered for their lax behavior, be brought back to life at the beginning of the Apocalyptic Age, so that finally they would pay the price for consorting with Gentiles.

Belief in a physical resurrection therefore made its appearance in Judaea at the same time as belief in the Apocalyptic Kingdom.⁴² The first reference to resurrection in the Hebrew Bible comes at Daniel 12:2. After describing the climactic battle in which Michael and the people of Adonai triumph over the forces of the "king of the north," the author explains what will happen next:

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.⁴³

This is not a universal resurrection, in which all the dead awake, but is restricted to the best and the worst. What the author of Daniel had in mind was not the Heaven and Hell imagined in medieval Christianity or Islam. Instead he imagined that both the righteous and the unrighteous would walk the same earth and see the same sky, but in a divine and eternal kingdom in which the righteous would "shine as the brightness of the firmament," while the wicked - or those who had backed the wrong side in the war against the Seleukids - would grovel in shame.

This relatively mild punishment that the author of Daniel envisaged for the wicked after their resurrection was by other apocalyptic writers made far worse, and a very different scenario was imagined for the End of Time. The roots of this alternative eschatology, which we may refer to as the doctrine of Judgement Day, went back at least a generation before the Maccabean revolt and the publication of Daniel. As we have seen, the "Book of the Watchers" that has come down to us in I Enoch, and that was evidently composed early in the second century BC, shows that some Judaeans had by then borrowed from Plato the belief that at death the souls of the wicked are plunged into rivers of fire or the Pit of Tartaros, never to re-emerge. For the Judaeans who hid their scrolls in the Qumran caves the various Enoch books were great favorites.⁴⁴

The Platonic scenario was not entirely persuasive, however, because it was not easy to understand how immaterial souls could be tormented by fire or could feel physical pain of any kind. Late in the Hellenistic period Judaeian apocalyptic found a solution and made the torment comprehensible, by borrowing from the Book of Daniel the idea of physical resurrection. At the End of Time, so it was said, would come a Day of Judgement, when all of the dead would be physically resurrected: the wicked would then be consigned - body and soul - to the eternal fires. In Judaeian apocalyptic these fires were located in *Gehenna*, originally the burial fields outside Jerusalem but in the first century a name used for what was imagined to be the worst district of *Sheol* or *Hades*. The doctrine of physical resurrection and of Judgement Day is perhaps the modern world's strangest but most consequential legacy from antiquity. Initially propagated in the Judaeian synagogues, it was fundamental for the formation of both New Covenant Christianity and Islam, and through the centuries has exhilarated and frightened billions of the faithful.

Exactly what was expected in the late Hellenistic and early Roman imperial period is laid out vividly in Book 2 of the collection known as the Sibylline Oracles. The Oracles, all in Greek hexameters, have a diverse origin, but much of Book 2 and most of Books 3-5 are heavily indebted to Judaism and Christianity. Although the long description of Judgement Day in Book 2 does not follow either Judaeian or Christian religious prescriptions about who is bound for Heaven and who for Hell (the poet instead sends "good" people to Heaven and the wicked to Hell) it describes in detail how the bodies of the dead will be recomposed at the End of Time:

Then the heavenly one will give souls and breath and
Voice to the dead and bones fastened
With all kinds of joinings...flesh and sinews
And veins and skin about the flesh, and the former hairs.
Bodies of humans, made solid in heavenly manner,
Breathing and set in motion, will be raised on a single day.
Then Uriel, the great angel, will break the gigantic bolts,
Of unyielding and unbreakable steel, of the gates
Of Hades, not forged of metal; he will throw them wide open.⁴⁵

The wicked (the author has a long list of sins, many of them sexual, that qualify a person as wicked) will be herded into Gehenna's rivers of fire, while the virtuous are taken to a beautiful place where fountains pour forth milk, honey and wine.

Like the Sibylline Oracles, the pseudepigraphical Fourth Esdras (also called *The Apocalypse of Ezra*) was much concerned with eschatology. Here too resurrection is no longer reserved for the best and the worst of humankind, as it was for the author of Daniel, but has become universal: everyone will arise from the earth. At Chapter 7 the author of Fourth Esdras prophesies:

The earth will give up those who sleep in it, and the dust those who rest there in silence,
and the storehouses will give back the souls entrusted to them.

The Most High will be seen on the judgement seat, and there will be an end of all pity and patience.

Judgement alone will remain, truth will stand firm, and faithfulness be strong.

The work of each man will come forward and its recompense be made known; good deeds will awake and wicked deeds will not be allowed to sleep.

The place of torment will appear, and over against it the place of rest; the furnace of hell will be displayed, and on the opposite side the paradise of joy.

Then the Most High will say to the nations that have been raised from the dead: 'Look and understand who it is you have denied and refused to serve, whose commandments you have despised.

Look on this side, and on that: here are joy and rest, there fire and torments.' That is how he will speak to them on the day of judgement. (Fourth Esdras 7:32-38 OSB)

The belief in physical resurrection and a Day of Judgement, which may have been limited to a few of the *hasidim* in the early years of the Maccabean revolt, must by the middle of the first century BC have been quite widespread in Judaism. It was not, however, accepted by everyone. The Essenes pinned their hopes on the soul, and must therefore have rejected the idea of a bodily resurrection. So certainly did the Sadducees. The Pharisees, on the other hand, espoused it, and supposed that their strenuous piety and the deprivations that they endured in this life would be rewarded when the Apocalyptic Kingdom dawned and they arose from their graves to take their places of honor and splendor in the Kingdom. It was all but impossible to find proof texts for the resurrection and Judgement Day in the older texts of the Hebrew Bible, but Pharisaic scholars claimed to have found them at Ezekiel 37:1-14 (the "dry bones" passage), and in even less promising passages in Isaiah (60:21, 65:20, and 66:24).⁴⁶ Because the Pharisees were greatly admired by the average Judaeans (at least this was so by the time that Josephus wrote his *Judaeans Antiquities*), it is likely that their belief in physical resurrection and Judgement Day would also have been shared by many Judaeans who were not themselves Pharisees.

Apocalyptic and Messianic Judaism at the end of the first century BC

More broadly, it is not clear how much the three sects - Sadducees, Pharisees and Essenes - were affected by the apocalyptic expectations that Daniel awakened. Because the book seems to have been generally regarded by Judaeans as a genuine prophetic book, recently come to light, we may suppose that none of the sects seriously disputed the book or its prophecies. For the Sadducees, however, neither Daniel nor other apocalyptic books - I Enoch, IV Esdras, and the many other pseudepigrapha that Judaeans composed in the late Hellenistic and early Roman periods - could have been of great importance, because the Sadducees regarded only "the five books of Moses" as sacred texts. At the other end of the spectrum, the Judaeans who treasured the Qumran scrolls were obsessed with apocalyptic: not only Daniel, but all the prophetic books, which believers ransacked in order to find clues about the coming War of the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness. Were these believers Essenes? Perhaps, but given Philo's and Josephus' description of the Essenes as pacifists we may wonder whether the Dead Sea Scrolls were deposited in the Qumran caves by Essenes. Of the three major sects, the Pharisees may have been most heartened by the prophecies of Daniel. Although they were not themselves inclined

to start a holy war, they trusted that their devotion to ritual purity and their opposition to Hellenism were about to be vindicated by the establishment of the Apocalyptic Kingdom, and that in that Kingdom they would have a very high rank.

The apocalyptic and Messianic enthusiasm that began with the publication of Daniel spread widely among the general population of Judaea, most of whom belonged to none of the three sects. For the average person in Judaea the success of the Maccabean revolt, culminating in the autonomous state ruled by John Hyrcanus, was gratifying but whetted the appetite for much more. The disappointment of Jannaeus Alexander's reign and of the stunted ethnarchy of Hyrcanus II made the prospect of the End of Time all the more exciting. Some looked forward to the Messiah's coming through the clouds to establish an eternal and world-wide Kingdom of God, while others awaited the utter dissolution of heaven and earth. If the reign of Herodes the Great provided a lull in Judaeian apocalyptic, the humiliation and devastation of Varus' War revived it. By the end of 4 BC many in Judaea were certain that unimaginably great things were about to happen.

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1. Before the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls William F. Albright had speculated that the Essenes may have come from Mesopotamia to Judaea after the decline of Seleukid power.
 2. Stegemann 1998 is a recent and readable introduction to the question of the Essenes' tie to the Dead Sea scrolls (he accepts it). The fullest sources on the Essenes are Josephus, *BJ* 2.120-161, and Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 8.11 and 8.12.75 to 13.91. The Eusebian passages are long quotations of what Philo had written about the Essenes three hundred years earlier. The first quotation came from Philo's *Hypothetica*, and the second from Philo's *Quod omnis probus liber sit* (*That Every Upright Man is Free*), a Stoicizing tract. A very brief description of the Essenes was given by Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 5.15. For a scholarly characterization of the Essenes see Koester 1982, vol. 1, pp. 234-39, but beware of Koester's statement (p. 235) that "there is no question that the Jewish sect of Qumran was indeed identical with the sect mentioned in the ancient reports about the Essenes." A leading voice against identifying the Essenes with the Qumran scrolls has been Norman Golb (Golb 1995).
 3. On these see Philo's *De vita contemplativa*, as transmitted in Eusebius, *HE* 2.17.
 4. The name Ἐσσηνοί comes to us from Philo and Josephus. The name is not attested in the New Testament or in any Hebrew or Aramaic text, leading hyper-skeptics to doubt the existence of the Essenes.
 5. Josephus, *BJ* 2.137 and 150. In several important ways the Therapeutai differed from the Essenes. The Therapeutai did not live together in a commune, and did not share their possessions. And unlike the Essenes, the Therapeutai included women. Although in their Sabbath gatherings the men and women occupied separate chambers, they joined together in singing hymns.

6. Josephus, *BJ* 2.154-58.

7. Vermes 1962, p. 51: “The doctrine of resurrection does not seem to have been a major preoccupation in the Community. It may be reflected in a few passages such as the following: “Hoist a banner, O you who lie in the dust! O bodies gnawed by worms, raise up an ensign...” (*Hymn* 10). But it is not impossible that the phraseology is metaphorical.”

8. Philo, at Eusebius, *Praep. Ev.* 8.12.79.

9. The third of the Buddhist monk’s ten precepts or vows was “to refrain from evil behavior in passion.” According to Basham 1967, pp. 281-82, “the third vow meant, for the monk, absolute celibacy.”

10. *BJ* 2.160.

11. Philo, at Eusebius *Praep. Ev.* 8.11. The translation is by Yonge.

12. For Pliny’s account of the Essenes see his *Nat. Hist.* 5. 15.73 (John Bostock translation): “Lying on the west of Asphaltites, and sufficiently distant to escape its noxious exhalations, are the Esseni, a people that live apart from the world, and marvellous beyond all others throughout the whole earth, for they have no women among them; to sexual desire they are strangers; money they have none; the palm-trees are their only companions. Day after day, however, their numbers are fully recruited by multitudes of strangers that resort to them, driven thither to adopt their usages by the tempests of fortune, and wearied with the miseries of life. Thus it is, that through thousands of ages, incredible to relate, this people eternally prolongs its existence, without a single birth taking place there; so fruitful a source of population to it is that weariness of life which is felt by others. Below this people was formerly the town of Engada, second only to Hierosolyma in the fertility of its soil and its groves of palm-trees; now, like it, it is another heap of ashes. Next to it we come to Masada, a fortress on a rock, not far from Lake Asphaltites. Thus much concerning Judaea.”

Pliny wrote at least this part of his *NH* after 70. He dedicated the work to Titus in 77, and continued to revise it until his death in 79. His reference to Engada in the past tense (*infra hos Engada oppidum fuit*) and to Engada and Jerusalem as “heaps of ashes” (*busta*) suggests that Pliny saw these places and made his tour of the Dead Sea after 70. Engada is Ein Gedi, along the west shore of Dead Sea and about 25 miles south of Khirbet Qumran. For the archaeological evidence for Ein Gedi’s destruction in 68 see Smallwood 1981, p. 315, n. 94. In short, it appears that Pliny saw Essenes living along the Dead Sea *after* the Judaeen War and the destruction of Ein Gedi and Jerusalem. Similarly, Josephus, writing well after 70, describes the Essenes very much in the present tense. If the Essenes suffered a major calamity in the Judaeen War, Josephus was evidently not aware of it.

13. For a full survey of the idea of bodily resurrection see Perkins 1984 and Segal 2004.

14. The most detailed study of the Sadducees is Jean Le Moyne, *Les sadducéens* (Paris: Lecoffre,

1972).

15. On the Sadducees' denial of angels and spirits see Acts 23:8. For the equivalence of an unclean *pneuma* and a *daimon* see Luke 4:33.

16. See, for example, Ezekiel 40:46; 43:19; 44:15; 48:11; cf. Ezra 8.2 (= 7.2 in OSB translation).

17. On these priestly Zadokites see now Hunt 2006.

18. See *Avot of Rabbi Nathan*, 5 (Recension A). Translated by J. Goldin: “[The Pharisee teacher] Antigonus of Sokho had two disciples who used to study his words. They taught them to their disciples, and their disciples to their disciples. These proceeded to examine the words closely and demanded, ‘Why did our ancestors see fit to say this thing? Is it possible that a laborer should do his work all day and not take his reward in the evening? If our ancestors, forsooth, had known that ... there will be a resurrection of the dead, they would not have spoken in this manner.’ So they arose and withdrew from the [study of the oral] Torah, and split into two sects, the Sadducees and the Boethusians: Sadducees named after Zadok, Boethusians after Boethus.”

19. The Karaite source is the *kitab al-anwar*, written in the tenth century by Ya‘qūb al-Qirqisānī. Wilfrid Lockwood translates the relevant passage (1.2.7) as follows: “After the rise of the Rabbanites, arose the Sadducees and their leaders, Sadok and Boethus. According to the Rabbanites, these latter were disciples of the Antigonus who succeeded Simeon the Righteous and received instruction from him. It was Sadok who first exposed the Rabbanites and openly disagreed with them. He had learned something of the truth and wrote books in which he is mainly concerned to challenge and attack the Rabbanites, though he offered no proof of anything which he says, but merely makes statements, except in one thing, *i.e.* the prohibition of the brother’s daughter and the sister’s daughter, for which he argued on the analogy of the paternal and maternal aunt. As for Boethus, he used to claim that the feast of Pentecost should fall only on a Sunday, just as the ‘Ananites and all the Qaraites say.” For the translation see Chiesa and Lockwood 1984, pp. 101-02.

20. For a different analysis see Cohen 1987, p. 159, who sees the two groups of “Zadokites” as two wings of the same group: “Most scholars now agree that the name Sadducee derives from the Hebrew *Zeduqi* and means ‘a descendant of Zadok the priest.’ ‘The priests the sons of Zadok’ is a regular turn of phrase in the last chapters of Ezekiel. Presumably that is a self-designation. Sadducees see themselves as the descendants of Zadok the priest, that is, as the true priests who are to officiate in the temple.”

21. For a good treatment of apocalyptic Judaism see Hengel 1981, pp. 175-218. Hengel states his conclusion concisely at p. 253: “Finally, it is very probable that between the Maccabean revolt and the destruction of Jerusalem the piety of Palestinian Judaism was shaped to a considerable extent by the *apocalyptic expectation of the end*” (Hengel’s italics).

22. For this observation and for good supporting arguments I am indebted to Richard Green, whose M.A. paper, “The Birth of Hell” was submitted to the Department of Classical Studies at

Vanderbilt University on April 8, 2003.

23. An excellent and readable introduction to, and commentary on, the Book of Daniel is now available: see Choon-Leong Seow, *Daniel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003). Seow, professor of Old Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary, had earlier written a fine commentary on Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes).

24. Three Daniel stories (the Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three; Daniel and Susanna; and Daniel, Bel and the Snake) come down to us by way of the Septuagint and the second of these may well have been composed in Greek, probably in the third or second century BC. Although Catholic Bibles have included all three stories in the Book of Daniel, the stories did not become part of the canon accepted in Rabbinic Judaism. Protestant Bibles have therefore relegated them to the Apocrypha.

25. See Seow 2003, p. 7: "The conclusion that one should draw from the historical overview in 11:2-45 seems inevitable: that account must have been completed near the end of the reign of Antiochus but before his death in December of 164 B.C.E., or at least before the information of his death reached Palestine, probably in the spring of 163 B.C.E." Daniel 9:24-27 and 11:2-39 refer clearly to the withdrawal of Antiochos Epiphanes (the "king of the north") from Egypt (the "kingdom of the south") when he is frightened by the Roman embassy (the "ships from Kittim" at 11:30), his consequent raging against Judaea, and the cessation of sacrifices in the temple for three and a half years. Judas Maccabeus' restoration of sacrifices and re-dedication of the Jerusalem temple to Adonai occurred in Kislev (December) of 164 BC. But the author of Daniel did not, when publishing the book, know about Epiphanes' death in Elam. The author instead, at 11:40-45, has Daniel prophesying that with a mighty army the wicked king of the north will sweep over Egypt and take it, along with Libya and Kush, before once again being alarmed by "rumors from the north and east" and departing in great anger. He will die not far from Jerusalem, "between the sea and the holy hill, the fairest of all hills" (11:45 OSB). At 7:25 and 12:7 Daniel reveals the "prophecy" that Antiochos' desecration of the temple will last for three and a half years. At 12:11 this is made more precise: "From the time when the regular offering is abolished and 'the abomination of desolation' is set up, one thousand two hundred and ninety days will elapse" (OSB).

26. As an introduction to the whole, the Maccabean author prefaced it - in Hebrew - with Chapters 1:1 through 2:3. See Seow 2003, p. 9: "The author of the Hebrew composition in 8:1-12:4, thus, added the new materials to the earlier Aramaic anthology (2:4b-7:28). In addition, a Hebrew introduction (1:1-2:4a) has been put at the beginning."

27. See, for example, Daniel 11:5-6, which refers to the marriage of Berenike, daughter of Ptolemy II Philadelphos, to Antiochos II Theos (ruled 261-246). The author correctly "predicts" the deaths of Berenike, Theos and their child. These murders were the work of Laodike, the former wife and half-sister of Theos (she had been shunted aside so that Theos could marry Berenike).

28. The four essays in Keel and Staub 2000 are related to various aspects of Daniel 7. On the

elephant as the fourth beast see Staub's essay in the volume, with John Collins' comments in his *JBL* 2002 review.

29. The dreadful fourth beast is the Seleukid kingdom. As the eleventh horn (or tusk) springs forth it uproots three others. This eleventh tusk, which "will hurl defiance at the Most High" and will terrorize the holy ones for a time and times and half a time (3.5 yrs), is Antiochos Epiphanes. In 175 BC Seleukos IV had been assassinated by Heliodoros, one of his own ministers. Epiphanes took over, evidently as regent for his nephew, the younger son of Seleukos IV, but by 170 BC Epiphanes had done away with the boy. While this was happening Demetrios, the older son of Seleukos IV (this Demetrios was known as Soter after his accession in 162 BC), was being held in Rome as hostage. Demetrios learned of his father's and brother's deaths, but until Epiphanes died Demetrios was unable to get any backing for his own claims to the throne. So, three tusks (Seleukos IV and both of his sons) were pushed aside when the eleventh tusk arose. The total of ten kings prior to Epiphanes: four Seleukoi, four reigning Antiochoi (counting the younger son of Seleukos IV), Demetrios Soter (still a hostage in Rome when Daniel was written), and Antiochos Hierax, who was a brother and rival of Seleukos II and was eventually defeated in civil war.

30. The Authorized Version (King James) is similar, but misleadingly capitalizes the term, "son of man," making it a title: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Although the author of Daniel 7 used the term, "son of man," merely as a poetic synonym for "man" (in contrast to the four beasts that preceded him), its use in this prophetic passage gave it the apocalyptic character that it has retained ever since. It appears nowhere else in the Tanakh.

31. In what follows I have profited from working with R. Craig Murray, who for his Honors project in the Department of History at Vanderbilt University (2004-05) explored the impact of the "Son of Man" prophecy on Judaea in the period 163 BC - 70 CE.

32. Acts 13:33, Hebrews 1:5, Hebrews 5:5.

33. IV Esdras, or the *Apocalypse of Ezra*, was apparently composed in the middle decades of the first century CE. Scholarly opinion is that it was written in Hebrew and was not long thereafter translated into Greek. By the end of the second century the book was not easily reconciled with either rabbinic Judaism or orthodox Christianity and as a result neither the Hebrew original nor the Greek translation survives. The apocalypse nevertheless continued to be read by Christians in Late Antiquity and versions have survived in Latin, Syriac, Georgian and Arabic, and a closely related text in Armenian.

34. Brock and Taylor 2001, p. 192.

35. The Hebrew or Aramaic text of Judith does not survive, and no fragment of Judith was found

at Qumran. English translations of Judith come from the Greek text. Jerome's Latin translation "from the Chaldaean language" is sloppy, and supports his claim that he completed the translation in a single day.

36. The real Nebuchadnezzar (reigned 605-562 BC) did not come to power until after Nineveh's destruction and the Assyrian empire's end, but by the second century BC neither Judaeans nor Hellenes had even a foggy notion of Mesopotamian history of the late seventh century BC. Even Herodotus had confused the Assyrian with the Chaldaean empire, and neither Herodotus nor Ktesias (who spent years at Babylon) knew anything of Nebuchadnezzar and his empire. Judaeans pretended to know this "ancient" history in detail, but for a sample of their confusion one need look no further than the Book of Daniel. See also Ezra 6:22, where the author confuses the king of Persia with the king of Assyria.

37. Lines 23-34, G. Buchanan Gray translation, in R. H. Charles, ed., *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913).

38. *Assumption of Moses*, Chapter 10. Translation by Charles, in Charles, *Apocrypha*, vol. 2.

39. Chapter 9 is given over to the story of the Levite Taxo (or Taksok), who with his seven sons goes off to a cave to die, rather than violating the *torah*. Taxo tells his sons that Adonai will reward their martyrdom by bringing the world to an end (9:7: "For if we do this and die, our blood shall be avenged before the Lord"). Charles suggests that the otherwise unknown Takso(k) is, by Gematria, Eleazar, who with the righteous widow's seven sons has been borrowed by the *Assumption's* author from Second Maccabees.

40. Josephus (*BJ* 2. 117-18) says that the Zealots first appeared when Caponius was governor of Judaea (6-9 CE). Caponius was the first Roman prefect of Judaea, assigned to that post immediately after Augustus ended Archelaus' ethnarchy and sent him into exile.

41. *AJ* 18.23.

42. On the broader topic see Segal 2004.

43. Authorized Version. The NEB translation reads, "some to everlasting life, and some to the reproach of eternal abhorrence."

44. I Enoch 37-71, the "Book of Parables" (or "Book of Similitudes"), may have been an early Christian composition attributed to Enoch. But the other texts included in the Ethiopic I Enoch (chapters 1-36 and 72-108) predate the Christian era. Aramaic fragments from no less than eleven different copies of these early Enoch books have been found at Qumran and were published by J. T. Milik, ed. and trans., *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976.

45. Sibylline Oracles, Bk. 2.273-282. Book 2 includes Christian interpolations and may have been given its present form as late as the second century CE. Most of its content, however, seems to be much earlier. The earliest Jewish Sibyl, supposed to have been responsible for

books 3-5, is usually put in the 2nd century BC (Hengel 1981, p. 89, suggests “about 140 BC” for the third book of the Sibyllines).

46. See Perkins 1984, p. 56.