

# From Jewish Apocalypticism to Gnosis

by  
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The topic assigned to me by my esteemed colleagues, the organizers of this conference, is one that would not have been of central concern in the scholarly discussion of Gnosticism prior to the discovery of the Nag Hammadi Codices.<sup>1</sup> The Nag Hammadi texts have changed the discussion fundamentally. My lamented friend George MacRae<sup>†</sup> expressed it very well at the 1979 Colloquium on Apocalypticism in Uppsala:

The fact that Gnosticism arose out of Jewish apocalyptic (and wisdom) traditions, however radical the revolt against the Jewish matrix may have been, is now very broadly acknowledged, especially in view of the prominent Jewish elements in the Nag Hammadi texts.<sup>2</sup>

In what follows I want to take up for discussion three subtopics: 1) Gnostic “apocalypses” in the Nag Hammadi corpus; 2) the use of Jewish apocalypses in some of the Nag Hammadi texts; and 3) the transformation of the “apocalyptic” worldview in the Gnostic religion. In this last section basic questions of definition (“apocalypticism,” “Gnosis”) will also be addressed, and MacRae’s assertion tested.

## 1. Gnostic “Apocalypses” in the Nag Hammadi Corpus

Before we look at the specific Nag Hammadi texts it will be useful to raise the question, What is an “apocalypse”?<sup>3</sup> This question, at

least as I intend it, has to do more with literary form, or genre, than with specific content. For purposes of this discussion I shall rely heavily on the work of a group of scholars of the Society of Biblical Literature in the U.S., as organized and edited by John J. Collins.<sup>4</sup> In his introductory essay Collins defines an “apocalypse” as follows:

“Apocalypse” is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an other worldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.<sup>5</sup>

Collins and his group devised a cross-cultural “master-paradigm” for the genre “apocalypse,”<sup>6</sup> and then went on to define the various types of apocalypses. Two main types are identified, according to the manner in which the purported revelation is communicated to the recipient: (I) apocalypses with no otherworldly journey, and (II) apocalypses with an otherworldly journey. Each of these two types is further divided into three subtypes: (a) “historical” apocalypses (*vaticinia ex eventu*), (b) those containing cosmic/political eschatology with no historical review, and (c) those with only personal eschatology.<sup>7</sup> I find these distinctions quite useful in treating the Gnostic material.<sup>8</sup>

The Nag Hammadi corpus contains five tracts that are identified as “apocalypses” in the

titles that are appended to them. They are (in the order in which they occur in the corpus): *The Apocalypse of Paul* (NHC V,2), *The (First) Apocalypse of James* (V,3), *The (Second) Apocalypse of James* (V,4), *The Apocalypse of Adam* (V,5), and *Apocalypse of Peter* (VII,3). *Apoc. Paul* belongs to category II, one that features an otherworldly journey. In the text the apostle Paul is taken by the Holy Spirit in the guise of a small child on a journey through the heavens, up to the tenth. *1 Apoc. Jas.*, *2 Apoc. Jas.*, and *Apoc. Pet.* belong to category I, and feature revelations given by Jesus Christ functioning as the “interpreting angel” found in many of the Jewish apocalypses.<sup>9</sup> In *1 Apoc. Jas.* and *Apoc. Pet.* the revelation is given in the context of a dialogue; in *1 Apoc. Jas.* there is only the revelatory discourse.<sup>10</sup>

Inasmuch as our interest here is on the connection between Jewish apocalyptic and Gnosis, we leave the four Christian Gnostic apocalypses and consider at greater length the fifth tractate with “apocalypse” in its title: NHC V,5: *The Apocalypse of Adam*.<sup>11</sup> As the only Gnostic text to be included in the standard English edition of the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,<sup>12</sup> *Apoc. Adam* is a parade example of a literary work that attests to the transition “from Jewish apocalyptic to Gnosis.” In generic terms, *Apoc. Adam* represents “a transitional stage in an evolution from Jewish to gnostic apocalyptic.”<sup>13</sup>

The four Christian Gnostic apocalypses already cited are, in contrast, later, at least typologically, inasmuch as they exemplify the full-blown development of a Christian Gnosticism out of a previously existing non-Christian Gnosticism, and an appropriation on the Christian side of the genre “apocalypse” that developed in pre-Christian Jewish circles. As I have argued elsewhere,<sup>14</sup> *Apoc. Adam* can aptly be regarded as an example of “Jewish Gnostic” literature.

*Apoc. Adam* is an apocalypse of the type Ia, (a “historical” apocalypse lacking a heavenly journey). In that respect it is comparable formally to such Jewish writings as Daniel 7-12, the “Animal Apocalypse” in *1 Enoch* 83-90, the “Apocalypse of Weeks” in *1 Enoch* 91-104, *Jubilees* 23, *4 Ezra*, and *2 Baruch*.<sup>15</sup> In terms of genre it is also a “testament,” i.e. a testamentary revelation given by Adam shortly before his death “in the seven hundredth year”<sup>16</sup> to his son Seth. The “apocalyptic testament,” or “testamentary revelation,” is a well known category in the history of Jewish literature.<sup>17</sup> In this particular case, Adam reports his experience of a dream vision in which three heavenly revealers tell of the subsequent history of the world and especially of Seth’s elect progeny (i.e. the Gnostics).

The following outline presents my own understanding of the structure and basic content of *Apoc. Adam*:<sup>18</sup>

## NHC V,5: The Apocalypse of Adam outline

Introduction	64,1-5
I. The Setting: Adam’s testamentary speech to Seth	64,5-67,21
A. Adam relates his and Eve’s experiences with their Creator	64,5-65,23
B. Adam’s dream vision: three heavenly men address him with a revelation	65,24-66,8
C. Adam and Eve’s experiences (continued)	66,9-67,14
D. Adam intends to transmit the revelations to Seth	67,14-21
II. The Revelation	67,22-85,18
A. The end of Adam’s generation <sup>19</sup>	67,22-28+
B. The Flood, first deliverance	69,2-73,29
C. Destruction by fire, second deliverance	73,30-76,7

D. Third episode: end-time threat and redemption	76,8-85,18
1. Coming of the Illuminator	76,8-77,3
2. The Powers' wrath against the Illuminator	77,4-18
3. Interpolation: competing views about the Illuminator	77,18-83,4
a. The Powers' quandary	77,18-27
b. The thirteen kingdoms	77,27-82,19
c. The generation without a king	82,19-83,4
4. Final struggle, repentance of the peoples	83,4-84,3
5. Condemnation of the peoples	84,4-28
6. Final salvation of the seed of Seth	85,1-6
E. Revelations put on a high rock	85,7-18
First conclusion	85,19-22
Second conclusion and title	85,22-32

Close parallels between *Apoc. Adam* and the Jewish Adam literature have been noted, especially the *Life of Adam and Eve* and the *Apocalypse of Moses*.<sup>20</sup> Compare, for example, the opening passages of the revelation to Seth in *Apoc. Adam* (IA in our outline) and *Adam and Eve*.

*Apoc. Adam*: "Listen to my words, my son Seth. When god had created me out of the earth along with Eve your mother ..." (64,5-8)

*Adam and Eve*: Adam said to Seth, "Listen my son, and I will pass on to you what I heard and saw. After your mother and I had been driven out of Paradise ..." (25.1-2). Cf. 32:1: And Adam answered and said, "Listen to me, my sons. When God made us, me and your mother ..." <sup>21</sup>

G. Nickelsburg posits the existence of an apocalyptic testament of Adam as a common source utilized by *Apoc. Adam* and *Adam and Eve*.<sup>22</sup>

The Syriac *Testament of Adam*<sup>23</sup> should also be mentioned in this connection. The prophetic section of this work (ch. 3) consists of a prophecy given by Adam to Seth of future catastrophes of flood and fire, and the coming of a savior who will deliver the elect posterity of Adam. G. Reinink has drawn attention to the correspondences between the Syriac *Testament* and *Apoc. Adam*, and has even posited the existence of a common source document for both.<sup>24</sup>

An Adam "apocalypse" is referred to and quoted in the Cologne Mani Codex. A radiant angel says to Adam, "I am Balsamos,<sup>25</sup> the

greatest angel of light. Wherefore take and write these things which I reveal to you on most pure papyrus, incorruptible and insusceptible to worms" (49,3-10).<sup>26</sup> Mention is made in what follows of further visions of Adam and other writings reporting them. Such writings may have been Jewish Adam books,<sup>27</sup> but it is also possible that our *Apoc. Adam* was known to Mani, as indicated in the following passage: "And he (Adam) became mightier than all the powers and the angels of creation" (50,1-4). Cf. *Apoc. Adam*, where Adam says to Seth, "And we resembled the great eternal angels, for we were higher than the god who had created us and the powers with him" (64,14-18).

However that may be, it is clear that *Apoc. Adam* is closely related to the Adam cycle of

Jewish revelatory literature, for which an early date can be posited. Josephus is acquainted with such literature, and may in fact be relying on an early "testament of Adam" (or of Seth) when he tells of predictions of flood and fire, and the erection by the progeny of Seth of inscribed steles of stone and brick for preservation of their lore, items which correspond in large measure to parts of *Apoc. Adam*.<sup>28</sup>

*Apoc. Adam* is, of course, a Gnostic text. As such it has a far different point of view in its interpretation of the Adam and Seth traditions from that of the other Adam books, Jewish and Christian. The passage partially quoted above is a case in point, wherein Adam provides an autobiographical account of his and Eve's misadventures after their creation. Whereas in *Adam and Eve* the two protoplasts are duly repentant after their banishment from Paradise, in *Apoc. Adam* they see themselves as naturally "higher than the god who had created us" (64,16-17) as a result of the "knowledge that breathed within us" (64,27-28). The biblical Creator is depicted in the text as acting against Adam and Eve out of jealous wrath, quite like the devil in *Adam and Eve*, banished from heaven because of his refusal to worship the newly created Adam (chs. 12-17). Thus, our Gnostic author is interpreting his inherited tradition in a radically new way.

This new perspective is carried throughout the text of *Apoc. Adam*. In the salvation history of the revelation proper (II in the outline) the elect seed of Seth (the Gnostics) is saved from flood, fire, and the final "day of death" (76,16-17) through the actions of a savior (the heavenly Seth, after whom Adam's son is named [65,5-9])<sup>29</sup> acting to thwart the designs of the Creator and his henchmen. While this three-fold sequence of flood, fire, and end-time has formal parallels in Jewish apocalypses, e.g. the "Apocalypse of Weeks" in *I Enoch*,<sup>30</sup> the radical perspective of *Apoc. Adam* represents a new departure, based on an esoteric gnosis that en-

ables the elect to know the "real truth" about past, present, and future events and future salvation, and about the "God of truth" (65,11) who is above, and unknown to, the god whom ordinary Jews "serve in fear and slavery" (65,20).

It is not possible here to treat *Apoc. Adam* in greater detail.<sup>31</sup> Suffice it to say that, whatever its date (a much disputed point),<sup>32</sup> it is a non-Christian Gnostic text that exemplifies probably better than any other Gnostic text known to us the transition from Jewish apocalyptic to Gnosis.

In addition to the five Nag Hammadi tractates that have "apocalypse" as part of their titles, two other tractates are so designated in a famous passage from Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus*:

There were in his (Plotinus') time many Christians and others, and sectarians who had abandoned the old philosophy (scil. of Plato), men of the schools of Adelphius and Aculinus, who possessed a great many treatises of Alexander the Libyan and Philocomus and Demostratus and Lydus, and produced revelations (ἀποκαλύψεις) by Zoroaster and Zostrianus and Nicotheus and Allogenes and Messus and other people of the kind ...<sup>33</sup>

Four of the five personages named as authors of "apocalypses" appear in the Nag Hammadi Codices. A "book of Zoroaster" is referred to in the *Apocryphon of John* II 19,10 as a source for the names of angels associated with the various parts of the body and its passions. "Zoroaster" also occurs in the subscript title of *Zostrianos* (132,6-10): "Zostrianos, Oracles of Truth of Zostrianos, God of Truth, Teachings of Zoroaster." The Nag Hammadi tractate bearing the name of Zostrianos (VIII,1: *Zostrianos*) is almost certainly the one referred to by Porphyry, as is the one bearing the name of Allogenes (NHC XI,3: *Allogenes*). Messos is the

“son” of Allogenes in *Allogenes* (50,1.19; 68,28; 69,16). Nikotheos is absent from the Nag Hammadi corpus but is named, and even quoted, in the Untitled Text of Codex Bruce (Cod. Bruc. *Untitled* ch. 7).<sup>34</sup>

Porphyry’s use of the term “apocalypse” for these Gnostic writings is apt, for both of the ones that we now have in the Nag Hammadi corpus belong to the “apocalypse” genre. *Zostrianos*<sup>35</sup> is an apocalypse of the second type, one with an otherworldly journey.<sup>36</sup> The seer Zostrianos is guided by an angel on an ascent through various “aeons,” where he also undergoes baptismal initiations. At the conclusion of the revelations Zostrianos returns to the perceptible world and preaches to the elect.<sup>37</sup> There are no Christian features in this text.

*Allogenes* is another apocalypse of the second type, at least in its second part (57,27-69,20).<sup>38</sup> After a series of revelations given by the female deity Youel to Allogenes, as reported by him to his son Messos (part 1: 45,1-57,27), Allogenes ascends to the transcendent world and receives revelations of the transcendent God and associated beings. After his revelations Allogenes is commanded to write them in a book and deposit it on a high mountain (68,16-20). This tractate, too, lacks Christian features.

Porphyry’s statement (quoted above) refers to “other people of this kind,” i.e. “authors” of “apocalypses.” One of those unnamed “others” might be Marsanes, a Gnostic prophet mentioned together with Nikotheos in Cod. Bruc. *Untitled* (ch. 7), and “author” of yet another Nag Hammadi tractate, *Marsanes* (X,1), unfortunately very fragmentary.<sup>39</sup> *Marsanes* is also a non-Christian Gnostic apocalypse of the second type,<sup>40</sup> wherein the seer ascends and receives progressive revelations of the transcendent world.

The four non-Christian apocalypses thus far mentioned (*Apoc. Adam*, *Zost.*; *Allogenes*, and *Marsanes*) are in some ways related. The last three belong together phenomenologically, in

that they share a common “system” and a common vocabulary drawn from late Platonism (which is probably why they were read by some of Plotinus’ students).<sup>41</sup> For *Apoc. Adam* the heavenly savior, after whom Adam’s son is named, is Seth. “Allogenes” is another name for Seth,<sup>42</sup> and it is probable that the seers of *Zost.* and *Marsanes* should likewise be considered as manifestations or “avatars” of Seth.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, these four apocalypses belong to a larger group of Nag Hammadi texts that have been labelled by some scholars as “Sethian,” reflecting a distinct type of Gnosticism.

The essential features of the Sethian Gnostic system are the following: the central role of Seth as a heavenly being and savior, whose spiritual descendants (the “children” or “race” of Seth) constitute the Gnostic elect; a primordial divine triad of Father (called variously “Anthropos,” “Invisible Spirit,” etc.), Mother (“Barbelo”) and Son (“Autogenes,” “Adamas,” etc.); four “Luminaries” (Harmozel, Oroiael, Daveith, and Eleleth) of the divine Son Autogenes; and an apocalyptic schematization of salvation history, focussing on judgments of the Creator and his archons in the Flood, in fire (e.g. Sodom and Gomorrah), and in the end time.<sup>44</sup>

The other Sethian tractates in the Nag Hammadi corpus are: *Ap. John* (II,1; III,1; IV,1; BG,2; cf Irenaeus *Haer.* 1.29), *The Hypostasis of the Archons* (II,4), the *Gospel of the Egyptians* (III,2; IV,2), *The Three Steles of Seth* (VII,5), *Melchizedek* (IX,1), *The Thought of Norea* (IX,2) and *Trimorphic Prottennoia* (XIII,1). We shall discuss each of them briefly.

*Ap. John* is defined by Fallon as “an apocalypse with dialogue,” belonging to the first category,<sup>45</sup> but this definition applies only to the total document as we now have it, i.e. in its latest stage of editorial development. This latest stage, wherein Jesus Christ plays the role of the Gnostic savior, represents a “Christianization” of earlier non-Christian Gnostic material,<sup>46</sup> consisting of a sustained Gnostic myth. The

myth comprises theosophy, cosmogony, anthropogony, and soteriology, and is developed out of a radical reinterpretation of scripture and Jewish exegetical traditions.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, *Ap. John's* presentation of the basic Sethian Gnostic myth is the best preserved version of "classic Gnostic" myth that we have.<sup>48</sup>

*Hyp. Arch.* is a complicated text that Fallon defines as "a treatise with a Christian introduction and two parts, a gnostic version of Genesis and an apocalypse with dialogue."<sup>49</sup> It shares considerable material with *Ap. John*, and is closely related to the untitled treatise *On the Origin of the World* (NHC II,5; XII,2). Here again we have to do with a "Christianizing" of previously existing Gnostic material.<sup>50</sup> The second part, the "apocalypse" (92,32-97,21), has been more specifically defined as a Gnostic "Apocalypse of Norea,"<sup>51</sup> wherein Norea receives revelations mediated by the light-angel Eleleth.<sup>52</sup> Norea, sister-consort of Seth, plays the role of a Gnostic savior, a female counterpart to Seth.<sup>53</sup>

*Gos. Eg.*, a work not treated by Fallon, is otherwise entitled "The Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit" (III 69,16-17; cf. III 40,12-13).<sup>54</sup> It shows some apocalyptic features in that it consists essentially of a revelation of the "salvation history" of the elect race of Seth, who is also the "author" of the revelation. At the end of the tractate it is reported that the great Seth wrote the book and placed it on a high mountain, "Charaxio."<sup>55</sup> The text has a thin Christian veneer in that Jesus Christ is mentioned in it. It is said that "Jesus the living one" is "he whom the great Seth has put on." Jesus is thus another "avatar" of the real savior, the heavenly Seth.<sup>56</sup>

*Steles Seth* is not an apocalypse *per se*,<sup>57</sup> but it has some apocalyptic features. In the text Dositheos reveals to the elect (Sethian Gnostics) the content of the three steles inscribed by Seth for his "race," consisting of theurgical prayers addressed to each of the members of

the Sethian divine Triad of Father, Mother (Barbelo), and Son.<sup>58</sup> The "steles" pick up the aforementioned Jewish tradition according to which Sethian lore was preserved on tablets of brick and stone.<sup>59</sup> There are no Christian features in *Steles Seth*.

*Melch.* is an apocalypse of the first type.<sup>60</sup> A fragmentary text, it consists of revelations given to the priest-king Melchizedek (Gen 14:18; Ps 110:4) concerning the future career of Jesus Christ and Melchizedek's own role as high priest. In the course of the revelations Melchizedek is given to understand that Christ's triumph over the forces of wickedness is really that of Melchizedek himself; i.e., the earthly savior Jesus Christ is really Melchizedek redivivus! The Sethian Gnostic features of *Melch.* are arguably secondary. These include liturgical invocations of the heavenly beings in the Sethian divine world (5,27-6,10; 16,16-18,7) and the identification of the elect as the "children of Seth" (5,20). One of the interesting features of this text is its use of Jewish traditions relating to the figure of Melchizedek, including some that are also reflected in the Dead Sea Scrolls (11QMelch).<sup>61</sup>

One of the shortest of the Nag Hammadi tractates, *Norea* is a hymnic text containing prayers to the divine Triad and narrative featuring Norea's role as a "saved savior."<sup>62</sup> It dovetails nicely with the "Apocalypse of Norea" that is part of *Hyp. Arch.*<sup>63</sup> In the latter, Norea is presented as "crying out" for "help" (92,32-93,1), which is then given by the light angel Eleleth. In *Norea* the hymnic invocation with which the text begins is attributed to Norea: "It is Norea who [cries out] to them" (27,21-22).

*Trim. Prot.* is not an "apocalypse," but it has, like *Steles Seth*, certain apocalyptic features.<sup>64</sup> It consists of three revelatory discourses narrated in the first person by a female savior figure, Protennoia ("First Thought") -Barbelo, recounting three salvific descents into the world. The third descent has her appearing as the Logos:

“I put on Jesus. I bore him from the cursed wood, and established him in the dwelling places of his Father” (50,12-15). *Trim. Prot.*’s intriguing parallels to the Prologue of the Gospel of John have been variously assessed, depending on the position one takes as to the Christian features of the text as a whole: integral or secondary.<sup>65</sup>

Four other Nag Hammadi tractates, plus one from the related Berlin Codex, have been defined generically as “apocalypses”: *Sophia of Jesus Christ* (III,4 and BG,3); *The Gospel of Mary* (BG,1); *The Letter of Peter to Philip* (VIII,2); *Hypsiphronne* (XI,4); and *The Paraphrase of Shem* (VII,1).<sup>66</sup> Three of these are obviously Christian, one (*Hypsiphronne*) consists only of small fragments, and the remaining one (*Paraph. Shem*) is a non-Christian work.

*Paraph. Shem*<sup>67</sup> is an interesting, though very obscure, apocalypse of the second type. In it Shem reports on out-of-the-body experiences in which he is snatched up to the edge of the universe and receives revelations from a figure called “Derdekeas.” The revelations concern the origin of the world, destructions by flood and fire, and the final salvation of the elect. The Gnostic cosmogony of *Paraph. Shem* involves a three-principle system: Light, Darkness, and Spirit in the middle, providing the occasion for “mixture” with Darkness and Light. A similar system is described by Hippolytus in his *Refutation* 5.19. Hippolytus ascribes this system to Gnostics he calls “Sethians,” and says that he is quoting from a “Paraphrase of Seth.” The “Paraphrase of Seth” quoted by Hippolytus, unlike *Paraph. Shem*, contains Christian features. While Hippolytus’ “Sethian” system differs markedly from the Sethian Gnosticism already discussed, the figure of Derdekeas (>Aramaic *dardeqa*, “male child”) may be taken as a manifestation of the heavenly Seth.<sup>68</sup> Thus, Shem in *Paraph. Shem* is the recipient of revelations given by Seth. This may then help to explain the differences in the

titles of what appear to be variant versions of a single work, as given by Hippolytus and as found in the Nag Hammadi tractate.

All of the apocalypses discussed so far are Gnostic ones, with varying degrees of Jewish influence, some of them also showing evidence of the Christianization of Gnosticism. We turn next to the use in Gnostic texts of non-Gnostic Jewish apocalypses.

## 2. The Use of Jewish Apocalypses in Nag Hammadi Texts

In our discussion of *Apoc. Adam* (above), we noted the close parallels between that text and the Jewish Adam books. The theory of the existence of a Jewish apocalyptic testament of Adam used as a common source for *Apoc. Adam* and *Adam and Eve* was advanced. A similar theory was cited to account for correspondences between *Apoc. Adam* and the Syriac *Testament of Adam*. We also noted the reference to an Adam “apocalypse” in the Cologne Mani Codex, presumably a Gnostic work, and other books known to Mani reporting visions of Adam, books that could have included non-Gnostic Jewish apocalypses. References to a lost *Apocalypse of Adam* are, in fact, known from various patristic sources.<sup>69</sup> Epiphanius of Salamis, for example, refers to such an apocalypse in use among the Nicolaitan Gnostics, as well as a “Gospel of Eve” and many books in the name of Seth (*Panarion* 16.8.1).<sup>70</sup>

But we do not need to speculate further on lost Jewish apocalypses used by Gnostics, or the nature of lost books cited only by title in the Nag Hammadi texts – *Orig. World* cites a number of these.<sup>71</sup> We can, in fact, refer to at least two well-known Jewish apocalypses that were known to, and used by, authors of Nag Hammadi tractates: *1 Enoch* and *2 Enoch*.

Looking first at *2 Enoch*,<sup>72</sup> Madeleine Scopello has made a good case for the use of this Graeco-Jewish apocalypse by the author of *Zos-*

*trianos*.<sup>73</sup> Both apocalypses feature a heavenly journey (type 2), in the case of Enoch up to the 10th heaven, in the case of *Zostrianos* to the region above the perceptible world. Two passages in *Zostrianos* are singled out by Scopello as having been taken from *2 Enoch*:<sup>74</sup>

*Zostrianos* 5,15-17:

I received the image of the glories there. I became like one of them.

*Zostrianos* 128,15-18:

Behold, *Zostrianos*, you have heard all these things of (which) the gods have are ignorant and (which) seem infinite to angels.

the revelation in *Apoc. Adam* depicting a three-fold sequence of flood, fire, and end-time, we noted the formal parallels with certain Jewish apocalypses, notably the "Apocalypse of Weeks" in *1 Enoch*, which provides the closest Jewish analogy. Both apocalypses feature judgments

*2 Enoch* 22.10 [J]:

And I looked at myself, and I had become like one of his [A: the] glorious ones, and there was no observable difference.

*2 Enoch* 24.3 [J]:

Listen, Enoch, ... not even to my angels I explained my secrets ... as I am making them known to you today.

In the first passage cited in *Zostrianos*, *Zostrianos* has completed his first ascent through the "thirteen aeons" of the world, and is initiated in a baptismal ritual, after which he becomes like one of the "glories," or "glorious ones." In *2 Enoch* Enoch has been removed from his earthly garments and anointed with oil, after which he becomes like one of the "glorious ones." The "glorious ones" are, in the angelology of *2 Enoch*, the highest angelic order. In *Zostrianos* they are "perfect thoughts" and "models for salvation" (46,23-26).<sup>75</sup>

The second passage in *Zostrianos* comes at the end. *Zostrianos* is addressed by one of the heavenly revealers, possibly Youel.<sup>76</sup> In *2 Enoch* Enoch is addressed by God himself, by way of introducing revelations yet to come. Enoch has been placed by God on his left, nearer than Gabriel.<sup>77</sup> Though the respective messages of the two apocalypses are quite different, the similarities between the two sets of passages cited suggest that the author of *Zostrianos* knew and used *2 Enoch*.<sup>78</sup>

We turn now to *1 Enoch*. In our discussion of

by water (the Flood), fire (imagery based on the Genesis story of Sodom and Gomorrah), and the final judgment. Both apocalypses have as their special theme the preservation of the elect, the children of Seth in *Apoc. Adam* (69,19ff, etc.), the "sons of righteousness" and the "plant of truth" in the "Apocalypse of Weeks" (*1 Enoch* 93.1). G. Nickelsburg posits the influence of the "Apocalypse of Weeks" on the putative common source lying behind *Apoc. Adam* and *Adam and Eve*.<sup>79</sup> But it is equally plausible that the author of *Apoc. Adam* was familiar with the "Apocalypse of Weeks," and perhaps other parts of *1 Enoch* as well.<sup>80</sup>

The clearest example of the use of *1 Enoch* in a Nag Hammadi writing is found in *Ap. John*. In this case we have to do with the use of a passage from the oldest part of *1 Enoch*, the "Book of Watchers" (*1 Enoch* 1-36), namely the myth of the descent of the angels in *1 Enoch* 6-11 (+15). This myth, an expansion of Genesis 6:1-4, provides a basis for the Enoch authors' interpretation of the origins of evil in the world, including evils current in their own day. The myth



also provides for the resolution of evil in the coming judgment.

The basic structure and content of the myth can be summarized as follows: A. The angels (“watchers”) plan to go down and copulate with the daughters of men; led by their chief, Shemiḥazah, they descend upon Mt. Hermon (6.1-6). B. The angels commit fornication (7.1). C. Their actions result in the birth of violent giants (7.2-6). D. The angels instruct people in metallurgy and other arts (8.1-3). E. The wicked angels are punished and reserved for the conflagration to ensue upon the final judgment (10.4-15). F. The evil spirits of the dead giants lead people astray and cause all manner of evils on the earth (15.8-12), and will continue their activities until the consummation of the age (16.1).<sup>81</sup>

The main passage in *Ap. John* that utilizes this myth in *I Enoch* is part of a running commentary on the opening chapters of Genesis, presented in the text as we now have it as part of a dialogue between the Gnostic revealer, Jesus, and his interlocutor, John.<sup>82</sup> *Ap. John*’s version of the myth can be summarized as follows:<sup>83</sup> A. The “chief archon” sends his angels down to copulate with the daughters of men. Unsuccessful, they create a “counterfeit spirit” (29,16-25). B. The angels change themselves to resemble the women’s mates,<sup>84</sup> and fill them with darkness (29,26-30). C. The angels instruct people in metallurgy and lead them astray (29,30-30,2). D. The entire world becomes enslaved and corrupted, dominated by the counterfeit spirit (30,2-11).

Our Gnostic author, while utilizing the myth in *I Enoch* as part of his commentary on Genesis, has also reinterpreted it. In *Ap. John* the angels’ plan follows upon the Flood, rather than preceding it (as in Genesis and *I Enoch*). The “chief archon” is elsewhere identified in *Ap. John* under the names Ialdabaoth, Saklas, and Samael (II 11,15-22),<sup>85</sup> and is manifestly a demonized version of the biblical Creator. In *Ap.*

*John*’s retelling of the Enochic myth he is functionally the counterpart to the chief of the “watchers,” Shemiḥazah. The author of *Ap. John* also retells the story of the angels’ fornication in such a way as to underscore his view that sexuality *per se*, not simply adultery, is inherently evil. The giants and the evil spirits play no role in *Ap. John*’s version; the functional equivalent of the evil spirits is *Ap. John*’s “counterfeit spirit.”<sup>86</sup> As for the angels’ instruction in metallurgy and other arts found in *I Enoch*, the presence of this part of the myth in *Ap. John* provides conclusive proof of *Ap. John*’s dependence upon *I Enoch*, for its purpose in *Ap. John* is not at all clear. The punishment of the angels depicted in *I Enoch* 10, while not an integral part of *Ap. John*’s retelling of the myth, is reflected in another passage in *Ap. John* wherein the punishment of reprobate souls is treated: they will go “to that place where the angels of poverty go . . . , the place where there is no repentance. And they will be kept for the day on which those who have blasphemed the spirit will be tortured, and they will be punished with eternal punishment” (27,24-31).

*Unde malum?* It is of more than passing interest that, as part of an attempt to answer that question, the author of *Ap. John* relied at least in part on a text from *I Enoch* that deals with the same issue, even though our Gnostic author comes up with a different answer. The Jewish Enoch traditions played an important role in the elaboration of Gnostic mythology and the production of Gnostic literature, and other examples of the use of these traditions in Gnostic texts from outside the Nag Hammadi corpus could be cited, including Manichaean texts.<sup>87</sup> *I Enoch* and *Ap. John* are among the most important texts of “Jewish Apocalypticism” and “Gnosis” respectively. Taken together they represent paradigmatically the transition from the one to the other, “from Jewish Apocalypticism to Gnosis.”

### 3. The Transformation of the Jewish Apocalyptic Worldview in the Gnostic Religion.

We have seen in the foregoing how the "apocalypse" genre as developed in the literature of Second Temple Judaism provided the model for apocalypses created in Gnostic circles, such as those responsible for the Nag Hammadi tractates that we have considered. We have also seen cases of how the Gnostic apocalypses used and reinterpreted older Jewish apocalypses, most notably those attributed to the antediluvian patriarch Enoch. It remains now to explicate what was only implicit in our previous discussions, i.e. the differences between the religiosity reflected in the Jewish apocalypses and that reflected in the Gnostic ones. We can do this by posing the questions raised by the title of this paper: What is "Jewish Apocalypticism"? What is "Gnosis," or "Gnosticism"? And how does one assess and interpret the relationship between them ("from ... to")?

I mentioned at the beginning of this paper the conference on Apocalypticism held in Upsala in 1979. It will be recalled that the organizers of that conference had as a goal the production of a consensus document defining "apocalypticism," comparable to the working document that issued from the Messina colloquium on Gnosticism in 1966.<sup>88</sup> As it turned out, no such consensus was possible to elicit from the scholars there assembled.<sup>89</sup> I suspect, though, that the project would have been somewhat easier if the goal had been narrower, and concentrated on "Jewish apocalypticism." Such a project would involve the extrapolation from extant Jewish apocalypses of a common worldview that is more or less reflected in the respective texts, coupled with a notion of revelation that the genre "apocalypse" ("revelation") presupposes.

There is no dearth of scholarship on Jewish apocalypticism; many scholars have been at

work on the subject. One of these, Christopher Rowland, makes the following points by way of answering the question, What is apocalyptic (i.e. Jewish apocalypticism)?:

Apocalyptic seems essentially to be about the revelation of divine mysteries through visions or some other form of immediate disclosure of heavenly truths ... The content of the material revealed is diverse, so are the modes of revelation. Heavenly ascents, dream-visions, with or without interpretation, and angelic or divine pronouncements are all typical ways of communicating the divine will and the mysteries of the heavenly world."<sup>90</sup>

In the chapters of his book devoted to the content of the heavenly mysteries, Roland uses as an organizing principle phrases from the following passage of the Mishnah:

The forbidden degrees [Lev. 18:6ff.] may not be expounded before three persons, nor the story of creation (*ma`aseh bereshit*) [Gen 1] before two, nor the chariot-chapter (*ma`aseh merkabah*) [Ezek 1 and 10] before one alone, unless he is a sage that understands of his own knowledge.

Whoever gives his mind to four things, it were better for him if he had not come into the world – what is above, what is beneath, what was beforetime, and what will be hereafter. And whosoever does not take thought for the glory of his creator, it were better for him if he had not come into the world.<sup>91</sup>

This statement could be taken as a polemic against apocalyptic or Gnostic speculation. It certainly reflects a time in the development of rabbinic Judaism when the reading and production of apocalypses was losing favor and Gnosticism was coming to the fore. Yet, there is no question but that elements of the apocalyp-

tic worldview persisted in rabbinic Judaism, and some important features of apocalypticism (throne-chariot visions) became the basis for a developed Jewish “merkabah mysticism.”<sup>92</sup> In any case, this mishnah provides useful headings for discussing the content both of “Jewish apocalypticism” and “Gnosis.” First, Jewish apocalypticism.

1. **What is above.**<sup>93</sup> Apocalyptic texts often depict in elaborate fashion the heavenly world: God and his attendant angels. Visions of God in apocalyptic texts, beginning with *1 Enoch* 14, depict God in his throne-chariot (Ezekiel 1), surrounded by his heavenly hosts. Included among the heavenly beings are the four living creatures (*hayyoth*) mentioned in Ezekiel 1:5ff., and various classes of angels, the chief of whom is Michael, the heavenly representative of Israel (e.g. Daniel 12:1). The development of angelology in Second Temple Judaism was one way of emphasizing the transcendence of God vis-a-vis the world below.

Discussions of “what is above” also include astronomy and other cosmological topics related to the created order. The Enoch literature, for example, is especially replete with encyclopedic discussions of the sun, moon, and other heavenly bodies (e.g. *1 Enoch* 71-75; 78-79), details which also involve concerns for the religious calendar – a solar calendar is favored in the Enoch texts, *Jubilees*, and the Qumran literature. In short, the life of God’s elect people on earth is expected to reflect patterns existing in the world above.

2. **What is beneath.**<sup>94</sup> The Enochic literature provides detailed treatments of other aspects of cosmology than the heavenly bodies and their movements: visions of the underworld, including the place of punishment of the fallen angels (*1 Enoch* 21), Gehenna (ch. 27), Paradise, and other areas of the world inaccessible to ordinary people. But the lot of human beings on earth is also a topic of the apocalyptic’s concern, especially the effects of sin in the lives

of individuals and the people of God as a whole. A deep pessimism regarding humankind and the people of Israel characterizes much of the later apocalyptic texts (*4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch*, *Apoc. Abraham*), tempered only by the hope in God’s promises for the future. “This age” (*’olam ha-zeh*) is dominated by the forces of evil.<sup>95</sup> Only an act of God can bring it to its conclusion with the ushering in of the “age to come” (*’olam ha-ba’*).<sup>96</sup>

3. **What was beforetime.**<sup>97</sup> We have already noted the interest in cosmology that is part of the apocalyptic worldview. But cosmogony is equally important, i.e. the subject matter and meaning of Genesis (*ma’aseh bereshit*). What is involved here is not only interpretation of the meaning of Genesis 1 and a recounting of Creation, but the addition of other details into the story, such as the creation of the various classes of angels (e.g. *Jubilees* 2). Interest in what was before Creation is also part of the subject matter, e.g. the “treasuries” or “angels” out of which God brought light (*4 Ezra* 4:20; cf. *2 Enoch* 24-33).

Interest in the primeval past also includes details related to the Fall of Adam and Eve. The *Life of Adam and Eve* and *2 Enoch* provide expansions of Genesis that tell of Satan’s expulsion from heaven, together with other angels subordinate to him, for failing to worship the newly created Adam (*Adam and Eve* chs. 12-16; cf. *2 Enoch* 29-31), and his vengeful temptation of Eve, as a result of which Adam and Eve are expelled from Paradise. This complex of material provides an explanation for the origins of evil in the world, to which the fall of the angels in Genesis 6, elaborated in *1 Enoch* 6-11, is an alternative or correlative.

Part of the apocalyptic’s interest in the past has to do with past history, the history of Israel but also the history of the world itself. In that case we have narratives of past events which serve as background for events that are expected in the future. Reference has already been

made to apocalypses containing these features.<sup>98</sup>

4. **What is to come.**<sup>99</sup> Eschatology, of course, is a feature of biblical religion that pre-dates apocalyptic. Eschatology is an essential feature of apocalypticism as well, though there is no uniformity among the apocalyptic texts as to the details of the end-time and the "age to come." For example, the belief in a coming Messiah, which predates the development of apocalyptic, is not a necessary feature of it. The essential point is that human history is moving to an end, after which evil will be no more and God's elect will live in eternal bliss. The hope for a future salvation – however variously it is described in the texts – provides the faithful people of God with hope that enables them to persevere in the face of the present evils that surround them.

The apocalyptic worldview here so cursorily summarized was an important feature of Second Temple Judaism, and manifested itself in various ways in the life of the people. It was a variegated phenomenon, so that it is not historically accurate to speak of a single "apocalyptic movement."<sup>100</sup> The first apocalypses, or sets of apocalypses, arise in different social settings, many of them obscure. But the apocalyptic worldview could also spawn separate Jewish sects, such as the Essene sect reflected in the Qumran scrolls, and the early Christian community. In these cases one can speak of full-blown apocalyptic sects within the religion of Second Temple Judaism.

What of "Gnosis," or "Gnosticism"? The scholars gathered at Messina for the international colloquium on "the Origins of Gnosticism" elected a committee to prepare a "final document," entitled "Proposal for a Terminological and Conceptual Agreement with regard to the Theme of the Colloquium." This document distinguishes "the Gnosticism of the Second Century Sects" from a more general gnosis, "knowledge of the divine mysteries re-

served for an élite." The gnosis of Gnosticism involves "the idea of a divine spark in man, deriving from the divine realm, fallen into this world of fate, birth, and death, and needing to be awakened by the divine counterpart of the self." Included in this gnosis is the notion of a "devolution" of the divine and "reintegration" of the fallen component. "This *gnosis* is a revelation-tradition of a different type from the Biblical and Islamic revelation traditions."<sup>101</sup>

Not all scholars of Gnosticism are happy with this formulation, with its distinction between gnosis (in a larger sense) and "Gnosticism."<sup>102</sup> For our purposes here, I shall use the term "Gnosis" (in the title of my paper) as an equivalent of "Gnosticism." But I go further than the Messina colloquium in defining Gnosticism as "a religion" in its own right, i.e. the Gnostic religion, with a worldview of its own.<sup>103</sup>

An essential feature of the Gnostic religion is its notion of revelation. We have seen that Jewish apocalypticism involves a developed concept of revelation, involving what could be viewed (in terms used by the Messina scholars for "gnosis") as a "knowledge of the divine mysteries reserved for an élite." But what distinguishes Gnostic *gnosis* from apocalyptic "knowledge" (Heb. *da`ath*) is that gnosis is itself the means of salvation, rather than observance (as in Judaism) or faith (as in Christianity). Revealed from the transcendent world, *gnosis* provides the basis for the reintegration of the divine spark in man into the divine world from which it came.

Gnosis has a "content," of course. Indeed, one can organize a discussion of the content of this Gnosis around the same rubrics as used with the Jewish apocalyptic worldview. The "Sethian" texts of the Nag Hammadi corpus, some of which we have already considered, provide the essential evidence for this discussion.

1. **What is above.** *Ap. John* contains an elaborate statement on the transcendent God and

the heavenly world (II 2,27-9,24), and parallel statements can be found in other Nag Hamma-di texts (esp. *Allogenes* 62,27-63,25). There is first the unknown “Invisible Spirit,” who is a “Monad.” In a process of intellection he brings forth his “First Thought,” called Barbelo. A third emanation is Autogenes-Adamas, and these three constitute the divine Triad of Father-Mother-Son in the Sethian Gnostic system. Additional beings include the four light angels of Autogenes, heavenly prototypes of Adam and Seth, and additional “aeons” including Sophia (“Wisdom”).

The heavenly world in this Gnostic system is quite comparable to that of the Jewish apocalypses, even if it reflects important influences from Middle-Platonism.<sup>104</sup> For example, the four light angels are formally comparable to the four *ayyoth* of the apocalypses, and there are even examples of “throne-chariot” mysticism comparable to the vision of Enoch in *I Enoch* 14 and later “mystical” texts (*Hyp. Arch.* 95,13-96,3; *Orig. World* 103,32-106,19).<sup>105</sup> There are also occurrences in Gnostic texts of a special angel having God’s own name, “Youel,” as we already noted in our discussion of *Zostrianos*.<sup>106</sup>

However, in the Gnostic case the transcendent God is not the Creator of the world. The Gnostics in effect split the transcendent God of the biblical tradition into two: a super-transcendent supreme God unknown and alien to the world, and a not-so-transcendent Creator (“Demiurge”) responsible for creating and governing the lower world. While this splitting of the deity might be at least partially accounted for with reference to the impact of Platonism (a transcendent *Nous* with the Demiurge of Plato’s *Timaeus* as a second god),<sup>107</sup> Gnostic dualism is much more radical than anything encountered in Platonism, as Plotinus’ attack against the Gnostics clearly attests (*Enneads* 2.9).

“What is above” also includes the origin of

human souls, and the destiny of those enlightened by gnosis. In the “Sethian” system the elect are regarded as the special “race” of the heavenly Seth.

**2. What is below.** The κόσμος, the spatio-temporal universe, is regarded by the Gnostics as a baneful prison for human souls entombed in material bodies. Created and governed by the Demiurge and his powers, it is the realm of darkness and chaos. Included in this lower world are the heavenly bodies, the seven planets (including sun and moon) and the Zodiacal constellations, with which various archons are associated. *Ap. John* has a lengthy treatment of this.<sup>108</sup> Of course, Gnostic cosmology, as also the cosmology of some Jewish apocalypses (e.g. *2 Enoch*), is based on that of the Hellenistic world in general, which views the earth as a sphere at the center (bottom) of the universe, surrounded by the spheres of the planets and fixed stars. What is new in the Gnostic case is that this entire κόσμος is viewed in a radically negative way as the place into which the Gnostic soul has been “thrown” and from which it must escape.<sup>109</sup> The Gnostic soul is regarded by the Gnostics as consubstantial with the divine, and thus as alien to the world as is the transcendent God himself.

**3. What was beforetime.** One of the features of Gnosticism that is often noted is the interest on the part of the Gnostics in the opening chapters of Genesis. We have also noted that there is a comparable interest in the accounts of Creation and the Fall of man in Jewish apocalypticism. What is new in the Gnostic case is the hermeneutical slant given to the biblical text and the various Jewish exegetical traditions based on it. Examples have already been cited: the role played by God the Creator in *Apoc. Adam* and *Ap. John* is comparable to that played by Satan in the Jewish Adam literature and the wicked Shemihazah in *I Enoch*. The “Fall” of Adam and Eve in the Gnostic sources is not due to their disobedience of the divine

command, but rather to the vengeful envy on the part of the Creator of their exalted status. The Creator and his archons fetter Adam in a material body, and attempt to hold him and his progeny in thrall. The real human being is the imprisoned soul, whose origin is from above, a "spark" of the divine. Indeed, the real "Fall" in the Gnostic texts occurs within the divine world itself, i.e. in the action of the Gnostic aeon Sophia, which results in an illegitimate son, the Creator of the world (Ialdabaoth-Saklas-Samael in *Ap. John*).<sup>110</sup>

We have also noted examples in the Gnostic apocalypses of a periodization of history comparable to that of the Jewish apocalypses, and a special interest in the salvation of the elect. Again, the essential difference between the Jewish and the Gnostic cases is the interpretive slant found in the latter: the heavenly agencies working to protect the Gnostic elect are working against the Creator and his henchmen. Whereas in the Jewish texts the elect's present lot is due to the evil powers of "this age," who are working against God in a world corrupted by sin, in the Gnostic texts the elect's lot is due to his imprisonment in a material body and in a κόσμος that is inherently evil.

4. **What is to come.** Just as eschatology is an important ingredient of the apocalyptic worldview, so is it in the case of the Gnostic worldview.<sup>111</sup> The future salvation of the elect is just as important in Gnosticism as it is in Jewish apocalyptic. Expectation of future punishment for the wicked is also found in some Gnostic texts, as we saw in the case of *Ap. John*, where the influence of *I Enoch* was also noted. But whereas in Jewish apocalyptic the elect are expected to live in a reconstructed world, one free from sin and evil, in the Gnostic worldview the κόσμος is expected to be annihilated, and the Gnostic elect reintegrated into the heavenly world from which they have their origins.

From what has already been said, it is clear that the Gnostic worldview is very different from that of Jewish apocalypticism. But it is equally clear that one cannot account for the former without reference to the latter. In other words, there is every reason to think that the Gnostic worldview developed out of the apocalyptic worldview of Second Temple Judaism. But how did this happen?

It is a truism that religious texts originate in the context of religious communities. Thus, apocalyptic texts are the literary products of authors active within specific religious sects or groups; and one must say the same for Gnostic texts. However, it is notoriously difficult to know anything about the actual social and historical contexts of such groups. This is true both for the Jewish apocalyptic texts, e.g. the Enoch literature, and the Gnostic ones, though we now have for at least one Jewish apocalyptic sect, the Qumran community, considerable archaeological and historical evidence. No such evidence exists for the earliest Gnostic groups.<sup>112</sup>

We can, therefore, only speculate as to how, or why, people reinterpreted their inherited traditions in such a way as to develop a new worldview, and a new religion, Gnosticism. But that they did so is quite clear from the texts. Who these innovative people were we do not know. But we can extrapolate from our evidence a plausible enough theory: they were intellectual Jews, somehow disaffected with the current interpretations of their ancestral traditions and in search of a new understanding of their place in the world. Thus, one can say the same thing about Gnosticism as about Christianity:<sup>113</sup> both of them emerged out of a Jewish matrix. The movement "from Jewish apocalypticism to Gnosis" should be understood in the historical context of the movement from Judaism to Gnosticism.

## Notes

1. For example, in his classic work on "Gnosis and the spirit of late antiquity" Hans Jonas pays no attention at all to Jewish apocalyptic as a factor in the development of Gnosticism. See *Gnosis und spätantiker Geist*, part 1: *Die mythologische Gnosis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1934; 3rd ed. 1964), part 2:1: *Von der Mythologie zur mystischen Philosophie* (1954), part 2:1 and 2 (ed. by Kurt Rudolph, 1993). Likewise the great Swedish historian of religions, Geo Widengren, paid no attention to Jewish apocalyptic in his work on Gnosticism. See e.g. his summary statement, *The Gnostic Attitude*, (trans. from the Swedish by Birger A. Pearson; Santa Barbara: Institute of Religious Studies, 1973); the Swedish version is chapter 16, "Den gnostiska inställningen," in his handbook, *Religionens värld*, 3rd ed. (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1971).
2. "Apocalyptic Eschatology in Gnosticism," in David Hellholm, ed., *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Apocalypticism, Uppsala, August 12-17, 1979* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1983) 317-25, esp. 319. It is a great pity that MacRae's doctoral dissertation was never published: "Some Elements of Jewish Apocalyptic and Mystical Tradition and Their Relation to Gnostic Literature" (2 vols., University of Cambridge, 1966). MacRae was one of the very first to see the importance of Jewish apocalyptic in the study of the Nag Hammadi texts that were then becoming available.
3. Cf. Morton Smith, "On the History of ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΠΤΩ and ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ," in Hellholm, *Apocalypticism*, 9-20.
4. *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre, Semeia* 14 (Missoula: Society of Biblical Literature and Scholars Press, 1979). Cf. also Lars Hartman, "Survey of the Problem of Apocalyptic Genre," in Hellholm, *Apocalypticism*, 329-43.
5. Collins, *Apocalypse*, 9. See now also his more recent work, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to the Jewish Matrix of Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1984).
6. *Apocalypse*, 5-8.
7. *Ibid.*, 13-15. The various known apocalypses are treated in the six main chapters of the book: the Jewish apocalypses (Collins), the early Christian apocalypses (Adela Yarbro Collins), the Gnostic apocalypses (Francis T. Fallon), Greek and Latin apocalypses (Harold W. Attridge), "Apocalypses and 'Apocalyptic' in Rabbinic Literature and Mysticism" (Anthony J. Salderini), and Persian apocalypses (Collins).
8. I have relied heavily on Fallon's essay (pp. 123-58) in what follows in this section. Quotations from the Nag Hammadi texts are, unless otherwise specified, taken from *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, 3rd rev. ed. by James M. Robinson and Richard Smith (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988). On the Gnostic apocalypses see also the still useful article by Martin Krause, "Die literarischen Gattungen der Apokalypsen von Nag Hammadi," in Hellholm, *Apocalypticism*, 621-37.
9. PHEME PERKINS has persuasively argued that the Gnostic "revelation dialogue," as a literary form, is heavily indebted to Jewish apocalypses which feature questions put by the seer to the interpreting angel. See *The Gnostic Dialogue: The Early Church and the Crisis of Gnosticism* (New York: Paulist Press, 1980) 19f., 25f. For a more recent discussion see Ulrich Schoenborn, *Diverbium Salutis: Literarische Struktur und theologische Intention des gnostischen Dialogs am Beispiel der koptischen 'Apokalypse des Petrus'* (SUNT 19; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995) 31-42.
10. On *Apoc. Paul*, *1 Apoc. Jas.*, *2 Apoc. Jas.*, and *Apoc. Pet.* see Fallon (in Collins, *Apocalypse*), 138; 132-33; 128; 133-34.
11. See Fallon, 126-27.
12. James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (hereafter: *OTP*), vol. 1: *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1983) 707-19 (Introduction and Translation by George MacRae).
13. George MacRae, Introduction to *The Apocalypse of Adam*, p. 152 in Douglas M. Parrott, ed., *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI with Papyrus Berolinensis 8502, 1 and 4* (NHS 11; Leiden: Brill, 1979), containing the critical edition of *Apoc. Adam* (Coptic transcription, translation, and notes also by MacRae).
14. B. A. Pearson, "The Problem of 'Jewish Gnostic' Literature," in Charles W. Hedrick and Robert Hodgson, eds., *Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism and Early Christianity* (Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 1986) 15-35, esp. 26-33. A revised version of this article is chapter 7 in Pearson, *The Emergence of the Christian Religion: Essays on the Early Christianity* (Harrisburg PA: Trinity Press International, 1997) 122-46.
15. See Collins' discussion of these in *Apocalypse*, 30-36.
16. I.e. after Seth's birth at age 230, according to the LXX of Gen 5:3; Adam died at the age of 930, according to Gen 5:4.
17. See the section devoted to Testaments (often with apocalyptic sections) in *OTP* 1:773-995. See also, on the testamentary form, George W.E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah: A History*

- ical and Literary Introduction (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981) 231-57. Fragments of apocalyptic "testaments" are also found at Qumran: *Testament of Levi* (4Q541); *Testament of Naphtali* (4Q215); *Testament of Qahat* (4Q542); *Testament of Amram* (4QAmram). For translations see Geza Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 4th rev. ed. (London: Penguin, 1995) 305-13.
18. The outline is essentially that found in my article, "Jewish Gnostic Literature" (cit. n. 14) 27.
  19. The death of Adam is implied in the phrase, "after I have completed the times of this generation" (67,22-24). The rest of page 67 is damaged; p. 68 is blank.
  20. PHEME PERKINS, "Apocalypse of Adam: The Genre and Function of a Gnostic Apocalypse," *CBQ* 39 (1977) 382-95; B. A. PEARSON, "The Figure of Seth in Gnostic Literature," in Bentley Layton, ed., *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1980-81) 2:472-504 [=PEARSON, *Gnosticism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990) 52-83]; G.W.E. NICKELSBURG, "Some Related Traditions in the Apocalypse of Adam, the Books of Adam and Eve and 1 Enoch," in Layton, *Rediscovery* 2:515-39.
  21. From M. D. JOHNSON'S translation in *OTP* 2:266, 270.
  22. "Related Traditions," 537.
  23. See S. E. ROBINSON, *The Testament of Adam: An Examination of the Syriac and Greek Traditions* (SBLDS 52; Chico CA: Scholars Press, 1982). Robinson's translation is published in *OTP* 1: 989-95.
  24. "Das Problem des Ursprungs des Testament Adams," *OrChrA* 197 (1972) 387-99, esp. 397-98.
  25. The name of the Phoenician "Lord of Heaven" (*Ba'al Shamem*). "Balsamos" is the name of an angel in the Coptic *Apocalypse of Bartholomew* (Rec. A) in a hymn sung by angels to Adam in Paradise. See A. M. KROPP, *Ausgewählte koptische Zaubertexte* (Bruxelles: Fondation Egyptologique Reine Elisabeth, 1930-31) 1:80.
  26. Ron Cameron and Arthur J. Dewey, ed. and trans., *The Cologne Mani Codex "Concerning the Origin of His Body"* (SBLTT 15, Early Christian Literature Series 3; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979) 39.
  27. So e.g. Gedaliahu G. Stroumsa, *Another Seed: Studies in Gnostic Mythology* (NHS 24; Leiden: Brill, 1984) 146
  28. *Ant.* 1.67-71; cf. IIB, C, and E in our outline of *Apoc. Adam*.
  29. On the heavenly Seth as "savior" see Pearson, *Gnosticism* (cit. n. 20) 76-79.
  30. Nickelsburg, "Related Traditions," 535-37.
  31. See my article, "Jewish Gnostic Literature," 26-33.
  32. In recent treatments suggested dates for *Apoc. Adam* range from the first century BCE (Andrew Welburn, "Iranian Prophetology and the Birth of the Messiah: The Apocalypse of Adam," *ANRW* II.25.6: 4752-94) to the fourth century CE (S. T. Carrol, "The Apocalypse of Adam and Pre-Christian Gnosticism," *VC* 44 [1990] 263-79).
  33. *Vit. Plot.* 16, Armstrong's translation in the LCL ed.
  34. For the critical edition see Carl Schmidt and Violet MacDermot, *The Books of Jeu and the Untitled Text in the Bruce Codex* (NHC 13; Leiden: Brill 1978). On Nikotheos see Howard M. Jackson, "The Seer Nikotheos and His Lost Apocalypse in the Light of Sethian Apocalypses from Nag Hammadi and the Apocalypse of Elchasai," *NovT* 32 (1980) 250-77.
  35. For the critical edition see John H. Sieber, ed., *Nag Hammadi Codex VIII* (NHS 31; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991).
  36. Cf. Fallon, in Collins, *Apocalypse*, 137.
  37. For critical edition see Charles W. Hedrick, ed., *Nag Hammadi Codices XI, XII, XIII* (NHS 28; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990).
  38. Fallon (in Collins, *Apocalypse*, 127) refers to a "mixture" of both categories.
  39. For the critical edition see Birger A. Pearson, ed., *Nag Hammadi Codices IX and X* (NHS 15; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981).
  40. *Marsanes* is not treated by Fallon.
  41. See e.g. B. A. Pearson, "Gnosticism as Platonism," in *Gnosticism* (cit. n. 20), 148-64.
  42. Cf. Pearson, "Figure of Seth," in *Gnosticism*, 65-66.
  43. *Ibid.*, 76-79. Even Zoroaster was sometimes identified with the biblical Seth; see W. Bousset, *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1907) 378-82.
  44. See esp. Hans-Martin Schenke, "Das sethianische System nach Nag-Hammadi-Handschriften," in P. Nagel, ed., *Studia Coptica* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1974) 165-72; idem, "The Phenomenon and Significance of Gnostic Sethianism," in Layton, *Rediscovery* (cit. n. 20) 2:588-616.
  45. Fallon, in Collins, *Apocalypse*, 130.
  46. So already Fallon, *ibid.*
  47. See e.g. B. A. Pearson, "Apocryphon Johannis Revisited," in P. Bilde et al., eds., *Apocryphon Severini presented to Søren Giverson* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1993) 155-65; and idem, "Jewish Gnostic Literature" (cit. n. 14), esp. 19-25.
  48. On "classic gnostic" scripture, see Bentley Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1987) 1-214. Layton's "classic gnostic" texts correspond, for the most part, to the ones other scholars label as "Sethian Gnostic."
  49. Fallon, in Collins, *Apocalypse*, 132. For the latest critical edition of *Hyp. Arch.* see B. Layton, ed., *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2-7 together with XIII, 2\**, *Brit. Lib. Or. 4926(1)*, and *P.Oxy. 1, 654, 655*, vol. 1 (NHS 20; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989).
  50. See e.g. B. A. Pearson, "Jewish Sources in Gnostic Lit-



- erature," in Michael Stone, ed., *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* (Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum II.2; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1984) 443-81, esp. 464-69.
51. *Ibid.*, 464.
  52. Eleleth is one of the four "Illuminators" or light-angels in the Sethian Gnostic system. Cf. n. 44.
  53. On Norea, see esp. B. A. Pearson, "The Figure of Norea in Gnostic Literature," in *Gnosticism*, 84-94.
  54. For the critical edition see A. Böhlig and F. Wisse, eds., *Nag Hammadi Codices III,2 and IV,2: The Gospel of the Egyptians* (NHS 4; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975).
  55. *Gos. Eg.* III 68,12-14. For discussion of the name "Charaxio" see Stroumsa, *Another Seed* (cit. n. 27) 115-17.
  56. Cf. Pearson, "Figure of Seth," in *Gnosticism*, 78f.
  57. Fallon (in Collins, *Apocalypse*, 139-47, esp. 146) lists *Steles Seth* with a group of texts that he refers to as "related types." For the most recent critical edition of *Steles Seth*, by James E. Goehring, see B. A. Pearson, ed., *Nag Hammadi Codex VII* (NH(M)S 30; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995).
  58. Cf. n. 44. On the ritual function of *Steles Seth* see e.g. B. A. Pearson, "Theurgic Tendencies in Gnosticism and Iamblichus's Conception of Theurgy," in R. T. Wallis and J. Bregman, eds., *Neoplatonism and Gnosticism* (Studies in Neoplatonism: Ancient and Modern 6; Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992) 253-75, esp. 260-63.
  59. Cf. discussion above, and Pearson, *Gnosticism*, 72.
  60. Fallon, in Collins, *Apocalypse*, 128-29. For the critical edition, by S. Giversen and B. A. Pearson, see Pearson, *Nag Hammadi Codices IX and X*.
  61. For discussion see Pearson's Introduction to *Melch.* in the critical edition; also *idem*, "The Figure of Melchizedek in Gnostic Literature," in *Gnosticism*, 108-123, esp. 110-14.
  62. Critical edition, by Giversen and Pearson, in Pearson, *Nag Hammadi Codices IX and X*.
  63. See n. 50.
  64. *Trim. Prot.* is another of Fallon's "related types" (in Collins, *Apocalypse*, 143). For the latest critical edition, by John Turner, see Hedrick, *Codices XI, XII, XIII* (cit. n. 37).
  65. For discussion, with relevant bibliography, see Turner's Introduction in the Hedrick edition.
  66. Fallon, in Collins, *Apocalypse*, 129-30; 131-32; 134; 136-37. Fallon also includes in his discussion (pp. 135-36) *Pistis Sophia* (in the Askew Codex). The following are included by Fallon in his discussion of "related types" (139-47): "Gnostic Revelatory Dialogues": *The Book of Thomas the Contender* (NHC II,7); *The Dialogue of the Savior* (III,5); *The First Book of Jeu* (in the Bruce Codex); *The Second Book of Jeu* (Bruce Codex). "Gnostic Revelatory Discourses (including *Trim. Prot.*): *The Thunder*, *Perfect Mind* (VI,2); *Second Treatise of the Great Seth* (VII,2); *The Concept of Our Great Power* (III,4). "Christian Apocalypse" (of questionable gnostic character): *The Apocryphon of James* (I,1). Revelation Journey and Epiphany: *The Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles* (VI,1). (*Steles Seth* is in a special category: "Revelatory Stele," p. 146.)
  67. Critical edition, by Frederik Wisse, in Pearson, *Nag Hammadi Codex VII* (cit. n. 57).
  68. So Stroumsa, *Another Seed*, 79.
  69. Cf. discussion in M. R. James, *The Lost Apocrypha of the Old Testament* (London: S.P.C.K./New York: Macmillan, 1920) 7-8.
  70. Cf. discussion in Pearson, "Jewish Sources" (cit. n. 50) 445f.
  71. *Ibid.*, 448f.
  72. *2 Enoch*, now extant only in Old Slavonic, is a writing that is most probably to be located in first-century Alexandria, or elsewhere in the Jewish Diaspora. See F. I. Andersen's introduction and translation in *OTP* 1:91-213.
  73. Scopello, "The Apocalypse of Zostrianos (Nag Hammadi VIII.1) and The Book of the Secrets of Enoch," *VC* 34 (1980) 376-85.
  74. I cite from the *OTP* edition of *2 Enoch*; Scopello uses that of A. Vaillant (*Le livre des secrets d'Hénoch: Texte slave et traduction française* [Paris: Institut d'Etudes Slaves, 1952]).
  75. Scopello, "Apocalypse of Zostrianos," 376-78.
  76. So Scopello, *ibid.*, 379. Cf. *Zost.* 52,14; 54,17; 63,11; 125,14. Youel, whose name is reminiscent of that of the angel Yaoel in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, is a feminine entity occurring in a number of Gnostic texts. See M. Scopello, "Youël et Barbélo dans le Traité de l'Allogène," in B. Barc, ed., *Colloque international sur les Textes de Nag Hammadi* (Québec: Les presses de l'Université Laval, 1981) 374-82.
  77. In  $\beta$  (Hebrew) *Enoch* Enoch becomes identified with Metatron.
  78. So Scopello, "Apocalypse of Zostrianos," 379. Scopello goes on (380-82) to explore other possible uses of Jewish sources in *Zost.*, especially material circulating in "an Essenic milieu" (382). On the probable use of *2 Enoch* by the author of the Hermetic *Poimandres* see B. A. Pearson, "Jewish Elements in *Corpus Hermeticum I* (*Poimandres*)," in *Gnosticism*, 136-47, esp. 138f.
  79. Nickelsburg, "Related Traditions" (cit. n. 20), 535-37.
  80. Nickelsburg (*ibid.*, 537f.) notes a possible connection between *1 Enoch* 62-63, the exaltation of the "Son of Man," and *Apoc. Adam* 83,8-23.
  81. See esp. G. W. E. Nickelsburg, "Apocalyptic and Myth

- in 1 Enoch 6-11," *JBL* 96 (1977) 383-405; idem, "Enoch, First Book of," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 2:508-16. On the use of this myth in *Ap. John* see B. A. Pearson, "1 Enoch in the *Apocryphon of John*," in T. Fornberg et al., eds., *Texts and Contexts: Biblical Texts in Their Textual and Situational Contexts: Essays in Honor of Lars Hartman* (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1995) 355-67. Much of what follows is based on that article.
82. For an analysis of the structure of *Ap. John* see Pearson, "Apocryphon Johannis Revisited" (cit. n. 47) 158-60.
  83. I cite the longer recension as represented in NHC II. For a synoptic presentation of all four versions of *Ap. John* see M. Waldstein and F. Wisse, eds., *The Apocryphon of John: Synopsis of Nag Hammadi Codices II,1; III,1: and IV,1 with BG 8502,2* (NH(M)S 33; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995).
  84. This detail is probably based on another version of the myth, such as the one found in *T. Reuben* 5.
  85. On these names see B. A. Pearson, "Jewish Haggadic Traditions in *The Testimony of Truth* From Nag Hammadi (CG IX, 3)," in *Gnosticism*, 39-51, esp. 47-49.
  86. On the "counterfeit spirit" see A. Böhlig, "Zum Antimimon Pneuma in den koptisch-gnostischen Texten," in idem, *Mysterion und Wahrheit: Gesammelte Beiträge zur spätantiken Religionsgeschichte* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968) 162-74.
  87. See Pearson, "Jewish Sources," 451-56.
  88. See Ugo Bianchi, *Le origini dello gnosticismo: Colloquio di Messina 13-18 aprile 1966* (SHR 12; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), esp. xx-xxxii.
  89. See Hellholm, *Apocalypticism* (cit. n. 2) 2.
  90. Christopher Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1982) 71-72.
  91. *M. Hag.* 2.1. See Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 277, and chapters 4-7 of his book.
  92. See esp. I. Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism* (AGAJU 14; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980).
  93. Cf. Rowland, *Open Heaven*, ch. 4.
  94. *Ibid.*, ch. 5.
  95. "This age" is regularly referred to in the Qumran scrolls as the "dominion of Belial" (e.g. 1QS i 18 *et passim*).
  96. Rowland tends to minimize this aspect of apocalypticism, i.e. chronological dualism. On this see e.g. D. S. Russell, *The Method & Message of Jewish Apocalyptic 200 BC – AD 100* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964) 264-71.
  97. Rowland, *Open Heaven*, ch. 6. Rowland concentrates on the history of Israel and Creation, but leaves out the material related to the Fall.
  98. Cf. discussion above, and n. 15.
  99. Rowland, *Open Heaven*, ch. 7.
  100. See e.g. W. Schmithals, *The Apocalyptic Movement* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975), and J. Collins' remarks (*Apocalyptic Imagination*, 29).
  101. Bianchi, *Le origini*, esp. xxvi-xxix (ET). Cf. Hans Jonas, "Delimitation of the gnostic phenomenon – typological and historical," in Bianchi, *Le origini*, 90-108.
  102. See e.g. Kurt Rudolph, *Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism* (trans. R. McL. Wilson; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark/San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983) 56.
  103. B. A. Pearson, "Is Gnosticism a Religion," in U. Bianchi, ed., *The Notion of "Religion" in Comparative Research: Selected Proceedings of the XVIth Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions, Rome, 3rd-8th September, 1990* (Roma: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 1994) 105-14.
  104. Cf. Pearson, "Platonism as Gnosticism" (cit. n. 41).
  105. See esp. F. T. Fallon, *The Enthronement of Sabaot: Jewish Elements in Gnostic Creation Myths* (NHS 10; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978).
  106. See discussion above, and n. 76. On this angel in apocalypticism see Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 94-113.
  107. This is a regular feature of Middle Platonism, attested e.g. in the fragments of Numenius (esp. frgs. 15 and 16, des Places).
  108. See esp. A. J. Welburn, "The Identity of the Archons in the 'Apocryphon Johannis,'" *VC* 32 (1978) 241-54.
  109. See the famous Valentinian formula in Clement, *Excerpta ex Theodoto* 78.
  110. On the Gnostic Sophia see esp. George MacRae, "the Jewish Background of the Gnostic Sophia Myth," *NovT* 12 (1970) 82-101.
  111. See e.g. MacRae, "Apocalyptic Eschatology" (cit. n. 2).
  112. We are, of course, better informed about the Manichaean and Mandaean forms of Gnosticism.
  113. See e.g. B. A. Pearson, "The Emergence of the Christian Religion," in H. Preissler and H. Seiwert, eds., *Gnosisforschung und Religionsgeschichte: Festschrift für Kurt Rudolph zum 65. Geburtstag* (Marburg: diagonal-Verlag, 1994) 217-24. A revised version of this article is chapter 1 in Pearson, *Emergence* (cit. n. 14), 7-22.