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Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

THE "COSMIC COVENANT" IN THE LETTER
TO THE HEBREWS

A Thesis
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Jeffrey P. Walker

2006

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A thesis
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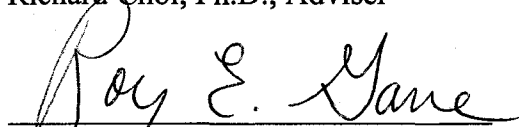
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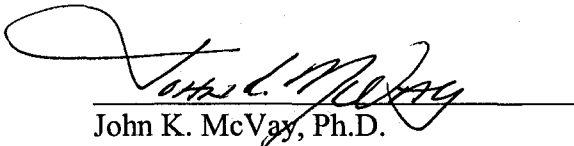
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ABSTRACT

**THE "COSMIC COVENANT" IN THE LETTER
TO THE HEBREWS**

by

Jeffrey P. Walker

Adviser: P. Richard Choi

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Thesis

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: THE "COSMIC COVENANT" IN THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS

Name of researcher: Jeffrey P. Walker

Name and degree of faculty adviser: P. Richard Choi, Ph.D.

Date completed: May 2006

The Topic

The "cosmic covenant" in Hebrews reflects three main ideas: There exists a close affinity between the letter and Enochic Judaism; the letter is a product of Roman Gentile Christianity that emerged as a response to Jewish particularists in the Second Temple covenantal debate; and the writer's cosmic perspective had the simultaneous effect of supplanting and universalizing the Jewish covenantal concept.

The Purpose

The thesis offered here is that Hebrews presupposes a notion of "cosmic covenant" similar to that found in Enochic Judaism.

Conclusions

What has emerged is support for how the universalistic scope of 1 Enoch and its strong cosmic-eschatological outlook are framed by a reformulation of the Jewish covenant and undergirded by a critical stance toward the national cultus. These theological tendencies in the works provide an important framework for understanding the distinctiveness of the new "cosmic covenant" elaborated in the Letter to the Hebrews.

**To Hannah and Esther—
that you may become daughters of the "new covenant"**

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PREFACE

In keeping with the tradition of Hebrews, this study has its own rather lengthy and complex history. After beginning studies in the Seminary, I soon became intrigued with many of the unique aspects of the letter—including its powerful language and imagery, evocative religious and philosophical symbols, unique Christology, and strong 'Jewish' ethos. As I also discovered, the "history-of-religions" tradition had produced almost a whole scholarly subdiscipline aimed at situating Hebrews within a considerable range of possible ancient religious and cultural traditions. The problem with this approach, however, was that its obsession with finding the 'right' conceptual framework of interpretation tended to cause the interpreter to overlook the text itself. Only gradually, and after several unfruitful attempts to apply the *Religionsgeschichte* approach to the text, did I realize the importance of reading Hebrews based on its own eclectic background. One major insight that emerged from adopting a broader perspective to the letter was the possibility of situating it within the framework of the Second Temple covenantal debate, an area that had largely been overlooked in relation to Hebrews. Further exploration began to suggest that many of the elusive concepts in the letter, especially surrounding the writer's views about cosmos, covenant, and cultus, seemed to bear considerable resemblances to those inscribed in the ancient movement commonly referred to today as 'Enochic Judaism.'

The fact that no substantial work had undertaken to explore the apparent conceptual echoes between 1 Enoch and Hebrews lent a sense of urgency to the present study. At the same time, the task of providing a plausible framework in which to interpret the writer's view of covenant and cult from a cosmic perspective, and especially

in relation to 1 Enoch, proved to be a far greater challenge than I had ever imagined. Indeed, as those who study Hebrews know, it is an extremely complex and demanding document. Consequently, it may have been excusable if I had quietly abandoned the thesis project and the quest for my vaguely defined notion of "cosmic covenant." After all, I completed my coursework and left the Seminary, moved to New York City, became involved with further graduate studies, and embraced a whole different set of social circumstances, not the least involving the birth of two beautiful daughters. But despite myself, and the depletion of any remaining resources of time and energy, Hebrews continued to exert a considerable hold on my imagination and would not let me rest. Perhaps this sense of urgency came from my additional studies at Jewish Theological Seminary, and the more nuanced view of socio-religious identity that came with it. Or perhaps it was the result of the ethos experienced by living in the heart of the world's most cosmopolitan city. Or it was simply a byproduct of the soul-searching that generally accompanies parenthood. Whatever may be the case, the experience of grappling with the text of Hebrews to understand the nature of the new "cosmic covenant" has been one of my most spiritually and intellectually rewarding, if painstaking, experiences. The writer's exhortation to "lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet" was not lost to me, and I often considered that it applied rather appropriately to my case. The message of Hebrews demands much through its inescapable insistence upon the close connection between theology, paranesis, and lived experience. In retrospect, I now realize that the unusually protracted nature of this project and the significantly different social settings from which it emerged, as well as my own personal transformations that accompanied the process, were all providential in helping me to more fully appreciate the brilliance of Hebrews' message concerning the nature and scope of the "cosmic covenant" available to all peoples.

With these considerations in mind, I would be remiss if I failed to acknowledge with deep gratitude the advice, and, above all, patience that my adviser, Dr. P. Richard

Choi, extended to me throughout the research and writing of this thesis. He faithfully read and commented upon several earlier drafts of this work over a number of years. His resilience, kind attitude, and encouragement at key moments in the process have proven to be a true source of inspiration, which gave me the fortitude to bring this project to completion when it seemed altogether impossible. Many thanks go also to Dr. Roy Gane and Dr. John McVay for their prompt feedback and suggestions in the closing stages of the project and also for reading an earlier, much thinner, version of the thesis that was prepared for the original defense. I want to express my appreciation to Bonnie Proctor for her efficiency in editing the final draft on such short notice, managing the administrative details, and granting me the long-awaited approval. I also wish to offer a special note of thanks to Joan Dewitt in the Records Office for her forbearance with my many attempts, and failures, to graduate. At last, this time it is finally for real!

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Ever since E. P. Sanders's landmark study, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion*, many New Testament scholars have tended to embrace his view of 'covenantal nomism' as the proper framework for understanding Second Temple concepts of covenant.¹ The summary of this view is that "getting in" to the covenant was the initiative of God's grace and that "staying in" was maintained by obedience to the law.² In other words, "*Obedience maintains one's position in the covenant, but it does not earn God's grace as such.*"³ According to this definition, the covenant functions within ancient Judaism primarily as a "soteriological category" so that "those who are in 'are saved.'"⁴ Notwithstanding the importance of 'covenantal nomism' as a means for bridging a greater sense of continuity between Judaism and Pauline Christianity, Sanders's thesis has come under criticism from various directions on the belief that it overlooks the essential diversity of the Second Temple period.⁵ Mark A.

¹E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977).

²*Ibid.*, 17, 75.

³*Ibid.*, 420 (original emphasis).

⁴E. P. Sanders, "The Covenant as a Soteriological Category and the Nature of Salvation in Palestinian and Hellenistic Judaism," in *Jews, Greeks and Christians Religious Cultures in Late Antiquity: Essays in Honor of William David Davies*, ed. Robert Hamerton-Kelly and Robin Scroggs (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), 39–40. Sanders also summarizes "covenantal nomism" in his *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE–66 CE* (London: SCM Press; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1992), 262–75.

⁵For William Scott Green the problem is that "the rubric of 'covenantal nomism' serves to embrace an exceedingly wide range of texts, and so to diminish their differences" ("Introduction: The Scholarly

Seifrid, for example, has highlighted this concern in relation to 'new perspective' scholars, such as James D. G. Dunn, who assert that "works of the law" equate to national boundary markers rather than strictly legalistic works. Seifrid sees this as one of the "blind alleys" in recent debate over Paul's relationship to Judaism.¹ The premise he follows in this assessment is that "the category of 'covenantal nomism' becomes relatively meaningless for describing the soteriology of early Jewish groups when the terms of the covenant are in dispute."² In support of this statement he refers to the Community Rule from Qumran (1QS) and the Psalms of Solomon as representative examples of two societies that limited the salvific benefits of the covenant to a select group within the nation.³ While Dunn understands that certain Jews could recognize other Jews as outside the community of the elect on the basis of halakhic differences (such as is apparent in the Qumran document 4QMMT—Miqsat Ma'ase Ha-Torah, "Some Observances of the Law"),⁴ Seifrid finds it difficult to understand how he can regard them merely as boundary markers with little interior meaning. Conversely, "insiders saw them as

Study of Judaism and Its Sources," in *The Literary and Archaeological Sources*, vol. 1 of *Judaism in Late Antiquity*, ed. Jacob Neusner, Handbuch der Orientalistik, Erste Abteilung: Der Nahe und Mittlere Osten 17 [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995], 6). Furthermore, James Charlesworth accuses Sanders of attempting to revive the whole notion of 'normative Judaism' (*The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the New Testament: Prolegomena for the Study of Christian Origins* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985], 19–21).

¹Mark A. Seifrid, "Blind Alleys in the Controversy Over the Paul of History," *Tyndale Bulletin* 45, no. 1 (1994): 73–95 (see especially pp. 77–85). James D. G. Dunn has constructed a whole scholarly edifice upon the understanding that Paul's rejection of "works of the law" (ἔργων νόμου) [Rom 3:20, 28; Gal 2:16; 3: 2, 5, 10] was not a rejection of Judaism *per se*, but a reaction against those (both Jews and Jewish Christians) who promoted Jewish 'national righteousness' as a substitute for faith in Christ. More specifically, he construes these *works* to be a catchphrase for "covenantal nomism," which stipulates the role of the law in separating Israel from the nations and reflected primarily in the commandment of circumcision along with obedience to food and Sabbath laws (for a summary of this view, see *idem*, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* [Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans, 1998], 354–66).

²Seifrid, 75–76.

³*Ibid.*, 76; see e.g., 1QS 1:7–8, 1:16–17; 10:10 and Pss. Sol. 12:6; 17:3. For translation of the Community Rule, see Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (London: Penguin Books, 1997), 98–117, and for the Psalms of Solomon, see R. B. Wright, "Psalms of Solomon," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, ed. James H. Charlesworth (New York: Doubleday, 1985), 639–70.

⁴See Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 357–58. A discussion and translation of the fragmentary text, 4QMMT, is provided in Vermes, 220–28.

emblems of community values, especially fidelity to *Torah* and covenant. . . . The מַעֲשֵׂי הַתּוֹרָה which divide the Qumran group from their adversaries represent what is right and good, and result in righteousness and blessing."¹ He summarizes this point further:

"When one group of Jews regards another as 'outside the boundaries', the concept of 'nation' is subordinated to a larger idea of true religion and piety."² The importance of Seifrid's critique of 'covenantal nomism' is that he aptly demonstrates how little use it provides in explaining the internal perspectives of those who saw themselves as the true elect, apart from the rest of Israel.³

The Letter to the Hebrews raises challenging questions about the issue of the covenant, which are difficult or impossible to fully address from the perspective of covenantal nomism. What is certainly needed is a more nuanced consideration of covenant during the Second Temple period that takes into account its multivalence and broader socio-religious complexity. One of the most perplexing difficulties in the letter involves the writer's assertion about the 'new covenant' and the obsolescence of the 'old' (8:6–13). The major problem emerges in relation to the traditional view that the writer was engaging in some form of anti-Judaic polemic, and the corresponding assumption that this was targeted toward certain ones within his community who were threatening to return to their native Judaism?⁴ Did the writer really intend to relegate his native religion

¹Seifrid, 81.

²Ibid., 80.

³Serious doubts about the viability of 'covenantal nomism' are brought to light in D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid, eds., *The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*, vol. 1 of *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament 140 (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001). See also Peter T. O'Brien, "Was Paul a Covenantal Nomist?" in *The Paradoxes of Paul*, vol. 2 of *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament 181 (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 249–96.

⁴For a treatment of the "problematic nature of the term 'anti-Judaism'" in relationship to Hebrews, see William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 47A (Dallas: Word Books, 1991), cxxvi, and especially, W. Klassen, "To the Hebrews or Against the Hebrews? Anti-Judaism and the Epistle

to an inferior ontological status? Was he implying that God's covenant with Israel was now invalidated? Were the ritual offerings of the Temple, in his view, no longer efficacious?

The traditional view of Hebrews notwithstanding, scholars today are more likely to read the letter in relation to what one has called "the new level of respect" toward modern and ancient Judaism that has emerged in recent decades within the New Testament guild.¹ Reflecting this 'new perspective,' one scholar comments that "to read Hebrew is to remind New Testament students of our roots in Jewish history, theology, and understanding of the covenant. Not knowing (or caring) about the Hebrew backdrop to the New Testament is like dismissing one's family tree."² Another scholar goes even further in minimizing the possibility in Hebrews of any fundamental breach between early Christianity and Judaism: "With one fundamental exception relating to the cult, the Torah is still valid for those to whom it was given by Moses. No break with Jewish tradition apart from priesthood, sacrifice and temple is assumed in Hebrews. Discontinuity centers upon cult, not Torah."³ The potentially confusing nature of this statement derives from the fact that the cultic material is part of the Torah in the first place. Clark Williamson defends a similar view, however, by stating that "it is not as clear today as it was to the author of Hebrews that the new covenant is any less weak than the old in producing

to the Hebrews," in *Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity*, vol. 2, ed. S. G. Wilson (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University, 1986), 1–16. An overview of the various approaches to interpreting Hebrews is provided in Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 10–11.

¹See Mark D. Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 3–4.

²Celia Brewer Marshall, *A Guide Through the New Testament* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 113. Cf. Tim Perry, "The Historical Jesus, Anti-Judaism, and the Christology of Hebrews: A Theological Reflection," *Διδασκαλία* 10 (Spring 1999): 76.

³Charles P. Anderson, "Who Are the Heirs of the New Age in the Epistle to the Hebrews?" in *Apocalyptic and the New Testament: Essays in Honor of J. Louis Martyn*, ed. Joel Marcus and Marion L. Soards (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 273.

perfection or any more gracious in its attitude toward sinners. Nor does Hebrews make, finally, a convincing case that this new covenant, therefore, displaces the old."¹

The primary challenge of Hebrews is contained in the fact that the letter does give considerably strong warrant for the traditional view that Judaism has been relegated to an inferior status in light of Christ's ascension and entrance into the true, heavenly sanctuary and his inauguration of a new covenant (9:11; 8:6). The repeated use of the comparative adjective κρείττων, "greater/superior," throughout the letter indicates quite explicitly the writer's interest in revealing Jesus to be superior to not only the angels but to Moses, the levitical priests, the Jerusalem cult, and all the structures of Judaism.² This point becomes especially clear in Heb 7:22 where he declares Jesus to be an eternal priest who "has become the guarantor of a superior covenant."³ The writer's strong theological legitimation is further clarified through the declaration of a "new covenant" (8:6) which is strongly contrasted with the "old covenant" that is "obsolete and aging . . . soon [to] disappear" (8:13). One of the central questions, therefore, that surrounds Hebrews is whether it, more than any other New Testament work, most fully anticipates a breach with Judaism.⁴

¹Clark M. Williamson, "Anti-Judaism in Hebrews?" *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 57, no. 3 (July 2003): 279. Another scholar who inveighs against the traditional approach to reading Hebrews is Ernst Käsemann, *The Wandering People of God: An Investigation of the Letter to the Hebrews*, trans. Roy A. Harrisville and Irving L. Sandberg (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), 24.

²Philip Hughes states that "the comprehensive theme of the Epistle to the Hebrews is that of the absolute supremacy of Christ" and structures his analysis of the epistle around this theme (*A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977], 2–4). As he mentions, the important word κρείττων occurs 13 times in the epistle, used by the writer to speak about a superior name (1:4), superior things (6:9 with κρείσσω), a superior priest (7:7), a superior hope (7:19), a superior covenant (7:22; 8:6), superior promises (8:6), a superior sacrifice (9:23), a superior possession (10:34), a superior country (11:16), a superior resurrection (11:35), a superior provision (11:40), and superior blood (12:24; also see p. 50, n. 1).

³Unless otherwise indicated scriptural quotations are taken from the RSV.

⁴See Susanne Lehne, *The New Covenant in Hebrews*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 44 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 124.

One particularly intriguing framework for exploring the complex issue of covenant in Hebrews, and its relation to the larger "internal diversification" of the Second Temple period, is suggested by looking more closely at the sect that has come to be known in scholarly circles as 'Enochic Judaism'.¹ The ascription of a whole term of 'Judaism' to the particular brand of Enochic literature is evidence of the increasing importance that scholars have attached to it in recent years, both as a framework for understanding Qumran origins as well as early Christianity.²

A meaningful way for understanding the complex literature that comprises Enochic Judaism has been set forth recently by David R. Jackson who arranges it in terms of three major "paradigm exemplars of deviation."³ This approach he derives from a particular synthesis of the famous work by Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, and its elucidation of how the scientific community adjusts to new theories and discoveries and, especially, what impact this process has on previous systems of belief; hence, the notion of a 'paradigm shift'.⁴ According to Jackson, one of the benefits of Kuhn's analysis is that it provides a helpful framework for organizing conflicting, or seemingly incompatible, data and "allowing a certain degree of diversity within a strongly unifying system."⁵ Applying these insights to the narrative history of 1 Enoch, Jackson identifies what he sees there as evidence of three perspectives on the one event, or

¹For a recent work that mentions "Enochic groups" as part of a formidable segment of this milieu, see Jeff S. Anderson, *The Internal Diversification of Second Temple Judaism: An Introduction to the Second Temple Period* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2002), 110–11.

²See the comprehensive set of essays in Gabriele Boccaccini, ed., *Enoch and Qumran Origins: New Light on a Forgotten Connection* (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans, 2005).

³David R. Jackson, *Enochic Judaism: Three Defining Paradigm Exemplars* (New York: T & T Clark International, 2004), 27.

⁴*Ibid.*, 15–17; cf. also pp. 15–28 for a further explanation of Jackson's methodology. See Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962); cf. also his 2d enl. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

⁵Jackson, 17.

'paradigm,' concerning angelic/cosmic deviation prior to the Noahic flood; on this basis, he posits that the "problems arising from the same event . . . can be interpreted and solved only by the implementation of the rules of the paradigm."¹ By recognizing the 'paradigm' as an important way of seeing the world, and how belief-systems change in connection with the emergence of new historical situations, Jackson proposes to understand the literature of 1 Enoch as a 'paradigm shift' within Second Temple Judaism, and that these three "paradigm exemplars of deviation" ultimately came to serve in the Enochic community as a basis for defining orthodoxy and validating the members' elect status.²

The first paradigm Jackson enumerates is the "Shemikhazah exemplar," which pertains to the account in which the angels of heaven go astray under the leadership of one Shemikhazah and join in sexual union with women, giving rise to demons on the earth.³ The second paradigm is the "Aza'el exemplar" and is named after the angel who revealed secret skills to the wicked that they could employ in order to defeat the righteous.⁴ Each of these two exemplars embodies issues of 'ethnic' and 'cultural' deviation, respectively; the purpose of the first is to address the problems of Jewish syncretism under Greek domination and the second represents "the threat of deviation in terms of culture and skills derived from the forbidden heaven-based knowledge."⁵

The final paradigm Jackson refers to as the "cosmic exemplar," and which concerns the issue of liturgical deviation; this involves "the deviation of the angels in charge of the phenomena related to the climate and seasons, which results in the disqualification of the whole priestly cult as the priests are deceived in constructing the

¹Ibid., 27.

²Ibid., 14, 19, 27, 220.

³Ibid., 27; cf. 30–87.

⁴Ibid., 27; cf. 88–138.

⁵Ibid., 30, 35–36, 87; cf. 88–89.

worship of YHWH on the basis of observed phenomena rather than according to his regulations for the order of the cosmos."¹ While caution must be exercised when projecting modern social and scientific structures upon ancient literary texts, Jackson's enumeration of the 'cosmic' paradigm exemplar introduces a meaningful framework for understanding the complex ways in which cosmology and cultus intersect throughout the corpus of 1 Enoch.

Significantly, this conceptualization also provides a helpful framework for discussing in the following section the multivalent nature of the covenant concept in Enochic Judaism that finds expression in several corresponding domains, all of which express the "manifestation of the underlying paradigm of deviation from the divinely created order of the cosmos":² through the legitimation of Enoch as the instigator of a considerable critique and reformulation of traditional Zadokite beliefs; through the legitimation of a cosmicized notion of covenant (symbolized by the 364-day calendar); as well as through the inclusivist notion that salvation would ultimately be sent to the Gentiles, but judgment upon Israel and its Temple. As will be argued, following this elaboration, the 'cosmic theology' of Enochic Judaism³ provides considerable points of conceptual correspondence with the reformulation of cosmos, creation, and covenant that emerge in the Letter to the Hebrews.

Enochic Judaism and the Cosmicization of Covenant

The 108 chapters that comprise the pseudepigraphic work of 1 Enoch are divided into five composite books that are commonly ascribed to different periods of time ranging

¹Ibid., 27; cf. 139–211.

²Ibid., 87.

³See the section entitled, "The Cosmic Theology of Early Judaism," in Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigraph and the New Testament*, 65–67.

from the third century B.C.E. until the late first century B.C.E.¹ Furthermore, the corpus assumes a variety of beliefs, teachings, astronomical and calendrical laws, promises and warnings that are peculiar to the community circulating the tradition. In particular, it is in the early Enochic writings that one sees the beginnings of full-blown 'apocalyptic' in which salvation is ascribed to a particular community on the basis of a revelation. According to the genre, this usually derives from a heavenly figure who reveals information about the future or about the cosmos to a human mediator either through a dream or in the course of a journey through the cosmos.²

For this particular community, Enoch was the primary bearer of revelation whose heavenly journeys were intended to ensure the faithful of the certainty of God's final eschatological judgment in an age when cosmic evil seemed insurmountable. Enoch gains insights into the cosmic regularity while he is in heaven and before the angelic revolt begins (12:1–2). He also receives, as it were, the 'blueprints' of the cosmic order (1 En 33:3–4).³ The Enochic concept of cosmic order is based upon the regularity described in 1 Enoch 2–5, so that anything that departs from this order is seen to be a deviation from the divine plan.⁴ This system of order is especially set forth in 2:1: "Examine all the activities which take place in the sky and how they do not alter their ways, and examine the luminaries of heaven, how each one of them rises and sets; each

¹For an introduction to the Enochic corpus, see E. Isaac, "1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, ed. James H. Charlesworth (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 5–12.

²On the genre 'apocalypse,' see John J. Collins, "The Jewish Apocalypses," in *Apocalypses: The Morphology of a Genre*, ed. John J. Collins, Society of Biblical Literature (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979), 21–59. While there has been much speculation about the origins of the Enochic corpus, not to mention the whole genre of 'apocalyptic,' it likely reflects the work of a group of scribes and priests who were disenchanted with the encroachment of Hellenism and its diminution of traditional institutions and customs. See also idem, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans, 1998), 79.

³Jackson, 140.

⁴*Ibid.*, 31.

one is systematic according to its respective season and do not divert from their appointed order."¹

Scholars have increasingly come to see this section of Enoch as an example of important covenantal concerns. Lars Hartmann observes in his study of 1 En 1–5 a clear connection between ancient covenant formulas and the order of nature. Drawing upon the Old Testament context and the influence of the *rib* pattern, or divine lawsuit, Hartmann further suggests that the "referential background" of 1 En 1–5 is the Mosaic covenant and that it should be understood as a denouncement speech, set in the context of a covenant renewal ceremony which was devised as a means for calling Israel back to repentance.² Adopting Hartmann's insights, Mark Adam Elliott has more recently defended the presence of covenantal themes in this section, especially in 1 En 5:4 where the text turns from concerns over the regularity of nature to a condemnation of Israel:

But as for you, you have not been longsuffering and you have not done the commandments of the Lord, but you have transgressed and spoken slanderously grave and harsh words with your impure mouths against his greatness. Oh, you hard-hearted, may you not find peace! Therefore, you shall curse your days, and the years of your life shall perish and multiply in eternal execration; and there will not be any mercy unto you. (vss. 4–5)³

As he suggests, the language of the text is inexplicable apart from a covenantal framework; the primary significance of this passage, in fact, is indicated by its mention of scathing judgment against apostates and sinners and by the stark contrast that this presents with the 'orderliness-of-creation' theme in the preceding section (2:1–5:3).⁴ The presence of these covenantal motifs is precisely why Elliot interprets the apostates here to

¹For translation, see Isaac, 14.

²Lars Hartman, *Asking for a Meaning: A Study of 1 Enoch 1–5* (Lund, Sweden: Gleerup, 1979), 42–44, 49–95, 123–24.

³For translation, see Isaac, 15.

⁴Mark Adam Elliott, *The Survivors of Israel: A Reconsideration of the Theology of Pre-Christian Judaism* (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans, 2000), 85–86.

be none other than Israelites; a point that leads him to take issue with Sanders's notion of covenantal nomism as applied to 1 Enoch.¹

One of the most provocative and interesting facets of Enochic Judaism that has become increasingly apparent in recent years is that it attests to a socio-religious tradition quite distinct from that espoused by the mainstream Zadokites who controlled the national cult. As evident in the opening "Book of the Watchers," and enumerated in Jackson's first paradigm, the writers of 1 Enoch conceive of the cosmic dimensions of evil as resulting from the sin of evil angels who transgressed God's law by taking wives for themselves upon the earth (chaps. 6–16; esp. 15:8–10).² A major implication of this view is the belief that restoration of the world will come only through God's future cataclysmic judgment and specifically through the agency of the Elect One (55:4). Because of the cosmic scope of evil caused by these angels, the creators of the Enochic myth were less confident in the value of ritual as a means for mediating its effects in the world. For them, the great atonement of sin was to be accomplished through an eschatological crisis when the angels would be bound up forever in fiery torment (10:12–14, 20–22).³

Conversely, in the Zadokite schema, while sin and evil are also viewed as counterparts to God's creation order, they are not of superhuman origin and can, therefore, be contained within precise boundaries through prescribed ritual action.⁴ As Gabriele

¹Ibid., 86. Cf. Sanders, *Palestinian Judaism*, 361.

²Jackson, 31–36. See also Ida Fröhlich, "Times and Times and Half a Time": *Historical Consciousness in the Jewish Literature of the Persian and Hellenistic Eras*, *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series 19* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 49–67.

³For these points, see Anderson, *Internal Diversification*, 110–11. Cf. Paolo Sacchi, *Jewish Apocalyptic and Its History*, trans. William J. Short, *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series 20* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 60–61, 83–84, and George W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1–36; 81–108*, *Hermeneia* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 54–55.

⁴Anderson, *Internal Diversification*, 110.

Boccaccini aptly points out, "Human beings have responsibility for . . . maintaining the distinction between good and evil, holy and profane, pure and impure."¹ The Zadokite worldview embodied the belief, long established in ancient Israel, that ritual performance served as the primary means for symbolically re-enacting God's ordering of the cosmos. The whole cultus was infused with this creation theology, and the Jerusalem Temple itself was seen as a visual representation of the cosmos intended to remind worshipers that it was the divinely ordained location where cosmic and social order were maintained by the priests. Martin Jaffee has well summarized the critical relationship between the cosmic and social realms embodied in the Zadokite Temple as follows: "The high priest . . . and his priestly kinsmen served as the human community that established and maintained connection between the various orders of being. Their labor in the temple preserved all other orders of being from collapse. Upon them, the people of Israel, the land of Israel, and ultimately, the entire cosmos and its population all depended."²

The primary conceptualization of social and cosmic order in early post-exilic Judaism derived from the biblical tradition and especially Israel's creation theology in which God is described as erecting rules and boundaries over the unruly primordial elements; an important example of this cosmogony is contained in Jer 5:22: "I placed the sand as the boundary (*gēbul*) for the sea, an eternal rule (*hoq 'olam*) which it may not transgress; though the waves toss, they cannot prevail, though they roar, they cannot pass over it." An important example of this theology is expressed in Jer 33:25–26 where God's creation is said to have involved a 'covenant': "Thus said the Lord: As surely as I have established *My covenant with day and night—the laws of heaven and earth*—so I will never reject the offspring of Jacob and My servant David; I will never fail to take

¹Gabriele Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis: The Parting of the Ways Between Qumran and Enochic Judaism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 71–72.

²Martin Jaffee, *Early Judaism* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1997), 171. Cf. Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis*, 72.

from his offspring rulers for the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."¹ While the point of the pericope (33:19–26) is to legitimate the Davidic kingdom and the levitical priesthood, what is most significant is how that covenant (בְּרִית) is here specifically identified with the "laws" (הַקְּוִיָּה) that regulate "heaven and earth." This further indicates the significant ways in which 'covenant' and cosmology were seen to be related concepts already during the exilic era and soon thereafter.² Robert Murray has explored this tradition not only within the biblical milieu but also throughout the ancient Near East and has described it in terms of a "Cosmic Covenant"—namely, what he sees as a "divinely willed order harmoniously linking heaven and earth . . . [that] was established at creation, when the cosmic elements were fixed and bound to maintain the order."³ The usefulness of this term, "cosmic covenant," is demonstrated by the fact that it specifies the important ways in which covenant concepts were seen in ancient Israel to be inextricably connected with the realm of creation; as Jer 33 indicates, God made the first divine covenant, not with humanity, but with 'day' and 'night.'

Whatever the origins of the debate between the Zadokites and Enochians, the latter portray themselves as comprising a group of priests who were disgruntled with the traditional Zadokite establishment and took their disagreement and created a myth in which their ideology became reified into a cosmic battle between the forces of good and evil. An important part of the Enochic concept of cosmic order is that it was based neither on adherence to the Temple nor Torah, but rather rested upon a higher revelation

¹The JPS (Jewish Publication Society) Tanakh is cited here because it provides the nicest rendition of the original Hebrew (emphasis mine).

²Debate exists concerning the time of composition of Jer 33:19–26, over whether it is exilic (E. W. Nicholson, *Jeremiah 26–52*, Cambridge Bible Commentary [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975], 87–89), or post-exilic (e.g., John Bright, *Jeremiah*, Anchor Bible [AB], vol. 21 [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965], 298).

³Robert Murray, *The Cosmic Covenant: Biblical Themes of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1992), xx.

of cosmic order given directly to Enoch by God. Deviation from this paradigm is subsequently seen to be the basis for why divine judgment will fall upon Israel (5:4–8). It is this conviction that undergirds the Enochic polemic against the traditional cult and priesthood.

The Enochic Critique of Temple and Cult

One of the most significant ways in which the writers of the early Enochic corpus offer a direct challenge to the legitimacy of the traditional Zadokite cult and priesthood is in the portrayal of their hero Enoch as an archetypal heavenly high priest. This becomes especially evident in 1 En 14 where he is described as having distinctive rights of access to the heavenly throneroom and the divine presence:

And the Great Glory was sitting upon it [throne]—as for his gown, which was shining more brightly than the sun, it was whiter than any snow. None of the angels was able to come in and see the face of the Excellent and the Glorious One; and no one of the flesh can see him—the flaming fire was round about him, and a great fire stood before him. . . . Until then I was prostrated on my face covered and trembling. And the Lord called me with his own mouth and said to me, 'Come near to me, Enoch, and to my holy Word.' (vss. 22–24)¹

The importance of this description is corroborated by Martha Himmelfarb who remarks that in spite of Enoch's trepidation, "God welcomes him and speaks to him without requiring any purification or change in his physical being." This is quite different from later apocalyptic traditions where "the visionary undergoes some kind of physical transformation in order to stand before God."² As Boccaccini further points out, this portrait carries obvious polemical intent: "The attribution to Enoch of priestly characteristics suggests the existence of a pure prediluvian, and pre-fall, priesthood and

¹For translation, see Isaac, 21.

²Martha Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 29. For a similar scenario in which Levi is described as ascending to heaven and receiving the heavenly priesthood, see the Testament of Levi (chaps. 2, 5, 8) in the translation by H. C. Kee, "Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 775–828.

disrupts the foundations of the Zadokite priesthood, which claimed its origin in Aaron at the time of the exodus, in an age that, for the Enochians, was already corrupted after the angelic sin and the flood."¹ Another facet of Enoch that serves the community's purpose of legitimation is that their hero never died and therefore, unlike Moses, was likely viewed as the progenitor of a more superior priesthood.

The marginalization of the traditional priesthood by the Enochians also gives rise to their negative evaluation of the established cult. This becomes apparent in the later "Dream Visions" of 1 Enoch (chaps. 83–90), and specifically the 'Animal Apocalypse' where the figures of biblical history are represented allegorically by animals. The first part of the account envisions the restoration of the Jerusalem Temple after the return from exile:

Thereafter I saw the shepherds pasturing for twelve hours: behold, three of those sheep returning, arriving, entering, and beginning to build all (the parts) of that house which had fallen down! . . . They began to build as before; and they raised up that tower which is called the high tower. But they started to place a table before the tower, with the food which is upon it being polluted and impure. (89:72–73)²

As the writer continues, these sheep are said to be "blind," which evokes his view that the period is characterized by widespread apostasy. This recalls the same set of conditions before the destruction and exile and further indicates that "nothing has really changed."³ The negative view of the post-exilic era also correlates with the "Apocalypse of Weeks" in 1 En 93 where the writers referred to an "apostate generation" arising in the final week. Though, as Collins aptly points out concerning this evidence, "We need not infer that the

¹Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis*, 74.

²For translation, see Isaac, 69.

³Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary*, 395.

Second Temple was rejected in principle, but that the actual cult of the early restoration period was regarded as impure."¹

Perhaps the most explicit account of the Enochian disavowal of the post-exilic cultus emerges in chap. 90 where it is described as being replaced by a new and better one in the final eschaton: "Then I stood still, looking at that ancient house being transformed. . . . I went on seeing until the Lord of the sheep brought about a new house, greater and loftier than the first one. . . . All the sheep were within it. . . . And the Lord of the sheep rejoiced with great joy because they had all become gentle and returned to his house (vss. 28–29; 33b).² One of the more intriguing aspects of this passage as well is the realization that Gentiles are also converted: "Then I saw all the sheep that had survived as well as *all the animals upon the earth and the birds of heaven*, falling down and worshiping those sheep, making petition to them and obeying them in every respect" (90:30; emphasis mine).³

The basic contours of the Enochic party have shown evidence of a non-conformist community that was centered neither on the national cultus nor, apparently, the Torah, therefore holding to fundamental differences of view from the traditional Zadokite beliefs. A further matter to briefly consider is the important implications that these differences have for understanding the Enochian view of covenant and election. Despite increased understanding of the complexity of Second Temple Judaism in recent years, scholars have been reticent to approach this issue directly. Much of the reason may be

¹Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 69.

²For translation, see Isaac, 71. Gabriele Boccaccini translates this passage to mean that the 'ancient house' or Temple actually is purged by the same fire that the wicked are thrown into: "I went on seeing until that ancient house caught [fire]. . . .," though it is unclear where he derives this interpretation (*Beyond the Essene Hypothesis*, 83).

³For this view, see Maxwell J. Davidson, *Angels at Qumran: A Comparative Study of 1 Enoch 1–36, 72–108 and Sectarian Writings from Qumran*, Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series 11 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 99, 104.

attributed to the continuing influence of 'covenantal nomism,' which claims that despite certain differences Jewish sects uniformly believed in Israel's ultimate election/salvation. Another problem is with the perception that there is no explicit evidence of a developed covenantal theology in the Enochic corpus. George W. E. Nickelsburg, for example, argues in his recent magisterial commentary on 1 Enoch "that covenant is not a major category" in the book since the word *διαθήκη* occurs there in only three instances (93:6; 99:2; 106:13).¹ In the following sections, more consideration will therefore be given to the way in which the issues of covenant and election were formulated within the framework of Enochic Judaism.

'Calendar' as a Symbol of Covenant in Enochic Judaism

In light of recent evidence confirming the multivalence of the covenant concept in Second Temple Judaism it is much less likely that 'covenant' is implied only when explicitly mentioned in literary texts.² A major transformation in covenantal thought occurred during the post exilic period as it was removed exclusively from its original cultic context and increasingly became associated with various ideologies of separation through *symbols* that reflected this new conceptualization, such as circumcision, dietary laws, and exogamy.³ Another symbol that scholars have recently come to see as an important nexus of intense covenantal debate during the Second Temple period is the 'calendar.' Evidence for this emerges most clearly in 1 En 72–82 (esp. 72–75) and the

¹Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary*, 50. A similar assessment was made over 40 years ago by Annie Jaubert in her claim that there was only one allusion to the covenant in 1 Enoch (60:6) (*La Notion d'Alliance dans le Judaïsme Aux Abords de l'Ère Chrétienne*, Patristica Sorbonensia 6 [Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1963], 261–62).

²For an important and timely discussion on the diversity of covenantal thinking during this period, see the collection of essays in Stanley E. Porter and Jacqueline C. R. de Roo, eds., *The Concept of the Covenant in the Second Temple Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

³For more on the symbolization of 'covenant' during this period, see George E. Mendenhall and Gary A. Herion, "Covenant," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary (ABD)*, ed. David Noel Freedman et al. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:1195, 1197, 1201.

book of Jubilees, both dating from the end of the third century and the middle of the second century B.C.E. respectively.¹ The Astronomic Book of Enoch provides an extensive and detailed recounting of the sun (72), of the moon (73, 78), and of a comparison between the solar and lunar years (74, 78). The primary focus of the book is on the 364-day solar year (72:32; 74:12–13) and especially with the inclusion of the four intercalary days (75:1–2) since, according to 82:4–6, some or all the people were held to be culpable for not reckoning them properly: "On this account there are people that err; they count them in the computation of the year; for the people make error and do not recognize them accurately; for they belong to the reckoning of the year" (vs. 5).² While the Astronomic Book of Enoch assumes that the cosmic laws will continue to operate as long as the universe endures, a notable exception is apparent in 80:2–8 where the prediction is made that in "the days of the sinners" cosmic and natural judgments will occur. Notable also is the way in which the heavenly luminaries are personified and even able to revolt, so that this is typified as an expression of the cosmic chaos associated with the use of a 'wrong' calendar, which leads to idolatry and, ultimately, covenantal judgment:

Many of the chiefs of the stars shall make errors in respect to the orders given them; they shall change their course and functions and not appear during the seasons which have been prescribed for them They (the stars) shall err against them (the sinners); and modify all their courses. Then they (the sinners)

¹A helpful discussion of these two works in relationship to the calendar is contained in Sacha Stern, *Calendar and Community: A History of the Jewish Calendar Second Century BCE—Tenth Century CE* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 5–11, and James C. VanderKam, *Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Measuring Time* (London: Routledge, 1998), 17–33.

²According to Gabriele Boccaccini, "the target [of the Astronomical Book] was a diverse solar calendar, a 360+4 day calendar, which, although recognizing the existence of intercalary times between seasons (and so completing the year in 52 weeks), failed to recognize them as 'days of the months.' The issue, therefore, was . . . whether or not the equinoxes and solstices were part of the reckoning of the year, or merely 'divisions of the year'" ("The Solar Calendars of Daniel and Enoch," in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, vol. 2, ed. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint with the assistance of Cameron VanEpps [Leiden: Brill, 2001], 318).

shall err and take them (the stars) to be gods. And evil things shall be multiplied upon them; and plagues shall come upon them so as to destroy all. (vss. 6–8)¹

It is difficult to determine the provenance of this dispute or whether it was directed explicitly against the Jerusalem Temple, especially since there were likely several different types of solar and lunar calendars in use among Jews of this period.² What is notable here is the way in which the Enoch community prescribed its legitimacy on the basis of a 364-day calendar that was never made official in Judaism. Furthermore, the passages indicate the group's awareness of a fundamental connection between the use of the 'correct' calendar and the preservation of the order of creation, which has important implications for its covenantal awareness. One recent scholar who has highlighted this concern is Mark Adam Elliott who sees a direct connection in these writings between the calendar and what he calls the "covenantal cosmic witness theme," which he understands to occur in such passages as Deut 30:19: "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse" (cf. also Deut 4:26; 31:28; 32:1; and Isa 1:2).³ In the same way that the cosmic elements were seen as 'witnesses' to the covenant in early Israel, the Enochic group apparently drew upon this notion as a means of legitimating its myth about the nature of evil in the world and as a framework for preserving cosmic harmony. As Elliott elaborates, their writings probably indicate an *"early and fundamental association between the covenant formulary and*

¹For a helpful overview of the Astronomic Book, see Margaret Barker, *The Older Testament: The Survival of Themes from the Ancient Royal Cult in Sectarian Judaism and Early Christianity* (London: SPCK, 1987), 44–49, and Sacchi, 130–39.

²Additional evidence for the complexity of the calendar in ancient Judaism is supplied in Roger T. Beckwith, *Calendar, Chronology, and Worship: Studies in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 7–90.

³Elliott, 157.

concern for maintenance of the proper calendar" so that to "sin against the calendar could be considered as *nothing less than a breach of the covenant*."¹

The book of Jubilees, which is commonly seen to derive from a group with connections to the Enochic community, elaborates on the same concerns of the 364-day solar calendar and shows evidence of how it became an important symbol of covenant fidelity for Jews of the second century B.C.E.² One of the primary concerns of its writers was with those who employed any type of lunar calculations in determining Israel's holy days; those who do so are certain to "err concerning new moons, sabbaths, festivals, jubilees, and ordinances" (1:14) as well as to "corrupt and make a day of testimony a reproach and a profane day a festival, and . . . mix up everything, a holy day (as) profaned and a profane (one) for a holy day" (6:37). Setting awry "the months and the (appointed) times and the sabbaths and the feasts" also means that the sacrifices are affected since the Israelites "will eat all of the blood with all flesh" (6:38; cf. vss. 34–38). For the writers of Jubilees, the cultic and covenantal significance of the 364-day solar calendar derived from the fact that it provided Israel with the means to distinguish between holy and profane days with the utmost accuracy (cf. Lev 10:10), lest she "forget the covenantal festivals and walk in the festivals of the nations, after their error and after their ignorance" (6:35b). Significantly, the writers legitimate this calendar on the basis that it was "engraved and ordained on the heavenly tablets" (see e.g., 6:29–31).³

¹Ibid., 158 (original emphasis).

²For the relationship between Enoch and Jubilees with regard to the issue of the 364-day calendar, see Vanderkam, 27–33. As David R. Jackson points out, "*Jubilees* seems to be the earliest attempt to read the Mosaic Torah within the framework of the calendar and paradigm exemplars of the *Books of Enoch*" (170).

³References to the book of Jubilees are from O. S. Wintermute, "Jubilees," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, ed. James H. Charlesworth (New York: Doubleday, 1985), 37–142. For a recent discussion of these passages in Jubilees, see James M. Scott, *On Earth as in Heaven: The Restoration of Sacred Time and Sacred Space in the Book of Jubilees* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 86–88.

Both portions of Enoch and Jubilees indicate that the 364-day calendar became an important symbol of covenantal concerns among certain Second Temple sectarian groups. Further examples could be explicated but the preliminary review of the evidence from these works indicates some of the ways in which the question of 'covenant' during the Second Temple period was apparently bound up with the issues of cosmology and the cultus. This point coheres well with the important awareness in ancient times concerning the Israelite cultus and how it was understood to be the nexus between heaven and earth and a visual representation of the actual cosmos. These groups apparently transformed this traditional cultic understanding into a major new cosmic-eschatological conceptualization which maintained that the curses of the covenant would be imminently cast upon those who did not follow the revelation concerning adherence to the proper 364-day calendar. One scholar has conveniently summarized this form of thinking in the following manner: "The orderly design and functioning of heavenly bodies, seasonal changes and elements of weather are presented as a cosmic background for the orderliness God requires of men."¹

Several points crystallize here to suggest Enoch and Jubilees as indications of a strong non-conformist tradition in the Second Temple period. According to 1 Enoch 89:73, for example, the Second Temple sacrifices were viewed as being "polluted and impure." In fact, in the earlier portion of the Animal Apocalypse describing the account of Mount Sinai, no mention is even made about the giving of the Mosaic Torah—the foundational document of the Zadokite cultus (89:29–35). Furthermore, the portrait of Enoch in priest-like terms with direct access to God's throne further substantiates the likelihood that these writers saw their hero as 'superior' to the traditional priests especially

¹J. C. Malan, "Enochic (Apocalyptic) and Christian Perspectives on Relationships: A Tentative Comparison of Striking Aspects and Underlying Lines of Thinking in 1 Enoch and the New Testament," in *Studies in 1 Enoch and the New Testament: Proceedings of the Nineteenth Meeting of the New Testament Society of South Africa (NTSSA) Held at the Randse Afrikaanse University from the 11th to 14th of July 1983*, by the New Testament Society of South Africa (Stellenbosch: NTSSA, 1983), 86.

since, according to biblical tradition, he never died. At the same time, Enoch is legitimated as the source of divine revelation, and his books are the repositories of heavenly wisdom for the community of the last days (chaps. 81–82; 104–105). As described, a crucial component of this revelation includes astronomical and calendrical laws and the information that this provides about the final judgment. In Jubilees, while the Mosaic Torah is mentioned, the claim of revelation derives from the 'heavenly tablets' which must be obeyed through the distinctive prism of understanding offered exclusively by the community.¹

Both Enoch and Jubilees present substantial evidence of a major movement of dissent within Second Temple Judaism, claiming that adherence neither to the precepts of the Jerusalem Temple nor to the Mosaic Torah could provide the basis for Israel's attainment of divine blessing. As the framers of this literature indicate, the restoration of social and cosmic order is impossible during the current age but will be accomplished only by God in the final eschaton. Until then, the representation of this divine order is considered obtainable only through adherence to "Enochic law" including implementation of the correct 364-day calendar.²

While not expressly mentioning the word 'covenant,' the calendrical and astronomical laws in Enoch point to a strong belief within this community in the *cosmicization* of the covenant concept as means to legitimate its symbolic universe. Whatever the provenance of this material may be, by the time Jubilees is written in the second century B.C.E. the use of the 364-day calendar is seen as crucial for the proper

¹Martha Himmelfarb sees a clear polemical agenda behind the notion of the 'heavenly tablets' in this work: "Jubilees demotes the Torah by undermining (relativizing) its claims to uniqueness and completeness, claiming for itself a separate but equal sphere" ("Torah, Testimony, and Heavenly Tablets: The Claim to Authority of the *Book of Jubilees*," in *A Multifform Heritage: Studies on Early Judaism and Christianity in Honor of Robert A. Kraft*, ed. Benjamin G. Wright [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999], 28).

²For reference to the notion of "Enochic Law," see George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Ancient Judaism and Christian Origins: Diversity, Continuity, and Transformation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 46–47.

maintenance of the festivals. As such, the nature of this argument marks it as a clear polemic against the cultic establishment in Jerusalem. Elliott follows this view and perceptively adds that in this situation, "*Control of the calendar implied control of the cultic life of a community, and rejection of the 'official' calendar implied a challenge to the established authority.*"¹ Again, at stake in this polemical debate was the issue of which community was the true representation of God's divine image for humanity. An important corollary as well to this concern was the question of *who* could be included in that community.

"Sectarianism in the Context of Universalism"

A heavily influential paradigm in conceiving of the sociological characteristics of ancient Judaism has been that of Max Weber, who described the post-exilic period in terms of an 'in-group' vs. 'out-group' typology, using it to organize a synthesis around the 'Jew' versus 'Gentile' dualism; on this account, sectarianism came to be perceived primarily as a response to economic and political exploitation by the Gentiles.² On the other hand, subsequent investigations of Second Temple Judaism have indicated that what was once considered to apply to the separation between Jews and non-Jews really had to do with 'internal diversification' of the period.³ One problem, however, is that this more nuanced understanding has often not been adequately extended to an understanding of the covenant idea. Instead, many scholars have continued to adopt the notion of

¹Elliott, 161 (original emphasis). Hereafter, unless indicated otherwise, all emphases in quoted material are the original authors'.

²See Max Weber, *Ancient Judaism*, trans. and ed. by Hans H. Gerth and Don Martindale (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1952), 336–54. Mark Adam Elliott identifies four main approaches that scholars have employed in the study of ancient Judaism: classical sociological approaches, approaches that emphasize Hellenism as a historical catalyst, approaches from the point of view of intra-Jewish social conflict, and more recent sociological approaches, including "displacement theories"; for his discussion, see pp. 197–202.

³Shemaryahu Talmon, "The Internal Diversification of Judaism in the Early Second Temple," in *Jewish Civilization in the Hellenistic-Roman Period*, ed. Shemaryahu Talmon, *Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series 10* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 42.

covenantal nomism almost implicitly in their conceptions of the Second Temple period, entailing the belief that Jews of the period unanimously accepted the view of Israel's ultimate election.

The writings of Enoch and Jubilees indicate that the terms of the covenant in ancient Judaism were not as uniformly set as many scholars have often assumed. In a further challenge to the assertion by Dunn and others that Israel's *nationalistic* boundary markers were intended primarily to set Jews apart from Gentiles, one scholar suggests that this non-conformist literature really seems to indicate the ways in which "cosmology becomes a more fundamental basis for obedience than covenantal commands (which are based on cosmology)."¹ While perhaps claiming too much, such a statement at least highlights some of the misgivings about covenantal nomism and its perceived failure to account for the multivalence and complexity of the covenant concept during the Second Temple period, especially in situations where the terms of the covenant were held in wide dispute.²

One of the major implications concerning the cosmological understanding of covenant seen in the Enochic literature is that it adduces a view in which salvation is seen to be reserved only for those who hold to the revelation of Enochic Law, whereas the covenantal curses are forecast to fall upon anyone who fails to adhere to this perspective. According to one of the earliest parts of the corpus, in the final eschaton when the earth has been cleansed, "all the children of the people will become righteous, and all nations shall worship and bless me; and they will all prostrate themselves to me" (10:21). This notion is proclaimed in the later writings as well: "all people shall direct their sight to the path of uprightness" (91:14) and "the sons of the earth shall give heed to all the words of

¹Simon J. Gathercole, "M. A. Elliott, *The Survivors of Israel: A Review Article*," *The Evangelical Quarterly* 74, no. 3 (2002): 264.

²See again Seifrid's article, "Blind Alleys," 75–76, and the collection of essays in Carson, O'Brien, and Seifrid, *The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*.

this book" (100:6). Conversely, the writers of Enoch expect that those who follow a different understanding of divine law will be cursed: "Woe unto you who alter the words of truth and pervert the eternal covenant! They reckon themselves not guilty of sin, they shall be trampled on upon the earth" (99:2).¹ Accordingly, while Israelites who think they are righteous will be judged, there are many Gentiles, considered to be unrighteous, who will in fact abandon their idols and be saved (cf. 50:1–3).² The crux of this more universal perspective derives from a significantly different understanding about what constitutes the right interpretation of divine law. The 'eternal covenant,' which the Israelite sinners are seen to violate (99:2), in fact is based on Enochic, not Mosaic, Law and is really 'cosmic' in scope, expressing more formally the belief of the elect community that God's salvation will ultimately be extended to those outside of national Israel.

This surprisingly open view toward the salvation of the Gentiles is significant and represents a functional antecedent to the type of universalism that emerges in early Christianity. Nickelsburg has drawn out this point in the following insightful statement:

Herein lies a paradox, though one for which we can find a precedent in Judaism. The Enochic Jews adopted a sectarian viewpoint. They were the eschatological community of the chosen, constituted by a revelation that would bring salvation. Nonetheless, they anticipated that while many of their fellow Jews would be damned, Gentiles who observed Enochic law would be saved. Early Christianity followed the broader, inclusivist strains of Judaism, but adopted the sectarian viewpoint that salvation was only for those who accepted *their* gospel.³

By defining Enochic Judaism in terms of what he calls "Sectarianism in the Context of Universalism," Nickelsburg touches upon a critical and unique feature of this

¹As Nickelsburg has well observed, "The text does not refer to hardened sinners, but to people who believe that their actions are not sinful" (*Ancient Judaism*, 46).

²Another form of this inclusivism appears in such works as the *Letter of Aristeas* and *Sybilline Oracles 3* where Gentiles are exhorted to avoid such major sins as idolatry, murder, and sexual promiscuity with the view that doing so will place them within the pale of salvation. For references to these works, see R. J. H. Shutt, "Letter of Aristeas: A New Translation and Introduction," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 7–34, and John J. Collins, "Sybilline Oracles: A New Translation and Introduction," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 317–472.

³Nickelsburg, *Ancient Judaism*, 87.

community;¹ one which indicates that its interpretation of divine law and covenant stood in significant discontinuity with the more mainstream Zadokite form of Judaism as embodied in the Jerusalem Temple.² A most important characteristic of this distinctive perspective was the belief that many Jews would be 'damned' on account of the general nation-wide failure to embrace the cosmic revelation of Enoch. This awareness adds strong credence to the possibility that much of what is commonly considered 'anti-Judaic' in the New Testament derives from antecedents already well-established in Second Temple Judaism. Mark Adam Elliott elaborates on this point in the following:

There can now be found suitable explanations *from Judaism* for many of the basic attitudes found in the New Testament—including that Israel, God's chosen people, is in danger of judgment and in this regard has been placed on a par with gentiles; [and] that the historical covenants are not unqualifiedly valid for all who consider themselves participants in them.³

With the increased understanding that has emerged in recent years on the sectarian background of Second Temple Judaism, scholars have increasingly come to identify 'Enochic Judaism' as a movement that exerted considerable influence on early Christian apocalyptic thinking.⁴ The Enochic corpus is largely steeped in the prophetic and wisdom tradition and casts its message as a call for people to pay attention to the cosmos as a sign of God's immanent eschatological judgment; doing so is what constitutes inclusion in the 'elect' community of the last days.⁵ This influence certainly provides an important backdrop to the Gospel accounts where Israel's rejection of Jesus and his message of

¹Ibid.

²See Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis*, 71–74. Cf. Anderson, *Internal Diversification*, 110.

³Elliott, 664.

⁴For references to the Enochic contribution to early Christianity, see Nickelsburg, *Ancient Judaism*, 76, 84–87. In his commentary Nickelsburg also provides a helpful overview of the history of scholarship on the relationship between 1 Enoch and the New Testament (*1 Enoch 1: A Commentary*, 123–24).

⁵Nickelsburg, *Ancient Judaism*, 84.

openness and inclusion is portrayed as the basis for a strong counter-movement to his establishment of a new, prophetic community of the righteous that transcends the exclusivistic boundaries of the Jerusalem Temple.¹ The nature and extent of the affinities between Jewish apocalypticism and the worldview of Jesus have been one of the most hotly debated questions in New Testament scholarship.² But what seems apparent from the evidence so far is that the distinct brand of universalistic Judaism found within the Enochic literature, and its strong cosmic-eschatological outlook, undergirded by a critical stance toward the national cultus, correspond in many ways with the conceptual framework behind Jesus' own proclamation of the kingdom of God and the termination of the old order.³

Enochic Judaism and Hebrews

Returning to the earlier discussion on the problems of covenant, especially in relation to Hebrews, what is significant to consider here is to what extent the Enochic worldview may provide a window into Hebrews and the writer's conceptualization of the new covenant. At the outset, the sectarian community's schema of cosmic order based on the esoteric traditions connected with Enoch seems to bear considerable similarity with the writer of Hebrews' own concern for promoting Jesus as the priestly mediator of a "new covenant." To be sure, both works elaborate on the notion that a redeemer figure's divine ascent to heaven is the basis for the establishment of a greater revelation

¹For a helpful presentation of Jesus' overturning of the traditional Jewish holiness system and remapping of new boundaries, in relation to the national cultus, see Jerome H. Neyrey, "The Symbolic Universe of Luke-Acts: 'They Turn the World Upside Down'," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, ed. Jerome H. Neyrey (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 271–304.

²An informative survey of this issue is contained in Collins's chapter on "Apocalypticism in Early Christianity" in *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 256–79.

³As Isaac adds, the nature of this influence permeates the whole New Testament canon: "There is little doubt that 1 Enoch was influential in molding New Testament doctrines concerning the nature of the Messiah, the Son of Man, the messianic kingdom, demonology, the future, resurrection, final judgment, the whole eschatological theater, and symbolism" (10).

concerning God's activity in the end times and the means by which cosmic evil will be resolved. On this basis, Enoch and Hebrews each adopt a stringent polemic against the established priesthood and cultus based on the conviction that these institutions cannot provide a solution to this plight.

The possibility for establishing a set of conceptual correspondences between Hebrews and Enochic Judaism has become strengthened in recent years in light of sociological investigations that have given greater credence to the sectarian nature of the Hebrews community and its socio-religious conflict with other competing Judaisms. One advocate of this approach has been Iustone Salevao, who reads Hebrews specifically as a polemical treatise designed by the writer "to legitimate the separation of his [Christian] community from Judaism."¹ He argues that the letter was set within Rome sometime during the last three decades of the first century,² and likely reflected the concerns of a small house church.³ The writer's primary purpose in writing was to address a deviant party within the house group who were continuing in their allegiance to Judaism and, by refusing to make "a total break," were threatening the social cohesion of the group.⁴ Within this sociological framework, Salevao argues that the writer devised the new covenant "as a metaphor for affirming the identity of the new social order as a distinctive cultic community separate from and independent of Judaism."⁵

¹Iustone Salevao, *Legitimation in the Letter to the Hebrews: The Construction and Maintenance of a Symbolic Universe*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 219 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 114.

²Ibid., 104, 120–21.

³Ibid., 131–33, 213.

⁴Ibid., 144, 147–49.

⁵Ibid., 387.

The view that the writer addressed a community in Rome, according to R. McLellan Wilson, "is probably the most popular suggestion" among scholars.¹ Internal evidence in the letter, especially 10:32–34 and its description of intense persecution experienced by the congregants, correlates well with what is known about the status of Christians in the imperial city during the mid-first century. Salevao summarizes this as follows: "Situated in Rome, the pulsating heart of the Roman Empire as it were, the community addressed by the author would have been immediately exposed to the full brunt of the Empire's social, political, legal, cultural and religious policies."² These circumstances were only exacerbated when Christians began to sever their ties with Judaism, which had recognized socio-religious legitimacy in the Empire.³ Furthermore, if the writer had connections to the larger stream of Pauline Christianity and its strong pro-Gentile mission, which drew considerable support from Rome (Rom 1:13–16; cf. 15:25–29), then the likelihood exists that he also experienced this separation through frequent confrontations with particularistic-minded Jews and Jewish Christians over questions of law, cultic ritual, and the status of non-Jews (see Acts 15). Given the heated context of the continuing Second Temple covenantal debate, Hebrews would have indeed found a highly favorable hearing among those Christians in Rome who advocated a "total break" from Judaism.

A final important consideration that Salevao raises in defending his thesis regarding the sectarian nature of Hebrews concerns the treatment of the social and theological significance of baptism as a primary symbol of commitment to the new

¹R. McLellan Wilson, *Hebrews*, New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 10.

²Salevao, *Legitimation*, 121; cf. 105, 137–38, 156.

³*Ibid.*, 147.

covenant community. He speaks of this practice as a legitimating part of the writer's 'doctrine' and as a means to protect the congregants against apostasy:

In absenting themselves from the assemblies, and by their continuing adherence to the practices of another society, the deviant members were thus disrupting the conceptual and institutional unity of the community. That threat to the internal cohesion of the community heightened the need to maintain strict group boundaries. The doctrine (with baptism as one of its basic tenets) became one such boundary. As a boundary-establishing ritual, baptism served as the focus, the visible and public sign of the group's exclusive identity. It also served as the basis for unity among the members.¹

In consideration of these ideas, it becomes possible to suggest that the sectarian attitude in Hebrews is not altogether different from that expressed at Qumran in which membership in "the Community of the everlasting Covenant" is essential for salvation and where strong covenantal symbols represent that commitment (see e.g., 1QS 5:7–20). Each new member was asked to "undertake [swear] by the Covenant to separate from all the men of injustice who walk in the way of wickedness. For they are not reckoned in His Covenant" (5:10–11). Elsewhere, when this identity is described as a "New Covenant" made "in the land of Damascus" the strong sense of discontinuity between this group and the rest of mainstream Judaism appears to be very much explicit (CD [B] 2:12).² Such thinking has considerable implications as well for determining how early Christianity eventually came to legitimate its own identity in distinction from mainstream Judaism. As Boccaccini has asserted, "The Qumran community offers the first example of the notorious 'theology of supersession' that the Church would often use in order to define itself in relation to the Synagogue."³ Given these coordinating insights, and especially Hebrews' own strong element of supersession, the question naturally arises as to what relationship indeed exists between the letter and these earlier sectarian

¹Ibid., 276.

²For references to the Community Rule (1QS) and the Damascus Document (CD) of the Dead Sea Scrolls, see the translation provided by Vermes.

³Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis*, 155.

movements. One intriguing proposal offered here is that the writer of Hebrews embraced an Enochic view of the "cosmic covenant" in order to simultaneously supplant and universalize the Jewish covenantal concept, and that this process was undertaken in the context of Roman Gentile Christianity and the Second Temple covenantal debate.

Statement of the Problem

One of the major problems with attempting to understand Second Temple and New Testament concepts of covenant through the paradigm of covenantal nomism is that it overlooks the considerably complex socio-religious and 'cosmic' dimensions of covenant already established in the Second Temple era, especially within Enochic Judaism. This problem becomes especially apparent in more recent understandings of the "new covenant" in Hebrews.

Purpose of the Study

The thesis offered here is that Hebrews presupposes a notion of "cosmic covenant" similar to that found in Enochic Judaism.

CHAPTER 2

THE COSMIC AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE JERUSALEM TEMPLE AND ITS PRIESTHOOD

The opening chapter revealed that one of the problems New Testament scholars have traditionally encountered when approaching the subject of Second Temple covenant is the tendency to overlook the importance of the "internal diversification" that marked the period.¹ As suggested, the notion of 'covenantal nomism,' with its emphasis on obedience to the law as a marker of identity in ancient Judaism, does little to explain the meaning of covenant in the context of competing definitions about who comprises the 'elect.' More is certainly being done these days to address the complexity of covenant during this period.² However, these advances have yet to be fully applied to Hebrews, where there still remains a tendency—particularly among more recent interpreters of the letter—to minimize the polemical nature of the new covenant concept.

A further look at a selection of passages from 1 Enoch and Jubilees indicated evidence of a complex notion of covenant which crystallized among sectarian groups of the Second Temple period. For the communities represented by this literature, the conceptual foundations of their covenantal outlook were multivalent, based upon a set of corresponding themes that tied into a specific notion of divinely prescribed cosmic order (1 En 2:1–5:10). One crucial aspect of the Enochic conceptual worldview was the 364-

¹Anderson, *Internal Diversification*.

²For evidence of this, see the work by Carson, O'Brien, and Seifrid, *The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*.

day solar calendar which was understood to reflect the cosmic order that God instituted at creation and that he intended as the proper vehicle for regulating Israel's socio-religious life. This theme of cosmic order resounds throughout the Astronomic Book of Enoch where considerable detail is given to calculating the position of the sun and moon as means to establish uniformity in the cosmos (chaps. 72–82); the work culminates in a prediction that cosmic and natural judgments will occur in "the days of the sinners" when the moon and stars will alter their courses and those who follow their errors will also be led into idolatry (80:2–8). According to the Enochic community, the calendar served as a major symbol of covenantal identity in order to legitimate its myth regarding the origins of cosmic evil and also to reinforce understanding that cosmic harmony would be restored only through the eschatological transformation of the earth and Temple (1 En 90:18–36).

As suggested, the major counterpart to the Enochic belief system was embodied in the framework of Zadokite theology, with its significantly different conceptions of creation, cosmos, and covenant. Gabriele Boccaccini has summarized the differences between these two major groups in the following terms:

While the Zadokites founded their legitimacy on their responsibility to be the faithful keepers of the cosmic order, the Enochians argued that this world had been corrupted by an original sin of angels, who had contaminated God's creation by crossing the boundary between heaven and earth and by revealing secret knowledge to human beings. Despite God's reaction and the subsequent flood, *the original order was not, and could not be, restored.*¹

Therefore, as will be recalled, both Enochic and Zadokite Judaism evoke diametrically opposing views regarding the stability of the Jewish cosmic and social-ethical orders—one in which the Jerusalem Temple was understood to be the legitimate center for their maintenance and another in which the cultus was seen to be corrupt, on the basis of the incorporation of an illegitimate calendar, and for which reason the world was perceived as being inherently unstable and ripe for eschatological judgment.

¹Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis*, 73 (emphasis mine).

A particularly intriguing aspect of the Enochic corpus, as suggested, has to do with the manner in which it seems to bear considerably strong conceptual resemblance to the framework of thought represented in Hebrews, where the writer presents Jesus as the one who has ascended into the true, 'cosmic' sanctuary, and become the source of a new revelation concerning the nature of sin, atonement, and eschatological judgment (8:1–10:39). An important point that is argued in the present research is that, like the Enochic group, the writer of Hebrews legitimated his understanding of the "new covenant" in direct reaction to the competing claims of the Jerusalem Temple, which stood as the primary symbol of Jewish covenantal adherence in his day. To better understand and appreciate the extent to which the Zadokite cultus would have exerted a considerable influence on the congregation of the "Hebrews" in the first century, it is therefore necessary to highlight, first, the primary characteristics of this 'cosmic' worldview and, second, the social significance of ritual as means for maintaining the divine order inscribed there.

The Zadokite Worldview

What is often described in the scholarly literature as the "Zadokite" view of reality stems from certain portions of Genesis as well as the large section from Exod 19:1 to Num 10:10, including all of Leviticus (which critical scholars identify as the "P" = Priestly source, although Lev 17–26 is generally ascribed to the so-called 'Holiness School').¹ The basis for its worldview is complex but can best be described in terms of what scholars have increasingly come to recognize in recent years as the important

¹For an overview of the so-called "priestly school," see Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 293–305; Menachem Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel: An Inquiry into the Character of Cult Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly School* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 58–111; Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Structure of P," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 38 (1976): 275–92; and the more recent treatment in Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB, vol. 3, 3–57.

congruence between cultus, cosmos, and creation, a point which is again nicely summarized by Boccaccini:

In the Zadokite worldview, the Jerusalem temple — their temple — separated from the profane world around it, was a visual representation of the cosmos itself. As God's realm, heaven, is separate from the human realm, the earth, so the earthly dwelling of God produces around the temple a series of concentric circles of greater degrees of holiness separating the profane world from the most holy mountain of Jerusalem. The internal structure of the temple, with its series of concentric courts around the holy of holies, was intended to replicate the structure of the cosmos and the structure of the earth.¹

While this statement is concentrated and could give rise to much discussion concerning the social and symbolic significance of the ancient Jerusalem cultus, the pertinent points to be addressed here relate to the ancient Near Eastern belief in temples as the meeting places between heaven and earth and its implications for determining the biblical conceptualization of the cultus and priesthood in cosmic terms. What will become most apparent in the following section is the way in which the Jerusalem Temple was seen to be a replication of the original creation order which, in turn, provided the basis for cosmic and social harmony in ancient Israel.

The 'Cosmic' Temple

Until relatively recently, the idea of the Jerusalem Temple as a "visual representation of the cosmos" was thought to be a late post-biblical development, evident in such works as Philo² and Josephus³ but not germane to the earlier milieu of Israel's

¹Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis*, 71–72.

²An aspect of Philo's elaborate allegories was the notion, common within the Hellenistic world, that the 'true' Temple was the cosmos itself: "We ought to look upon the universal world as the highest and truest temple of God, having for its most holy place that most sacred part of the essence of all things, namely, the heaven; and for ornaments, the stars; and for priests, the subordinate ministers of his power, namely, the angels" (*The Special Laws* 1.66 [trans. Yonge, 540]). For further passages in Philo where the Temple and its appurtenances are portrayed in terms of cosmic symbolism, see *On the Cherubim* 23–26; *On the Life of Moses* 2.88, 98, 101–105, 117–26; *On Noah's Work as a Planter* 50, 126; and *Who is the Heir of Divine Things* 199, 221–24. Unless otherwise indicated, future citations of Philo are taken from the Yonge translation.

³In his description of the Temple, Josephus draws attention to the cosmic imagery of its various

history. Roland deVaux was a classic formulator of this view, stating that "there is not a single text which suggests that the Temple itself ever had cosmic significance" and that the ancients "did not think of the Temple as representing the universe, [since] ideas of cosmic symbolism emerged only long afterwards."¹ A total reassessment of this issue, however, has emerged in connection with a general renewal among scholars in their understanding of the importance of cosmology and cosmogony in ancient Israel, in contrast to earlier tendencies which privileged 'history' as the main framework for understanding ancient Israelite religion.² Within this purview, scholars have come to realize that the primacy of the 'cosmic' Temple tradition in ancient Israel has its strongest antecedents in the long-established Near Eastern beliefs about temples and mountains as the meeting place between heaven and earth.³ While it is important not to overgeneralize the evidence, a common motif that emerges in this tradition involves the depiction of humans residing in a high mountain city built by the gods, containing a splendid garden

appurtenances: "The seven lamps (such being the number of the branches from the lampstand) represented the seven planets; the twelve loaves on the table, twelve in number, the circle of the Zodiac and the year; while the altar of incense, by the thirteen fragrant spices from sea and from land, both desert and inhabited, with which it was replenished, signified that all things are of God and for God" (Josephus *Jewish War* 5.5.5, §217–18 [trans. Thackeray, Loeb Classical Library, 3:267]). Also of significance is his description of its outer veil: "[It was a veil] of Babylonian tapestry, with embroidery of blue and fine linen, of scarlet also and purple, wrought with marvelous skill. Nor was this mixture of material without its proper significance: it typified the universe. For the scarlet seemed emblematical of fire, the fine linen of the earth, the blue of the air, and the purple of the sea. . . . On this tapestry was portrayed a panorama of the entire heavens, the signs of the Zodiac excepted" (*Jewish War* 5.5.4, §212–14 [Loeb Classical Library, 3:265]). For additional references that Josephus makes to cosmic symbolism in the temple and its appurtenances, see Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 3.6.4, §123 and 3.7.7, §180–87 (trans. Thackeray, Loeb Classical Library, 4:375, 403–407). All future citations of Josephus are taken from the Loeb editions, hereafter referred to as LCL.

¹Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, trans. John McHugh (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1973), 328–29.

²For an explanation of this point, see e.g., Robert A. Oden, Jr., "Cosmogony, Cosmology," *ABD*, 1:1162–63.

³See the evidence provided in Richard J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), and also Victor Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in Light of Mesopotamian and Northwest Semitic Writings*, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series* 115 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 335–37.

with rivers and trees, similar to the ziggurat in Mesopotamia.¹ This concept is clearly represented, for example, in Ezek 28:12–19 where the king of Tyre is portrayed as living in a garden paradise described both as Eden (vs. 13) and "the holy mountain of God" (vs. 14), though, from which he was eventually expelled because of pride (vs. 16). As likely reflecting one of the earliest cosmogonies in the Bible, this passage provides an important venue for understanding how the cosmic mountain tradition and later Zion tradition merged into the concept of the Jerusalem Temple as the center of cosmic stability.²

What has been especially helpful in recent years is that scholars have begun to link this 'cosmic mountain' tradition more closely with the ancient *Chaoskampf* in which divine victory over chaos provided the basis for temple-building.³ This motif is evident, for example, in the account of Enuma Elis where as a gratuitous response to Marduk's victory over Tiamat, the lesser gods say to him: "Now, Lord, you have liberated us, what courtesy may we do you? We will make a shrine, whose name will be a byword, your chamber that shall be our stopping place, we shall find rest therein."⁴ As one scholar has well articulated, "The god's conflict with the forces of chaos . . . is inseparable from the search for a temple in a situation where the cosmic stability provided by the cult is either

¹See e.g., Walter Harrelson, "The Significance of Cosmology in the Ancient Near East," in *Translating & Understanding the Old Testament: Essays in Honor of Herbert Gordon May*, ed. Harry Thomas Frank and William L. Reed (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), 247–48.

²For further examples of the cosmic mountain motif and its influence on the biblical writers, see Ps 46; Isa 2:2–4; 14:12–14; and Mic 4:1–4. Cf. Harrelson, 247–48.

³See e.g., Moshe Weinfeld, "Sabbath, Temple Building, and the Enthronement of the Lord – The Problem of the *Sitz Im Leben* in Genesis 1:1–2:3," in *Mélanges Biblique et Orientaux en l'Honneur de M. Henri Cazelles*, ed. A. Caquot and M. Delcor (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981), 507–508; Jon D. Levenson, "The Temple and the World," *Journal of Religion* 64 (July 1984): 287–88; and Blenkinsopp, 285.

⁴For translation, see Benjamin R. Foster, "Enūma Elish," in *Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*, vol. 1 of *The Context of Scripture*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, Jr. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997), 6:49–52; cf. 5:115–24.

absent or under threat."¹ The correlation of these themes becomes especially evident in the epic 'Song of the Sea' (Exod 15:1–18) where Yahweh is described as the divine warrior who emerged victorious over the waters and led his people Israel to his "holy abode" (vs. 13) and a sanctuary that he established in the "mountain of his inheritance" (vs. 17; cf. Ps 68:7–9, 16–17; Hab 3). In later royal tradition, this pattern of cosmogonic victory crystallized into the view of the Temple as a replication of God's creative activity and the "stronghold" of cosmic stability (cf. Ps 48:2–4). This is especially apparent in the belief that Yahweh "built his sanctuary like the high heavens, like the earth which he has founded forever" (Ps 78:69; cf. Exod 25:9, 40; 1 Chr 28:14; Wis 9:8).

The correspondences between creation, cosmos, and temple-building that have emerged, especially with reference to the ancient theme of the cosmic mountain, become even clearer through the biblical idea of the Garden of Eden as the archetypal temple of God. Already detected in Ezek 28:12–19, this point is further reinforced by the numerous typological and literary echoes that exist between Gen 2–3 and later descriptions of Israel's cultic milieu described in both biblical and non-biblical sources.² For example, God's "walking to and fro" in the garden employs a word (מתהלך) used to describe the divine presence in the later tent sanctuaries (Lev 26:12; Deut 23:15; vs. 14 [Eng]; 2 Sam 7:6–7), the cherubim guarding the tree of life at the east entrance of the garden (Gen 3:24) corresponds with the fact that the 'east' serves as the entrance for the tabernacle (Exod 27:13–16) and later temples in Israel (e.g., Ezek 10:19; 47:1); the four-headed river in Eden (Gen 2:10) is similar to the river depicted in Ezekiel's vision of the future Temple situated on the cosmic mountain (47:1–12; 43:12; cf. Rev 22:1); and the gold and

¹Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "The High Priest as Divine Mediator in the Hebrew Bible: Dan 7:13 as a Test Case," in *Society of Biblical Literature 1997 Seminar Papers 36* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 172–73.

²See Gordon J. Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story," in *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Division A: The Period of the Bible* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1986), 19–25.

precious stones in the garden (Gen 2:12) are important components for the construction of the tabernacle (Exod 38:24) and many of its appurtenances, including the priestly vestments (Exod 25:7; 28:9, 20; 39:13; 1 Chr 29:2). Also of relevance is that within Solomon's Temple there were carvings of gourds and open flowers on its walls (1 Kgs 6:18), carvings of "cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers" on the doors of the inner sanctuary (6:29, 32, 35) and in front of the holy place were two pillars with capitals that were lily-shaped and lined underneath with carved pomegranates (7:18–20), all of which indicate ways that the Temple took on a "garden-like atmosphere."¹

The evidence for this congruity between Eden and the Jerusalem Temple also appears in post-biblical tradition as well. For example, in the third century B.C.E. work, the Book of the Watchers, chaps. 17–18 and 23–27 offer a description of Enoch's tour of the cosmos, which includes a vision of Jerusalem represented in terms of a recrudescence of the Eden-as-temple theme: "I went into the center of the earth and saw a blessed place in which were trees. . . . And there I saw a holy mountain . . . and there was a stream which was flowing in the direction of the north" (1 En 26:1–3; cf. 27:1 and Ezek 38:12). A similar tradition is also found in the second century B.C.E. work Jubilees (ca. 160 B.C.E.) in which Noah "knew that the garden of Eden was the holy of holies and the dwelling of the Lord. And Mount Sinai (was) in the midst of the desert and Mount Zion (was) in the midst of the navel of the earth. The three of these were created as holy places one facing the other" (8:19; cf. 4:26). Moreover, in the same work Adam and Eve are said to have been brought into Eden forty and eighty days, respectively, after their creation, according to the stipulations concerning the laws of purity for the birth of a boy and girl in Lev 12:2–8, further indicating how the garden was understood as the

¹For this interesting point, see Gregory K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 1111. It should be mentioned as well in this context that the tabernacle menorah has also been seen as typologically related to the original tree of life in Eden (see Carol L. Meyers, *The Tabernacle Menorah*, American Schools of Oriental Research Dissertation Series 2 [Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976]).

archetypal sanctuary (3:8–14). A similar conception is apparent at Qumran, for example, in 4Q265 (fr. 7 ii 11–17), a fragment text from the late first century B.C.E. containing miscellaneous rules based on material derived from both the Community Rule and the Damascus Document: "For holy is a garden of Eden, and every fresh shoot that is in it is holy [as it is written, *If a woman conceives and bears a male child,*] *then she shall be unclean for seven days; as at the time of her menstruation, she shall be unclean*" [the text continues to enumerate the laws of purity related to childbirth in Lev 12].¹

In consideration of these preceding insights about the cosmic significance of the Jerusalem Temple and especially of the Garden of Eden as an archetypal sanctuary, it becomes apparent how the holy of holies within the Temple could eventually become perceived as nothing less than heaven on earth. This much is certainly clear from Josephus on the basis of his view that the tripartite division of the Temple was analogous to the heaven, earth, and sea: "Thus, to take the tabernacle, thirty cubits long, by dividing this into three parts and giving up two of them to the priests, as a place approachable and open to all, Moses signifies the earth and the sea, since these too are accessible to all; *but the third portion he reserved for God alone, because heaven also is inaccessible to men.*"²

When dealing with such an issue as the 'cosmic' significance of Israel's Temple tradition, there is always the risk of anachronistically projecting later Greco-Roman allegorical interpretations of the Temple back upon an earlier milieu. And since no

¹For translation of this text, see Vermes, 155-56 (emphasis in original). Further information on the halakhah related to the association between the Garden of Eden and the Jerusalem Temple is provided in Joseph M. Baumgarten, "Purification after Childbirth and the Sacred Garden in 4Q265 and Jubilees," in *New Qumran Texts and Studies: Proceedings of the First Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies, Paris 1992*, ed. George J. Brooke (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 3–10.

²See Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 3.7.7, §181 (LCL, 4:403; emphasis mine). Similarly, in 3.6.4, §123 Josephus mentions that "this partitionment of the tabernacle was withal an imitation of universal nature; for the third part of it, that within the four pillars, which was inaccessible to the priests, was like heaven devoted to God, while the twenty cubits' space, even as earth and sea are accessible to men, was in like manner assigned to the priests alone" (LCL, 4:375).

explicit data for this theme exist in the biblical texts, any reconstruction must be carefully inferred from intertextual comparisons as well as extra-biblical sources. Nonetheless, evidence *has* shown that the concept of the harmonization between heaven and earth, so prominent throughout the Near East, did in fact exert a considerable influence on the development of the biblical cultic tradition, albeit in significantly demythologized form, and crystallized into the view of the Jerusalem Temple itself as a reflection of the archetypal Eden-like temple established at creation and particularly represented in vestiges of an older cosmic mountain tradition such as is described in Ezek 28:12–19.

To recapitulate, what has emerged is that Israel's Temple was built according to a 'heavenly' pattern matched by parallels in the ancient Near East and intricately tied to Israel's unique cosmogony. Given the cosmic dimensions of the biblical Temple, the question remains as to what implications this might have for determining the nature and function of the privileged priests who ministered there. Based on the preceding insights, an important point to consider is that if the Temple was understood to be the nexus between heaven and earth and the center of cosmic stability, then these same priests must have also somehow embodied that cosmic domain in a symbolic or even ontological respect.

The 'Cosmic' Priesthood

As with the Jerusalem Temple, the notion that the priesthood had cosmic symbolic significance is not explicit in the Hebrew Bible or LXX but only becomes so among later Jewish interpreters. A case in point is found in the prominent first-century allegorist, Philo of Alexandria, who interpreted the Jewish high priest as a stunning embodiment of the cosmos. In his work entitled, *On the Special Laws (I)*, Philo refers to "the arrangement of the sacred dress of the high priest, [as] being a representation of the universe, a marvelous work to be beheld or to be contemplated" (95) and in which "God

intends that the high priest should . . . have a visible representation of the universe about him, in order that from the continual sight of it he may be reminded to make his own life worthy of the nature of the universe, and secondly, in order that the whole world may cooperate with him in the performance of his sacred rites" (96). This suggests that, within Philo's conceptualization of reality, the high priest who ministered in the Temple was seen to function as almost a hypostasis, or quasi-personification, of the cosmos, in a manner that had great significance for the world.¹

While the issue here is not with the ultimate origins of Philo's imagery, the assumption has generally been that it was part of the syncretistic outgrowth of interest in 'cosmic piety' and natural philosophy that characterized the Hellenistic period.² As is well-established, much of the basis for these concepts had been derived centuries earlier in Plato's account of creation, *Timaeus*,³ which exerted an enormous influence on Philo's own conceptual outlook.⁴ An important Platonic notion was that the world was created by the great artificer (the 'Demiurge') and that every visible thing was a copy of a perfect original (e.g., 29A–C; 31A; 37D; 39E). In this scheme, every form of intelligence was contained within the original world soul (30C–D; 34B), which gave rise to other human, divine, and animal souls as well (41D; 44B–D). Most significantly, for Plato it was this perfection and orderliness found in creation and especially in "the courses of intelligence in the heaven" that could provide the basis for bringing order to the moral and social

¹For further information on the cosmic significance of the high priest in Philo, see C. T. R. Hayward, *The Jewish Temple: A Non-Biblical Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 1996), 109–16, and J. Laporte, "The High Priest in Philo of Alexandria," *Studia Philonica Annual* 3 (1991): 74–77.

²See e.g., Jean Pépin, "Cosmic Piety," in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality: Egyptian, Greek, Roman*, ed. A. H. Armstrong, *World Spirituality: An Encyclopedic History of the Religious Quest*, vol. 15 (New York: Crossroads, 1986), 408–35.

³Plato *Timaeus, Critias, Cleitophon, Menexenus, Epistles*, vol. 9, trans. R. G. Bury, Loeb Classical Library (London: Heinemann; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966).

⁴For a comprehensive comparison between Philo and *Timaeus*, see David T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986), 412–75.

sphere of human existence as well (47B–C). One scholar has well summarized this point as follows: "Macrocosm, microcosm, and human society all have potential of perfect orderliness and felicity, almost actualized in the heaven but to be painfully attained in humanity and society."¹

More specifically, Philo's notion of cosmic priests may have also been influenced by certain segments of Stoicism. Jean P  pin raises this possibility by observing that the third century B.C.E. Stoic philosopher Cleanthes was apparently the first one to draw a comparison between the world and the temple.² In support of this, he notes a fragment in which it is reported that "Cleanthes . . . used to say that the gods are priestly figures and sacred invocations, he added that the sun is a torch-bearer, he called the world a place of initiation and the keepers of divine truth the initiators."³ As P  pin goes on to maintain, recrudescences of this theme of a cosmic temple and priesthood appear to become especially evident later in Philo. For example, in a passage from *On the Special Laws*, the Alexandrian mentions the role of angels as cosmic 'priests': "We must believe the supreme temple, the real temple of God to be the world in its totality, which has a sanctuary the most sacred part of subsistent reality, the sky, which has the stars for votive offerings and for priests the angels serving under its powers" (1.66).⁴

¹J. B. Skemp, "The Spirituality of Socrates and Plato," in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality: Egyptian, Greek, Roman*, ed. A. H. Armstrong, *World Spirituality: An Encyclopedic History of the Religious Quest*, vol. 15 (New York: Crossroads, 1986), 116.

²P  pin, "Cosmic Piety," 425. Since P  pin is dealing exclusively with evidence from the Hellenistic milieu, he does not draw upon, nor seems cognizant of, the important parallels to the world-as-temple theme which are implicit within biblical cosmology, such as in Isa 66:1–2; see Levenson, 291–96.

³P  pin, "Cosmic Piety," 425. The source is taken from *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, ed. J. von Arnim (Leipzig: Teubner, 1903–24. Reprint, Stuttgart: Teubner, 1966; New York: Irvington Publications, 1986), 1:123, sec. 538, 7–10. P  pin mentions in a brief note that "several corrections" have been made to the Greek text (434, n. 37), and further suggests that the "text makes sense if by 'gods' we understand the stars, to which the Stoics actually did assign divinity" (425).

⁴*Ibid.*, 430 (trans. P  pin). For additional evidence of this theme, see *On the Creation*, where Philo mentions that "[On the fourth day of creation, God] made the sensible stars, divine and beautiful effigies which he placed in the sky as in the purest temple which exists in corporeal substance" (18.55; trans. P  pin, 426).

This notion of Jewish cosmology is not confined only to Philo but is evident in other sources from the late Second Temple milieu as well. For example, in *Wisdom of Solomon*, a work dating from either the latter half of the first century B.C.E. or the opening decades of the first century C.E.,¹ the writer provides his own reworked version of Korah's rebellion and of the following plague (18:20–25; Num 16:1–50), in which the latter is assuaged by Aaron's intervening act of atonement (Num 16:47–48). Especially intriguing in this account is the description of Aaron robed in his priestly garments: "For on his long robe the whole world (ὅλος ὁ κόσμος) was depicted, and the glories of ancestors were engraved on the four rows of stones, and your majesty was on the diadem upon his head" (Wis 18:24 NRSV).²

Additionally, the first-century Jewish historian Josephus provides evidence of a belief in the cosmic significance of the high priesthood, which focuses mainly on the symbolism of his attire,³ though in one particularly provocative passage, he refers to the priests leading "the cosmic worship" (τῆς κοσμικῆς θρησκείας), but with otherwise no

¹For a discussion on the date and provenance of the work, see George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 184–85, and David Winston, "Solomon, *Wisdom of*," *ABD*, 6:122–23.

²See the reference to this passage in Hayward, 112. David Winston also notes its affinities with Philo as well as with Stoic and Cynic thought (*The Wisdom of Solomon*, AB, vol. 43, 321–22).

³While the emphasis in Josephus is clearly on the cosmic significance of the Temple, his understanding of the priestly garments also shows similarities and differences with Philo (references are indicated below in parentheses; for references to *On the Life of Moses* 2.118–24, see Yonge, p. 501, and for *On the Special Laws* 1.87, see p. 542). According to *Jewish Antiquities* 3.7.7, §184–87 (LCL, 4:405–407), "The high-priest's tunic likewise signifies the earth, being of linen, and its blue the arch of heaven" (for Philo it is symbolic of the air and the regions beneath the moon [*On the Life of Moses* 2.118–21]); "His upper garment [ephod], too, denotes universal nature, which it pleased God to make of four elements" and furthermore, "Sun and moon are indicated by the two sardonyxes wherewith he pinned the high-priest's robe" (Philo refers to the ephod as a symbol of heaven and the two stones as the hemispheres of the zodiac, though he notes that "in the opinion of some persons" they symbolize the sun and moon [*On the Life of Moses* 2.122–23]); the stones in the breastplate may signify either the months or else the Zodiac (Philo chooses the latter option [*On the Life of Moses* 2.124; *On the Special Laws* 1.87]); and lastly, "the head-dress appears . . . to symbolize heaven, being blue." For a helpful comparison between Josephus's and Philo's interpretation of the high priestly attire, see Hayward, 150–51.

clear indication of what this really means.¹ The word κοσμικῆς which, according to one source, can refer to being "open to the whole world" or perhaps "emblematic of the mundane system"² does not occur in the LXX, but is used once in the New Testament with a moral connotation, referring to the need to avoid "worldly passions" (Titus 2:12). A meaning that may be closer to that found in Josephus occurs in Heb 9:1 with reference to the first covenant and its "earthly sanctuary" (ἅγιον κοσμικόν). The apparent similarity of this phrase with the thought world represented by Philo (and also of Josephus in *Jewish War* 4.6.2, §324) has even led one commentator to translate it as "the tabernacle with its cosmic symbolism."³

Based on the preceding evidence, and an awareness of the important stream of ideas regarding cosmic religion that Philo and other Jewish thinkers inherited from Hellenism, it is clear that the 'cosmic' priesthood was an apparently well-established concept in the Jewish symbolic universe for at least a century or more prior to the destruction of the Temple system in 70 C.E. While scholars have tended to assume that Judaism derived this concept primarily from the Greco-Roman milieu, it is also important to recall that both the ancient Near Eastern and biblical worldviews were heavily predicated on the notion of a cosmic temple as the nexus between heaven and earth.

¹The reference is from Josephus *Jewish War* 4.6.2, §324 (LCL, 3:95–97) and occurs in the context of a discussion about the murder of two former high priests by the names of Ananus, son of Ananus, and Jesus, son of Gamaliel, in the turmoil that arose during the first year of the Jewish revolt against Rome (see 4.6.2, §314–25 [LCL, 3:93–97]). Josephus notes that the corpses of these two men were left unburied, representing an act of gross impiety practically unheard of among Jews, even for executed criminals (§316–17), and which for him sadly contrasted with the honor formerly ascribed to them: "So they who but lately had worn the sacred vestments, led those ceremonies of world-wide significance and been revered by visitors to the city from every quarter of the earth, were now seen cast out naked, to be devoured by dogs and beasts of prey" (§324–25). While this translation renders τῆς κοσμικῆς θρησκείας, as "ceremonies of world-wide significance," Hayward's interpretation of the phrase as "the cosmic worship" seems to better evoke awareness of the supramundane element behind the cultic services (*The Jewish Temple*, 144).

²See H. St. J. Thackeray in Josephus *Jewish War*, LCL, 3:96–97.

³S. G. Sowers, *The Hermeneutics of Philo and Hebrews: A Comparison of the Interpretation of the Old Testament in Philo Judaeus and the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Richmond: Knox, 1965), 108–109.

Therefore, the question remains as to whether the 'cosmic' priesthood also was not already an established concept in an earlier period of Israel's history.

This cosmic theme can be traced to at least as early as the mid-second century B.C.E. and the period of the Maccabean uprising, on the basis of evidence supplied in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and especially from the Testament of Levi.¹ In a section that is arranged as a polemic against the established priesthood, the writer states that shame is the characteristic of the sons of Levi when they should otherwise be known for their honor: "As heaven is pure above the earth; and *you should be the lights of Israel as the sun and the moon*. For what will all the nations do if you become darkened with impiety? You will bring down a curse on our nation, because you want to destroy the light of the Law which was granted to you for the enlightenment of every man, teaching commandments which are opposed to God's just ordinances" (T. Levi 14:3–4; cf. Isa 49:6; emphasis mine). This statement seems to bear similarity to the themes already enumerated in 1 Enoch concerning Israel's judgment for failure to preserve the 'true' order of creation (cf. 2:1–5:3).² Aspects of this concern also appear to be evident in the Testament of Naphtali 3:2: "Sun, moon and stars do not alter their order; thus you should not alter the Law of God by the disorder of your actions." Another enigmatic passage of cosmic interest occurs in chap. 5 of the same document where the patriarch purportedly has a vision on the Mount of Olives in which the sun and moon stand still. At this point, his grandfather Isaac appears, exhorting his sons to run and grasp the sun and moon so that whoever grasps them will possess them: "All of them ran, but Levi seized the sun and

¹References to this work are taken from Kee. Since the Testaments contain a number of Christian interpolations, they have given rise to extensive debates on the provenance of the work. However, to heed Kee's view on this matter, "When the ten or twelve Christian interpolations are set aside, the basic document of the Testaments bears witness to the diversity of outlook that developed within Judaism in the period prior to the Maccabean Revolt and flourished throughout the Maccabean period" (778). For a similar position, including a concise overview of the evidence for an earlier provenance, see Elliott, 23–25.

²See pp. 9–10 above.

Judah, outstripping the others, grasped the moon. Thus they were exalted above others. When Levi became like the sun, a certain young man gave him twelve date palms. And Judah became luminous like the moon, and twelve rays were under his feet" (T. Naphtali 5:1–5).¹

Another intriguing reference to the priesthood which draws upon cosmic imagery occurs again in the Testament of Levi, this time chap. 18, where the future eschatological priest is described as one whose "star shall rise in heaven like a king" and who will "shine forth like the sun in the earth" (vss. 3–4; cf. Num 24:17). Additionally, the reign of this priest will be characterized by the restoration of creation to an Edenic-like state: "In his priesthood sin shall cease and lawless men shall rest from their evil deeds, and righteous men shall find rest in him and he shall open the gates of paradise; he shall remove the sword that has threatened since Adam" (18:9–10).

The same tradition of using astral language to describe the priesthood appears in The Wisdom of Jesus ben Sira, or sometimes known simply as Sirach, a work dating from the early second century B.C.E. (ca. 180),² specifically in reference to the Zadokite Simon ben Onias: "How glorious he was, surrounded by the people, as he came out of the house of the curtain. Like the morning star among the clouds, like the full moon at the festal season; like the sun shining on the temple of the Most High, like the rainbow

¹References to the Testament of Naphtali are taken from Kee. Elliott sees this passage as possibly related to the calendar issue to the extent that whoever followed the example of Levi and Judah would be considered maintainers of the "proper calendar" (391, n. 104).

²For discussion of the date and provenance of the work, see Hayward, 38–41. Sirach was originally written in Hebrew but gained much wider circulation when it was translated into Greek by the grandson of ben Sira sometime after 132 B.C.E. A considerable portion of the Hebrew text of ben Sira has been reconstructed, first from fragments discovered in the Cairo Genizah in 1896, and later supplemented by fragments found at Masada in the 1950s. An assessment of the textual work on ben Sira is provided by M. Gilbert, "The Book of Ben Sira: Implications for Jewish and Christian Traditions," in *Jewish Civilization in the Hellenistic-Roman Period*, ed. Shemaryahu Talmon, Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series 10 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 81–91.

gleaming in splendid clouds" (50:6–7 NRSV).¹ The imagery used here to describe Simon's ministry in the Temple recalls other passages in Sirach where the writer speaks of the "glorious . . . sight of the heavens" and the "beauty of heaven" (43:1, 9), as well as the celestial bodies described in Ps 148:1–5, which are declared to be "established forever and ever" (vs. 6). What is also noteworthy about Sir 50:5–7 is that it corresponds considerably with the cosmic imagery that describes the grandeur of the priesthood in Philo and Josephus. In reference to the passage, Robert Hayward states, "It would seem that the high priest is here described as related to things of great beauty above the terrestrial sphere, and as if he had in some manner made these things present in the Temple."²

The continued description in Sir 50 compares Simon with the fecundity of nature such that he is "like roses in the days of firstfruits, like lilies by a spring of water, like a green shoot on Lebanon on a summer day . . . like an olive tree laden with fruit and like a cypress towering in the clouds . . . like a young cedar on Lebanon surrounded by the trunks of palm trees" (vss. 8, 10, 12 NRSV). Strong parallels between Sir 50:8–12 and Sir 24:11–17, where very similar vegetative symbolism is used to describe Wisdom in terms of the Edenic-creation, also strengthen the possibilities for understanding how the high priest was seen himself to embody Wisdom by recapitulating the cosmic order and bringing creation to completion.³ The probability that Sirach also relies on an

¹The comparison of an individual to the sun, moon, and stars is implied in Joseph's dream (Gen 37:9) and is approximated in the promise that David's throne will endure as the sun and moon (Ps 89:37–38) and in the description of the ideal ruler as one like the "morning light at sunrise" (2 Sam 23:4). Also in Job 38:7, the "morning stars" are associated with the angels and in Rev 22:16 Jesus refers to himself by this title (cf. 2 Pet 2:19).

²Hayward, 49–50.

³For a thorough review of this perspective, see Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 72–81, and C. T. R. Hayward, "Sacrifice and World Order: Some Observations on Ben Sira's Attitude to the Temple Service," in *Sacrifice and Redemption: Durham Essays in Theology*, ed. S. W. Sykes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 22–34.

understanding of the Temple as a replication of the original Edenic paradise would indeed support the notion that the 'cosmic' Temple theme ultimately has its roots in the biblical tradition.

Further evidence for the view that Simon's ministry in the Temple is described in relationship to the original garden paradise emerges through a look at the critical juncture which occurs between the close of the lengthy section commonly known as the "Hymn in Praise of the Fathers" (44:1–49:16) and the beginning of 50:1 where Simon is introduced. Following references to such highly honored patriarchs as Enoch, Joseph, Shem, and Seth, the author culminates the list by mentioning that "above every living being is the *beauty of Adam* (תִּפְאֶרֶת אָדָם)" [49:16].¹ Immediately afterwards, he refers to Simon in similarly resplendent terms as being the "greatest of his brothers and the beauty (תִּפְאֶרֶת) of his people" [50:1].² More than just a formal link, this connection appears to reflect a concerted attempt to identify the pre-lapsarian Adam with the Zadokite high priest and to show that both shared important functional similarities.

This notion that the ancient priests were intended to represent the same role as the original Adam in the Garden of Eden has received special attention recently in relationship to evidence derived from the Dead Sea Scrolls. Crispin Fletcher-Louis, for example, draws attention to this theme in several passages; in 1QS 4:22–23 "the perfect of way . . . have been chosen for an eternal covenant and for them there is (or, will be) all the glory of Adam" (cf. 1QH 4:14–15 [Thanksgiving Hymns]) and also evidence appears in the Damascus Document (CD 3:19–20) and 4Q171 3:1–2 about those who will possess

¹For this rendering, see Hayward, *Jewish Temple*, 41. The advantage of Hayward's work is that he provides commentary on both the Hebrew and Greek versions of chap. 50, which is an eulogy to Simon ben Onias (cf. 41–63; 71–84). It should be noted here that the Hebrew of 49:16 varies from the Greek version, which says nothing about the 'beauty' of Adam (p. 77).

²In highlighting the important occurrence of the word תִּפְאֶרֶת in both Sir 49:16 and 50:1, Hayward has suggested that since it is used elsewhere to describe both the beauty of Aaron's priestly garments (Exod 28:2, 40), as well as those of Simon himself (see 50:11 where his garments are called בְּגָדֵי תִפְאֶרֶת), it may possibly reflect vestiges of an earlier tradition in which Adam was understood also to possess priestly garments (*Jewish Temple*, 44–47).

"all the inheritance of Adam," which indicates to him that the Qumran community perceived this inheritance as already in their possession.¹ As he summarizes, "The Qumran community believed then, that it was their vocation to fulfill the responsibility originally given to Adam to embody God's own glory"—a point which further stems from their mythical understanding in "the remembrance of Adam's original state as the basis for future restoration of the true Adam-in-Israel."²

While most of the citations in support of this Adamic theology so far have been drawn primarily from extra-biblical sources, exegetical proof for this theme does emerge more clearly in the Scriptures. For example, the Lord's command for man to 'till and tend' the ground (Gen 2:15) employs two words, לְעַבְדָּהּ and לְשָׁמְרָהּ, which also describe the duties of the Levites in guarding and ministering in the sanctuary (Num 3:7–8; 8:25–26; 18:5–6; 1 Chr 23:32; Ezek 44:14). And it is further significant that before their expulsion from Eden, "Yahweh God made tunics (קְתוֹנוֹת) of skins for the man and his wife and clothed them (יְלַבְּשֵׁם)" (Gen 3:21 NJB [New Jerusalem Bible]), a reference that uses the same words to describe the attire worn by the Aaronic priests during their ordination (Lev 8:7, 13) as well as Moses' own clothing of them (Exod 28:41; 29:8; 40:14).³

The preceding section has provided a survey of evidence for what appears to have been a fairly widespread belief in the cosmic significance of the Jerusalem priesthood during the Second Temple period. Drawing upon sources ranging from Philo back to Sirach, the primary purpose here has been to comment on the evidence rather than to engage in speculation about the origins of such imagery. Nevertheless, it seems that this

¹Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam*, 95–97. For translation of the Qumran material, see Vermes.

²Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam*, 97, 94.

³Another provocative reference which links Adam with duties relegated to the priesthood is provided in Jubilees, though in the context of his expulsion from Eden: "And on that day when Adam went out from the garden of Eden, he offered a sweet-smelling sacrifice—frankincense, galbanum, stacte, and spices—in the morning with the rising of the sun from the day he covered his shame" (3:27).

theme of cosmic priesthood, while tangential with similar interests in the Hellenistic milieu and while not explicitly mentioned in the Scriptures, ultimately relates to the same complex of ideas as found in the ancient Near East where earthly sanctuaries were understood to have heavenly archetypes and themselves to be the meeting points between heaven and earth.

Given the overriding evidence for the cosmic significance of the Jerusalem Temple and its priesthood in antiquity, it is important to be reminded of the broader social dimensions these institutions encompassed. Martin Jaffee has well summarized the critical relationship between the cosmic and social realms of the national cultus and its priesthood in the following terms: "The high priest . . . and his priestly kinsmen served as the human community that established and maintained connection between the various orders of being. Their labor in the temple preserved all other orders of being from collapse. Upon them, the people of Israel, the land of Israel, and ultimately, the entire cosmos and its population all depended."¹ With these considerations in mind, the next section will turn to a discussion of the social and symbolic function of ritual in ancient Israel and its significance as the divinely ordained means for preserving the social and cosmic realms from collapse.

Ritual and the Maintenance of a Symbolic Universe

Unlike the Zadokites who viewed the Jerusalem Temple as the crucial nexus where cosmic and social stability was maintained, the Enochic sect of Judaism considered it illegitimate, drawing upon a significantly different conception of divine order, which it considered to be embodied in the 364-day calendar. This debate, and how it played itself out within Second Temple Judaism, provides important insights concerning the social

¹Jaffee, 171; see also p. 12 above. A similar point is made by Robert Murray: "They [temples] contained symbols of the heavenly bodies and of earthly creatures, and were the privileged meeting-places of heaven and earth as well as the points from which the cosmic forces of chaos and disorder could be controlled" (71).

dynamics of group legitimation that occurred within this milieu and the different meanings that came to be assigned to ritual as means for bringing about cosmic and social order. As suggested, these considerations provide a significant framework for understanding the kind of complex issues that arise in the Letter to the Hebrews, where the writer also evinces strong polemic against traditional notions of covenant and ritual embodied in the Jerusalem Temple.

Before proceeding to Hebrews, however, it is necessary to give some further attention to the nature of the worldview inscribed within the Zadokite cultus and, more precisely, why the majority of Jews viewed it as the central institution for maintaining social and cosmic order. A helpful methodological tool for delineating social phenomena and their interrelationship is provided from the field of 'sociology of knowledge.'¹ While precautions must be taken when drawing upon modern social theory to elucidate ancient cultures, there are several premises within the sociology of knowledge that provide useful means for understanding the dynamics behind group formation and maintenance, as well as the nature of social conflicts that invariably arise. One important aspect concerns the notion of 'legitimation' which refers in a larger sense to how the objective and subjective realities become actualized for members of a particular society. Iustone Salevao, in drawing upon the sociology of knowledge in his approach to Hebrews, describes legitimation as follows:

It aims at making the institutional order objectively available to those participating in society (as in the traditions instructing members about it). It also aims at making the institutional order subjectively plausible to the members of society by telling them why things are as they are and that they should act on this right knowledge.²

¹The classic work on this subject is Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966). One of the earliest treatments of the sociology of knowledge approach is Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, trans. Louis Wirth and Edward Shils (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964). The work was originally published in German in 1929.

²Salevao, 54; cf. 5. See also Berger and Luckmann, 85–87.

Legitimation occurs at four distinct levels of complexity within societies, ranging from the use of shared vocabulary by which individuals are first introduced to the social structures of their society, to the development of explanatory theoretical statements such as proverbs and maxims, as well as to the advancement by the experts of certain fixed theories.¹ The fourth and highest level of legitimation involves the construction of 'symbolic universes' which are defined as "bodies of theoretical tradition that integrate different provinces of meaning and encompass the institutional order in a symbolic totality."² The primary characteristic of a symbolic universe is that it provides "an all-embracing frame of reference" by which individuals in a particular society may conceptualize their self-identity in relation both to its institutions as well as other members within that social order.³ Through this shared identity, involving a common history and belief system, a symbolic universe serves to provide individuals with a strong sense of unity and a measure of protection against the terrifying prospects of chaos. As an overriding framework of socio-cosmic order, the symbolic universe "puts everything in its right place."⁴

The significance of the 'symbolic universe' is that it provides a compelling approach for investigating ritual activity within the context of the Jerusalem Temple, and how rituals came to embody there such critical social and religious meaning. The relationship between ritual activity and meaning has been an important area of concern for ritual theorists, and has generated quite differing perspectives. Frits Staal, for example, in his study of Vedic rituals, posits that rituals have no inherent meanings, and

¹Berger and Luckmann, 87–88. Cf. Salevao, 5, 58.

²Berger and Luckmann, 88; cf. 89–96.

³Ibid., 89. "On this level of legitimation, the reflective integration of discrete institutional processes reaches its ultimate fulfillment. A whole world is created" (89). For a helpful overview of the co-author's position, see Salevao, 58–60.

⁴Berger and Luckmann, 91.

that the social and religious significance attached to them is merely secondary to ritual.¹ For him, "Ritual may be defined, in approximate terms, as a system of acts and sounds, related to each other in accordance with rules without reference to meaning."² While agreeing with Staal's notion that rituals are "rule-governed," Roy Gane disagrees with his premise that they do not have meaning. As he argues, the very essence of ritual derives from the realization that such actions are understood to effect critical changes in relation to the realm of the supramundane: "A *ritual* is a privileged activity system that is believed to carry out a transformation process involving interaction with a reality ordinarily inaccessible to the material domain."³ In applying this working definition to ancient Near Eastern and Israelite cultic settings, Gane demonstrates the value of ritual actions as means for maintaining harmony within those societies, not because of their intrinsic significance, but through acknowledgement of their essential efficacy. Rituals, in other words, "serve as a vehicle for transformation that takes place on the level of symbolic meaning"; this meaning itself "was part of a conceptual system that called for belief."⁴

While Gane clarifies that he is not directly concerned with the social function of rituals, but rather with their "dynamic structure,"⁵ his investigation corresponds well with

¹Frits Staal, *Rules Without Meaning: Ritual, Mantras and the Human Sciences* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), 127–29, 134, 137, 140, 330.

²*Ibid.*, 433.

³Roy E. Gane, *Cult and Character: Purification Offerings, Day of Atonement, and Theodicy* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 15; cf. 14–18. See also *idem*, *Ritual Dynamic Structure*, Gorgias Dissertations 14, Religion 2 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2004), 61. The basis for Gane's approach is rooted in the application of "applied general systems theory" to the domain of ritual. This theory is an interdisciplinary area of thought that investigates the nature of "relationships between systems and their components" (*Ritual Dynamic Structure*, 23; cf. 23–43) and which he employs as a heuristic tool for studying the formulaic properties of ritual activities in the ancient Near East and Israel. Gane's premise is that just as "nonritual human activity systems" have as their basic goal "a particular transformation through an activity process," so the basic function of rituals is defined by the goals that they are meant to achieve (*Cult and Character*, 12–15).

⁴Gane, *Cult and Character*, 17.

⁵Gane, *Ritual Dynamic Structure*, 7; cf. n. 3.

the points already addressed concerning symbolic universes as frameworks for social order. With reference to the ancient Israelite cultus, and later, Jerusalem Temple, it could now be argued that rituals there embodied the divinely ordained means by which the various "provinces of meaning" within the Jewish symbolic universe were brought together and legitimated.¹ Frank H. Gorman, Jr., extends these insights further:

The central organizing categories operative in the ritual are broader than defilement and cleansing. The concern of the ritual is a concern for the reestablishment of order, and the restructuring of the categories of order and chaos. Thus, the ritual reflects the need for an annual reestablishment of the order of creation consisting of cosmic, social, and cultic categories.²

Rituals, both ancient and modern, may be described as involving the "complex performance of symbolic acts" which function to reinforce a particular worldview.³ Accordingly, they provide important maps about a society and of the kind of social hierarchies, boundaries, transactions, and other stratifications that comprise it. Stated slightly differently, rituals symbolize important meanings about a particular social order and an individual's relationship to that order.⁴ As Gane again clarifies, however, it is important to consider that ritual is efficacious precisely because it is seen to provide transformations in relation to the realm of the supramundane.⁵

¹This point is confirmed by Stephen B. Reid: "Religion is perceived [*sic*] as a construction of a symbolic universe. This symbolic universe legitimates through the vehicle of the cult" ("The Sociological Setting of the Historical Apocalypses of 1 Enoch and the Book of Daniel" [Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 1981], 71, n. 79). Cf. Berger and Luckmann, 88.

²Frank H. Gorman, Jr., *The Ideology of Ritual: Space, Time, and Status in the Priestly Theology*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 91 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 61; cf. 102.

³*Ibid.*, 20–25.

⁴According to Gorman, "Ritual is a means by which individual and society enter into a self-awareness and then act upon that awareness. Ritual serves to make public the multiple and complex relationships embodied in society and to comment on the value, meaning, and condition of those relationships" (22).

⁵Gane, *Cult and Character*, 14–18.

An important heuristic that has been employed by structural anthropologists in their study of cultural systems is the awareness that "human society is created by the segmentation of space, of time, of social relations, by means of a symbolic code" and that this code is typically expressed through a series of binary distinctions.¹ The clearest and most concise expression in the Hebrew Bible of this binary-opposition view of reality is contained in Lev 10:10–11 where the priests are told, "You are to distinguish (לְהַבְדִּיל) between the holy (הַקֹּדֶשׁ) and the common (הַחֹל), and between the unclean (הַטְּמֵא) and the clean (הַטְּהוֹר); and you are to teach the people of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them by Moses." The primary theological importance of this passage is to be noted by the occurrence of the word לְהַבְדִּיל, derived from the root בָּדַל and meaning to "separate" or "distinguish between,"² which occurs no less than five times in the Gen 1 creation account with reference to the distinction between light and darkness (1:4), the firmament and the waters (1:6–7), and the day and night (1:14; and vs. 18 where the same Hiphil verb לְהַבְדִּיל occurs). If a priestly oriented worldview is to be assumed here, then the passage evokes very well the idea that the cultus was considered to be inextricably linked with the concern for cosmogony. The defining act of creation when God transformed the primeval chaos into order by arranging the cosmos according to the principle of division and separation provided the dominant conceptual basis for why and how the priests were to teach the Israelites "to distinguish between the holy and the common and between the unclean and the clean."³ Ancient Israel's conceptual

¹John Dunnill, *Covenant and Sacrifice in the Letter to the Hebrews* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 69; for a helpful discussion on some of the theoretical foundations of structuralism and its application to biblical studies and hermeneutics, see also pp. 48–63. Cf. John Barton, "Structuralism," *ABD*, 6:214–17.

²William L. Holladay, ed., *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 13th impression, based upon the lexical work of Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner (1993), s.v. "בָּדַל."

³This conceptualization is nicely summarized by Gorman as follows: "God brought into being and established the tabernacle cult order in the same way as he brought into being and established the cosmic order" (42).

worldview, therefore, was predicated largely upon a clear theology of separation and distinction, between the realm of chaos and creation, and it was precisely through ritual performance that these distinctions were actualized.

Cosmogony was also intricately connected to Israel's sociological awareness, for in recognizing the correctness of these binary opposites as means for maintaining their distinct ethical and religious values, the Israelites were expected to reinforce their election and commitment to remaining holy and set apart from all other nations (Lev 20:24–26; 1 Kgs 8:53; cf. Deut 32:8–9). Jacob Milgrom provides a helpful summary of this socio-religious conceptualization as follows:

As the quintessence and source of *qēdūšâ* resides with God, it is imperative for Israel to control the occurrence of impurity lest it impinge upon the realm of the holy God. The forces pitted against each other in the cosmic struggle are no longer the benevolent and demonic deities who populate the mythologies of Israel's neighbors but the forces of life and death set loose by man himself through his obedience to or defiance of God's commandments.¹

As means of symbolically re-enacting God's creative acts, ritual performance in ancient Israel was the primary means of reinforcing the separations and distinctions between the orders of the 'sacred' and 'profane,' and of protecting the cosmic and social order against the intrusion of chaos caused by human sin. Therefore, the primary goal of ritual, and hence, of the whole Mosaic covenant, was to preserve Israel's distinctive calling as a "holy nation" (Exod 19:6). As Jerome Neyrey well states, summarizing many of the preceding points, "This 'holiness' came to be embodied especially in the central symbol of Israel's culture, the temple system, where specific maps, replicating the patterns of Gen 1, regulated that focal symbol of the Jewish world, which was often thought to be the center of the universe."²

¹Milgrom, 1002–3; cf. 47.

²Neyrey, 277.

The preceding discussion has highlighted some aspects concerning the important social meaning of ritual and how it functioned as the primary vehicle for reinforcing the Jewish 'symbolic universe.' What can be said now about occasions, as in the calendar debate in the Enochic literature, when strong dissensions arose over the proper interpretation and implementation of that ritual? Exploration of this complex issue can easily encompass a whole monograph itself. However, for the present purposes, it is helpful to briefly consider how the cosmic and social significance of ritual performance emerges through the modalities of space, time, and status. Frank Gorman provides a helpful summary of these points in the following:

Priestly ritual functions within the context of clearly defined and demarcated categories of space, time, and status. Each of these conceptual categories is given concrete expression through a foundational image of separation: space in the separation of the holy of holies from all other areas; time in the separation of the Sabbath from all other days; status in the separation of the priests from all other persons. . . . Thus, the central conceptual element of the Priestly world view that is present in the cosmological, existential, and praxeological elements of that world view, and is operative within the framework of the cosmological, societal, and cultic orders, is the idea that order is established through the careful observation of categorical divisions, through the recognition and maintenance of boundaries.¹

Ritual performance within the cultus involved the awareness that the whole identity, meanings/values, and conduct of the Israelites were integrally tied in with each of the respective realms of cosmos, society, and cultus. In the language of sociological theory, ritual actions served as the primary means for objectifying and internalizing the different "provinces of meaning" that comprised the Jewish symbolic universe.² By implementing

¹Gorman, 45. The integration and intersection between creation, cultus, society, and cosmos is further clarified by Gorman as follows: "Just as cosmic order was achieved through a series of separations that must be maintained if cosmic order is to continue, so also, society and cult are created with categories and separations that must be maintained if order is to continue" (230). Philip Peter Jenson also provides a comprehensive discussion on the modalities of space, time, the status of priests, and the ritual dimension—all as components of "graded holiness" within the Israelite cultus (*Graded Holiness: A Key to the Priestly Conception of the World*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 106 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992]).

²See Berger and Luckmann, 88.

proper distinctions between chaos and order within each of the modalities of time, space, and status, Israelites were confirming the created order and "keeping chaos at bay."¹

Berger and Luckmann observe that socialization only becomes complete when the social order has been successfully transmitted to the next generation.² Once a symbolic universe is constructed and the social order is explained to its members, then ideally they should be able to inhabit it with a "taken-for-granted attitude."³ But because of the precariousness of human nature and the many exigencies of life, a symbolic universe will never be completely stable for the very same reason that socialization is never completely efficient.⁴ In fact, symbolic universes are always "incipiently problematic" since some individuals will embrace the original version of the social order more tenaciously than others.⁵ Through the course of time, as these persons come in contact with outsiders and become influenced by a different set of 'significant others,' there will arise obvious tensions within the established social order.⁶ The traditional symbolic universe will eventually become problematic for these individuals to the point that they will even begin to objectify an "alternative definition of reality," thereby, posing a serious threat to the institutional order of the original symbolic universe.⁷

The primary utility of this theory is that it here provides a helpful model for probing aspects of the tensions that the group of priests identified with the Enochic

¹Ibid., 96.

²Ibid., 58.

³Salevao, 60. Berger and Luckmann mention that although "one may conceive of a society in which this would be possible" and which "would be a harmonious, self-enclosed, perfectly functioning 'system,'" in reality "no such society exists" (98).

⁴Berger and Luckmann, 98.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Salevao, 60–61, n. 156.

⁷Berger and Luckmann, 98–99. Cf. Salevao, 60–62.

corpus must have felt in the aftermath of the destruction of the Solomonic Temple and exile. At some point in time following this tragedy, they came to view the foundation of the Zadokite cultus as altogether "problematic" and began to legitimate an "alternative symbolic universe."¹ The roots of the dissension are unclear. However, the institution of the 364-day calendar by the Enochians suggests the plausibility that the debate came to be centered largely around differing interpretations over the ritual prescriptions involved with the regulation of Israel's cultic cycle and festivals. By adopting the 'wrong' cultic calendar, the traditional priests had induced the nation to break the divine covenant by failing to properly distinguish between profane and sacred times (Jub 1:14, 6:34–38; Lev 23:2, 4, 37, 44; cf. Lev 10:10), thus bringing about a complete collapse of the cosmic, social, and cultic orders in Israel. According to the Enochic priests, this apostasy was the primary reason why God's judgment would soon fall upon the nation.²

As the preceding survey has shown, the concept of 'symbolic universes' as safeguards against chaos provides a helpful framework for exploring the social function of ritual within ancient Israel, and helps to explain more adequately the reasons why the Zadokite cultus was considered as the central institution for maintaining social and cosmic order. As Gane has highlighted, the efficacy of ritual derived from the important transformation that it was seen to accomplish in relation to the divine realm. On this

¹Cf. Berger and Luckmann, 99–100. Notwithstanding its theoretical usefulness, Berger and Luckmann's notion of a "social construction of reality" and their belief in 'deviance' as a perceived threat to this official order have come under criticism from those who argue for a more nuanced view of the underlying dynamics involved in the legitimation of a symbolic universe. For example, according to David G. Horrell, "While it [the traditional social world] may indeed be challenged by an 'alterantive' order, most often it is the power struggles among those who inhabit the same symbolic social world but who seek to transform it in different directions which must be acknowledged and illuminated" (*The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: Interests and Ideology from 1 Corinthians to 1 Clement* [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996], 44). As he further points out, "The labelling of some forms as 'deviant' may be a strategy of dominant groups to portray themselves as defenders of the social order while stigmatising and externalising others" (43). For a more comprehensive discussion of the theoretical assumptions behind a sociological and, particularly, functionalist approach to interpreting social phenomena and group identity, with direct application to the New Testament, see Salevo, 78–92.

²For a review of the debate over the cultic calendar, see the discussion on pp. 17–23 above.

basis, ritual came to embody significant symbolic power and served as the primary vehicle for securing cosmic, social, and cultic order in ancient Israel. The Enochic challenge to the legitimacy of the Zadokite cultus was predicated on the belief that the traditional priests had compromised this divine order by failing to implement the 364-day solar calendar, thereby leading the whole nation into apostasy.

With this important background information in mind concerning the 'cosmic' nature of the Zadokite Temple and priesthood, and the significance of the rituals performed there, more precise consideration can now be given to understanding the particular socio-cosmic and symbolic world which encompassed the writer of Hebrews and which led to his legitimation of the new "cosmic covenant" based on a revelation of Jesus Christ as the resurrected and ascended high priest who, by his own ritual sacrifice and atonement, had gained admission into the heavenly sanctuary.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL SITUATION OF THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS

One of the compelling reasons for the present investigation is to try to fill a gap left open by the lack of studies dedicated to any type of comparison between Hebrews and the Enochic worldview. Some scholars in recent years have made overtures in this direction. According to one, "We must not overlook . . . the weighty influence on Hebrews of extracanonical factors."¹ More specifically, L. D. Hurst concludes in his study of the background of Hebrews that it was an eclectic blend of various traditions drawn from the LXX, the same OT tradition that appear in Acts 7, Pauline theology, along with "an exposure to strands of Jewish apocalyptic similar to . . . 4 Ezra and 1 Enoch 90."² And so there has been some admission of points of contact, but little concerted effort to draw these out more systematically.³

¹H. Anderson, "The Jewish Antecedents of the Christology in Hebrews," in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 529, n. 53. This point echoes James Charlesworth's statement that in the case of Hebrews it "should be read in the light of all documents anterior to and contemporaneous with it" (*The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the New Testament*, 82).

²L. D. Hurst, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: Its Background of Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 133.

³Margaret Barker is one scholar who gives significant attention to the relationship between the Enochic apocalyptic 'myth' and the origins of New Testament theology, especially reasons for why scholars have traditionally overlooked such parallels (see e.g., "Some Reflections Upon the Enoch Myth," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 15 [1980]: 7–29). Throughout her various works, Barker focuses especially on the origins and nature of the Enochic view of priesthood and believes that this group most likely remained committed to the beliefs of the pre-exilic royal cultus; as their contemporary circumstances dictated, the Enochians projected their disdain for post-exilic Zadokite innovation into a myth about fallen angels that evoked a major cosmic struggle between the 'righteous' and 'wicked' priests (in particular, see

An important contribution that this line of inquiry can potentially make to understandings about Hebrews is realization that the writer's cultic and covenantal arguments and his purportedly strong anti-Judaic polemic did not originate with him but already had antecedents within Enochic Judaism. It has become clear that the major hallmark of this literature, and of apocalyptic in general, was the notion that the books given to Enoch were the repository of heavenly wisdom and revelation intended for the elect community of the last days (chaps. 81–82; 104–105); importantly, this corresponded with the prediction that many Gentiles would receive this message while Jews would reject it. As Christianity emerged on the scene in the first century, the Church in fact readily took over the inclusivist aspects of this sectarian belief; Gentiles came to represent the vast majority of the new 'elect' community while Jews largely rejected belief in Jesus as incompatible with the demands of the Torah.¹ Primarily, this resulted from the Pauline synthesis involving the rejection of the Mosaic Covenant as the basis for acceptance in Christ.²

The point here is to suggest that the developments relating to the "cosmic covenant" in Enochic Judaism provide the most likely framework of thought for understanding the influences which led to the writer of Hebrews' own supplanting and universalization of the Jewish covenantal notion in connection with his declaration of Jesus as God's true eschatological deliverer. It is necessary to clarify, however, that this perspective should not be taken to imply any direct influence of the Enochic literature on

The Older Testament: The Survival of Themes from the Ancient Royal Cult in Sectarian Judaism and Early Christianity). Cf. idem, *The Lost Prophet: The Book of Enoch and Its Influence on Christianity* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1988).

¹Again, Nickelburg's definition of "sectarianism in the context of universalism" aptly summarizes the ironic mixture of exclusiveness and openness which characterized the Christian gospel (*Ancient Judaism*, 87); see pp. 25–27 above.

²For a thoroughgoing orientation to the background of Paul's relationship to the Second Temple Jewish covenantal debate and an exegesis of selected passages in Galatians and Romans which draw upon these issues, see P. Richard Choi, "Abraham Our Father: Paul's Voice in the Covenantal Debate of the Second Temple Period" (Ph.D. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1997).

Hebrews. Instead, what is important to consider is how the writer was heir to the significant diffusion of ideas relating to concerns for the preservation of cosmic order, expressed in covenantal terms, which served as such a distinct aspect of Enochic Judaism. Perhaps one way of positing this influence in Hebrews is to see the writer as reading his scriptures through the lens of a Second Temple "apocalyptic *imaginaire*"—involving a crystallization of beliefs relating to God's final eschatological victory over the power of sin and evil.¹ From this vantage point, it is possible to see that a significant socio-religious framework was already established within pre-Christian Judaism that would enable the writer of Hebrews to declare Jesus as God's messianic agent of redemption whose ascent to the heavenly sanctuary was confirmed by the declaration of a new cosmic covenant.

The framework for better understanding the complex diffusion of ideas that was passed down to the writer of Hebrews is best ascertained in connection with understandings about his socio-historical setting and the major circumstances that prompted him to write his composition.

The Roman Provenance of Hebrews

The portrait of Enochic Judaism that emerged in earlier discussion indicated awareness of a universalistic tendency which embraced the notion that in the final eschaton salvation would be poured out on the Gentiles (91:14; 100:6; 104:12–105:2). A coordinating feature of this non-conformist view emerges in the realization "that Israel, God's chosen people, is in danger of judgment . . . [so] that the historical covenants are

¹For an insightful overview of this theme, including implications for Hebrews, see Daniel Stökl, "Yom Kippur in the Apocalyptic *Imaginaire* and the Roots of Jesus' High Priesthood: Yom Kippur in Zechariah 3, 1 Enoch 10, 11Q Melchizedeq, Hebrews, and the Apocalypse of Abraham 13," in *Transformations of the Inner Self in Ancient Religions*, ed. Jan Assmann and Guy G. Stroumsa (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 349–66.

not unqualifiedly valid for all who consider themselves participants in them."¹ The process by which this diffusion of ideas concerning eschatological judgment underwent transformation and reemerged within early Christianity is not entirely clear. Nonetheless, what does seem apparent is that many of the same strains of universalism within the Enochic brand of Judaism manifest themselves most clearly in connection with the writer of Hebrews' declaration of a new cosmic covenant made by Jesus. The letter's strong message of inclusivism, in fact, emerges as an important element in establishing a better understanding of the social location of Hebrews.

Certainly much debate has centered over the issue of where Hebrews was originally addressed, made difficult by the lack of explicit internal evidence on this issue.² A popular view has been that the letter was addressed to a Jerusalem/Palestinian congregation of Jewish Christians in danger of reverting to Judaism.³ This perspective has been defended on the basis that the 'ethos' of the letter is very much Judaic in its orientation, especially given the writer's strong emphasis on the themes of the Old Testament cultus, priesthood, and covenant in chaps. 7–10. And since the letter refers to the activity of the priesthood in the present tense as if sacrifices were still being offered in the central sanctuary (e.g., 7:27–28; 8:3–5; 9:6–7, 25; 10:1–3, 8; 13:10–11), it is often assumed that the writer's argument would have made the most sense when addressed to those for whom worship at the Jerusalem Temple was still a live option.⁴ Furthermore, it

¹Well expressed in the words of Mark Adam Elliott, 664.

²This point is best reflected in the statement of one scholar that "proposals for the social location of the community addressed in Hebrews have ranged from Jerusalem in the East to Spain in the West" (William L. Lane, "Social Perspectives on Roman Christianity During the Formative Years from Nero to Nerva: Romans, Hebrews, 1 Clement," in *Judaism and Christianity in First-Century Rome*, ed. Karl P. Donfried and Peter Richardson [Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans, 1998], 215).

³For this point see Attridge, 10, and nn. 84–85.

⁴Phillip Hughes provides a thorough review of the present tenses in Hebrews which he claims indicate that the levitical priesthood was still operating at the time of composition (31–32). See also Randall C. Gleason, "The Old Testament Background of the Warning in Hebrews 6:4–8," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 155 (January–March 1998): 67–68.

could be argued that the writer's strong commitment to what one scholar has described as "the cosmos of apocalypticism,"¹ conveys impressions of the letter's strong affinities with the sectarian setting of Jerusalem or Judea.

However, it is precisely the universalistic scope of the new covenant concept in Hebrews that suggests a much broader domain for the receptivity of the letter beyond what one would have expected in first-century Jerusalem. A view that has crystallized into a general consensus among New Testament scholars in recent years posits that Rome was the original destination of Hebrews.² While the writer does not explicitly mention it, many scholars believe that the ancient capital city correlates better with the available evidence in the letter than any of the alternate proposals advanced to date. As Donald A. Hagner well states, "When all the data have been considered, Rome remains the most attractive hypothesis concerning the destination of the letter."³ But since the complexities surrounding determination of the social location of Hebrews can easily encompass a dissertation in itself, the purpose here is to merely sketch in broad terms the reasons why a Roman provenance serves as the most likely context for understanding the writer's declaration of a cosmic covenant.

A major piece of support that is cited by scholars defending a Roman provenance for Hebrews derives from the writer's statement in 10:32–34 regarding his audience's experience of intense persecution at an earlier, unspecified period in their history. This involved their "being made a public spectacle" (θεατριζόμενοι) and which took the form

¹David A. deSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle "to the Hebrews"* (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans, 2000), 27.

²More recent proponents of this view are Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 29; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 13–14; Raymond E. Brown and John P. Meier, *Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 142–49; Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB, vol. 36, 49–50; and Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, lviii–lx.

³Donald A. Hagner, *Hebrews*, New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1990), 7.

of censure, defamation, and jeerings (ὀνειδισμοῖς; 1 Pet 4:14, Matt 5:11) as well as physical abuse (θλιψεσιν), not to mention the "plundering of [their] property." The coordinating assumption is that this outbreak of persecution was associated with the Edict of Claudius in 49 C.E. when Jews and Jewish Christians living in Rome were expelled from the city.¹ The primary source for this event is the Latin historian Suetonius (69–150 C.E.) who writes in his *Lives of the Caesars* that "Iudaeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantis Roma expulit" (Claudius 25.4) and which may be translated in one of two ways: "[Claudius] expelled from Rome the Jews constantly making disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus" or else "Since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he expelled them from Rome."² The first translation would indicate that this expulsion affected only Jews responsible for the 'instigation of Chrestus' whereas the second implies that the entire Jewish community was affected by the edict on account of their frequent rioting.³ If, as strong evidence seems to suggest, the name "Chrestus" is none other than a garbled reference to "Christus,"⁴ then the Edict of Claudius should be seen as a direct political intervention to end the rioting that had erupted in Rome between Jews and Jewish Christians on account of disputes over the messiahship of Jesus.

The significance that the Edict of Claudius plays in the present argument is that it provides likely evidence for the existence of considerable social conflict between Jews

¹See e.g., Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, lxiii–lxvi; Koester, 51–52; and Salevo, 130–31.

²The first translation is the most common one and is reflected in Suetonius *The Lives of the Caesars* (The Deified Claudius) 5.25.4 (trans. Rolfe, LCL, 2:53). The second translation is proposed by Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, lxiv, and Koester, 51–52, n. 109.

³Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, lxiv–lxv, and Koester, 51–52, and n. 109.

⁴For further ancient evidence where the name 'Christus' is correctly spelled with an *i*, see Tacitus *The Annals* 15.44: Auctor nominis eius Christus Tiberio imperitante per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio adfectus erat, "Christus, the founder of the name, had undergone the death penalty in the reign of Tiberius, by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilate" (trans. Jackson, Loeb Classical Library [LCL], 5:283).

and Jewish Christians in Rome within merely twenty years after the crucifixion of Jesus. Furthermore, if this expulsion corresponds with the events described in Heb 10:32–34, then it likely sets the basis for an early dating for Hebrews.¹ In any case, the best way to contextualize these concerns is to attempt to understand some aspects of the socio-politics behind the relationship between the Jewish diasporic synagogue and the household setting of Roman Christianity.

Synagogues during the first century were distinct legal and religious entities classified by the Roman government as "collegia," which meant that they shared traits with other private clubs, guilds, and cultic associations that were legally entitled to the same privileges.² As one scholar notes, "To the Romans, Jewish synagogues would have appeared very much like other religious collegia, with their weekly meetings, community prayer to their patronal deity, and the regular collection of funds from the members."³ This entailed the right to assemble, to share common meals, common property, financial responsibilities, disciplinary rights among members, and responsibility for the burial of members.⁴ A unique feature about Judaism in the Roman Empire is that it had the status of *religio licita* (a licensed religion), meaning that unlike other private associations, Jews were entitled to live according to their ancestral traditions based on the legal privileges granted them decades earlier by Julius Caesar.⁵ Among these were the authority to

¹John Dunnill describes the pessimism which has arisen over attempts to ascertain when Hebrews was written: "Scholars are equally divided between those who think an origin before the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 'impossible' and those who think an origin after AD 70 'inconceivable'" (2).

²For a helpful discussion of the Jewish synagogue in the Diaspora, see Nanos, 42–50.

³Wendy Cotter, "The Collegia and Roman Law: State Restrictions on Voluntary Associations, 64 BCE—200 CE," in *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, ed. John S. Kloppenborg and Stephen G. Wilson (New York: Routledge, 1996), 77.

⁴See e.g., Mary E. Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule: From Pompey to Diocletian* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981), 133–43, 210; Harry J. Leon, *The Jews in Ancient Rome* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1960), 9–11; and Nanos, 43–44.

⁵Caesar's edict on behalf of the Jews was made to the authorities of the ancient Greek city of

interpret the Torah and customs for the community, exemption from the Imperial cult, the right to collect and distribute the Temple tax for Jerusalem, exemption from military service, the protection of Sabbath observance without the obligation to appear in court, and the right to establish a new synagogue without the need for government authorization.¹ At the same time, it is important to realize that the model of the Jewish synagogue was not based solely on the *collegia* but was frequently adapted from private households as well, especially since economic constraints made the cost of public buildings prohibitive for many Jewish communities.²

Many of the organizational and religious elements of the early household churches were also taken over directly from the synagogue. Christians are known to have also participated in scripture reading and interpretation, prayers, the observance of Sabbath and sharing of common meals, as well as the adjudication of internal disputes; the Book of Acts, for example, is full of references to the early church developing in the context of Judaism.³ A longstanding question among scholars, however, is whether or not Christian

Parium, following an appeal by Jews in the region who were prevented from keeping their religious customs; the edict is reported by Josephus as follows: "Similarly do I forbid other religious societies but permit these people alone to assemble and feast in accordance with their native customs and ordinances. And if you have made any statutes against our friends and allies, you will do well to revoke them because of their worthy deeds on our behalf and their goodwill toward us" (*Jewish Antiquities* 14.10.8, §216 [trans. Marcus, LCL, 7:563]). For the fuller context and history behind this declaration, and other Roman decrees favorable to the Jews, see *Jewish Antiquities* 14.10, §185–267 (LCL, 7:547–93).

¹For further details concerning these special privileges, see Nanos, 44–45, and Victor Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*, trans. S. Applebaum (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961), 305–308.

²Eric M. Meyers and James F. Strange make this determination on the basis of the observation that the majority of synagogue evidence is from the third century C.E. (*Archaeology, the Rabbis, and Early Christianity: The Social and Historical Setting of Palestinian Judaism and Christianity* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1981], 141).

³See especially Acts 2:46; 5:42 for references to worship in the Temple and from house to house; 13:5, 14, 44; and 14:1; 17:1–2; 18:4, 9, 24–26 for references to the apostles visiting, preaching, and interpreting scripture within Jewish synagogues. The practice of Christians meeting in synagogues for prayer is noted by Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief*, 202–208. Concerns over the issues of food with respect to Jewish and gentile table fellowship are apparent in Acts 15:20–21, Rom 14:20–21, 1 Cor 10:23–29, Gal 2:11–14; Meeks refers to the similarities concerning the adjudication of internal disputes highlighted in 1 Cor 6:1–11 and what Josephus mentions for Jewish practice in *Jewish Antiquities* 14.10.17, §235 (LCL, 7:573–75) (*Urban Christians*, 80, and n. 38).

congregations were able to operate independently of the synagogues under the auspices of Roman *collegia*.¹ Since no evidence exists that Christians petitioned to operate as independent *collegia*, either in Rome or elsewhere, the likelihood is that the house churches were initially perceived by the Roman authorities to be none other than Jewish synagogues.² Wendy Cotter frames the complex socio-religious issues here in terms of the following question: "Did Christians pass 'informal' scrutiny by city officials because their Jewish hero and their appeal to Jewish tradition cloaked them as a Jewish society?"³

The most plausible explanation for the development of house churches in first-century Rome is that they emerged as owners of certain house-sponsored synagogues came to embrace Jesus as Israel's Messiah. Since these dwellings already happened to have the legitimate standing as Roman *collegia*, they would have continued to operate under that status. As the house church phenomenon grew, there also emerged increasing internal dissensions between Jews and Jewish-Christians over the issue of Christ, the law and covenant, the status of ethnic Israel, and the issue concerning relations with Gentiles. Apparently, these escalated until they caught the attention of the government officials, which resulted in the Edict of Claudius in 49 C.E. Together, these factors suggest the likelihood that the Letter to the Hebrews was addressed to a house church in Rome at a time when increasing internal factions were developing between those who embraced the inclusivism represented by the author, who himself was likely influenced by Pauline Christianity, and other more particularistic-minded Jewish and Jewish-Christian groups.

The discussion regarding the tensions that emerged between Christian house churches and Jewish synagogues in first-century Rome has provided important pieces of

¹Nanos raises this important question as follows: "How would Christians, outside association with the synagogue, obtain the right to congregate for fellowship and worship, even in their own homes or tenement rooms, unless they petitioned for designation as a 'private club'?" (74).

²Ibid.

³Cotter, 88.

evidence for contextualizing the probable socio-political situation which led to the composition of Hebrews. The question that remains, however, concerns more precisely the nature of this debate and how it contributed to the writer's own theological formulation of the new cosmic covenant.

Hebrews as a Product of Roman Gentile Christianity

As P. Richard Choi convincingly argues, the early Church was characterized by a major division between universalists and particularists, much like Second Temple Judaism, which served as an indication of the two primary responses to the major theological debate of this period. While an official "two-track policy" was implemented at the first church council in Acts 15, involving different requirements for the Gentiles and Jewish believers in Christ, factionalism gained the upper hand and the split between the particularists and universalists was never resolved. The crucial context for this debate emerges most clearly in Paul's Letter to the Romans where his overriding theme is that Christ is the "common ground" for both camps.¹ The importance of Choi's work, for the present purposes, is that he situates Roman Gentile Christianity, and particularly Paul's contribution to it, firmly within the context of the larger Second Temple covenantal debate and indicates how this movement stood in strong continuity with the universalism of the pre-Christian era. As he explains, "Gentile Christianity . . . completely shed the restraint of Jewish provincialism with its law, and began unfolding in history the visions of the Jewish universalists in an unprecedented way. Their missionary zeal fueled by their inclusive theology and openness toward all humans was indeed unprecedented."²

¹See Choi's dissertation, *Abraham Our Father: Paul's Voice in the Covenantal Debate of the Second Temple Period*, especially his section on Romans and his conclusion (291–423).

²*Ibid.*, 421. The framework for this covenantal debate was centered around two competing hermeneutical interpretations of Israel's scriptures: creation theology and election theology. Whichever side one chose had significant implications for his or her social relations. Choi enumerates this point: "The farther one moved in the direction of creation theology, the more one tended to be open to the Gentile

What is argued here is that the writer of Hebrews' own strategy of supplanting and universalizing the Jewish covenantal notion into awareness of a new cosmic covenant should be seen as a response to this larger Second Temple covenantal debate, legitimated in the context of Roman Gentile Christianity.

One important means for better establishing this point derives from an awareness concerning Hebrews' probable link with Pauline Christianity. While this precise relationship cannot be drawn out here in detail, there are several strong affinities between Hebrews and Paul that are worth mentioning. For example, both speak of Jesus as the one who provided atonement (Heb 2:17; Rom 3:25); overcame cosmic powers (Heb 2:14; Col 2:15); changed the statutes of the Law (Heb 7:11–19; Gal 3:23–29), and instituted a new covenant (Heb 7:22; 8:6–13; 9:15; 2 Cor 3:6); while, at present, he intercedes on behalf of all believers (Heb 7:25; 9:24; Rom 8:34).¹ Such similarities do not necessarily prove any literary dependence of the writer of Hebrews upon Paul, but they do attest to a shared correspondence regarding the important cosmic scope of the Christian message.² As Richard Heard points out, despite otherwise clear differences in terms of style, vocabulary, and exposition on such topics as the law and faith, "in a wider sense [the writer] shows his sympathy with Pauline conceptions of the universalism of the gospel and the free working of God's grace."³

Hebrews does not draw explicit reference to the tensions between Jews and Gentiles that are evident in Paul's letters nor does he mention the ethnic background of his audience. Since, however, the imperial capital was known to be the site of a

influence. Conversely, the farther one moved in the direction of election theology, the more one tended to be hostile to the Gentile influence" (69).

¹For a further listing of affinities between Hebrews and Pauline Christianity, see the careful enumeration in Koester, 54–55. Cf. Hurst, 107–24.

²For arguments for literary dependence between Paul and Hebrews, see e.g., Ben Witherington, "The Influence of Galatians on Hebrews," *New Testament Studies* 37 (1991): 146–52.

³Richard Heard, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Harper & Row, 1950), 210.

significant Gentile world mission (Rom 1:13–16; cf. 15:25–29), the writer's declaration of a "cosmic covenant" inaugurated by Jesus and available to all peoples would have had particularly strong appeal to Gentile Christians living in the city. In fact, one can hardly fail to imagine that the house-church audience of Hebrews was not comprised of some, or even a considerable number of, Gentiles. More recent insights into the social world of early Christianity support this proposal. The traditional view of a predominantly Jewish-Christian audience has assumed that the writer's close elaboration of the Jewish cultus "would probably have left gentile readers cold."¹ On the other hand, according to David A. deSilva, "both Jewish and Gentile Christians were socialized into a sect that required both an acceptance of the OT as a record of divine revelation *and* a rejection of the contemporary validity of the covenant and priesthood therein described."² This point seems to corroborate well with the general ethos of Hebrews where, as evidence suggests, questions over the "validity" of the Jewish cultus remained a central part of the debate between the universalists and particularists.

The likelihood of a Gentile audience in Hebrews is further supported by awareness concerning the complexity of their social situation in the first century, both in relation to the dominant culture and the subculture of Judaism. While Greco-Roman society held that belief in the gods was the key to socio-political stability, Christians, by withdrawing from public cultic celebrations, especially the Imperial cult, became viewed as trouble-makers and as a source of chaos and disunity.³ The popular views toward Christians and their beliefs perhaps can be summed up best by the Church father, Justin

¹According to Ellingworth, 25.

²deSilva, *Perseverance*, 5.

³See David A. deSilva, *Despising Shame: Honor Discourse and Community Maintenance in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Society of Biblical Literatures Dissertation Series 152 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 146–54. For more on the pervasiveness of the Imperial cult throughout the Roman Empire, see Stephen Mitchell, *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor*, vol. 1 of *The Celts in Anatolia and the Impact of Roman Rule* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 113.

Martyr, who wrote in his *First Apology* that the pagans considered it sheer madness to "give to a crucified man a place second to the unchangeable and eternal God, the Creator of all."¹ The tensions therefore between the faith commitments of Christians and the beliefs of the dominant society help to explain their situation of social malaise, such as described in Heb 10:32–34.

Insights into the social situation of Gentile Christians in relation to the subculture of Judaism also help us to understand why they would have been tempted to particularize their faith in Jesus by undergoing circumcision and embracing other halakhic practices, aside from the possibility of abandoning their faith altogether. In touching upon the central and complex issues here, one scholar well observes that while Jews would be exempted from the imperial celebrations by their status as members of a *religio licita*, "it is difficult to see on what grounds Gentiles who became Christians could *ipso facto* claim exemption from participation in the cult."² For many Gentile Christians, therefore, entering into a covenantal relationship with Judaism existed as a very plausible resolution to the social tensions that their Christian faith commitment implied. Within this framework, the writer of Hebrews' proclamation of a new cosmic covenant can be seen as a concerted attempt to undermine the claims of particularists who declared that the Jewish covenant could provide safe haven for Gentiles threatened with state persecution.

In viewing Hebrews as a product of Roman Gentile Christianity and a response to the debate between universalists and particularists, it is important to consider the counterpart to the writer's universalistic *Weltanschauung*. Accordingly, if the declaration of a cosmic covenant inaugurated by Jesus represented the epitome of a universalism that was ultimately traceable back to Enochic circles, what was the competing primary symbol

¹Justin Martyr *First Apology* 13.4 (trans. Dods and Reith, Ante-Nicene Fathers, 1:167). Cf. Koester, 235.

²Bruce W. Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans; Carlisle, U.K.: Paternoster, 1994), 133.

of covenantal identity within the social world of first-century Judaism? The answer to this question ultimately resides within the general framework of New Testament thought and the unanimous belief of its writers that Christ's once-for-all atonement cancelled the efficacy of the Jerusalem Temple as the domain of God's presence.

Temple and Priesthood in First-Century Judaism

As shown in chapter 2, the Jerusalem Temple embodied great social and cosmic significance within ancient Judaism, based upon a cosmogony in which the cult came to be perceived as the cosmic center of the universe and the place where heaven and earth converge. Despite the opposition of certain groups, the institution continued to serve as the preeminent symbol of Jewish identity in the first century. The primacy of the cult was based on a conceptualization of creation in which the classification of the elements into an orderly arrangement was symbolic of Israel's own distinctive calling to be 'holy' in relationship to the outside world. This cultic system was comprised of a series of maps that were designed to replicate the order of creation according to a specific set of classifications and hierarchical boundaries, which in turn profoundly impacted the shape of Jewish society.¹ As John Elliott has aptly summarized: "This system established the structure and social stratification of the Jewish community . . . [and] the norms of public and private behavior, and the lines of demarcation between holy Israelites and those at or beyond the margin's of God's holy people (i.e., physical or social deviants, Samaritans, and Gentiles)."²

An important point to consider here as well is that the lines of purity emanating from the national cultus did not pertain only to the land of Israel, but also deeply affected

¹Neyrey, 276–82.

²John H. Elliott, "Temple Versus Household in Luke-Acts: A Contrast in Social Institutions," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, ed. Jerome H. Neyrey (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 221.

first-century Jewish diasporic communities as well. John M. G. Barclay, in his extensive investigation of diaspora Judaism, finds that the Jewish people during this period were identified by what he calls distinctive "symbolic resources" such as circumcision, Sabbath observance, and adherence to dietary laws; critically important as well was devotion to the Jerusalem Temple.¹ This is evidenced by the fact that Jews living outside of Israel paid annually the two-drachma or one-half shekel Temple tax for support of the daily whole-burnt offerings and community sacrifices, and it appears that they sent supplemental gifts to the Temple as means allowed.² As a biblical mandate, these payments authenticated the common belief among Jews that the Temple was the divine location where God's atonement was to be obtained (Exod 30:12–16; Neh 10:32–34).

The successful maintenance of the Jerusalem cultus was inextricably linked with the important function there of the priests. Just as the Temple was to be the locus of God's presence, so also they were to be the human transmitters of that holiness at all times. According to the Torah, the priests were specially consecrated by God (Exod 30:30; 40:12–15; Lev 21:9) with the 'holy' anointing oil (Lev 8:10, 12; cf. Exod 30:32, 37), so that they alone of all Israelites had the privilege and responsibility of contacting the 'most sacred' parts of the sanctuary, which included the altar (Exod 40:10; Lev 10:12), the holy place and all that was within it (Num 4:4–15), as well as the holy of holies (Exod 26:33–34; cf. Lev 16:32–33).³ Together, the cultus and its priesthood encompassed a complete 'symbolic universe' that, despite certain ideological differences, served to unite

The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation, ed. Jerome H. Neyrey (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 221.

¹John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE—117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996), 413–28; 434–42.

²For a complete discussion of the Temple tax and other payments made by Diasporic Jews to Jerusalem, see Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief*, 146–69. Josephus refers to certain Gentile God-fearers (σεβομένων τὸν θεόν) paying this tax as well (see *Jewish Antiquities* 14.7.2, §110 [LCL, 7:505]).

³Haran makes the interesting observation that just as the sanctuary was anointed for service, so also were the priests who ministered there, in order that they might become "integrated into [its] concrete, contagious holiness" (59; cf. Exod 30:25–30; 40:9–15).

both Palestinian and Diasporic Jews into a larger framework of shared socio-religious, political, and economic identity.¹ Richard W. Johnson well summarizes this elaborate system as follows: "In the levitical system first-century Judaism possessed a symbolically-oriented structure that defined and reinforced first-century Jewish society. The embedded symbols revolved around the hierarchical priesthood, the sacred space of the sanctuary, the necessity of cultic purity, the Law as arbiter of sin, and the sacrificial ritual as remedy for sin."²

Significantly, the Temple priests were held in highest esteem not only within Judaism but also throughout the larger Greco-Roman world. To understand this point it is necessary to consider that dominant society as a patronal culture in which "brokers" were seen as important personages providing access to the goods and services of other benefactors, and in which relations between humans and gods were similarly construed.³ Within this milieu, the crucial importance of the high priest, in particular, would have stood out very clearly; as David deSilva maintains, "The High priest served as a broker of the benefits of God, the Patron *sans pareil*. Offering sacrifices as satisfaction for the affronts to the authority of God, he secured the Benefactor's favorable disposition (χαρις) and thus restored the nation's confidence in the hope of God's continued beneficence in God's dealings with the people."⁴

¹For more on the concept of 'symbolic universe,' see the discussion on p. 53 above.

²*Going Outside the Camp: The Sociological Function of the Levitical Critique in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 209 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 129.

³Richard P. Saller points out that during the Principate of Augustus (23 B.C.E. to 14 C.E.) patronage continued to serve as an important means to conceptualize not only family and friendship relationships, but also human-divine ones as well (*Personal Patronage Under the Early Empire* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982], 23); this is especially apparent, for example, in the references to prosperity and good luck as *beneficia* of the gods (see e.g., Seneca *Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales* 8.3 [trans. Gummere, Loeb Classical Library, 1:38–39]), and the fact that the gods expected *gratia* in return (cf. Tacitus *Annals* 11.15 [trans. Jackson, LCL, 4:272–73]).

⁴deSilva, *Despising Shame*, 220 (cf. 220–26). See also David A. deSilva, "Exchanging Favor for

The writer of Hebrews' polemic against his particularist rivals in first-century Rome was therefore a challenge to the undergirding symbols of Judaism as embodied in the Jerusalem Temple and priesthood, which both were strongly supported by the claims of social as well as 'cosmic' legitimacy. As an alternative, he employed the "embedded symbols" of a new cosmology, which is best summarized in Heb 10:19–22 as follows:

Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter *the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way which he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh*, and since we have *a great priest over the house of God*, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, *with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience* and our bodies washed with pure water.¹

The once-for-all sacrifice of Christ as high priest, the believers' access to the true sanctuary, and the resolution to the fundamental problem of sin all function as indications of the writer's own awareness concerning the supplantation of the Jewish covenant and its replacement with a new cosmic covenant that transcends all social, hierarchical, and ethnic distinctions.

As argued, the framework of Hebrews' worldview appears to reflect significant conceptual similarity with the ideas represented within Enochic Judaism where Enoch's ascent to heaven served as the basis for a new revelation concerning the nature of end-times events and the means by which cosmic evil would be resolved, carrying with it major implications for understandings about the status of the Jerusalem Temple and the future of the Gentiles. The proposal therefore that both Hebrews and Enoch draw upon a similar notion of cosmic covenant has much to commend it and further derives significance from the fact that both sources developed within the context of strong polemic against the established cultus and priesthood. By setting Hebrews within the

Wrath: Apostasy in Hebrews and Patron-Client Relationships," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115, no. 1 (1996): 97–100. Philo of Alexandria avows a similar view: "It is plain that the law invests the priests with the dignity and honour that belongs to kings; since he commands contributions from every description of possession to be given to them as to rulers" (*On the Special Laws* 1.142 [Yonge, 547]; cf. *On the Life of Moses* 2.131).

¹Scripture is taken from the RSV (emphasis mine).

milieu of Roman Gentile Christianity, and the context of continued covenantal debate between particularists and universalists over the efficacy of the Jerusalem Temple, an important framework in fact has emerged for establishing plausible connections between the worldview of the writer and of Enochic Judaism.

CHAPTER 4

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM AND THE COSMIC DIMENSIONS OF THE NEW COVENANT

The 364-day solar calendar within Enochic Judaism provides important evidence of the ways in which cultus and cosmology were inextricably connected during the Second Temple period. Furthermore, this calendar functioned for this group as a critical symbol of covenantal identity, so that Israel, because of the failure to properly adhere to this calendar, placed itself under the divine curses (1 En 5:4–8). The importance of symbolic notions of covenant within the sectarian environment of early Second Temple Judaism is indicated by Mendenhall and Herion as follows: "[Covenant] seems largely to have been symbolic, and there seems to have been simply widespread disagreement as to what specifically it symbolized (i.e., which sect constituted the 'true' Israel still in covenant with God?)."¹

Similar points concerning the symbolic importance of the covenant in Hebrews were touched upon in chapter 1, where the rite of baptism was suggested as the primary form of identity signaling adherence to the new Christian community. Given the thesis that both Hebrews and the framers of Enochic Judaism reflect similar polemics against the Temple, each in its own way, an understanding of the symbolic and cosmic dimensions of the covenant therefore becomes important.

Insights from the field of the sociology of knowledge indicate that the legitimation of a 'new' symbolic universe within a society necessarily implies the subordination, or

¹Mendenhall and Herion, 1:1195.

'nihilation,' of the competing universe. There are two primary ways to accomplish this denigration: first, by relegating the threatening group to "an inferior ontological status, and thereby a not-to-be-taken-seriously cognitive status,"¹ and second, by interpreting the traditional universe in terms drawn from one's own symbolic world so that it becomes important only when understood in relation to that reality.² According to Salevao, "the underlying presupposition is that the competing definition has no validity or meaning at all except insofar as it is translated into terms derived from the universe it purports to negate."³ John Dunnill makes the appropriate application of these points to the present concern when he states that "Hebrews attempts a Christian rational reordering of Israel's symbol-system."⁴ For the writer, this implied the development of a new set of 'embedded symbols' in contrast to those of the Jerusalem Temple and priesthood.

Evidence of the new symbolic universe of Hebrews is especially apparent in Heb 10:19–22 where the writer declares that the universal scope of the new covenant derives from Christ's once-for-all sacrifice as high priest, the believers' access to the true sanctuary, and the resolution to the fundamental sin problem. In connection with this implicit cosmology, many scholars have seen an important reference in the passage to the ritual act of Christian baptism based on the phrase "with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (vs. 22).⁵ It can be argued whether the writer intended this phrase metaphorically or literally in the present context, though a literal view is likely since in Heb 6:1–2 baptism is associated with repentance.

¹Berger and Luckmann, 106.

²Ibid.

³Salevao, 64.

⁴Dunnill, 231.

⁵The majority of commentators on Hebrews see the reference to "our body washed with pure water" as referring to baptism (e.g., Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrew*, 289; Bruce, *Hebrews*, 255; and deSilva, *Perseverance*, 339).

The ritual of βάπτισμα was indeed understood in early Christian circles as an integral part of the conversion-initiation process and symbolic of the believer's inner transformation from the 'old' order of sin to the 'new' order of holiness (e.g., Titus 3:5; 1 Pet 3:21).¹ However, what interpreters of the New Testament have tended to overlook is the extent to which the eschatological perspective is often assumed in baptismal passages, not only in the forward-looking sense but also through the belief in a 'realized eschatology' in which believers already participate in the new age.² In fact, it may be argued on the basis of Heb 10:19–22 that Christian baptism imbibed an important cosmic-eschatological dimension noted by the fact that the washing of believers is closely associated with their entrance by faith into the inner sanctum of heaven.

On this basis, the following discussion explores in greater detail how baptism, as indicated both within Heb 10:19–22 and elsewhere in the New Testament, came to symbolize the Christian's incorporation into the new cosmos inaugurated by Jesus. Doing so should thus provide an important segue into the conceptual worldview of the writer of Hebrews and greater understanding of how his supplantation of the Jewish covenant assumed with it the supplantation, or *washing away*, of the 'old' cosmic order embodied in the Jerusalem Temple and priesthood.

The Cosmic and Eschatological Significance of Christian Baptism

As Luke Timothy Johnson points out, "Asking about the 'world of Hebrews' means investigating the social and symbolic world that produced this composition."³

¹Cf. Albrecht Oepke, "Βαπτισμός, βάπτισμα," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 1:545.

²This point is brought out by Lars Hartman, "Baptism," *ABD*, 1:593. For a more detailed treatment of baptism, see idem, *"Into the Name of the Lord Jesus": Baptism in the Early Church* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997).

³Luke Timothy Johnson, "The Scriptural World of Hebrews," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 57, no. 3 (July 2003): 237.

This is a significant statement and draws upon recent advances in applying sociological insights to the letter. One new approach to understanding Hebrews that has emerged from this asserts that the writer's new covenant concept was formulated within the framework of his own construction of a Christian 'symbolic universe,' over and against the competing one of Judaism.¹ The usefulness of this language is that it provides a means, as one scholar describes, for "reading Hebrews through the social and cosmological functions of religious symbolism."² This implies, therefore, a further understanding of the extent to which the writer's confrontation with his rivals, the Jewish and Jewish Christian particularists in first-century Rome, really amounted to a polemical transformation of their symbolic universe as embodied in the Temple. Richard Johnson summarizes this point as follows: "By challenging the undergirding symbols of first-century Judaism, the author set the stage for the definition of a new society."³ The primary vehicle for entering into this 'new society' inaugurated by Jesus Christ was Christian baptism. What will be argued below is how this washing also carried with it significant cosmic and eschatological meaning, implied in both Hebrews and elsewhere in the New Testament. As a symbol of the believers' own spiritual transformation from the old creation into the new, the rite came to represent a type of collocation between their inward cleansing and the changes in the cosmic structures of the universe that had resulted from Jesus' resurrection and ascent into heaven. This conception is especially apparent in such passages as Gal 3:27–28: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

¹See Salevao, *Legitimation in the Letter to the Hebrews: The Construction and Maintenance of a Symbolic Universe*. In connection with the covenant concept in Hebrews, Susanne Lehne also states that the writer "associates a whole symbolic universe with the idea" (11).

²Dunnill, 263.

³Johnson, *Outside the Camp*, 129.

On this basis, an important point to keep in mind is that the cosmic-eschatological meaning of baptism cannot be understood apart from its broader socio-religious implications, since Jesus' covenant was seen to provide the basis for a new, shared identity and the end to ritual and hierarchical distinctions between different groups of people.

Hebrews 10:19–22 and the Typology of Baptism

An insightful approach to understanding Hebrews' significant transformation in covenantal symbolism has been articulated recently by Peter J. Leithart and is worth drawing out in some detail. He begins his discussion by advancing the claim that Heb 10:19–22, and specifically the phrase "our bodies washed with pure water" (vs. 22), refers to baptism which initiates Christians into a new community of priests.¹ As the basis for his thesis, Leithart further observes from Titus 3:5 that the reference there to "regeneration" (παλιγγενεσίας) in the phrase "washing of regeneration," has a meaning which extends beyond the domain of sacramental theology, embracing cosmological significance in both ancient Stoic circles as well as first-century Judaism (Matt 19:28), and which for him raises the provocative question of "how can baptism be a washing that brings cosmic renewal?"² Based upon the long-standing liturgical truism that Christian baptism fulfills the priestly rite of ordination (Exod 29; Lev 8), Leithart next seeks to uncover a "typology of baptism" in Heb 10:19–22 and more specifically the question of "how baptism functions in this passage as an efficacious sign producing a change in the distribution of household ministry that requires a corresponding change in law."³ For

¹Peter J. Leithart, "Womb of the World: Baptism and the Priesthood of the New Covenant in Hebrews 10.19–22," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 78 (2000): 49–65.

²Ibid., 49. For insight into the cosmological meaning of παλιγγενεσίας, see Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 148.

³Leithart, 49–50.

him, the issue involves an orientation to the Old Testament cultic worldview and specifically the concept of what one scholar has called "graded holiness."¹ Since the ordination of priests in ancient Israel represented a ritual distinction from other laypeople on the basis of their higher status of sanctity,² the nature of "Israel's antique order" is one that is also able to reproduce this distinction on another conceptual level—this time as the typological backdrop for the implementation of Christian baptism:

The 'eighth' day of Aaron's ordination was the first day of a new socio-religious cosmos. If, therefore, baptism fulfills Aaronic ordination, if baptism does now what ordination did then, we have reason to suspect that it reconstructs the religious landscape. The baptismal formation of a new priestly community, historically extending the veil-rendering work of Jesus' death, *challenges and remaps antique Israelite topography.*³

Leithart's claim that Heb 10:22 describes Christian baptism as replacing priestly ordination is dependent on the importance of the typological parallels between Jesus' atonement and entrance into the heavenly holy of holies and the ordination ceremony of the Levitical priests in Exod 29 and Lev 8–9. In the case of the priests, it was important for them to be 'sprinkled' with sacrificial blood (Exod 29:20–21; Lev 8:23–24, 30) and washed with water (Exod 29:4; Lev 8:6). Christ's blood is explicitly described in Hebrews as the definitive agent for cleansing the heart and conscience (Heb 9:9, 14; 10:2), and the writer understands the importance of the Old Testament ceremonial application of the blood through his use of the term "sprinkle" (ῥαντίζω) (Heb 9:19, 21–22; 12:24). Therefore, it is particularly significant for Leithart's argument that in Heb 10:22 the one who draws near to God is described as being both 'sprinkled' with blood

¹Philip Peter Jensen, *Graded Holiness: A Key to the Priestly Conception of the World*.

²Leithart draws here upon the insights in Jensen and discerns from him that "'P' imagined Israel as a concentrically arranged community radiating from the tabernacle, its ranks marked out, among other things, by clothing, food, and access to or exclusion from holy environments" (50).

³*Ibid.*, 50 (emphasis mine).

and 'washed' with water. These two terms are rarely used together in the Old Testament, but do indeed occur in the ordination ceremony of the priests.¹

The importance of this reuse of old-covenant imagery in Hebrews is further clear from the writer's assertion that Christians who have come under the blood and water are now qualified to enter beyond the "veil" (10:20; καταπέτασμα), which refers to that which separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place in the Tabernacle (6:19; 9:3; cf. Exod 26:33; Lev 16:15). While some have assumed the backdrop of Heb 10:19–22 to be the high priest's entrance into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement,² Leithart sees the fact that the priests were sprinkled with blood and washed with water only at their ordination as the basis for understanding that particular ceremony as the correct typological referent for this passage (Exod 29:4, 21; Lev 8:6, 30). The implications of this insight are very important for understanding the writer's socio-religious argument: "The dual structure of the first covenant—a narrow priestly covenant within the larger national covenant—no longer exists. All those baptized and sprinkled with the blood of Christ have privileges of access beyond those of Israel's High Priests."³

According to Leithart, the full significance of Hebrews' typological strategy of making Christian baptism into an efficacious sign of a new priesthood emerges only in connection with its wider 'cosmic' implications, a point corresponding with the original purpose of his inquiry into the meaning of παλιγγενεσίας in Titus 3:5. Insights into this typology become especially apparent in relation to the writer of Hebrews' use of

¹For the development of this argument, see Leithart, 53–54.

²See e.g., James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-Examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today*, Studies in Biblical Theology 15 (London: SCM Press, 1970), 213.

³Leithart, 55. William Lane identifies the consecration ceremony of the priests as the correct typological framework and the "most common interpretation" for Heb 10:22 (*Hebrews 1–8*, 286).

apocalyptic metaphor to describe the transformation of the old world into the new; a point which Leithart draws out as follows:

Earthquakes shake heaven and earth, toppling what can be shaken so that the unshakable kingdom remains (12.26-27). A new age (αἰών) has come and is coming. The Son is rolling up and changing the 'garments' of heaven and earth (1.10-12), for he is the one through whom God made the ages (αἰῶνες). That these 'garments' and 'shakable things' include the institutions of the 'first covenant' is evident from the first lines of the epistle, where the author contrasts the filial word with the Torah spoken through angels (1.1-2; 2.1-4; cf. Gal. 3.19).¹

The significance of this statement is that Leithart here appears to be one of the few interpreters to make reference to the important dialectic which exists in Hebrews between cosmos, creation, and the two-covenant contrast. The fuller extent of this understanding becomes clearer upon realization that "changes in sanctuary, priesthood and law detailed in the rest of the letter are so radical that they can be described with the imagery of cosmic destruction and renewal."²

The primary advantage of Leithart's approach to Heb 10:19–22 is that it provides an important typological framework for understanding the larger social and cosmic scope of Jesus' inauguration of a new covenant and priesthood. As he argues, "Through his unique sacrifice and his entry into the heavenly sanctuary, Jesus has shaken the old covenant house and the aftershocks are global in scope. Baptism temporally and geographically extends his disruption of heaven and earth."³ Furthermore, entrance into the house of the "new Zadok," the "Melchizedekan priest," is no longer based on the graded holiness of genealogical distinction, but rather on the "washing of παλιγγενεσίας" that provides for everyone, whether Jew or Gentile, unhindered access to God's throne as

¹Ibid., 56. Another important passage in this conceptualization is Heb 8:13 which mentions the first covenant as "becoming obsolete and growing old [and] ready to vanish." Though Leithart makes only passing reference to this metaphor (56, 62), it actually provided a crucial component within the writer's theological understanding about the correspondence between the obsolescence of the first covenant and the ultimate dissolution of the cosmos; this point will be drawn out in greater detail in chapter 5.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., 64.

priests within a new symbolic universe.¹ These points are nicely summarized by Leithart as follows: "Baptism formed a new nation out of the old, molding the eschatological race of the Last Adam, the kingdom of priests. It is the efficacious sign of *the clothing change of the heaven and earth*, destroying the antique Israelite order and remapping the terrain."²

Leithart's interpretation of Christian baptism in terms of a "washing of *παλιγγενεσίας*" that brings cosmic renewal provides important insights into the intellectual framework of Hebrews and the way in which the writer reconceptualized the notion of Israel's covenant in light of Jesus' inauguration of a 'new' covenant and priesthood. The primary uniqueness of this approach is that it shows how the writer's 'typology of baptism' was integrally connected not only with his theology, but with his broader cosmic and social concerns as well. Consequently, Christian baptism is presented as signifying more than an existential cleansing of individual conscience. Rather, the breakdown no less of ritualized boundaries between Jews and Gentiles, Levites and non-Levites, accomplished through baptism, finds its primary meaning in the formation of a totally "new socio-religious cosmos"—to borrow Leithart's phraseology³—that completely destroys the exclusivistic holiness gradient inscribed in Israel's "old" cultus.

The Cosmic Implication of Baptism in the New Testament

This conceptualization of Christian baptism as a symbol of a strong apocalyptic transformation in the cosmic-eschatological sphere is not unique to Hebrews, however,

¹Ibid., 60–62. Leithart makes the following interesting point: "Since Jesus is a sanctified priest, it follows that his household is a priestly house and he is a new Zadok, who, not coincidentally, bears the name of the High Priest of the restoration" (60).

²Ibid, 64 (emphasis mine).

³Ibid., 50.

but also finds expression in other New Testament passages. One of these is 1 Pet 3:20–21 where the concept of baptism carries very explicit eschatological overtones: "[They] formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." The background of the passage begins in vs. 19 with the writer's enigmatic reference to a tradition in which Christ, after his death, "went and preached to the spirits in prison." Immediately following in vs. 20, these spirits are described as the same disobedient ones who were alive in the days of Noah and the flood when eight souls were "saved through water" (διεσώθησαν δι' ὕδατος). Scholars have also seen in these verses evidence from the legend preserved in 1 Enoch chaps. 6–11 regarding the fall of the wicked angels, the demoralization of the human race, and the consequent judgment pronounced by God on these spirits.¹ Furthermore, according to biblical and post-biblical writings, Noah was celebrated as an important example of righteousness in the midst of an ungodly world (Ezek 19:14, 20 and Wis 10:4). In the Petrine context these traditions would have provided a helpful lesson for the early Christian facing the thought of the final apocalyptic judgment.

The crux of the writer's argument emerges in 1 Pet 3:21 where Christian baptism is described as the typological counterpart (ἀντίτυπον) to the waters of the flood, which now 'saves' the believer; in this manner, the writer links the symbolic rite with the salvation which is provided through Christ's resurrection. Drawing upon the Enochic backdrop, William Dalton summarizes 3:19–21 in the following manner: "As Noah was delivered by the water from the evil instigated by these fallen angels, so also will the

¹For a thorough discussion concerning the probable Enochic background of 1 Pet 3:19, see William J. Dalton, *Christ's Proclamation to the Spirits: A Study of 1 Peter 3:18–4:6*, *Analecta Biblica* 23 (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1989), 165–76.

Christian be saved by the waters of baptism."¹ According to this passage, therefore, the association of the Noahic flood in the typological framework of judgment provided an apparent means for early Christians to also conceptualize the wider cosmic and eschatological significance of their baptism. This point is further corroborated by 2 Pet 3:5–7 where the flood of Noah's day is also seen to be symbolic of the future cosmic judgment by fire.²

Another consideration to make in connection with 1 Pet 3:19–21 is the phrase in vs. 21 which states that Christian baptism does not correspond to the mere "removal (ἀπόθεις) of dirt from the body." More than a mere physical act, the rite was seen to represent an "appeal to God for a clear conscience," thus indicating an important existential transformation imparted to the believer "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."³ As Dalton well states, "Baptism affects the whole person, the whole body of sin, and symbolizes a complete renovation going to the very depths of human nature."⁴

A significant parallel to the ideas in 1 Pet 3:21 appears to be present in the Pauline text of Col 2:11–12, which begins as follows: "In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off (ἀπέκδυσει) the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ" (vs. 11). The thought then moves immediately to baptism and resurrection: "And you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised

¹Ibid., 188.

²Baptism was generally associated in Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity with eschatological judgment. This point becomes particularly clear in the sayings of John the Baptist who exhorted his hearers to flee from the coming wrath (Matt 3:6–12; Luke 3:3–17); see Adela Yarbro Collins, *Cosmology and Eschatology in Jewish and Christian Apocalypticism* (New York: E. J. Brill, 1996), 228–29. For an important discussion on the use of water rites at Qumran as means for renewing the covenant, see Elliott, *Survivors of Israel*, 602–609; cf. 1QS 3:4–5; 5:13–14.

³For more on this passage, see John E. Colwell, "Baptism, Conscience and the Resurrection: A Reappraisal of 1 Peter 3:21," in *Baptism, the New Testament and the Church: Historical and Contemporary Studies in Honour of R. E. O. White*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Anthony R. Cross (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 210–27.

⁴Dalton, 202.

with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead" (vs. 12). The fact that both nouns *ἀπόθεσις* and *ἀπέκδυσει*, carrying the sense of "putting aside, making away with, getting rid of," and "put off," respectively, also occur in close proximity with similar meaning in Col 3:8–9: "But now put them all away (*ἀποθέσθε*): anger, wrath, malice, slander . . . seeing that you have put off (*ἀπεκδυσάμενοι*) the old nature with its practices," support the notion that *ἀπόθεσις* and *ἀπέκδυσει* are equivalent terms.¹ These points indicate that the description of Christian baptism in Col 2:11 as "the putting off the body of flesh," which contrasts with Jewish circumcision, has strong parallels to 1 Pet 3:21, where baptism is also contrasted with the mere "removal of dirt from the body."² In all likelihood 1 Peter and Colossians express a common early Christian view of baptism as symbolizing the believer's complete mystical transformation and incorporation into a new cosmos—a process made efficacious through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The cosmic dimensions of Christ's redemption, and its implications for understanding baptism, further emerge in Col 2:15, which declares that "he disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them." One scholar captures well the sense of this passage by linking it to the ideas already espoused in Col 2:11–12: "Baptism means, namely, sharing the destiny of Christ who, in his resurrection, triumphed over the cosmic powers."³ The implication is that the victory obtained by Christ is applied to Christians, who thus participate in a new cosmic and

¹Ibid., 201. See Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, comp., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, revised and augmented throughout by Sir Henry Stuart Jones with the assistance of Robert McKenzie and with the cooperation of many scholars; with a revised supplement (1996), s.v. "Ἀπέκδυσει," "Ἀπόθεσις." (all future citations of this work will be referred to as LSJ). Other similar usages of the verb *ἀποτίθημι* occur, for example, in 1 Pet 2:1: So *put away* (*ἀποθέμενοι*) all malice and all guile and insincerity and envy and all slander," and in Eph 4:22: "*Put off* (*ἀποθέσθαι*) your old nature . . ." In Acts 7:58 this verb occurs in the middle tense to refer to the taking off of clothes and in Matt 4:13, for casting one into prison.

²Dalton, 201.

³Hartman, "Baptism," 589. Cf. Dalton, 202.

eschatological awareness through baptism.¹ As the preceding points indicate, the close association in both 1 Pet 3:21 and Col 2:11–12 between Christian baptism, the removal of fleshly impurity, and resurrection provide valuable insights into how the watery rite came to powerfully symbolize the believer's participation in the new cosmos inaugurated by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the glorious future that this entailed.

Another occurrence of the motif of baptism as a sign of incorporation into a new cosmos appears to be present in Paul's discussion in 1 Cor 10:1–6. In describing how the Israelites' Exodus and subsequent wilderness disobedience serve as a warning for Christians, the apostle mentions that during the Red Sea crossing all the Israelites "were *baptized* into Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (vs. 2). The intent of this passage was apparently to get the Corinthians to see how the Israelites' 'baptism' paralleled their own. From this, the covenantal context of the passage emerges more clearly, which one scholar articulates as follows: "As the Israelites were delivered from Egypt through their 'baptism' and received their covenant in the wilderness of Sinai, so the Corinthians entered an eschatological covenant through their baptism."² One of Paul's major rhetorical aims in this passage therefore was to indicate for his audience how the cloud and sea served as metaphors for baptism in the Spirit and water, thus signifying their initiation into the new covenant.³ At the same time, the apostle also warned the Corinthians that whoever

¹Johannes C. Beker also elaborates on this point: "When in Colossians and Ephesians baptism signifies that Christians have not only been buried with Christ but have also been raised with Christ in the heavenly places (Col 2:12; 3:1; Eph 2:4–6), the apocalyptic future collapses into the Christ-event. In this context the church becomes identified with Christ, becoming a heavenly entity and threatening to displace the apocalyptic future" (*Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1980], 163).

²B. J. Oropeza, *Paul and Apostasy: Eschatology, Perseverance and Falling Away in the Corinthian Congregation*, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament* 115 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 101.

³Ibid. This point also relies upon the importance of the 'pillar of cloud traditions' in which the cloud that led Israel during the Exodus and in the wilderness was seen as a manifestation of the Divine Presence (Exod 16:10–11; 24:15–18). Oropeza argues that within the Isaianic tradition, where the Red Sea motif becomes associated with the 'new exodus' through the return from exile, the cloud-presence also is

among them, like the Israelites, would forfeit God's favor through neglect of his commandments would be in danger of eschatological judgment (vss. 6–11).

Further support for this conceptualization may be derived from Acts 2 where in Peter's Pentecost sermon baptism is associated with the gift of the Holy Spirit and further, in a pesher-like interpretation of Joel 2:28–32, with eschatological judgment involving "blood, fire, and pillars of smoke" (Acts 2:17–21). Similar themes are repeated as well in John the Baptist's statement concerning Jesus: "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Matt 3:11; Luke 3:16). What these points again suggest is the way in which early Christian baptism symbolized a new covenant identity embodying not only individual spiritual significance but broader cosmic-eschatological importance as well, especially in relation to the tradition of judgment by water and fire.¹

That baptism was linked in early Christianity with the expectations of cosmic renewal seems to be implicit in other areas of Pauline understanding as well. In 2 Cor 5:17, for example, the apostle writes that "if any one is *in Christ* (in the context of 'baptism' [cf. Rom 6:3–5]), he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come."² Furthermore, according to 1 Cor 12:13, baptism is seen to represent a unity that overturns the socio-religious and cultural conditions of the first century world order:

identified with the Holy Spirit. This is especially apparent from Isa 63:11–14 where Yahweh is described as placing his Spirit among the Israelites and leading them through the Red Sea; significantly, the Spirit grants them rest (vs. 14) in the same way as was performed by the Divine Presence (cloud) in Exod 33:14 (see pp. 92–95).

¹For a further treatment of the connection between the judgment by fire and water and baptism in ancient Judaism and early Christianity, see Jean Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, trans. and ed. John A. Baker (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1964; reprint, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978), 227–29. Margaret Barker provides a helpful overview of the various traditions of baptism that were practiced within the mystical streams of Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity (*The Risen Lord: The Jesus of History as the Christ of Faith* [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996], 27–55).

²Dunn also relates this passage to the "eschatological and cosmic dimensions" of Paul's soteriology (*Theology of Paul*, 411–12).

"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--Jews or Greeks, slaves or free-- and all were made to drink of one Spirit" (cf. Gal 3:27–28). Taken together, these preceding passages may well provide a link to the notions already espoused by Leithart regarding the eschatological and cosmic significance of baptism in Heb 10:22. The likelihood of a Roman destination for Hebrews would also certainly enhance this proposal since the imperial city has been identified with the earliest traditions of Christian 'baptismal catechesis,' especially in relation to early attempts among Christians to contrast the rite with Jewish circumcision.¹

The discussion so far has shown that Christian baptism denoted an inner transformation in believers that was also intrinsically linked to awareness of their incorporation into a "new socio-religious cosmos" based on the revelation of Jesus's resurrection and ascension into the heavenly realm (Heb 10:19–22). Leithart's conceptualization of baptism in terms of the "clothing change of the heaven and earth" expresses these themes very well and has significant explanatory power for describing how early Christians apparently saw their baptism as a collocation between their inward,

¹Dalton, 202–206. The close link between the concept of baptism presented in 1 Pet 3:20–21 and Heb 10:22, where in both cases it is associated with the cleansing of an evil conscience, may derive from a shared Roman provenance. According to 1 Pet 5:13, the writer sends greetings from 'Babylon,' which was seen among first-century Christians as a symbol for the imperial city. Attridge believes that "the close affinities between Hebrews and 1 Peter" is one of the reasons for accepting a Roman destination for Hebrews (10; cf. 30–31 for a list of parallels). And Koester further points out that "references to Paul's companions Timothy and Silas in Heb 13:23 and 1 Pet 5:12 also make it conceivable that Pauline teachings were among the Christian traditions used by each author" (58). And finally, in his comments on "teaching about ablution (Heb 6:2), F. F. Bruce supports the association between early forms of Christian baptism and a Roman destination for Hebrews. An important piece of evidence that he cites to shed light on the liturgical practices in early Roman Christianity is from the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus, a work attributed to the Roman presbyter of the same name dating from the turn of the second century; in particular, the work mentions that prior to their baptism on Easter Day, Christian initiates underwent a prebaptismal bath for the removal of impurity on the preceding Thursday, a tradition which Bruce believes may have derived from Roman Judaism and that may elucidate Heb 6:2 (*Hebrews*, 142; cf. n. 23; for a translation of the relevant passage in Hippolytus, see Gregory Dix, ed., *The Treatise on the Apostolic Tradition of St. Hippolytus of Rome*, reissued with corrections, preface, and bibliography by Henry Chadwick [London: Alban Press; Ridgefield, CT: Morehouse Publishing, 1992], 31).

spiritual cleansing and the outward changes in the cosmic structures of the universe.¹

Ceslas Spicq makes this similar point in connection with the "washing of παλιγγενεσίας" theme in Titus 3:5: "The choice of the word 'palingenesie' suggests that it is necessary to link closely the individual regeneration of the neophyte to the new cosmic era inaugurated by Jesus Christ."²

Baptism and the "Clothing Change" Motif

Another important consideration to make in connection with this scheme, which Leithart surprisingly fails to mention, concerns the important fact that baptism itself often involved the stripping of garments and reclothing of the proselyte. While post-baptismal liturgies in the early Church are particularly hard to trace due to the variations in rite and custom over time and place, there remains widespread testimony for the practice of baptizands being clothed with a white garment following their immersion.³ Perhaps one of the most illustrative examples is found in the *Clementine Homilies*, a work of unknown authorship that dates from fourth-century Syria, and therefore preserves traditions from the Jewish-Christian wing of the early Church in the region—likely extending back to the apostolic period.⁴ In Book 8 the author recounts the Matthean parable of the wedding feast held by a king in honor of his son (22:2–14) which many of the invited guests were too busy to attend. After the invitation was extended to everyone,

¹This idea runs parallel to the findings of modern social theory that indicate how the physical body often serves as a microcosm of the social realm (see Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*, 4th ed. with a new introduction [New York: Routledge, 1996], 69–87).

²Ceslas Spicq, *Les Épîtres Pastorales*, 2 vols., Études Bibliques (Paris: Gabalda, 1969), 2:653. The original text reads as follows: "Le choix même du mot palingénésie suggère qu'il faut lier étroitement la régénération individuelle du néophyte à la nouvelle ère du cosmos inaugurée par Jésus-Christ."

³For more on this subject, see the evidence presented in Thomas M. Finn, *Early Christian Baptism and the Catechumenate: Italy, North Africa, and Egypt* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 16–17, 57, 60, 87–88, 157, 233.

⁴See F. Stanley Jones, "Clementines, Pseudo," *ABD*, 1:1061–62. Daniélou sees correspondences between the ideas reflected in the pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* and *Recognitions* and the early Jewish-Christian sect of the Ebionites (59–61).

there came a man, however, who was discovered without the required wedding "garment" (ἔνδυμα) and subsequently cast into "outer darkness" (Matt 22:11–12). The author then proceeds to draw an intriguing parallel between the garment, which is symbolic of salvation, and the rite of Christian baptism: "But instead of those who through preoccupation disobeyed, the Father celebrating the marriage of his Son, has ordered us, through the Prophet of the truth, to come into the partings of the ways, that is, to you, and to invest you with the clean wedding garment, which is baptism." (chap. 22).¹

A baptismal liturgy preserved from the central Italian city of Verona in the fourth century offers the following exhortation to the baptizands: "Therefore, rejoice. For you will plunge naked into the font but you will soon emerge clothed with a heavenly garment, dressed in white. And he who does not soil his baptismal robe will possess the kingdom of heaven. Amen."² Additionally, *The Shepherd of Hermas*, a work written in or near Rome that offers the earliest baptismal text in the Western tradition, happens to also mention a white garment in the context of a metaphorical description of baptism:

He crowned the men who handed over the sticks that were budding with fruit, and he sent them off into the tower (the Church). He also sent into the tower the ones who handed over sticks (representing the 'law') that were budding but bore no fruit, after giving them seals (baptism). All those who went into the tower had the same clothing, white as snow. And he sent off those who handed over their sticks green, as they had received them, after giving them white clothing and seals.³

And finally, the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus, a work attributed to the Roman presbyter of the same name dating from the turn of the second century, offering important

¹*The Clementine Homilies* 8.22 (trans. Peterson, Ante-Nicene Fathers, 8:274).

²For the full source, see André Hamman, ed., *Baptism: Ancient Liturgies and Patristic Texts*, trans. Thomas Halton (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1967), 64–66; the passage quoted here is found on p. 66. Cf. Finn, 54–57.

³For the reference, see *The Shepherd of Hermas* (Parables) 8.2.1–4 (trans. Ehrman, LCL, 2:360–61). For more about the "parables of the tower" and the identity of the Church as "the tower built upon water," see *The Shepherd of Hermas* (Visions) 3.3 (LCL, 2:200–203). According to Graydon F. Synder, the Muratorian canon, a list of canonical works from the third century, mentions *The Shepherd of Hermas* as being written about 140–154 C.E. ("Hermas, The Shepherd," *ABD*, 3:148). A helpful study on the social setting of early Roman Christianity as it is recoverable from *Hermas* is by Carolyn Osiek, *Rich*

evidence about the liturgical practices in early Roman Christianity, mentions that during baptism the new initiates removed their clothes, descended into the baptismal font, then emerged to be anointed with oil, before reclothing themselves and entering the church (chap. 21).¹

Despite the difficulty of locating the precise origins of the practice of reclothing after baptism, some scholars have traditionally considered the clearest referent for this tradition to be the New Testament, in Gal 3:27: ὅσοι γὰρ εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε, Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."² In a more recent contribution to this discussion, J. Louis Martyn argues that this passage presupposes a liturgical context involving the removal of the baptizand's clothes before entering the water so that the "new robe, put on as one comes out of the water, signifies Christ himself."³ Others interpret the language of putting on clothes as the act of baptism itself: for example, R. Schnackenburg asserts that "the baptismal water . . . [is] like a garment in which the baptized are plunged."⁴

Such language would certainly not be unusual for Paul since he uses the imagery of clothing elsewhere to describe "putting on" (ἐνδύω) virtues (Col 3:10–12; Eph 4:24; 1 Thess 5:8), spiritual armor (Rom 13:12; Eph 6:11–17), as well as a new incorruptible body at Christ's coming (1 Cor 15:53–54)—metaphors which the apostle likely derived from the frequent LXX references to being clothed with righteousness, salvation,

and Poor in the Shepherd of Hermas: An Exegetical-Social Investigation, Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 15 (Washington DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1983). Cf. Finn, 33–36.

¹See Dix, 33–38.

²See e.g., E. C. Ratcliff, "The Relation of Confirmation to Baptism in the Early Roman and Byzantine Liturgies," *Theology* 49, nos. 315–16 (September–October 1946): 263. Cf. also the discussion in G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (London: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1962), 148–49.

³J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB, vol. 33A, 375–76. For a similar view, see also C. F. D. Moule, *Worship in the New Testament*, Ecumenical Studies in Worship 9 (London: Lutterworth, 1961), 52–53.

⁴R. Schnackenburg, *Baptism in the Thought of St. Paul* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964), 24.

strength, and glory (2 Chr 6:41; Ps 131:9, 16, 18; Isa 51:9; 61:10; Zech 3:3–5).¹ Similar imagery is evident in Jewish sectarian circles as well. For example, several allusions in the work, Odes of Solomon, from the late first to early second century C. E., echo these themes: "And I abandoned the folly cast upon the earth and stripped it off and cast it from me. And the Lord renewed me with his garment and possessed me by his light" (11:10–11) and again, "I have put on incorruption through his name and stripped off corruption by his grace" (15:8).² An even more intriguing backdrop for the Pauline imagery of reclothing after baptism seems to be apparent in the Testament of Levi which depicts the anointing of Levi as the eschatological high priest: "The first anointed me with holy oil and gave me a staff. The second washed me with pure water, fed me by hand with bread and holy wine, and put on me a holy and glorious garment" (8:4–5).³ On the basis of these sources, Jean Daniélou suggests that the rite of reclothing with a white garment after baptism is likely of Jewish-Christian origin.⁴ If an earlier provenance for the Testament of Levi is accepted, however, this may suggest evidence of well-established pre-Christian antecedents for the practice of ritual immersion which, in turn, influenced Paul's notion about "putting on" Christ in Gal 3:27.⁵

¹Walter Bauer, Frederick W. Danker, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (BDAG)*, 3d ed., revised and edited by Frederick W. Danker (2000), s.v. "Ἐνδύω."

²For the translation of this work, see James H. Charlesworth, "Odes of Solomon," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, ed. James H. Charlesworth (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 725–71. Similar imagery occurs in Odes of Solomon 21:3: "And I stripped off darkness, and put on light." Cf. 1 Bar 4:20; 5:1–2.

³The priest's change of clothes after ritual immersion is already apparent in the Day of Atonement ceremony (Lev 16:23–24). See also Lev 8:6–9 where the washing of Aaron at his consecration is prerequisite to his being clothed with the garments of priesthood.

⁴Daniélou, 326–27; this view is based in part on the similarities between the Clementine literature and the beliefs of the early Jewish-Christian sect of the Ebionites (cf. 59–61).

⁵Howard C. Kee attests to the likelihood of a pre-Christian date for this literature (*Testaments of the Twelve*, 777–78). While the questions concerning the background for this Pauline imagery are intriguing and complex, Hans Dieter Betz points out that the specific language of "putting on" a redeemer figure is

Finally, it is helpful to note that James D. G. Dunn argues against the traditional understanding of Gal 3:27 by asserting that Paul's language of "putting on clothes" in connection with Christian baptism was intentionally metaphorical. He states that the traditional exegesis of this passage reflects "an attempt to neuter or demetaphor Paul's language, and misses entirely the transfer of the phrase to a quite different subject, and the jerking-into-fresh-insight effect that the apparent inappropriateness of the metaphor is intended to achieve."¹ It is indeed important to be cognizant of the metaphorical tropes in the language of Paul; however, it seems unnecessary to insist that the imagery of reclothing in Gal 3:27 cannot correspond with the actual event of baptism. This point is perhaps best summarized by F. F. Bruce who believes "it is difficult to suppose that the readers would not have understood it (the phrase, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ") as a statement about their initiatory baptism in water 'into the name of the Lord Jesus' (that Paul's converts were so baptized is a reasonable inference from 1 Cor 1:12 . . .)." ²

found only in the mystery religions (*Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*, Hermeneia [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979], 188; see his listing of sources in n. 60). An interesting example is given by the ancient writer Ehippus who mentions that Alexander the Great liked to put on the ἱεράς ἐσθήτας of the gods and so became Ammon, Artemis, Hermes, and Heracles (for this reference, see Bauer, *BDAG*, s.v. "Ἐνδύω"). For a helpful and nuanced presentation of the evidence, see A. J. M. Wedderburn, *Baptism and Resurrection: Studies in Pauline Theology Against Its Graeco-Roman Background*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament 44 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1987), 332–42. With regard to Gal 3:27, Wedderburn states "that the widespread convention of attiring priests and worshippers in the manner of their deities would have made this particular New Testament usage a great deal more intelligible in the Graeco-Roman world, and may indeed have suggested to early Christians this step beyond the language of the Septuagint which speaks of a metaphorical wearing or putting on of moral or religious qualities like righteousness" (339).

¹James D. G. Dunn, "'Baptized' as Metaphor," in *Baptism, the New Testament and the Church: Historical and Contemporary Studies in Honour of R. E. O. White*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Anthony R. Cross (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 299.

²F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Exeter, U.K.: Paternoster Press, 1982), 185. In his interpretation of Gal 3:27, Bruce is followed by Richard N. Longenecker: "The verb ἐβαπτίσθητε ('you have been baptized') undoubtedly refers to Christian baptism, i.e., immersion in water, for this is the uniform meaning of the term in Paul (cf. Rom 6:3; 1 Cor 1:13–17; 12:13; 15:29), with the single exception being his reference to the Israelites as 'baptized into Moses [εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν ἐβαπτίσθησαν] in the cloud and in the sea' (1 Cor 10:2), though even there the term is used of something that is similar in character and

That early Christian and (apparently) Jewish baptism was frequently followed by the practice of reclothing the initiates in white garments, described symbolically as a stripping off of "corruption" and "folly" or the old self (Eph 4:22; cf. Rom 6:6), certainly makes a plausible case for how the rite came to symbolize the socio-religious and cosmic reorganization of the world in the new covenant. This point becomes central when read in the context of Paul's larger statement in Gal 3:26–28: "For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Hans Dieter Betz, who interprets the passage as part of a pre-Pauline baptismal liturgy, captures its overall significance very well when he states that "the saying would communicate information to the newly initiated, telling them of their eschatological status before God in anticipation of the Last Judgment and also informing them how this status affects, and in fact changes their social, cultural, and religious self-understanding, as well as their responsibilities in the here-and-now."¹

The application of these insights to Hebrews becomes apparent especially in relationship to the writer's strong contrast between the covenants and the possibility of how he saw Christ's work, in effect, as a *washing away* of the old order. The writer employs a clever verbal link which relates the provisional status of the first covenant (8:13; described as "obsolete [παλαιούμενον] and growing old, ready to vanish") with the changing of the 'garments' of heaven and earth in 1:12 ("they will perish, but you endure; they will all wear out [παλαιωθήσονται] like a garment"). The basis for this important argument derived from his christological reinterpretation of Ps 102:25–27 in Heb 1:10–12: "Long ago, Lord, you laid earth's foundations, the heavens are the works of your

significance to Christian baptism" (*Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 41 [Dallas: Word Books, 1990], 155).

¹Betz, 184.

hands. They pass away but you remain, they all wear out like a garment. Like a cloak you will roll them up, like a garment, and they will be changed. But you never alter and your years are unending" (NJB). While originally contrasting the permanence of Yahweh with the mutability of his creation, the Psalm provided an important component in the writer's theological arsenal for contrasting the permanence of Christ with the wearing out of the 'garments' of heaven and earth. The covenantal implications of this passage could hardly have been lost upon him. Indeed, as seen, baptism clearly functions in the letter as the primary symbol of the Christians' new hope, indicating that the law of God has been written on the heart and their iniquities forgotten and consciences cleansed (10:22; 6:2–6; cf. 10:16; 8:9–12). What is interesting to consider further is whether or not, in light of his strong covenantal contrast, the writer also envisioned the ritual washing into Christ and the simultaneous changing of the individuals old 'garments' as a microcosmic representation of the larger eschatological judgment and cleansing of the heavens and earth.

These points strongly enhance the plausibility of seeing the "clothing change of heaven and earth" as more than a simple metaphor but as a critical expression of the writer's larger theological conceptualization about cosmos, creation, and the relationship between the covenants. Importantly, by elaborating on this theme and its significance in Hebrews, it will become clear how the "cosmic covenant" functions there in much the same way as it did within Enochic Judaism—as a powerful, universal concept implying the imminent destruction of the old order embodied in the Jerusalem Temple and its priesthood.

CHAPTER 5

THE "CLOTHING CHANGE OF HEAVEN AND EARTH" AND THE FORMULATION OF THE NEW 'COSMIC COVENANT' IN HEBREWS

What has emerged in the preceding discussion has been greater awareness concerning the provenance of Hebrews and the probable factors that led to its composition. Given the weight of evidence, the document should most likely be viewed as a product of Roman Gentile Christianity and a response to the continuing Second Temple covenantal debate between universalists and particularists. The writer's own commitment to the revelation of Jesus' resurrection and inauguration of a new "cosmic covenant," available to all peoples regardless of race and ethnicity, led him irrevocably to the conclusion that the 'old' cosmic order as embodied in the Jerusalem Temple, with its exclusivistic boundaries, was now defunct and would eventually end. As argued, the primary antecedents to this schema ultimately derived from the apocalyptic and universalistic outlook found within Enochic Judaism.

In his confrontation with the symbolic universe of Judaism, however, one of the major theological challenges which the writer of Hebrews had to address for his congregants was the realization that the 'new covenant' was not completely fulfilled in the world. William Lane aptly describes the struggle as follows: "Unfortunately, the promise implied by the divine intention has plainly not been fulfilled. . . . It actually appears to be mocked and frustrated by the presence of sin and death in the world."¹ The experience of intense persecution described in Heb 10:32–34 in which the congregants endured "public

¹Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 49–50.

ridicule" (θεατριζόμενοι) as well as ὀνειδισμοῖς and θλίψεσιν, terms both describing various aspects of humiliation, not to mention the "plundering of [their] property" (τὴν ἀρπαγὴν τῶν ὑπαρχόντων ὑμῶν)¹ would have served only to exacerbate any feelings of disenchantment about their faith. At the same time, the Jerusalem Temple stood as a grandiose, visible reminder of the enduring relevance of the Jewish covenant, and was perceived as the cosmic center point where heaven and earth converged and where God's 'presence' was manifest. Within its sacred precincts, as Martin Jaffee has put it, the levitical priests "served as the human community that established and maintained connection between the various orders of being. Their labor in the temple preserved all other orders of being from collapse. Upon them, the people of Israel, the land of Israel, and ultimately, the entire cosmos and its population all depended."² Given their intensely difficult social circumstances, many Christians would have found that the worldview inscribed in the Jerusalem Temple presented a legitimate and attractive alternative to the claims of those universalists who insisted upon faith in Jesus as the sole basis for salvation (cf. Acts 16:31; Rom 10:9).

The discrepancy that the congregants of Hebrews experienced between their inner hopes and expectations for Christ's return and the dim realities of their disenfranchised status in the world raises the issue concerning the 'already-not-yet' aspect of Christian experience as one of both continuity and discontinuity between two spheres of existence: the present age and the age to come. This understanding is strongly evident in Paul; for example, while the blessings of God's kingdom could be experienced in the present age (1 Cor 4:20; 1 Thess 2:12; Rom 14:17), the full benefits and inheritance were yet to come (1 Cor 6:9–10; 15:24, 50; Gal 5:21; 2 Thess 1:5). Also, Christians can be said to possess

¹See the helpful comments on the social dimensions of this passage in deSilva, *Despising Shame*, 156–57.

²Jaffee, 171. For a review of the cosmic significance of the Jerusalem Temple and its priesthood, please refer to chapter 4 above.

both the present and future ages in Christ (1 Cor 3:22; Rom 8:38–39).¹ Within his distinct formulation of this cosmic-eschatological paradigm, the writer of Hebrews reminded the congregants that they in fact were once "enlightened," had "tasted the heavenly gift," "become partakers of the Holy Spirit," and had "tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come" (6:4–5). Furthermore, he averred that such benefits derived from their initial experience of faith and repentance (6:1), which was obtained through a form of Christian baptism (6:2).² Scholars note in this context the centrality of the ceremony, referred to here as "washings" (βαπτισμῶν), and that it likely reflects part of an early catechism intended to instruct new converts about the distinctiveness of Christian baptism over and against other religious and, most likely, Jewish purification rituals.³ Therefore, despite the intensity of their struggles and the temptation to embrace Jewish covenantal distinctives, the "Hebrews" are warned about the irrevocability of their commitment to the new covenant and the impossibility of a second repentance (6:4–6), and that they must persevere in the Christian journey at all costs (12:1–4). Arguably, the decisive importance of the public act of baptism, symbolizing the believers' transition from death to life and the old creation to the new, was the critical reason why the writer exhorted them to retain faith in Christ as the supreme object of hope during the difficult interim period between the ages.

¹For a thorough treatment of this 'eschatological tension' in relation to Pauline theology, see Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 461–71.

²Lars Hartman argues that baptism in 6:2 connotes "enlightenment," "tasting a heavenly gift," "partaking of the Holy Spirit," and "the power of the coming age" (vss. 4–5) ("Baptism," 592). Bruce also mentions that it is 'tempting' to see the word "enlightenment" (φωτισθέντας) in Heb 6:4 as referring to baptism especially since this is the connotation that it had in Rome in the middle of the second century, based on references made by Justin Martyr (*Hebrews*, 145, and n. 39). Salevao accepts as well the likelihood that φωτισθέντας is a reference to baptism (273–74). For a review of this proposal, see Attridge, 169 (also n. 46).

³See Beasley-Murray, 27, 243; Schnackenburg, 8–9; and more recently, Anthony R. Cross, "The Meaning of 'Baptisms' in Hebrews 6.2," in *Dimensions of Baptism: Biblical and Theological Studies*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Anthony R. Cross, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 234 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 165–66. For the distinction between βαπτισμός and βάπτισμα, which is the specific word used in the New Testament for baptism, see Oepke, 545.

In continuity with the themes that emerged in Enoch, the writer of Hebrews' new cosmic revelation was cause for considerable reflection on the intersection between the order-in-creation and the covenants as means for addressing the urgent needs of his eschatological community and ensuring them that God's promises had not failed. Craig Koester aptly describes the solutions that the writer was working toward in his new conceptualization of socio-cosmic reality and what this entailed for the present and future status of his congregants:

Conflict between faith's claims concerning the reign of Christ and the contradictory claims that arise from the visible world will end when God or Christ bring the created order to its end. Hebrews envisions the created order being displaced by the kingdom of God, much as the new covenant replaces the old one. In 1:10-12 Hebrews applies Ps 102:25-27 to the Son of God, saying that the one who created earth and heaven will eventually roll them up like a cloak. The created order perishes whereas the Son remains. The implication is that faith based on the created order is transient, for the creation is transient. Faith that endures is bound to the Son of God who endures.¹

In addressing his letter the writer of Hebrews was thus moved by the urgency of his conviction that the present created order would soon end in a cosmic conflagration that could only be compared to the biblical metaphor of the heavens and earth being rolled up like a garment. For his congregants in Rome who were engaged in a disheartening struggle with certain particularists, both Jewish and Christian alike, over the efficacy of the Jewish covenant as embodied in the Jerusalem Temple, the implications of this new revelation were profound indeed. For since the central cultus was seen as the cosmic center of heaven and earth, the shaking of the visible order could mean only one thing—the ultimate demise of the old covenant on which that order was based. Significantly, as indicated in Heb 8:13, while this order had not yet been completely abolished, it was certainly "obsolete and growing old [and] ready to vanish away."

¹Koester, 102–103.

Within this scheme, it should be added, the plausibility exists that the ritual enactment of baptism provided an important resolution to the tensions implied in the already-not-yet component of Christian experience, offering the congregants hope that the full inauguration of the new covenant would soon be secured and their status in the world vindicated. In fact, it is not unlikely that the rite came to represent for the writer of Hebrews the believer's spiritual *washing* and incorporation into the new cosmic covenant in a manner that also contained within it a stringent polemic against the primary symbol of Judaism, the Jerusalem Temple—implying its impending demise in the *deluge* of God's judgment.

The literary framework of Hebrews indicates a strong belief in the eschatological awareness of the writer and his reconceptualization of cosmos, creation, and the relationship between the covenants in light of the Christ event. This is apparent not only in the opening exordium of the letter where, as already mentioned, Ps 102:25–27 was quoted by the writer to contrast the permanency of Christ with the demise of the heavens and earth, but also in the concluding warning of 12:25–29 where he employed a quote from Haggai 2:6 (LXX) to reinforce belief in the imminent 'shaking' of the created order. Importantly, in this latter passage, the writer related the eschatological drama to the contrast between the old and new covenants. In the same way that God shook the earth during the establishment of the first covenant at Sinai, so he will shake the heavens and the earth as part of the second so that only that which is uncreated and cannot be shaken will remain. The primary argument of the writer here was that Christians had already received the 'unshakable kingdom' to come by faith while the visible institutions of the old covenant, including especially the Jerusalem Temple, are soon to be destroyed in the final eschatological judgment. Scholars have noticed that the writer's citation of Ps 102:25–27 in 1:10–12 concerning the demise of the old heavens and earth indeed

corresponds closely with the cosmic quake promised in 12:26–28.¹

However, what is further unique about the framing of the letter, and which has generally gone unnoticed, is the way in which the "clothing change of heaven and earth" theme provides a useful heuristic for expressing the complex cosmic-eschatological changes that the writer envisioned as a result of Christ's inauguration of the new covenant. As Peter Leithart drew attention to this earlier, such a theme is most apparent not only in the critical opening and closing sections of Hebrews but at various strategic points throughout, leading to his conclusion that "changes in sanctuary, priesthood and law detailed in the rest of the letter are so radical that they can be described with the imagery of cosmic destruction and renewal."² Drawing upon the points already espoused, therefore, the following discussion will attempt to provide an enumeration of how the "clothing change of heaven and earth" theme emerges as a critical expression of the writer's view concerning the complete displacement of the old covenant by the new and the imminent destruction of its primary supporting institution—the Jerusalem Temple.³ In the process, what should become clearer as well is that during the difficult interim period when the faith of the Christian community was on the wane, our writer apparently saw the rite of baptism as the most suitable means to embody this conceptualization and proclaim how Christ's resurrection and ascension to heaven effectively destroyed the exclusivistic boundaries between Jews and Gentiles, Levites and non-Levites—thus,

¹For a listing of other commentators who have highlighted this observation, see William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 47B (Dallas: Word Books, 1991), 480. Cf. Otto Michel, *Der Brief an die Hebräer*, 12th ed., Kritisch-Exegetischer Kommentar Über das Neue Testament 13 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), 121, 473; Marie E. Isaacs, *Sacred Space: An Approach to the Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 73 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 207; deSilva, *Perseverance*, 100; and Hughes, 558.

²Leithart, 56.

³In this regard, the present research represents a significant departure from the view of certain scholars of Hebrews, such as John Dunnill: "The author declines to promote the new order by denigrating or setting aside the old" (229).

leading to the formation of a "new socio-religious cosmos."¹ The implicit argument here is that while quite different in form, the content of this polemic very much imbibes the same type of supplantation and universalization of the Jewish covenantal notion as found within the apocalyptically oriented framework of Enochic Judaism.

The First Shaking of Heaven and Earth: Hebrews 1:10–12

The primary basis for the "clothing change of heaven and earth" theme in Hebrews derives from the writer's incorporation into his exordium of an exact quotation from Ps 102:25–27 (LXX: 101:26–28): "Long ago, Lord, you laid earth's foundations, the heavens are the works of your hands. They pass away but you remain, they all wear out like a garment. Like a cloak you will roll them up, like a garment, and they will be changed. But you never alter and your years are unending" (NJB). This represents the sixth and longest citation from the LXX in a catena of seven scriptures (vss. 5–14) that together are generally understood to reflect the important theme of Christ's superiority to the angels (vs. 4),² which were understood anciently to be the mediators of the first covenant.³ Originally, Ps 102 was a prayer for the Jerusalem community as a whole with an alternating focus between the personal complaints of the petitioner (vss. 1–11 and 23–24) and the prayers on behalf of Zion and the people (vss. 12–22 and 25–28). In this context, the psalmist highlighted the contrast between Yahweh's immutable character and ability to stand above the decay and corruption of creation ("But though, O Lord, art enthroned forever" [vs. 12]) with his own weak and transitory existence ("My days are

¹Leithart, 50.

²E.g., Attridge, 50; Koester, 190; and Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 22.

³For the notion of angels as mediators of the Mosaic covenant in the NT, see Acts 7:38, 53; Gal 3:19; and Heb 2:2; further aspects of this understanding will be highlighted below.

like an evening shadow; I wither away like grass" [vs. 11] RSV).¹ As will be argued in the following, through the influence of his christological reading of Ps 102:25–27 the writer of Hebrews saw the category of transitoriness-eternity as a crucial means for reinforcing the distinction not only between the exalted Christ and the angels, but also between the heavenly and earthly cults and the two covenants that governed each realm.

The Structure and Purpose of Hebrews 1:10–12

Scholars are in general agreement that the purpose of the writer's exposition of Old Testament scriptures in Heb 1:5–14 is to provide support for the claims that he makes in the opening of the exordium (1:1–4) concerning the exaltation of Jesus Christ to God's right hand and his superiority over the angels.² The framework for this 'catena' is provided by a strong allusion to Ps 110:1 in 1:3: ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν ὑψηλοῖς, "he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high," and then a direct quote in vs. 13. The belief that Jesus was enthroned at God's right hand was one of the earliest and most important affirmations of Christian faith and is well attested in Paul who proclaims that Christ has "ascended far above the heavens that he might fulfill all things"

¹See Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 30–31. For a concise exegetical survey of Ps 101:25–27, see Herbert W. Bateman, *Early Jewish Hermeneutics and Hebrews 1:5–13: The Impact of Early Jewish Exegesis on the Interpretation of a Significant New Testament Passage* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997), 198–200. And for a discussion on the textual divergences which appear between the Hebrew and Greek contexts, see Radu Gheorghita, *The Role of the Septuagint in Hebrews: An Investigation of Its Influence with Special Consideration to the Use of Hab 2:2–3 in Heb 10:37–38*, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament* 160 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 43–44, 60–62.

²As pointed out by James W. Thompson, "The Structure and Purpose of the Catena in Hebrews 1:5–13," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (July 1976): 352. It should be mentioned here as well that 'exordium' is a term derived from Greco-Roman oratory, which served as a device to gain the audience's attention and introduce the major themes to be expounded (cf. Duane F. Watson, *Invention, Arrangement, and Style: Rhetorical Criticism of Jude and 2 Peter*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 104 [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988], 21). Scholars have generally designated Heb 1:1–4 as the introduction of the letter (Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 6–7; Attridge, 6). However, based on a keen observation of Greco-Roman speech patterns, Koester has argued that speakers generally allowed themselves several minutes of delivery time to complete their introduction, and that the exordium of Hebrews is better understood if extended through 2:4 (p. 175). As such, he divides it into two parts: the introduction of the Son as heir and creator of all things (1:1–4) and the OT support for these claims (1:5–14), with the final paragraph offering a warning about the consequences of neglecting the writer's message (pp. 84–85). This understanding of the term 'exordium' will therefore be assumed in the present research.

(Eph 4:10), and that "God has highly exalted him, and bestowed on him the name which is above every name" (Phil 2:9).¹ The unique characteristic about the writer of Hebrews' usage of Ps 110:1 is that the heavenly exaltation of Christ means he has not only received a new name, but is also now κρείττων τῶν ἀγγέλων, "superior to angels" (Heb 1:4).² While there has been much debate concerning the reasons behind the writer's inclusion here of a comparison between Christ and the angels,³ it certainly fulfills an important function in the first part of the exordium and provides the specific framework for the organization and development of the following scriptural catena in 1:5–14.

Furthermore, in seeking to determine the difficult question of what relationship these scriptures have to one another and to the writer's underlying theological conceptualization,⁴ it may be helpful to consider them as arranged according to three pairs, followed by a concluding text (Ps 110:1 in Heb 1:13), and which together comprise three coordinating themes. The first pair (Ps 2:7 and 2 Sam 7:14 in 1:5) concerns the exaltation of the Son, the second (Deut 32:43 in 1:6 and Ps 104:4 in 1:7) the Son's

¹See e.g., David Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand: Psalm 110 in Early Christianity*, Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series 18 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1973).

²As deSilva aptly points out, "By applying Psa 110:1 to Jesus, the author claims for him the place of highest honor in the Jewish-Christian cosmos, namely, a seat at the right hand of God" (*Perseverance*, 102). For a helpful treatment of the use of Ps 110:1 in Hebrews see Isaacs, 179–86.

³Some propose that the writer was combatting a form of angel Christology, or that the readers were engaged in the practice of worshiping angels similar to what had been introduced among the Colossian Christians. Cf. Thomas W. Manson, "The Problem of the Epistle to the Hebrews," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 32 (1949): 1–17. For an overview of the different possibilities, see Attridge, 51, and Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 8–9.

⁴See, for example, the interesting proposal by John P. Meier concerning the "ring structure" of chap. 1, in which he attempts to show that the seven scriptural quotations in 1:5–14 coordinate with seven declarations made about the Son in 1:1–4; as such, this *exordium* ring follows a seven-fold symmetric progression which begins with the subject of exaltation and proceeds to creation, eternity, back to creation, cleansing, back to exaltation, and finishes with the result of exaltation ("Structure and Theology in Heb 1, 1–14," *Biblica* 66, no. 2 [1985]: 168–89).

relationship to the angels, and the third (Ps 45:6–7 in 1:8–9 and Ps 102:25–27 in 1:10–12) the eternality of the Son's reign.¹

The grammatical basis for the contrast between Christ and the angels, which will emerge in Heb 1:10–12, first becomes apparent through the μὲν . . . δέ construction that frames vss. 7–8 and is further developed throughout vss. 8–12.² The description of angels in vs. 7 as "winds" and "flames of fire" which derives from Ps 104:4 (LXX 103:4): ὁ ποιῶν τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ πνεύματα, καὶ τοὺς λειτουργοὺς αὐτοῦ πῦρ φλέγον, "He makes winds his angels, flames of fire his servants," corresponds with other traditions in the Bible in which God made the natural elements into servants (Ps 148:8; cf. 1QH 1:10–11).³ For the writer of Hebrews, the point is that the angels are part of God's creative activity; by being made into πνεύματα, "winds," and πυρὸς φλόγα, "flames of fire," it is clear that they belong to the created realm.⁴ The further use of the particle δέ, in vs. 8, is intended to emphasize the contrast between the Son who is enthroned forever and the ephemeral existence of the angels, a theme well expressed in this passage through the quotation of Ps 45:6 (LXX 44:7): πρὸς δὲ τὸν υἱόν, Ὁ θρόνος σου ὁ θεὸς εἰς τὸν

¹This proposal is presented in George H. Guthrie, *The Structure of Hebrews: A Text-Linguistic Analysis*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 73 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 61, and also, with certain slight modifications, Thompson, 354–55, and Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 24.

²Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 28. The conjunctive particle δέ functions with adversative force and is often connected with μὲν, which also serves as a particle, and that together may be rendered "on the one hand, on the other hand" (Liddell, *LSJ*, s.v. "Δέ," "Μὲν").

³A conflation of the 'winds' and 'flame' metaphor is apparent in Jub 2:2 where the writer(s) report that "the angels of the spirit of fire" are among those things that were created on the first day of creation (see Wintemute's translation of Jubilees, p. 55). Cf. 4 Ezra 8:21–22.

⁴The Hebrew text of Ps 104:4: עָשָׂה מַלְאָכָיו רִיחוֹת מְשֻׁרָרִים אֶשׁ לֵהֵם, is considered ambiguous and can mean either, "He who makes his angels/messengers into winds," or "He who makes winds his angels/messengers" (Thompson, 357, n. 22), though translations almost always render it as the latter (NASB, NIV, RSV; cf. Ellingworth, 120). It is also common to translate πνεύματα here in the LXX as "winds"; Heb 1:7 is the only occurrence in the letter where πνεῦμα means "wind." Koester aptly observes the appropriateness of this "since wind, like fire, is a natural force and since the passage contrasts the abiding position of the Son with the changeable elements in nature" (193). For another usage of Ps 104:4 in the context of developing early Christology, see *1 Clement* 36:3 (trans. Ehrman, LCL 2:101); this work, written in Rome around 96 C.E., was likely dependent upon Hebrews (Koester, 21–23; 198).

αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος, καὶ ἡ ράβδος τῆς εὐθύτητος ράβδος τῆς βασιλείας σου, "But of the Son he says, 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, the righteous scepter is the scepter of thy kingdom.'" Thus, in the pericope of 1:7–9 the writer brings to the LXX his own christological reading; one which also happens to presuppose clear theological differences from what is commonly found in other Second Temple apocalyptic traditions. James Thompson highlights this point as follows:

In Heb, Christ is eternal because he is a heavenly being; in the Jewish traditions of the OT and apocalyptic literature, the reign εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα (*Ps. Sol.* 17:4; *Test. Judah* 22) is attributed to an earthly being. The author's contrast between the eternal Son and the changeable creation in this catena further indicates that the attribution of eternity to the Son presupposes the spatial distinction between the heavenly and earthly.¹

The citation of Ps 102:25–27 (LXX 101:26–28) in Heb 1:10–12 indicates the writer's intention of introducing further into his argument "the category of transitoriness-eternity."² But whereas this category was applied previously to Christ and the angels, the contrast is here broadened to encompass the heaven and earth. As David deSilva aptly points out, "Unlike previous antitheses, this one is inherent in the quotation and not the product of the author's construction."³ The first two stichs of the Psalms citation in vs. 10 affirm the attribution that early Christians made to Christ as the creator of heaven and earth: Σὺ κατ' ἀρχάς, κύριε, τὴν γῆν ἐθεμελίωσας, καὶ ἔργα τῶν χειρῶν σου εἰσὶν οἱ οὐρανοί, "Thou, Lord, didst found the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of thy hands." A further comparison may be drawn as well to Heb 1:2b where the

¹Thompson, 359. Thompson follows the premise that the writer of Hebrews is distancing himself from the apocalyptic tradition altogether, based especially on 12:27–28 (360, n. 38). This perspective, however, seems to imply too strong of a distinction between the eschatological and cosmological strands of the letter, characteristic of an earlier "history-of-religions" approach to the text. The eschatological shaking of the "heavens" mentioned in 12:27–28 bears similarities with the imagery in 1 En 60:1 where the visionary describes the shaking of "the heaven of heavens." This would at least suggest that the Jewish apocalyptic tradition exerted much more influence on the writer than Thompson acknowledges. For the problems of a history-of-religions approach to Hebrews, see Koester, 59–63.

²Use of this important designation here, and throughout the following research, is attributed to Thompson (359).

³deSilva, *Perseverance*, 99.

writer already spoke of the Son, δι' οὗ καὶ ἐποίησεν τοὺς αἰῶνας, "through whom also he created the world."¹ The angels are never mentioned in the quotation of vss. 10–12 (or in Ps 102 for that matter) but they may be implied in the reference to "the heavens,"² which would indicate their inclusion within the domain of Christ's creation. In any case, the writer's explicit focus here is to employ the Psalms quotation as the basis for legitimating a strong contrast between the eternal realm of the Son-creator and his creation. This theme becomes especially apparent in the words of vs. 11a, αὐτοὶ ἀπολοῦνται, σὺ δὲ διαμένεις, "they will perish, but thou remainest," as well as vs. 12b, ἀλλαγῆσονται, σὺ δὲ ὁ αὐτὸς εἶ, "they will be changed. But thou art the same"—both passages that contain conjunctive particles highlighting these contrasts. The first of the two terms expressing this cosmic transformation, ἀπολοῦνται, is from the common root ἀπόλλυμι and in the middle, indicative tense here means to perish/to be lost.³ The other term, ἀλλαγῆσονται, is from the root ἀλλάσσω and has the meaning "to alter or change";⁴ both verbs are in the third person plural and relate to the main subjects in vs. 10, τὴν γῆν . . . καὶ . . . οἱ οὐρανοί, "the earth . . . and . . . the heavens." The root ἀλλάσσω also occurs in Acts 6:14 when the Jews accused Stephen of declaring that Jesus would destroy the Temple, καὶ ἀλλάξει τὰ ἔθη ἃ παρέδωκεν ἡμῖν Μωϋσῆς, "and will change the customs which Moses delivered to us," and is used by Paul twice in 1 Cor 15:51–52 to refer to the transformation that believers will undergo at the resurrection, πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγησόμεθα . . . ἡμεῖς ἀλλαγησόμεθα, "but we shall all be changed . . . we shall be changed."⁵

¹A similar status is ascribed to Christ in Col 1:16: ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς . . . τὰ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἔκτισται, "for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth . . . all things were created through him and for him."

²Ellingworth, 126.

³Liddell, *LSJ*, s.v. "Ἀπόλλυμι."

⁴Friedrich Büchsel, "Ἀλλάσσω," *TDNT*, 1:251–52.

⁵See Bauer, *BDAG*, s.v. "Ἀλλάσσω."

Interestingly, Paul's use of the future passive form of ἀλλάσσω in 1 Cor 15 bears considerable correspondence with what occurs in Heb 1:12 (where it is linked with the phrase, "like a garment" [ὡς ἱμάτιον]) since he anticipates that at the resurrection Christians will also experience "putting on" (ἐνδύω) a new immortal, incorruptible body (vss. 53–54). Ellingworth suggests that this eschatological use of ἀλλάσσω may refer to a common tradition in early Christianity,¹ which is enlightening because of how Paul elsewhere frequently equates baptism with resurrection (e.g., Col 2:12, 3:1–3; Rom 6:3–5). As seen, in early Christianity baptism denoted the removal of moral impurity, which was frequently expressed in metaphorical terms as a stripping off of old garments and a reclothing of new. Since the writer of Hebrews most likely knew of this tradition and incorporated it into his own distinct understanding of Christian baptism as a symbol of the new cosmic covenant, then it is quite plausible that the word ἀλλαγῆσονται also came to embody for him strong covenantal significance—by denoting the collocation between the eschatological transformation of the believer and that of the universe.² The imagery of individuals changing old garments for new during baptism would have enhanced this association significantly.

A critical concept which the writer of Hebrews derives from his interpretation of Ps 102:25–27 is that Christ embodies all the attributes of divine permanence and immutability, based on his own ascension and enthronement at God's right hand (cf. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12). This point becomes especially apparent in vs. 11a where it is stated with reference to Christ and his creation: αὐτοὶ ἀπολοῦνται, σὺ δὲ διαμένεις, "they will perish, but thou remainest." The importance of this clause is determined by the fact that it

¹Ellingworth, 129.

²This verb is used in a similar context in the *Epistle of Barnabas* 15:5, which concerns a Christological interpretation of Gen 2:2: "And he rested on the seventh day.' This means that when his Son comes he will put an end to the age of the lawless one, judge the impious, and alter the sun, moon, and stars (καὶ ἀλλάξει τὸν ἥλιον καὶ τὴν σελήνην καὶ τοὺς ἀστέρας); then he will indeed rest on the seventh day" (*Epistle of Barnabas* 15:5 [trans. Ehrman, LCL, 2:69]; emphasis mine).

provides the crux for the writer's category of transitoriness-eternity. As Lane well states, therefore, "the concept of abiding permanence finds expression in the contrast between the perishability of the cosmos and the 'remaining' of the Son."¹

The word διαμένεις, "to remain," is especially significant in 1:11a, leading Thompson to suggest that its presence in Ps 102 was what initially influenced the writer of Hebrews to adopt the scripture into his catena.² Elsewhere, he employs various forms of μένω to describe Christ as the one who "remains" (7:3, 24)—a point that emerges as a central theme in Hebrews (cf. 6:19–20; 7:16, 28; 13:8). The writer also uses μένω when he wishes to describe the contrast between the heavenly "abiding" inheritance of the Christian and the fading institutions of this world (10:34; 13:14);³ this is most apparent in the eschatological passage of 12:27, which 1:11 anticipates, where the "unshaken things" are said to "remain" (μείνη).⁴

As indicated already, the contrast between Christ and the angels mentioned in 1:4 provides the organizing framework for the catena of scriptures which comprise Heb 1:5–14. What is particularly significant about the clause in vs. 11a is that it picks up elements of this contrast implicit in the quotation of Ps 104:4 in vs. 7 where angels are depicted as πνεύματα, "winds," and πυρὸς φλόγα, "flames of fire." Therefore, they also are among those created things that will be affected when the heavens and earth ultimately pass away (αὐτοὶ ἀπολοῦνται); though Christ himself "remains" (σὺ δὲ διαμένεις).⁵ The writer here would have undoubtedly agreed with the perspective in 1 En

¹Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 31.

²Thompson, 359–60. In the NT διαμένεις occurs only in Heb 1:11 and 2 Pet 3:4.

³Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 31; cf. Thompson, 361.

⁴Cf. Ellingworth, 359. For more on the background of this word and its occurrence in the New Testament, especially in the Johannine writings which contain over half the total uses, see Friedrich Hauck, "Μένω," *TDNT*, 4:574–76.

⁵Attridge, 60–61.

60:1 where the visionary witnesses that "the heaven of heavens was shaking and trembling with a mighty tremulous agitation, and the forces of the Most High and the angels, ten thousand times a million and ten million times ten million, were agitated with great agitation."¹ As James Thompson correctly summarizes, the writer is fundamentally concerned in the context of Heb 1:10–11 for developing a strong "spatial distinction" between creation and the heavenly world, one which draws closely upon parallels in 1:7–8: "Thus the characterization of the created order (and implicitly, of angels) is made on the basis of its mutability. . . . The author's interest is to distinguish radically between the changeable creation and the immutable Christ."²

With these important points in mind, another word that carries considerable meaning in the context of Heb 1:10–12 is *παλαιόω*, "become old" or "decay through lapse of time,"³ which appears in vs. 11b (Ps 101:27 LXX): *καὶ πάντες ὡς ἱμάτιον παλαιωθήσονται*, "they will all grow old like a garment." The verb occurs in the passive tense, third person plural and has as its subject the "heavens" and "earth" (vs. 10), standing in apposition to what was stated in the first stich of vs. 11: *αὐτοὶ ἀπολούνται*, "they will perish." For the writer *παλαιόω* was "theologically significant"⁴ especially when coupled with *ἱμάτιον*, "cloak," since, by associating old age with destruction, it set up the basis for the clothing change metaphor that would serve to express a crucial component of his cosmological and eschatological outlook.

This use of *παλαιόω* in connection with *ἱμάτιον* occurs not only in the context of Ps 101:27 but is well-attested throughout the LXX. For example, in Isa 51:6 the eternal salvation offered by Yahweh is contrasted with the temporality of the earth which "will

¹For translation, see Isaac, 40.

²Thompson, 360–61; cf. 359.

³Liddell, *LSJ*, s.v. "Παλαιόω"; cf. Bauer, *BDAG*, s.v. "Παλαιόω."

⁴Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 31.

wear out (παλαιωθήσεται) like a garment." And in Isa 50:9, instead of the earth, it is the enemies of Yahweh who "will wear out like a garment." Job states in his complaint the same notion of human frailty: "Man wastes away (παλαιούται) like a rotten thing, like a garment that is moth-eaten" (13:28). Of particular note is Sirach 14:17 where this metaphor is linked directly with the idea of a 'covenant': "All flesh becomes old (παλαιούται) like a garment, for the covenant from of old is 'You must die.'"¹

As these examples indicate, the verb παλαιόω provided the writer of Hebrews with a considerably rich context for expressing his concept of transitoriness-eternity in light of Christ's resurrection and ascension into heaven. Given earlier considerations of the typology of baptism in the letter, especially in 10:19–22, it is conceivable that the imagery of the heavens and earth being discarded like old garments also signified in his mind the same socio-cosmic transformation that occurs symbolically during the immersion and re-clothing of baptizands. Though the verb is never used in a baptismal context in Hebrews, the evidence presented in early Christian literature describing the rite as an exchange of 'old' garments for 'new,' especially to symbolize disenfranchisement from the world, may well offer potentially significant insights concerning the writer's own adaptation of this imagery for his purposes.²

The significance of παλαιόω in Heb 1:11 is further enhanced by the fact that the writer only employs the word elsewhere in 8:13, where it occurs *twice* to denote the passing away of the Mosaic covenant. The importance of this feature will require a fuller discussion on the covenantal significance of παλαιόω and its implications for the theology of Hebrews in a subsequent section. At this point it is simply helpful to note that Heb 8:13 is especially intriguing since it strengthens the argument that the clothing change

¹For further examples in the LXX of this verb, see e.g., Josh 9:13; Lam 3:4; and Neh 9:21.

²See pp. 95–101 above.

metaphor provided the writer with a critical means to link the demise of the cosmos with the obsolescence of the old covenant.

Further evidence that the writer saw the clothing change metaphor as a valuable component in the development of his new covenant cosmology becomes clear by his addition of the phrase "as a cloak" (ὡς ἱμάτιον) in the second stich of Heb 1:12. Putting it aptly, Attridge states: "As a cloak the heavens will be not simply changed, but 'removed' (ἀλλαγῆσονται)."¹ This phrase does not occur in the LXX or any of its witnesses which suggests that it was most likely added by the writer to emphasize the transitoriness of creation.² By drawing upon the quotation of Ps 101:27 and slightly altering it for his purposes, therefore, the writer was sending a powerful message to his congregants who were tempted to place their faith in the material realm: "The Son will change one order of creation for another as easily as a human being changes one cloak for another, while remaining himself unchanged."³ Again, an intriguing possibility to consider in this context is whether the writer of Hebrews envisioned baptism and the simultaneous changing of individual 'garments' as also reflecting a collocation between the eschatological transformation of the believer and that of the universe. The correspondence between the occurrence of the verb ἀλλάσσω in Heb 1:12 (Ps 102:28) to describe the 'transformation' of the heavens and earth, and its use by Paul for identifying the transformation of believers at the resurrection (1 Cor 15:51–52), when they will experience the "putting on" of immortality (vss. 53–54), certainly suggests the basis for a shared set of ideas between the two sources on the issue of baptism/resurrection as a type of reclothing.

¹Attridge, 61.

²Ibid., 61, n. 131.

³Ellingworth, 128.

Through his use of Ps 102:25–27 and its statement about the dissolution of the heavens and earth, the writer of Hebrews demonstrates an intense interest in orienting his listeners' attention away from an exclusive focus on the material realm. By emphasizing the permanence of Jesus Christ, over and against the mutability of the created realm and even the angels, he wishes to emphasize for the struggling congregants that their disenfranchised status in the world was only temporary and that soon they too would receive the full eternal inheritance promised to all God's children (9:15; cf. 1:14, 6:12). Craig Koester summarizes the writer's notion of transitoriness and eternity as follows:

The world has no independent existence, but depends upon the power of the Son of God, who will remain when heaven and earth perish. The implication is that if faith is based on the empirical world, it is captive to the cycles of decay and death, and is therefore doomed to perish. For faith to endure it must be placed in the Son of God, who endures.¹

This statement highlights well the main argument in 1:10–12 and further points to the strong similarities that it shares with 12:26–28 where the transitory nature of the world is also contrasted with the eternal realm in which Christ abides. The implication is that while the cosmos and the institutions based upon it will ultimately be destroyed, Christians can be assured that they have already received the 'unshakable kingdom' to come by faith.² The significance of Heb 12:26–28 and the contribution that it makes in the writer's literary and theological strategy will be detailed in later discussion.³ For now,

¹Koester, 203.

²Thompson offers an insightful comment on these two passages: "It is admittedly difficult to establish the author's intent in such a passage as 1:10–12, inasmuch as the author cites the text of Ps 102:26–28 without giving an exegetical comment. In the absence of any exegetical comment, the interpretative key to 1:10–12 must be the parallel passage, 12:26–28, where the author comments on his tradition" (360, n. 38). Though the present research argues that there is much more behind Heb 1:10–12 than what Thompson realizes, his point is well taken that these opening and closing passages in the letter are very similar in content and meaning.

³Scholars have given considerable attention in recent decades to the literary elements within Hebrews, especially in light of the awareness that it was written with a view toward oral delivery and in order to achieve a maximum persuasive effect among its audience. A particularly well-informed discussion of the structure and rhetorical strategy of Hebrews is found in the recent commentary by Craig Koester (83–92). For a careful survey of scholarly investigations into the rhetorical and literary structure of

however, it is necessary to give further attention to the points already raised about the role of angels in chap. 1 of Hebrews and, more specifically, what meaning they contribute to the development of the writer's argument concerning the strong contrast between the transitory realm of creation and the old covenant associated with it, on the one hand, and the immutability of Christ and the new covenant, on the other.

Angels, Creation, and the Two-Covenant Contrast

Scholars of Hebrews are readily aware that the catena of chap. 1 is intended to demonstrate the superiority of Christ over the angels and that Ps 102:25–27, in particular, reinforces this claim by contrasting the permanence of Christ with the transitory nature of the creation where the angels happen to reside. The point is best expressed by William Lane as follows: "Heaven and earth, the realm of the angels, both belong to the created realm, which will change and decay."¹ A central issue that remains, however, is to determine more precisely what implications this awareness might have had on the broader contours of the letter and especially the writer's covenantal, cosmological, and, ultimately, eschatological understanding. An important component of this inquiry to keep in mind as well is the question of whether the strong contrast between Christ and both the angels and creation may have provided a foil for the writer's subtle polemic against the Jerusalem Temple.

There has been a certain degree of reticence among commentators about extending the influence of Heb 1:5–14 beyond the domain of the first chapter. For example, Loren T. Stuckenbruck observes that there is a certain "logical distance" between the argument of chap. 1, which contrasts Christ with the angels, and the

Hebrews, see Guthrie, 29–35. As he points out, rhetorical and literary approaches both are generally concerned with elucidating a work's stylistic features as well as the milieu in which it was written; though, "rhetorical" usually denotes more about aspects of comparison to patterns of Greco-Roman oratory (35). Since this particular approach does not reflect the concern of the present work, the more traditional word "literary" will be employed when dealing with structural components of Hebrews.

¹Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 31.

paranesis of 2:1–4 where this contrast is applied to the distinct revelations delivered through Christ and the angels.¹ Harold Attridge speculates about the various purposes of the catena and suggests that it serves "at least superficially" to link themes in 1:1–4 regarding Christ's exaltation with the author's ensuing exposition about his humiliation (2:5–9); "this manifest function may be all there is to the matter."² In addition, William Lane expresses doubts about whether the content of 1:5–14 has any close relation to the rest of the address.³ From these perspectives, therefore, it appears that the influence of the catena is not commonly seen to extend much beyond the domain of chap. 1. One probable reason is that scholars have focused their interpretative efforts on Heb 1 with attempts to understand why the writer set forth such a strong contrast between Christ and the angels in the first place; the common view is that he was addressing problems associated with some form of angel worship in the community.⁴ In any case, isolating the catena from other parts of the letter has done little to enhance understanding of its purpose in the writer's literary strategy.⁵

¹Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology: A Study in Early Judaism and in the Christology of the Apocalypse of John*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament 70 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 127–28.

²Attridge, 50–51.

³Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 33.

⁴See e.g., Yigael Yadin, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Epistle to the Hebrews," in *Aspects of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Chaim Rabin and Yigael Yadin, Scripta Hierosolymitana 4 (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1965), 39–40; Ronald Williamson, *Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970), 194; and, to a certain extent, Bruce, *Hebrews*, 51. A view that has become increasingly popular over the years suggests that the writer of Hebrews intended his treatise as a polemic against a form of early Ebionism, which was seen to be threatening to the emerging orthodox Christology, and which was based on a belief in Jesus as an angelic being who was less than divine (Hugh Montefiore, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Harper's New Testament Commentaries [New York: Harper & Row, 1964], 41; James D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity* [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977], 260–61, cf. 242; and, more recently, Michael D. Goulder, "Hebrews and the Ebionites," *New Testament Studies* 49, no. 3 [July 2003]: 393–406). For an overview of the Ebionite doctrine of angels, see Daniélou, 144; cf. 57.

⁵For a recent exception, see Koester who draws heavily upon Greco-Roman writers, especially Quintilian, to elucidate the formal structure of Hebrews (83–86). With regard to the issues surrounding

Further insights into the role of the opening catena and especially of Heb 1:10–12 become more apparent, however, once these sections are related to a broader understanding of the writer's important two-covenant contrast. While the word διαθήκης, "covenant," does not appear in Hebrews until the midpoint of his discourse (7:22), the writer's initial declaration of the contrast between Christ and the angels and the heavens and the earth, already enumerated, makes further sense if examined in light of the role that was commonly ascribed to angels during the Second Temple period as mediators of the Mosaic covenant. In Heb 2:2 the writer draws upon this awareness to formulate an *a fortiori* comparison indicating that if disobedience against "[God's] word spoken through angels" (ὁ δι' ἀγγέλων λαληθεὶς λόγος) deserved punishment in the Mosaic era,¹ denial of Christ's present salvation deserves even greater retribution. The basis for this angelic tradition is suggested by and may have originated from the theophanic vision described in Deut 33:2 (LXX): Κύριος ἐκ Σινα ἦκει . . . ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ ἄγγελοι μετ' αὐτοῦ, "The Lord came from Sinai . . . on his right hand *were* his angels with him." A similar understanding finds expression in Jubilees (1:27, 29; 2:1) when the Torah is dictated to Moses by "the Angel of the Presence." Furthermore, in the New Testament when Stephen addresses the Jewish council he refers to the theophanic angel who spoke to Moses at Mt. Sinai (Acts 7:38; cf. vs. 53) while Paul mentions that the law was "ordained by angels through an intermediary" (Gal 3:19).² And near the end of the first century Josephus records Herod as saying, "We have learned the noblest of our doctrines and the

chap. 1, he mentions that a "more promising approach is to note that an exordium often leads *indirectly* to the main issue of the speech" and goes on to outline how Jesus' superiority to the angels serves as a framework in the letter for addressing the issues confronting the listeners (200–201).

¹Ellingworth offers the helpful note that the verb λαληθεὶς implies "by God," namely that he is the agent of the action, so that δι' ἀγγέλων should be translated as "through," not "by angels" (137).

²On angelic mediation of the law, see also F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 176–78.

holiest of our laws *through angels* (δι' ἀγγέλων) sent by God."¹

Notwithstanding the widespread awareness of the important role that angels were understood to play in mediating the law during the Second Temple period, the writer of Hebrews does not indicate any specific interest in this tradition other than to provide a foil for developing his sharper contrast between the law and Christ. There are several exegetical and thematic clues which suggest such a strategy on his part. First, it is interesting that the writer's description of angels in Heb 1:7 (cf. Ps 103:4 LXX) as πνεύματα, "winds," and πυρὸς φλόγα, "flames of fire," bears strong resemblance to occasions in Israel's history when angels were seen as ministering to God's people in various forms of imagery associated with creation, such as in the burning bush or the pillar of fire in the wilderness.² This depiction is evident for example in Exod 3:2 when the angel of the Lord appeared to Moses as a flame of fire (φλογὶ πυρός).³ As seen from the LXX, in fact, the phrase φλογὶ πυρός is closer to the way that the writer of Hebrews cites Ps 104:4 (πυρὸς φλόγα) than the actual Greek of the psalm (πῦρ φλέγον), suggesting that he may have had the Exodus passage directly in mind.⁴ Philo mentions as well that the pillar of flame which led the Israelites in the wilderness might have been inhabited by an "unseen angel" (ἀφανῆς ἄγγελος)—"one of the lieutenants of the great King."⁵ Again, the major points here indicate that for the writer of Hebrews the association of the law

¹Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 15.5.3, §136 (trans. Marcus, LCL, 8:66-67; emphasis mine). Marcus translates the reference δι' ἀγγέλων as "from the messengers" and believes it to refer to prophets or priests (pp. 66-67, see note).

²These helpful points are highlighted by Kenneth Schenck, "A Celebration of the Enthroned Son: The Catena of Hebrews 1," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 120, no. 3 (2001): 475 (see especially n. 27).

³Cf. Judg 6:11-24 and the account of Gideon's visitation by the "angel of the Lord" where the "angel" is interchangeable with "YHWH" (see vss. 14-16).

⁴For these insights, see Schenck, 475, n. 27. Thompson suggests that the different reading given in Heb 1:7 may be attributed to the particular LXX text which the writer happened to use (357, n. 21).

⁵Philo *On the Life of Moses* 1.166 (trans. Colson, Loeb Classical Library [LCL], 6:360-61). For additional sources which make a clear association between angels and fire, see Jub 2:2 and 1 Kgs 19:12.

with angels is nullified by the identification of angels with "winds" and "flames of fire," since this creation is a realm that will ultimately pass away.

Another factor that suggests a diminution of angels in relation to the law is the writer's conviction concerning the atonement and exaltation of Jesus Christ. It becomes clear throughout the letter that the law (which is virtually equated with the levitical cultus [9:15–22; 10:8]) could not bring one to perfection (7:11, 10:1), and therefore is replaced by Christ's own unique sacrifice for sin (9:11–14; 10:12). He is presented as a permanent priest (7:11–28), who has built a new 'house' (3:1–6; 10:21) with access to the true sanctuary in heaven (8:1–10:18). It is precisely on the basis of God's revelation of his Son that the "last days" have arrived (1:2) and the stage set for his "inaugurated eschatology."¹ Since Christ is exalted at God's right hand (1:3), in the unshakable heavens (12:25–29), he has acquired a greater name and status than the angels ever possessed in the created realm (1:4). Therefore, the implication is that by giving the Son obeisance, the angels, and the law which they represent, are now subjugated under him (1:6)—to show the Son's sovereignty over all of creation (1:13; cf. 2:5-9). What these preceding points indicate is that by first drawing upon scriptures and traditions which specifically associated the angels with creation, and that implied their role as mediators of the Mosaic covenant, the writer of Hebrews appears to have formulated a considerable basis for legitimating the demise of the old realm and its supporting institutions. Through the category of transitoriness-eternity already seen in Ps 102, therefore, he shows how the contrast between Christ and both the angels and the law indeed carries with it strong *cosmological* and eschatological overtones.²

A third major factor which gives credence to the writer of Hebrews' thematic two-covenant contrast in relationship to the angels (and law) is evident in the last verse of the

¹Bruce, *Hebrews*, 46 (see n. 14).

²See Schenck, 481.

catena where he mentions that they serve as "ministering spirits (λειτουργικά πνεύματα) for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation" (1:14). The passage occurs as an "exegetical comment" on Ps 104:4 in 1:7, echoing the key words πνεύματα, "winds," and λειτουργούς, "servants," which are there quoted.¹ Again, the Second Temple literature offers strong antecedents for the writer's adaptation of the idea of angels as ministering spirits. An especially provocative reference occurs in 1 En 40 where mention is made of four angels that stand before the "Lord of the Spirits" and have specific names—Michael, Raphael, Gabriel, and Phanuel—and functions. Most pertinent here is Phanuel who is described as being "set over all actions of repentance unto the hope of those who would inherit eternal life" (vs. 9),² a notion strikingly similar to what is conveyed in Heb 1:14.

Further evidence from the Second Temple period indicates that angels were understood to be intimately connected to the heavenly cultus. According to Philo of Alexandria, "The highest, and in the truest sense the holy, temple of God is, as we must believe, the whole universe, having for its sanctuary the most sacred part of all existence, even heaven, for its votive ornaments the stars, for its priests the angels who are servitors to His powers."³ An even clearer example, however, of the strong association that certain sectarian Jews made between the angels and the cultic administration of the law occurs in Testament of Levi 3:5 where the archangels in the third heaven are described as those "who serve (λειτουργοῦντες) and offer propitiary sacrifices to the Lord on behalf of all the sins of ignorance of the righteous ones"—"a rational and bloodless oblation" (cf. 3:4–6).⁴ Although in Hebrews the writer generally uses λειτουργέω, "to serve/minister,"

¹Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 32.

²For translation, see Isaac, 32. Additional references to angelic intercession are evident in 1 En 9:1–11; 15:2; 40:6; 47:2; 99:3; 104:1.

³Philo *On the Special Laws* 1.66 (trans. Colson, LCL, 7:137).

⁴For translation, see Kee, 789. Further evidence of angelic priests in Second Temple Judaism is

and its cognates to refer to service connected to the sanctuary (8:2, 6; 9:21; 10:11), it is uncertain whether or not he implies a cultic function for the angels in 1:14.¹ In any case, what is apparent is that while angels were positively associated with the law in Second Temple Judaism, the writer of Hebrews seems to have utilized this tradition diminutively as a foil to legitimate his own cosmological and eschatological contrast between the mediators of both covenants.² These points are strengthened further by the writer's claim in 8:10 that the "laws" have now been written on hearts and minds, through the new covenant of Christ, drawing support from Jer 31:33; thus, the role of angels as legislators of the Mosaic covenant is rendered obsolete as the means of transmitting the law has changed.

Given these preceding insights, the writer's use of the words λειτουργός, "minister," in 8:2 and λειτουργία, "ministry," in 8:6 to describe Christ's role as mediator of a new covenant could hardly have failed to remind his listeners of similar language spoken with reference to angels in 1:7 and 1:14, thus extending the juxtaposition between the Son and the angels already indicated. Kenneth Schenck defends this view on the basis that strong consideration must be given to situating the catena of Heb 1 "within the broader matrix of Hebrews' thought and rhetoric."³ As he argues, since the major theme

provided, for example, in Jubilees, which describes the creation of the "angels of the presence" (2:2) and indicates that the Levites are blessed by God because they have been elected "to serve in his sanctuary as the angels of the presence and the holy ones" (31:14). Cf. Attridge, 99–100.

¹There has been some debate over this issue. For example, while the term λειτουργικός, "ministering," in the LXX always has a cultic meaning (Exod 31:10; 39:12; Num 4:12, 26; 7:5; 2 Chr 24:14), Hermann Strathmann argues that in Heb 1:14 the word "is not cultic and is independent of the LXX" ("Λειτουργικός," *TDNT*, 4:231); this is a position with which Attridge also tends to agree (62, n. 148). On the other hand, Ellingworth argues that this interpretation seems "perverse" especially since a cultic role is prominently assumed by angels in Heb 12:22 (133).

²For more on this point, see Schenck, 482–84. Along somewhat similar lines, Randall C. Gleason argues that the excessive reliance upon angels for national deliverance, healing, and personal protection within Second Temple Judaism posed a serious threat to the belief in the pre-eminence of Christ among Jewish Christians; on this basis, the writer claims that only through Jesus could they receive the necessary 'help' (Heb 2:18; 4:16) to remain faithful during the coming eschatological judgment ("Angels and the Eschatology of Heb 1–2," *New Testament Studies* 49, no. 1 [January 2003]: 90–107).

³Schenck, 471.

of the catena—"Christ's cosmic enthronement" and the inauguration of a complete salvation—implies with it the subordination of the angels and their role as mediators of the old covenant, it is plausible that "the inner dynamic of Hebrews' thought world connects angels with the later argument even though they are not mentioned explicitly."¹ The most obvious objection to this proposal is that after 2:16 the writer indeed does not refer to the angels again until the end of his exposition (12:22; 13:2). Nevertheless, based on the multivalence of his thought world, as well as the evidence for the correspondence between priests and angels in Second Temple Judaism, there remain strong possibilities for an implied association to the ministering angels in the beginning of chap. 8.²

Further consideration of this matter derives from closer reflection on Heb 8:1–2, which scholars have seen as a major transition in the writer's argument since he there announces his "main point" (κεφάλαιον) and prepares to elucidate the particulars of Christ's priestly sacrifice and heavenly ministry.³ In his important contribution to the study of Hebrews' literary structure, George H. Guthrie detects a conceptual correspondence in the letter between the discussion of the Son's exalted status over the angels (1:5–14) and his superior priestly ministry in 8:3–10:18; just as the first section is hinged by an important transition in 2:5–9 to the earthly sphere which concerns Jesus' solidarity with humanity and the necessity of becoming lower than the angels (2:10–18),

¹Ibid., 484. Koester hints at some of these considerations. For him Christ's superiority to angels in chap. 1 reflects an important rhetorical relationship to the exordium (1:1–2:4), proposition (2:5–9), and conclusion of the speech (12:22–24) as the author compares the original humiliation of Christ below angels, and subsequent exaltation above them, to a similar dialectic being worked out in the listeners' situation—where suffering precedes future glory: "Christ's exaltation gives beleaguered listeners hope that they too may experience a glorious future with Christ and the angels in a world that transcends what can be seen with the eye" (201). Finally, in response to those who believe that the angel-Christ contrast was only intended "as a rhetorical device to exalt Christ," Gleason makes the following statement but does not develop it further: "It is true that Christ's contrast with angels is an important part of the rhetorical strategy developed throughout Hebrews" ("Angels and Eschatology," 91).

²Attridge maintains that the writer of Hebrews likely derived his notion of Jesus as heavenly priest directly from the idea of angelic priests that was prominent in Jewish tradition (100).

³See e.g., deSilva, *Perseverance*, 279–80, and Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 204.

so also 8:1–2 provides a new spatial point of reference ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, "in the heavens," while echoing themes already enumerated in the exordium (1:3, 13).¹ These points indicate further literary and theological evidence for how the writer apparently drew upon the common understanding in his day of angels as "ministers" (λειτουργοῦντες) of the Mosaic covenant as means to establish an important contrast with Christ as minister of the new covenant; one especially that would have considerable eschatological and cosmological implications in the rest of the letter. Kenneth Schenck helpfully explains this complex dialectic as follows: "In ch. 1, as the author is drawing the audience into his 'rhetorical world,' he pits Christ against the angels in the most general way—as the mediatorial representatives of the two ages and two orders he will contrast in much greater detail in his argument proper."²

On the basis of the preceding discussion the inner connection between the angels, the created realm, and the old covenant in the catena of Heb 1 has become more readily apparent. Drawing upon Ps 102:25–27 as the crux of this dialectic, the writer shows exegetically that the announced dissolution of the heavens and earth also provides the basis for framing a considerable contrast between the mediators of the two covenants. This awareness is determined primarily through an understanding of the category of transitoriness-eternity. While the angels were understood in scripture and Second Temple tradition to function as "ministering spirits" between God and his people during the time of the old covenant, the writer emphasizes that this role was confined to the created realm since they took on the form of "winds" and "flames of fire" (cf. Ps 103:4 LXX). On the

¹Guthrie, 106–109, 121–24. As Guthrie further indicates, the major spatial transitions which the writer of Hebrews provides to his listeners are based largely on allusions and quotations from Ps 110:1; for example in 1:3 he mentions that Jesus ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν ὑψηλοῖς, "sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high," and then provides a formal quote of the psalm passage in 1:13 (preceded by πρὸς τίνα δὲ τῶν ἀγγέλων εἶρηκέν ποτε—"But to what angel has he ever said"). In 8:1, after considerable treatment of Jesus' earthly life, the writer alludes again to the psalm but the ἐν ὑψηλοῖς, "on high," mentioned initially in 1:3 is replaced with ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, "in heaven" (see especially p. 123).

²Schenck, 484.

other hand, the major point of Hebrews is that Christ's enthronement takes place beyond the created realm in the unshakable kingdom where God's throne is located (e.g., Heb 1:3, 13; 8:1; cf. 12:25–29). Since the writer believes that the removal of the old created order is an essential component in the full inauguration of the new covenant (12:27), this implies that the previous role of the angels is now rendered obsolete; "they cease de facto to be God's mediators to humanity."¹ The interplay between covenantal judgment and the displacement of angels is perhaps no more vividly illustrated than in 1 En 60:1, 6:

In the same parable (I saw) that the heaven of heavens was quaking and trembling with a mighty tremulous agitation, and the forces of the Most High and the angels, ten thousand times a million and ten million times ten million, were agitated with great agitation. . . . And when this day arrives—and the power, the punishment, and the judgment, which the Lord of the Spirits has prepared for those who do not worship the righteous judgment, and for those who take his name in vain—it will become a *day of covenant* for the elect and inquisition for the sinners.²

The plausibility therefore exists that a similar apocalyptically oriented understanding as indicated in this passage also influenced the writer of Hebrews' own worldview.

At the same time, it is important to clarify that in the letter the angels are not completely dismissed. They are instead brought into a new role within the Christian cosmos—this time as "ministering spirits" commissioned to serve those inheriting God's salvation (1:14).

To summarize the main points so far, while Heb 1:10–12 has traditionally been taken as indicating the sharp contrast between the permanence of Christ and the transitory nature of the creation where the angels reside, further exploration has shown that the passage offers a more expansive statement about the writer's theological conceptualization of cosmos, creation, and the relationship between the covenants in light of the Christ event. This seems to confirm, as claimed earlier, the important relevance of the "clothing change of heaven and earth" theme as means for expressing the contours of

¹Ibid., 481.

²For translation, see Isaac, 40 (emphasis mine).

the *cosmic covenant* in Hebrews; indeed, if the 'garments' of heaven and earth include the Mosaic covenant, which the angels mediated, then the statement in 1:10–12 concerning their dissolution represents a considerable argument for the superiority of the new covenant over the old. These points are highlighted nicely by Peter Leithart as follows:

The Son is rolling up and changing the 'garments' of heaven and earth (1.10-12), for he is the one through whom God made the ages (αἰῶνες). That these 'garments' and 'shakable things' include the institutions of the 'first covenant' is evident from the first lines of the epistle, where the author contrasts the filial word with the Torah spoken through angels (1.1-2; 2.1-4; cf. Gal. 3.19).¹

Cumulative evidence from the letter of Hebrews has revealed that the literary and theological strategy of the writer was formulated by his considerable awareness of the complex cosmological and eschatological changes associated with Christ's inauguration of the new covenant. This became especially apparent by observing how the exordium of Hebrews is characterized by a strong set of contrasts between the permanence of Christ and the transitory realm of creation, including the angels, which together can be summarized by the metaphor of the "clothing change of heaven and earth." At the same time, there are yet further instances in Hebrews where this theme appears to play itself out as part of his broader conceptual understanding, some points of which were already adduced in connection with Heb 12:26–28. As will be shown in the following section, the lines of influence of the "clothing change" theme extend well beyond the domain of the first chapter, becoming detectable especially in relation to the writer's repetition of the verb *παλαιῶ* in Heb 8:13—where the reasons for the strong degree of urgency in his letter also emerge.

The Covenantal Significance of *Παλαιῶ* in Hebrews 1:11 and 8:13

Another important way in which the theological dimensions of the "clothing change of heaven and earth" theme emerge in Hebrews is, as already seen, through the

¹Leithart, 56.

occurrence of the verb παλαιόω, "to be old or antiquated," in 1:11b: καὶ πάντες ὡς ἱμάτιον παλαιωθήσονται, "they will all grow old like a garment." In earlier discussion it was observed that throughout the LXX the word frequently occurs in contexts which compare the transitory nature of creation and human life with the wearing out of a garment. This was especially helpful in understanding the use of παλαιόω in Ps 101:27 and how it provided a crucial witness to the development of the writer's eschatological and cosmological perspective: for even though the heavens and earth will eventually *wear out* like a garment, Jesus Christ endures forever (cf. Heb 13:8).

The theological significance of παλαιόω also becomes enhanced in light of the preceding discussion on the role assigned to the angels in the catena of Heb 1. While angels were much extolled in Jewish tradition as ministers of the Mosaic covenant, the writer emphasizes that they are inherently part of the created realm—as "winds" (πνεύματα) and "flames of fire" (πυρὸς φλόγα) (1:7; cf. Ps 103:4 LXX). The dissolution of the cosmos like the *wearing out* of an old garment therefore implies for the writer that their function in relation to the law has also become obsolete; hence, Christ's superiority to the angels is an important argument for the superiority of the new covenant over the old.

The observation that the changing of the 'garments' of heavens and earth in Heb 1:10–12 includes the institutions of the Mosaic covenant also draws significant support from the occurrence of παλαιόω in 8:13 where the writer uses it twice to describe the covenant as "obsolete and growing old": ἐν τῷ λέγειν καινὴν πεπαλαίωκεν τὴν πρώτην; τὸ δὲ παλαιούμενον καὶ γηράσκον ἐγγὺς ἀφανισμοῦ, "In speaking of a new covenant he treats the first as obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away." The passage occurs at the close of a segment in chap. 8 where the writer has presented his thesis concerning the "better" quality of the new covenant (vs. 6). This he supports further with a direct quote from Jer 31:31–34 (8:8–12) to prove that God

himself intended to set aside the "first" covenant as ineffective and flawed (vs. 7) in order to establish a new covenant based on "better promises" (vs. 6). The basis for this new covenant proceeds from the logic of the first half of the chapter; the writer declares his "main point" (κεφάλαιον) that Jesus is the high priest in the heavenly sanctuary who is seated at the right hand of the "throne of majesty" (8:1–2), thus setting forth the stark differences between his ministry and the levitical ministry which occurs on earth in a sanctuary that is merely "copy" and "shadow" of the heavenly one (8:4–5). As Craig Koester well points out, "by contrasting these earthly institutions with their heavenly counterparts, the author allows their limited and transient qualities to appear."¹ Based therefore on the superior nature of his ministry, Christ is declared to be the "mediator of a better covenant" (8:6) which for the writer presupposes the flawed character of the old covenant (8:7) and necessitates its ultimate demise—indicated by παλαιόω in 8:13.²

This occurrence of παλαιόω in a covenantal context is especially significant since it marks the only other appearance of this verb in Hebrews outside of 1:11 and suggests that its earlier usage there in connection with the metaphor of a worn-out article of clothing must have also provided the writer with an important means to describe more visually the demise of the 'first' covenant. Notwithstanding, comment on the writer's use of the verb *twice* in Heb 8:13 is usually sparse indicating that scholars have failed to discern the possibility for the existence of additional theological and literary associations between the passage and 1:11.³ Attridge states, for example, that "what we have here is more of a rather simple exegetical inference. If one of two covenants is 'new' the other

¹Koester, 383.

²In Heb 8:7 the writer mentions, εἰ γὰρ ἡ πρώτη ἐκείνη ἦν ἄμεμπτος, οὐκ ἂν δευτέρας ἐζητεῖτο τόπος, "for if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion for a second," which Guthrie sees as forming an *inclusio* with 8:13 based on the occurrence in each passage of the word πρώτη, a reference to the old covenant (85–86).

³See Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 210; Koester, 388; and Ellingworth, 418–19.

must be 'old.'¹ And even Leithart, who formulates the basis for the significance of the "clothing change of heaven and earth" metaphor in Hebrews, makes only two passing references to Heb 8:13 and mentions no direct connection between it and 1:11.²

Because of this lack of recognition of any connection between Heb 1:11 and 8:13, it is perhaps worth returning briefly to George H. Guthrie's study on the text-linguistic structure of Hebrews where he mentions that "one of the most neglected topics in discussions on the structure of Hebrews is the author's use of various transitional devices."³ His analysis covers nine different transitional techniques; one of the most significant he terms "intermediary transition," involving a "unit of text which stands between two major sections of the discourse."⁴ Two important examples of this device are found in 2:5–9 and 8:1–2, which serve to transition between both 1:5–14 and 2:10–18 and 5:1–7:28 and 8:3–10:18, respectively.⁵ According to Guthrie, the development of the writer's argument throughout these expositional sections is both spatial and logical, since he frames his discourse by following Jesus' path from the heavenly sphere to the earthly sphere, and back to the heavenly, while also giving attention to the progressive and orderly unfolding of the expositional units.⁶ The transition points are where strong verbal links and allusions between the coordinating sections become most apparent.⁷

¹Attridge, 248.

²Leithart, 56, 62.

³Guthrie, 94. Guthrie refers to text-linguistics, which in some circles is termed 'discourse analysis,' as "an approach to examining a text by which a critic seeks to understand the relationship between the various sections of an author's discourse" (36–37; cf. 46).

⁴Ibid., 95–96; cf. 105–11.

⁵Ibid., 121–24. Cf. pp. 127–28 above.

⁶Ibid., 121–27.

⁷For a descriptive overview of Guthrie's study on the transitional techniques employed in Hebrews, see Lane, *Hebrew 1–8*, xc–xcviii.

The initial movement of expositional material in Hebrews is represented by the focus on the Son's exaltation above the angels (1:5–14) which begins in 1:3 with him having "sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high" (ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν ὑψηλοῖς), based on an allusion to Ps 110:1.¹ The transition in 2:5–9 signals a switch to the second movement of discourse where attention becomes focused on the earthly sphere and Jesus' humiliation, suffering, and the necessity of him becoming lower than the angels (2:10–18), followed by his selection by God as high priest and the permanence of this priesthood (5:1–7:28).² The third movement comes in the next transition in 8:1–2 where Jesus is again described as the one who ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, "sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven" (recalling themes in 1:3, 13, based on Ps 110:1), but this time in preparation for expansion upon his superiority to the earthly cultus and priests (8:3–10:18),³ which will include, of course, discussion about the superiority of the new covenant (8:7–13).⁴ As Guthrie implies, the initial subject of Christ's relationship to the angels provides a strong functional element in the writer's ensuing logical exposition: "The Son had to become lower than the angels in order to be made a superior high priest, who has been tempted through suffering and can, therefore, aid those who are tempted."⁵

¹Guthrie, 122–23; cf. 106.

²Ibid., 122, 125–27; cf. 108–109.

³Ibid., 122, 126–27; cf. 106–108. The 'expansion' that will be developed in 8:3–10:18 is signalled by the references in 8:2 to τῶν ἁγίων λειτουργός καὶ τῆς σκηνῆς τῆς ἀληθινῆς, "the minister of the sanctuary and of the true Tent" (NJB).

⁴The preceding points concerning the major 'movements' of expositional materials in Hebrews are enumerated in Guthrie, 106–109, 121–27. Cf. pp. 127–28 above.

⁵Guthrie, 125. Craig Koester shares a similar view with reference to 2:5–9, which he designates as the pivotal section in Hebrews, announcing as it does the themes to be developed in the rest of his speech: "Christ's movement from suffering to glory, his suffering on behalf of others, and the idea that one can 'see' the fulfillment of God's promises in Christ, despite their apparent nonrealization in human experience" (85; cf. 219–20).

These emerging insights take on further significance, given the nature of the preceding argument for the role that the angels play in helping to establish the writer's two-covenant contrast. While Guthrie does not raise the issue directly, his text-linguistic approach could plausibly provide an important framework for exploring the underlying conceptual correspondences and contrasts between the respective mediators of the two covenants and the orders which they represent. The identity of the angels as λειτουργικά πνεύματα, "ministering spirits," in 1:14 was seen to provide an important conceptual link with 8:2, 6 where the words λειτουργός, "minister," and λειτουργίας, "ministry," also introduce aspects of Christ's heavenly ministry. Coupled with the occurrence of the intriguing link between Heb 1:11 and 8:13 on the basis of the word παλαιόω, these points suggest further evidence of the writer's concern for drawing out a dynamic inner link between the angels, creation, and the old covenant/law, as means for highlighting their contrast with Christ.

The structural integrity of Hebrews is established by an important set of correspondences between chaps. 1:3, 13 and 8:1–2 on the basis of Ps 110:1, which is not mentioned again in the intervening material, and that further serve to highlight the spatial distinction between Christ and the transitory realm of creation with its corresponding institutions.¹ It also could be argued that this framework is extended to Heb 10:12–13 where Ps 110:1 is again alluded to, thus forming a sort of *inclusio* based on the theme of Christ's superior priesthood.² As Guthrie summarizes, "The allusion to Ps. 110:1 in Heb

¹Ps 110 is commonly acknowledged to be the most important scripture used by the writer of Hebrews (cf. Isaacs, 179). See also George W. Buchanan, *To the Hebrews: Translation, Comment and Conclusions*, AB, vol. 36, 132; cf. ix–xxii.

²See e.g., David R. Anderson, *The King-Priest of Psalm 110 in Hebrews* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 231–39. There has been considerable debate over the boundaries of the central exposition in Hebrews concerning Christ's high priesthood. Many adopt the proposal of Albert Vanhoye that the writer intended an *inclusio* between 8:3 (προσφέρειν, "to offer") and 9:28 (προσενεχθείς, "having been offered") (*La Structure Littéraire de l'Épître Aux Hébreux*, 2d ed. Studia Neotestamentica, Studia 1 [Paris and Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1976], 138–61; cf. Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 202–204; and Ellingworth, 397–98). Alternatively, for those who view 8:1 as an introduction to all that follows through 10:18, see Attridge, 216.

1:3 initiates the spatial orientation to the heavenly realm, the quote at 1:13 and the allusion at 8:1 provide means for major spatial transitions in the discourse, while the allusion at 10:12 offers the spatial end point for the expositional material. The Son begins and ends sitting at the right hand of God."¹ James Thompson, however, seems to be one of the few who has considered the broader theological dimensions of these intriguing correspondences: "It is the heavenly existence of Christ which makes possible the unlimited duration of his existence. Earthly matters, including angels and cult (cf. 8.13), are transitory; but because of the exaltation Christ is eternal."² The main point here is that on the basis of strong parallels between chap. 1 (especially vss. 3, 11, 13–14) and chap. 8 (vss. 1–2, 13), the structure and theology of Hebrews substantiate how "the inner dynamics of an angel-Christ contrast relate well to the contrast between the two covenants."³

With these important structural considerations in mind, a further basis for beginning to understand the covenantal significance of the writer's use of *παλαιόω* in Heb 8:13 may be derived by exploring other New Testament contexts in which this root occurs, especially in Paul. Following this, the discussion will turn more specifically to how the verse elucidates the provenance of the letter, especially with regard to the significance of the Jerusalem Temple, and provides insights into the reasons behind the urgency of the writer's address.

In the synoptics, *παλαιόω* and its accompanying noun form *παλαιός*, "old, antiquated," occur when there is a differentiation to be made between new and old cloth

279, and Anderson, *King-Priest*, 231–39. It is worth mentioning here as well that 8:1–6 is often considered to be an *inclusio* framed by the terms *λειτουργός*, "minister," in 8:2 and *λειτουργίας*, "ministry," in 8:6 (Vanhoey, 140–41; Koester; 380; and Buchanan, 136).

¹Guthrie, 123–24.

²Thompson, 358.

³Schenck, 483.

or other material objects. Luke has the sole use of the verb form, which he employs in the context of an exhortation by Jesus to his disciples about not becoming obsessed with earthly goods: "Sell your possessions, and give alms; provide yourselves with *purses that do not grow old* (βαλλάντια μὴ παλαιούμενα), with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail; where no thief approaches and no moth destroys" (12:33). Otherwise, the root occurs in the noun form (παλαιός) whenever Jesus discusses the impropriety of using an article of new clothing to patch an 'old' garment (Mark 2:21; Luke 5:36), or of pouring new wine into 'old' wineskins (Matt 9:17; Mark 2:22; Luke 5:37).¹

In the Pauline writings the antithesis between old and new seen in Jesus' proclamations is further strengthened and extended to the antithesis between good and evil.² This is especially evident from the apostle's use of the noun form παλαιός to refer to the destruction of the 'old' man with its corruptness and decay (Rom 6:6) as well as the putting off of the 'old' nature, to be followed by the "putting on" (ἐνδύω) of the new nature in Christ (Eph 4:22–24 and Col 3:9–10). What is interesting is that in most cases παλαιός occurs in an eschatological context where this 'clothing change' imagery is used in close proximity to the idea of baptism and resurrection (Rom 6:3–5; Col 3:9–10; cf. vss. 1–4), similar to what was already observed with ἀλλάσσω, "to alter/change," in 1 Cor 15:51–52.³ This suggests an intriguing confluence in the writings of Paul between the eschatological significance of both ἀλλάσσω and παλαιόω and his understanding of baptism seen metaphorically as a type of 'clothing change.' The close proximity of these verbs in Heb 1, vss. 11 and 12, based on the LXX of Ps 102:27–28, would seem to

¹For a further overview of the various usages of παλαιός in the New Testament, see Heinrich Seesemann, "Παλαιός," *TDNT*, 5:717–20.

²*Ibid.*, 719.

³See pp. 112–13 above. The fact that Paul's discourse on resurrection in 1 Cor 15 is integrally connected to his understanding of baptism is particularly evident in the mysterious passage of vs. 28: "Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them?" (NIV).

indicate further that they exerted a considerable influence on the writer of Hebrews' own eschatological and cosmological formulations and that both he and the apostle likely drew upon a shared complex of ideas in this regard.¹

The covenantal meaning of *παλαιώ* in Heb 8:13 finds its most explicit Pauline parallel however in 2 Cor 3:14 where the apostle uses the adjective form of the noun *παλαιός* to describe those Jews who still have the veil over their minds when they read the "old covenant" (*παλαιᾶς διαθήκης*). The context here concerns his midrashic interpretation of the account in Exod 34:29–35 about Moses' descent from Mt. Sinai with the two tablets of stone and his face radiated by God's glory, which required him to wear a veil over his face when speaking with the Israelites (cf. 2 Cor 3:7–18). According to Paul's reading of the passage, Moses' glory, which is characteristic of the old covenant, is a fading one that does nothing to transform those who listen to him (2 Cor 3:13–14a). On the other hand, Christians are "ministers of the new covenant" who reflect the Lord's glory with "unveiled faces" and are constantly "being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory" (3:18 NIV).² What is unique here is Paul's reference to the glory on Moses' face as "fading" (*καταργουμένην*; vs. 7), which he sees as proof indeed that the old covenant ministry has passed away (*καταργούμενον*; vs. 11) and is even already at an end (*τὸ τέλος τοῦ καταργουμένου*; vs. 13).³ This occurrence of the verb *καταργέω*,

¹Therefore, it is manifestly wrong to suggest, as does Seesemann, that *παλαιώ* "has theological significance only in Hb. 8:13" (720).

²James D. G. Dunn regards 2 Cor 3:7–18 as "Paul's sharpest contrast between epochs," which is evident by the presence of several "forceful negatives" to describe the old covenant in comparison with the new: "stone (tablets)" and "letter" (3:3, 6) are part of "the ministry of death" (3:7) and "the ministry of condemnation" (3:9; *Theology of Paul*, 148–49). For an extensive discussion and exegesis of 2 Cor 3:7–18, see Scott J. Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament 81 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 255–436.

³Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 148. According to Victor P. Furnish, the use of the neuter form of *καταργέω* in 3:11 and 13 indicates "the entire ministry of the old covenant symbolized by Moses" (*2 Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB, vol. 32A, 205).

which means to invalidate, nullify, abolish, wipe out, set aside,¹ is frequent in Paul and carries particularly important cosmic significance in the development of his theology. As Gerhard Delling clarifies, "καταργεῖν often means to 'put out of action' or 'to deprive of power' in cases where there has been relative value and validity in the pre-Christian period."² Elsewhere the apostle uses the word to refer to the disarming of demonic powers (1 Cor 15:24, 26; 2 Thess 2:8), the passing away of the rulers of this age (1 Cor 2:6), and the destruction of the old man and carnal nature (Rom 6:6; 1 Cor 6:13), as well as commandments and ordinances (Eph 2:15). While there is in connection with 2 Cor 3:14 some degree of ambiguity about what the verb καταργέω is referring to (the glory, the covenant, the veil covering the face of those belonging to the old covenant),³ the clause ὅτι ἐν Χριστῷ καταργεῖται, "because [only] through Christ is it taken away," reads most naturally when παλαιᾶς διαθήκης is taken as its subject, to indicate that the 'old covenant' is what is indeed fading away.⁴ Thus, as Dunn well puts it, Paul's interpretation of the veil of Moses is "that which obscures from present Israel the fact of the old covenant's fading glory."⁵

As these preceding points have shown, both Paul and the writer of Hebrews posit a strong anti-thesis between the old and new covenants through their use of the words παλαιός / παλαιόω. This was most apparent in 2 Cor 3:14 where the apostle describes the "old covenant" (παλαιᾶς διαθήκης) as "being rendered inoperative," based on the passive

¹Bauer, *BDAG*, s.v. "Καταργέω."

²Gerhard Delling, "Καταργέω," *TDNT*, 1:452–54.

³For this point, see also James D. G. Dunn, "Did Paul Have a Covenant Theology? Reflections on Romans 9.4 and 11.27," in *The Concept of the Covenant in the Second Temple Period*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Jacqueline C. R. de Roo (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 300.

⁴Delling, 454. Furnish also adopts the view that in 3:14 Paul is thinking specifically of the demise of the old covenant (210). For an interpretation of the verb as referring to the veil, see M. E. Thrall, 2 *Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 264–66.

⁵Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 421.

form of the verb καταργέω.¹ The word has important cosmological meaning throughout the Pauline writings and its association here with παλαιός in a covenantal context corresponds considerably well with Heb 8:13 where παλαιόω is used by the writer to describe the epochal passing away of the Mosaic institution.²

Earlier discussion of Heb 1:10–12 indicated that the "clothing change of heaven and earth" theme expresses very well the complexities surrounding the writer's reconceptualization of the cosmos, creation, and the relationship between the covenants. Support for this derived from a christological reading of Ps 101:26–28 in which he interprets the striking contrast between the transitory realm of creation and the permanence of the exalted Christ as evidence also that the new covenant supersedes the old. This clever exegetical assertion drew upon scripture and traditions which linked angels with creation and the Mosaic covenant; thus, the inference is that since the old garments of the cosmos are wearing out, those agents and institutions directly associated with it will also become defunct. As argued, the formulation of this claim was based on the writer's desire to orient his listeners' attention away from an overweening focus on the 'cosmic' grandeur of the Jerusalem Temple where it was claimed by competing particularists that the benefits of atonement and forgiveness had to be procured.

This raises another point of significance with regard to the argument of Hebrews and especially of 8:13 and that concerns the status of the Jerusalem Temple in the writer's discourse. While there has been considerable debate among scholars over whether or not the Temple was still in operation when Hebrews was written, evidence from the previous

¹This is the rendering given by Hafemann (310).

²Another context in which these words occur in close proximity is Rom 6:6 where Paul mentions that the 'old' carnal self (παλαιός) is crucified with Christ in order that it might be 'destroyed' (καταργηθή). Also noteworthy is his use of the noun form of παλαιόω to contrast the 'old' and new covenants in Rom 7:6: "But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we serve not under the old written code (παλαιότητα γραμματος) but in the new life of the Spirit." In 7:2 Paul describes the law as comparable to a relationship of a man to his wife; when he dies she is "discharged (κατήργηται) from the law concerning the husband."

chapter has shown that the general ethos of the work as well as the nature of the socio-religious and political tensions facing the recipients all give considerable support for situating it in a period not long before 70 C.E. and the destruction of the cultus, probably sometime in the 60s.¹ It is indeed on the basis of this view that the covenantal significance of Heb 8:13 becomes much more pronounced, as various scholars have seen in the passage an allusion to the impending destruction of the Temple—the embodiment of the old covenant.² This is suggested by the tense of the verb *πεπαλαίωκεν* which refers to a past event whose effect continues into the future and "connotes something that is not only useless or out of order, but also in the process of decaying, worn out; it is both old and ageing."³ Therefore, as William Lane well states, "The argument that by designating the covenant 'new' God declared the covenant concluded at Sinai to be unserviceable and outmoded (*πεπαλαίωκεν*, 'obsolete, antiquated') carries the corollary that God himself has

¹While establishing a precise date for Hebrews is not possible, the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman army in 70 C.E. has served as a convenient benchmark for scholarly speculations. A well-established belief especially among earlier interpreters was that the letter was written after 70 C. E.; see W. G. Kümmel who assigns it to a date "between 80 and 90" (*Introduction to the New Testament*, trans. H. C. Kee [Nashville: Abingdon, 1975], 304) as well as the evidence in Attridge, 9, n. 63. Over a quarter of a century ago, however, John A. T. Robinson detected a noticeable trend of commentators shifting to a pre-70 provenance for the letter (*Redating the New Testament* [London: SCM Press, 1976], 201). For a helpful listing of the various views, arranged according to chronology, see Ellingworth, 33, n. 105. John Dunnill describes the pessimism which has arisen over attempts to ascertain when Hebrews was written: "Scholars are equally divided between those who think an origin before the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 'impossible' and those who think an origin after AD 70 'inconceivable'" (*Covenant and Sacrifice*, 2). The recent view of deSilva seems most appropriate here: "While neither the case for not the objections to a pre-70 date are decisive, Hebrews reads more naturally in a pre-70 setting" (*Perseverance*, 21). For others who espouse a similar view, see Bruce, *Hebrews*, 21; Hughes, 30; Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, lxvi; and Barnabas Lindars, *The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 20.

²See e.g., Hughes, 302; cf. 30–32, and Ray C. Stedman, *Hebrews* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 92. Bruce also suggests this possibility (*Hebrews*, 195–96). According to Iustone Salevao, "It seems certain that for the author the old order was still in existence, but it was now antiquated and outmoded, superseded by the new order which God had already decisively established" (237).

³Salevao, 236, n. 236. Cf. Paul Ellingworth and Eugene A. Nida, *A Translator's Handbook on the Letter to the Hebrews* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1983), 175.

cancelled its validity. . . . Consequently, the old arrangement is on the point of disappearing."¹

The frequent counterargument to this proposal is that the writer of Hebrews bases his cultic arguments on the wilderness tabernacle rather than on what appears as contemporary practice at the Jerusalem Temple.² Furthermore, the writer's use of the present tense to refer to the levitical cultus (e.g., 5:1; 7:5; 8:3; 10:4; 13:11) is considered to be irrelevant since those who wrote about the Jerusalem Temple after its destruction also described it in the present tense.³ On the other hand, Paul Ellingworth clinches the essential point that makes supporting a post-70 date for Hebrews equally problematic:

It is reasonable to suppose that the author of Hebrews did not write in a vacuum, and that news of the destruction of the Jerusalem temple, and the cessation of the daily sacrifices, would have quickly reached the furthest limits of the diaspora. If Hebrews were written after that news reached its author, it is difficult to believe that he would have stated that the old covenant was merely ἐγγύς ἀφανισμοῦ (8:13), or that he would not have referred to the fall of Jerusalem.⁴

As these points therefore indicate, the writer's use of the verb παλαιόω in relation to the Mosaic covenant in 8:13 makes it plausible that he was also expecting the imminent destruction of its primary institution—the Jerusalem Temple. While some disagree with this assertion by pointing out that no conclusion concerning the status of the cultus can be based on this passage,⁵ the inference here derives not simply from 8:13 but from the overall ethos of the letter, which is strongly polemical against any forms of covenantal particularism. In the assessment of one scholar, "He [the writer] is so unsparing in his

¹Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 210.

²See e.g., Isaacs, 43; Attridge, 240, n. 128. Cf. Ellingworth, 419.

³Isaacs, 42. Josephus is the most notable example of one who continued to refer to the Temple in the present tense after its destruction; see his *Jewish Antiquities* 3.7, §151–87 (LCL, 4:387–407).

⁴Ellingworth, 32. In the LXX the word ἀφανισμός is frequently used to refer to divine judgment (1 Kgs 9:7; Jer 9:11; Ezek 6:14; Joel 1:7; Mic 1:7).

⁵See e.g., Attridge, 229, n. 49, who also follows in this assessment Herbert Braun, *An die Hebräer*, Handbuch Zum Neuen Testament 14 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1984), 246.

critique of the inefficacy of the levitical cultus and in his affirmation of the obsolescence of Torah that it is hard to see how he could have made his sermon any more offensive by adding the destruction of the 'copy' and 'shadow' to his generally unappreciative assessment of the OT cult!"¹

As the foregoing overview has shown, the various usages of *παλαιός / παλαιόω* in Paul and especially in 2 Cor 3:14 highlight the covenantal significance of this verb in Heb 8:13 and the strong antithesis between the old and new covenants assumed there by the writer.² Contextualizing Heb 8:13 within the broader argument of Hebrews, and in consideration of the social setting of the congregants, also strengthens the likelihood that the ongoing status of the Jerusalem Temple played an important role in the formulation of the writer's discourse. The theological association between Heb 8:13 and the occurrence of *παλαιόω* in 1:11, where it was observed that the changing of the 'garments' of heaven and earth also included the institutions of the Mosaic covenant, indeed strengthens the proposal that he foresaw the imminent end of the Jewish national cult. Since the "cosmic covenant" implied the complete overturning of the old order, it is plausible as well that baptism and the act of reclothing afterwards—the major symbols of incorporation into the new Christian universe—would have evoked this eschatological transformation in a very powerful way.

Finally, consideration of Heb 8:13 and the probability that the writer foresaw the imminent end of the Jewish national cult corresponds considerably well with what one writer has identified in Hebrews as "the cosmos of apocalypticism."³ Within biblical

¹deSilva, *Perseverance*, 20–21.

²The similarities that Hebrews and Paul share with regard to understanding this contrast is highlighted by Koester, also through reference to 2 Cor 3:1–18: "Paul's argument and principal OT text (Exod 34:29–35) differ from Hebrews, but like Hebrews he sharply contrasts the old and new covenants, and holds that people enter into glory through the new covenant" (113).

³deSilva, *Perseverance*, 27.

scholarship, increasing attention has emerged in recent years to the fact that, in the apocalyptic language of the New Testament, descriptions of cosmic disturbances could frequently serve also as metaphors for the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple.¹ Mark 13:31 and Matt 5:18 are well-known passages in which Jesus predicts the passing away of the 'heaven' and 'earth' in the latter days. According to Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, they must be understood, however, not as references to the end of the space-time universe as traditional interpreters have assumed, but rather to the pending destruction of the Temple and the covenantal institutions based upon it.² As he elaborates, this scheme relies especially upon awareness of the ancient cult-centered theology in which the Temple was perceived as the cosmic center of the universe and the place where heaven and earth converge; a fact well attested from Philo, Josephus, and other extra-biblical sources.³

However, an important element which fails to enter Fletcher-Louis's discussion is that this New Testament "theology of cosmic interruption," as it has been described,⁴ was largely shaped by the apocalyptic eschatology of Enochic Judaism and other similar non-nationalistic dissent movements that vehemently opposed the Zadokite worldview. As observed already, these groups drew heavily upon traditional cultic categories, but developed them into a theological conceptualization based on radically different beliefs about the nature of evil, the interpretation of divine law and its observance, and the means

¹For further discussion of the New Testament's use of apocalyptic language as means for describing political, religious, and cultural transformations, see C. B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), 243–71, and N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, vol. 2 of *Christian Origins and the Question of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 320–68.

²Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "The Destruction of the Temple and the Relativization of the Old Covenant: Mark 13:31 and Matthew 5:18," in *The Reader Must Understand: Eschatology in Bible and Theology*, ed. K. E. Brower and M. W. Elliot (Leicester, England: Apollos, 1997), 145–69.

³Ibid., 156–62.

⁴Gregory K. Beale uses this phrase in the context of his exegetical treatment of Revelation chap. 8 and the disruption of the cosmic elements described there (*The Book of Revelation*, 484–85).

for achieving cosmic order.¹ A major premise of this Enochian outlook that directly influenced the main stream of early Christian apocalyptic thought was the notion that restoration of the corrupted world order would not be obtained through the Jerusalem Temple and its priesthood, but rather through some future cosmic catastrophe in which the cultus would be destroyed and a new one established by God. This scheme is described precisely in the description of 1 En 90:28–29: "And I stood up to see, until that old house was folded up—and they removed all the pillars, and all the beams and ornaments of that house were folded up with it. . . . And I saw until the Lord of the sheep brought a new house, larger and higher than the first one, and he erected it on the site of the first one that had been rolled up."² The expression here about the "folding up" of the old cultus is intriguing, and in light of the points already enumerated concerning the "clothing change" theme in Hebrews and the cultic transformation that it implies, suggests that these ideas in Enoch may have provided the writer with inspiration for the derivation of his own unique conceptual worldview.

While the majority of first-century Jews apparently continued to hold to the Zadokite belief that the Temple was the cosmic center of the universe, it has become increasingly clear how Hebrews' own supplantation and universalization of this covenantal distinctive derives its potency from antecedents already well-established within Enochic Judaism. Following this premise, Ps 101:26–28 (LXX) presented itself to the writer as an important scripture for describing vividly what he saw as "the 'apocalyptic' costume change of heaven and earth"³ that derived from the momentous

¹See Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis*, 72–74.

²For translation, see Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 402–403. For comment on this passage and defense of the translation, "was folded up," see Patrick A. Tiller, *A Commentary on the Animal Apocalypse of 1 Enoch*, Society of Biblical Literature: Early Judaism and Its Literature 4 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 374–75.

³For this phrase, see Leithart, 60.

seating of Jesus Christ at God's right hand. For the creator would himself bring the very foundations of the old cosmic order to a cataclysmic end, thus implying also the demise of the Mosaic covenant and its supporting institutions and constituents (including the angels). As seen above, the verb *παλαιόω* plays a critical role in this context for determining the writer's understanding of transitoriness-eternity (1:11); its covenantal and cosmological significance is strengthened as well through comparison with other usages in the LXX and especially Paul. Based upon the biblical understanding of the harmonization between covenant and cult as well as the general socio-religious ethos of Hebrews, the writer's double repetition of this verb in 8:13 to refer to the first covenant as "obsolete and growing old" likely reflected his urgent conviction that the Zadokite cultus itself would soon be demolished in the wrath of God's eschatological judgment.

Recapitulation and Extension of the "Clothing Change" Theme

To recapitulate the main points discussed so far, the "clothing change of heaven and earth" theme has presented itself as a critical expression of the writer of Hebrews' awareness concerning the dissolution of the old covenantal order embodied in the Jerusalem Temple, a point made clear on the basis of evidence presented both in the opening catena of chap. 1 (vss. 10–12) as well as in 8:13. In the process, his theological strategy has also appeared as an attempt to encourage his struggling congregants with the promise of the cosmic covenant established by Jesus Christ, over and against particularist claims concerning the efficacy of the 'cosmic' Temple. For him, the revelation of Jesus' entrance into the unshakable realm provides the incontrovertible basis for Christian eschatological hope, one which contrasts significantly with the uncertainty of reliance upon the transitory nature of material existence. The writer's major premise was that the Jerusalem Temple was part of this impermanent realm that soon would be swept away in the deluge of God's judgment.

Baptism, as suggested, also plays a significant role in reinforcing the new Christian symbolic universe described in Hebrews. The washing into Christ and the simultaneous changing of old garments and reclothing with new served as an individual, microcosmic representation of the dissolution of the old covenantal order and the establishment of a new ritual process, one signified by the breakdown of cultic boundary markers between Jews and Gentiles, Levites and non-Levites.

At the same time, while the writer had forcefully addressed the issues concerning the dissolution of the covenant and its cultus, there was still the problem related to the precariousness of existence in the interim period between the ages. On the one hand, while it was significant indeed for his congregants to understand that they had already been "enlightened" and experienced the "powers of the age to come" (6:4–5) (benefits derived from their initial experience of baptism [6:2a]), they had not yet received their full inheritance in the world to come (9:15; cf. 1:14; 2:5). Likewise, while they were fully aware that Christ had inaugurated the new covenant, it was all too clear that the old had not yet disappeared (8:13). Indeed, the grandiose 'cosmic' Temple in Jerusalem still stood as a visible reminder of the enduring relevance of the Mosaic covenant where its cadre of elegantly dressed, highly esteemed priests provided the benefits of atonement and forgiveness to the people. For although the writer had declared the "Hebrews" to be priests by virtue of their baptism and sprinkling with Jesus' blood, and with full rights of access to God through the veil (10:19–22), the reality of their present existence was still all too precarious.¹ A major challenge therefore facing the writer was how to address further the issue of the troubling 'already-not-yet' aspect of Christian experience in the

¹That the writer's argument makes most sense in the context of Roman Gentile Christianity is indicated further by the fact that the imperial city provides the most convincing location for understanding the complex socio-political and religious tensions facing these congregants. The evidence for the important role that baptism played in the early church in Rome has also been helpful in supporting this proposal (see p. 94, n. 1, and pp. 96–97 above).

context of the important themes developed relating to the "clothing change of heaven and earth."

From the writer's exegesis of Ps 101:26–28 in the first chapter of Hebrews, it became apparent that the changing of the 'garments' of heaven and earth served as an apt metaphor for describing the end of the Mosaic covenant. The ripple effect of this cosmic transformation extended directly to his formal discussion of a *better* covenant (8:6–12) and, as seen through various structural and theological clues (e.g., the verb *παλαιόω*), amounted to a firm declaration that the "first" was indeed passing away and soon to vanish (8:13)—implying with it the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple. The close harmonization between covenant and sanctuary assumed throughout ancient Judaism has played a critical role so far in clarifying the writer's cosmic-eschatological awareness and the way that it directly informs his critique of the old covenant. Thus, in a complete reversal of traditional understanding, he posits that, because of Christ's permanence, the transitoriness of the Mosaic covenant also implies the eventual demise of its sanctuary.

There are yet further indications in Hebrews' theology and structure of ways that the category of transitoriness-eternity contributes to understanding the writer's strong covenantal contrast; a matter which recalls Leithart's earlier insight that "changes in sanctuary, priesthood, and law detailed in the rest of the letter are so radical that they can be described with the imagery of cosmic destruction and renewal."¹ This becomes initially evident from an interesting wordplay in 8:13 and 9:1 based on the use of *πρώτος*, "first." In 8:13 the adjective *τὴν πρώτην* occurs by itself but denotes "the first covenant" which has been abrogated, and in 9:1 the writer repeats *ἡ πρώτη*, again specifying "the first covenant," this time as means of transitioning to his formal discussion of the "earthly

¹Leithart, 56.

sanctuary" (ἅγιον κοσμικόν).¹ The association here between the fading old covenant and the earthly sanctuary on the basis of the word πρῶτος is significant and, in light of the discussion so far, suggests how the writer will also seek to enumerate the deficiencies in the cultic worship in terms drawn from the realm of "cosmic renewal and destruction."

That the sanctuary in 9:1 is described as κοσμικός supports these points further since the word denotes something "which belongs to this world" and with it, the transitoriness that is implied within the cosmos.² Undoubtedly, in his pejorative reference to the "worldly sanctuary" the writer was also drawing attention to its significant contrast with the heavenly sanctuary "which the Lord pitched, not man" and to which Christ has ascended (8:1–2). This is further apparent in 8:5 where he mentions that the earthly sanctuary, though constructed in accordance with a divine 'pattern' (Exod 25:40), was a mere "copy and shadow" of its heavenly prototype. Indeed, as William Lane well states, "The fact that it was only a copy of the heavenly reality consigns the earthly sanctuary to the realm of the changing and transitory, which has only limited validity because it must ultimately pass away."³

In his new section on the description and provisions of the earthly cultus (9:2–10) the writer plays further upon the creative ambiguity derived from the use of the catchword πρῶτος in 8:13 and 9:1, but extends it this time to the division between the two compartments of the sanctuary through the terms πρώτη, "first" (vss. 2, 6, 8), and δευτέρα, "second" (vss. 3, 7). Thus, he does not employ these numerical terms in a temporal sense, as might be expected, to designate the first sanctuary in Israel's history,

¹Commentators and translators commonly agree that "covenant" is implied in Heb 9:1; see e.g., Ellingworth and Nida, 176–77; Attridge, 230; and Bruce, *Hebrews*, 197.

²See Hermann Sasse, "Κοσμικός," *TDNT*, 3:569. See also Liddell, *LSJ*, s.v. "Κοσμικός." Cf. James W. Thompson, "Hebrews 9 and Hellenistic Concepts of Sacrifice," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 98, no. 4 (1979): 569.

³Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 206.

but rather as one bipartite structure divided into a πρώτη σκηνή, "first tent," and a δευτέρα σκηνή, "second tent"—a rare spatial usage not attested anywhere else.¹ According to Koester, "When listeners heard the author refer to 'the first tent,' they almost certainly would have thought of the entire Mosaic tabernacle in contrast to later sanctuaries,"² a usage attested by Josephus who calls the tabernacle the πρώτη σκηνή as compared with Solomon's Temple.³ With these points in mind, it becomes apparent how the writer's transposition of the structure of the sanctuary ties into his broader theological strategy. For suddenly the focus of cultic activity that the congregants would have associated with the "first tent," or entire Mosaic tabernacle, is shifted instead to the "first" (outer) court, indicating a much more limiting view of the institution and its efficacy.⁴ The effects of this major transformation are expressed succinctly by Peter Leithart in terms of a remapping of Israelite cultic topography: "Covenant and sanctuary are inseparable: a new covenant remodels the holy place."⁵

The writer of Hebrews' appeal to the use of "first" and "second" in relation to the earthly sanctuary ultimately derives from the fact that they also can designate the two covenants (8:7, 13). By drawing upon the formidable contrast that these two terms therefore imply, he proceeds to develop in Heb 9:6–10 a clever typological interpretation of the sanctuary in which the first tent serves as a παραβολή εἰς τὸν καιρὸν τὸν ἐνεστηκότα, "parable for the present [transient] age" (9:9a). This is an argument that carries with it tremendous cosmological and eschatological significance, reflecting a

¹Ibid., 219. See Wilhelm Michaelis, "Πρώτος," *TDNT*, 6:866, and also his article on "Σκηνή," *TDNT*, 7:376.

²Koester, 402.

³Josephus *Against Apion* 2.12 (trans. Thackeray, LCL, 1:297).

⁴Koester, 402.

⁵Leithart, 62–63.

continuation of the strong covenantal contrast already enumerated. For as will emerge in the following section, the writer of Hebrews transforms the notion of the 'cosmic' sanctuary, often employed within Judaism for apologetic purposes, into a metaphor of the believer's experience at the "turning point of the two ages"¹—in the difficult interim period between the dissolution of the "first" covenant and the full implementation of the "second."

Before proceeding it should be mentioned that these points also provide the best explanation for the writer's choice of the Mosaic tabernacle as the basis for his argument, rather than the Jerusalem Temple. For since his discussion of the two sanctuaries in 8:1–5 is developed in relation to the strong contrast between the old and new covenants (8:6–13; 9:1), it therefore makes sense that he draws upon the desert sanctuary which is so closely associated with the "first" covenant at Sinai.² At the same time, F. F. Bruce points out that this argument cannot "be treated as proof that the temple was no longer standing, nor yet that the readers were not Jews at all."³ The socio-religious and political ethos of Hebrews in fact has supported the probability that the target of the writer's polemic was the Jerusalem Temple, which he predicted would soon be destroyed, and this premise is what appears to provide the basis for the urgency and strength of his cultic argument.

The Sanctuary 'Parable' in the Context of Hebrews 9:6–10

The "clothing change of heaven and earth" theme, which has emerged as an important factor in Heb 1:10–12 and 8:13, is further enumerated through awareness of the deep theological meaning that the writer sees inscribed in the bipartite earthly sanctuary.

¹For this expression, see Lehne, 100.

²Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 218.

³Bruce, *Hebrews*, 198.

While indeed considered part of the old creation order destined soon to be destroyed in God's judgment, this institution nevertheless reveals for him important lessons regarding the Christian's experience of living in the interim period between the two ages. David deSilva nicely articulates this matter as follows: "The structure of the tabernacle . . . points beyond the cultic *fait accompli* to the cosmological *desideratum*, that is, the removal of the outer, created cosmos so that the believers may enter at last their unshakable kingdom, the realm of God's full presence."¹ For the writer, in other words, it appears that the arrangement of the old cultus ultimately reveals its own inadequacy.² This is a critical observation which he uses to considerable advantage in order to formulate his Christian conceptualization of cosmos, creation, and the relationship between the covenants.

The subject of the inferiority of the Mosaic sanctuary and its relation to the theology of Hebrews is a matter first treated in 8:5 when the writer describes it as a mere "copy and shadow" of the heavenly prototype, based on his reading of Exod 25:40.³ His argument is made in the context of discussion about the formidable contrast between the exalted ministry of Jesus Christ and the levitical priests (8:1–4: cf. 7:23–28), which is highlighted further by the two-covenant contrast in 8:6–13. On this basis, the writer proceeds to elaborate on the "better" nature of Christ's heavenly ministry (9:11–10:18) by first showing the limitations implied in the provisions and arrangements for worship in the Mosaic tabernacle (9:1–10). Of special significance for him is its "worldly" focus

¹deSilva, *Perseverance*, 302–303.

²Attridge, 240.

³The phrase ὑποδείγματι καὶ σκιᾷ, "copy and shadow," according to Attridge, functions in the present context as "a hendiadys clearly emphasizing the inferiority of the earthly temple" (219). The word σκιᾷ, "shadow," is Platonic and denotes what belongs to the material world in contrast to the "real" and "true" types of the immaterial realm (cf. Plato *The Republic* 7.515A–D [trans. Shorey, Loeb Classical Library, 6:120–25]). In Wis 9:8 Solomon's Temple is described as a "copy (μίμημα) of the holy tent that you prepared from the beginning." For an overview of the relationship between the cosmological dualism found in Plato/Philo and Hebrews' typology of the two tabernacles (8:5; cf. Exod 25:40), see Leonard Goppelt, "Τύπος," *TDNT*, 8:256–59.

(vs. 1), its layout into a front and rear compartment (vss. 2–5), and the amplification of what this arrangement signifies for his listeners (vss. 6–10). Thus, initial views about the inferiority of the levitical priests, in comparison to Jesus, lead the writer to ultimately critique the covenant and the sanctuary under which they serve.

While in ancient Judaism apologists saw the cosmic symbolism of the Jerusalem Temple as proof of its divine significance, Hebrews clearly argues in the opposite direction to prove that the cultus is inefficacious because it belongs to the earthly, transitory realm.¹ The reference to the sanctuary as *κοσμικός* in the opening of the cultic argument (9:1) illustrates this polemical approach and signals an important transition in the writer's discussion as he applies the two-covenant contrast, and its associations of cosmic renewal and destruction, to highlighting the significant deficiencies in the sanctuary system. These points become especially clear in the context of Heb 9:6–10 where he argues that the two-tent arrangement of the sanctuary and its cultic regulations actually provide a powerful metaphor for describing the "Hebrews" present experience of trouble and sorrow in the world and the limitations that are imposed upon their faith, so much so that the "first tent" can indeed be described as a "parable" (9:8–9a). What this means and how it relates to the writer's broader theological strategy will unfold in the following discussion. First, however, because of the complexity of the writer's conceptualization a brief elaboration on the structural and thematic elements within the pericope 9:1–10 is necessary before proceeding to his specific argument concerning the 'parable' of the sanctuary.

The Scope of Hebrews 9:1–10

According to William Lane, the primary purpose of the writer in 9:1–10 is "to assess the deficiency of the preceding covenant by referring to its cultic provisions for

¹Koester, 402; cf. Hughes, 306–307. Attridge provides a helpful discussion on the 'cosmic' Temple tradition and its points of comparison and contrast with the thought world of Hebrews (223–24).

worship."¹ This, in turn, sets the stage for his elaboration on Christ's superior ministry in "the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation)" (see 9:11–14). In earlier discussion, the possibility of making a strong association between the fading old covenant and the 'worldly' sanctuary was seen to derive from the intriguing wordplay on *πρῶτος* that occurs in 8:13 and 9:1.² Since, in this context, the writer enumerated upon the "first" covenant in terms drawn from the realm of cosmic disruption (8:13), it was suggested that he would also develop his negative evaluation of its cultus in similar fashion. This strategy indeed becomes apparent in the introduction to the new pericope: "Now even the first (*πρῶτος*) had regulations for worship and an earthly sanctuary (*ἅγιον κοσμικόν*)" (9:1). The use of the term *κοσμικός* to refer to the Mosaic tabernacle is indeed significant since the word denotes something "which belongs to this world" and with it, the transitoriness of the cosmos.³ For the writer, this clearly implies that the institution belongs to the present world, further suggesting it as one of those things which will soon pass away, to be fully replaced by the new cosmic covenant of Christ.

This introductory passage also announces the two subjects that will be treated in the rest of the pericope, namely, the cultic "regulations for worship" (*δικαιώματα λατρείας*) and the earthly sanctuary. These matters, however, are taken up in reverse order, with the arrangement of the sanctuary discussed in vss. 2–5 followed by an explication on its rituals and their symbolic significance in vss. 6–10.⁴

¹Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 225. See also Thompson, *Hebrews 9*, 568–69.

²See pp. 148–51 above.

³See Sasse, 897, and Thompson, "Hebrews 9," 569; cf. p. 147 above. The mention of the word *κοσμικῆς* here also recalls the provocative passage in Josephus concerning the priests who lead "the cosmic worship" (*τῆς κοσμικῆς θρησκείας*) in the Jerusalem Temple (*Jewish War* 4.6.2, §324 [LCL, 4:95–97]). Cf. p. 44–45 above, especially n. 1.

⁴For these points, see e.g., Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 217, and Ellingworth, 419.

The reference to δικαιώματα, "regulations," in 9:1 is especially important for the writer since he uses the same term to frame the pericope; thus, the phrase, δικαιώματα λατρείας, "cultic regulations for worship," in vs. 1 corresponds with δικαιώματα σαρκός, "regulations for the body," in vs. 10. Since these rituals cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, they are declared to be only provisional until the "time of correction" (9:9b–10). The implication, therefore, is that all "cultic regulations" are now devoid of meaning in light of Christ's perfect sacrifice and heavenly ministry (9:11–10:18). That the pericope is also framed by the μέν . . . δέ construction (9:1, 11), which carries adversative force, indicates the writer's intent of developing further the strong contrast between the fading covenant of the levitical priesthood and the new covenant of Christ (9:15).¹

In the first half of the pericope (9:2–5) the writer presents a summary of the layout and furnishings of the "worldly" sanctuary: in the first compartment stood the lampstand, a table, and the bread set before God's presence (vs. 2); a second compartment behind a second veil housed the altar of incense and the ark of the covenant containing a gold vessel full of manna, the rod of Aaron, and the two tables of the covenant (vss. 3–4). It is above the ark where the two cherubim overshadow the mercy seat, which represents God's presence (vs. 5).² The writer's main point in mentioning this elaborate arrangement however was not to comment upon the cosmic or allegorical significance of the sanctuary, but rather to focus on its separation into a front and rear compartment. This becomes clear in vs. 2 where he repeats the important term πρώτος, "first," seen already in connection with "covenant" in 9:1 and 8:13, but this time associates it with σκηνή, "tent,"

¹Thompson, "Hebrews 9," 569. For more on the function of the particles, μέν . . . δέ, see Liddell, *LSJ*, s.v. "δέ," "Μέν." See p. 111, n. 2 above.

²Many of these cultic details are taken from Exod 25–26; see especially 26:31–35 concerning the separating curtain and the arrangement of the various items on either one side or the other of that curtain. There are, however, also significant differences between the account of Heb 9:2–4 and the Pentateuch; for a thorough discussion on these anomalies, see Attridge, 236–38.

to designate the front compartment of the sanctuary or ἅγια, "holy place." Continuing the spatial metaphor, the writer refers in vs. 3 to the rear compartment as the ἅγια ἁγίων, "holy of holies," and mentions that its location was "behind the second veil" (μετὰ δὲ τὸ δεύτερον καταπέτασμα). The "second" veil is what separates the inner chamber from the outer one.¹ This feature of the sanctuary is of primary interest for the writer since it prepares for his argument in the next section of the pericope, which is to enumerate on the limitations imposed by the cultus and its "regulations for worship."

The writer's main focus in the first half of 9:1–10 is with the "worldly" sanctuary and its arrangement into two compartments; this division is highlighted by the words πρώτη, "first," and δευτέρα, "second"—terminology originally applied to the covenants (8:7, 13; 9:1). These points are developed further in vss. 6–10 where he employs the language of the bipartite sanctuary and its supporting rituals to derive a typological contrast between the 'old' and 'new' covenants and the ages to which they belong.² The intriguing wordplay seen initially in 8:13; 9:1, 2 with πρῶτος is indicated further in vs. 6 where the term describes the "first" tent in which the priests continually performed their "ritual duties." The same wordplay is then repeated in vs. 7, this time with the word δευτέραν, to denote the "second" tent (cf. 9:3) into which the high priest entered *once a year* with blood to make expiation for sins (Lev 16:32–33). This indicates further that the significance of the words "first" and "second" finds its full disclosure in the contrast between the ministries of the ordinary priests and the high priest, for in the writer's

¹Ellingworth points out that there is no evidence in the OT for the specific mention of a "second veil" (δεύτερον καταπέτασμα) and sees 9:3 as an example of the problematic nature of the writer's language (424). The term καταπέτασμα however is consistently used in the LXX to refer to the entrance into the sacred precincts of the holy of holies (see e.g., Exod 26:31–35, Lev 16:14–15, and Num 18:7) and so would indicate that the writer has adapted this term to his own purposes. The equivalent expression of καταπέτασμα in the Hebrew is מִכְבִּית לְפָרֹכֶת; its construction is described in Exod 26:31–35; 36:35. See Attridge for a helpful discussion on the symbolic meaning of the "veil" in Hebrews (184–85).

²Lehne, 100–101.

imagination it is the latter who provides an antitype of Christ and his own unique "once for all" (ἐφάπαξ) sacrifice and entrance into the heavenly realm (9:11–14).

The underlying premise of this whole schema emerges in 9:9a where the writer maintains that the first tent also serves as a 'parable' for believers who live in the "present age" (παραβολή εἰς τὸν καιρὸν τὸν ἐνεσθηκότα). This point is closely connected with the preceding statement in vs. 8 that "the way into the sanctuary (holy of holies) is not yet opened as long as the outer tent is still standing." The writer espouses a generally negative view of the Mosaic sanctuary, seeing it as κοσμικός, "of this world"; however, he indicates here that the bipartite arrangement still embodies significant cosmic-eschatological meaning for the "Hebrews." The first tent represents the limited view that they have during the "present age," similar to what old-covenant worshipers experienced through the restrictions imposed by the earthly cultus. According to the writer, the main problem with the earthly sanctuary is that its rituals, described as "regulations for the body" (δικαιώματα σαρκός) (vs. 10), pertain only to the flesh and therefore are unable to cleanse the conscience of the worshiper. On the other hand, Jesus' self-sacrifice and entrance into heaven means that believers can now enjoy continual access to God's presence by faith, through "the new and living way" (10:19–22). Because of his inauguration of the new cosmic covenant, in the words of Peter Leithart, "the first tent becomes a parable (παραβολή) for the entire dissolving first covenant."¹ As will become clear, this lesson affirms the writer's strategy of encouraging his embattled congregants during the interim period prior to the "time of correction" (vs. 10), when creation will finally be restored to its original purpose and the existing barriers to God's full presence removed.

¹Leithart, 63.

The Significance of the 'Parable' in Hebrews 9:8–9a

As the preceding overview of Heb 9:1–10 has shown, the cultic argument of Hebrews is extremely complex and indicates the working of a brilliant and original mind. For this very reason the letter has engendered significant amounts of scholarly speculation about the nature of the writer's worldview and the forces that shaped it.¹ To repeat the point raised in earlier discussion, a frequently overlooked question in the ongoing debate over the 'background' to Hebrews has been the extent to which the writer was influenced by the sets of ideas and conceptions passed down to Christianity through the streams of Enochic Judaism. It is important to consider that various groups associated with this movement in the era between the third and first century before Christ were responsible for developing a complex reconceptualization of traditional Zadokite beliefs in light of new formulations about the meaning of the universe, including such critical issues as the source of sin and evil, the order of creation, the final judgment, and the nature of divine revelation and authority. Within this purview, the compilers of the Enochic corpus cast their hero Enoch in the distinctive role as a priest-like figure who ascends to heaven and directly into God's throneroom, significantly without undergoing any transformation in his physical appearance.² The fact that Enoch is not descended from Levi, but has more ancient roots, implied for them "the existence of a pure prediluvian, and pre-fall, priesthood"—and one that was superior to the Zadokite priests.³ As argued, this

¹As L. D. Hurst mentions, "During the past century it has been read against perhaps a greater number of widely differing backgrounds than any other ancient document" (2). Luke Timothy Johnson points out that when deciphering the "complex" imagery in such sections as Heb 8–9, "It does not help to compare notes with the original in Torah, for the Christian confession stretches these symbols into almost unrecognizable forms" (*The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*, rev. ed. [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999], 471). As another scholar adds, "The inference is that *extracanonical* sources need to be reckoned with in any attempt to 'explain' Hebrews" (Anderson, "Jewish Antecedents," 529).

²For a description of this episode, see 1 En 14:8–25 as well as the discussion on p. 14 above. Himmelfarb provides a helpful overview of Enoch's role as priest within the larger context of Second Temple notions about cosmic priesthood (20–25).

³See Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis*, 74.

apocalyptic framework exerted a considerable influence on the development of the cosmic worldview represented in Hebrews and further supplies a plausible framework for understanding the writer's strong supplantation of the Jewish covenant.

At the same time, what is further intriguing about the account of Enoch's heavenly ascent and its relation to the thought world of Hebrews is the description of the layout of the cosmic temple that it offers. According to the earliest stratum of the corpus, Enoch "entered into the [great] house, which was hot like fire and cold like ice, and there was nothing inside it. . . . And behold there was an opening before me (and) a second house which is greater than the former. . . . And in every respect it excelled (the other)—in glory and great honor" (14:13–16).¹ What is apparent here is that the writer speaks of a two-room house in heaven, with God's throne in the second room. Again, the fact that Enoch is described as gaining unmediated access to this most holy domain, and even functions in an intercessory role (13:4–6), seems to reflect an attempt by the writers of this literature to portray their hero as the propagator of a new revelation concerning the nature, meaning, and applicability of Israel's covenantal distinctives.

A final point that is pertinent here as well concerns the manner in which the writers substantiate Enoch's authority at the outset of their discourse by reference to a "parable" that he received in a vision from God: "And Enoch, the blessed and righteous man of the Lord, took up (his parable) while his eyes were open and he saw, and said, '(This is) a holy vision from the heavens which the angels showed me" (1:2a).² As one commentator has well stated, the historical underpinnings of 1 Enoch, with its concern for the origins of humanity and of evil and its consequences, mean that "according to the

¹For translation, see Isaac, 20–21.

²For translation, see Isaac, 13. Cf. Matthew Black, ed., *The Book of Enoch or 1 Enoch: A New English Edition with Commentary and Textual Notes; with an Appendix on the 'Astronomical' Chapters (72–82) by Otto Neugebauer*, *Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha* 7 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985), 25.

intentions of the author this story is a 'parable' for the history of his own age."¹

These observations concerning Enoch's priest-like associations and his intercessory role in the bipartite heavenly temple, as well as the communal authority structures that supported that view, provide an intriguing framework in which to consider the cultic language contained in 9:6–10. Though, as mentioned earlier, direct correspondences are impossible to detect between the two works, there still remain a distinct set of conceptual ideas in the Enochic corpus that appear to have heavily influenced Hebrews' reformulations of traditional Jewish notions of covenant (including priesthood and cult)—all in light of his revelation concerning Jesus' own ascension to heaven.

The writer of Hebrews introduces his cultic discussion with a reference to the earthly sanctuary as *κοσμικός*, "of this world" (9:1), by which he sets up his negative evaluation of the cultus and prepares to make clear to his congregants the reasons for the superiority of Christ's own priesthood (9:11–10:18). In distinction from all other Second Temple writers who may have disavowed the practices of the Jerusalem Temple while retaining belief in the basic *idea* of the cultus, the writer of Hebrews sees the main problem with the "worldly" sanctuary as an intrinsic one, based upon its bipartite structure: because of this, worshipers could not enter into the fullness of God's presence, but were restricted to the spaces outside of the holy place where they had to rely upon the mediation of the high priest who could gain direct access to the holy of holies only once a year.² This point emerges especially in Heb 9:8 where he provides certain clues, credited

¹Fröhlich, 49–50. For more on the importance of the 'parable' as a specific type of genre in 1 Enoch, see chaps. 37–71 where frequent mention is made of the parables that Enoch has received (37:1 [also referred to as 'vision']; 37:5; 43:4; 45:1; 57:3; 58:1; 60:1; 68:1). For evidence concerning the textual occurrence of *mašal* (parable) in 1 Enoch 37–71, see David W. Suter, *Tradition and Composition in the Parables of Enoch*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 47 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979), 146–49, and the translation in Black, 42–68.

²deSilva, *Perseverance*, 300.

to divine inspiration, about the meaning of the sanctuary structure: "The Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the sanctuary (ἅγιος) has not yet been disclosed as long as the first tent (πρώτης σκηνῆς) is still standing" (NRSV). Continuing on in the next verse, the writer declares that the "first tent" actually serves as a παραβολή εἰς τὸν καιρὸν τὸν ἐνεσθηκότα, "parable of the present age" (9:9a), and that this arrangement will continue until the "time of correction" (vs. 10) when all of creation will be restored to its original purpose. The implications of this cosmic-eschatological understanding are profound indeed, and help provide further clues about the theological significance that the writer finds in the earthly sanctuary; especially as a means to portray the deep contrast between the two covenants and the ages which represent each.

As maintained so far, a critical component of the writer's argument within the pericope has been the distinctive use of the keywords πρώτη, "first" (vss. 1, 2, 6), and δευτέρα, "second" (vss. 3, 7), as the means to designate spatially the two parts of the sanctuary, and which also recalls the contrast between the two covenants (8:7, 13). However, the complexity of the argument has led to considerable disagreement among commentators about his use of language in 9:8 to describe the structural components of the sanctuary. The central question here is whether πρώτη σκηνῆς should be also taken in a spatial sense as the "outer" tent (as in vss. 2, 6) or in a temporal sense to refer to the "first" tent, or the whole Mosaic tabernacle.¹ Lane, for example, sees the reference as primarily spatial and reflecting the writer's emphasis on how the old covenant cultus posed a barrier to the worshipper's access to God.² Attridge avers this basic view, seeing no reason why the language to describe the tabernacle would be altered from what was

¹The temporal usage of πρώτη σκηνῆς is likely what the original congregants of Hebrews would have expected since this is the meaning that was best known at the time of writing (see Josephus *Against Apion* 2.12 [LCL, 1:297]); cf. p. 150 above (also n. 2).

²Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 223.

mentioned earlier in the pericope.¹ Alternatively, Ellingworth focuses on the temporal aspect of the writer's language, noted by the particles ἔτι, "yet, still," and μήπω, "not yet" (vs. 8)² and states that it is not uncharacteristic for him to change the sense which he assigns to certain words within his discourse.³ The same view is reflected in certain translations such as the NEB which renders πρώτης σκηνης as "earlier tent."⁴ The fact, however, that vss. 6–10 comprise just one compound and complex sentence suggests that the best approach to this conundrum is to see πρώτης σκηνης in vs. 8 as primarily a spatial metaphor consistent with what occurs in vs. 6, but while also acknowledging the temporal significance of the passage and its allusion to the role of the Mosaic cultus in redemptive history.⁵

The identification of the "first tent" in 9:8 as a reference to the front compartment of the Mosaic tabernacle, as opposed to the entire tabernacle itself, thus provides the context for better understanding the writer's broader strategy in 9:6–10 of using the symbolism of the bipartite sanctuary to develop a typological contrast between the two covenants and two ages.⁶ It will be recalled that his particular purpose in the beginning of the second half of the pericope (vss. 6–7) was to mention the cultic regulations of the "worldly" sanctuary, especially as a foil against which to compare the cosmic ministry of

¹Attridge, 240.

²See Liddell, *LSJ*, s.v. "ἔτι," "μήπω."

³Ellingworth, 419, 438. For example, when introducing the 'Holy of Holies' in 9:3 the writer uses the formal term ἅγια ἁγίων, though in 9:8 where the same location is implied, he uses the shortened form ἅγιον (ἁγίον); this form is also consistently used to refer to the inner sanctuary of the tabernacle in Lev 16 (vss. 2–3, 16–17, 20, 23, 27 LXX).

⁴Cf. also Bruce, *Hebrews*, 208.

⁵Norman H. Young, "The Gospel According to Hebrews 9," *New Testament Studies* 27 (1981): 200.

⁶See David Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection: An Examination of the Concept of Perfection in the 'Epistle to the Hebrews'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 133 (compare also nn. 46 and 47).

Christ who entered through "the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation)" (see 9:11–14). There, the levitical priests performed their "ritual duties" (λατρείας ἐπιτελοῦντες) in the first tent while the high priest entered the second tent annually with blood for the expiation of sins. The argument is set up through two main contrasting clauses that are framed by the μέν . . . δέ construction, and which together highlight the significant difference in status between the ordinary priests and the high priest: "The priests are continually (διὰ παντός) entering the outer tabernacle . . . but into the second only the high priest enters once a year (ἅπαξ τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ)" (9:6–7).¹ Both the phrases, διὰ παντός and ἅπαξ τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ, indicate that the writer is concerned with further elucidating the qualitative differences between the old covenant and new, by reference to the contrast between the ministry of the ordinary priests and the high priest.² In developing this typology "the author is not concerned with the double entry of the high priest, but with the contrast between the multiplicity of ordinary sacrifices and the unique yearly ritual of Yom Kippur. The contrast comes to symbolize that between the unique sacrifice of Christ and the multiple offerings of the old covenant."³ Therefore, the fact that the entrance into the earthly holy of holies is limited to the high priest only "once a year" during the Yom Kippur ceremony has special significance which the writer seeks to exploit by showing that Jesus has entered into heaven "once for all" (ἐφάπαξ) by his own blood (9:11–12). Again, the typological cruces here relating to the writer's two-covenant contrast make the most sense if the "first" tent in 9:8 is taken literally as the front compartment of the earthly sanctuary, symbolic of the fading old covenant (8:13).⁴

¹For clarification of these points, and the paraphrase of the verses, see Steve Stanley, "Hebrews 9:6-10: The 'Parable' of the Tabernacle," *Novum Testamentum* 37, no. 4 (1995): 387, 391.

²Koester provides a helpful sketch of this typology which he outlines according to the differences in the two tents (404).

³Attridge, 239. Cf. Heb 7:27; 9:26, 28; 10:10.

⁴Cf. Leithart, 63.

These points correspond closely with the additional critique of the "cultic regulations" that the writer brings to the fore in Heb 9:9b–10: Although the priests offered gifts and sacrifices all year long in the outer court, these ultimately "cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper" (μη δυνάμεναι κατὰ συνείδησιν τελειῶσαι τὸν λατρεύοντα). As Peterson points out in connection with this passage, "the search for a cleansed conscience through the sacrificial system is represented as being the concern of priests and laymen together."¹ The word συνείδησιν was widespread in the Hellenistic world and came to be used in both moral and non-moral senses to denote an individual's "awareness";² though, in the LXX συνείδησιν occurs only in Eccl 10:20, Sir 42:18 (variant), and Wis 17:10, and only in the latter case does it denote the common Hellenistic sense of a prosecutor or judge.³ Philo also conveys an understanding of this forensic meaning of "conscience" (e.g., *On the Special Laws* 2.49; *On the Virtues* 124), but combines it considerably with the Old Testament idea of subjection to God (see *The Worse Attacks the Better* 146).⁴ According to the writer of Hebrews, the repetitive nature of the sacrifices in the earthly sanctuary serves only to reinforce the 'awareness' or "consciousness of sin" (10:1–3). The problem is connected with the fact that these cultic rituals are δικαιώματα σαρκός, "regulations for the body" (9:10), which pertain only to the cleansing of the "flesh" (9:13) and therefore cannot affect the heart.⁵ Therefore, it is not implausible that in Hebrews the "flesh" represents the earthly sphere of existence that

¹Peterson, 134.

²See Attridge, 242.

³Christian Maurer, "Συνοῖδα, συνείδησις," *TDNT*, 7:909.

⁴*Ibid.*, 911–13. For more on the background of συνείδησιν with application to its use in Hebrews, see Johnson, *Going Outside the Camp*, 104–107.

⁵The limitations of the cultic sacrifices are not related to an internal/external dualism. As Koester remarks: "The problem is not that the cleansing was external, but that the cleansing was *incomplete*, since the conscience remained defiled. Those who have a clean body but a defiled conscience are not in a state to draw near to God. A more complete cleansing is required" (405; cf. Leithart, 52).

is separate from God, while the "conscience" relates to the heavenly realm "not made with hands."¹ Whatever the case, clearly for the writer the purification of the συνείδησιν requires a superior sacrifice (9:11–14).

Given these considerations, it appears that within the framework of his covenantal contrast the writer also posited a strong 'anthropological' dualism in which the "conscience" represented the second tent and the "flesh" the first.² His point therefore is that the old covenant (symbolized by the first tent) only has power to deal with external defilement since it belongs to the material realm, which will soon pass away; this notion becomes most apparent in 9:10 where the "regulations for the body" are said to be only provisional until the "time of correction." On the other hand, the eternal promises of the new covenant are now fulfilled when hearts are "sprinkled clean from an evil conscience" (10:22); a cleansing made possible by Jesus' self-sacrifice and entrance into heaven.³ Aelred Cody nicely summarizes the writer's schema as follows: "The earthly liturgy of the earthly sanctuary achieved an earthly purity, while the heavenly liturgy of the heavenly sanctuary and its new order of salvation has achieved a purity in the celestial, spiritual realm to which the conscience of man, the soul of man, belongs."⁴

As these preceding points suggest, the writer is quite severe in his polemic against the cultic regulations and the bipartite sanctuary and is certainly not impressed with its exquisite historical or cosmological meaning. He sees the so-called 'wordly' aspects of the tabernacle/temple tradition, in fact, as reflections of their association with the old

¹Eduard Schweizer, "Σαρξ," *TDNT*, 7:142.

²See Koester, 405 (cf. 98), and Thompson, "Hebrews 9," 572.

³Peterson, 136.

⁴Aelred Cody, *Heavenly Sanctuary and Liturgy in the Epistle to the Hebrews: The Achievement of Salvation in the Epistle's Perspectives* (St. Meinrad, IN: Grail Publications, 1960), 190. Thompson succinctly captures the writer's basic cosmological conception here in the following terms: "What is created, according to Hebrews, cannot bring salvation" ("Hebrews 9," 571).

order which is about to pass away.¹ At the same time, the writer is not altogether apathetic toward the earthly sanctuary since it provides the very basis for the formulation of his typology. As intimated so far, what is most compelling for him is how the "second tent" (i.e., holy of holies) functions as a symbol of heaven itself, the immutable domain of God's presence, and the age to come when that presence will be manifested throughout creation.² The notion of the second tent as representing the realm of the purified conscience also enhances this association considerably.

The preceding orientation to the writer's typological interpretation of the bipartite sanctuary, and the open critique of that arrangement in 9:9b–10, provides the basis for further understanding the specific nature of his complex argument in 9:8–9a. He introduces this passage with the genitive absolute, *τοῦτο δηλοῦντος τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου*, "by this the Holy Spirit indicates," which connects conceptually with the preceding two clauses. What indeed the Holy Spirit reveals about the meaning of the levitical ritual is clarified in the second half of vs. 8: *μήπω πεφανερῶσθαι τὴν τῶν ἁγίων ὁδὸν ἔτι τῆς πρώτης σκηνῆς ἐχούσης στάσιν*, "the way into the sanctuary is not yet opened as long as the outer tent is yet standing." The expression, *τὴν τῶν ἁγίων ὁδόν*, serves as a genitive of direction and follows examples from the LXX in which *ὁδός* is used to denote the way to something (e.g., Gen 3:24: *φυλάσσειν τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς*—"to guard the

¹Peterson doubts that the writer sees the Mosaic tabernacle as a symbol of the world, such as is reflected in Josephus and Philo, and that his view was based on the idea of the *heavenly* prototype (Exod 25:40), not creation (257, n. 41). It is hard to make strict assertions along these lines, however, especially since cosmos and creation were closely interrelated in ancient Jewish and biblical understanding. Instead, the writer of Hebrews was undoubtedly aware of the cosmic traditions of the tabernacle/temple and used them to enhance his own polemical purposes (cf. Attridge, 222–24).

²The notion that the inner sanctuary of the Temple symbolized heaven is attested by Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 3.7.7, §181 (LCL, 4:403; cf. p. 40 above). Though, it should also be mentioned here that scholars have debated the question of whether the writer's typology embraced the notion of a divided heaven commonly attested throughout Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity (see Adela Yarbro Collins's chapter on "The Seven Heavens in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses," 21–54). For further discussion on the matter, see Ellingworth, who concludes that the writer was doubtless aware of this cosmology, but does not incorporate such ideas into his letter (446–47).

way to the tree of life") (cf. Prov 7:27; Jer 2:18).¹ The meaning of the genitive case τῶν ἁγίων in 9:8 can be understood as a neuter plural, "the holies"; according to the context it implies the inner sanctuary or "holy of holies."² Again, this reflects the variability in the writer's use of language to describe the Mosaic tabernacle, since he employs the more formal term ἅγια ἁγίων in 9:3 to also describe the sacred realm behind the veil.³

Despite general agreement among commentators that τῶν ἁγίων in 9:8 denotes the holy of holies,⁴ the issue of whether the writer here means the earthly sanctuary or its heavenly counterpart as being μήπω πεφανερῶσθαι, "not yet opened," is not so immediately clear. The phrase, ἔτι τῆς πρώτης σκηνῆς ἐχούσης στάσις, "while the outer tent is yet standing," adds to this conundrum and raises further questions concerning the nature of the typology expressed here and the relation between symbol and referent. The expression ἐχούσης στάσις is usually translated as a periphrasis, "has (its) standing," though some give it the meaning, "to have status" or "legal standing."⁵ For Ellingworth, who translates πρώτης σκηνῆς temporally, and therefore as a reference to the entire Mosaic sanctuary, the imagery expressed in the phrase cannot be taken in a strictly physical sense to refer to the closure of the earthly holy of holies. After all, it was

¹Ellingworth, 438.

²Hughes, 322, n. 70; cf. 281, n. 53. See also Bruce, *Hebrews*, 208.

³In every case except for 9:1, the writer uses the word ἅγιος to refer to the holy of holies of the earthly sanctuary, or its heavenly counterpart (8:2; 9:2, 12, 24, 25; 10:19; 13:11). This corresponds with Lev 16 where the same word consistently refers to the holy of holies, equating to the Hebrew term שְׁרָטָה (vss. 2–3, 16–17, 20, 23, 27 LXX).

⁴As pointed out by Young, 198–199. Alwyn P. Salom is an exception who argues, on the basis of the general usage of τὰ ἅγια in the LXX to refer to the entire sanctuary, that Heb 9:8 also follows this pattern. The fact that the writer's imagery derives from the Yom Kippur ritual in Lev 16 where the restricted meaning of τὰ ἅγια is used has no bearing for Salom, since the word occurs there consistently in the singular, and the writer uses the plural ("*Ta Hagia* in the Epistle to the Hebrews," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 5, no. 1 [January 1967]: 60–62).

⁵Hughes, 322. Scholars usually agree that this phrase cannot be used as support for the continuing presence of the Jerusalem Temple (e.g., Attridge, 240, n. 128; Bruce, *Hebrews*, 208; and Isaacs, 43); however, for an exception to this, see Lindars, 87.

technically still open, even if only to the high priest once a year, and so on this basis τῶν ἁγίων is best defined, in contrast to τῆς πρώτης σκηνῆς, to mean the heavenly sanctuary.¹ However, other commentators maintain that τῶν ἁγίων is to be taken in its more literal sense as a reference to the inner tent of the earthly sanctuary, and that the writer here seeks to affirm how access to this sacred realm was denied to worshipers under the old covenant.²

As shown above, there exists a certain degree of incongruity in the writer's use of language which precludes strict delineations about his adaptation and use of cultic symbolism. Therefore, probably the best statement on the matter of 9:8, which leaves open some fluidity of interpretation regarding the meaning of τῶν ἁγίων, is offered by Attridge: "The point is that as long as the cultic system connected with the outer portion of the earthly tabernacle 'has standing,' the way to both the earthly and heavenly ἅγια is blocked."³ This view retains the basic premise already developed that the "first tent" refers to the outer portion of the earthly sanctuary, while also embracing the notion that the "second tent" or holy of holies is, if not a direct reference to heaven itself, certainly symbolic of the sacred realm where God dwells.⁴

A true understanding of the writer of Hebrews' conception of the earthly sanctuary described in 9:8 is impossible, however, apart from its connection to the rest of the clause that follows in 9:9a. There he indicates that a deeper significance is contained in the two tents of the sanctuary: ἥτις παραβολὴ εἰς τὸν καιρὸν τὸν ἐνεστηκότα, "this is a symbol of

¹Ellingworth, 438. For another scholar who considers τῶν ἁγίων to be a reference to the heavenly sanctuary, see Peterson, 133.

²So Bruce, *Hebrews*, 208; Hughes, 322; and, to a certain extent, Attridge, 240.

³Attridge, 240.

⁴As Helmut Koester well puts it, "since the inner part of the tabernacle, the Holy of Holies, is the type of the heavenly sanctuary, the 'tent' becomes a symbol for the heavenly regions through which Christ was to pass to enter the heavenly sanctuary itself" ("Outside the Camp": Hebrews 13.9–14," *Harvard Theological Review* 55 [October 1962]: 309).

the present time" (NRSV). One of the problems in this passage is to determine the antecedent to the relative pronoun ἥτις since it could relate either to πρώτης σκηνης in the latter part of vs. 8,¹ or to the whole situation of the divided sanctuary described in vss. 6–8.² Ellingworth and Nida lean toward the latter view, pointing out that since "so much is potentially included in the symbolism of the sanctuary, it may be legitimate to translate the first sentence of verse 9 as 'All of this is a symbol which points to the present time,' or 'All this shows us something about the present time,' or 'All of this is a picture about what is important now.'"³ One rationale for this view is the belief that the feminine gender of the relative pronoun is influenced by the word παραβολή. However, as Norman Young points out, in Hebrews the writer consistently uses ἥτις to refer back to a specific antecedent, and adjusts the gender and number accordingly (2:3; 8:6; 9:2 [here, the antecedent is also ἡ πρώτη σκηνή] 10:35; 12:5); this would therefore suggest "strong grammatical reasons" for also relating ἥτις in 9:9 back to the immediate antecedent in vs. 8, πρώτης σκηνης, the "first tent."⁴ Together, these points indicate that the most plausible reading of Heb 9:8–9a would be to follow the NASB as follows: "The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the way into the holy place [i.e. holy of holies] has not yet been disclosed while the outer tabernacle is still standing, *which* is a symbol for the present time" (emphasis and brackets mine; cf. RSV).

Determining the "first tent" of the earthly sanctuary to be the 'parable' in 9:9a opens up the basis for further probing the underlying nature of the writer's argument in this section. Two central issues that emerge here have to do with the specific meaning of

¹So Attridge, 241; Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 224; and Young, 201.

²E.g., Bruce, *Hebrews*, 209, n. 60. Cf. Peterson, 257, n. 49.

³Ellingworth and Nida, *Translators Handbook*, 187. The translation of the NEB reflects the first interpretation that the co-authors propose: "all of this is symbolic."

⁴Young, 201. See also Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 224, and Moffatt, 118.

παραβολή as well as how the "present time" of his listeners is indeed symbolized by this first tent. According to Ellingworth, "Παραβολή here clearly does not mean a narrative parable, as in the synoptics. It has rather the older sense of a rhetorical figure of speech involving a comparison."¹ This point is further enhanced by Koester, who mentions that in ancient rhetoric the παραβολή involved a comparison of things in which the resemblance was not immediately obvious.² Since the conceptual orientation of Hebrews is largely typological, the writer uses the term to draw a connection between the two covenants and to teach his congregants "that there is something in the old to be learned about the new."³ Most modern translations render παραβολή in 9:9 as either "symbol" (NRSV, NJB); "symbolic" (RSV); or else "illustration" (NIV), terms that seem to convey best the writer's theological understanding of the sanctuary.

While Hebrews makes clear that the "first tent" of the sanctuary serves as a 'parable' or *symbol*, a more difficult question concerns the nature of this symbolism and the relationship between symbol and referent.⁴ This problem especially becomes apparent in connection with attempts to determine the meaning of τὸν καιρὸν τὸν ἐνεσθηκότα, "the present time," which is somewhat ambiguous and has been interpreted as a reference to either the Old Testament dispensation or the Christian dispensation. Donald Guthrie, for example, believes the "'present' age was that which prepared for the appearing of Christ."⁵ However, elsewhere in the New Testament the perfect participle ἐνεσθηκώς or ἐνεστώς is used to designate events that are now present; Rom 8:38, 1 Cor

¹Ellingworth, 440. Cf. Liddell, *LSJ*, s.v. "Παραβολή."

²Koester, *Hebrews*, 398. See also Friedrich Hauck, "Παραβολή," *TDNT*, 5:745–46.

³Stanley, 389.

⁴Cf. Attridge, 241. Discussion on this point is further complicated by the question of whether one takes the "first tent" to be the whole tabernacle (Ellingworth, 419, 438) or the outer compartment.

⁵Donald Guthrie, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries 16 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), 183.

3:22 (ἐνεστώτα, "things present," as contrasted with μέλλοντα, "things to come"), 1 Cor 7:26 (τὴν ἐνεστώσαν ἀνάγκην, "the present time of distress"), and Gal 1:4 (τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ ἐνεστώτος, "the present evil age"),¹ and so the simplest reading is probably to take the expression in Heb 9:9 as symbolic of the age of the new covenant inaugurated by Christ.² At the same time, this clarification raises its own set of difficulties, especially since the 'present age' expressed in Heb 9:9 does not strictly follow the well-known apocalyptic schema of a strong division between the two ages. In keeping with general New Testament understanding, the writer rather uses the designation as an expression of the paradoxical reality of Christian experience in which both present and future ages overlap.³

Some would take τὸν καιρὸν τὸν ἐνεστηκότα, "the present time," to be synonymous with καιρὸς διορθώσεως, "the time of correction" in 9:10,⁴ however, such an interpretation obscures important aspects of how the tension of the already-not-yet plays itself out within the typological structure of the sanctuary parable. Like Paul, who could speak of the continuing existence of "the present evil age" (Gal 1:4) even though "the fullness of time" was already inaugurated by Christ (Gal 4:4), the writer of Hebrews addresses his concerns to those who were troubled by the fact of having experienced "the powers of the age to come" (6:5) without yet receiving the full eternal inheritance promised to all God's children (9:15; cf. 1:14, 6:12). Therefore, to clarify, it is probably best to see τὸν καιρὸν τὸν ἐνεστηκότα in 9:9 as overlapping, but not completely identical,

¹For these points, see Hughes, 323, n. 73.

²E.g., Ellingworth, 441, and Moffatt, 118–19.

³See pp. 103–104 above for more on the 'already-not-yet' paradigm, with evidence drawn from Paul and Heb 6:1–6.

⁴See John M. Scholer, *Proleptic Priests: Priesthood in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 49 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 162–63; Attridge, 241; and Ellingworth, 441.

with the *καιρὸς διορθώσεως* in 9:10;¹ in this case, the latter expression would indicate the time "when this world order will be completely superseded" (Matt 19:28; Acts 3:21).²

In light of these further insights regarding the symbolic and typological nature of the sanctuary parable, it is necessary to mention that because of the longstanding "history-of-religions" approach to addressing the letter, scholars have frequently given attention to the promotion of *either* temporal *or* spatial categories in the work, at the expense of the other.³ A primary example of this was evident in earlier tendencies of viewing Hebrews as a product of Alexandrian Judaism and, particularly, Philonic thought.⁴ Such comparisons frequently gave consideration to how each source framed the contrast between earthly and heavenly realms in terms of a shared set of ideas drawn from the world of Platonic dualism,⁵ and applied especially to interpretations of the Mosaic tabernacle.⁶ Philo, for example, concluded that the inner tent of the tabernacle stood for the unchanging realities of the noetic world, while the outer tent represented the changing

¹This helpful insight is provided by Koester, *Hebrews*, 398. Bruce suggests translating the noun *διορθώσις*, which is a hapax legomenon in biblical Greek, as "the new order" (*Hebrews*, 211, n. 66).

²Hugh Montefiore, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Harper's New Testament Commentaries (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 150. Philip Hughes also leans toward a similar view of this phrase, suggesting "the day when everything [will] be put right" (325).

³For the delineation of the issues here, see Anderson, "Jewish Antecedents," 518–23.

⁴The classic representative of this view is Ceslas Spicq, *L'Épître Aux Hébreux*, 2 vols., *Études Bibliques* (Paris: Gabalda, 1952–53).

⁵As Luke Timothy Johnson points out, Platonism divided reality into the "phenomenal" world and the "noumenal world," the former being "characterized by movement, change, and corruption—and, therefore, only partial knowledge," and the latter "by changelessness and incorruptibility because it is spiritual in nature" (*The Writings of the New Testament*, 465).

⁶For a careful assessment of Philo's interpretation of the tabernacle, especially by reference to the sections *Allegorical Interpretation* 3.95–103 and *Questions and Answers on Exodus* (esp. 2.52 and 2.82), see Mary Rose D'Angelo, *Moses in the Letter to the Hebrews*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 42 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979), 214–22. Cf. Attridge, 219. For the translation of *Questions and Answers on Exodus*, which is not included in Yonge, see Philo *Questions and Answers on Exodus* (trans. Marcus, Loeb Classical Library [LCL], Supp. 2).

world of perception¹—a concept bearing both similarities and also significant differences with the typology contained in Heb 9:6–10.² James W. Thompson reflects the *Religionsgeschichte* perspective in his approach to the eschatological section in Heb 12:26–28, where he posits that the writer of Hebrews subordinated traditional Jewish apocalyptic understanding to the terms of a Platonic, cosmological dualism between the unstable, inferior, sense-perceptible world and the unshakable, changeless, superior immaterial world of heaven.³

On the other hand, there are those who insist that Hebrews, and particularly Heb 9:8–9a, is framed by an overriding eschatological/temporal perspective. According to William Lane, for example, the first tent is "symbolic of the present age (τὸν καιρὸν τὸν ἐνεσθηκότα), which through the intrusion of the καιρὸς διορθώσεως, 'the time of correction' (v 10), has been superseded."⁴ Norman Young avers a similar view: "The language of 'first tent' has a clear eschatological purpose: it means the old covenant order now in process of dissolution by the καιρὸς διορθώσεως (9.10)."⁵ The prevalence of this traditional approach to viewing Hebrews primarily in horizontal terms is perhaps best summed up by Leonard Goppelt when he states that in the letter, "typology is a specifically biblical approach which overlaps and transcends the mythical cosmic analogy thinking of antiquity, both the cyclic analogy between the world epochs and the vertical

¹See Philo *Questions and Answers on Exodus* 2.91 (LCL, Supp. 2:140). Cf. D'Angelo, 229.

²For a helpful discussion on the relationship between the cosmology of Hebrews and the Platonic worldview, see Koester, *Hebrews*, 97–100.

³See his chapter entitled, "The Eschatology of Hebrews: A Study of 12:18-29," in James W. Thompson, *The Beginnings of Christian Philosophy: The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 13 (Washington DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1982), 41–52. For another example of an approach that views the vertical, spatial component as predominant in Hebrews, see L. L. K. Dey, *The Intermediary World and Patterns of Perfection in Philo and Hebrews*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 25 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975), 123.

⁴Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 224.

⁵Young, 202. Peter Leithart also believes that "the first tent becomes a parable (παραβολή) for the entire dissolving first covenant" (63).

analogy between the upper world and the lower, by adopting them as forms of expression."¹

An important alternative approach to these two extremes involves recognizing that the sanctuary parable in Heb 9:8–9a encompasses *both* temporal *and* spatial dimensions in the writer's broader conceptual worldview.² In commenting upon the relative clause in 9:9a, David deSilva sees it, for example, as a "parenthetical remark" which interrupts the writer's flow of thought, but nevertheless provides important insights concerning this interchange between cosmological and eschatological aspects:

This parenthesis interjects a cosmological dimension to the layout of the first tabernacle, one that will eventually be clarified by 12:26–28. The outer tent is a symbol of the present age when the visible creation itself still hides the entry into the heavenly, permanent, unseen realm. There is the implicit assurance . . . that the heavenly holy place exists even though we do not now see it, just as the holy of holies existed even though only one person a year saw it. The way will be made clear when the first chamber, that is, this visible creation, will be shaken and removed, 'so that what is unshakable may abide' (12:27).³

As these points indicate, the sanctuary parable ultimately reveals the problems and challenges of living in the already-not-yet period of Christian experience. While believers indeed understand that Jesus has entered into "the greater and more perfect tent, not made with hands, that is, not of this creation"—which is heaven itself (9:11–12; cf. 6:19–20), the writer of Hebrews seeks to make clear that the first tent represents the limited view that they still have during the present age, similar to what the old-covenant worshipers had experienced through the restrictions imposed under the Mosaic law. By comparing the bipartite sanctuary to the material realm of creation, which will eventually be removed in the final shaking, deSilva provides an insightful perspective on the way

¹See Leonard Goppelt, "Τόπος," *TDNT*, 8:258–59.

²George MacRae points out that the writer of Hebrews "has combined an apocalyptic time scheme with the Hellenistic mode of heavenly temple symbolism" and that "Heb 9:8–9 provides an explicit example of this mingling of spatial and temporal imagery" ("Heavenly Temple and Eschatology in the Letter to the Hebrews," *Semeia* 12 [1978]: 189). Cf. D'Angelo, 229–30, and Lehne, 29, 79, 100.

³deSilva, *Perseverance*, 302.

that the writer's cultic eschatology and covenantal understanding are both informed by his cosmology—and how this schema supports his pastoral concerns for addressing the 'Hebrews.'¹

In consideration of the way that scholars, on the basis of the *Religionsgeschichte* approach, have often viewed the typological framework of Hebrews in either temporal or spatial terms, it is important to realize that the writer's outlook is not confined to just one category, but operates in both.² Indeed, as Susanne Lehne aptly summarizes, the writer has constructed his conceptual scheme so that, "a temporal dualism, expressed in the sequence of the two ages, intersects with a spatial dualism of heavenly/abiding and earthly temporary realities."³ It is precisely this intersection which provides the crux of the writer's two-covenant/two-age contrast, and serves as the framework for his larger exhortation. Because of their previous confrontations with "public ridicule and other forms of humiliation and abuse (10:32–34), the congregants had to be reminded to retain faith in Christ during the present age before the full actualization of the new covenant, rather than reverting to trust in the world system. As James Thompson argues, there is no doubt that the writer draws upon the metaphysical assumptions of Platonic dualism to make clear the contrast between the transitory realm of creation (including the angels and the levitical cult, which is ἐγγὺς ἀφανισμοῦ, "ready to vanish away"), and that of Christians who experience "abiding, unshakable, and firm realities."⁴ But, as the foregoing has shown, it is important to realize that the urgency of Hebrews' message is

¹The notion of 'cultic eschatology' mentioned here conveniently describes the writer's creative use of cultic language and imagery as means for expressing the Christian hope in a better, eternal, heavenly existence. Young implies this understanding in the following: "The 'greater and more perfect tent' symbolizes the eschatologically new cultic means of access; the ἄγια is the ultimate goal of that access – the presence of God in heaven" (204–205).

²Koester, *Hebrews*, 98. For a structuralist critique of the "false disjunction" that has often been imposed upon Hebrews, see Dunnill, 227–28.

³Lehne, *New Covenant*, 29; cf. 79, 100.

⁴Thompson, *Beginnings*, 13. Cf. idem, "Structure and Purpose," 358.

also predicated upon a strong apocalyptic perspective in which the covenant plays a central role.

As argued, the universalistic scope of 1 Enoch and its strong cosmic-eschatological outlook, framed by a reformulation of the Jewish covenant, and also undergirded by a polemical stance toward the national cultus, are all elements that provide a critical framework for understanding the writer of Hebrews' own unique reconceptualization of cosmos, creation, and the covenants in light of the Christ event. Drawing upon this apocalyptic framework, the writer found the "clothing change of heaven and earth" metaphor from Ps 102:26–28 as an important means to expand his concept of transitoriness and eternity; a point which first emerged in the exordium where the rolling up of the 'garments' of heaven and earth was seen to imply a strong declaration of the superiority of Christ and the new covenant over the old institutions represented by the Mosaic covenant and the angels.

The compound sentence in Heb 9:6–10 represents a continuation of the "clothing change" theme, thus fulfilling the suggestion that "changes in sanctuary, priesthood, and law detailed in the rest of the letter are so radical that they can be described with the imagery of cosmic destruction and renewal."¹ The sanctuary 'parable' in Heb 9:8–9a emerges in this context as the writer's response to those struggling with the difficult realities of Christian experience prior to the full actualization of the new covenant. Primary to his argument is belief that the division of the sanctuary into two tents ultimately reflects its own inadequacy since it prevents worshipers from obtaining full access to God's presence. Thus, while the writer minimizes traditional notions concerning the cosmological and historical significance of the national cultus, he recognizes, at the same time, that its bipartite arrangement contains great typological significance: for just as the high priest entered into the holy of holies "once a year" (ἄπαξ

¹Leithart, 56.

τοῦ ἐνιαντοῦ) to accomplish atonement for the people (9:7), so Jesus has inaugurated a superior ministry since he entered through "the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) . . . [and into] the holy place once for all" (ἐφ'ἑαυτοῦ)" (9:11–12). By transposing the first tent of the sanctuary into a 'parable' of Christians current status in the world, the writer illustrates for his congregants the physical limitations that the material realm still imposes on them during the "present age" which inhibit their experience of the new heavenly realities, in a manner not unlike what old-covenant worshipers experienced through the legal restrictions imposed by the earthly cultus. The portrayal of this complex symbolization emerges through an intriguing play on the terms, πρώτη, "first," and δευτέρα, "second," which the writer initially applies to the contrast between the covenants in chap. 8, but then extends to his discussion on the bipartite sanctuary in chap. 9; in this manner, according to Peter Leithart, "the first tent becomes a parable (παραβολή) for the entire dissolving first covenant."¹ The inadequacy of the cultus becomes especially apparent by the declaration that its rituals are merely "regulations for the body" which cannot cleanse the conscience of the worshiper, further signifying its provisional status until the "time of correction" (9b–10).²

There are two overriding premises that emerge from the writer's argument and which relate closely to the 'already-not-yet' components of his cosmic-eschatological conceptualization. First, while the revered Jerusalem Temple remains in operation and constitutes a source of disruption and division in the lives of the congregants, it is κοσμικός, "of the world," and therefore belongs to the old creation which will soon pass away. Second, Christians must recognize that, because of Jesus' death, ascension and entrance into the true heavenly sanctuary, they now have direct access to God's throne by "the new and living way" and therefore, even greater privileges than Israel's high priests

¹Leithart, 63.

²See Peterson, 134.

(10:19–22; cf. 9:11–14). The brilliance of the writer's exegesis is thus evident in the manner in which traditional notions of Jewish cosmology, including understandings about the harmonization between covenant and sanctuary, are reinterpreted through the universalistic lens of Enochic Judaism, and adapted to fit his own unique Christian worldview.

In light of the preceding investigation on the "clothing change" theme in Hebrews, and its application to the sanctuary parable in Heb 9:8–9a, what indeed can be said concerning the novelty of the writer's new "cosmic covenant" concept? As argued, the derivation of the parable takes place in close connection with the themes of cosmic destruction and renewal enumerated in the exordium of the letter (1:10–12), and which appear again in Heb 8:13 through the influence of the verb *παλαιόω*. The important wordplay on *πρώτη*, "first," and *δευτέρα*, "second," indicates 8:13 and 9:1 to be the critical juncture at which the two-covenant contrast, implied also in the exordium, becomes further extended by the writer to his critique of the 'worldly' sanctuary. As Norman Young well observes regarding the cultic argument in chap. 9, "Our author has clearly never lost sight of his original discussion of the covenant (8.13–9.1); indeed his view of the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries and their respective atonements portrays his conception of the difference between the old and new covenant."¹ What the writer therefore is arguing for, and which lends such urgency to the message of Hebrews in general, is that the rolling up of the 'garments' of heaven and earth signals the imminent end of the current order of creation and, by implication, the destruction of its supporting institutions and representatives—the Mosaic covenant, the angels, and preeminently, the Jerusalem cultus. Contrary to all outward appearances, the congregants can take consolation in knowing that the final day of judgment is near (10:25).

¹Young, 205, n. 52.

While Heb 9:6–10 does not provide direct evidence concerning the date of Hebrews, which might be used to prove the continuing existence of the Jerusalem Temple, the general socio-religious ethos of the letter points to the probability that it was written in the pre-70 milieu of Rome. One major basis for this proposal derives from the letter's formidable inclusivistic theology, especially in consideration of the "once for all" atoning work of Christ in the heavenly temple (9:11–15). Given the affinities between Hebrews and Pauline doctrine on this and other critical points already adduced, the letter appears to serve as an important witness to the significant influence of Gentile Christianity within the imperial city by the middle of the first century. Furthermore, since the capital was known to be the site of a significant Gentile world mission (Rom 1:13–16; cf. 15:25–29), the writer's declaration of a new cosmic covenant inaugurated by Jesus and available to all peoples would have had particularly strong appeal to Gentile Christians living in the city.

Additional evidence in support of a Roman provenance for Hebrews is suggested by consideration of the social situation of the congregants themselves. The apparent dilemma of the "Hebrews" was that they were being led to particularize their faith in Jesus by certain members of the community who insisted that the Mosaic covenant had continuing validity and that the Jerusalem Temple was still to be revered as the place of God's divine presence. This thesis is sustained by wide evidence concerning the extent to which the symbolic universe of first-century Judaism, both within Palestine and throughout the Diaspora, was predicated upon the pervasive influence of the national cultus and its cadre of priests.¹ The polemical nature and general ethos of Hebrews indeed supports the likelihood that the writer was addressing his congregants in the face of the impending doom of the Temple. On the other hand, some argue that "such a claim severely limits the period of the author (66–70 A.D.) and binds him too closely to events

¹See the discussion in chapter 4.

in Palestine."¹ The problem with this view, however, is that it overlooks evidence concerning the extent to which the Jerusalem Temple continued to exert considerable influence on Diasporic communities of Jews.²

While the original destination and date of Hebrews cannot be proven conclusively, the argument here is that placing the letter within the framework of the Second Temple covenantal debate, and especially in continuity with the distinctive message of universalism contained in Enochic Judaism, coordinates well with a Roman provenance. The urgency of the writer and his strong, polemical legitimation of a new cosmic covenant for all peoples reflects very much the intensity of disagreement that arose among Jews and both Jewish and Gentile Christians throughout the imperial city and its provinces, over the nature and scope of early Christian theology. The outcome of this debate, however, was ultimately decided by the destruction of the national cultus itself, a point well expressed by Ralph P. Martin as follows: "The Jewish-Christian/Gentile issue of the Pauline period [was] resolved, namely after AD 70 when the exigencies of history nailed down the lid on the coffin of Jewish Christianity as a valid rival to the predominantly Gentile-oriented church."³ As evidence suggests, Hebrews was witness to one of the strongest universalistic streams within the early Church. Given the likelihood that the writer's audience was also comprised largely of Gentiles who were being tempted to particularize their faith, the catastrophe of 70 C.E. would have therefore provided a major vindication of his claims concerning the cosmic scope of the new covenant.

¹deSilva, *Perseverance*, 287, n. 50.

²See pp. 76–77 above, and the work of Barclay, 413–28 and 434–42.

³Ralph P. Martin, *Reconciliation: A Study of Paul's Theology* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 79. Choi also describes the destruction of the Temple as the decisive factor that led to the victory of universalism over particularism in early Christianity, and discusses the implications that this event had on subsequent developments within the Church (410–14).

**Christian Baptism Revisited:
The New 'Cosmic' Priesthood**

A final matter which was not addressed in direct relation to the sanctuary 'parable' in Heb 9:8–9a, but which certainly has important implications for understanding the writer's cultic eschatology, is the matter of baptism.¹ As suggested in the context of 6:1–5, this rite provides the framework for understanding the Christian experience of the already-not-yet; while the congregants were once "enlightened," had "tasted the heavenly gift," and experienced "the powers of the age to come" (vss. 4–5), the full disclosure of the new covenant still awaited them.² On account of their faith and the disconnection that it implied from the values and assessments of power and status inscribed in the world system as well as Jewish cultus (1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:26–28; Col 2:11–12), the "Hebrews" experienced various forms of shaming and humiliation, causing many to consider forsaking Jesus altogether. Within this social framework, baptism served as a significant means for reinforcing the writer's Christian symbolic universe, over and against those who insisted upon the continuing efficacy of the 'cosmic' temple. As Koester has well stated, "Socially, baptism . . . visibly defined a person with a community whose members were called to support each other in the face of opposition and suffering (Heb 10:32–34; 13:3)."³ That the situation of the congregants makes most sense in the context of Roman Gentile Christianity is substantiated further by evidence concerning the important role that baptism was known to have played in the imperial city from the earliest days of Christianity.⁴

¹For clarification concerning the usage of 'cultic eschatology,' see p. 175, n. 1 above.

²See pp. 103–104 above.

³Koester, *Hebrews*, 449.

⁴See p. 94, n. 1, and pp. 96–97 above.

These points concerning the socio-religious significance of Christian baptism are enhanced by the claim that the writer of Hebrews also derived his understanding of covenantal identity from antecedents already established in Enochic Judaism, where the 364-day solar calendar served as a primary symbol of sectarian commitment in opposition to the claims of the Jerusalem Temple. The calendar provided evidence of the important intersection between cult and cosmology in Second Temple Judaism, revealing the complexity and multivalence of the covenant concept during this time. Furthermore, in the discussion in chapter four above it became clear that Christian baptism also contained strong cosmic significance and, within Hebrews, was specifically associated with a critique of the traditional cultic categories, through the phrase "our bodies washed with pure water" (10:22). Indeed, the formulation of a strong cosmic covenantal identity in Enochic Judaism, cast in opposition to the Temple and Zadokite priesthood, provides an intriguing backdrop for exploring the writer of Hebrews's own transformation of baptism into a rite symbolizing the creation of a new Christian priesthood.

Given the preceding extensive survey of the "clothing change" theme in Hebrews, and its importance for expressing the writer's polemic against the Mosaic covenant and cultus, baptism suggests itself as a more central component of this legitimation. The evidence already presented in early Christian literature describing the rite as an exchange of 'old' garments for 'new,' especially to symbolize disenfranchisement from the world, offers potentially significant insights concerning the writer's use of this imagery to illustrate the transformative power and scope of the new covenant.¹ Furthermore, the intriguing correspondence between the occurrence of the verb ἀλλάσσω in Heb 1:12 (Ps 102:28) to describe the 'transformation' of the heavens and earth, and its use by Paul for identifying the transformation of believers at the resurrection (1 Cor 15:51–52), when they will experience the "putting on" of immortality (vss. 53–54), suggests the basis for a

¹See pp. 95–101 above.

shared set of ideas between the two sources on the issue of baptism/resurrection as a type of reclothing; the apostle's use of *παλαιός / παλαιόω* also supports this interchange (Rom 6:3–5; 2 Cor 3:14; Col 3:9–10; cf. Heb 1:11).¹ While Hebrews does not explicitly describe baptism in these terms, the cosmological and eschatological significance of the "clothing change" theme seen so far may well indicate how the congregants also saw their baptismal act of reclothing in relation to the 'rolling up' of the structures of the universe (cf. 1:10–12) and, ultimately, the destruction of the Jewish cultus (cf. 8:13).

The most explicit contribution that baptism in Hebrews makes to the defense of the writer's symbolic universe emerges in 10:22 where it symbolizes the rights of access that believers have gained to God's presence in the inner sanctum, based on the new covenant. The context of this passage is steeped in cultic imagery as the writer exhorts his listeners to confidently "draw near" by entering the heavenly holy of holies through "the new and living way" provided by Jesus, having "hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and . . . bodies washed with pure water" (10:19–22).² The majority of commentators on Hebrews believe the phrase, *λελουσμένοι τὸ σῶμα ὕδατι καθαρῷ*, "our bodies washed with pure water," refers directly to Christian baptism.³ While some discount this possibility, arguing that the requirement of baptism would negate the efficacy of the cross,⁴ such a view runs counter to other New Testament passages in which the rite is the primary means for appropriating the effects of Christ's death and exaltation to believers (Rom 6:4; Col 2:12; 1 Pet 3:21; Titus 3:5). Furthermore, the

¹See pp. 113–14 and 137–40 above.

²For earlier discussion on this important passage, see pp. 84–88 above.

³Attridge, 289; Bruce, *Hebrews*, 255; deSilva, *Perseverance*, 339; and Koester, *Hebrews*, 445, 449.

⁴See Markus Barth, *Die Taufe—Ein Sakrament? Ein Exegetischer Beitrag Zum Gespräch Über die Kirchliche Taufe* (Zürich: Evangelischer A. G. Zollikon, 1951), 473–79, and Scholer, 130, n. 4.

suggestion of a merely metaphorical understanding of ὕδατι καθαρῶ, "pure water,"¹ is countered by its occurrence in contexts involving explicit ritual purification (Num 5:17; 1QS 3:4, 9); Philo, for example, connects this expression with the washing of the Aaronite priests at their ordination: λούει τὸ πρῶτον αὐτοὺς ὕδατι πηγῆς τῷ καθαρωτάτῳ, "first he washed them with the purest and freshest spring water."²

The distinct reference in Heb 10:22 to both the blood sprinkling and the ritual washing has led the majority of scholars to see the consecration ceremony of the Israelite high priests as the correct typological framework for its interpretation.³ As maintained in earlier discussion, the implications of this understanding are significant indeed as the writer seems to claim, in no uncertain terms, baptism as the ritual enactment of a new Christian priesthood comprised of Jews and Gentiles, who hold privileges even greater than those of Israel's high priests. Others have also recognized how the cultic and sacerdotal language of Hebrews serves to identify the congregants as part of a priesthood of believers or, as one has put it, "proleptic priests."⁴ The imagery of Heb 10:22, as well as the broader context of vss. 19–21, therefore seems to best exemplify the writer's reappropriation of the "embedded symbols" of the Jewish cultus as means for legitimating his distinct Christian symbolic universe.⁵ By urging believers to follow Christ's example

¹Leithart characterizes and critiques Barth's spiritualizing view of Heb 10:22 as follows: "For Barth, when the writer says 'bodies washed with pure water', he means that what are not really bodies are not really washed by what is not really water" (52).

²Philo *On the Life of Moses* 2:143 (LCL, 6:518–19).

³See e.g., Lane, *Hebrews* 1–8, 286; Moffatt, 144; and Nils A. Dahl, "A New and Living Way: The Approach to God According to Heb. 10:19–25," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 5, no. 4 (1951): 406–407.

⁴Scholer, 207. For others who avow a belief in the priesthood of believers in Hebrews, see Ernest Best, "Spiritual Sacrifice: General Priesthood in the New Testament," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 14, no. 3 (1960): 273–99, and more recently, Darrell J. Pursiful, *The Cultic Motif in the Spirituality of the Book of Hebrews* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen Biblical Press, 1993), 128, 132–33. Attridge opposes such a view (288).

⁵See pp. 77–78 above.

and enter into the true inner sanctum by "the new and living way," the writer clearly indicates that "the most protected boundary in first-century CE Judaism has (metaphorically) been crossed."¹ Together, these points recall and seem to favorably support Peter Leithart's insightful study on this passage and his conclusions concerning the significance of Hebrews' cultic typology: "Baptism formed a new nation out of the old, molding the eschatological race of the Last Adam, the kingdom of priests. It is the efficacious sign of *the clothing change of the heaven and earth*, destroying the antique Israelite order and remapping the terrain."²

With these considerations in mind, it becomes possible to see how the sanctuary 'parable' in 9:6–10 correlates with the imagery of Heb 10:19–22 substantially in the development of the writer's cultic eschatology.³ As Susanne Lehne points out, "the conjunction of sprinkling, inauguration and blood in 10.19–22 depicts the NC sacrifice of Christ against the backdrop of the old covenant sacrifice, meshed with Yom Kippur typology."⁴ Very similar language occurs in 9:6–10 where the writer sees the differences in the ministries of the ordinary priests and the high priest on Yom Kippur as the basis for his brilliant symbolic interpretation of the bipartite sanctuary, contrasting the two covenants. An important means for exploring here this relationship between the typologies of the sanctuary and priesthood derives from the element of the already-not-yet aspect of Christian experience, a feature seen to play a critical role so far in the formulation of the writer's cosmic-eschatological understanding. The first component of this paradigm is reflected in Jesus' completed salvific work: he entered into heaven

¹Johnson, *Going Outside the Camp*, 79.

²Leithart, 64 (emphasis mine). See the discussion on pp. 84–88 above.

³Scholars have generally recognized that 10:19–22 is based on the material in 8:1–10:18 and therefore functions as a summation and conclusion of the preceding discussion on priesthood, covenant, and sacrifice. See Leithart, 56; Scholer, 127; and Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 279.

⁴Lehne, 114.

through his own unique self-sacrifice for sin (cf. 9:11–14), opened a "new and living way" to God's divine presence for all Christians, and serves as their "great priest over the house of God" (10:20–21), therefore fulfilling the annual Yom Kippur ceremony (9:6–7). Within this cultic framework, baptism advances the writer's typological argument considerably by indicating the significant benefits that Christians *already* enjoy (6:2–5), despite many outward contradictions. As the major symbol of incorporation into the new heavenly priesthood, the rite serves as a qualifer for present entrance into the Most holy place¹ so that the "Hebrews" (arguably comprised of many, if not entirely, Gentiles) are now able to stand by faith before God's presence, washed and sprinkled (10:22), with even greater privileges of access than Israel's distinguished high priests.

At the same time, the "way" (ὁδός) into the heavenly sanctuary, symbolized by the holy of holies of the earthly sanctuary, is *not yet* completely open to Christians since the old order is still operative during the "present age" (9:8). The intentional incongruity here in the writer's typology is often either misunderstood or not clarified by scholars. According to Steve Stanley, for example, "The obvious implication of . . . this παραβολή is that Jesus' entry into and sitting down in the heavenly tent shows that the first tent, the earthly sanctuary, no longer has any standing."² Helmut Koester, in commenting on the passage, overextends the writer's eschatological tension: "Hebrews considers the present time as the 'time of reformation' (9.10). Consequently, the first tent is already abolished."³

In his discussion of Heb 9:9–10, James Swetnam offers a more insightful perspective on the cultic typology of the writer, suggesting that the heavenly "cultic

¹Leithart, 53, n. 8.

²Stanley, 396. See also Spicq, *Hébreux*, 2:254. This point again draws attention back to the meaning of the expression ἐχούσης στάσιν, "has [its] standing," in 9:8. For a more accurate rendering of this symbolism, see Koester, *Hebrews*, 397. Cf. Attridge, 240.

³Koester, "Outside the Camp," 311.

realities" inaugurated by Christ were foreshadowed by Old Testament rituals such as "foods" and "drinks" and "cleansings." On this basis, he formulates a strongly deterministic view of the Christian cult in which the Eucharist and baptism serve as the two main components of the new Christian priesthood inaugurated by Jesus.¹ What is particularly intriguing about this hypothesis, however, is the connection Swetnam finds between 9:8 and 10:19–20 through reference to the "way" (ὁδός) not being "manifest" initially, but then "manifest" because of Christ's sacrificial act and entrance into the heavenly sanctuary (which, for him, is the Eucharist).² If indeed baptism and Eucharist are the New Covenant rituals that fulfill the Old Testament "foods" and "drinks" and "cleansings," through Christ's entrance into them, Swetnam then asks, "What does it imply about the 'entrance' of the addressees of the epistle into the holy of holies?"³ He goes on to speculate: "Such an entrance seems envisioned in 10,19-20 and 9,6-8. Granted that the Christian high priest has 'entered into' the *hagia*. What does it mean for his followers to 'enter'?"⁴ The problems here are masked by the inherent difficulties in Swetnam's theology; however, for the present purposes, his considerations raise important questions about the nature of the writer's cultic typology and the already-not-yet

¹James Swetnam, "On the Imagery and Significance of Hebrews 9,9-10," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 28 (1966): 158; cf. 167. The formulation of Swetnam's hypothesis is convoluted as he interprets 9:9-10 based on a particular understanding of ἐπί and ἐπικείμενα which connotes the imagery of something blocking something else (cf. John 11:38), so that the Old Testament sacrifices and offerings (9:9) are seen to be obstructing or "lying athwart" the "foods" and "drinks" and "cleansings" (9:10). His premise here is to support the idea that Christ's entering into the "true tent" (9:11) is really the Eucharist (cf. 162): "If the imagery of Heb 9,9-10 depicts the sacrifices of the OT as blocks lying across the way into the OT rites, with the latter being inefficacious because of the impotency of the former, then the terminus of Christ's act of entrance should involve the NT rites. For if the thought of the author of Heb is to be consistent with his use of imagery . . . the entrance of Christ through his sacrifice should be 'into' the OT rituals, which thereby become endowed with the efficacy of his presence and become the NT rituals, capable of bringing the worshipper to union with God" (161).

²Ibid., 157, 160, 165, 169 (cf. 162 for his equation of the true heavenly sanctuary with the Eucharist).

³Ibid., 172.

⁴Ibid., 172–73.

component inscribed within it. These observations are well summarized by Iustone Salevao as follows:

The point is, for the author, the first tent (i.e. the earthly/material sacrificial cult) was still in existence. The old covenant order represented by the first tent was surely in the process of dissolution though it had not completely given way to the new. This means that through Christ's self-sacrifice the way into the heavenly tent was now opened for his followers (10.19-20). *This access to the heavenly tent nevertheless was only a proleptic possession of the heavenly reality primarily because the old order had yet to pass away.*¹

The cumulative effect of these insights is to reinforce the cosmic significance of Christian baptism within the writer's cultic eschatology. Since the 'new' cosmic covenant clearly implied the complete destruction of the 'old' order and its supporting institutions, including the Jerusalem Temple, the major symbol of incorporation into the new Christian universe would have evoked this transformation in a very compelling and provocative manner. For the congregants, the "way" into the true sanctuary was made available through Jesus' own veil-rending self-sacrifice so that their rights of access there as washed and sprinkled priests provided considerable consolation during times of struggle in the world—especially when facing off over issues concerning the efficacy of the Jewish sanctuary. Despite the limitations imposed upon their experience of the new heavenly realities, these "Hebrews" were exhorted to look beyond their difficulties to the final day of judgment when the 'garments' of heaven and earth would be rolled up and all institutions based upon them, dissolved. As deSilva has well put it: "The 'way into the holy places' has now been revealed to the Christian community; they traverse that path proleptically in their communal worship but must wait until the eschatological 'shaking' (12:26-27) to cross that threshold in an ultimate sense."²

By critiquing the traditional concept of the earthly sanctuary as the cosmic center of creation, the writer introduced for his congregants a novel typological reconfiguration

¹Salevao, 378–79 (emphasis mine). These same points are found in Lehne, 100.

²deSilva, *Perseverance*, 337.

of Israel's symbolic universe so that Christian baptism came to symbolize inauguration into a new cosmic priesthood in a manner which also contained within it a stringent polemic against the primary institution of Judaism. If indeed the writer of Hebrews envisioned both baptism and the simultaneous changing of individual 'garments' as a microcosmic representation of the larger eschatological judgment and the removal of the 'old' heavens and earth, it would have served to enhance the effectiveness of his cosmic-eschatological conceptualization substantially.

In a final addendum to this discussion of the complex cultic typology of Hebrews, it is noteworthy that John Dunnill sees an important association between the present status of Christians and the Aaronite priests who, during their ordination, dwelt "at the door of the Tent of Meeting" for seven days (Lev 8:32–35) in a type of "transition from a secular to a sacred status."¹ This process involved an initial stage of separation as Aaron and his sons were washed, re clothed and anointed, and then required to present a pair of offerings (8:1–21); the next stage involved an act of blood consecration after which the priests had to reside in the sanctuary for the seven-day liminal period, living on the "ram of ordination" (8:22–36); finally, on the eighth day the priests assumed their new cultic responsibilities by performing sacrifices on behalf of the congregation (9:1–21).² The typological implications of this are important for Christians since, according to Dunnill, "they are God's people now purified and able to dwell in his presence."³ As a "boundary-establishing ritual,"⁴ baptism strongly reinforced the faith commitment of Christians. In

¹Dunnill, 147.

²Ibid., 88. For a more detailed overview of the concept of liminality in relationship to ancient Israel and its cultus, see Dunnill, 80–90. Further insights concerning the "rite of passage" that accompanied the consecration of Israel's priests, especially in relation to its surrounding ancient Near East context, are provided in Milgrom, 566–69.

³Dunnill, 147.

⁴For the use of this term in relation to Christian baptism, see Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 102, 154.

the words of Salevao, "it was associated with the self-definition of the Christian community as opposed to the outside world. It perpetuated and legitimated the characterization of the former as the clean group, clearly distinguished from the latter as unclean."¹ As baptized 'priests' of the new cosmic covenant, Christians were impelled by the writer of Hebrews to maintain their commitment to Jesus during the difficult liminal, interim period before the full actualization of the new covenant, since reverting to the security of the 'worldly' sanctuary would only mean certain destruction at the final judgment (cf. 10:25–29).

Again, these preceding insights indicate how both the typologies of the sanctuary and baptism serve as reconstituted components of the writer's Christian symbolic universe, evoking new contours in the relation between cosmos, creation, and the covenants, even as it "reconstructs the religious landscape" and "challenges and remaps antique Israelite topography."² The basis for this new cultic typology rests upon the firm eschatological hope that Christians presently are able to enjoy 'proleptic' access to the heavenly holy of holies as priests of the new covenant. In Norman Young's words, "The 'greater and more perfect tent' symbolizes the eschatologically new cultic means of access; the ἄγια is the ultimate goal of that access – the presence of God in heaven."³

Following upon the importance of the sanctuary 'parable' for expressing the two-covenant contrast in Hebrews, further evidence shows that the writer also conceived of Christian baptism and its accompanying "clothing change" as the constitutive symbol of the socio-religious and cosmic reorganization of the world in the new covenant. The crux of his conception emerges in the awareness that Jesus "abolishes the first in order to establish the second" (10:9). Through his divine ascent and entrance into heaven,

¹Salevo, 275.

²Leithart, 50.

³Young, 204–205.

Christians representing all ethnicities and classes are presently able to enter into God's presence continually by faith and to enjoy privileges even greater than Israel's high priests. At the same time, the difficult realities of the "present age," including various forms of social shaming, signified that since the old order was not completely abolished the congregants still had to diligently resist the temptations of the world and, especially, the Jewish cosmic cultus. In order to reinforce commitment to the new "cosmic covenant," the writer formulated the typologies of the sanctuary and baptism as critical components within his cultic eschatology. For those Christian priests awaiting the full actualization of this new covenant, it is, as one scholar remarks, "the proleptic possession of the unshakable kingdom [that] empowers them to offer acceptable service/worship to God."¹ The expectation of the great cataclysm to come indeed reinforced for these "Hebrews" the hope that soon they would enjoy the full benefits of their heavenly citizenship, along with the visible realities of the new cosmic covenant and priesthood that Jesus Christ inaugurated; points which are reflected well in the following comment:

The 'removal of the things that are shaken' corresponds to the removal of the first chamber that blocks access to the holy place . . . At this eschatological shaking, the visible creation, which stands as a barrier between the believers and their better, abiding, heavenly homeland—the presence of God in the unshakable heaven—will be removed. They will then enter their promised, eternal inheritance, the 'unshakable kingdom' that they are receiving. This expectation undergirds the author's consistent devaluing of worldly possessions, worldly citizenship, worldly status. All such things are guaranteed by God's promise to pass away, and only the believers' better possessions in God's realm will remain.²

¹Lehne, 111.

²deSilva, *Perseverance*, 472.

CHAPTER 6

THE FINAL SHAKING OF HEAVEN AND EARTH: HEBREWS 12:26–28

The preceding survey of evidence has shown that the "clothing change of heaven and earth" theme presents itself in Hebrews as an intriguing expression of the writer's complex reconceptualization of cosmos, creation, and the relationship between the covenants in light of the Christ event. This synthesis derived from the category of transitoriness-eternity seen initially in connection with the writer's christological reading of Ps 102:25–27, from which he formulated a strong contrast between the permanence of Christ and the unstable realm of creation (1:10–12). That the 'rolling' up of the garments of heaven and earth implies a strong declaration of the superiority of Christ and the new covenant over the institutions and representatives of the Mosaic covenant, including the angels, was a significant insight that emerged from investigation into the passage. Further support for this proposal came from awareness concerning the importance of the verb *παλαιῶ* in 1:11 (Ps 102:27) and the fact that the writer employs it again *twice* in 8:13 to describe the passing away of the old covenant.

Though much debated, the socio-religious and political ethos of Hebrews as well as its strongly polemical nature make most sense in the context of Roman Gentile Christianity and indicate the likelihood that the writer framed his argument in the context of the ongoing Second Temple covenantal debate, especially against particularists who were proclaiming the efficacy of the Jewish cultus. Drawing upon antecedents already established in Enochic Judaism relating to the supplantation of the Jewish covenant, he

therefore developed his own distinct legitimation of the new cosmic covenant on the premise that the material realm and its institutions including, most notably, the Jerusalem Temple, are transitory and are expected to ultimately pass away in divine judgment. Both the construction of the sanctuary 'parable' (9:6–10) and the declaration concerning the inauguration of a new priesthood through baptism (10:19–22) provided critical expressions of the writer's Christian symbolic universe, further legitimating his conviction that the 'worldly' cultus would soon be destroyed in God's fiery judgment.

The writer's unique cosmic-eschatological view, which was seen initially in Heb 1:10–12, is brought to a dramatic climax at the end of the letter in 12:26–28 where he again emphasizes the contrast between the transitory nature of creation and the eternal realm in which Jesus Christ abides, but this time with direct reference to the expectation of the "coming eschatological earthquake," based on the citation of Hag 2:6 (LXX):¹

His voice then shook the earth; but now he has promised, 'Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heaven.' This phrase, 'Yet once more,' indicates the removal of what is shaken, as of what has been made, in order that what cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe.

The passage reflects the fifth and final warning in the letter, which begins with a menacing note in vs. 25: "See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less shall we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven."² The final verse of the block in vs. 29 reinforces emphatically the reason why the warning should be heeded: "Our God is a consuming fire." The fact that the writer frames his letter, both the opening exordium and here toward the conclusion, with the theme of eschatological judgment, indicates the

¹This expression is taken from Thompson, *Beginnings*, 42.

²Previous warnings are located in 2:1–4; 4:12–13; 6:4–8; and 10:26–31.

crucially important role that it plays in his overall argument.¹ To better understand this new section, therefore, it must be placed within the context of discussion on the two-covenant contrast developed in vss. 18–24 and which extends throughout the entire pericope.

The Scope of Hebrews 12:18–29

The basis for the warning in 12:25 and what follows emerges in the context of the larger pericope which includes 12:18–29.² This section follows closely the exhortation in 12:12–17 where the writer warns his congregants to make straight paths for their feet and not to follow the apostasy of Esau (vss. 15–17), who lost his inheritance. The conjunction γάρ indicates the transition to vss. 18–24, and suggests that the preceding material is intended to amplify this new section.³ The primary purpose of the writer in 12:18–24 is therefore to create an image of the goal to which Christians are striving, in spite of their hardships.⁴ This effect is accomplished through a comparison, in both vss. 18 and 22, between the experience of Israel at Mt. Sinai and that of Christians who have come to the heavenly Mt. Zion; here the writer states emphatically: οὐ γὰρ προσεληλύθατε ψηλαφώμενω . . . ἀλλὰ προσεληλύθατε Σιών ὄρει καὶ πόλει Θεοῦ ζῶντος, Ἱεροουσαλήμ ἐπουρανίῳ, "For you have not come to what may be touched . . . but you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." The descriptions of the two scenes serve to enhance the glaring contrast between the two covenants: those who approached Mount Sinai at the giving of the law did so amidst the sights and sounds of fire, cloud, darkness, and a trumpet (vss. 18–19; cf.

¹For more on the connection between Heb 1 and 12 see Vanhoye, 233–34.

²Lane points out that most scholars agree that 12:18–29 forms a single literary unit, though differences of opinion exist concerning how to divide the sections within it (*Hebrews 9–13*, 444).

³Thompson, *Beginnings*, 43–44.

⁴deSilva, *Perseverance*, 468.

Deut 4:11–12; 5:22), whereas Christians have arrived to a heavenly, festive assembly which includes angels and people who have direct and continual accessibility to God and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant (vss. 22–24).¹ The clear contrast in the mood is between one of stark fear, which even Moses attested (vs. 21), and of continual joy.

Both the emphatic negative particle οὐ, "not," and the correlative adversative particle ἀλλά, "but," serve to highlight the sharp contrast between the two sections in a manner that places considerable emphasis on the differences in approach implied under the two covenants.² The verb προσέρχεται, "to come to," in vs. 18 further suggests the likelihood that the writer intended this contrast to be understood cultically, as in other contexts (4:16; 7:25; 10:1, 22; 11:6) and that this same sense is applied in vs. 22.³ Hence, the inability of the Israelites to 'draw near' or even touch Mount Sinai is a fundamentally different experience than for Christians who have direct access to the heavenly Jerusalem; but not to "what may be touched" (vs. 18), since they presently experience that realm by faith. As William Lane articulates it, "Through faith that grasps the future as though it were present (11:1), Christians in their pilgrimage come to that future reality that is not palpable to the senses, Mount Zion, the city of the living God."⁴

The term ψηλαφημένος, "palpable," is determinative for the contrast that the writer of Hebrews seeks to elucidate here between Sinai and Zion, the old and new covenants.⁵ Thompson argues that it evokes the Platonic notion of "earthly" or "sense-

¹Attridge, 372. For a helpful juxtaposition of both scenes and their different visual, tactile, and auditory features, see Dunnill, 145.

²Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 459, 465; cf. Scholer, 140. For more on the use of the negative particle ἀλλά in this passage, see Ellingworth, 676.

³Scholer, 139–41. Thompson also points out the cultic use of προσέρχεται in the Old Testament for drawing near to sacrifice (Lev 9:5–7), and that in Hebrews it is important "not for the priestly approach to God, but for the assembly . . . of the whole congregation in worship" (*Beginnings*, 45, n. 18).

⁴Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 465.

⁵The basic pattern of the comparison between the earthly Sinai and the heavenly Zion is contained in Gal 4:24–26. For more on this section, see Choi, 283–86.

perceptible" and is set over and against the *ἐπουράνιος*, "heavenly," realm to which Christians have arrived by faith; as such, for him "Sinai becomes merely an event in the created order."¹ While undoubtedly conceiving of Sinai as part of the noumenal, material realm, the writer's cosmology also encompasses a strong eschatological component as it symbolizes the drastically different methods of approach under the two covenants.² Old-covenant worshipers were forbidden access to a mountain that was "tangible, earthly, material, devoid of the heavenly and intangible."³ Christians, on the other hand, are impelled by the awareness that they have come to the heavenly city, but not to "what may be touched" (vs. 18) since they have grasped it only by faith, and have yet to receive the full blessings of their inheritance.⁴ Paul Ellingworth summarizes in concise terms the writer's thought as follows: "The conditions in which you live and worship as Christian believers are not those of Sinai but those of heaven."⁵

The striking contrast presented in 12:18–24 between the old and new covenants serves, therefore, as the basis for the writer's paranetic exhortation to his congregants in vss. 25–29. This becomes apparent in vs. 25 which begins with a warning, "see that you do not refuse him who is speaking," and is followed by an *a fortiori* argument which urges them not to "reject" or "refuse to obey" the one who speaks to them from heaven, for if they do so it will be impossible to escape from God's wrath.⁶ The reason for the

¹Thompson, *Beginnings*, 45; cf. 46–47.

²Differences of opinion emerge in this context over the nature of the writer's imagery, as to whether it is primarily cosmological/Platonic (Thompson), or else whether it reflects primarily Jewish apocalyptic-eschatological traditions (Dunnill, 144; Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 461; Attridge, 374).

³Scholer, 140.

⁴Cf. Peterson, 155.

⁵Ellingworth, 671.

⁶deSilva, *Perseverance*, 470. deSilva further points out that this argument corresponds considerably with Heb 2:2–3; seeing that the old covenant gave its verdict against every sin, "how then will we escape" if refusing the salvation offered by Christ (470). The definition of *a fortiori* derives from one of

seriousness of this warning emerges in 12:26–28; here the writer argues, on the basis of a quote from Hag 2:6, that just as the earth shook once at Sinai, the final shaking will encompass both the heavens and the earth. As one scholar aptly points out, "The author interprets the Haggai passage to mean that the created order will be done away with—the coming judgment of God will shake the cosmos, crumbling its very foundation."¹ The significance of this pericope and the contribution that it makes to the cosmic-eschatological perspective of Hebrews will emerge below.

The Coming Cosmic Quake and "Unshakable Kingdom"

A critical component that has become most apparent in the conceptual framework of Hebrews by now is that the inauguration of the new covenant implies the passing away of the old material realm and the institutions based upon it, especially the Jerusalem cultus and its covenant and priesthood. This view derived primarily from a christological reading of Ps 102:25–27 which the writer applied to the Son of God in his exordium, declaring that the One who had created the heavens and earth would roll them up like an old garment, while himself remaining unchanged.² Such an assessment gives considerable urgency to the writer's strategy in addressing his congregants: Since the material realm is of limited value they are urged to place their trust only in the eternal inheritance (10:34; 11:13–16; 13:13–14).³ The supreme object of hope, toward which the writer has been directing their attention all throughout his letter, reaches its grand climax

the ancient Jewish rules of exegesis known as קל וחומר or, an argument from lesser to greater; in other words what applies in a less important situation certainly will apply in a more important one (Guthrie, 62, 128; cf. Bateman, 11–12).

¹Guthrie, *Structure of Hebrews*, 133.

²Cf. Koester, *Hebrews*, 102–103.

³deSilva, *Perseverance*, 100.

in Heb 12:26–28 where he declares the great coming eschatological drama and establishment of the "unshakable kingdom."

The writer's eschatological argument in Heb 12:26–27 continues the assumptions of the two-covenant contrast already enumerated in vss. 18–24, but does so in terms of a more focused distinction between the shakable and unshakable, the transitory and the permanent realms. The writer's primary argument in this section is to point to the contrast between the shaking which purportedly occurred at the Sinai theophany, on earth, with the greater eschatological quake that will encompass both heaven and earth; a view which he derives from a modified reading of Hag 2:6 (LXX).¹ As suggested, it is precisely this awareness that underscores his whole strategy for encouraging the "Hebrews" to remain faithful to Christ and the new covenant at all costs. Lane avers this view as follows, drawing attention to the important covenantal connotations that the writer espouses:

Life under the new covenant is conditioned not only by promise in the sense of future blessings but by promise in the sense of future scrutiny. That aspect of the present and future is explored in terms of the promise of Hag 2:6 LXX that a divine 'shaking' will profoundly affect the new covenant community. Those who carelessly ignore the revelation of the eschatological salvation of God through his Son and who show contempt for the blessings of the new covenant cannot possibly escape detection.²

That such apostasy can occur through recourse to the Jerusalem Temple serves only to heighten the writer's urgency, especially since, as argued in the preceding chapter, the cultus itself belongs to the same transitory realm of creation that will be shaken in the future conflagration (cf. 8:13).

At the beginning of 12:26 the writer refers to the tradition that the divine voice shook the earth during the giving of the Law: οὐ ἡ φωνὴ τὴν γῆν ἐσάλευσεν τότε, "His voice then shook the earth." While the Exodus account does not mention this detail, the LXX of Exod 19:18, which the writer likely had before him, states that "all the people

¹See Ellingworth, 685. Cf. deSilva, 470.

²Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 491.

trembled greatly" (καὶ ἐξέστη πᾶς ὁ λαὸς σφόδρα).¹ Other passages in the Old Testament refer to a great shaking at the Sinai epiphany and it was likely one or more of these that he was alluding to; perhaps Judg 5:4–5: "the earth trembled (ἐσειέσθη) . . . the mountain shook (ἐσαλεύθησον) before the Lord, the One of Sinai, before the LORD, the God of Israel" (Pss 68:8; 77:18; 114:7).² The word σαλεύω here is significant, especially since the motif of 'shaking' becomes a central theme throughout Heb 12:26–28.³ In the Old Testament σαλεύω commonly is used to refer to the shaking of the earth (Pss 17:8; 45:7; 76:19; 96:4; 98:1 [LXX]); of mountains (Judg 5:5; Jdt 16:15; Sir 16:18; 43:16), and of the sea (Ps 97:7 [LXX]). In the New Testament, outside of Heb 12:26–28, the word does not carry any direct eschatological connotations (though Acts 4:31 may be an exception), and so it appears that the writer of Hebrews has derived his use of it from the Old Testament conception of creation as under the threat of divine shaking.⁴

The writer introduces the passage from Haggai into his exegesis as the means to substantiate the claims concerning God's cataclysmic shaking of both heaven and earth. In vs. 26 he assumes a strong covenantal contrast juxtaposed within a temporal perspective: God's "voice then (τότε) shook the earth (at the time of Sinai); but now (νῦν) he has promised" an even greater eschatological shaking, associated with the new covenant.⁵ The writer finds in the words of the Old Testament prophet the very confirmation of this promise: "For thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Once again, in a little

¹The MT of Exod 19:18 states that when God spoke from Sinai "the whole mountain quaked greatly."

²Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 478 (his translation of the LXX is included here). Cf. Bruce, *Hebrews*, 363, n. 195.

³Attridge, 380. Cf. deSilva, *Perseverance*, 470.

⁴George Bertram, "Σαλεύω, σάλος," *TDNT*, 70:70; cf. 67. In the Old Testament an earthquake is often seen to mark the coming Day of the Lord (Isa 2:19, 21; Joel 2:1); this involves not only the shaking of the earth, but the heavens also: "I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken out of its place, at the wrath of the Lord of hosts in the day of his fierce anger" (Isa 13:13; cf. Joel 2:10).

⁵Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 478.

while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land; and I will shake all nations" (2:6–7a). The context for the original oracle was addressed to Zerubabel, the governor of Judah, and Joshua, the high priest, in order to encourage them in the face of disappointment over the meager appearance of the post-exilic Temple. The prophet assured the remnant that the fall of Babylon which had enabled them to return to the land of Israel was not the final great shaking (cf. Isa 13:1–22). Soon God would "once again" shake the heavens and earth and overthrow the nations. As a result, the new Temple would become the place of God's glory, its splendor exceeding even that of the first (vss. 2:3–9).¹

The writer cites the first half of the Haggai text (LXX) as a summary of what God has promised to do: ἔτι ἄπαξ ἐγὼ σεισῶ τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν, "Once again, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth," but introduces several significant modifications in order to emphasize what he believes is most crucial about the prophecy. He excludes the reference in Haggai to the shaking of the "sea and dry land" to highlight that the future cataclysm is focused on the heavens and earth; he adds the expression οὐ μόνον . . . ἀλλὰ, "not only . . . but also," and inverts the order of τὴν γῆν, "the earth," and τὸν οὐρανόν, "the heaven," by placing the "heaven" at the end of the sentence, to further accentuate that the final shaking will include that realm: ἔτι ἄπαξ ἐγὼ σεισῶ οὐ μόνον τὴν γῆν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν οὐρανόν, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heaven."² This indicates the significant differences that exist in the original meaning of the Haggai prophecy and the way that Hebrews adapts it; as Koester highlights: "Haggai

¹Ibid., 479. Cf. Attridge, 380, and Bruce, *Hebrews*, 363–64. See the similar oracle in Hag 2:21–22. In his discussion on Hebrews, Jerome Smith offers an excursus on Old Testament eschatology and draws a connection between Hag 2:6 and Isa 13, especially as they relate to the themes of "primitive chaos" (*A Priest For Ever: A Study of Typology and Eschatology in Hebrews* [London: Sheed and Ward, 1969], 51).

²For a discussion on the ways in which the writer modifies Hag 2:6, see Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 479–80; deSilva, *Perseverance*, 470; Ellingworth, 686; and Koester, *Hebrews*, 547.

relates the shaking of the world order to the wealth of many nations coming to Israel. In Hebrews the shaking is cosmic."¹

These points raise further issues concerning the cosmic-eschatological assumptions that are at work within the purview of Hebrews, and which heavily determine the writer's strategy in addressing his congregants. Haggai 2:6 is a foundational text which supports the general notion in apocalyptic literature that the coming cataclysmic judgment will affect also the whole cosmos (see 2 Bar 32:1; 53:3; 4 Ezra 6:11, 17; 10:25–28; Sib Or 3.675; Matt 24:29; 27:51, 54).² This outlook is especially prominent in 1 En 60:1 where the visionary reports that the shaking will be particularly troublesome for the angels who dwell there: "In the same parable (I saw) that the heaven of heavens was quaking and trembling with a mighty agitation, and the forces of the Most High and the angels, ten thousand times a million and ten million time ten million, were agitated with great agitation."³ Hebrews also indicates that the dissolution of the cosmos will have a deleterious effect on the angels, since they too are part of the created, transitory realm as πνεύματα, "winds," and πυρὸς φλόγα, "flames of fire" (1:7, 11; cf. Ps 103:4 LXX). But what exactly does this imply about the writer's understanding of the 'heavens' which he derived from Hag 2:6, as well as the impact of the final eschatological shaking on that realm? Some have considered that he assumes a view in which οὐρανός is part of a lower transient realm of creation than the eternal realm where Christ and God dwell (1:3; 8:1; 9:24, αὐτὸν τὸν οὐρανόν ["heaven itself"]).⁴ John M. Scholer sees evidence for this in Heb 9:11 which declares that Christ ascended into the

¹Koester, *Hebrews*, 547.

²Thompson, *Beginnings*, 48.

³For translation see Isaac, 40.

⁴E.g., Michel, 311–12, and Mathias Rissi, *Die Theologie Des Hebräerbriefs: Ihre Verankerung in der Situation Des Verfassers und Seiner Leser*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament 41 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1987), 35–36.

true, heavenly sanctuary that is οὐ τούτης τῆς κτίσεως, "not of this creation"—described elsewhere as being "higher than the heavens" (7:26).¹ In his interpretation of 12:26, Ellingworth also follows the view that 'heaven' refers to "the higher part of the created universe," and believes that this passage, in fact, plays a crucial role in understanding the overall aim of Hebrews: "to encourage the addressees to hold fast to their faith during the final cataclysm in which God will shake both parts of his creation, but from which his kingdom, in which believers share, will emerge henceforth unshakable."²

Alternatively, other scholars detect a strong sense of continuity between the writer and the biblical tradition, as indicated in Ps 102:25–27, and believe that τὸν οὐρανόν in 12:26 refers to the created cosmological realm that will be completely destroyed.³ On this basis, Koester sees the writer reflecting the idea that even the heavenly realm of angels and saints will not escape the final testing.⁴ And George W. MacRae, for example, finds any differences in meaning of οὐρανός in Hebrews "hard to substantiate."⁵

The unique cosmic-eschatological view of the writer and his particular understanding of what constitutes τὸν οὐρανόν emerge more clearly in 12:27 where he offers an interpretation of the Haggai text cited in vs. 26b: τὸ δὲ ἔτι ἅπαξ δηλοῖ τὴν τῶν σαλευομένων μετάθεσις ὡς πεποιημένων, ἵνα μείνη τὰ μὴ σαλευόμενα, "This phrase, 'Yet once more,' indicates the removal of what is shaken, as of what has been made, in order that what cannot be shaken may remain." Whereas vs. 26 was seen to elucidate the writer's "antithesis" between heaven and earth, as grounds for an even greater shaking in

¹Scholer, 161.

²Ellingworth, 687.

³Bruce, *Hebrews*, 364–65.

⁴Koester, *Hebrews*, 547, 552.

⁵MacRae, 187–88.

the future, the present passage focuses on distinguishing between the shakable and unshakable realms themselves.¹

The writer's repetition of the adverbial phrase ἔτι ἅπαξ, "yet once more," at the beginning of vs. 27 indicates the importance that it plays in his interpretation of Hag 2:6.² According to Lane, the phrase is meant to further elucidate the writer's two-covenant contrast already developed in vs. 26: "it is the detail in the prophecy that calls for comparison between the past shaking at Sinai (v 26a), which affected the old covenant community, and the yet pending, greater shaking promised by God (v 26b), which impinges upon the new covenant community."³ The reiteration of "once more" affirms the promise that the heavens themselves will indeed be dissolved in the final judgment, in contrast to the time at Mount Sinai when only the shaking of the earth occurred. This becomes apparent from the clause that follows, describing what precisely it is that ἔτι ἅπαξ "indicates" (δηλοῖ): τῶν σαλευομένων μετάθεσιν ὡς πεποιημένων, "the removal of what is shaken, as of what has been made." The noun μετάθεσιν can mean either "removal" or "transformation," but because of its juxtaposition with μείνη, "remain," in vs. 27b, indicates that the correct usage here is "removal."⁴ This suggests on the writer's part quite a radical understanding of the final eschaton, as involving a complete annihilation of the old order, which is distinctive from other apocalyptists who envisioned a transformation of the heaven and earth (cf. Isa 65:17; Rom 8:19–22; 2 Pet 3:10; 1 En

¹See Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 481.

²See Gustav Stählin, "'Ἀπαξ, ἐφάπαξ,'" *TDNT*, 1:382.

³Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 481.

⁴Thompson, *Beginnings*, 48–49. Cf. Koester, *Hebrews*, 547. For more on the background of μετάθεσις see Ellingworth, 688, and Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 482. The noun is rare as it occurs only once in the LXX (2 Macc 11:24) and in the NT only in Heb 7:12; 11:5; and 12:27.

45:4–5; Jub 1:29).¹ Thompson follows the assumption that the writer is a Platonist and "is not interested in the nearness of the end," thus distancing himself from traditional apocalyptic ideas.² But this is rather to project false categories on the letter; a more nuanced understanding would suggest that for the writer "there is transformation as well as annihilation."³ While he avows the Platonic view that the noumenal, invisible world is better and more real than the perceptible, this is understood within an eschatological framework. As shown earlier, a critical component of Hebrews involves the awareness of his careful combining of both cosmological and eschatological concepts into his legitimation of the new covenant.

The description of the earthly things that will be "removed" in 12:27 is indicated by the parallel verbs τῶν σαλευόμενων, "what is shaken," and πεποιημένων, "what has been made." The first term is especially significant since the writer uses it instead of the synonym σείσω which originally occurred in Hag 2:6; a switch that perhaps reflects his paranetic interest.⁴ Another reason may be related to the use of the verb σαλεύω in the LXX to distinguish between shakable and unshakable realms; for example, Ps 95:9–10 (LXX) enjoins the "whole earth" to "be shaken before the face of God" (σαλευθήτω ἀπὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ πᾶσα ἡ γῆ), while indicating that there is a realm that "will not be shaken" (τὴν οἰκουμένην ἣτις οὐ σαλευθήσεται) (cf. Ps 92:1 and Ps 45:6–7 in the LXX).⁵

¹Attridge, 381. For other strands of thought that envisioned the complete annihilation of the universe see, 4 Ezra 7:31; cf. 1 Cor 7:31, Rev 21:1. See also Anton Vögtle, "Das Neue Testament und die Zukunft Des Kosmos: Hebr. 12,26f. und das Endschicksal Des Kosmos," *Bibel und Leben* 10 (1969): 239–53.

²Thompson, *Beginnings*, 50.

³Koester, *Hebrews*, 547–48. Isaacs rejects the notion that Platonism is at work in this passage, suggesting instead that the writer is indebted to "Jewish notions of heaven as both part of and beyond the created order" (208). Cf. Bruce, *Hebrews*, 365.

⁴So Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 481.

⁵For these insights see deSilva, *Perseverance*, 471, n. 67. The word was regularly used by Philo to denote that which belongs to the earthly realm (Thompson, *Beginnings*, 49 [also n. 33]; in Philo see *On the*

In any case, the writer avows the removal of 'the things that are shaken,' because they are *πεποτημένων*, "created things," which here denotes a "somewhat pejorative" sense, and may recall elements in the writer's dualistic worldview that associated the transitory creation with the realm of the flesh.¹ These points correspond well with Peter Leithart's earlier insight on the correspondence between Heb 1:10–12 and 12:26–27, in which he states that "these 'garments' and 'shakable things' include the institutions of the 'first covenant.'"²

The last clause of 12:27 highlights the ultimate purpose of the *μετάθεσις*, or "removal," of the transitory heaven and earth: "in order that what cannot be shaken may remain" (*ἵνα μείνη τὰ μὴ σαλευόμενα*). The question most pertinent here concerns what exactly the 'unshakable things' are that will "remain" (*μείνη*) after the future eschatological judgment.³ There is no clear consensus among scholars on what these comprise. Harold Attridge suggests that they are "stable, spiritual entities" and that Platonic categories may be at work here.⁴ Thompson shares a similar view, indicating that "the 'unshakable' refers to that which has no contact with sense perception."⁵ Lane, on the other hand, takes these terms to be speaking less in terms of durability or futurity, but rather in qualitative terms with regard to 'who' will abide the day of testing: "This clause indicates that the judgment . . . will have a discriminating function. It will remove

Posterity and Exile of Cain 19-29; cf. *On the Change of Names* 54; *Allegorical Interpretation* 2.89, 3.97-100; *On the Decalogue* 58).

¹Attridge, 381. deSilva refers to *πεποτημένων* as reflecting the "'manufactured,' secondary quality of the visible cosmos" (*Perseverance*, 471, n. 66). For the preceding discussion on evidence of the writer's anthropological dualism, especially in relation to Heb 9:10–14, see pp. 164–65.

²Leithart, 56.

³For more on the background of the word *μένειν*, see Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 482–83. According to Thompson, "Philo uses *μένειν* for the intelligible world and for the sphere of ideas" (*Beginnings*, 51).

⁴Attridge, 381.

⁵Thompson, *Beginnings*, 51.

some ('all that can be shaken') and allow others to endure ('what cannot be shaken')."¹ Thus, the point here is to suggest that the true members of the new covenant will be revealed in the final dénouement.

Perhaps the best resolution to the identity of the 'unshakable things' is to relate them to other things in Hebrews that "remain"; the most notable example is Jesus himself who is described in the writer's christological reading of Ps 102:26 as the one who "remains" (διαμένεις), in contrast to the fading 'garments' of heaven and earth (1:11).² The word μένειν also is used to describe the permanency of Christ's priesthood in 7:3, 24 as well as the permanent gifts which believers enjoy because of him (10:34; 13:14). It would seem, therefore, that the 'unshakable things' which will remain following the eschatological judgment encompass the whole order of abiding realities that believers are entitled to by virtue of their status as priests of the new covenant. To ensure their reception of the full inheritance, though, the congregants must retain their allegiance to Christ and carefully guard against any enticement to return to the world and its Temple. As deSilva avers, "Being part of the Christian community (and remaining a part) is vitally

¹Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 482; cf. 483.

²See pp. 114–15 above. It should be mentioned here that the permanency of Jesus Christ expressed in Heb 1:11–12 is a concept that also lies close to the biblical idea of the 'remnant.' According to one source, remnant denotes "what is left of a community after it undergoes a catastrophe" (Lester V. Meyer, "Remnant," *ABD*, 5:669). For example, Noah and his family can be understood as the remnant that survives the flood (Gen 6:5–8), as can Lot, when Sodom is destroyed (Gen 18:17–33; 19:1–29). Isaiah refers to the remnant of those faithful who survive the onslaught of the Assyrian army (Isa 4:2–6; 12:1–6). Later, following the Babylonian exile, the prophet evisions a new, reconstituted people of Israel and Judah to be the remnant (46:3–4; 45:20; 49:14–26; 54:1–7). In Isaiah the idea of the remnant also became personified in the Suffering Servant (52:13–53:12) which, of course, was transferred to Jesus in the New Testament (e.g., Luke 4:18–19; Acts 8:32; 1 Pet 2:22–24). In the Synoptic Gospels allusions to the remnant are evident in John the Baptist's warnings of the coming judgment that will leave only the trees that bear good fruit, and will gather the wheat into the granary while the chaff is burned (Matt 3:7–10; Luke 3:7–9). The Pauline writings reflect the idea of the remnant when describing Christians as the true sons of Abraham (Gal 3:7), as part of the Israel of God (Gal 6:16), and as fellow-citizens of the household of God (Eph 2:11–12). Finally, in Rev 14:1–5, the 144,000 saints on Mt. Zion in heaven who escape the catastrophe upon the earth are the final remnant; this notion is not unlike what is described in Hebrews as awaiting those Christians who persevere in their faith (12:22–24). Taken together, the implication the writer seems to reach in Heb 1:11–12 is that when the heavens and earth fade away like an old garment, those who stand with Jesus will also "remain" (contrast this with Isa 50:9 where the enemies of Yahweh "will wear out like a garment").

important for survival itself. . . . It signifies deliverance from the material world that is slated for dissolution and entrance into the abiding realm that alone survives the 'shaking.'"¹

The elucidation of 12:27 helps bring clarity to the issue raised earlier regarding the writer's conception of the heavenly realm, and whether he distinguished between a lower level οὐρανός, "heaven," and the immutable realm where God and Christ dwell (8:1; 9:24). While no hard and fast assertions can be made, the writer's argument for the permanency of Christ and the realm where he dwells strongly suggests that he conceived of an 'axiological' heaven distinguishable from the 'cosmological' one that would be destroyed, points highlighted by Aelred Cody as follows: "There will be the everlasting kingdom . . . and it will be axiologically heavenly (11.16; 12:22), but when the old cosmological heaven and earth pass away at the end of time and history, they will not be replaced by any new, eschatological heaven and earth. The unshakeable, axiologically heavenly things are those that will remain (12.27)."² The notion in Hebrews of a higher heaven distinguishable from a lower transient realm is certainly intriguing and corresponds considerably well with themes already developed in 1:10–12 where the writer contrasted the transitory, mutable realm of the heavens and earth with the unchanging and eternal nature of the Son.³ This is also further supported by evidence which states that Christ ascended into the true sanctuary that is ὑψηλότερος τῶν οὐρανῶν, "higher than the heavens" (7:26; NAB) and οὐ ταύτης τῆς κτίσεως, "not of this creation"

¹deSilva, *Perseverance*, 471.

²Cody, 85. Cf. Ellingworth, 687, 689; Scholer, 161; and Thompson, *Beginnings*, 50.

³Attridge, 381. Cf. deSilva, *Perseverance*, 471. According to Helmut Traub, "The heavenly tent here [to which Jesus has ascended] is not cosmic. Hence these heavens do not pass away like those in 1:10–12 (12:26)" ("Οὐρανός," *TDNT*, 5:527). For discussion on the contrast between the transitory realm of creation and the permanence of Christ, see pp. 114–16 above.

(9:11).¹ Given these insights, the writer's distinction between the shakable and unshakable realm need not assume the problematic notion that angels and saints will have to endure a final testing in the mutable realm of heaven.² The realm where Christ dwells is secure and indestructable since it is οὐ χειροποίητος, "not made with human hands" (9:24). As Bruce states, "Earlier he has emphasized the transitoriness of the world in order to set in contrast the eternity of the Son of God; now he emphasizes it again in order to set in contrast the eternity of that new order into which the Son of God has brought his people."³

The idea in Hebrews of an 'axiological' heaven that is higher and permanent compared to the fading 'cosmological' one amplifies the contrast already assumed between the earthly and heavenly realms substantially. Consequently, while the writer has already indicated the precariousness of the 'worldly' cultus (9:1), what emerges here is the extent to which he conceives of its immense spatial and qualitative differences from the true, heavenly realm where Christ abides. This again becomes clear from his christological interpretation of Hag 2:6, which diverges significantly from its Old Testament context. Originally, the prophet indicated that the 'shaking' of the foreign nations would be a precursor to the establishment of the new Temple, even greater than the former (vs. 9). But in 12:27, as Ellingworth well recognizes, the situation is the obverse: "The author of Hebrews has already amply shown that he considers the earthly

¹Scholer, 161. According to Lane, the expression ὑψηλότερος τῶν οὐρανῶν, "higher than the heavens," specifically refers to God's throne and indicates that the writer has drawn upon this spatial metaphor "to denote the highest possible exaltation" (cf. 4:14) (*Hebrews 1-8*, 192). The spatial imagery in Hebrews has particular affinities with the motif of "seven heavens" which was prominent in the Second Temple apocalyptic tradition; for example, the *Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah* and its description of Isaiah's ascent through the seven heavens to God's throne is one of the earliest Christian works to make use of this tradition (ca. late first or in second century) (Collins, *Cosmology and Eschatology*, 39-42; for translation of the work, see M. A. Knibb, "Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, ed. James H. Charlesworth [New York: Doubleday, 1985], 143-76).

²So Koester, *Hebrews*, 547, 552.

³Bruce, *Hebrews*, 365.

cultus and its sacrifices to be at best a type of the worship of heaven and the sacrifice of Christ. Here he speaks more emphatically than ever about the end of the earthly cultus, though that end still lies in the future."¹ The urgency of the writer's appeal concerning the fading order of creation and its cultus is thus framed in the context of the already-not-yet component of Christian experience, thus explaining why the congregants must retain their faith in the immutable character of Christ. The contrast between the highest heaven and the earthly sanctuary is as great therefore as the two covenants which represent each realm.

As the exegesis of 12:26–27 has shown, the writer continues his understanding of the category of transitoriness-eternity initially seen in 1:10–12, but develops an ever greater distinction between the highest 'axiological' heaven where Christ abides and the precarious lower, transient heaven that is soon to fade away along with the rest of the old creation. The 'cosmic' Jerusalem Temple is included in this indictment as the primary symbol of the Jewish covenant which the writer seeks to supplant (cf. 8:13). However, even though the Mosaic cultus has no normative status for the believers, since it pertains to the flesh (9:10, 13), the writer is still able to affirm its typological value and the insights that it provides concerning their status during the "present age." This again recalls deSilva's statement: "The outer tent is a symbol of the present age when the visible creation itself still hides the entry into the heavenly, permanent, unseen realm. . . . The way will be made clear when the first chamber, that is, this visible creation, will be shaken and removed, 'so that what is unshakable may abide' (12:27)."²

The next verse, 12:28, introduces a new phase of the argument as the writer transitions from the eschatological to the present; the opening participial phrase, which provides the basis for the rest of the exhortation, is what is most pertinent here: $\delta\iota\omicron$

¹Ellingworth, 687.

²deSilva, *Perseverance*, 302.

βασιλείαν ἀσάλευτον παραλαμβάνοντες ἔχωμεν χάριν, δι ἧς λατρεύωμεν εὐαρέστως τῷ θεῷ μετὰ εὐλαβείας καὶ δέους, "Therefore, let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe."¹ The phrase βασιλείαν παραλαμβάνω, "to receive the kingdom," has its most explicit parallel in Dan 7:18 (LXX) where it describes the saints of the Most High reception of a kingdom, which in 7:27 is said to be "everlasting."² The expression βασιλείαν ἀσάλευτον, which is unique in the New Testament, is here synonymous with τὰ μὴ σαλευόμενα, "what cannot be shaken," in vs. 27b.³ Given the nature of the writer's argument, it is interesting also to note that Philo uses the adjective ἀσάλευτος to describe the laws of Moses.⁴ Harold Attridge explains some of the 'eschatological' implications of this imagery as follows:

What 'remains' after the removal of the inferior, material creation is indeed something 'spiritual,' and at the same time eschatological. Like the 'kingdom' (βασιλεία) of Daniel or of the Gospels, it is the eschatological reign of God. But this eschatological reality is something that the addressees already possess. They do so precisely because this kingdom is 'not of this creation,' but is the realm to which Christ's death and exaltation has given access.⁵

The already-not-yet component of Christian experience implied here becomes especially prominent in vs. 28a where believers are assured that they "have been given possession of an unshakable kingdom" (NJB), but that the full inauguration is still to be

¹Though most scholars see 12:18–29 as a literary unit, the transition between vs. 28a and the exhortation that follows has suggested to some that the reference to the unshakable kingdom should mark here the beginning of a new section. Koester, for example, marks 12:28–13:21 as the peroration of the letter (*Hebrews*, 554).

²For these points, see Bruce, *Hebrews*, 364, n. 199. Cf. Ellingworth, 689, and Lane, *Hebrews* 9–13, 484.

³See Ellingworth, 690, and Lane, *Hebrews* 9–13, 484. In the NT the word ἀσάλευτος, "unshakable," occurs only in Acts 27:41. For its use in the LXX, see Exod 13:16 and Deut 6:8, 11:18.

⁴Philo *On the Life of Moses* 2.14 (LCL, 6:456–57). Cf. Bruce, *Hebrews*, 364, n. 199, and Montefiore, 236.

⁵Attridge, 382.

completed.¹ The present tense of the participle, παραλαμβάνοντες, "receiving," indicates that this process has begun and will continue into the future.² It is this prospect of future blessedness that provides the basis for the writer's exhortation to "be grateful" (ἔχωμεν χάριτι), and which sets up the worshipful attitude that he tries to evoke. As Susanne Lehne states concerning the congregants, "in 12.28 the proleptic possession of the unshakable kingdom empowers them to offer acceptable service/worship to God."³ Because of this new reality they can be certain the promised eschatological shaking will transpire. Indeed, the life of faith guarantees that the fulfillment of the final catastrophe cannot be delayed for long.⁴

Cumulative evidence so far has indicated that the "clothing change of heaven and earth" theme provides an extremely useful means for expressing the profound changes which the writer of Hebrews envisioned in the realm of creation and the cosmos as a result of Christ's inauguration of the new covenant. The category of transitoriness- eternity found in Ps 101:26–28 was a critical component of this conceptualization as it shaped the basis for his formulation of the strong theological contrast between the new creation of Christ and the old order represented by the Mosaic covenant. The notion that the rolling up of the 'garments' of heavens and earth represented for the writer the superiority of the new covenant over the old was, arguably, one of the major insights that emerged from this passage.

The notion of the mutability of creation and the old covenant that emerges in the exordium of Hebrews, and which is developed throughout the letter in such passages as

¹Ellingworth, 690. Cf. Montefiore, 236. For more on the 'already-not-yet' component implied in Heb 12:28a, see Franz Laub, *Bekennnis und Auslegung: Die Parännetische Funktion der Christologie Im Hebräerbrief*, Biblische Untersuchungen 15 (Regensburg: Pustet, 1980), 253.

²Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 484.

³Lehne, 111.

⁴Lindars, 116.

8:13 and 9:6–10, reaches its fulfillment in the concluding warning of 12:25–29 where the writer cites Hag 2:6 (LXX) to reinforce belief in the final eschatological drama.

Developing further his important two-covenant contrast, the writer argues from this passage that in the same way that God shook the earth during the establishment of the first covenant at Sinai, so he will shake the heavens and earth as part of the second so that only that which is uncreated and cannot be shaken will remain. An insight that emerged from this passage concerns his awareness of an apparent distinction between the highest 'axiological' heaven where Christ abides and the lower, transient 'cosmological' heaven that is soon to fade away along with the rest of the old creation. As Aelred Cody explains, "The earth was shaken at Sinai, both heaven and earth will be shaken at the end of time (12.26), but the transformation of movable, transitory things is already accomplished in the new and eternal order established by Christ (12.27), and we have already received our unshakeable kingdom."¹ The fact that the congregants already belong to God's 'unshakable kingdom' by faith is an indication of the immense benefits that they possess as members of the new covenant community. Therefore, to secure their commitment and to protect the community against apostasy the writer assures them that among the shakable things in the coming eschatological catastrophe will be the whole Mosaic covenant and sacrificial system, which has been surpassed by the once-for-all offering of the great high priest, Jesus Christ.²

The new "cosmic covenant" that emerges in Hebrews is formulated by the writer in relation to a complex set of notions regarding the removal of the old creation and cosmos, based upon antecedents in Enochic Judaism, and which are adapted in his own day to legitimate the new Christian community. When framed in the context of the Second Temple covenantal debate, Hebrews makes considerably more sense, especially

¹Cody, 141.

²Hughes, 558–59.

as it explains why the writer constructed the new covenant as "a metaphor for affirming the identity of the new social order as a distinctive cultic community separate from and independent of Judaism."¹ These complex themes are nicely summarized in the following statement by David deSilva:

The author opened the sermon with an affirmation that the visible earth and heavens would themselves 'grow old' like a worn-out coat (1:11-12a), and he will close the sermon with a dramatic image of God's forthcoming act of shaking the heavens and the earth so that the visible, material creation will be removed and only the unshakable realm will remain (12:26-28). Even if the descendants of Levi still minister at the Jerusalem temple at the time this sermon is composed, those heirs of the only other priesthood sanctioned in God's oracles cannot offer deliverance from the cataclysm that will rock this age and all that belongs to it. There is but one avenue for deliverance — connection to the one who has already passed into the unshakable realm, Jesus (6:19-20), the mediator of a better covenant with the promise of eschatological salvation.²

¹Salevao, *Legitimation*, 387.

²deSilva, *Perseverance*, 287–88.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The opening chapter revealed that one of the problems New Testament scholars have traditionally encountered when approaching the subject of Second Temple covenant is the tendency to overlook the importance of the "internal diversification" that marked the period. As suggested, the notion of 'covenantal nomism,' with its emphasis on obedience to the law as a marker of identity in ancient Judaism, does little to explain the meaning of covenant in the context of competing definitions about who comprises the 'elect.' More is certainly being done these days to address the complexity of covenant during this period. However, these advances have yet to be fully applied to Hebrews, where there still remains a tendency—particularly among more recent interpreters of the letter—to minimize the polemical nature of the new covenant concept.

A further look at Enochic Judaism indicated evidence of a complex notion of covenant which crystallized within this literature. The conceptual foundations of its covenantal outlook were seen to be multivalent, based upon a set of corresponding themes that tied into a specific notion of divinely prescribed cosmic order (1 En 2:1–5:10). The elaboration on this cosmicized notion of covenant within Enoch followed three primary themes: the critique of traditional Temple and priesthood; the legitimation of a cosmicized notion of covenant (symbolized by the 364-day calendar); and an elaboration on the universalistic aspects of Enoch, embodied in the notion that salvation would ultimately be sent to the Gentiles, but judgment upon Israel and its Temple.

One crucial aspect of the Enochic conceptual worldview was the 364-day solar calendar which was understood to reflect the cosmic order that God instituted at creation and that he intended as the proper vehicle for regulating Israel's socio-religious life. This theme of cosmic order resounds throughout the Astronomic Book of Enoch where considerable detail is given to calculating the position of the sun and moon as means to establish uniformity in the cosmos (chaps. 72–82); the work culminates in a prediction that cosmic and natural judgments will occur in "the days of the sinners" when the moon and stars will alter their courses and those who follow their errors will also be led into idolatry (80:2–8). Therefore, according to the Enochic community, the calendar served as a major symbol of covenantal identity in order to legitimate its myth regarding the origins of cosmic evil and also to reinforce understanding that cosmic harmony would ultimately be restored only through eschatological transformation of the earth and Temple (cf. 1 En 90:18–36). Inherent in this notion as well was a strong belief in the dialectic between the calendar, the covenant, and creation, and how, as a symbol of covenant, the cultic calendar was to be a reflection of the cosmic order that God instituted in the heavens, which he intended as a means for regulating Israel's social life as well.

The underlying premise in the first chapter therefore was to suggest that the "cosmic covenant" embodied in Enochic Judaism reflects the same apocalyptic framework that the writer of Hebrews draws upon in order to formulate his own complex conceptualization of the cosmos, creation, and the relationship between the covenant in light of the Christ event. Little work has in fact been done on investigations into the correspondences between Hebrews and Enochic Judaism and so the present study attempts to fill this gap, not by positing direct influences, but by suggesting that the writer was heir to the complex diffusion of ideas relating to the Second Temple "apocalyptic *imaginaire*."¹

¹Stökl, 349–66.

To more fully understand the meaning of the problematic worldview that the Enochic community polemicized against, chapter 2 took up an examination of the Zadokite Temple on the basis of its significance as the nexus between heaven and earth. Central to this understanding was the recognition of the strong conceptual affinities that existed between cosmos, creation, and temple-building, enhanced by the belief that the cultus was a replication of the original Edenic paradise and the place where cosmic and social order was maintained.

Substantial evidence revealed as well that the 'cosmic' priesthood was an apparently well-established concept in ancient Judaism for at least a century prior to the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. According to Philo, for example, every Zadokite high priest who ministered in the cultus was seen as almost a hypostasis, or quasi-personification, of the cosmos, in a manner that had great significance for the world. And in at least some traditions, the priest was assigned the role of replicating the work of the archetypal priest, Adam, and restoring his glory to creation.

Coupled with this understanding, a discussion was offered on the important significance of the Jerusalem Temple and why it was seen as the divinely chosen center where social and cosmic order was maintained in ancient Israel. Insights from the field of sociology of knowledge provided a helpful framework in which to explore the nature of social phenomena in the ancient world; in particular, the notion of the 'symbolic universe' as a safeguard against chaos provided an especially useful means to conceptualize how social order was formulated.

Based upon these considerations, what emerged next was a delineation upon the social and symbolic function of ritual. Ritual was widely understood in the ancient world to affect transformations in the realm of the supramundane and, therefore, was also considered to be the divinely ordained means for preserving the social and cosmic orders of a society from collapse. In ancient Israel, order was embodied in the biblical concept

of cosmogony and its concern especially for preserving the distinction between the realms of the "holy" and the "profane." Based upon the prescriptions of the Torah, the national cultus came to represent the divinely chosen domain in which ritual action could be undertaken by the Zadokite priests in order to secure these realms and prevent the intrusion of chaos into society.

Chapter 3 posited that the socio-historical, religious, and political ethos of Hebrews and its strong polemical bent, all make most sense if the letter is placed within the milieu of Roman Gentile Christianity, and the context of continued covenantal debate between particularists and universalists over the efficacy of the Jerusalem Temple. The letter was likely addressed to a house church in the imperial city at a time when increasing internal factions were developing between those who embraced the inclusivism of the writer, and more particularistic-minded Jewish and Jewish-Christian groups. The evidence from the letter indicated that the congregants had previously experienced significant episodes of social shaming and abuse (10:32–34) and it was apparently these difficulties that had led some in the congregation to withdraw their commitment to Christ. The possibility that the congregants were indeed Gentiles corresponds well with the strongly inclusivistic belief of the writer, and indicates parallels with the kind of universalism seen in Enochic Judaism.

While the continuing existence of the cultus is not explicitly stated by the writer, there is strong reason to believe that his formulation of the new covenant concept was carried out in the context of intense, ongoing debate among Jews and Christians alike about the efficacy of the Jerusalem Temple and its priesthood.

Chapter 4 turned to a discussion of the theological significance of baptism enumerated within Heb 10:19–22 as well as throughout various key passages in the New Testament. Christian baptism was the preeminent symbol of new covenant identity in the early Church and so an investigation into its social, cosmic, and eschatological meaning

provided an important means for understanding the conceptual framework of the new covenant. Peter Leithart's elaboration on baptism in Hebrews as the ritual enactment of a new priesthood, engendering the breakdown of the boundaries between Jews and Gentiles, Levites and non-Levites, provided an especially helpful framework for understanding the broader cosmic and eschatological dimensions of the rite.

The greatest value of Leithart's insights into baptism, however, derive from his designation of the rite as "the efficacious sign of the clothing change of the heaven and earth."¹ This evokes a whole framework of cosmological and eschatological connections that stretch far beyond the designation of a mere metaphor. In fact, though Leithart does not mention it, the early Church provides considerable evidence for the extent to which the watery rite was often accompanied by a changing of clothes. On the basis of cosmic-eschatological significance of baptism, it was suggested that early Christians saw the clothing change ceremony as the basis for establishing a collocation between their own inward, spiritual cleansing and the changes in the cosmic structures of the universe that resulted from Christ's ascension. Furthermore, it was suggested on the basis of the reference in Hebrews to the "clothing change of the heavens and earth" (1:10–12) that the writer perhaps also envisioned the ritual washing into Christ and the simultaneous changing of the individuals' old 'garments' as a microcosmic representation of the larger eschatological judgment and cleansing of the heavens and earth.

With these considerations in mind, chapter 5 turned more specifically to Leithart's intriguing designation of the "clothing change of heaven and earth" theme which he makes in connection with baptism, suggesting that it provides a viable framework for understanding the writer's complex reconceptualization of cosmos, creation, and the relationship between the covenants in light of the Christ event. The basis for this synthesis derived from the category of transitoriness-eternity seen initially in connection

¹Leithart, 64.

with the writer's christological reading of Ps 102:26–28, and which provided the basis for his formulation of the strong contrast between the permanence of Christ and the unstable realm of creation (1:10–12). The prevailing assumption here has been that the writer intends to simply reinforce his broader contrast between Christ and the angels, which, as created beings, belong to the transitory realm and are referred to as "winds" and "flames of fire" (1:7; Ps 104:4). However, as evidence has shown, angels were sometimes described in Jewish tradition as mediators of the Mosaic covenant. Therefore, an important insight which emerged in the context of Heb 1:10–12 was that the rolling up of the 'garments' of heaven and earth also implies a strong declaration of the superiority of Christ and the new covenant over the old institutions represented by the Mosaic covenant and angels. Support for this proposal was strengthened further by awareness concerning the significance of the verb *παλαιόω* in 1:11 (Ps 102:27) and the fact that the writer employs it again *twice* in 8:13 to describe the old covenant "as obsolete and growing old [and] ready to vanish away."

For the writer of Hebrews, the crux of the "clothing change" theme, and its strong declarations concerning the superiority of the new covenant over the old, is situated not in a concern for mere theologizing, but rather emerged as a pastoral response to addressing the problems associated with living in the interim period between the ages. While they had experienced the joys associated with their new Christian commitment through baptism (Heb 6:1–5), the "Hebrews" still had to face the dim realities of their disenfranchisement in the present world on account of their faith (10:32–34). Furthermore, the Jerusalem Temple stood as a grandiose, visible reminder of the enduring relevance of the Jewish covenant, and was perceived as the cosmic center where heaven and earth converged and where God's 'presence' was manifested. As evidence has shown, the tensions related to the 'already-not-yet' aspect of Christian experience, including awareness that the primary symbol of the old covenant was still operative and the new

covenant not fully inaugurated, were major issues that informed the writer's strategy in addressing his letter.

To address these concerns, the writer's major point of departure was Enochic Judaism. Drawing upon many of the same apocalyptic and conceptual understandings found in 1 Enoch concerning the supplantation of the covenant, the writer warned his addressees that the present created order would indeed soon end in a cosmic conflagration which could only be compared to the biblical metaphor of the heavens and earth being rolled up like a garment. The "clothing change" theme indeed provided a critical expression of the writer's view concerning the ultimate displacement of the old covenant by the new and the imminent destruction of its primary supporting institution—the Jerusalem Temple. A major point argued in the present research is that Heb 8:13, in fact, implies this catastrophe. And so, like his intellectual forebears, the writer of Hebrews asserts that the 'cosmic' national cultus will be destroyed in the final eschatological judgment. This awareness was intended to provide the congregants with a major basis for hope and assurance that their plight in the present age would soon be resolved.

In extending his notion of the "clothing change" theme beyond Heb 1:10–12, the writer provided the most notable demonstration of his brilliance by devising an exegesis in which he transposed the outer tent of the Mosaic tabernacle into a 'parable' of the believers' current status in the world. The crux of this symbolization emerges through an intriguing play on the terms *πρώτη*, "first," and *δευτέρα*, "second," in chaps. 8 and 9. While initially applying them to the distinction between the old and new covenants (8:7 and 8:13), the writer plays further upon the ambiguity of "first" in 9:1 by connecting it with 8:13 to mean "first" covenant and then switches to using "first" and "second" to designate spatially the two parts of the sanctuary (9:2, 3, 6, 7, 8). In this manner, the writer extends his two-covenant contrast to the revered institution of the Mosaic tabernacle so that, as Leithart explains, "the first tent becomes a parable (*παραβολή*) for

the entire dissolving first covenant."¹ The overriding premise here is that the sanctuary is fundamentally flawed since it is *κοσμικός* and belongs to the material world which will soon pass away. The brilliance of the writer's exegesis is thus evident by the manner in which traditional notions of Jewish cosmology, including understandings about the harmonization between covenant and sanctuary, are reinterpreted through the universalistic lens of Enochic Judaism, and adapted to fit his own unique Christian worldview.

An elucidation of the sanctuary 'parable' in Heb 9:8–9a provided a useful framework for better understanding the typology of Christian baptism in Heb 10:19–22, especially embodied in the phrase "our bodies washed with pure water" (10:22). Although the congregants faced many difficulties living in the "present age," especially in the shadow of the Temple, the writer's claim was that through their own spiritual washing into Christ, they had become part of a new and greater priesthood than the Zadokites, with rights of continual access to the heavenly holy of holies by faith.

A major premise of the "clothing change of heaven and earth" theme is that it represents the difference between the mutable realm where Christ dwells and the transitory realm of creation, which will soon pass away. In the final chapter, the unique eschatological view which emerges in 1:10–12 and which is developed throughout the letter in such passages as 8:13 and 9:6–10, reaches its fulfillment in the concluding warning of 12:25–29 where the writer cites Hag 2:6 (LXX) to reinforce belief in the final eschatological drama. Developing further his important two-covenant contrast, the writer argues from this passage that in the same way that God shook the earth during the establishment of the first covenant at Sinai, so he will shake the heavens and earth as part of the second so that only that which is uncreated and cannot be shaken will remain. An important insight that emerged from this exegesis was awareness of the writer's apparent

¹Leithart, 63.

distinction between the highest 'axiological' heaven where Christ abides and the lower, transient 'cosmological' heaven that is soon to fade away along with the rest of the old creation. The fact that the congregants already belong to God's 'unshakable kingdom' by faith is an indication of the immense benefits they possess as members of the new covenant community.

What has emerged throughout the foregoing discussion of the Letter to the Hebrews is strong evidence to suggest how the writer's conceptual worldview corresponds in many respects with that of Enochic Judaism. While Hebrews does not indicate direct verbal correspondences with 1 Enoch, the writer develops major theological premises that appear to draw heavily upon antecedents already well-established in this Second Temple community concerning the supplantation of the Jewish covenant and the relativization of the national cultus. Several intriguing points of correspondence between 1 Enoch and the conceptual worldview in Hebrews were suggested earlier; it is worth repeating them here briefly.¹ One concerns the way in which the framers of the Enoch corpus cast their hero Enoch as a priest-like figure who ascends to heaven and directly into God's throneroom, without undergoing any type of physical transformation. As some have discerned, the most likely intent here is to portray Enoch as representative of a primordial type of priesthood that supersedes the Zadokite lineage.² The other major factor has to do with the description of the heavenly temple as a bipartite structure, with God's throne in the second chamber. Enoch's unmediated access to this most holy domain, and his service there in an intercessory role, establishes him in this tradition as the source of divine revelation concerning God's activity in the end times. A final point that is pertinent here concerns the manner in which the writers substantiate Enoch's authority at the outset of the discourse by mentioning him as one "whose eyes

¹See pp. 158–60 above.

²Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis*, 74.

were opened by God, and who saw a vision of the Holy One in heaven" (cf 1:2a).

Through the construction of this new cosmic-eschatological perspective, the framers of the corpus were able to cast Enoch as the instigator of a considerable critique and reformulation of traditional Zadokite beliefs; this emerged especially through the legitimation of a cosmicized notion of covenant (symbolized by the 364-day calendar), as well as the inclusivist notion that salvation would ultimately be sent to the Gentiles, but judgment upon Israel and its Temple. Simply stated, the Enochic corpus attests to the emergence of a non-conformist group during the Second Temple period that was based on adherence neither to the Temple nor the Torah.

Hebrews and 1 Enoch therefore elaborate on the notion that a redeemer figure's divine ascent to heaven forms the basis for the establishment of a greater revelation concerning God's activity in the end times and the resolution of cosmic evil. Consequently, each work adopts a stringent polemic against the established priesthood and cultus based on the conviction that these institutions cannot provide a solution to this plight. In addition, both sources represent communities that embody a strong symbol of covenantal fidelity; in the case of the Enochic community, it is the calendar, and for Christians, it is baptism. In conclusion therefore, what has emerged is support for how the universalistic scope of 1 Enoch and its strong cosmic-eschatological outlook, framed by a reformulation of the Jewish covenant, and also undergirded by a critical stance toward the national cultus, are all factors that provide an important framework for understanding the distinctiveness of the new "cosmic covenant" elaborated in the Letter to the Hebrews.

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