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A Kingdom of Priests and Gods: Angelic and Participatory Deification in John's Apocalypse

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A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS AND GODS: ANGELIC AND PARTICIPATORY

DEIFICATION IN JOHN'S APOCALYPSE

A Masters Thesis

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The Graduate College of

Missouri State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts, Religious Studies

By

David Alan Armstrong

May 2018

A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS AND GODS: ANGELIC AND PARTICIPATORY

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ABSTRACT

Ancient Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature contains soteriological narratives of human transformation that qualify as examples of deification in antiquity. One widely exemplified type of deification in ancient Jewish apocalypses and apocalyptic literature focuses first on the analogy between priests and angels, and then the gradual assimilation of the former to the identity of the latter. In much apocalyptic thought, God resides in a celestial sanctuary in heaven where angels serve a heavenly liturgy of worship and praise, and it is this reality which the earthly priesthood, temple, and cult mimic and extend into the human world, which led to speculation that human priests would become angels either at death or in the eschaton. This narrative of transformation also accords with what Martha Himmelfarb calls a "democratization" of the priesthood to include righteous individuals who otherwise would not enjoy such privileges. The Book of Revelation, as an apocalypse written by a Christian Jew, makes use of this traditional Jewish soteriology in a uniquely Christian framework, by appropriating its imagery and logic in the context of an early Christian participatory model of deification, the communicatio idiomatum, or "exchange of attributions." Through participation in the angelomorphic, priestly Christ, the priestly saints are also guaranteed a share in angelic, divine glory. The study adds Revelation to an ongoing scholarly conversation about the trajectory of early Christian soteriological development.

KEYWORDS: Judaism, Christianity, apocalypticism, soteriology, deification, priests, angels, Revelation, Christology

This abstract is approved as to form and content

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Leslie Baynes, PhD
Chairperson, Advisory Committee
Missouri State University

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Approved:

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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How does the Apocalypse of John relate to early Jewish and Christian soteriologies of deification? How does John relate to Jewish traditions of deification, and how does he relate to Christian ones?

My answer to those questions can be summarized in the following points:

(1) Ancient Jews and early Christians were participants in a wider discussion in antiquity of deification and human transformation, and both resembled and differed from both one another and their neighbors in their respective soteriologies.
(2) John's Apocalypse, as a Jewish apocalypse, is part of a tradition of Jewish apocalyptic texts that are marked by what April D. DeConick calls a "priestly cosmology," in which God's Glory[1] resides in heaven, conceived of as a celestial temple where the angels minister as priests, and to which human beings can, in the proper state of purity, ascend to receive knowledge and transformation. In particular,
(3) John receives but also reconfigures this Jewish tradition of angelic deification within an early Christian participatory model. Specifically, John has an angelomorphic Christology that is implicitly priestly, and which anchors the explicit priesthood of the earthly saints; in turn, though the transformation of the earthly saints is never explicitly described, it is implied through the privileges which they share that conform them both to the angelomorphic Christ and to the angelic priesthood. John's soteriology thus constitutes an example of *communicatio idiomatum*, an "exchange of attributions" between Christ and the saints.

The rest of this chapter includes an explanation of my methodology, the character of ancient Jewish apocalypticism, and the religio-cultural context of ancient Jewish and early Christian soteriologies of deification. Chapters 2 and 3 correspond to points 2 and 3 above, respectively.

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[1] Throughout, where I use "Glory" to indicate this hypostatic manifestation or body of God, the *Kavod* of biblical and related literature, I will use "Glory" with the capital G. Where "glory" is meant in the sense of radiance, brilliance, or splendor more generally, it will appear without the capitalization.

Methodologies And Their Application

The project will engage in a historical-critical investigation of John's Apocalypse, with a heavy focus on the importance of intertextuality for understanding some of the text's key theological ideas and the author's expectations. What follows is an explanation of these methods and their application.

Historical Criticism. Historical criticism has fallen on somewhat hard times in terms of its intellectual credibility as academia has taken a decisively postmodern turn in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The golden era of historical critical scholarship was from the mid-19th to the mid-to-late 20th centuries, reaching a crescendo during the last century of the modern period. Nevertheless, historical criticism remains a viable method for understanding biblical texts, and it is for that reason that it is still widely practiced by biblical scholars today.

John Barton outlines four major elements of historical criticism: genetic questions, original meaning, historical reconstructions, and disinterested scholarship. "Historical critics," he argues, pursue questions of "when and by whom books were written; what was their intended readership; and, in the case of many biblical books, what were the stages by which they came into being[.]"[2] In this pursuit, historical critics embark on "[v]ery sophisticated philological and linguistic studies…in order to establish what the original author could have meant in his own historical period."[3] Historical critics also seek to examine this original textual meaning in its relationship to an objective historical reality which stands behind the text. Such a pursuit is marked by "going back to

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[2] John Barton, "Historical-Critical Approaches," in *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation*, ed. John Barton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 9.

[3] Barton, "Historical-Critical Approaches," 10.

the original sources and refusing to accept what ancient writers said at face value," whether in classical or biblical literature.[4] One could alternatively draw on the model articulated by Daniel J. Harrington: historical critics try to examine "*the world of the text*" by several means (philological examination which seeks to understand the world presented by the text, i.e., what the text says and what it means) and seek to reconstruct "*the world behind the text*" as best as they are able (both through textual and archaeological study), though this latter world remains fundamentally inaccessible.[5] However, historical criticism is theoretically supposed to remain indifferent about what Harrington calls "*the world in front of the text*": i.e., the world which the text has shaped, leading up to the present world which scholar and lay reader inhabit.[6] As Barton says, "The historical critic's calling was to be a neutral observer, rescinding from any kind of faith-commitment in order to get at the truth."[7] Theoretically, then, historical criticism is to be carried out regardless of its consequences for traditional theological readings of Scripture. This aspirational objectivity is a consequence of historical criticism's debt to the Enlightenment: that is, historical criticism has often applied the Enlightenment's rather iconoclastic attachment to rationalistic empiricism to the enterprise of interpretation of religious texts.

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[4] Barton, "Historical-Critical Approaches," 11.

[5] Daniel J. Harrington, "Reading the Bible Critically and Religiously: Catholic Perspectives," *The Bible and the Believer: How to Read the Bible Critically & Religiously*, ed. in Marc Zvi Brettler, Peter Enns, and Daniel J. Harrington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 106-107. Harrington is pleasantly skeptical of overconfident scholarly attempts to dissect biblical text, its composition history, and its historical context; see below.

[6] Harrington, "Reading the Bible Critically and Religiously," 109-110.

[7] Barton, "Historical-Critical Approaches," 12.

The historical-critical method has been rightly criticized and reshaped on all of these points. Chiefly, the objectivity which it hails as proper to the scholarly enterprise is both impossible and of questionable value. As Barton says, "The neutral, scientific pursuit of truth by a disinterested scholar has been shown (it is said) to be bankrupt….No-one is really 'disinterested'; everyone has an axe to grind."[8] Historical criticism can legitimately be used for confessional ends, and need not always be in conflict with traditional readings. As Barton summarizes: "The vast majority of biblical interpreters until very recently have been religious believers,"[9] and despite the growing number of biblical scholars who identify as agnostics or atheists, this remains more or less the case.

Moreover, the other three pursuits of historical critics—genetic origins of texts, original meanings of texts, and historical settings of texts—have been legitimately criticized on epistemological grounds. To begin with, postmodernism has raised serious questions about the character of objective or absolute truth in all fields of knowledge to which historical critics operate in. Secondly, it remains true, as Harrington has pointed out, that much of the "world behind the text"—the historical setting, circumstances, and even the intention of the author—remains somewhat permanently out of reach. The suggestions of source criticism, for example, about the compositional histories of various texts, are problematized heavily by the fact that in most cases we do not possess the supposed layers of edition that we theoretically should, but only the text in more or less

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[8] Barton, "Historical-Critical Approaches," 13.

[9] Barton, "Historical-Critical Approaches," 15.

its final form (differences among different manuscripts aside).[10] This has led to the rise of *synchronic* readings of the biblical text—i.e., readings of the text as we have it—in opposition to *diachronic* readings which seek to understand the text's development over a period of time.[11]

These critiques, while important, do not denigrate the essential integrity of historical criticism as a discipline, provided that it is pursued with some degree of humility about the nature and scope of the results it can produce. Attempting to understand biblical and related literature in its historical context, reconstructed to the best of the scholar's ability, remains the most viable scientific method for determining probable original meaning of texts.

Intertextuality. Intertextuality can be described as the web of relationships between different biblical and related texts constituted by influence, borrowing, and mutually shared traditions. Intertextuality is a "property of texts" insofar as it describes "their inseparability from associations with other texts[.]"[12] That very "inseparability" itself, however, can be elusive, because "the shared webs of meaning and association that enable communication between people are never fully and completely shared," and the connections among texts that constitute intertextuality can be interpreted as "general,

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[10] For example scholars regularly revise the Documentary Hypothesis of Wellhausen, usually by a reduction of the number of Pentateuchal sources, on the grounds that some of Wellhausen's dissection was unwarranted; despite its theoretical usefulness for explaining the Synoptic Problem, physical evidence of a Q Document which influenced Matthew and Luke remains undiscovered, etc.

[11] See also the discussion in Harrington, "Reading the Bible Religiously and Critically," 92-94, in which he details what he understands to be the literary and historical problems with historical criticism and its limited ability to produce firm results.

[12] Patricia K. Tull, "Rhetorical Criticism and Intertextuality," in *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and their Applications*, ed. Steven L. McKenzie and Stephen R. Haynes (Louisville, KY: The John Knox Press, 1999), 165.

untraceable intelligibility" or with "direct, traceable literary borrowing or allusion," or inclusively of a whole range of possible relationship.[13] This results in a method that is somewhat deliberately vague, more interested in "providing an angle of vision on the nature of biblical texts than in prescribing a precise set of procedures for producing an interpretation."[14] When combined with a historical-critical methodology, intertextuality focuses on the transmission and development of several traditions through various texts, and the ways that various texts can help mutually answer questions of original context and meaning.

Defining Apocalypticism and Deification in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity

  Apocalypticism and Priestly Cosmology. The dominant definition of what constitutes a literary apocalypse (ἀποκάλυψις, "unveiling") in biblical scholarship has easily been that of John J. Collins' influential *Semeia* article "Introduction: The Morphology of a Genre."[15] As Collins admits in that piece, "the classification 'apocalyptic' or 'apocalypse' is a modern one."[16] Apart from John's Apocalypse, none of the ancient literature commonly treated under that label refers to itself as such. Collins is ardent that despite this, "there is a phenomenon which may be called 'apocalyptic' and that it is expressed in an ill-defined list of writings which includes (on any reckoning) the Jewish works Daniel (chaps. 7-12), 1 Enoch, 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch and the Christian book

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[13] Tull, "Rhetorical Criticism and Intertextuality," 165.

[14] Tull, "Rhetorical Criticism and Intertextuality," 166.

[15] John J. Collins, "Introduction: The Morphology of a Genre," *Semeia* 14 (1979): 1-20.

[16] Collins, "The Morphology of a Genre," 2.

of Revelation."[17] Texts, either in part or in whole, which belong in this collection are those which, Collins argues, fit the following definition:

> 'Apocalypse' is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.[18]

The major alternative to Collins' definition in recent scholarship was proposed by Christopher Rowland in his book *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Early Judaism and Christianity*,[19] though in reality Rowland's argument has more to do with the character of apocalyptic as an "outlook" or a "movement" (what would be well captured by the German *Weltanschauung*, or worldview) than as a literary genre.[20] Rowland seeks to dispute the idea that "apocalyptic and eschatology are alternative ways of speaking about the hope for the future" and "to move away from an approach to apocalyptic which is dominated by a study of eschatological material," insisting instead that "The mysteries of heaven and earth and the real significance of contemporary persons and events in history are…the dominant interests of the apocalypticists."[21] The

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[17] Collins, "The Morphology of a Genre," 3.

[18] Collins, "The Morphology of a Genre," 9.

[19] Christopher Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1982).

[20] Gerhard Von Rad summarizes the distinction nicely: "[T]he many definitions of apocalyptic attempted at different times have not confined themselves simply to the understanding of a peculiar literary phenomenon, but they also try to describe a theological phenomenon with its own view of the world." Gerhard Von Rad, *The Theology of Israel's Prophetic Traditions*, vol. 2 of *Old Testament Theology*, trans. D.M.G. Stalker (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), 301.

[21] Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 2. This is not to say, as Rowland admits, that eschatology has no relevance to the study of apocalyptic, or that eschatological concerns are not major emphases of the apocalyptic tradition, but eschatology is a function of this more sapiential concern to "expound the meaning of the universe" (2).

essence of apocalyptic, according to Rowland, "is that God reveals his mysteries directly to man and thereby gives them knowledge of the true nature of reality so that they may organize their lives accordingly."[22] Rowland summarizes his definition of the apocalyptic worldview thus: apocalyptic concerns "the revelation of the divine mysteries through visions or some other form of immediate disclosure of heavenly truths." It ought to be "confined to those works which purport to offer disclosures of the heavenly mysteries," it is not synonymous with eschatology, it possesses no singularly essential eschatological vision, it is found in but not limited to the generic form of an apocalypse, and it has a diversified portfolio of revelatory mechanisms.[23]

Rowland's thesis has much to commend it, but Collins' definition has remained popular despite the critiques of Rowland and others that argue a "purely formal definition."[24] For my purposes, where a text is identified generically as an "apocalypse," it is identified as such in the sense argued by Collins, while acknowledging that a text which is not an apocalypse generically can still showcase the apocalyptic *Weltanschauung*, per Rowland. Apocalypticism,[25] both literary and otherwise, has a variegated genealogy, owing much to its ancient Near Eastern setting and

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[22] Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 11.

[23] Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 70-72.

[24] Collins, "What is Apocalyptic Literature?" in *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, ed. John Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 5. See pp. 1-6 more broadly for Collins' defense of his definition against these more recent interlocutors.

[25] As a term encompassing all phenomena connected to apocalypses, apocalyptic ideas, and the communities that produce and disseminate them.

Mesopotamian,[26] Canaanite,[27] Persian,[28] and Hellenistic[29] precedents and parallels, all of which contribute to a wide diffusion of apocalypticism and likeminded traditions in late antiquity.[30] Nevertheless, none of these traditions is directly responsible for Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature, which seems to have developed independently even while drawing on the matrix of mythological and apocalyptic traditions from its surroundings.[31]

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[26] See Richard J. Clifford, "The Roots of Apocalypticism in Near Eastern Myth," in *The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity*, ed. John J. Collins vol. 1 of *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, ed. Bernard McGinn, John J. Collins, and Stephen J. Stein (New York: Continuum, 2006), 3-20. For Babylonian influence, see Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 32-36.

[27] See Clifford, "The Roots of Apocalypticism," 20-29. Clifford covers the biblical use of Canaanite mythology in 29-35.

[28] See Anders Hultgard, "Persian Apocalypticism," in *The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity*, 39-81; idem, "Bahman Yasht: A Persian Apocalypse," in *Mysteries and Revelations: Apocalyptic Studies since the Uppsala Colloquium*, ed. John J. Collins and James H. Charlesworth, JSPSup 9 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 114-134; and Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 36-41; Iranian influence on exilic, postexilic, and Second Temple Judaism is a key aspect of the development of the apocalyptic tradition, though, as Hultgard notes, it "exerted itself in an indirect way": "The encounter with Iranian religion produced the necessary stimulus for the full development of ideas that were slowly under way within Judaism" (80). Collins concurs: "even if the Persian apocalypses could be dated securely to the Hellenistic age, the Jewish genre cannot be regarded as a simple borrowing, since it is adapted to the needs of Jewish monotheism…In short, whatever was taken over from Persian apocalypticism was thoroughly reconceived and integrated with other strands of thought" (Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 41).

[29] See Hubert Cancik, "The End of the World, of History, and of the Individual in Greek and Roman Antiquity," in *The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity*, 84-125; Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 41-46; idem, *Seers, Sibyls and Sages in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism*, SJS 54 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 59-74.

[30] This diffusion was significant, ranging from the Mediterranean to the South Asian worlds, as evidenced by the existence of apocalypses in Hindu and Buddhist literature (e.g., the end of the Mahabharata and the Nimi-Jataka). This diffusion speaks to the cross-cultural character of apocalypticism as a literary and religious phenomenon, despite the fact that South Asia probably received the genre of "apocalypse" from its Persian and, later, Hellenistic contacts.

[31] As Collins says, "The apocalyptic visionaries drew on materials from many sources: ancient myths, biblical prophecies, Greek and Persian traditions. But what they produced was a new kind of literature that had its own coherence and should not be seen as a child or adaptation of something else." John J. Collins, "From Prophecy to Apocalypticism: The Expectation of the End," in *The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity*, 146.

Typically, scholars seek the origins of Jewish and Christian apocalypticism in either the wisdom or prophetic traditions of ancient Israel.[32] As Collins notes, this dichotomy "has often led scholars to view apocalypticism as a derivative phenomenon," and the "logic" involved in the search is "patently defective."[33] As noted above, ancient Jewish and Christian apocalypticism drew on a variety of cultural resources within and without their respective traditions, including both wisdom literature and postexilic prophecy. Wisdom and apocalypticism "have much in common."[34] They share several "underlying questions, insofar as both are often concerned with theodicy or the problem of divine justice,"[35] and "they can influence one another," as illustrated in the existence of "apocalyptic" wisdom texts and generic apocalypses that are consumed with sapiential interests.[36] The degree of overlap is severe enough that George Nickelsburg has admonished that phrases like "*sapiential*, *apocalyptic*, and *eschatological* are useful and, indeed, necessary, but they must be seen for what they are: windows into another world, means for trying to understand that to which we do not have first-hand access."[37] In the interest of avoiding the evolution of these terms into "hermetically sealed compartments,"

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[32] To some extent, the divide between Rowland and Collins is possibly intelligible on precisely these grounds. For a definition of "Wisdom" literature, see Matthew Goff, "Wisdom and Apocalypticism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, 54-55.

[33] Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 25.

[34] Goff, "Wisdom and Apocalypticism," 60.

[35] Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 26.

[36] Goff, "Wisdom and Apocalypticism," 60-63.

[37] George W.E. Nickelsburg, "Wisdom and Apocalypticism in Early Judaism: Some Points for Discussion," in *Conflicted Boundaries in Wisdom and Apocalypticism*, ed. Benjamin G. Wright and Lawrence M. Wills, SBL Symposium Series 35 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2005), 36.

Nickelsburg stresses the need to see wisdom and apocalypticism as contiguous phenomena in ancient Judaism.[38]

As Matthew Goff notes, most scholars have rejected the thesis of Gerhard von Rad as first articulated, that apocalypticism derives from wisdom and not from prophecy, as problematized both by the dating of the earliest apocalypses as well as the clear relationship between late prophetic literature and early apocalypticism.[39] Furthermore, as I will go on to argue, the soteriological traditions of ancient Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature which this thesis focuses on have more to do with the social setting of postexilic prophecy than they do with the shared social and ideological space of wisdom and apocalypticism. For these reasons, without rejecting a congenital relationship between wisdom literature and ancient Jewish and Christian apocalypticism, my focus in the remainder of this section will be on the prophetic origins of ancient Jewish and Christian apocalypses.

Whereas prophecy before the Babylonian Exile was largely concerned with divine orchestration of human events within history, exilic and postexilic prophecy increasingly looked to a final realization of the reign of God in an eschatological or transcendent future beyond history as such. [40] The earliest instances of apocalypticism, as Paul D. Hanson argued, derive from this exilic and postexilic transformation of prophetic tradition.[41] Specifically, Hanson argues that "(1) the sources of apocalyptic eschatology

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[38] Nickelsburg, "Wisdom and Apocalypticism in Early Judaism," 36.

[39] Goff, "Wisdom and Apocalypticism," 52-53, 58-60.

[40] See Joseph Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel*, Rev. and enl. ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 226-239.

[41] On the transformations of prophecy in the exilic period, see Joseph Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel*, 148-193; on the postexilic realities of prophecy in the Persian period, 194-222.

lie solidly within the prophetic tradition of Israel; (2) the period of origin is in the sixth to the fifth centuries; (3) the essential nature of apocalyptic is found in the abandonment of the prophetic task of translating the vision of the divine council into historical terms; (4) the historical and sociological matrix of apocalyptic is found in an inner-community struggle in the period of the Second Temple between visionary and hierocratic elements."[42] A key element of Hanson's reconstruction is the idea that the apocalyptic group has been disenfranchised by the Zadokite priestly establishment.[43] Hanson summarizes the situation this way: "The sociological position of the proponent of apocalyptic eschatology is therefore that of powerlessness and disenfranchisement vis-à-vis the controlling powers of the community and world."[44]

The most important critique and modification of Hanson's reconstruction comes from Stephen L. Cook's *Prophecy and Apocalypticism: The Postexilic Social Setting*.[45] While Cook agrees with Hanson that proto-apocalyptic[46] texts (and thus, presumably,

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Blenkinsopp stresses that prophecy did not come to an end with the exile (149), and that a clear self-awareness existed in the institution following the exile that understood that "one long phase of its history now belonged to the past" (153). Additionally, "more traditionally Israelite forms of prophecy were waging a losing battle against the allure of Babylonian magic, divination by a variety of techniques, and dream interpretation," (153), due at least in part to the loss of royal patronage that would have privileged it (154-155). Within the prophetic institution there also existed conflict and rival prophetic expectations and authorities, with little reliable arbitration between them. This, Blenkinsopp suspects, is partly responsible for the final edition of the Deuteronomic tradition (161-163). This is the prophetic context both for Ezekiel (165-180) and Second Isaiah (181-193). The early Persian period—dominated by Joel, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi—brings about a recentralization of the institution of prophecy through its connection to the cult (201; 222-226). See Paul D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975).

[42] Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 29.

[43] Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 93.

[44] Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 251.

[45] Stephen L. Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism: The Postexilic Social Setting* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995).

proto-apocalypticism) originate in exilic and post-exilic prophecy, he successfully shows

that "proto-apocalyptic texts" like Ezekiel 38-39 and Zechariah 1-8 "are not products of

groups that are alienated, marginalized, or even relatively deprived. Rather, they stem

from groups allied with or identical to the priests at the center of restoration society."[47]

Cook sees the views of previous scholars that "apocalyptic texts [are] the literary

expressions of alienated factions in the restored community"[48] as an insufficient reading

of the evidence, on the grounds that "Dissonance" (such as is experienced in the

disappointment of the proto-apocalypticists in the lackluster restoration of Judah after the

exile) "can occur even when groups are not at all deprived or frustrated,"[49] as evidenced

in the existence of numerous non-deprived millennial groups from antiquity to the

present.[50] Ultimately, the best examples of proto-apocalyptic literature reflect a

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[46] Cook is careful to distinguish his understanding of the phrase "proto-apocalyptic" from that of his predecessors. Rather than seeing "proto-apocalyptic eschatology as part of a continuum from prophetic eschatology into apocalyptic eschatology," but to denote Persian-period Israelite literature that shares some of the major themes of the Hellenistic apocalypses, but not all of them, and not some of the more distinctive ones (such as, e.g., resurrection). In some sense, Cook notes, proto-apocalyptic literature is a step away from the "nonapocalyptic visionary" literature of the preexilic prophets, but does not quite attain to the level of "full-blown apocalyptic literature (such as the vision of Daniel)." Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism*, 34-35.

[47] Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism*, 2. Blenkinsopp takes issue with Hanson on other grounds: namely, that Hanson (and his predecessor Ploger) makes an "attempt to create a trajectory covering some four centuries with inadequate data," that "[b]oth authors…write as if millenarian, messianic, and apocalyptic movements are peculiar to Judaism " (Blenksinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel*, 213-214). Instead, Blenkinsopp suggests, "certain political and social situations, not restricted to any one epoch, will tend to precipitate or encourage messianic, millenarian, or apocalyptic thinking," and "[t]he transition from Neo-Babylonian to Persian rule was just such a juncture, and we have seen that it gave rise to a messianic (i.e., nationalist and royalist) movement in Jewish communities" (214).

[48] Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism*, 12.

[49] Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism*, 15.

[50] Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism*, 35-40.

mainstream rather than a purely sectarian identity: Ezek 38-39, Zech 1-8, and Joel all reflect the cultic concern of mainstream Zadokites.[51]

Thus, even if apocalypticism has its origins in a prophetic milieu,[52] that prophetic milieu is characterized by priestly tradition and emphasis, and as will be clear in the following chapter, the priestly character of early apocalypticism is obvious in many of the works that scholars categorize as apocalypses. As Joseph Blenkinsopp notes, "One of the most important aspects of the transformation of Israelite prophecy after the loss of national independence was its reabsorption into the cult,"[53] and thus proto-apocalyptic literature, as an essentially postexilic prophetic genre, is also a priestly one. This priestly inheritance will also define many of the apocalypses of the Hellenistic-Roman era. Indeed, April D. DeConick goes so far as to argue that apocalyptic literature possesses an explicitly "priestly cosmology," the "centerpiece" of which is "the belief that God has a 'body,' called the 'Glory' or Kavod of YHWH," a "heavenly version of the Jerusalem temple" in which "angels associated with this heavenly temple are the temple's functionaries, its priests performing cultic activities," the *merkabah* "throne of glory," and a "secret heavenly curtain." [54] As I will show at some length in the next chapter, the

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[51] Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism*, 87, 98-103, 105-108, 124, 139, 140-144, 171, 188-194, 215-218.

[52] It is important to stress again that while "postexilic prophecy shares some significant features of the apocalypses" (and, indeed, is their earliest formative matrix,) "it still lacks the generic framework of apocalyptic thought" (Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*), 30.

[53] Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel*, 223.

[54] See especially April D. DeConick, "What is Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism?" in *Paradise Now: Essays on Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism,* ed. April D. DeConick, SBL Symposium 11 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2006), 11-18. DeConick challenges the dominant view of apocalyptic as a merely literary phenomenon, suggesting that mysticism and apocalypticism ought to be understood as continuous aspects of the same reality and that there exists a "mystical" dimension of apocalyptic texts which has to do with "the encounter with God that results in the devotee's immediate personal transformation and the uncovering of God's mysteries," and that involves a divine/angelic anthropology (18-22).

influence of the temple and its cult upon the apocalypses and the apocalyptic worldview is deep and unavoidable. It is this massive influence which colors so many ancient Jewish texts that I will go on to argue is also present in John's Apocalypse.

A key element of a "priestly cosmology" as defined by DeConick is the concept of personal transformation, either of the seer or his group, from merely human existence to glorious human existence, conceived of in either an angelic or a divine modality. Broadly speaking, such transformation belongs to the plethora of traditions in the ancient world which have to do with deification. I now turn there.

Deification in Hellenistic Paganism, Judaism, and Early Christianity.

"Deification" (Gk: ἀποθέωσις; θεοποίησις; ἐκθέωσις; θέωσις; ἀποθειάζειν/ἐκθειάζειν)[55] denotes the status or process of a human being, becoming, or being turned into a god.[56]

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[55] See Norman K. Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in The Greek Patristic Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 333-344, "The Greek Vocabulary of Deification." Ἀποθέωσις was the most popular word in the Hellenistic period, and the "early instances…are all connected with the Hellenistic ruler-cult," though "[t]he Roman period is marked by a widening of applications" of the term (334), particularly as a translation for the Latin consecratio (335), with sporadic philosophical and metaphorical use and some use by early Christian authors (336-337). Θεοποίησις was "the preferred verb among Christians to denote both pagan and Christian deification," though it too has some usage in earlier Greek and Latin literature (338-339). Ἐκθέωσις "occurs for the first time in Appian, who uses it to signify the dedication of an altar," while its first use in a deificatory sense is by Clement of Alexandria (339), though Proclus also employed it "to express the divinity which is acquired by participation in the divine" (340). Θέωσις, though popularly used in modern theology as a synonym for deification, ironically appears in early usage as a parodic word for the "absurdity of pagan deification" (340); and "[a]lthough this became the standard term for deification in Byzantine theology, it is the rarest of the various expressions employed by the earlier Fathers" (341). Ἀποθειάζειν/ἐκθειάζειν has even less representation (341-342). Though coined in pagan context, "the terminology of deification was used much more frequently by Christians than by pagans," since "[u]ntil the Christian era there are only seventeen surviving instances of the use of the terms" (343). In general, "Christian authors show a marked preference for the verbs θεοποίησις and θέωσις, both nouns being late coinages found almost exclusively in Christian writers," while ἀποθέωσις and its cognates "had begun to acquire pejorative connotations" prior to the Nestorian controversy (344). Russell concludes that "Christian writers were thus successful in evolving their own distinctive terminology for deification" (344). See also Litwa, *We Are Being Transformed: Deification in Paul's Soteriology*, BZNW 187 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 58-61.

[56] This, to my mind, takes proper account of the "types" and definition put forward by Litwa, *We Are Being Transformed*, 31-32: "[D]eification in the ancient world came in many types. Such types can be described in terms of chronology (post-mortem? pre-mortem?), mode (through ritual? Moral practice?), motivating power (divine benefaction? or through human action?), result (union with a greater deity or independent Godhood?), etc. All these features, I believe, are more or less secondary characteristics—

The two key questions to ask of any system of deification revolve around both elements of this definition: that is, "What is a human being?" and "What is a god?" Different soteriologies of deification differ with regard to their underlying anthropological and theological convictions; they are not logically interchangeable, and thus to employ the term in this project will require some sketch of the relevant traditions and some placement of the sort of deification I mean to talk about. Simply put, antiquity knew of many ways to become a god: ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece, and Rome all conceived, cultivated, and critiqued traditions of deification individually and collaboratively. So, too, Second Temple Jews, their rabbinic successors, and early Christians all developed complex theologies of deification that both borrowed from their cultural neighbors and also found a basis in biblical and related material. On these grounds, I will argue that deification is an appropriate lens through which to interpret John's Apocalypse.

Some commonalities existed cross-culturally in antiquity in the identification of a god. Immortality is typically a sign that a human being has become a god, since deathlessness was considered a uniquely divine property in antiquity; indeed, as M. David Litwa writes, it is "*the* fundamental divine trait."[57] Phosphorescence, particularly

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outgrowths of more fundamental conceptions. The basis of deification—as I understand it—is sharing in *a* or *the* divine identity—that is, sharing in those distinctive qualities which make (a) God (a) God." Elsewhere, Litwa attempts to construct a "typology" of deification which identifies the phenomenon as either thetic ("juxtaposition" with the divine), kratic ("blending" with the divine), or metabolic ("transformation" into the divine), rooted in Stoic taxonomies for different kind of mixture (Litwa, "Becoming Gods: Deification and the Supernatural," in *Religion: Super Religion*, ed. Jeffrey J. Kripal, MacMillan Interdisciplinary Handbooks [New York: MacMillan, 2016], 100-101).

[57] Litwa, *Becoming Divine: An Introduction to Deification in Western Culture* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2013), 4; idem, *We Are Being Transformed*, 44-46. For example, οἱ ἀθάνατοι, the "deathless ones" or "immortals," is one way to refer collectively to the gods in ancient Greek literature (the Latin equivalent is di immortales, "the immortal gods"). This is true despite the fact that gods can sometimes die in mythical contexts.

in the acquisition of solar or astral luminescence, is usually a distinctly divine trait.[58]

Gods are also immensely powerful: "no one single quality better represented Godhead to the common person in the Hellenistic world" than power.[59] In general, Jews and Christians seem to have delineated the God of Israel as God along these same lines: YHWH is God because he is immortal and demonstrates a universal supremacy in creation and redemption as no other god does,[60] and is also to be associated with fire and light (e.g. Exod 3:2; Ps 104:1-2; Heb 12:29).[61] Becoming a god for an ancient Mediterranean Greek, Roman, Jew, or Christian, then, involves assimilation at least to these qualities.

Jews and Christians were participants in the soteriological pluralism of antiquity as it involved deification. The Hebrew Bible gives little if any indication of any belief in the ability of human beings to become divine, not to mention its sparse detail on

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[58] For example, the Indo-european words for god (deus, diva, and the various common Greek adjectives for divinity, including Zeus' own name) are all etymologically related to daylight. Thus Walter Burkert: "The Greek vocabulary, parallel to Latin *deus-dies*, thus conveys a special message of the Indo-european concept of 'god': 'God' belongs to the sky and the flash of daylight" (Burkert, "From Epiphany to Cult Statue: Early Greek *Theos*," in *What Is A God? Studies in the Nature of Greek Divinity*, ed. Alan B. Lloyd [Swanswea: Classical Press of Wales, 2009], 15). By contrast, the root of θεός, coined at some point in the Minoan-Mycenean period, seems to connote some kind of ecstatic state, "an experience of the extraordinary, especially to smells, noises, and voices encountered in the range of seers and singers" (19). Nevertheless, even by the Homeric period when θεός language was standard for divinity, the phosphorescence of the gods, who are "strong, beautiful, fast like thought, and [who] cast about them the radiance of light," is still emphasized (e.g., *Od*. 19.37-40, 43; see Bernard Dietrich, "From Knossos to Homer," in *What Is A God?*, 11 fn42). Ancient religion in the Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and Mediterranean worlds also associate the gods with the celestial bodies in various ways (see, e.g., Francesca Rochberg, "'The Stars Their Likenesses': Perspectives on the Relation Between Celestial Bodies and Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia," in *What Is A God? Anthropomorphic and Non-Anthropomorphic Aspects of Deity in Ancient Mesopotamia*, ed. Barbara Nevling Porter [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009], 41-92; Martin P. Nilsson, "The Origin of Belief Among the Greeks in the Divinity of the Heavenly Bodies," *HTR* 33 (1940): 1-8; Tamsyn Barton, *Ancient Astrology*, Sciences of Antiquity [London: Routledge, 1994], 111-113).

[59] Litwa, *We Are Being Transformed*, 46-47.

[60] Litwa, *We Are Being Transformed*, 50-57.

[61] See Willem F. Smelik, "On Mystical Transformation of the Righteous Into Light in Judaism," *JSJ* 26 (1995): 123-127; Litwa, "The Deification of Moses in Philo of Alexandria*," SPhil* 26 (2014): 17-20.

postmortem life in general.[62] "[T]he profound gulf that separates the Creator from the created world" leaves human beings who desire divinity or paint themselves as divine as at best ignorant and, at worst, arrogant opponents of the true God (e.g., Isa 14:3-21; Dan 3:1-30; 6:1-28). The Hebrew Bible also gives no indication of a robust afterlife: "The final state of the *nefesh*, the 'soul', was as a silent shade in the underworld, where it had no communication with God or with the living, no real consciousness."[63] However, some fluidity between humanity and divinity is acknowledged in the Hebrew Bible.[64] Several divine hypostases of God are anthropomorphic: God usually appears in basically human form, though enormous (Exod 33:22; 34:6); the Glory of Ezek 1:26-27 has "a likeness as it were of a human form"; and "God's visible form to humans," the "Angel of the Lord (מלך יהוה)," "apparently had an anthropomorphic character."[65] The Hebrew Bible contains several instances of angels appearing as human beings (e.g., Gen 18-19; 32:22-31; Josh 5:13-15; Judg 2:1-2; Zech 1:8-11).[66] Human beings are made in the image and likeness of

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[62] Segal argues, convincingly to my mind, against the dominant scholarly view on this subject in writing that the absence of a "significant afterlife for the dead…would make the Hebrews absolutely unique among world cultures and especially strange in the ancient Near East, where elaborate ideas about postmortem existence and even more elaborate rituals were everywhere part of literature, myth, and social life" (Segal, *Life After Death: A History of the Afterlife in the Religions of the West*, ABRL [New York: Doubleday, 2004], 123). Given that textual and archaeological evidence supports an afterlife in ancient Israelite religion (124-142), Segal argues that the Hebrew Bible lacks a coherent account of it since "any extended discussion of life after death or the realm of the dead with its pantheon of divinities would open the door for idolatry or veneration of ghosts which the Bible…has entirely forbidden" (124).

[63] Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*, 54.

[64] See Litwa, *We Are Being Transformed*, 86-105.

[65] Kevin P. Sullivan, *Wrestling With Angels: A Study of the Relationship between Angels and Humans in Ancient Jewish Literature and the New Testament*, Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 55 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 17-18.

[66] See Sullivan, *Wrestling With Angels*, 37-83. Sullivan maintains that "even when described anthropomorphically, angels remained distinct from humans" (83), but also maintains the problematic assumption that "divine beings, like angels, are incorporeal" (27) and thus that the appearance of angels in human form is accidental. This prevents him from seeing that divine anthropomorphism is theologically significant for ancient Jews.

God (Gen 1:26-28), which includes "at least in part a *morphological* and thus *physical* similarity to Godself,"[67] and through eating from both the tree of life and the knowledge of good and evil were apparently able to become like gods (3:5; cf. 3:22, where the point of denying humanity access to the tree of life is so that humanity may not become completely divine). In the MT of Ezekiel 28:12-19, "the *Urmensch* is angelic, whilst in the LXX he only experiences community with the angelic world, and *Engelgemeinschaft*."[68] Gen 6:1-4 and 11:1-9 show the interchangeability of divinity and humanity from both sides: the sons of God do not transform into humans to mate with human women, and the humans who build the tower of Babel are able to cross into the "category of the divine" through their efforts.[69] In short, "in the imagination of ancient Jews, the human *can bridge both the divine and the animalic*," and "the basic structure of Hebrew thought about God is anthropomorphic."[70]

This fluidity between divinity and humanity is clear in the Hebrew Bible's treatment of kingship.[71] Some texts, which seem to have their "origins in the melting pot of ancient Near Eastern religious experience from which Israel was to emerge" award "to kingship a divine identity."[72] Among these, Psalm 45:7 and Isaiah 9:6 "speak of the king as אלהים and אל גבור, respectively," while in other texts "the king is likened to an angel (1

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[67] Litwa, *We Are Being Transformed*, 101.

[68] Crispin H.T. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, STDJ 42 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 19.

[69] Litwa, *We Are Being Transformed*, 100.

[70] Litwa, *We Are Being Transformed*, 99. Italics in original.

[71] See Litwa, *We Are Being Transformed*, 109-115.

[72] Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam*, 9.

Sam 29:9; 2 Sam 14:17, 20; 19:17; LXX Isaiah 9:5, Zechariah 12:8, cf. Esther LXX 15:4-19 (Add. D)).”[73] Zechariah 12:8 says that “the house of David shall be כאלהים כמלאך יהוה לפניהם,” “like God/gods, like the angel of the LORD before them.”[74] “The Israelite king is God’s viceregent on earth, and rules the world”; therefore, “the king—and humanity in its original state—shared the sovereignty of God,” and participation in this divine power constitutes some measure of divine identity.[75]

It is clear, then, that even before the advent of Hellenism, some strains of ancient Israelite religion held open the possibility of a divine humanity, even in a heavily mitigated sense. Various schools of thought in ancient Judaism offered different means of attaining this divine/angelic status. In those traditions that Norman K. Russell, following older scholarship, denotes as “Hellenistic” in character, deification is most often phrased in terms of participation or union with a secondary divine hypostasis, most often the Logos (in Philo’s case) or Wisdom.[76] However, in what Russell denotes as “Palestinian Judaism”—that is, “the developments that we encounter in Apocalyptic literature and the sectarian writings of Khirbet Qumran”—both the method and the product of human glorification is conceived differently.[77] In this literature, “Enoch, Moses, and other heroes

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[73] Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam*, 9.

[74] The translation is Fletcher-Louis’; see Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam*, 9. See also John J. Collins and Adela Yarbro Collins, *King and Messiah as Son of God: Divine, Human, and Angelic Messianic Figures in Biblical and Related Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 2-24, where the former notes that “the language of sonship does have mythical overtones, and clearly claims for the king a status greater than human” (22), even if the divinity of the king is still subordinated to God (22-24). See also Litwa, *We Are Being Transformed*, 115, who notes that royal deification in the Hebrew Bible consists in sharing “the power of divine sovereignty.”

[75] Litwa, *We Are Being Transformed*, 114-115.

[76] See Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in The Greek Patristic Tradition*, 55-65, most of which is a treatment of Philo on the Logos and human capacity to “attain divinity in the sense of incorporeality or immortality,” though “it is impossible for them to become gods” in the absolute sense (64).

[77] Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*, 65.

of the faith were represented as ascending to heaven to participate with the angels in the

heavenly liturgy," and "[i]n their wake they drew up the faithful remnant of Israel, the

promotion of the resurrected righteous to a community of life with the angels[.]"[78]

Deification in this context, then, "expresses the assimilation of the elect to the life of the

'gods' of the heavenly court," and "the elect, through obedience to the covenant and

participation in the cosmic liturgy, can come to share with the angels in the glory of

God."[79] Scholarship since Russell has recognized that a strict divide between

"Hellenistic" and Palestinian" Judaisms is untenable, since Palestine was thoroughly

Hellenized in the period following the death of Alexander the Great; that is, all Judaisms

of the Second Temple period were Hellenistic Judaisms, with the extent of and comfort

with Hellenization constituting a key element of difference between certain Jewish

groups and schools of thought.[80] Nevertheless, the "Palestinian" moniker as employed by

Russell is useful as a geographic, rather than an ideological, category. As the majority of

ancient Jewish apocalyptic literature was produced in Palestine, a "Palestinian" tradition

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[78] Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*, 67. On the deification of Moses in ancient Judaism, e.g., Litwa, *We Are Being Transformed*, 106-109; James D. Tabor, "'Returning to Divinity': Josephus's Portrayal of the Disappearances of Enoch, Elijah, and Moses," *JBL* 108 (1989), 225-238, and the response by Christopher Begg ("'Josephus's Portrayal of the Disappearances of Enoch, Elijah, and Moses': Some Observations," *JBL* 109 [1990]: 691-693), Fletcher-Louis, "4Q374: A Discourse on the Sinai Tradition: The Deification of Moses and Early Christology," *DSD* 3 (1996): 236-252.

[79] Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in The Greek Patristic Tradition*, 70-71.

[80] A variety of works reflecting this consensus have been published in the last few decades. See especially Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter In Palestine During the Early Hellenistic Period*, 2 vols., trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974); Lee I. Levine, *Judaism and Hellenism in Antiquity: Conflict or Confluence?*, Samuel and Althea Stroum Lectures in Jewish Studies (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998); John J. Collins and Gregory E. Sterling, eds., *Hellenism in the Land of Israel* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2001); Collins, *Jewish Cult and Hellenistic Culture: Essays on the Jewish Encounter with Hellenism and Roman Rule*, SJSJ 100 (Leiden: Brill, 2005); Louis H. Feldman, *Judaism and Hellenism Reconsidered*, SJSJ 107 (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

of Jewish deification is an appropriate concept, provided that it is simultaneously understood that such a "Palestinian" tradition is not immune to Hellenistic influence.

Early Christianity, as a form of Second Temple Judaism and a segment of the Jewish community for an indefinite period of time in the first few centuries CE, espoused a form of deification from its earliest stages. Pauline literature shows a soteriology defined by "[p]articipation in Christ," which has "successive stages: liberation from demonic powers, sharing in the sufferings of Christ, and finally sharing in his glory."[81] This participatory model of deification was also the dominant one for the Johannine school and is the substance of deification in the ante-Nicene period, in Ignatius of Antioch, Justin Martyr, Tatian, Theophilus of Antioch, Irenaeus of Lyons, and Hippolytus of Rome.[82] The logic of this participatory model of deification in the early Christian fathers is dependent upon the incarnation: "If Christ had not really become human, there could be no true baptism with its bestowal of incorruption and immortality. The inward renewal and transformation of the Christian was only possible if the Incarnation was real."[83] That is, Christ's humanity offers the opportunity for human

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[81] Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in The Greek Patristic Tradition*, 82. Stephen Finlan agrees that "There certainly are some meanings of the term theosis that do fit what Paul taught," specifically the "transformation into 'the image of the Son' (Rom 8:29)," the "conformation" to Christ which "has to do with reorientation from fleshly living to spiritual living," and the reflection of "God's light" and "Christ's glory" both inwardly and outwardly in the eschaton (Stephen Finlan, "Can We Speak of Theosis in Paul?" in *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions*, ed. Michael J. Christensen and Jeffrey A. Wittung [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008], 68, 72, 75). Per Litwa, Pauline deification consists chiefly in "assimilation" to "the glorious *body* of the divine Christ," which may or may not be coextensive with the divine Glory, and enjoys pneumatic substance and celestial immortality (Litwa, *We Are Being Transformed*, 119; see 119-171). See also Ben C. Blackwell, *Christosis: Pauline Soteriology in Light of Deification in Irenaeus and Cyril of Alexandria*, WUNT 314 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 115-248.

[82] Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in The Greek Patristic Tradition*, 87-92, 96-112. A participatory model also apparently defined the Valentinian movement (92-96), which "exercised an enormous influence on contemporary Christians, not only negatively…but positively, too," as they were "keenly studied by such speculative theologians as Clement of Alexandria and Origen" (96).

[83] Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in The Greek Patristic Tradition*, 112-113.

beings to participate in his divinity; this is the meaning of deification for early Christian

writers. As scholarly consensus continues to grow that the earliest Christian beliefs about

Jesus understood him to be divine,[84] it is increasingly clear that such is also the case for

Paul and John. For Paul, the earliest surviving Christian writer, participation in Christ is

deifying because Christ is "the power and wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:24), the one in

whose face is "the knowledge of God's glory" (2 Cor 4:6), the one who was primordially

"in the form of God" (Phil 2:6), "the image of the invisible God" (2 Cor 4:4; cf. Col

1:18); it is to a divine Christ that Paul believes Christians are conformed and into whose

image they are transformed. For John, participation in Christ is deifying because Christ is

the divine Logos made flesh (Jn 1:1-14) and who reveals the Father (14:9). In this sense,

early Christianity inherited both the participatory model of deification espoused by

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[84] For an overview, see Andrew Chester, "High Christology—Whence, When and Why?" in *Early Christianity* 2 (2011): 22-50, who sees four main positions in the debate: high Christology (i) as "something essentially and utterly alien within a Jewish context"; (ii) as something which "emerges within essentially Jewish categories, but does so only very gradually"; (iii) something that "emerges in Jewish categories and within a Jewish context, but [which] does so very rapidly"; (iv) as something which "does not develop or evolve at all, but can be seen to be present…from the very start" (31). Of these options, Chester shows that (iii) has enjoyed growing consensus since Martin Hengel (24-31) best fits the evidence despite methodological issues with the position (32), though he points out that the "divine status" implied by high Christology can take numerous forms (33-40). See especially Larry Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988); idem, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003); idem, *How On Earth Did Jesus Become a God? Historical Questions About Earliest Devotion to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005); Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 1-59; Crispin H.T. Fletcher-Louis, *Christological Origins: The Emerging Consensus and Beyond*, vol. 1 of *Jesus Monotheism* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2015); Michael F. Bird, *Jesus the Eternal Son: Answering Adoptionist Christology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017), especially 11-33, 64-106; Bird offers a hard-hitting critique of Adoptionist Christologies (ancient and modern) in 107-123. But see also the more hesitant tone in John J. Collins and Adela Yarbro Collins, *King and Messiah as Son of God*, esp. 207-213. Despite Collins' rejection of recent attempts to see a preexistent Jesus in the Synoptics (123-126), she admits that "the account of the transfiguration suggests that Jesus is a divine being walking the earth" (131); the "tension" she identifies with the baptism scene (132) is soluble with Bird's work, which shows that Jesus is not adopted in the baptism scene as recent scholars have argued (64-81). The divinity of Christ is also evident in his depiction as a Mediterranean deity by early Christians, as chronicled by Litwa, *Iesus Deus: The Early Christian Depiction of Jesus as a Mediterranean God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014).

philosophical Judaism[85] as well as the transformative, angelomorphic model of

apocalyptic Judaism.[86] The patristic term for this participation in Christ, to which I will

return in the third chapter, is *communicatio idiomatum*.[87]

Ancient Jews and Christians, then, held open the possibility of humans becoming

gods. It is necessary to defend this point. Peter Schafer has argued that angelification and

deification are not equivalent in "apocalyptic, Qumranic, and Hekhalot literatures," and

that it is inappropriate to speak of a human being becoming anything greater than an

angel in these texts.[88] Deification, then, is an inappropriate category for the kind of

transformation that occurs in the apocalypses, including the Book of Revelation. This

objection suffers from one major difficulty: it depends on a faulty definition of

monotheism in the ancient context. Schafer defines deification strictly as a "becoming

God"—i.e., the one, ontologically distinct, Creator God of Jewish monotheism, YHWH

himself. What is inappropriate about this assumption is that it does not take proper

account of the fluidity of ancient Jewish monotheism and its willingness to use the

language of divinity—"god," "gods," etc.—for beings who are usually categorized in

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[85] By this term, I mean to refer to Jews like Philo or Aristobulus, who make conscious attempts to engage Greco-Roman philosophy and culture as Jews.

[86] Exemplified more so by the Synoptics and, as I will argue, Revelation; e.g., Matt 22:30; Luke 20:36.

[87] The "exchange of attributions" is further developed in second stage of the Alexandrian theological tradition, particularly Athanasius: "Human nature becomes the Word's 'own' (ἴδιον), so that we are all, in some sense, incorporated into the incarnate Word and benefit from the 'giving' and 'receiving'" (Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*, 172). He goes on: "As a result of the *communicatio idiomatum*, human beings linked by nature to the flesh of Christ are able to participate by grace in the divinity of Christ" (186).

[88] Peter Schafer, *The Origins of Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 20; cf. 343, where he argues that "Metatron's enthronement and transformation in 3 Enoch is the only case in the Hekhalot literature of the angelification of a human being that even borders on deification." The argument is relevant because this transformation of Enoch is, admittedly, more grandiose than anything encountered in the apocalypses or at Qumran.

later tradition as angels.[89] To begin with, the Hebrew Bible frequently assumes the reality

of other divinities apart from Israel's God even while asserting his unique supremacy

over them. For example, YHWH is "God of gods and Lord of lords" (Deut 10:17) who

apportions the nations according to the number of the gods (32:8, according to the DSS

reading accepted by the NRSV), to whom other gods are commanded to ascribe glory (Ps

29:1) and who sits enthroned among their council (82:1). The image of the Divine

Council, in which a chief deity sits enthroned over an array of lesser divinities who act as

counselors to him, is a central religious belief of the ancient Near East and appears in

several biblical texts (e.g., 1 Kgs 22:19-23; Ps 82:1; Isa 6; Dan 7; Job 1-2), and continued

to be important in the Second Temple period in various ways.[90] In this theological

context, as Collins notes, "Monotheism, strictly defined—the view that only one God

exists, as opposed to henotheism or monolatry, the view that only one God should be

worshiped—may owe more to the systematic reasoning of Greek philosophy than to 'the

Mosaic distinction.'"[91] Indeed, as Benjamin Sommer has written, while "[t]he polarity

'monotheism-polytheism' has some explanatory value…its explanatory value has been

overestimated, because it obscures connections that transcend this polarity."[92] Rather than

to a hard, fast, and unitarian monotheism, the evidence of ancient Judaism points instead

to "divinity" as "an analogous concept," meaning that while "the uniqueness of the

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[89] See especially John J. Collins, "Powers in Heaven: God, Gods, and Angels in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. John J. Collins and Robert A. Kugler (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 9-28.

[90] See E. Theodore Mullen, *The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1980).

[91] Collins, "Powers in Heaven," 10.

[92] Benjamin Sommer, *Bodies of God in Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 145. See also Litwa, *We Are Being Transformed*, 229-245, 251-256.

creator was affirmed, it remained possible to speak of other divine beings in a qualified sense."[93] Notably, the Dead Sea Scrolls refer to the "holy ones" of the heavenly host as "gods" (*elim*) on several occasions.[94] In light of this information, Sommer has argued for a redefinition of monotheism to include the existence of other divinities "who live in heaven and who are in the normal course of events immortal; but they are unalterably subservient to the one supreme being, except insofar as that being voluntarily relinquishes a measure of control by granting other beings free will;" in this definition, it is "appropriate to term the supreme being the one God and the other heavenly beings gods or angels."[95] "In this definition," he writes, "it is not the number of divine beings that matters to monotheism but the relations among them."[96]

I offer, then, a qualified critique of Schafer: if by deification one means that one becomes or merges with the one, uncreated, Creator God, then, yes, deification is an inappropriate term to describe the transformations which occur in the apocalypses and other ancient Jewish literature. If, on the other hand, one means by deification transformation into a divine being by analogy, or a divine being whose share in the glory and power of God is contingent (in a similar way as is that of the angels), then deification is an entirely appropriate summary of much of what we find in that literature.

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[93] Collins, "Powers in Heaven," 11.

[94] Collins, "Powers in Heaven," 12.

[95] Sommer, *Bodies of God in Ancient Israel*, 146-147.

[96] Sommer, *Bodies of God in Ancient Israel*, 147.

CHAPTER 2: THE ANGELIC DEIFICATION OF THE PRIESTHOOD IN ANCIENT JEWISH LITERATURE

In the last chapter, I argued for the origins of apocalyptic literature in postexilic prophetic circles attached to the Temple and priestly community and for deification as a key element of ancient Judaism and early Christianity. From these influences, apocalyptic literature derives what April D. DeConick calls its "priestly cosmology" focused on the Glory of God, the heavenly temple with its angelic priesthood, and the logic of purity and transformation involved in human ascensions to heaven and encounters with the divine.[1] The form of deification that belongs to this tradition, which was principally developed in apocalypses and apocalyptic texts composed in Palestine, centers on an analogy between priests and angels as ministers in the earthly and heavenly temples, respectively. Angels serve a liturgy in the celestial sanctuary, of which the earthly temple, its priesthood, and its service are copies. From this, two developments are possible. First, priests can, in the present, participate in the angelic liturgy and thus enjoy some kind of liturgical communion with the angels. Second, the eschatological destiny of priests, righteous Israelites, and humankind more generally is transformation into a glorified, angelic state of existence, which according to some authors earthly priests (and worshipers) are able to experience proleptically through participation in the temple cult. In this chapter, I survey the evolution of this tradition and highlight its major features, and in the following

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[1] April D. DeConick, "What is Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism?" in *Paradise Now: Essays on Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism,* ed. April D. DeConick, SBL Symposium 11 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2006), 11-18

chapter, I will argue that John reuses the logic and imagery of this tradition in the context of an early Christian participatory model of deification.

Analogy and Transformation Between the Earthly and Heavenly Priesthoods in Ancient Jewish Apocalypses and Apocalyptic Thought

The priestly tradition of ancient Judaism centers on interlocking concerns for purity, cult, and temple. Through ritual purity,[2] priests are able to accomplish "*imitatio Dei* (Lev. 11:44-45, 19:2, 20:7, 26)": "[b]y separating from sex and death…ancient Israelites (and especially ancient Israelite priests and Levites) separated themselves from what made them least God-like."[3] Following this logic inherent within the purity law, the entire sacrificial system is also an extended divine mimesis: in the careful domestication, selection, ritual slaughter, dissection, manipulation, and consumption of the life and corpse of an animal, the priest (and, to a lesser extent, the worshiper) imitates God's own sovereignty over life, death, and human beings.[4] As a result, "There is an analogy at the heart of sacrifice. The worshiper and priest play the part of God, and the domesticated animals…play the part of the people (and particularly Israel)."[5] Klawans insists that this analogy is just that: "people don't really become divine in the process of imitating God.

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[2] For ritual and moral purity, see Jonathan Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 4-19, and *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple: Symbolism and Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 4-48. As Klawans puts it, summarizing the insights of David P. Wright and Tikva Frymer-Kensky: "Because God is eternal, God does not die….Because God has no consort, God cannot have sex." Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 58.

[3] Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 58.

[4] Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 58-66. For God as pastoralist, see Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 58-62.

[5] Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 67.

They can merely aspire briefly to play on the human level roles otherwise played by God on the divine level….analogy is not identity."[6] However, as will be seen, the analogy at the heart of sacrifice is the basis of a soteriology of deification in ancient Jewish literature in which priests and worshipers are first thought to be like God and the angels and then to become like God and the angels during the liturgy or after death. This development from analogy to identity coincides broadly with a more general dichotomy in ancient Judaism about sacred space, between conceiving of the temple itself as either "a symbol of the cosmos"[7] or "as an analogue to a sanctuary located in heaven."[8] As Klawans notes, "[w]hile the two ideas are not contradictory,[9] there are many tensions between them, and…it is a general rule that ancient Jewish sources will articulate only one or another of these approaches, and not both."[10] The first interpretive framework, which understands the Temple as being symbolic of the cosmos, has broad precedent in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East more generally, where temples were constructed often intentionally as microcosms.[11] The narratives where God commands Moses to construct the tabernacle and the narratives of Solomon building the temple both "carefully recall

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[6] Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 68.

[7] On the Temple as cosmos, see Raphael Patai, *Man and Temple in Ancient Jewish Myth and Ritual* (New York: Ktav, 1967), 105-117; see also the sources in C.T.R. Hayward, *The Jewish Temple: A Non-Biblical Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 1996).

[8] Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 111.

[9] As Klawans continues, "Despite the differences between these two notions, it is important to emphasize that the notions are not completely incompatible. Nor does the mere presence of the aforementioned prerequisites necessarily lead directly to the notion of a temple in heaven." Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 113.

[10] Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 111.

[11] Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 268 fn65 for a list of relevant works.

the language and structure of Genesis 1,"[12] suggesting that the worshiping space is meant to be understood as a model of the cosmos and, further, that the cosmos itself is meant to be a temple. It is, most likely, the older of the two models, and this accounts for its wide representation in ancient Jewish literature (e.g., Josephus, *B.J.* 5:184-237; *A.J.* 3:102-279, especially 3:123, 132, 183, 183-187, 146, 179, 180, 181, 182; Philo, *Spec.* 1:66-67, 82-97, 162-167, 172; *Her.* 196-197; *QG* 3:3; *Mos.* 2:98, 99, 101-103, 109-135; *QE* 2:51-124 [particularly 2:73-81, 91-93, 107-124]).[13]

The second perspective, that a temple exists in heaven parallel to the earthly one, is rooted in biblical texts which describe a heavenly model for the earthly sanctuary (Exod 25:40, 26:30, 27:8; 1 Chr 28:11-20; Ezek 40-48), and, indeed, some ancient Jewish texts assume and elaborate upon precisely this sort of "heavenly temple" (2 Bar. 4:5; Philo, *Mos.* 2:74-76; Pseudo-Philo, LAB 11:15; Wis 9:8).[14] On the basis of these texts, "a set of traditions emerged that imagined that a glorious new temple was in heaven, waiting and ready to descend to earth at the end of days, and able to be seen by those visionaries who ascend to heaven (e.g., *1 Enoch* 90:28-37; 2 Baruch 4:1-6; 2 Esdras 10:25-28; cf. the *Temple Scroll* XXIX:9-10 and *The New Jerusalem* texts from Qumran)."[15] This idea is

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[12] Klawans, *Sacrifice, Purity, and the Temple*, 62.

[13] As Klawans writes, "[S]cholarly approaches to the biblical sources [suggesting the Temple-cosmos connection] lend credence to the idea that Josephus' work in this regard is not creative but conservative. It is hardly likely that Josephus created anew among ancient Jews an analogy that is well attested in ancient Near Eastern literature" (Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 115). The same can be said of Philo, although he begins to bridge the gap between Temple-cosmos symbolism and heavenly sanctuary theology in some unique ways. For Philo on the Temple as cosmos, see Hayward, *The Jewish Temple*, 108-141, and 142-153 for Josephus. See Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 113-128 more widely for an in-depth analysis of this symbolism in ancient Jewish literature in general. I will return to it again below.

[14] This list is Klawans'; Klawans*, Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 128.

[15] Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 128-129.

distinct, however, from "the notion that a permanent temple exists in heaven, in which God is worshiped by the angels."[16] It is this latter idea, however, that grounds the apocalyptic soteriology of angelic deification of the priesthood. Below, I treat several important texts in that tradition.[17]

The Book of the Watchers. The first major ascent to a heavenly temple where angels engage in ceaseless worship of God appears in the third century BCE *Book of the Watchers* (*1 Enoch* 1-36, hereafter BW), which is also often counted as the first apocalypse proper.[18] Elaborating on Genesis 6:1-4, the Book of the Watchers recounts the fall of the eponymous Watchers in taking wives, producing monstrous, giant offspring, and disseminating forbidden knowledge to humans, which leads to widespread violence on the earth (1 En 6:1-8:4). In response, the archangels Michael, Sariel, Raphael, and Gabriel, watching these events "from the sanctuary of heaven" (9:1), intercede with God on behalf of humankind to send them to do something about the extreme situation (9:1-11). God, in reply, commissions the archangels to prepare Noah for the upcoming flood, imprison the Watchers, destroy the giants, and to "Cleanse the earth from all impurity and from all wrong and from all lawlessness and from all sin" (10:20; 10:1-22). Enoch is then

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[16] Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 129. Here, Klawans draws on the insight of George Buchanan Gray, *Sacrifice in the Old Testament: Its Theory and Practice* (New York: Ktav, 1971), 153-157.

[17] Here I am synthesizing the order of treatment given by Martha Himmelfarb in chapters 2 and 3 of *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), and Joseph Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, STDJ 86 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 23-167.

[18] As Klawans says, BW is "the best place to begin" (Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 129). For the dating of and an introduction to the Enochic corpus, see 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), 1-125. As Nickelsburg writes, Enoch sets the tone for later apocalyptic texts in many ways, including "literary form; attitude toward the Hebrew Scriptures; notions of revelation; use of sapiential language; concern with the temple, cult, and priesthood; historical situation and social setting" (68). The translation here is Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch: A New Translation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004).

commissioned by one of the faithful angels to announce to the imprisoned Watchers that they will not receive forgiveness and that their children will be destroyed (12:3-13:3), and the fallen Watchers, in turn, ask Enoch to go and intercede with God on their behalf (13:4-5). Enoch agrees, and recites the petition until he falls asleep and enters a dreamlike visionary state (13:6-8). In this dream, Enoch ascends to heaven and receives there the definitive divine condemnation of the Watchers (14:1-25). The heaven of Enoch's dream is clearly a celestial temple, possessing an outer court (14:9), a larger "house" within the court (14:10-14), and a "greater" house within it (10:15-17), wherein he sees the *merkabah*[19] (14:18-19) upon which the "Great Glory" (God) sits enthroned, surrounded by an exceedingly large number of angelic beings (14:20-23), corresponding with the "three zones"[20] of the earthly sanctuary.[21] These angels conduct Enoch himself to the door of the third house (14:24-25) so that he may receive the divine condemnation of the Watchers from the Lord himself (15:1-16:4). This message of condemnation Enoch then announces to the Watchers upon waking (14:9-10).

That heaven is a temple in BW would naturally imply that the angels of the Book of the Watchers are priests, or at the very least that they have priestly qualities, and this inference is supported from the activities ascribed to them. To begin with, various angelic figures in BW are said to "approach" God, using a set of words which carry technical

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[19] The chariot-throne of God, upon which much ancient Jewish apocalyptic and mystical attention was focused. See April D. DeConick, "What Is Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism?" 16-17. Nickelsburg discusses BW's use of Ezekiel's chariot-vision in Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 264.

[20] Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 130.

[21] See Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 14, 25-28; Nickelsburg, "Enoch, Levi, and Peter: Recipients of Revelation in Upper Galilee," *JBL* 100 (1981): 575-588; idem, *1 Enoch 1*, 259-266. See also Joseph Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, STDJ 86 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 28, fn 15.

meaning in the cult for a priest officiating some sacrificial act (e.g., 9:4; 14:23; cf. 14:21-22, where "none of those about [God] approached him" because of his majesty).[22] Next, at least one of the archangels, Michael, is commissioned with the explicitly priestly task of making atonement: Michael is to "[c]leanse the earth from all impurity and from all wrong and from all lawlessness and from all sin, and godlessness and all impurities that have come upon the earth," as a result of which "all the peoples will worship [God], and all will bless [him] and prostrate themselves," since "the earth will be cleansed from all defilement and from all uncleanness, and I shall not again send upon them any wrath or scourge of all the generations of eternity" (10:20-22). As Angel notes, "this story is an etiological allegory for the scapegoat ritual of Leviticus 16," and thus "1 Enoch 10 may have served as the myth to accompany the priestly ritual of Yom Kippur"; hence "Michael is already portrayed here as a sort of celestial high priest interceding in behalf of all humankind, a conception that resonates in later Jewish literature."[23] The angels also function as intercessors in BW: the archangels petition God on behalf of humanity (9:1-11), and it is to the shame of the fallen Watchers that they, who were supposed to petition on behalf of humankind, have charged a human being to petition God on their behalf

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[22] See Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 208-212; Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 28-29. As he points out, "The Greek verb utilized to denote drawing near (ἐγγίζω) appears several times in the LXX denoting priestly service in the temple (often translating קרב, נגש), and the same is likely the case here."

[23] See Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 29-30. On this point, Angel refers the reader to 3 Bar. 11-16; Hag. 12b; cf. 11Q13, though Nickelsburg is "uncertain" if traditions about Michael as high priest were known (Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 227-228). It could be argued that Raphael's commission to "heal the earth, which the watchers have desolated" (10:7) may also have cultic overtones, since the moral defilement of the land leads eventually to the desolation and desecration of the sanctuary (on this see Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 55, 71). Furthermore, Raphael is to bring "healing" for a "plague," and the connection between plague and expiatory sacrifice is well-established in biblical tradition (e.g., the Passover sacrifice in Ex. 12:1-32; perhaps more directly parallel, David's sacrifice on the threshing floor of Araunah which turns away the devastating plague from Israel in 2 Sam 24).

(15:2).[24] The fallen Watchers have left "the sanctuary of their eternal station" (στάσις; 12:4), which "probably translates a term equivalent to מעמד, in the sense of 'priestly course'."[25] Last, several scholars have made the argument that the fallen Watchers themselves are meant as a sort of critique of the Jerusalem priesthood: in the same way that the Watchers have defiled themselves with human women, so, too, the Jerusalemite priests have morally compromised themselves with the wrong women in violation of the laws that regulate their sexual relations and marital options.[26] That the Book of the Watchers envisions a heavenly priesthood is thus a necessary preliminary to the perceived rhetorical function of the book's mythic narrative.

Importantly, Enoch himself becomes a priest by becoming "a mediator between God and the fallen watchers."[27] As Joseph Angel points out, the "task assigned to the angel Michael in chapter 10 [i.e., cleansing the earth] is carried out by none other than Enoch in 12:3-6; 14:4-7; and 15:2-16:4."[28] Enoch "is granted the privilege of accessing the glorious divine presence, an honor denied to some angels [1 En. 14:20-15:1]."[29] In

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[24] As Angel notes, "Intercession here is to be understood as a priestly role," drawing on Exod. 28:29 (Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 29). He goes on, in 29 fn21: "The idea of angelic intercession in behalf of humans was popular in the Second Temple period (see 1 En. 47:2; 99:3; 16; Tob 12:12; T. Levi 3:5; 5:6-7; Rev. 8:3)…The notion may be related to the heavenly court setting in which God is pictured as sitting on the throne of judgment while supernatural beings argue over the fate of human beings (Psalm 82; Zech 3:1-10; Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6)."

[25] Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 28. This is how Nickelsburg takes it (Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 271).

[26] See D. Suter, "Fallen Angel, Fallen Priest: The Problem of Family Purity in 1 Enoch 6-16," *HUCA* 50 (1979): 115-135; Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 20-23; Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 207-211; Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 27, 33-35.

[27] Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 31. See Andrei A. Orlov, *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition*, TSAJ 107 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 70-76 for an overview.

[28] Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 31.

[29] Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 31.

brief, "Enoch's role as intercessor for the watchers as well as his access to God's

presence in what appears to be the heavenly temple represent privileges best understood

as priestly."[30] This is certainly how later Enochic and other subsequent Jewish literature

appears to understand him (e.g., 2 En. 22; 69-73; Jub. 4:17, 25; 21:12).[31] To some extent,

Enoch's scribal characteristics imply this priestly role, since scribal activity was

connected with priesthood in the Second Temple period and Enoch's status as scribe

would naturally have connoted his priestly character.[32]

    Jubilees. Jubilees is a non-sectarian work that probably dates to between 160 and

150 BCE.[33] The work[34] is essentially "rewritten Bible"[35] drawing on postbiblical

traditions about the patriarchs Enoch[36] and Levi in which "[a]ngelology[37] plays a central

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[30] Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 32.

[31] As Himmelfarb notes, Enoch' "priestly role is implicit in the narrative" of the Book of the Watchers (Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 25). See Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 25-46; Crispin H.T. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, STDJ 42 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 23-24; Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 32.

[32] See Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 32, and also 257-295, where Angel argues that the scribal character of the Qumran community was an integral part of the *yahad*'s self-understanding as an eschatological priestly community. See also Angel, "Enoch, Jesus, and Priestly Tradition," *Enoch and the Synoptic Gospels: Reminiscences, Allusions, Intertextuality*, eds. Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Gabriele Boccaccini, EJL 44 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016), 285-316.

[33] On Jubilees and its understanding of the Temple more generally, see Hayward, *The Jewish Temple*, 85-107. See also James VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 17-21.

[34] For a translation, see O.S. Wintermute, "Jubilees (Second Century B.C.)," in *Expansions of the 'Old Testament' and Legends, Wisdom and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms, and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works*, vol. 2 of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James Charlesworth, ABRL (New York: Doubleday, 1985), 35-142.

[35] Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 36.

[36] For Jubilees and its relationship to Enochic literature, see especially the essays in Gabriele Boccaccini and Giovanni Ibba, eds., *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), particularly John S. Bergsma, "The Relationship Between Jubilees and the Early Enochic Books (Astronomical Book and Book of the Watchers)," in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah*, 36-51.

role" and in which "the angelic fulfillment of [a priestly] role is explicit," while "human priests of the line of Levi are likened to angels."[38] A "complex work with mixed affinities," Jubilees "conforms to the apocalyptic genre at the level of literary morphology but radically departs at the level of the ideas raised by genre."[39] As such, it both represents a major development of the themes under consideration in this chapter and belongs in a discussion of *apocalyptic* deification in ancient Judaism.

As Annette Yoshiko Reed points out, "Depictions of angels in Jubilees revolve around two main themes: (1) the transmission of knowledge and (2) the elevation of Israel."[40] In Jubilees' account of creation, the angels are created on the first day in three separate divisions, "angels of the presence," "angels of holiness," and angels of "cosmic phenomena"[41] such as fire, winds, clouds, snow, thunders, seasons, etc. (Jub. 2:2). In Jub. 2:18, the angels of the presence and of holiness are commanded to observe the Sabbath, while the angels of the various cosmic phenomena are not. Israel, alone among humankind, is also granted this privilege (2:19-22). As Angel puts it, this sets up a "direct parallelism between the existence and actions of heavenly beings and those of their human counterparts on earth. Written into the very order of creation, Israel corresponds to the angels closest to God, while the Gentiles correlate to those farthest away."[42] Angel

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[37] For angelological overlap between Enoch and Jubilees, see Annette Yoshiko Reed, "Enochic and Mosaic Traditions in Jubilees: The Evidence of Angelology and Demonology," in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah*, 353-368.

[38] Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 37.

[39] Todd R. Hanneken, *The Subversion of the Apocalypses in the Book of Jubilees*, EJL 34 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2012), 3-4, 259.

[40] Reed, "Enochic and Mosaic Traditions in Jubilees," 355.

[41] Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 38.

[42] Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 38.

also notes that this same parallelism is implicit in the fact that the first two angelic orders were created circumcised, thus necessitating the circumcision of Abraham and his household (15:23-32).[43] Israel's general priestly calling outlined in Ex. 19:6 is reaffirmed at several points throughout Jubilees (e.g., 16:18; 33:20), and thus has a conception of "the priesthood as democratized (and, as a consequence, merit-based)," but without necessarily marginalizing "the scriptural notion of a hereditary priesthood within Israel."[44] From the perspective of Jubilees, this hereditary priesthood encompasses the major patriarchal figures of Israel's history, beginning with Adam and going through Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob before culminating in Levi.

The angels of Jubilees "are depicted as fulfilling sacerdotal duties in the temple above."[45] They observe Shavuot in a particular manner (6:13, 22) and are openly said to cultically serve the Lord continually (30:18, 31:14-17). Notably, these explanations of the angelic cult come as part of a broader account of the selection of Levi and his line to be the hereditary priesthood in Israel. The angelic priests remark that "Levi's descendants were chosen for the priesthood and as Levites to serve before the Lord as we (do) for all time" (30:18). Isaac blesses Levi that God would "make you and your descendants (alone) out of all humanity approach him to serve in his temple like the angels of the presence and like the holy ones" (31:14). This angelic mimesis to which the Levitical line

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[43] Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 38.

[44] Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 40. See also Himmelfarb, *A Kingdom of Priests: Ancestry and Merit in Ancient Judaism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 53-84. As Himmelfarb notes elsewhere (Himmelfarb, "The Book of Jubilees and Early Jewish Mysticism," in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah*, 384-394), "Jubilees understand not only priests but also the entire people of Israel to be the earthly counterpart of the angels," particularly the two highest groups of angels, and "[t]his point is crucial," since it differentiates Jubilees from sectarian literature (391-394).

[45] Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 41.

is invited is a likeness to the angels "of honor, greatness, and holiness," that Levi's

descendants may be "princes, judges, and leaders of all the descendants of Jacob's sons"

(31:14b-15). As Angel notes, "[t]he precise significance of these comparisons is unclear,"

as to whether or not the earthly priests are simply analogous to the angels or whether or

not they actually "enter and serve in the celestial temple and may thus more literally be

said to be like the angels in honor, greatness, and holiness."[46] Crispin H.T. Fletcher-Louis

has argued that the selection of the Levites "out of all humanity" represents "a real

ontological transfer from one realm to another,"[47] implying that Jubilees understands the

Levites to undergo some kind of transformation into angelic beings. As Angel notes,

following James VanderKam, Jubilees 31 is drawing on Malachi 2:7, where the priest's

guardianship of knowledge is connected to his identity as "an angel of the Lord of

Hosts," and thus the "attribut[ion] of an otherworldly quality to human priests"[48] is not

totally out of the question here. However, while the analogy between human priests and

angels begins to collapse in Jubilees, "it is far from clear that an actual ontological

transformation is envisioned in Jub. 31:14," and thus the most that may be said

confidently is that human priests share in the unique privileges and holy status of their

angelic counterparts.[49] On the other hand, however, since Israel enjoys divine benefits

which the angels do not (including the choice to serve God, God's "direct rule" of the

people, and his personal hand in their eschatological redemption), "Jubilees extends

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[46] Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 42.

[47] Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam*, 16.

[48] Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 43.

[49] Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 44-45.

Enoch's prerogatives to all Israel, proposing that this nation's status as the children of

God ultimately surpasses the status of God's angels."[50]

    Aramaic Levi Document* and *Testament of Levi. A possible source for Jubilees'

Levi traditions is the *Aramaic Levi Document* (ALD),[51] a mid-2nd c. BCE document[52]

that also stands behind the later 2nd c. CE Greek *Testament of Levi*.[53] Both texts are

examples of what Robert Kugler has called "The Levi-Priestly Tradition," a collection of

texts (principally, ALD, Jub. 30:1-32:9, and T. Levi) which "depict Levi as God's ideal

priest."[54] This tradition, while perhaps not reducible to being "purely a product of

authorial imagination,"[55] is certainly extrabiblical: "no single biblical text relating to Levi

leads one to such a conclusion ["that God selected Levi for the priesthood as a reward for

his zeal at Shechem"] about him."[56] The origins of the idea seem to be founded in Gen

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[50] Reed, "Enochic and Mosaic Traditions in Jubilees," 356.

[51] See Robert A. Kugler, *From Patriarch to Priest: The Levi-Priestly Tradition from* Aramaic Levi *to* Testament of Levi, EJL 9 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 139-170. As Kugler writes, ALD and Jub. 30:1-32:9 share the Dinah/Shechem episode, an angelic injunction against exogamy/selection of Levi as priest, a visit with Isaac, Levi's ordination by Jacob, Levi's sacrifices, and another visit with Isaac (149). Jubilees, however, has many traditions that ALD lacks (149), and has omitted Levi's prayer, blessing of his family, Isaac's "cultic instructions," family history, and Levi's speech (149-150). Kugler concludes from this that "The most likely answer [for the discrepancy] is that both books relied independently on a similar source" (150). See also Esther Eshel, "The Aramaic Levi Document, the Genesis Apocryphon, and Jubilees: A Study of Shared Traditions," in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah*, 82-87. Eshel notes that Jubilees has transformed the narrative of ALD to conform to the overall "centrality" it awards to Jacob, and as such "devotes considerably less space to Levi than does ALD" (85).

[52] For the dating of ALD, see Kugler, *From Patriarch to Priest*, 134-135; see also James Kugel, "How Old Is the 'Aramaic Levi Document'?" *DSD* 14.3 (2007): 291-312, who concurs that "the dating of *ALD* as we know it to any period earlier than the late second c. BCE seems quite untenable" (312).

[53] As Angel notes, this is "generally acknowledged," though "the extent and nature of the use of *ALD* as a source for T. Levi is a long-debated and extremely complex question." See, at his recommendation, Kugler, *From Patriarch to Priest*, 177-220. Here, Kugler outlines what he believes to be the "Original Testament of Levi," before the Christian interpolations of the present form of T. Levi.

[54] Kugler, *From Patriarch to Priest*, 2.

[55] Kugler, *From Patriarch to Priest*, 9.

[56] Kugler, *From Patriarch to Priest*, 9.

34, Exod 32:25-29, Num 25:6-13, and Deut 33:8-11, each of which depict either Levi or one of his descendants acquiring priestly office by means of some act of violence (in order: Levi slaughtering the Shechemites, the Levites killing 3,000 of Israel, Phinehas slaying Zimri and Cozbi, and the Mosaic blessing which assigns priestly office to Levi whose zeal for purity exceeds his love for family).[57] Malachi 2:4-7 appears to interpret this tradition as a "covenant" between God and Levi, and in turn forms part of the scriptural matrix for the Levi-Priestly tradition itself.[58]

A key development in the Levi-Priestly tradition, however, is the idea of parallelism between Levi's priesthood and that of the angels. In the fragmentary pieces that remain of *ALD*, Levi ascends to heaven in a dream vision and is told that he has received "the anointing of eternal peace" (*ALD* 4:13; see 4:1-4:13).[59] Following this vision, Levi is blessed by Isaac and ordained and invested priest by Jacob (5:1-8), following which Isaac instructs Levi in cultic matters (6:1-10:14). The text of T. Levi[60]

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[57] See Kugler, *From Patriarch to Priest*, 10-18. The connection between priesthood and violence is one to which I will return in the subsequent chapter. For now, it is sufficient to note that Michael's violent destruction of the wicked to cleanse the earth in the Book of the Watchers has already been shown as an example of priestly behavior. See especially Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 30 fn26, who reviews the evidence covered by Kugler above, that "[v]arious texts in the Hebrew Bible link the acquisition of priestly privilege with zealous violence against the wicked." This connection is ancient, and apparently well-developed already by the preexilic period. See Joel S. Baden, "The Violent Origins of the Levites: Text and Tradition," in *Levites and Priests in Biblical History and Tradition*, ed. Mark Leuchter and Jeremy M. Hutton, AIL 9 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2011), 103-116. While, as Baden notes, "[t]he evidence does not allow us to make any conclusive statements as to the origin of the connection of Levites and violence," nevertheless "the connection is undeniably present, and the variant reflexes of it in the J source attest to its age and flexibility in the service of describing the salient features of the status of the Levites in Israelite society" (116).

[58] Kugler, *From Patriarch to Priest*, 18-22. See also Cana Werman, "Levi and Levites in the Second Temple Period," *DSD* 4 (1997): 211-225, who argues that the development of Levitical traditions took place concurrently with a "dearth of Levites during the Second Temple period" (212).

[59] For the reconstructed text of ALD, see Jonas C. Greenfield, Michael E. Stone, and Esther Eshel, *The Aramaic Levi Document: Edition, Translation, and Commentary*, SVTP 19 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 56-102.

expands upon this vision: Levi, bemoaning the corruption of humankind (T. Levi 2:3-5), sees the various heavens in a dream (2:6-5:7). In this dream, Levi is told that he "shall be [God's] priest and [he] shall tell forth his mysteries to men" (2:10),[61] and the contents of the various heavens are described to him (3:1-10). In the "uppermost heaven of all dwells the Great Glory in the Holy of Holies superior to all holiness," and "[t]here with him are the archangels, who serve and offer propitiatory sacrifices to the Lord in behalf of all the sins of ignorance of the righteous ones" (3:4-6). The sacrifice that they make is "a pleasing odor, a rational and bloodless oblation" (3:6-7).[62] The angel then opens the gates of heaven for Levi and he "beholds the holy temple [Gk: ναός], and the Most High upon a throne of glory" (5:1).[63] God himself reaffirms to Levi that he has given him "the blessing of the priesthood" (5:2), before the *angelus interpres* of his vision escorts him back to earth and arms him to make vengeance for Dinah (5:3-7). In Levi's second vision, "seven men in white clothing" command Levi to "Arise, put on the vestments of the priesthood, the crown of righteousness, the oracle of understanding, the robe of truth, the breastplate of faith, the miter of the head, and the apron for prophetic power" (8:2-3).[64] Each of the men invests Levi with one of these items, thereby making him a priest

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[60] For which, see Martin de Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Critical Edition of the Greek Text*, PVTG (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 24-50.

[61] The translation is from H.C. Kee, "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (Second Century B.C.): A New Translation and Introduction," in *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, vol. 1 of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,* ed. James H. Charlesworth , ABRL (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 775-795.

[62] It is possible that this is one of the Christian interpolations in the text, though it could also be a precedent for later Christian language concerning the eucharist. See Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 33-36.

[63] This is my translation of the Greek text provided by de Jonge; Kee's translation omits the mention of the "holy sanctuary" in heaven, because he relies on R.H. Charles' text rather than on De Jonge's (Kee, "Testaments," 775-776).

[64] The vestments of the high priest are described in detail in Exod. 28:1-43, and include "a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a checkered tunic, a turban, and a sash" (38:4). The colors of these vestments

(8:3-10). Unlike in *ALD*, Jacob does not ordain and invest Levi following this vision, though Isaac still instructs Levi in "the law of the priesthood" (9:1-14).[65]

That the angelic "men" of ch. 8 who invest Levi are priests in a heavenly temple is clear in T. Levi, which presents the celestial sanctuary "in a more extensive manner"[66] than either BW or Jubilees. The "sacerdotal roles" of the angels in this temple are varied: Angel divides them into "three classes: violent purging of evil, propitiation/intercession, and worship," and notes that while the first two are "familiar already from BW," the "explicit details of the angelic worship" given in T. Levi are unlike any precedent in ancient Jewish literature.[67]

The Levi-Priestly tradition insists that Levi's priesthood is to be understood through the framework of angelic priesthood, though *ALD* and T. Levi handle this theme

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include gold, blue, purple, and crimson in addition to white linen. The "robe [Gk: ποδήρη] of the ephod" (28:31) has pomegranates and bells along its lower hem (28:33-34). The turban has affixed to its front a "flower" plaque, on which is inscribed "Holy to YHWH" (28:36). Additionally, he wears "a sash embroidered with needlework" (28:39). The plaque on the turban was probably a crown or "a diadem" rather than simply a plate, as evidenced by the use of נזר as a synonym for ציץ in related passages on the topic (Exod. 28:36; 39:30; Lev. 8:9) which would also explain why later works (like T. Levi and Sir) both assume that the high priest wears a crown (typically a golden στέφανος in Greek literature; see Deborah W. Rooke, *Zadok's Heirs: The Role and Development of the High Priesthood in Ancient Israel*, OTM [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000], 18, 16-20 more widely for a description of the high priestly garments). For a detailed treatment of the high priestly dress, see Ross E. Winkle, "'Clothes Make the (One Like a Son Of) Man': Dress Imagery in Revelation 1 As An Indicator of High Priestly Status" (PhD Diss., Andrews University, 2012), 130-255.

[65] Nickelsburg notes the numerous parallels between the dream visions of Enoch in the Book of the Watchers and Levi in T. Levi: both enter a dreamlike state contracted through prayer and sleep, are taken to Mt. Hermon, witness various celestial phenomena, arrive at the Holy of Holies in the highest heaven, behold God on the *merkabah* who is referred to "by the rare title, 'the Great Glory,'" are assisted by priestly angels, one of whom "opens the gates of heaven," and upon return to earth are commissioned to engage in purificatory violence (Nickelsburg, "Enoch, Levi, and Peter," 588). The similarities between the two accounts is further indication that, in the former, Enoch is to be understood as priest (589).

[66] Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 46.

[67] Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 49-50. See also Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 33-36. As she puts it, "sacrifice appears in very few descriptions of the heavenly temple" (33) and "[r]eferences to actual sacrifice in heaven are quite rare in the apocalypses and elsewhere" (127 fn20). Notably, John's Apocalypse is among this small number that does evidence such an idea (34).

differently. In *ALD*, Levi is said to "be near to God and near to all his holy ones" (6:5), [68] and his investiture by the seven angels is implied (4:12).[69] Levi's investiture also makes him like the angels, whose white clothes, "reminiscent of the seven angels in the book of Ezekiel (9:2-3, 11; 10:2) who wear linen pants [and t]he garments…that the high priest is to wear once a year on the Day of Atonement when he enters the holy of holies (Lev. 16:4)…identif[y] them as priests."[70] Levi's "human priesthood" bears "a sort of angelic status," since it permits him to draw near to God and to the angels as well, and unlike Enoch in the Book of the Watchers, "Levi shows no sign of fear during his vision of heaven or his interaction with angels….instead, he seems completely at home in the celestial realm."[71] This implies, among other things, that the Levi-Priestly tradition understands that "the earthly priesthood of Levi is analogous to and somehow participates in the nature of the angelic priesthood serving God in the celestial temple."[72] This theme of liturgical concelebration with heaven was important to many ancient Jews, particularly Qumranites.

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[68] Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 52.

[69] Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 51. It is a point of debate among scholars as to whether or not Levi has one or two visions. James Kugel argues that there are indeed two visions (Kugel, "Levi's Elevation to the Priesthood in Second Temple Writings," *HTR* 86 [1993], 1-64), while Kugler maintains that ALD only has one (Kugler, *From Patriarch to Priest*, 47-59). The primary evidence that ALD implies the scene of the investiture by the seven angels is the narrative note in 4:12, "And those seven departed from me" (ונגדו שבעתו מן לותי).

[70] Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 51.

[71] Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 52.

[72] Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 53. Himmelfarb takes this Stoic receptivity to the events that befall Levi as evidence that "[t]he author of the Greek Testament found priests and temples extremely important, but their meaning had been transformed so that the mundane details of the cult had lost their power" (Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 32).

The Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice (4Q400-407) and The Self-Glorification Hymn (4Q491c, 4Q471b, 4Q427 7, and 1QHᵃ): The Evidence from Qumran. For any discussion of the developmental history of ancient Jewish notions of deification, not to mention of the apocalyptic worldview and its literature, Qumran is critical. The liturgical evidence from Qumran—particularly the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and the Self-Glorification Hymn—showcases a soteriology of deification in which the members of the community are able already in this life to participate in the angelic worship of the heavenly temple and can hope to be made like, join, and perhaps even surpass the angels in the following life or at the end of time. Qumran, as home to a priestly community[73]

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[73] While "revisionistic hypotheses" disputing "the identification of Khirbet Qumran as the ruins of a sectarian communal center" have failed to convince the majority of scholars, scholars do nevertheless continue to contest the origin and composition of the Qumran community (Gabriele Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis: The Parting of the Ways Between Qumran and Enochic Judaism* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 2). The most popular explanation almost since the discovery of the Scrolls has been the Essene Hypothesis, which argues that "the Dead Sea Scrolls [were] the main library of an Essene community led by Zadokite priests who in the aftermath of the Maccabean revolt retired into the wilderness in a settlement known today as Qumran" (2). Though various problems exist with the identification of the Qumran *yahad* with the Essenes (see Lena Cansdale, *Qumran and the Essenes: A Re-Evaluation of the Evidence* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997], 19-79), "[t]he reasons for identifying the Essenes with the *yahad* remain substantial" (John J. Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community: The Sectarian Movement of the Dead Sea Scrolls* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010], 156; on this see also Todd S. Beall, *Josephus' Description of the Essenes Illustrated by the Dead Sea Scrolls*, SNTMS 58 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988], 12-122, 123-130). Scholars seem to still be largely agreed that "historiographical analysis leads to the overall conclusion that the community of the Dead Sea, described by Pliny and Dio, was a radical and minority group within the larger Essene movement, described by Philo and Josephus" (Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis*, 49). Angel argues that this movement was "in a constant state of historical and ideological development" (Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 11). Though scholars have debated, revised, and challenged the sect's status as a Zadokite priestly movement (e.g., A.I. Baumgarten, "The Zadokite Priests at Qumran: A Reconsideration," in *Dead Sea Discoveries* 4 (1997): 137-156; Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 11-14), its Zadokite provenance has been defended (e.g., Corrado Martone, "Beyond *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis*: Some Observations on the Qumran Zadokite Priesthood," in *Enoch and Qumran Origins: New Light on a Forgotten Connection*, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005], 360-365). See, however, Lawrence H. Schiffman, "The Sadducean Origins of the Dead Sea Scroll Sect," in *Understanding The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Reader From The Biblical Archaeology Review*, ed. Hershel Shanks (New York: Random House, 1992), 35-49, who contests that the halakhot of MMT are Sadducean in origin and, thus, that sectarians were Sadducees, rather than Essenes. For my purposes, I identify the Qumran sect as a "priestly community" on the following grounds: the DSS remember and celebrate the Teacher of Righteousness, a priestly figure, as having had a foundational role in the community's birth (see Loren T. Stuckenbruck, "The Legacy of the Teacher of Righteousness in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *New Perspectives on Old Texts: Proceedings of the Tenth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 9-11 January, 2005*, ed. Ruth Clements, Betsy Halpern Amaru, and Esther G. Chazon, STDJ 88

that considered itself a temporary alternative to the Jerusalem Temple, had intense

concern for ritual and moral purity.[74] Ritually speaking, the purity of the Qumran

community was a necessary prerequisite to their "liturgical communion with the angels."

Moral purity, by contrast, was understood as "able to atone for sins," that is, to ensure the

divine presence among the community in light of its absence from the defiled temple.[75] In

disconnection from the Temple, the Qumran sect ordered its communal life according to

an alternative liturgical rhythm of daily prayer, communal Sabbath worship, sacral meals,

fasts, and festivals.[76] Qumran, in turn, possessed a priestly cosmology, and intense

[Leiden: Brill, 2010], 26-45); at some point, the Qumran sect came to have a number of priests in its leadership and possibly also its membership (Martone, "Beyond," 361-365, for this argument); the Qumran sect was founded in opposition to what it took to be cultic and moral improprieties of the Temple establishment and, in turn, practiced rigorous cultic and moral purity (for which see below, fn 84); and, finally, the Qumran community was structured by a liturgical rhythm which imagined its members as participants in a cosmic and celestial liturgy together with angelic priests. It thus had both historical connections to the priestly community as well as a vibrant "priestly cosmology."

[74] See especially Eyal Regev, "Abominated Temple and a Holy Community: The Formation of the Notions of Purity and Impurity at Qumran," *DSD* 10 (2003): 243-278. Regev focuses on 4QMiqsat Ma'ase ha-Torah (MMT), which he argues "stressed that the Temple was defiled and desecrated with ritual impurity, hoping that this would lead the addressee…to practice more scrupulous observance of the cultic laws" and that the "reason for [the sectarian] withdrawal" from mainstream Judean society "was due to the latter's moral impurity" (244). According to Regev, MMT reflects an early hope of the sectarians that the Temple establishment would accept their concerns for cultic purity, thus "mak[ing] it possible for them to return to the Temple and take part in the cult" (253), but it was ultimately the "immoral behavior of the high priest and the people who follow him" that secured the sectarians' secession (259).

[75] Regev, "Abominated Temple and a Holy Community," 267, 269-275.

[76] See especially Daniel K. Falk, *Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, STDJ 27 (Leiden: Brill, 1998) for an overview; see also idem, "Qumran Prayer Texts and the Temple," in *Sapiential, Liturgical, & Poetical Texts from Qumran: Proceedings of the Third Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies*, ed. Maurice Baillet, Daniel K. Falk, and Florentino Garcia Martinez, STDJ 35 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 106-126. Also on prayer at Qumran see Richard S. Sarason, "Communal Prayer at Qumran and Among the Rabbis: Certainties and Uncertainties," in *Liturgical Perspectives: Prayer and Poetry in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Proceedings of the Fifth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 19-23, January, 2000*, ed. Esther G. Chazon, Ruth Clements, and Avital Pinnick, STDJ 48 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 151-172, who argues that "it is clear from the sources that communal prayer at Qumran serves a cultic function, as a substitute for sacrifices," contra Falk (154). The liturgical life of the community was "intimately bound to [its] calendar," probably included "a twice-daily recitation of Deut 6:4-9" (the Shema; 156-159). "Institutional and fixed prayer" outside of the Temple setting "grew out of the Temple cult" and served to connect daily religious life to the Temple in a variety of ways, and Qumran is exemplary for this (again, despite Falk's objection that prayer is not per se a replacement for Temple sacrifice [Falk, "Qumran

speculation on the heavenly world.[77] In this qualified sense, Qumran may be called an

"apocalyptic" community at the level of worldview rather than literary production. The

Dead Sea Scrolls show belief in a vast celestial hierarchy, in which "the heavenly host" is

understood to be "primarily…a cultic or liturgical assembly," an "angelic priesthood"

made up of "holy ones [who] are also called 'gods' (*elim*), angels, spirits, and princes"

who serve in a heavenly temple.[78] Most importantly for my purposes, the sectarians at

Qumran clearly held "the belief that the members of the community were *ipso facto*

companions to the hosts of heaven and so living an angelic life, even on earth," and in the

idea that "some human being can be reckoned with the gods and enthroned in heaven."[79]

Prayer Texts," 113-125]; see Israel Knohl, "Between Voice and Silence: The Relationship Between Prayer and Temple Cult," *JBL* 115 (1996): 17-30; Eyal Regev, "Prayer Within and Without the Temple: From Ancient Judaism to Early Christianity," *Henoch* 36 (2014): 118-138; the quote is from Regev, 118). For the organization and life of the Qumran sect, see also Francis Schmidt, *How the Temple Thinks: Identity and Social Cohesion in Ancient Judaism*, trans. J. Edward Crowley, Biblical Seminar 78 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 138-167.

[77] Angel describes this "larger cosmology" as having "deep roots in broader Jewish apocalyptic thought, as well as in biblical and broader ancient Near Eastern religion," and as "envision[ing] the universe as a horizontal duality in which the heavenly and earthly realms mirror one another" (Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 83-84).

[78] John J. Collins, "Powers in Heaven: God, Gods, and Angels in the Dead Sea Scrolls," *in Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. John J. Collins and Robert A Kugler (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 11-12.

[79] Collins, "Powers in Heaven," 22-26. On participation in the angelic liturgy, see Esther G. Chazon, "Liturgical Communion with the Angels at Qumran," in *Sapiential, Liturgical, & Poetical Texts from Qumran*, 96-105; eadem, "Human & Angelic Prayer in Light of The Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Liturgical Perspectives*, 35-48. As Chazon notes, "the Qumran Community's belief in its common lot with the holy ones in heaven" revolves around "communion with the angels while praising God" ("Liturgical Communion," 96). 4Q503, a collection of "blessings for every evening and morning of the month," includes "[a] description of the worshippers' praise with the heavenly hosts [as] an essential feature of each blessing, intrinsically connected with its main astrological theme," showing that angelic communion was a daily reality for the sectarians, to be connected with "the regular renewal of the heavenly lights" (97-98). 4Q*Berakhot* "is a liturgy for the Qumran community's annual covenant renewal ceremony," and "praises God's attributes and mysteries, and describes the heavenly Temple, the divine chariot-throne, and various classes of angels…spirits of the holy of holies and ministering angels, luminaries and angels of lightning, clouds, and rain," and constitutes an example of "the phenomenon of joint human-angelic praise" (102-103). Joint praise exists in "diverse modes" in the DSS, which envision humans as co-worshippers with the angels in cosmic, mimetic, and unitive ways ("Human & Angelic Prayer," 36-38, 39-43, and 43-45, respectively).

The Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice (4QShirShabb), "a liturgical text from Qumran Cave 4 composed of thirteen separate sections, one for each of the first thirteen Sabbaths of the year,"[80] is perhaps the most powerful and poetic iteration of the Qumran sect's belief in its participation in the heavenly community and liturgy.[81] As Angel notes, "[t]he manuscripts date paleographically from the Late Hasmonean period (c. 75-50 BCE; 4Q400) to the late Herodian period (c. 50 CE; Mas1k [ShirShabb[i]] and 11QShirShabb),"[82] though the work may be much earlier. The Songs follow a particular progression, with each song having a particular theme or concern:

- Song 1 describes "God's establishment of the angelic priesthood, the laws ordained for the priests whereby they insure their purity and that of the heavenly sanctuary, and their responsibilities for making atonement and for teaching," and probably also "some general description of heaven or the heavenly sanctuary"[83]
- Song 2 fragments describe "the praise of God by the elite priestly angels and contrasts them with the human person" and includes "the communication of hidden things and mysteries"[84]
- Song 3 has not been satisfactorily reconstructed[85]
- Song 4 is fragmentary, but "contains references to 'strong warriors'…and to 'councils of rebellion'"[86]

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[80] Carol Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice: A Critical Edition*, Harvard Semitic Studies (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 1.

[81] Per Angel: the Songs "provides the most detailed and explicit portrait of the angelic priesthood and the celestial temple not only in Qumran, but in all of Second Temple Jewish literature" (Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 84). The songs have been described as "mystical" texts, though the application of this term to the Songs and to Qumran literature more generally has been debated (e.g., Philip Alexander, *The Mystical Texts*, LSTS 61 [London: T&T Clark International, 2006], 5-11; idem, "Qumran and the Genealogy of Western Mysticism," in *New Perspectives on Old Texts*, 215-235; see also Bilhah Nitzan, "Harmonic and Mystical Characteristics in Poetic and Liturgical Writings from Qumran," *JQR* 85 (1994): 163-183, and the response by Elliott Wolfson, "Mysticism and the Poetic-Liturgical Compositions from Qumran: A Response to Bilhah Nitzan," *JQR* 85 [1994]: 185-202). Angel treats all of these authors in detail in *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 84.

[82] Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 85. For a discussion of provenance, see below.

[83] Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, 7.

[84] Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, 8.

[85] Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, 8.

- Fragments from 4Q401 "may contain references to Melchizedek"[87]
- Song 5 makes "several references to war in heaven…and to the mustering of the angelic hosts," and "concludes with a highly parallelistic account of God's predestination of all events"[88]
- Song 6 centers on "the 'psalms' (תהלי) of the seven chief princes" and concludes with "a blessing by God"[89]
- Song 7 "begins with a series of seven intricately developed calls to praise addressed to the angels," and "seems to progress from the praise uttered by the outer parts of the heavenly sanctuary to the debir [the innermost sanctum], its furnishings, and its attendant angels," with "a brief description of the divine throne," and "concludes with the praise uttered by the markabot [sic?] (plural), their cherubim and ophanim"[90]
- Song 8, though poorly preserved, includes "several references to the seven angelic priesthoods which serve in the seven heavenly sanctuaries" and describes their crescendo of praise;[91]
- Song 9, though "extant in only one fragment," "contains references to the vestibules of the heavenly temple," the "debirim," and "figures or images of heavenly beings" which are the "[animate] celestial equivalent of the cherubim, palm trees, and flowers described as ornamenting the walls of the Solomonic temple and the ideal temple of Ezekiel's vision"[92]
- Song 10 "appears to continue the description of the sanctuary and its praise," with "two references to the paroket veil(s)," several "to angels," "vestibules," "brickwork or pavement," and "thrones"[93]
- Song 11 continues describing "the heavenly debirim," but "concludes in 4Q405 20 ii 21-22 with a reference to the angelic priesthood (כול כוהני קורב, line 1), a brief description of the chariot thrones of the heavenly temple…and apparently a reference to their movement"[94]
- Song 12 "begins with a lengthy description of the appearance and movement of the divine chariot throne," which is "*the* merkabah, the throne of Glory, and is described in terms which depend heavily on Ezekiel 1 and 10," and concludes

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[86] Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, 8.

[87] Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, 8.

[88] Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, 8-9.

[89] Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, 9.

[90] Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, 9-10.

[91] Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, 10.

[92] Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, 10-11.

[93] Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, 11.

[94] Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, 11.

with "the procession of worshipping angels in and out of the heavenly sanctuary"[95]

- Finally, Song 13 gives "explicit references to sacrifices," "a rather lengthy description of the angelic high priests and especially of the vestments which they wear in their service before God," and "a systematic list of the contents and structures of the heavenly temple"[96]

Much is debated about the Songs. First, it is unclear if the work is sectarian or not. "[A] single large fragment, written in fully developed Herodian script, was discovered by Y. Yadin in the excavations of Masada,"[97] leading some to speculate that the Songs are pre-sectarian,[98] and at Qumran there is always the possibility that a text is a preservation of an originally non-sectarian work and thus represents a wider range of religious thought and life in ancient Judaism.[99] Second, the dualism of the text is questionable: specifically, whether the text envisions a celestial temple in heaven in which the angels worship or speaks in heavenly language of the earthly community and its worship.[100] As Angel notes, "explanations from the perspective of the first position have dominated

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[95] Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, 12.

[96] Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, 12-13.

[97] Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, 1.

[98] Newsom herself originally rejected this possibility (Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, 2-4), but later changed her view (Newsom, "'Sectually Explicit' Literature from Qumran," in *The Hebrew Bible and Its Interpreters*, ed. W.H. Propp, B. Halpern, and D.N. Freedman [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990], 179-185. See the overview in Angel, Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood, 85-87, who concludes that "[i]n the end, there is no clear answer" to the provenance of the Songs, though "it nonetheless functioned as an adopted text within the religious framework of the Qumran community" (87). Connected with this is the question of whether or not the Songs—which clearly possess a priestly cosmology—actually stand within the tradition of priestly literature, on which Noam Mizrahi has argued convincingly that it does not (Noam Mizrahi, "The Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and Biblical Priestly Literature: A Linguistic Reconsideration," *HTR* 104 [2011]: 33-57).

[99] As Newsom writes, "One must ask of every manuscript found at Qumran whether it is a composition of the Qumran community itself or a pre-Qumran composition copied and preserved in the Qumran libraries." Newsom, *The Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, 1.

[100] See the summary of the positions and the discussion in Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 97-105.

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scholarship,"[101] in large part because of Newsom, who understands liturgical "recitation" of the Songs as an experience which "evokes [a] sense of being present in the heavenly temple."[102] The second position has been championed largely by Crispin H.T. Fletcher-Louis, who, in pursuit of his thesis that ancient Judaism took divine humanity for granted and thought it realized in liturgical worship,[103] rejects the idea that the Songs reflects a heavenly temple but instead argues that they embrace a temple cosmology (to refer back to Klawans' two types discussed above),[104] and that the "priests," "chiefs," "princes," "holy ones," etc. referenced in the Songs are "exalted human[s]" rather than heavenly beings.[105]

Fletcher-Louis makes a series of interesting proposals in his monograph, and several of his positions deserve credence—particularly, as I have argued especially in these first two chapters, his thesis that an essential fluidity between divinity and humanity did indeed exist in ancient Judaism, and that liturgy, priesthood, and temple are major categories within which that fluidity was contemplated and contoured. However, his rejection of a celestial temple with an angelic priesthood has failed to win consensus,[106] and with good reason. Fletcher-Louis' rejection of a heavenly temple in ancient Judaism

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[101] Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 98.

[102] Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, 65. This, despite the fact that "The Shirot stop short of describing the co-participation in the heavenly cult referred to in 1QSb as one of the blessings of the eschatological age" (64).

[103] Crispin H.T. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam*, xii.

[104] Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam*, 252-277.

[105] Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam*, 277-279.

[106] Wolfson, "Seven Mysteries of Knowledge: Qumran E/sotericism Recovered," in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honor of James L. Kugel*, ed. H. Najman and J. Newman, JSJSup 83 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 184-185 is the only voice cited by Angel who seems to affirm Fletcher-Louis' rejection of a hard and fast dualism.

seems immediately problematized by earlier texts which scholars widely agree describe one (e.g., BW),[107] and his argument that the heavenly beings who supposedly serve in this temple are too anthropomorphic to truly be angels seems to not thoroughly follow the logic of his own argument that humanity in its primeval, liturgical, and eschatological modes is divine and that the divine Glory is anthropomorphic.[108]

The Songs advance the present thesis in three main ways. First, "[f]rom the first Sabbath song, with its account of the establishment of the angelic priesthood, through the central songs with their formulaic accounts of the praises of these seven priestly councils, to the final thirteenth song, the subject of chief interest in the *Sabbath Shirot* is the angelic priesthood itself,"[109] ministering in the resplendent beauty of the celestial temple. However, the Songs do this in a more detailed fashion than any preceding and, arguably, succeeding document of ancient Judaism: they reflect a carefully thought out "priestly cosmology," to borrow DeConick's phrase, in which the service and personnel of the heavenly sanctuary are discernible and definable. Thus, the Songs represent the continued interest of at least some (though probably many, if the Songs are non-sectarian) ancient Jews in a detailed and sacerdotal account of the cosmos (or, at least, heaven and its principal residents). Second, the Songs "envision the structure of the heavenly priesthood and that of an earthly community as duplicates in their replication of the ideal temple,"[110]

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[107] Notwithstanding Fletcher-Louis' own somewhat idiosyncratic interpretation of BW in Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam*, 268-270.

[108] I owe this point to Angel, who in turn takes it from Alexander (Alexander, *The Mystical Texts*, 45); Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 100.

[109] See Newsom, "'He Has Established For Himself Priests'": Human and Angelic Priesthood in the Qumran Sabbath Shirot," in *Archaeology and History in the Dead Sea Scrolls: The New York University Conference in Memory of Yigael Yadin*, ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman, JSPSup 8 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 101-120,

and this "results in the semblance of ontological participation"[111] between the human and angelic members of the community. Here, too, the Songs utilize and expand an idea present in BW, Jubilees, and the Levi-Priestly Tradition. While in those texts, individual humans or groups of humans (Enoch, Levi/the Levites) are like the angels in their priestly service and perhaps even derive their priestly service from the angels, in none of these texts is the depiction of the heavenly priesthood (and, thus, the implications of this depiction for its earthly counterpart) so meticulous. Thus Songs represent the interest of Jewish communities not simply in the one-time fact of human participation in the divine service (Enoch) or of the heavenly credentials of the extant priesthood, but also in the ability of humans to enjoy a present likeness to the angels through some sense of share in their worship. Third, and building on the second point, the Songs probably exemplify the attempt of the earthly priesthood to participate, whether mystically (per Alexander and Wolfson) or proleptically, in the angelic liturgy, which is not precisely what happens in any of the previously mentioned texts (insofar as individual ascent to the heavenly temple and temporary participation in the liturgy celebrated there is not necessarily equivalent to an ongoing, permanent, present postmortem, or eschatological participation). Thus the Songs represent a key development in the tradition of analogy and identity between priests and angels that stands at the heart of this chapter's focus. The Songs, however, clearly stop short of any description of full deification or transformation of the community into the divine beings whose orders and praise they otherwise wish to share

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[110] Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 93.

[111] Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 97.

in. The most explicit example of such transformation from Qumran literature is The Self-Glorification Hymn, which survives in four text witnesses provided below (Table 1).[112]

The text has a long and fascinating manuscript history and a similarly complex history of scholarship, of which I will only recount part. When 4Q491 was first published in fragments in DJD 7, M. Baillet dubbed its two main pieces the "Canticle of Michael" and the "Canticle of the Righteous."[113] Baillet assumed that the speaker of the hymn was Michael.[114] Morton Smith disputed Baillet's suggestion in rather dismissive terms, arguing instead that the speaker was a human being whose glorification was colored by "the influence of speculation on deification by ascent towards or into the heavens[.]"[115] Smith later expanded this article and its argument,[116] which Alan Segal affirmed in the same collection.[117] Though Smith's thesis has not been received by wider scholarship,[118] the idea that the speaker is a human being who has been glorified has been.[119]

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[112] The translations are those of Michael O. Wise, "מי כמוני באלים: A Study of 4Q491c, 4Q471b, 4Q427 7 and 1QHᵃ 25:35-26:10," *DSD* 7 (2000): 183, 197, 203, 204, respectively.

[113] Wise, "מי כמוני באלים," 173-174. Wise gives an overview of the history of scholarship in 173-178.

[114] Wise, "מי כמוני באלים," 174.

[115] Morton Smith, "Ascent to the Heavens in 4QMᵃ," in *Archaeology and History in the Dead Sea Scrolls: The New York University Conference in Memory of Yigael Yadin*, ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman JSPSS 8 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 187.

[116] Smith, "Two Ascended to Heaven—Jesus and the Author of 4Q491," in *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, ABRL (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 290-301.

[117] Alan F. Segal, "The Risen Christ and the Angelic Mediator Figures in Light of Qumran," in *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 308. Segal sticks to this line of thought in Segal, *Life After Death: A History of the Afterlife in the Religions of the West*, ABRL (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 306-307.
[118] See especially John J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: Routledge, 1997), 143-147; idem, "The Self-Glorification Hymn from Qumran," in *Crossing Boundaries in Early Judaism and Christianity: Ambiguities, Complexities, and Half-Forgotten Adversaries: Essays in Honor of Alan F. Segal*, ed. Kimberly B. Stratton and Andrea Lieber, JSJS 177 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 37-40.

[119] See the discussion in Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 137-141, who agrees that "[t]here is indeed good reason to identify the protagonist in the Self-Glorification Hymn as a priest," since "[t]he motifs of numinous glory and the participation of earthly priests with angels within a

Table 1. The Self-Glorification Hymn From Qumran.

4Q491c 4-13	4Q471b (4Q431 i) 10-19	4Q427 7:6-13	1QHᵃ 25:35-26:10
T]he company of the Poor (shall become part of) the eternal council. And [they are to say, 'Blessed be God who has seated me among] the [et]ernally blameless—(given me) a mighty throne in the angelic council. No king of yore will sit therein, neith[er] will their nobles [(take seat) therein to judge. No]ne can compare [to] my glory; none has been exalted save myself, and none can oppose me. I sit on [high, exalted in hea]ven, and none can [su]rround (me). I am reckoned with the angels, and my dwelling is in the holy council…my [por]tion lies in the glory of the holy [hab]itation…who is like me in my glory?...[None compares to me, fo]r [my] stati[on] is with the angels. My [g]lory abides with the Sons of the King…To [the glorious King, sing out,] you righteous among the angels [of deliverance.	[…my dwelling is in the holy] council….I sit [on high, exalted in heaven]. Who is like me among the angels?...[I am] beloved of the King, a friend to the Ho[ly Ones and none can oppose me. To my honor and my glory] none compares, for my [station is with the angels.]…Hymn, [O beloved, sing to the glorious King, rejoice in the council of God.]	[Does any compare to me?]…[I sit on high, exalted in heaven…Who is like me] among the angels?...[I am beloved of the K]ing, a friend to the Holy Ones and none can oppose [me. To my honor and] my [glo]ry none compares, for my station is with the angels….Hymn, O beloved, sing to the King…	For the Maskil, a musical psa[lm. Bless him with a joyous cry,…Li]ft up with me a song, let us rejoice [together: 'I sit on a mighty throne, no] kings of yore shall sit there[in]…You established it for me from of old, for [my] gl[ory…and apart from me is none e]xalted. None can oppose me….[My dwelling is in the holy council….Does any compare to me?...I sit on high, exalted in heaven…Who is like me among the angels? And who can assail me when I open my mouth, the utterance of my lips, who endure?...I am beloved of the King, a friend to the Holy Ones and none] can oppose [me. To my honor and my glory none compares, for my station is with the angels….Hymn…

Michael O. Wise was the first one to trace the textual development of the "Canticle" through the manuscripts given above in any detail, and on the grounds that "[a]nyone reworking the claims of a version of the Canticle of Michael that he applied to himself would be much more likely to expand than to abbreviate," he argued for a three

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liturgical context are familiar from both 1QSb and 4QSongs of the Sage," as well as, to a lesser extent, Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice (139). See also idem, "Maskil, Community, and Religious Experience in the 'Songs of the Sage' (4Q510-511)," *DSD* 19 (2012): 1-27.

stage process, with the first stage consisting of "a collection of hymns that might antedate the [Qumran sect]," corresponding to 4Q491c, the second stage involving a "Hodayot redaction" in which a *maskil*[120] edited the hymns and put them into "a new literary setting," corresponding to 4Q427, and the third stage including a further redaction of 4Q427 "together with Teacher Hymns to form the type of Hodayot manuscript witnessed to by 1QHᵃ."[121] Wise argues that the speaker of the Hymn is universal: "each individual member of the group spoke of himself or herself. At least by the stage of the Hodayot redaction [stage two], they declaimed in unison and chanted, singing of their singular significance at the behest of a worship leader, the *Maskil*."[122] The speaker has obtained "a portion in the 'glory of the holy habitation,'" "a throne 'in the council of the angels,'" and, "it seems, after death," since "God has raised them from the dust of death[.]"[123] Wise also affirms the thesis of Esti Eshel that the speaker is the Teacher of Righteousness, and argues that "each individual believer could make them true for himself or herself by partaking in the charisma of the Teacher."[124] In short, "the followers of the Teacher of Righteousness celebrated their future glorification by reciting amongst themselves the Canticle of Michael."[125] Esti Eshel and John J. Collins have both argued that the speaker may in fact be an eschatological high-priest after the model of the

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[120] In the context of the Qumran community, a liturgical "leader or instructor." See Peter Trudinger, "Maskil," *NIDB* 3:832.

[121] Wise, "מי כמוני באלים," 214-216.

[122] Wise, "מי כמוני באלים," 216. As Angel argues, "[a]s the embodiment of key Qumranite ideals, the Maskil served as a template with which worshipers were to identify" (26).

[123] Wise, "מי כמוני באלים," 217-218. It is not clear to me why this could not be a reference to *eschatological* resurrection.

[124] Wise, "מי כמוני באלים," 218.

[125] Wise, "מי כמוני באלים," 219.

Teacher, a figure expected in other texts.[126] Angel, however, disagrees, arguing that the speaker "should be considered eschatological only inasmuch as the liturgical experience allowed him to escape linear historical time and take a seat among the angels"; believing that heavenly enthronement of humans is always eschatological, Collins misinterprets the anthropological tensions between the Hymn and other liturgical literature from Qumran, and the speaker appears to be a member of the community he addresses.[127] For my purposes, the identity of the speaker matters in three ways. First, the speaker is now widely considered by scholars to be a human figure who has become divine, indeed, superior to the heavenly host itself. Second, the original speaker of the hymn is a priestly figure, both by virtue of the major interpretive options for his identity (the Teacher of Righteousness or the eschatological high priest) and by his instructive authority (which, as argued above, is a key element of priesthood). Third, and finally, the speaker's own glorification was the substance of the Qumran sect's communal expectation of glorification—that is, the members of the Qumran community experienced proleptically and looked forward to mutual glorification with their founder (or future leader) either after death or in the eschaton, through liturgical hymnody.[128] Qumran thus shows belief in both an analogy between the earthly and heavenly priesthoods and the possibility of (eschatological) human deification through liturgical concelebration of the former with the latter. This remains an especially important idea in the three works yet to be considered in this chapter.

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[126] See Collins, "The Self-Glorification Hymn from Qumran," 32-37, especially 35-37.

[127] Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 142-146.

[128] See Wise, "מי כמוני באלים," 219.

The Similitudes of Enoch, 2 Enoch, and The Apocalypse of Zephaniah. The last set of apocalyptic texts that I will examine give the most explicit accounts of the transformation of earthly, human figures into divine or angelic beings. I begin with the Similitudes of Enoch (*1 Enoch* 37-71).[129] As Himmelfarb notes, "the most important influence on the Similitudes is the Book of the Watchers," as the Similitudes "is best understood as a retelling of the Book of the Watchers that integrates elements of the story of the fallen angels, the ascent to the heavenly temple, and the journey to the ends of the earth, into three discourses, called parables or similitudes, about the ultimate vindication of the righteous and punishment of the wicked."[130]

The Similitudes of Enoch. A major theme of the Similitudes, only briefly alluded to in the Book of the Watchers, is the postmortem, eschatological punishment of sinners and reward of the righteous, the latter of which is consistently cast in both priestly and angelomorphic terms. In contrast to the sinners who "will not be able to look at the face of the holy" since "the light of the Lord of Spirits will have appeared on the face of the holy, righteous, and chosen" (1 En. 38:4), the first thing that Enoch sees in "the confines of the heavens" (39:3) are "the dwellings of the holy ones, and the resting places of the righteous" (39:4). The righteous enjoy "dwellings with [God's] righteous angels, and their resting places with the holy ones," and in those dwellings they are seen "petitioning and interceding and…praying for the sons of men" (39:5). Enoch also beholds the Chosen One there (39:6-7), and he expresses his wish to remain (39:8). Enoch then participates in the heavenly worship of the angels "who sleep not" (39:9-14), at which

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[129] My translation here as above is from Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch*, 50-95.

[130] Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 59.

point Enoch's "face was changed" since the sight is "apparently too glorious for Enoch to behold."[131] The Similitudes describes the archangels performing priestly functions in the heavenly temple as they do in the Book of the Watchers: "uttering praise," "blessing the Chosen One," "petitioning and praying for those who dwell on the earth, and interceding," and "driving away the satans" (40:3-7).[132] Enoch again sees "the dwelling places of the chosen and the dwelling places of the holy ones," in contrast to the fate of the wicked (41:2). In the second parable, Enoch recounts that "there had arisen the prayer of the righteous, and the blood of the righteous one" (47:1), for whom "the holy ones who dwell in the heights of heaven were uniting with one voice, and they were glorifying and praising and blessing the name of the Lord of Spirits," interceding for the vengeance of the shed blood of the righteous (47:2-2bd). The reader learns that "a change will occur for the holy and chosen, and the light of days will dwell upon them, and glory and honor will return to the holy" (50:1).

The third parable is focused on "the righteous" and "chosen" (58:1), whose "lot" will be "glorious" (58:2): they will be "in the light of the sun," "in the light of everlasting life" (58:3). On the day in which the Chosen One judges the kings and the mighty, "the congregation of the chosen and the holy will be sown; and all the chosen will stand in his presence" (62:8). On that day, "the righteous and the chosen will be saved" (62:13), they will eat with the Son of Man (62:14), and they will "put on the garment of glory" (62:15). These "garments will not wear out," and the luminous "glory" of the chosen and

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[131] Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 60.

[132] This fourth category could be broadly conceived as parallel to the role of Michael (and to a lesser extent Raphael) in punishing evil both angelic and human by means of violence, though here, "satans" appears to be a class of spirit who come before God "to accuse those who dwell on the earth" (40:7).

righteous "will not fade in the presence of the Lord of Spirits" (62:16). I will argue below that the most natural reading for "garments of glory" is that they are angelic garments. For now, however, it is worth noting that other Enochic texts explicitly encourage the righteous with the hope both of "shin[ing] and appear[ing] as the lights of heaven" and of "becom[ing] companions of the angels of heaven" (1 En. 104:2-6). As mentioned in the introduction, phosphorescence and divine or angelic status are indicative of one another in ancient Judaism and antiquity more widely.[133]

It is probable that the Similitudes conceives of heaven here as a celestial temple in which the angels worship God. Certainly, the angels of the Similitudes act in priestly ways: blessing God and standing "in the presence of [God's] glory" (39:12, 13; 40:1), and performing various intercessory roles on behalf of humankind (40:1-10). It is for this reason that the righteous, who are glorified to be like the angels, also attain to "participation in the heavenly liturgy"[134] after death and in the eschaton, partly through their joint intercessory prayer (e.g., 39:5) and partly through their acquisition of "garments of glory" (62:15), which likewise connote the attainment of "an angelic state after death."[135] Enoch himself is twice said to be transformed in the Similitudes for the express purpose of participating in the heavenly praise. In the first instance, Enoch participates in the heavenly praise (39:9-11) only to be overwhelmed by the glory of angelic worship of God (39:12-13), necessitating his transformation to continue (39:14).

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[133] See especially the list in Leslie Baynes, "Jesus the Revealer and the Revealed," in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Tradition and the Shaping of the New Testament*, ed. Benjamin E. Reynolds and Loren T. Stuckenbruck (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), 26-27, and Willem F. Smelik, "On Mystical Transformation of the Righteous Into Light In Judaism," *JSJ* 26 (1995): 122-144.

[134] Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 60.

[135] Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 60.

In the second, which takes place in the second appendix to the Similitudes, Enoch's journey is recounted: he "saw the sons of the holy angels, and they were stepping on flames of fire; and their garments were white, as were their tunics, and the light of their faces was like snow" (71:1) At the climax of this recapitulation, Enoch sees a procession of "many holy angels without number" with "the Head of Days," whose head and hair are "white and pure as wool," and whose apparel is "indescribable" (71:9-10). In response to this, Enoch falls on his face, his flesh "melts," and his spirit is "transformed," at which point he is able to participate in the heavenly worship of God (71:11-12). The appendix concludes with either an unnamed angel or God identifying Enoch himself as the Son of Man (71:13-17). At least in the second appendix to the Similitudes, then, Enoch has received what the righteous in various places throughout the Similitudes are promised to receive: transformation into divine/angelic status, which also involves assimilation to some kind of priestly status insofar as it involves participation in the angelic liturgy.

2 Enoch. As many scholars have noted, the second appendix to the Similitudes is apparently a later addition to the text.[136] However, both appendices assume Enoch's ascension into heaven, and the trend set in the second appendix, conceiving of the significance of Enoch's transformation as his becoming "not merely an angel, but the most exalted of angels,"[137] goes on to define the rest of the Enochic corpus. In 2 Enoch, yet another retelling of Enoch's heavenly journey, Enoch is visited during the night by "two huge men" who are described as having "faces…shining like the sun," "eyes…like burning lamps," "fire" coming from their mouths, striking clothing,[138] "wings more

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[136] Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 60.

[137] Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 61.

glistening than gold," and "hands whiter than snow" (1:5).[139] They then escort Enoch

through the various heavens, abandoning him at the seventh (3:1-21:2). Here Enoch sees

the heavenly host, before which he is fearful (20:1). At a distance he can see YHWH

himself and watches as the heavenly armies worship God on ten steps before his throne

(20:3-4). Gabriel then summons Enoch to come and stand before YHWH with him

"forever" (21:4-6). Finally, in the tenth heaven, Enoch sees "the face of the Lord, like

iron made burning hot in a fire and brought out, and it emits sparks and is incandescent"

(22:1-2), whose beauty is "indescribable" (22:4). Enoch prostrates himself (22:4). God

himself then reaffirms Gabriel's invitation to Enoch to stand before him forever (22:5),

and Michael lifts Enoch up and brings him before God (22:6-7). God commands Michael

to "extract Enoch from his earthly clothing [and] anoint him with my delightful oil, and

put him into the clothes of my glory" (22:8). Michael anoints Enoch with "oil" which

appears to be "greater than light," "like the rays of the glittering sun" (22:9), at which

point Enoch beholds himself and realizes that he "had become like one of [God's]

glorious ones, and there was no observable difference" (22:10).

As a result of this encounter, it is clear that "Enoch has become an angel."[140] As

in earlier Enochic literature, Enoch's ability to remain in the heavenly realms and

participate in the heavenly praise of the angels (which in 2 Enoch frightens him) requires

his transformation into angelic glory. But 2 Enoch, like its literary precedents, also

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[138] As F.I. Anderson points out, "The text at this point seems to be incorrigibly corrupt" (Anderson, "2 [Slavonic Apocalypse] of Enoch [Late First Century A.D.]: A New Translation and Introduction," in *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, 106).

[139] The translation is Anderson's; Anderson, "2 (Slavonic Apocalypse) of Enoch," in *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, 102-221. I have chosen here to use the longer manuscript, J, unless otherwise noted.
[140] Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 40.

conceives of Enoch as a priest. Though "the Slavonic text is reluctant to directly portray

Enoch as the celestial high priest," it nevertheless "contains a number of other indirect

testimonies that demonstrate that the authors of this apocalypse appear to be cognizant of

the patriarch's priestly functions."[141] First, "the seer's anointing with shining oil and the

transformation of his clothing into the luminous garments during his angelic

metamorphosis appear to resemble the priestly investiture."[142] Second, after hearing the

full revelation concerning God's mysteries of creation and redemption, Enoch is

commissioned to return to the earth and instruct his sons "so that they may obey what is

said to them" by Enoch (36:1). It is possible that Enoch's farewell address (39:1-67:3),

which in some ways appears to mimic that of Levi following his own angelic investiture

(10:1-19:5),[143] also designates him as a priest, given the repeated insistence in priestly

literature that it is a sacerdotal duty to convey instruction in cultic and moral matters to

the community. Third, and more certainly, 2 Enoch 67-69 shows concern for the

sacerdotal succession of Enoch through his descendants Methusalam, and then by Nir,

Melchizedek, and Noah, through the transmission of proper cultic procedure (70-73).[144]

The narratives of Enoch's instructions to his descendants and of the priestly lineage

which they constitute, which conclude 2 Enoch, show that 2 Enoch shares similar

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[141] Orlov, *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition*, 201.

[142] Orlov, *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition*, 201. Orlov is here drawing on Himmelfarb: "The combination of clothing and anointing suggests that the process by which Enoch becomes an angel is a heavenly version of priestly investiture" (Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 40). Himmelfarb also notes that the trend in 2 Enoch and the Levi-Priestly Tradition, anointing followed by investiture, stands "in opposition to the instructions for the consecration of Aaron as high priest in Exodus 29" (40).

[143] As an example of the testament genre, the whole of T. Levi is technically a farewell address to Levi's sons, but the narrative shifts with 10:1: "And now, my children, observe the things which I have commanded you[.]" Of some interest is that Levi in T. Levi cites "the writings of Enoch" when talking about the future impiety of his line (14:1-8).

[144] See Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 41-42.

concerns with other literature here surveyed: namely, the divine foundation of the human

priesthood, in this case as mediated by a human figure who has achieved divine status. In

short, "the authors of 2 Enoch were familiar with the traditions about the priestly

affiliations of the seventh antediluvian person attested also in the early Enochic

booklets."[145] Moreover, 2 Enoch provides the first instance of the later exaltation of

Enoch to the status of celestial choirmaster,[146] as Enoch is the one "who encourages the

celestial Watchers to conduct the liturgy before the Face of God" when he finds them too

somber so to do (18:8-9).

The Apocalypse of Zephaniah. The trope of transformation into angelic status by

investiture for the sake of participating in the heavenly liturgy appears in at least one

other text worthy of mention. The Apocalypse of Zephaniah is a Jewish text written

sometime between the first century BCE and the first century CE.[147] The text describes

the fate of souls after death in "extraordinary"[148] fashion. A seer descends to Hades, reads

two manuscripts (one with his sins and one, lost in the present form of the text,

presumably with his righteous deeds), is acquitted, emerges from Hades, and then comes

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[145] Orlov, *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition*, 202.

[146] See Orlov, "Celestial Choirmaster: The Liturgical Role of Enoch-Metatron in 2 Enoch and the Merkabah Tradition," *JSP* 14 (2004): 3-29. Building on this depiction of Enoch in 2 Enoch, "the Merkabah materials emphasize another important dimension of his activities in the divine worship, namely, the liturgical aspect of his celestial duties" (19), duties which "as the choirmaster or the celestial liturgical director appear to be applied, not only to his leadership over angelic hosts, but also over humans, specifically the visionaries who are lucky enough to overcome the angelic opposition and be admitted into the heavenly realm" in the Hekhalot literature (20). This is also hinted at by Enoch's role as the one who "stands before God's face" (24-25) and his youth (25-28).

[147] O.S. Wintermute, "Apocalypse of Zephaniah (First Century B.C. – First Century A.D.): A New Translation and Introduction," in *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, 497. As Wintermute notes, "Whatever his name, it is fairly clear that the writer was a Jew," despite the fact that the text was clearly preserved for Christian usage" (501).

[148] Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 54.

to a great angelic throng (6:1-7:11). "Thousands of thousands and myriads of myriads of angels gave praise before me," the seer writes, "and I, myself, put on an angelic garment" (8:1-3). After this investiture, the seer reports "I myself, prayed together with [the angels], I knew their language, which they spoke with me" (8:5). Here, the glorious garment which the righteous may enjoy after death is clearly described as "angelic," and its function is to induct the seer into the "angelic liturgy as a sign of fellowship with the angels," which "is also an indication that the picture of heaven as temple stands in the background in the Apocalypse of Zephaniah."[149] However, the angelic fellowship is not an egalitarian society. As Himmelfarb notes, "[a]lthough Zephaniah is now able to join the angels at prayer, he is apparently not fully their equal," since Zephaniah attempts but is unable to "embrace" the angel with the golden trumpet who praises his victory over Hades (9:1-3), who nevertheless easily communes with "Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Enoch and Elijah and David…as friend to friend" (9:4-5).

Conclusion: Revelation Among the Apocalypses

In this chapter, I have traced the development of one tradition of deification in ancient Judaism, chiefly associated with texts that have a geographically Palestinian provenance and apocalyptic influence. This tradition, which takes its logic from the divine and angelic mimesis inherent in the systems of ritual purity, sacrifice, and temple cult, asserts first an analogy between angels and priests—whereby the former enjoy a priestly ministry, serving a liturgy in the heavenly temple, and provide the basis for the establishment of the latter, their earthly counterparts. Gradually, this angelic-priestly

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[149] Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 54.

analogy was developed in a variety of generic apocalypses or texts influenced in whole or in part by that genre into a soteriology of identity, whereby earthly priests first participate in the liturgy of the heavenly priesthood and then are eschatologically conformed to it. In later apocalypses—those written toward the end of the first century BCE and in the first few centuries CE—the eschatological glorification of the priesthood is "democratized" to include ordinary righteous people, who in turn were cast in some kind of priestly role in various sects of ancient Judaism.

In the following chapter, I will argue that the Jewish tradition of deification sketched in this chapter is taken up by John of Patmos in his Apocalypse (ca. 90s CE),[150] though reconfigured within a soteriology distinctive of the early Christian movement.[151] That John employs many of the motifs associated with this tradition is clear both from the Apocalypse's numerous mentions of the heavenly sanctuary, its furniture, and priestly angels with liturgical functions within it (Rev 1:12; 2:1; 4:5, 8-11; 5:8; 6:9; 7:15; 8:1-5; 11:19; 15:2, 5-8), as well as its consistent portrayal of the earthly community in sacerdotal terms (1:6; 5:10; 20:6). It seems almost certain that John was "an early Christian prophet…of Jewish background," as evidenced by "[h]is frequent use of biblical imagery [which] shows familiarity with the Jewish Scriptures" and his "warning against eating food sacrificed to Greco-Roman deities [which] reflects the outlook of Jewish Christianity[.]"[152] It is possible that John knows these traditions because he

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[150] See the summary in David Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, WBC 52a (Waco, TX: Word, 1997), for information on the dating of the Apocalypse. For my purposes, the textual history of the Apocalypse—whether Aune is correct that it is the product of two or more editions—does not matter.

[151] Which was not, by this point, clearly separate from Judaism either in its own self-evaluation or in any other straightforwardly obvious way, but one among many competing Jewish groups with certain theological and practical idiosyncrasies which would eventually lead to a "parting of the ways."

himself was a Palestinian native, a Judean escapee of the first Roman-Jewish war in 66-70 CE, and, indeed, the cultic saturation of the Apocalypse may imply that John himself was connected in some way with the temple or the cult, possibly even as a priest, before its destruction by the Romans in 70 CE.[153] However, Craig Koester is right in saying that "[John's] perspectives need not be linked especially to Palestine or interpreted as those of a prophet who migrated to Asia Minor from elsewhere" either to be an apocalypticist or to be interested in the specific apocalyptic traditions that he inherits and refashions; that is, John could equally well have been a Jew of the Diaspora and still have been acquainted with apocalyptic traditions that originated in Palestine.[154] Either way, it is a hardly novel suggestion that John's Apocalypse ought to be read in concert with other Jewish apocalypses and apocalyptic traditions. Where the present work hopes to expand such intertextual exegesis in the next chapter is not with this general suggestion, but by illuminating how John's Apocalypse compares and contrasts soteriologically, in its conception of human deification, with its literary and traditional forbears.

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[152] Craig Koester, *Revelation: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AYB (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 68.

[153] See Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 1 and the summary in Koester, *Revelation*, 69. For John's possible connection to the temple cult, see Torleif Elgvin, "Priests on Earth as in Heaven: Jewish Light on the Book of Revelation," in *Echoes from the Caves: Qumran and the New Testament*, ed. F. Garcia Martinez, STDJ 85 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 277-278.

[154] Koester, *Revelation*, 69.

CHAPTER 3: ANGELOMORPHIC CHRISTOLOGY, PARTICIPATORY DEIFICATION, AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF TRADITION IN JOHN'S APOCALYPSE

The last chapter surveyed a well-represented soteriology of angelic deification in ancient Jewish apocalypses and apocalyptic-oriented texts. In this chapter, I will argue that John has transformed this tradition in light of an early Christian model of participatory deification. My proposal is this: while John's Apocalypse never explicitly refers to Christ as a priest and never explicitly describes the glorious transformation of the saints into divine/angelic beings, the relationship between Christ and the saints in the Apocalypse is such that a *communicatio idiomatum* can be posed between them. Specifically, John's depiction of Christ—which many scholars have noted is angelomorphic in character—is implicitly priestly, which grounds the explicit priesthood of the earthly saints; in turn, the saints, whose transformation is never explicitly described, are implied to be deified both by the privileges they are promised to enjoy that conform to those of both the angelomorphic Christ and the angelic priesthood, and that ultimately include the beatific vision and priestly service both in heaven after death and in the New Jerusalem.

Angelomorphic Christology in John's Apocalypse

John's modification of Jewish traditions of angelic deification is made possible by his Christology, which many scholars have described as "angelomorphic." That is, John's Apocalypse depicts Christ in the imagery and tropes of major angelic figures from

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previous apocalyptic literature, while also distinguishing Christ as superior to these

figures.[1] This thesis reemerged in recent scholarship when Loren T. Stuckenbruck

published his monograph *Angel Veneration and Christology: A Study in Early Judaism*

and in the Christology of the Apocalypse of John in 1995.[2] This book was followed

closely in 1997 by two other publications on the same topic, Peter R. Carrell's *Jesus And*

The Angels: Angelology and the Christology of the Apocalypse of John[3] and Crispin H.T.

Fletcher-Louis's *Luke-Acts: Angels, Christology and Soteriology*,[4] and in 1998 by

Charles A. Gieschen's *Angelomorphic Christology: Antecedents and Early Evidence*.[5] A

more recent monograph building on Stuckenbruck's work is Matthias Reinhard

Hoffmann's *The Destroyer and the Lamb: The Relationship between Angelomorphic and*

Lamb Christology in the Book of Revelation.[6] Arguments for the angelomorphic

Christology in the Apocalypse, per Carrell, are based principally on three Christophanies

in Rev 1:12-16, 14:14-16, and 19:11-21. In what follows, I will consider these

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[1] The study of angelology's impact on Christology goes back at least to Wilhelm Bousset; for a summary of his contribution, see Larry Hurtado, "New Testament Christology: A Critique of Bousset's Influence," *TS* 40 (1979), 306-317.

[2] Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology: A Study in Early Judaism and in the Christology of the Apocalypse of John*, WUNT 70 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995).

[3] Peter R. Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels: Angelology and the Christology of the Apocalypse of John*, SNTSM 95 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[4] Crispin H.T. Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts: Angels, Christology and Soteriology*, WUNT 2/94 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997). Though Fletcher-Louis's monograph is more focused on angelomorphic Christology in the Lukan material, his study is relevant to many of the issues involved in the present topic of consideration.

[5] Charles A. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology: Antecedents and Early Evidence*, AGJU 42 (Leiden: Brill, 1998). Gieschen provides a helpful overview of the history of research on the question on 7-25.

[6] Matthias Reinhard Hoffmann, *The Destroyer and the Lamb: The Relationship between Angelomorphic and Lamb Christology in the Book of Revelation*, WUNT 203 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005).

Christophanies—using the progression of Carrell's monograph as a model—and the way that they make use of angelic imagery and function in their portrait of Christ, before turning to consider priesthood as a key element of that angelomorphism.

The "One Like a Son of Man" (Rev 1:12-16). At the beginning of the Apocalypse, John has a vision of the risen and glorified Christ, who commissions him to write to the seven churches of Asia Minor:

> And I turned to see the voice which spoke with me, and turning I saw seven golden lampstands (ἑπτὰ λυχνίας χρυσᾶς) and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man (ὅμοιον υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου), clothed in a long robe (ποδήρη) and girded about the breasts with a golden girdle (ζώνην χρυσᾶν). And his head and his hair were white as snow and his eyes were as a flame of fire and his feet like bronze fired in a furnace and his voice as the voice of many waters, and holding in his right hand seven stars and from his mouth a sharp two-edged sword proceeding and his face shone as the sun in its power. (Rev 1:12-16, my translation)

As Carrell puts it, "[t]he appearance of the risen Jesus in Apocalypse 1.13-16 apparently mixes both angelophanic and theophanic elements,"[7] the latter being Christ's depiction with a white head and hair and his "eyes as a flame of fire" (a reference to Daniel 7:9, where these elements are part of the description of the Ancient of Days; cf. also 1 En. 46:1).[8] As David Aune writes, the "allusion to Dan 10:6, where the angelic revealer is described as having 'eyes like flaming torches,' also likely identifies Christ as a god, since "[t]he comparison of eyes with fire is a frequent metaphor in Greek and

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[7] Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, 145. Stuckenbruck concurs: "Numerous commentators have noted that the figure whom John encounters in Revelation 1 is described in terms of both divine and angelic attributes" (Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology*, 211).

[8] See Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology*, 213-218 for a discussion of the theological tradition in Greek translations of Daniel which blur the distinction between the Ancient of Days and the Son of Man and may stand behind the Apocalypse's application of Ancient of Days language to the "one like a son of man." Instead of attributing Christ's divinity to this manuscript tradition, Craig Koester suggests that "Revelation's readiness to ascribe divine traits to Jesus is broadly based in the author's theology" (Koester, *Revelation: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AYB [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014], 245).

Latin literature…used in contexts where humans are described in ways that are characteristic of the gods[.]"[9] The "voice of many waters" with which the risen Christ speaks is also probably to be taken as a divine rather than a merely angelic characteristic, since elsewhere the "voice of many waters" is distinct from the principal angelic figure (e.g., Iaoel in Apoc. Ab. 17:1-2, 18:2).[10] Canonically, John's depiction of Christ in this chapter owes itself chiefly to Daniel. Christ's identification as ὅμοιον υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου links him to the figure in Dan 7:9, as well as to the Glory of LXX Ezek 1:26, described as ὁμοίωμα ὡς εἶδος ἀνθρώπου.[11] The other relevant allusion is Dan 10:5-6,[12] where the angelic figure who appears to Daniel is portrayed in a similar way, "clothed," "belted," with fiery eyes and a thunderous voice. The Christophany of Rev 1:12-20 is thus intertextually related to several angelophanies from other ancient Jewish apocalypses, some of which I covered in the previous chapter, and most of which depict the revelatory angel with similarly luminescent qualities, but none of whom transcend the divine-angelic boundary quite the way that Christ does (Apoc. Ab. 11:2; Apoc. Zeph. 6:11-12;

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[9] David Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, WBC 52a (Waco, TX: Word, 1997), 95.

[10] Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology*, 219.

[11] See Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, 158-162; Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 252. Adela Yarbro Collins, however, cautions against this reading (John J. Collins and Adela Yarbro Collins, *King and Messiah as Son of God: Divine, Human, and Angelic Messianic Figures in Biblical and Related Literature* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008], 192).

[12] As Adela Yarbro Collins writes, "In terms of form and content, Rev 1:9-3:22 seems to have been modeled on Dan 10:2-12:4. Both passages describe the epiphany of a heavenly being to a human visionary. In both, the seer identifies himself by name and gives the time and place of the experience. In both texts, the visionary says that he looked and then gives a description of the heavenly being. Following the description, both passages relate that the seer is overwhelmed by the apparition and falls to the ground senseless. The heavenly being then comforts or strengths the seer. After this exchange, the heavenly being conveys to the seer a long verbal revelation which is associated with a book" (Collins, *Cosmology and Eschatology in Jewish and Christian Apocalypticism*, SJSJ 50 [Leiden: Brill, 1996], 173). Collins describes the similarities between the figures in Rev 1 and Dan 10 in 173-177.

Jos. Asen. 14:8-9; 22:7; 1 En. 106:2-5).[13] Indeed, part of the point of the angelomorphism of John's Apocalypse is to clearly delineate Christ's superiority to the other figures he resembles. For example, numerous connections exist between Christ and Eremiel, the angel of Apoc. Zeph. 6:11-15. Like Eremiel, whose "face [was] shining like the rays of the sun in its glory," who "was girded as if a golden girdle were upon his breast," and whose "feet were like bronze which is melted in a fire" (6:11-14), Christ's face shines as the sun, he has a golden girdle (a ζώνη or belt, for which see below), and has feet like "burnished bronze." Moreover, Christ's self-identification as the one who "has the keys of Death and Hades" (1:18) parallels Eremiel, who "is over the abyss and Hades" (6:15).[14] However, unlike Eremiel, Christ's power over the underworld "derives from [his] own death and resurrection,"[15] and unlike Eremiel, Christ does not forbid his own worship (1:17-18).[16] In this way, "Christ's self-introduction ultimately reaches beyond categories known in Jewish or Jewish-Christian angelology,"[17] even while borrowing

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[13] See Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, 162-165. For these and other texts, see Richard Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 124-132. As Koester summarizes, "readers could also assume that John sees an angel. The superscription said the revelation came to John through an angel (1:1), and the description of the figure John saw resembles that of the angel who spoke to Daniel (Dan 10:5-6). Other sources also pictured angels this way (*Apoc. Zeph*. 6:11-12; *Apoc. Ab*. 10;4; 11:2-3; *Jos. As*. 14:8-9; cf. *1 En*. 106:2-5). In Revelation, angels wear linen robes and gold sashes (Rev 15:6); they have faces like the sun, legs like fire, and voices that roar" (Koester, *Revelation*, 252-253).

[14] It also competes with several Greco-Roman traditions. As Koester notes, "[i]n the Greco-Roman world the keys to Hades were said to belong to Pluto (Pausanius, *Descr*. 5.20.3), the hero Aecus (Apollodorus, *Library* 3.12.6; Lucian, *Dial*. M*ort*. 20; Lucian, *Char*. 2), the goddess Hecate (Aune), and Hermes-Thoth (*Rom. Civ*. 2:535)." Koester, *Revelation*, 247.

[15] Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology*, 220. See also, 125-126, and Koester, *Revelation*, 247.

[16] In contrast not only with Eremiel (Apoc. Zeph. 6:14), but with the angelic figures of Tob 12:16-22, Jos. Asen. 15:11-12, Apoc. Paul, Apoc. Matt. 3:3, Ladder of Jacob 3:3-5, 3 En. 16:1-5, and Cairo Genizah Hekhalot A/2 13-18 (see Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 124-132), as well as the *angelus interpres* of Revelation (Rev 19:9-10; 22:8-9). Indeed, Christ is explicitly worshiped alongside God at least once in the Apocalypse (5:8-12).

heavily from such traditions. In other words, "the Jesus of the Christophany appears in the form of an angel and…carries out a similar function to an angel," but is clearly "one who participates in the eternal being of God."[18] The purpose of this angelomorphism is that "Jesus is seen in ways which are accessible to human vision, and cohere with his roles and functions," that Jesus "takes on the form of an angel and functions like an angel…for the sake of his church."[19] This is possible, Carrell goes on to argue, because "apocalyptic language distinguishes between the reality of a person and the representation of a person," thus allowing "Jesus appearing as an angel in a vision" not to mean that "Jesus *is* actually an angel."[20]

The One Like a Son of Man and the Harvest (Rev 14:14-16). The next important, but heavily debated, appearance of an angelomorphic Christ in John's Apocalypse is in 14:14-20.[21] There, John writes:

> And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and one like a son of man (ὅμοιον υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου), sitting upon the cloud, having upon his head a golden wreath (στέφανον χρυσοῦν) and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the temple crying in a loud voice to the one sitting upon the cloud, "Send forth your sickle and reap, because the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth has ripened." And the one sitting upon the cloud threw his sickle upon the earth and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out from the temple in heaven himself also holding a sharp sickle. And another angel, the one having

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[17] Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology*, 220.

[18] Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, 170, 172.

[19] Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, 173.

[20] Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, 194. Bauckham concurs: "So far from endorsing a general tendency to reverence intermediary beings, [early Christian] writers emphasized a traditional motif designed to rule out angelolatry. At the same time they depicted the worship of Jesus in the throne-room of heaven. This combination of motifs had the effect, probably more clearly than any other Christological theme available in their world of ideas, of placing Jesus on the divine side of the line which monotheism must draw between God and creatures" (Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 149).

[21] Hoffmann actually begins here, arguing that "this passage contains the most interesting Christological ideas of Revelation's author which, in turn, may shed light on descriptions of Christ in other chapters of the Apocalypse" (Hoffmann, *The Destroyer and the Lamb*, 31).

authority over fire, came out from the altar and called with a great voice to the one holding the sharp sickle, saying, "Send forth your sharp sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because its grapes are fully ripened." And the angel threw his sickle to the earth and gathered the vine of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trod outside the city and blood came from the wine press up to the horse-bridles, about one thousand six hundred stades. (Rev 14:14-20, my translation)

Scholars are divided over the identity of this figure, some preferring to interpret him as an angel and others preferring to see him as Christ (and thus continuous with the figure of 1:12-16).[22] The interpretation of the figure as an angel is largely due to the interpretive difficulty some scholars have with the idea that a separate angel would command Christ.[23] It is true that the one like a son of man bears many of the characteristics of an angel.[24] First, as Carrel writes, he "appears in the middle of a series of six angels, making in all a series of seven heavenly beings,"[25] suggesting that Christ is here functioning as part of an angelic troupe. Second, "he is succeeded by an angel described as ἄλλος ἄγγελος (14.15) giving the impression that Jesus is an angel."[26] Aune

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[22] Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, 186. Hoffmann phrases the question thus: "who is the ὅμοιον υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου in Apc 14:15 who appears without any further names or titles? Can one assume that this figure is Christ? And if Christ is really meant in this passage, is he described clearly enough and sufficiently prominently so that no further title or name was necessary to identify him unambiguously?" (Hoffmann, *The Destroyer and the Lamb*, 31-32). He goes on to say: "it has to be examined whether he can be Christ or if he is rather an angel, or alternatively if he has features of Christ and an angel" (32).

[23] Carrell: "The major problem is, in fact, the apparent ignorance of Jesus as to the time of harvest." Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, 190.

[24] See e.g. Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, 192.

[25] Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, 192.

[26] Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, 192. Hoffmann thinks that Carrell is here beholden to a dogmatic reading of the Apocalypse, but nevertheless agrees with him that the figure is Christ (Hoffmann, *The Destroyer and the Lamb*, 36; see also 32-36). Bauckham agrees with Carrell, arguing that "[t]he use of ἄλλος ἄγγελος in 14:15 does not mean that the 'one like a son of man' is also an angel: it refers back to the three angels of 14:6-9" (Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 294 fn80). That the one like a son of man functions as an angel here does not preclude his identity as Christ if the identification of angelomorphic Christology in the Apocalypse is accurate, since angelomorphic Christology has no trouble applying angelic language and features to Christ.

argues that "[t]he context suggests that the *huios anthropou* is a reference not to the exalted Jesus but rather to an angelic being[.]"[27] Moreover, per Aune, "[t]he fact that the second figure commands the first to begin harvesting is a strong reason for not regarding the latter as either the Messiah or the exalted Jesus."[28] Third, Jesus "performs a similar function to one of the angels"[29] in his act of reaping. Fourth, "his appearance as 'one like a son of man' is similar to angels and angelomorphic figures in other apocalyptic literature,"[30] as, for instance, the angel in Dan 10 who is denoted by the same phrase (indeed, the source of dispute about the identity of this figure in scholarly commentaries). Fifth, "the wearing of a crown recalls the appearance of the elders who, if not angels, are angelomorphic figures."[31]

However, the interpretation that the figure is probably Christ remains the most probable reading for several reasons. To begin with, he is linked to the figure of 1:12-16 by the phrase ὅμοιον υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου, "one like a son of man," used only in these two passages, its introductory usage clearly signifying Christ.[32] Second, the phrase Καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ appears on only six other occasions in the Apocalypse (4:1; 6:2,5,8; 7:9; 14:1; 14:14; 19:11), and "on most other occasions…introduce[s] a vision which features (i)

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[27] Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, WBC 52b (Waco, TX: Word, 1998), 841.

[28] Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 842-843.

[29] Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, 192.

[30] Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, 192.

[31] Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, 192.

[32] See Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 252. As Carrell notes, "While recognizing...that ὅμοιον υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου does not necessitate the conclusion that the figure is Jesus Christ, the fact remains that the only other occurrence of this expression in the Apocalypse is in the description of the risen Jesus (1.13)." Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, 187. See also the linguistic discussion in Hoffmann, *The Destroyer and the Lamb*, 36-38, 47-54.

either explicitly or implicitly the divine throne (4:1; 7:9), or (ii) Jesus as the Lamb (7:9, 14:1) or as the Rider (19:11)."[33] Third, the depiction of the "one like a son of man" ἐπὶ τὴν νεφέλην καθήμενον ("sitting upon a cloud") could be taken to suggest Jesus, since Jesus is introduced in the Apocalypse as "coming with the clouds" (1:7).[34] Fourth, the figure on the cloud is seated, suggesting that the cloud is a throne and thus placing the one like a son of man in parallel both to God seated on his throne in the Apocalypse (4:2), Jesus sitting upon God's throne (3:21), the chariot-throne of the Glory in Ezekiel surrounded by a cloud (Ezek 1:4), Wisdom's throne on a pillar of cloud (Sir 24:3), and the Son of Man tradition in the Gospels (e.g. Luke 21:27).[35] As Carrell notes, "the improbability that an angel would be referred to as 'one seated on the cloud' when this description, as we have just noted above, is akin to the description of God as the 'one seated on the throne'" makes it "more likely that the occupant of the cloud was Jesus rather than an angel."[36] Fifth, the angelic command to the "one like a son of man" need

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[33] Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, 180.

[34] At the same time, however, the mighty angel in 10:1 is "wrapped in a cloud" and the two witnesses ascend to heaven in a cloud (11:12). Carrell concludes from this that "'cloud is associated with a figure coming from or going to heaven" (Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, 180-181). Hoffmann points out that "at least four traditions concerning the angel in Apc 10:1 also have a Christological reference within the Apocalypse" (Hoffmann, *The Destroyer and the Lamb*, 72) but concludes that "at most *traces* of an angel Christology can possibly be found in the Apocalypse" (76) and that the "integration" of angelomorphic traditions was a rhetorical ploy on the part of John (77). Koester takes the cloud as indicative that the figure in 14:14-20 is Christ, writing that "Revelation previously made clear that the exalted Christ is the one who comes with the clouds (Rev 1:7) and 'looked like a human being' (1:13), making it likely that Christ is the figure in 14:14" (Koester, *Revelation*, 623).

[35] Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, 181-182. Notably, all of these are divine or quasi-divine figures; if the one like a son of man in 14 is *not* Jesus, then John would seem to be proposing yet a further divine hypostasis by this parallelism, which seems unlikely. See also the discussion of clouds in Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 840-841. Koester agrees that "[t]he human one is seated on the cloud (4:14), much as God is seated on a throne (4:2; 5:1; 7:10; 19:4; 21:5). The posture suggests power to rule." Koester, *Revelation*, 627.

[36] Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, 182. Hoffmann argues that "a combination from Daniel 7:13 with another OT tradition in this passage of the Apocalypse seems even more plausible if one compares Apc 14 with the other passages within the Apocalypse mentioning the son of man-like figure," meaning both that "[t]he description in Apc 14 is probably best explained as a rather free adaptation of Daniel 7:13, combined

not suggest superiority: as Koester writes, "this is unlikely," since "[t]he angel comes from the temple, where God is present (7:15; 15:8), and he acts as a messenger by conveying God's command to the figure on the cloud[.]"[37] Finally, it seems strange, if the figure is meant to be taken as one of a series of seven angelic figures, that he alone would not be introduced byἄλλος ἄγγελος; the lack of this introduction to the one like a son of man suggests that he interrupts rather than fully belongs to the angelic series. On these grounds, "the difficulties with identifying 'one like a son of man' in Apocalypse 14.14 with Jesus Christ are not insuperable, and this identification is to be preferred to that in which 'one like a son of man' is an angel."[38]

The Rider on the White Horse (19:11-16). Following on the destruction of Babylon in Rev 18, as Carrell writes, "we have a vision of a heavenly rider whose appearance suggests that he is identical to the figure in the Christophany in Apocalypse 1.1[2]-16."[39] Here, John writes

> And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse and one sitting upon it called faithful and true, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. And his eyes were as a flame of fire (ὡς φλὸξ πυρός), and upon his head many diadems (διαδήματα), having a name written which nobody knows if not himself, and wrapped in a garment (ἱμάτιον) dipped in blood, and his name is called the Logos of God. And the armies which are in heaven followed him on white horses, clothed in pure white fine linen (βύσσινον λευκὸν καθαρόν), and from his mouth a sharp two-edged sword proceeds (ῥομφαία ὀξεῖα), so that he may trample the nations, and he may shepherd them with an iron rod, and that he may trod the winepress of the wine of the wrath of fury of God Pantokrator, and he has upon

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with an interpretation like the one found in 4 Ezra 13," and that the figure in 14:14-20 is to be understood as continuous with the figure from 1:12-16, who is also composed of OT allusions from Daniel and other texts (Hoffmann, *The Destroyer and the Lamb*, 40-41).

[37] Koester, *Revelation*, 624.

[38] Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, 192.

[39] Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, 196. I have modified the quote to reflect the pericope of focus in this work.

his garment and upon his thigh a name written: King of kings and Lord of lords. (Rev 19:11-16, my translation)

The continuity between the Rider and the one like a son of man in 1:12-16 also suggests his continuity with the Rider on the clouds of 14:14-20, if in fact this figure is to be taken as Christ (as I argue above). As in 1:12-16, the eyes of the Rider in 19:11-16 are described ὡς φλὸξ πυρός, and from his mouth proceeds a ῥομφαία ὀξεῖα. The garment that the Rider on the white horse wears is not explicitly similar to that worn by the "one like a son of man," and different language is used to describe it (the "one like a son of man" in 1:12-16 wears a ποδήρης, while the Rider wears a ἱμάτιον βεβαμμένον αἵματι). However, other activities of the two figures serve to suggest their common identity. Just as the one like a son of man of John's initial vision is the one who will give the conquerors **"the wreath of life"** (2:10), a secret name (2:17), will clothe them in white robes (3:5), and will give them "authority over the nations; to shepherd them with an iron rod, as when clay pots are shattered—even as [he] also received authority from my Father" (2:26-27), so too the Rider on the white horse has "many crowns," a secret name known only to himself, leads a heavenly army clothed in "pure white linen," and "shepherds [the nations] with an iron rod."[40] For these reasons, Carrell concludes that "the Rider is essentially the same angelomorphic figure who appears in Apocalypse 1.13-16 and 14.14."[41] On the second point, the argument that the figure in 19:11-20 is continuous with the figure in 14:14-20 depends on the transitive property: the figure in 14:14-20 is the same as the figure in 1:12-16; the figure in 19:11-20 is also the same as

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[40] See Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, 196-197.

[41] Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, 204.

the figure in 1:12-16; therefore, the figure in 19:11-20 is also the figure of 14:14-20. The

following chart (Table 2) lays out these similarities.

Table 2. Parallels Between The One Like A Son Of Man (Rev 1:12-16) And The Rider
On The White Horse (Rev 19:11-20).

The One Like a Son of Man (Rev 1:12-16)	The Rider On The White Horse (Rev 19:11-20)
Rev 1:14 Eyes like a flame of fire (ὡς φλὸξ πυρός)	Rev 19:12 Eyes like a flame of fire (ὡς φλὸξ πυρός)
Rev 1:16 Two-edged sword (ῥομφαία δίστομος)	Rev 19:15 A sharp sword (ῥομφαία ὀξεῖα)
Rev 2:10 Will give conquerors the wreath (στέφανος) of life	Rev 19:12 Wears many crowns (διαδήματα)
Rev 2:17 Will give conquerors a secret name	Rev 19:12 Has a secret name
Rev 3:5 Will clothe conquerors in white robes (ἱματίοις λευκοῖς)	Rev 19:14 Commands army in white linen (βύσσινον λευκὸν καθαρόν)
Rev 2:26 Will shepherd with iron rod (ποιμανεῖ αὐτοὺς ἐν ῥάβδῳ σιδηρᾷ)	Rev 19:15 Will shepherd with iron rod (ποιμανεῖ αὐτοὺς ἐν ῥάβδῳ σιδηρᾷ)

According to Carrell, four elements of the Rider's description add something new

to the angelomorphic Christology of the Apocalypse: "(i) Jesus Christ as a rider on a

horse; (ii) leadership of the heavenly armies; (iii) the secret name (which is mentioned as

a gift of the one like a son of man in 1:12-16 to the conqueror but is not suggested as a

possession of his own); and (iv) the *Logos*-name."[42] Christ riding on the horse owes itself

not to "the 'messianic' texts influential on this vision such as Genesis 49.11, Psalm 2.9,

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[42] Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, 204.

and Isa. 11.4, 49.2, 63.1-3," but to Zech. 1:8, 6:1-8, and the angelic horsemen of Maccabean literature.[43]

As leader of the heavenly armies, the Rider "takes up a role with both angelic and divine roots," standing in parallel with the ἀρχιστράτηγος of biblical and apocalyptic literature, who is sometimes an angel (usually Michael; e.g., Josh 5:13; 2 En. 2:28; 33:10; T. Ab. Rec. A, 7 and 19; Apoc. Esdras 4:24; Jos. Asen. 14:7) and other times God himself (e.g., Exod 15:3; Deut 7; 10; Ps 68:4, 14, 17; Zech 14:5).[44] The secret name of the Rider can be read as an allusion to various angelic figures who refuse to divulge their names or whose secret names are somehow indicative of their inner character (Gen 32:30; Judg 13:18; 1 En. 69:14-15).[45] The identification of the Rider as the Logos— elsewhere in the Apocalypse "directly associated with suffering (1:9, 6:9; 20:4)"—may associate him with an angelic figure from Wis 18:15-16, but ultimately testifies to his transcendence of a merely angelic status.[46]

In sum, the Christ of the Apocalypse is frequently seen "appearing angelomorphically, yet [is] ultimately indistinguishable from God."[47] Recognition of Christ's assumption of angelic features, roles, imagery, and functions opens up a range of interpretive possibilities in the Apocalypse. I now turn to one such possibility.

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[43] Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, 204-206.

[44] Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, 206-210.

[45] Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, 210-213.

[46] Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, 214-218. See also Hoffmann, *The Destroyer and the Lamb*, 193-200.

[47] Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, 218-219.

The Angelomorphic Christ as Heavenly High Priest of the Priestly Saints

Christ's angelomorphism in the Apocalypse is multifaceted. At times, as Hoffmann has argued, it connotes Christ's role as heavenly judge,[48] while at other times it serves to highlight Christ's divinity. However, I argue that Christ's angelomorphism is also the strongest grounds for his presentation as a priest in the Apocalypse. Scholars have debated whether or not John has a priestly Christology—that is, whether or not the Christ of the Apocalypse ought to be thought of as a priest. However, if the survey of the last chapter holds true, a priestly character ought to be expected both of angels and of angelomorphic human beings. Indeed, when we survey the evidence of John's Apocalypse, it becomes apparent that the explicit priesthood of the earthly saints, to which John makes frequent reference, is undergirded by his implicit portrait of Christ as the high priest of the heavenly cult.

This is clearest in the opening vision of 1:12-16 where Christ is depicted wearing "a long robe" and a "golden sash." Interpretation of Christ's appearance here has largely been divided over whether or not the language intends to present him as a royal or priestly figure. David Aune suggests that the priestly reading is "unfounded," since the "long robe," the ποδήρης, is used to translate "five different Hebrew words," on which grounds Aune suggests that it "can hardly be understood as a technical term[.]"[49] Since "[r]obes and belts (which gathered the robes at the waist) were basic articles of clothing in the ancient Mediterranean world used by both men and women (cf. *Odyssey* 6.38)…these two garments by themselves cannot be claimed to be priestly vestments.

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[48] Hoffmann, *The Destroyer and the Lamb*, 104.

[49] Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 93.

Nothing is said about the rest of the vestments (the ephod, the trousers, the turban, the crown, and so forth), nor are the material and color of the robe specified. There is therefore no clear intention on the part of the author to conceptualize the appearance of the exalted Christ in priestly terms."[50] Instead, Aune argues, the figure is more directly related to the angel in LXX Dan 10:5 and to the epiphanies of other Greco-Roman divinities.[51] Craig Koester concurs: "the title 'priest' is not given to Christ but to his followers (1:6; 5:10)…Christ does not lead others in worship of God but is worshiped along with God (5:11-14)…he does not minister in the heavenly sanctuary as the angels do (8:3-5; 15:508). More importantly," he goes on, "such attire was worn by heavenly figures that did not have priestly roles (Dan 10:5; Ezek 9:2-3; Apoc. Zeph. 6:12)"; thus, "[h]ere it has more to do with majesty than with priesthood."[52]

However, there are good reasons, contra Aune and Koester, to think of the Christ of 1:12-16 as a priest, indeed, the high priest of the heavenly priesthood. To begin with, the setting of the vision among the "lampstands" (λυχνίας) gives it a cultic context; as Aune himself admits, "this imagery suggests that a 'temple' is the ambiance for John's vision."[53] As Ross E. Winkle writes, "[t]he verbal and conceptual background to the ἑπτὰ λυχνίας χρυσᾶς in 1:12 is sanctuary imagery, whether the singular golden lampstand in the Israelite tabernacle, the golden lampstands in Solomon's Temple, the golden

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[50] Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 94.

[51] Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 93-94.

[52] Koester, *Revelation*, 246.

[53] Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 88. Koester agrees: "Revelation transforms the single lampstand with seven branches into seven lampstands, which represent the seven churches (Rev 1:20). As the sanctuary's lampstand was 'before the Lord' (Exod 27:20-21; Lev 24:2-4), the congregations are in the presence of Christ. A lampstand with seven lamps is also pictured in Zech 4:2, a passage Revelation uses to portray the church's vocation as a witness (Rev 11:4; cf. Matt 5:15; Phil 2:15)" (Koester, *Revelation*, 245).

lampstand in the Second Temple period (LXX 1 Macc 1:21; 4:49-50; Sir 26:17), or the visionary lampstand in Zech 4:2-3."[54] The lampstands, which evoke Exod 35 and 37, Num 8, and Zech 4:2, 10, "represent the church (cf. 1:20)," but do so by way of evocation of a longstanding tradition whereby "part of the temple furniture stands for the whole temple, which by extension also represents faithful Israel."[55] The ability of the lampstands to symbolize the churches thus in part depends on their interpretation as temple furniture. Consequently, Christ has the "priestly role" of "tend[ing] the lampstands," like the "OT priest [who] would trim the lamps, remove the wick and old oil, refill the lamps with fresh oil, and relight those that had gone out": instead, however, "Christ tends the ecclesial lampstands by commending, correcting, exhorting, and warning (see chs. 2-3)[.]"[56]

Second, despite Aune's misgivings, Christ's clothing is probably best understood as priestly.[57] This is principally hinted at by his ποδήρης and ζώνη, both of which are both mentioned among the articles of clothing which the Israelites must create for Aaron

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[54] Ross E. Winkle, "'The Clothes Make the (One Like A Son Of) Man': Dress Imagery in Revelation 1 as an Indicator of High Priestly Status" (Andrews University: PhD Dissertation, 2012), 264. In 264 fns 23-24, Winkle offers LXX Exod 25:31-35; 26:35; 30:27; 31:8; 35:14; 38:13; 39:16; 40:4, 24; Lev 24:4; Num 3:31; 4:9; 8:2-4; 1 Kgs 7:35; 1 Chr 28:15; 2 Chr 4:7, 20; 13:11; Jer 52:19 in support of the use of λυχνία for sanctuary lampstands. He goes on to point out that "[t]he fact that they are described in Revelation as golden further substantiates this conclusion" (264-265). This is contra Aune (Aune, *Revelation* 1-5, 65 n 12.d), who suggests "that John's audience was not familiar with such lampstands," but, as Winkle writes, "the issue is not one of familiarity but one of the ability of John's audience to make conceptual connections" (265-266). See also Henry B. Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes, and Indices* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1998), 14.

[55] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 206-207.

[56] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 208-209.

[57] Here I follow the thesis of Ross E. Winkle, "'Clothes Make the (One Like a Son of) Man"; idem, "'You Are What You Wear': The Dress and Identity of Jesus as High Priest in John's Apocalypse," in *Sacrifice, Cult, and Atonement in Early Judaism and Christianity: Constituents and Critique*, ed. Henrietta L. Wiley and Christian A. Eberhart, RBS 85 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017), 327-346.

to wear (LXX Exod 28:4, 31, 39; 29:5).[58] (Zech. 3:4). Indeed, "[o]f the twelve textual references to ποδήρης in the LXX, eight clearly refer to some dress aspect of the high priest," while "three refer to Ezekiel's mysterious 'man clothed in linen,'" and the final occurrence takes place in Sir.[59] The "six men" of Ezekiel's vision, who as discussed in the last chapter are priestly in character, wear both a ποδήρης and a ζώνη (Ezek 9:2-3, 11). The ποδήρης typically refers to the high priestly robe in other Greek-speaking Jewish and Christian literature (Wis 18:24; Let. Aris. 96; Philo, *Fug.* 185; *Her.* 176; *Leg.* 1.81; 2.56; *Mos.* 2.117, 118, 120, 121, 133, 143; *Mut.* 43; *Somn.* 1.214; *Spec.* 1.85, 93, 94; Frg. 117 on LXX Exod 28:27; Josephus *A.J.* 3.153, 159; 8.93; 20.6; *B.J.* 5.231; Barn. 7:9; T. Levi 8:2).[60] The most direct referent for Christ's robe from Second Temple Greek-speaking Jewish and Christian literature would thus be high priestly apparel; it is almost unprecedented that a different reference is intended.[61]

So, too, with the ζώνη, the "girdle," "belt," or "sash." Though a ζώνη is not "characteristically indicative of a particular role-related identity,"[62] and was worn mostly

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[58] G.B. Caird agrees that "The **robe** and the **girdle** are the garb of the high priest (Exod. Xxviii. 4; xxxix. 29)" (Caird, *A Commentary on The Revelation of St. John the Divine* [New York: Harper and Row, 1966], 25).

[59] Winkle, "'Clothes Make the (One Like A Son Of) Man," 161-163; see especially Table 2 (162-163). Though the occurrence in Sir is "a wisdom parable" (163), Sir may be intending to reference the high priestly garment (Sir 27:8; 45:8; cf. 50:11; see Winkle, 180-182). See the discussion in 163-182.

[60] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 210. The list given above is Winkle's; see Winkle, "'Clothes Make the (One Like A Son Of) Man,'" 183-196.

[61] Among "the remaining twenty-five references to ποδήρης in Jewish and Christian literature during the Second Temple period and into the send century CE…there are only three occurrences in this literature that clearly do not refer to dress associated with the high priest," though two "imply such dress" (Winkle, "'Clothes Make the (One Like A Son Of) Man,'" 282). Thus, "[t]he only class of people who wore the substantival ποδήρης in the LXX and other Second Temple literature were the high priests" (298). Swete acknowledges that ποδήρης is "used in the LXX of Exodus for various priestly garments," and "is thus seen to denote dignity or high office, usually but not necessarily the office of High Priest" (Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John*, 15).

[62] Winkle, "'Clothes Make the (One Like A Son Of) Man,'" 307.

in non-sacerdotal contexts in antiquity (chiefly in the everyday dress of women),[63] the

word is often employed in sacerdotal contexts in Greek-speaking Jewish literature as a

translation for the priestly אבנט, appearing several times with ποδήρης (e.g., LXX Exod

28:4, 39, 40; 29:9; 36:36; Lev 8:7, 13; 16:4; Ezek 9:2-3, 11). Levi is clothed with a ζώνη

as part of his priestly investiture (T. Levi 8:7). Though none of these ζῶναι are golden, it

is probable that in the Second Temple period the high priest wore a sash "interwoven

with gold," per Josephus (*A.J.* 3.159).[64] The possible high priestly association of the

golden ζώνη is further indicated by its location at Jesus' μαστοί (breasts), since "the first

ζώνη of the high priest…was located at the στῆθος [chest] or the στέρνον [sternum];

(Josephus, *A.J.* 3.154; *B.J.* 5.232)."[65] If Torleif Elgvin is correct that John of Patmos was

a Judean of a priestly background with personal familiarity with the temple cult,[66] then it

is likely that this reality of the cult in his own day stands behind the image.[67] Elsewhere

in the Apocalypse, attire which includes "pure bright linen"[68] and "golden sashes" (ζώνας

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[63] See especially Michael J. Bennett, *Belted Heroes and Bound Women: The Myth of the Homeric Warrior-King* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997), 125-160 for the associations of the ζώνη with femininity and domestication.

[64] Winkle, "'Clothes Make the (One Like A Son Of) Man,'" 313-320. As Winkle notes, the ζώνη here "could refer to more than one high priestly dress item" (317), since Josephus mentions two sashes interwoven with gold; regardless of which one it is, "John may have used ζώνη metonymically or synecdochically to encompass the high priestly ζώνη, ephod, and even breastpiece, since they could be visually perceived to be attached to each other" (319). This would conform to several "incomplete sartorial descriptions" in the Apocalypse which are "purposely partial, metonymical, or synecdochical in nature" (320).

[65] Winkle, "'Clothes Make the (One Like A Son Of) Man,'" 323.

[66] Torleif Elgvin, "Priests on Earth As In Heaven: Jewish Light on the Book of Revelation," in *Echoes From the Caves: Qumran and the New Testament*, ed. Florentino Garcia Martinez (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 277-278.

[67] This is not to deny that some reference to the vision of Dan 10:5 or an echo of 1 Macc 10:89 as, e.g., Swete (Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John*, 15-16) and suggests.. However, the primacy of the ποδήρης seems to narrow the intended referent of the golden ζώνη.

χρυσᾶς) is seen on the plague angels who emerge from the heavenly temple (15:6) and bear "seven golden bowls" (φιάλας; 15:7), signifying them as cultic officiants with "libation bowls."[69] Beale concurs: "Although the clothing of v. 13 could also resemble kingly attire, its use here evokes the image of a priest because of the clear temple atmosphere of the 'lampstands' and the angels coming out of the heavenly temple, who wear the same clothing in 15:5-8."[70]

Thus Aune's objections to a priestly reading of Christ's apparel fail to take proper stock of the available evidence. That ποδήρης translates a number of Hebrew terms, *all of which refer to priestly garments (and at least four of them to high priestly garments)*,[71] would seem to strengthen rather than undermine the idea that there is a high priestly referent intended here, even if ποδήρης could be and was used to refer to non-sacerdotal clothing in Greco-Roman culture. Moreover, as Winkle writes, "a lack of further high priestly dress imagery—whether dress element, color, or type of material, does not necessarily undercut a high priestly understanding of the admittedly meagre dress terminology in 1:13. A sartorial synecdoche might only include one or two items of an identifiable dress ensemble, but as a figure of speech it refers to the whole

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[68] See Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 804-805, who notes that in one manuscript tradition (A C 2053 2062), the reading is λίθον rather than λίνον, which may imply "an allusion to Ezek 28:13…which describes the clothing of the guardian cherub (or Adam?) who fell from his heavenly position," or possibly "an allusion to the high priest's breastplate," which is how it is taken by Mounce [Mounce, *Revelation*, 289]. Either way, "the beings of Rev. 15:6 should be seen as priestly angelic figures" (805).

[69] Koester, *Revelation*, 624. Aune concurs: the φιάλη, "usually translated 'bowl'…must be understood as a cultic utensil and should therefore be translated 'bowl used in offerings'…These libation bowls are mentioned twelve times in Revelation (5:8; 15:7; 16:1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 10, 12, 17; 17:1; 21:9)" (Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 879). Aune goes on to note that the Hebrew *mizraq*, "libation vessel," "is always translated φιάλη in the LXX [e.g., Exod 27:3; 38:3; Num 4:14]" (879).

[70] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 209.

[71] Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 93.

ensemble….Expectations that a larger or a full ensemble of clothing reasonably indicative of high priestly identity should be present in the text are consequently incorrect expectations that can preclude or distort identity perception."[72] Thus, Aune's suggestion that the one like a son of man cannot be a high priest because he lacks the full array of vestments[73] does not hold up to the character of literary use of clothing in antiquity.

Thirdly, objections that the scriptural allusions in 1:12-16 imply an angelic figure to the exclusion of a priestly one present an untenable false dichotomy. Since, as I argued in the last chapter, angels in Jewish apocalyptic tradition are often priests, that Christ should be similar here to an angelic figure cannot preclude his priesthood, even if the angelic figure to which he is similar is not explicitly shown to be a priest in the text to which the Apocalypse possibly alludes (in this case, LXX Dan 10:5). So, too, do objections that Christ's divinity (Koester) or royalty preclude his priesthood similarly fail. Apart from Christ's identification as "one like a son of man" and his depiction as the Ancient of Days from Dan 7, nothing about his appearance specifically connotes royalty. As Beale points out, "the LXX never uses ποδήρης (of its 12 uses of the word) of a king's attire."[74] More importantly, however, kingship and priesthood were not completely antithetical categories in ancient Judaism. As Beale writes, "the ambiguity [in Rev 1:12-16] may be deliberate: perhaps both a king and a priest are in mind, which would have precedent in the two figures of Zech. 4:3, 11-14 (see on Rev 11:4) and in the descriptions of Jonathan (1 Macc 10:88-89; 14:30) and Simon, the 'governor and high priest' of Israel

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[72] Winkle, "'Clothes Make the (One Like A Son Of) Man,'" 302-303.

[73] Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 94.

[74] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 209.

(1 Macc 14:32-47)."[75] Moreover, "kings and leaders in Israel did have some priestly responsibilities (e.g., David), so that it would not be unexpected that their attire might resemble to some degree that of priests," since "Eliakim [the chief steward of the royal household in Isaiah 22] is portrayed as having a tunic and sash in Isa. 22:21-22, which the Targum explicitly interprets as both kingly and priestly attire, and directly relates to his sons as 'priests wearing the Ephod[.]'"[76] As Beale notes here, David himself was remembered for participation in priestly cultic activities (1 Sam 21; 2 Sam 6; 1 Chron 15:3-28, 16:1-6), installed his own sons as priests in Jerusalem (2 Sam 8:18), and was principally remembered in the Second Temple period for founding the liturgical cult (2 Sam 7:1-7; 1 Chr 21:22-28:21; Sir 47:8-11; 11QPsalms^a 2-11).[77] The strong Davidic messianism of Revelation (e.g., 3:7; 5:5; 22:16) would not have been incompatible with priestly messianism to John and his audience, and a stringent divide between kingship and priesthood is untenable for many Jews after the Hasmonean period.[78]

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[75] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 209.

[76] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 209.

[77] See especially Eva Mroczek, "The Hegemony of the Biblical in the Study of Second Temple Literature," *JAJ* 6 (2015): 17-34; eadem, "How Not To Build A Temple: Jacob, David, and the Unbuilt Ideal in Ancient Israel," *JSJ* 46 (2015): 523-546; eadem, "'David Did Not Ascend Into The Heavens' (Acts 2:34): Early Jewish Ascent Traditions and The Myth of Exegesis in the New Testament," *AJ* 3 (2015): 219-242, who chronicles David's association with the heavenly cult in ancient Jewish and early Christian texts. See also Simon J. DeVries, "Moses and David as Cult Founders in Chronicles," *JBL* 107 (1988): 619-639, who argues that "an idealized and divinely inspired king David" is invoked in Chronicles as the foundation for the Levitical order in the restored cult of the postexilic period (639).

[78] This is true even if many Jews were uncomfortable with or critical of the royal-cultic functions of the Maccabean king-priests. See Deborah W. Rooke, *Zadok's Heirs: The Role and Development of the High Priesthood in Ancient Israel*, OTM (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 219-324, who argues that "the Maccabean high priests were in reality monarchic rulers, and that they should not be seen either as the culmination of the high priesthood's political development or as giving the high priesthood an authority and influence of itself which it had hitherto lacked" (302). In short, both biblical and more recent examples of an admixture of royal and hieratic offices were available to John.

Indeed, on this last point, it must be noted that John's presentation of Christ prior to and following this initial Christophany depicts him in the process of precisely such an establishment of an earthly priesthood and cult, as would have been expected in the portrait of a Davidic figure as remembered in Second Temple tradition. Christ is the one who has made the earthly community of the saints "a kingdom, priests to his God and Father" (1:6), who "tends the ecclesial lampstands" (as Beale puts it above), and who promises them various priestly privileges: Christ will award the conqueror "permission to eat from the tree of life that is in the paradise of God,"[79] the "wreath (στέφανος) of life,"[80] the "hidden manna" and a "white stone" with a new name, to be "clothed…in white robes [ἱματίοις λευκοῖς]," and to be made "a pillar in the temple of [his] God," such that "will never go out of it" (2:7, 10, 17; 3:5, 12).[81] Indeed, in two cases, the descriptions of Christ at the beginning of the epistles to the seven churches coincide in

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[79] Paradise in Jewish tradition was deeply associated with the Temple and its cult, and in several ancient Jewish texts appears as part or as shorthand for the heavenly Temple itself. On this point, see Kevin J. Madigan and Jon D. Levenson, *Resurrection: The Power of God for Christians and Jews* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 81-106. As Madigan and Levenson write, the concept has its roots in ancient Near Eastern connections between gardens and temples (85), and finds literary expression in Ezekiel's Eden myth (Ezek 28:11-19; Madigan and Levenson, *Resurrection*, 82-85), the identification of one of the rivers of Eden with an important spring in Jerusalem (the Gihon) and the elaboration of that connection in Ezekiel 47:1-12 (85-89).-. Moreover, there are some textual grounds for associating the right to eat of "the tree of life" and priesthood. It is the "new priest" of T. Levi 18 in whose "priesthood the nations shall be multiplied in knowledge on the earth, and…shall be illumined by the grace of the Lord (18:9), and it is he who "shall open the gates of paradise; [who] shall remove the sword that has threatened since Adam, and [who] will grant to the saints to each of the tree of life" (18:10-11). As Winkle notes, "Many scholars [among whom he lists only Beale] understand the tabernacle/temple lampstand to have symbolized, among other things, a stylized tree," and thus Christ's promise in Rev 2:7 is ideologically related to "Jesus describing himself as the one who walks in the midst of the lampstands (2:1)" (Winkle, "'The Clothes Make the [One Like A Son Of] Man,'" 269 fn 43). The tree of life is further connected to priestly concerns by its juxtaposition in the New Jerusalem with the priestly service of the saints before the face of God (Rev 22:4-5) and the final beatitude of the Apocalypse, which states that "Blessed are those who wash their stoles, so that the authority of the tree of life will be theirs and so that they may enter by the gates into the city" (22:14). See below for the image of "washing the stole" as a summons to priestly purity.

[80] For which see below.

[81] See Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 293-294.

some way with the promise offered. Christ is the one who "walks among the seven golden lampstands"[82] and offers access to Paradise. He identifies himself as the one "who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens" when he offers to the conqueror to be made a pillar in the temple of God (all the more notable, since this is an allusion to Isa 22:22, where the "key of David" connotes authority over the temple).[83]

John's transition to a Lamb Christology in Rev 5 further suggests that the apocalyptic Christ is priestly. Like the "one like a son of man" of 1:12-16, who promises the authority of the Davidic king detailed in Psalm 2 and the morning star in Rev 2:26-28 (elsewhere a self-identification of Christ together with an explicit affirmation of Davidic status in 22:16) and is the one who holds the "key of David" in 3:7, the Lamb is a Davidic messiah (5:5; cf. the reference to Psalm 2 in Rev 2:26-28; 3:7), and is also marked out in continuity with the one like a son of man by his constitution of the saints as "a kingdom and priests to our God" (5:9; cf. 1:6). The Lamb's accomplishment of this reality is directly tied to the character of his death: he "was slaughtered (ἐσφαγμένον, ἐσφάγης; 5:6, 9, 12),[84] and with his blood purchased for God from every tribe and tongue

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[82] Which as I argue above, following Beale, is a priestly image.

[83] See especially John T. Willis, "An Interpretation of Isaiah 22.15-25 and Its Function in the New Testament," in *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel: Investigations and Proposals*, ed. James A. Sanders and Craig A. Evans, JSNTSup 148 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 334-351; Bruce Chilton, "Shebna, Eliakim and the Promise to Peter," in *Jesus in Context: Temple, Purity, and Restoration*, ed. Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans, AGJU 39 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 319-52; Michael P. Barber, "Jesus as the Davidic Temple Builder and Peter's Priestly Role in Matthew 16:16-19," *JBL* 132 (2013): 935-953, especially 944-947, where Barber argues convincingly that "there are several indications that Isaiah 22 was understood as describing Eliakim as a *priestly* figure," again on the grounds of his clothing (specifically, in a tunic [כתנת] and a sash [אבנט]—see 945 fn28). This is the clear interpretation in later Jewish tradition (both the Targum, which Beale also notes, and Lev. Rab. 5:5; 944), which "identifies the key given to Eliakim as 'the key of the sanctuary'" (947).

[84] Beale notes allusions to Passover and Isaiah 53 in the use of σφάζω (Beale, *Revelation*, 351, 358). Both allusions, particularly the first, suggest that the slaughtered Lamb is a sacrifice, but the Lamb's

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and people and nation" the community of the earthly saints (5:9). The Lamb also installs the saints in priestly power in other ways. He is the one who opens the fifth seal and gives to the slaughtered (ἐσφαγμένων) martyrs beneath the heavenly altar white stoles (στολὴ λευκὴ), which can often be priestly garments in the LXX.[85] That Christ rewards the martyrs slain in the same manner as he was for the sake of his witness with priestly authority would seem to imply that he himself has received such authority; one wonders on what other grounds he has the ability to consecrate priests. According to the presbyter with whom John converses in 7:13-14, the great multitude of 7:9-17, "clothed in white stoles," have "washed their stoles" and "made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (7:14), and are now able to "stand before the face of God and the face of the Lamb" (7:9) and "before the throne of God and to worship him day and night in his temple" (7:15). The apparel of the multitude, combined with their station before the throne of God in the heavenly sanctuary, implies that they have been installed as priests therein.

If the one like a son of man of 1:12-16 is to be identified as priestly and with the priestly Lamb, then the priestly character of the one like a son of man in 14:14-16 and the Rider on the white horse of 19:11-16 follows both from the continuity among these three figures, but is also seen in features unique to each.[86] The one like a son of man in 14:14-

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active rather than passive utilization of his own sacrifice suggests that he is the one who has performed and applied his self-offering.

[85] Per Ulrich Wilckens, "In the LXX στολή is used 98 times," and "first means 'clothing' of any kind, especially the 'upper garment.' But often the idea prevails that the clothing denoted by στολή is not just an outward covering but is something by which a man is essentially stamped in his current status....In this connection one may also refer to the common use of στολή to denote the priestly vestments (over 40 times). The priestly robe is a στολὴ ἁγία (Ex. 28:2 etc.) which Aaron and his sons put on (Ex. 40:13 etc.)…Later the priestly vesture can even be described as στολὴ δόξης, Sir. 45:7; 50:11, cf. also Wis. 18:24 on the robe of the high-priest." Wilckens, "στολή," *TDNT* 7: 687-691.

[86] Swete makes the interesting suggestion that "[i]n [ch. 1] the royal Priesthood of Christ is the predominating thought; in [ch. 19] He appears as the true Imperator; here [in 14:14-20] the writer's aim is

16 is designated as a priest by his headgear, his procession, and his activity. First, he wears a "golden wreath" (στέφανον χρυσοῦν) on his head. The antique Mediterranean world knew a variety of crowns, each of which carried a variety of religious, political, and social significances. Of these, the wreath (στέφανος),[87] whether organic (i.e., woven of the branches and leaves of a particular tree, usually a tree with some sort of sacred significance) or cast in gold could signify several things. Prominent among these connotations is priesthood. Wreaths were "considered appropriate apparel for anyone approaching a deity. Consequently, both priests and priestesses [in the Greco-Roman world] adorned themselves with wreaths as a symbol of their office," and "[m]any of the priests' crowns were golden."[88] Indeed, as Gregory M. Stevenson writes, "[d]uring the Roman period many priests wore crowns, many of which were gold, displaying anywhere from three to fifteen busts [of various gods], numerous examples of which have come to light in Asia Minor from the first to the late third century AD."[89] It may be for these reasons that, with the advent of Hellenistic culture in ancient Judaism, the ציץ/πέταλον of the high priestly attire is frequently referred to as a στέφανον χρυσοῦν in Greek Jewish literature of the intertestamental and first century periods, wherein "the wreath became a distinct symbol of the Jewish high priesthood."[90] Thus, though "[t]he priest's crown in

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to bring together the thought of Christ's victory over sin and death with the hope of His return to raise and judge mankind" (Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John*, 185).

[87] Throughout, unless quoting another source, I use "wreath" to differentiate the στέφανος from other kinds of crowns, like the diadem (διάδημα).

[88] Gregory M. Stevenson "Conceptual Background to Golden Crown Imagery in the Apocalypse of John (4:4, 10; 14:14)," *JBL* 114 (1995): 262. Stevenson offers the example of "the sarcophagus of the chief priest Capella [which] testifies to his exemplary performance in the priesthood describing him as 'having continually worn a gold crown gloriously' (χρυσοῦν στέφανον μετὰ δόξης)" (262-263).

[89] Stevenson, "Conceptual Background," 263.
[90] Stevenson, "Conceptual Background," 263. See, e.g., Sir 45:12; T. Levi 8:2, 10. Stevenson goes on: "Jewish priests likewise may have worn wreaths as a symbol of their office (T. Levi 8:1-11; Tacitus,

Exodus resembles a diadem more than it does a wreath, the original design of the [high priestly] crown may have been replaced with the golden wreath by later Israelites."[91] Given the manner of the son of man's procession and his assigned activity, it seems most likely that a priestly referent is in view for this kind of crown in 14:14-20. The "one like a son of man" stands in parallel to the ἄλλος ἄγγελος who proceeds from the heavenly sanctuary, implying that the one like a son of man coming on the cloud from heaven is also coming from the heavenly sanctuary. Moreover, this "one like a son of man" borne out by his duty to tread the eschatological winepress of God's wrath. Many of the divine warfare texts themselves—notably Isa 63:1-6 and Joel 3:13, which stand behind 14:14-20 and 19:11-21 with the imagery of the divine winepress—have cultic language and undertones. In the former, God's garment is "bloodstained," as would have been those of ministering priests in the temple,[92] and the verb for "spatter," נזה, "denotes unintentional, accidental splattering" and "is almost "always used in ritual contexts and refers to the sprinkling of water or blood to consecrate or purify and [sic] object, person, or sanctuary."[93] In Lev 6:27, for example, "it refers to the blood of the purification offering spattering the priests [sic] clothes."[94] Moreover, the use of גאל, translated typically as

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Hist. 5.5)....Numerous Hasmonean coins have the title 'high priest' in Paleo-Hebrew surrounded by a wreath....When Alexander appointed Jonathan as the high priest he sent him a purple robe and a golden crown (στέφανον χρυσοῦν)... While explaining the symbolism of the priest's dress, Josephus offers one Jewish perspective on the meaning of the gold crown in the first century AD. According to him the crown is gold because God is light and therefore the color of the crown is 'that sheen in which the Deity most delights' (Josephus, *J.W*. 3.187)."

[91] Stevenson, "Conceptual Background," 263.

[92] Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 64.

[93] Jason A. Riley, "Does YHWH Get His Hands Dirty? Reading Isaiah 63:1-6 in Light of Depictions of Divine Postbattle Purification," in *Warfare, Ritual, and Symbol in Biblical and Modern Contexts*, ed. Brad E. Kelle, Frank Ritchel Ames, and Jacob L. Wright, AIL 18 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 259-260 fn61.

"stained," is also a cultic verb: it "carr[ies] the connotation of defiling in a ritual sense, whether passively, actively, or reflexively."[95] The agent of divine wrath is parallel in these texts is thus parallel to a cultic officiant. While Revelation does not use this verbiage or its Greek equivalent, its allusions to Old Testament divine warfare texts could suggest the same cultic allusions that those texts do.

The priestly character of the Rider is admittedly the most difficult of the three Christophanies to argue for. However, certain elements of his presentation could plausibly be seen as priestly. The Rider's clothing, a ἱμάτιον (also used of Joshua's investiture in LXX Zech. 3:5) dipped in blood, may suggest the same divine warfare imagery as in Isa 63:1-3, and with it, too, the same cultic undertones suggested by that passage.[96] His priesthood is also possibly shown forth in his execution of God's wrath on the nations. As reviewed in the previous chapter, ancient Judaism intrinsically connected priesthood with violence, seeing zeal for purity expressed through violent purging as the requisite trait for the award of the hieratic office (Gen 34; Exod 32:25-29; Num 25:6-12; Deut 33:8-11; T. Levi 5:3-7). Several priestly angels in ancient Jewish literature—notably Michael—are responsible for inflicting God's violent wrath in the eschatological

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[94] Riley, "Does YHWH Get His Hands Dirty?", 260.

[95] Riley, "Does YHWH Get His Hands Dirty?", 261. Susan Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible: A Study in the Ethics of Violence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 28-55 for sacrificial overtones in texts of divine warfare more generally. Niditch notes that initially the ban (Heb.: חרם) was the extension of a sacrificial concept—"a possession devoted and sacrificed, given up for the use of God or his priests" (29)—into the context of warfare.

[96] Notably, the bloodstained garment of the Rider in 19 may stand behind *Barn.* 7:9, where Christ will appear τὸν ποδήρη ἔχοντα τὸν κόκκινον, "having the scarlet ποδήρης." As Winkle argues, "when κόκκινος itself describes fabric it typically carries priestly and/or royal connotations [e.g., LXX Exod 25:4; 26:1, 31, 36; 27:16; 28:5, 8, 15, 33; 31:4; 35:6, 25, 35; Num 4:8; 2 Sam 1:24; 2 Chr 2:6, 13; 3:14; Matt 27:28], and thus Barn. 7:9's reference to τὸν ποδήρη ἔχοντα τὸν κόκκινον could still indicate both royal and high priestly imagery for the returning Christ" (Winkle, "'Clothes Make The [One Like A Son Of] Man,'" 195).

scenario precisely as a function of their heavenly priesthood (e.g., 1 En. 10:20-22).[97] The

cleansing of the earth by violent destruction of the wicked is a divine act comparable to

the controlled ritual slaughter of animals by the priest in the sanctuary.[98] Most

importantly, the scriptural passages that 19:11-21 draws on have cultic undertones: the

effect of the Rider's slaughter of the nations is a great feast for all the birds of the air, just

as YHWH hosts a great "sacrificial feast" to which the birds are invited in Ezekiel (Ezek

39:17-20). Thus, the description of the Rider as warrior, especially if he is to be identified

with the figures in 1:12-16 and 14:14-20, could be read through a priestly lens.[99]

It is precisely in those passages where Christ is depicted in angelomorphic terms

that he is also seen to be priestly, and this is to be expected, since, as I demonstrated in

the last chapter, a widespread tradition in ancient Judaism held the angels to be priests,

and may likewise have expected a deified human being[100] to become both an angelic and

a priestly figure. However, this priestly status is implicit in the language and imagery

used for Christ in the Apocalypse, who is never explicitly identified as a priest therein,

though his followers, whose priestly status is established by him and their identification

with him, are explicitly referred to as priests on several occasions. In turn, it is my thesis

that the saints' explicit participation in Christ's priesthood also provides them with an

implicit share in the angelomorphic glory that he himself exhibits. Thus, John's

Apocalypse reconfigures an established Jewish tradition of deification—priestly

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[97] See above.

[98] Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 64-65.

[99] Elgvin takes this view, evoking also 4QVisions of Amram, 11QMelchizedek, and "the vigilant Levi in the Schechem episode (Gen 34) in the priestly writings Aramaic Levi (2:1) and Jub. (30:4, 18-20)" (Elgvin, "Jewish Light on the Book of Revelation," 274-275).

[100] And Christ, while more than this in John's Apocalypse, is not less.

angelomorphism—in the context of an early Christian participatory model of deification, defined by a reciprocal participation between Christ and the church. To this exchange I now turn in closing.

Communicatio Idiomatum: The Deification of the Priestly Saints in John's Apocalypse

That the earthly community of the saints is conceived of in priestly terms is explicit in John's Apocalypse, and several of the major texts have already been visited in this chapter (1:6; 5:10; 7:14-15). To them ought to be added 20:6, which promises that those who share in the first resurrection "will be priests of God and of Christ," and 22:3-4, where the "throne of God will be in [the New Jerusalem], and his slaves will worship him; they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads" (NRSV).[101] The saints enjoy this priestly status precisely through their identification with Christ, whether expressed through Christ's constitution of them as a priesthood (1:6; 5:10), the image of having the name of God and of Christ written upon the forehead (3:12; 7:3; 14:1), Christ's sacrificial establishment of the priesthood in his own blood (5:9; 7:14), or following Christ with a singular devotion (14:4). As Caird puts it, each earthly saint is "both king and priest, but with a sovereignty and priesthood derived from Christ, as his were derived from God."[102] However, I argue that it is those same images/privileges of participation in Christ's priesthood through identification with him that also connote deification of the saints into angelic glory. Since Christ's priesthood is a function of his

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[101] The priestly character implied by the use of λατρὲυσουσιν, which in 7:15, as I have argued, denotes priestly worship in the heavenly sanctuary.

[102] Caird, *Revelation*, 77.

angelomorphism, participation in Christ's priesthood is also a participation in his angelomorphic glory.

The saints are promised to be clothed in "white garments" (ἱματίοις λευκοῖς) in (3:5) and are commanded to buy or wash their robes white on at least two occasions (3:18; 22:14; cf. 7:14). On two other occasions, the garments are white stoles (στόλας; 6:10-11; 7:14) and have some sort of connection to blood, whether the blood of the slaughtered martyrs or the blood of the slaughtered Lamb in which they have been washed. The bride of the Lamb is promised to be clothed in "pure bright linen" (βύσσινον λαμπρὸν καθαρόν; 19:8). As Elgvin writes, "[w]hite robes are a common image both in Israelite and gentile sources," signifying "purity, removal of guilt, priestly or scribal dignity, heavenly existence, wealth, celebration (e.g. Yom Kippur, and Rosh Hashanah), victory, and eschatological reward. For Revelation, which stresses the priesthood of all believers, the investiture of *kohanim* with white clothing carries great symbolic significance."[103] Importantly, this clothing promised to be worn by the earthly saints is also that worn by the heavenly priesthood in the Apocalypse. The twenty-four elders, who are priestly angelic beings whether or not their number signifies the twenty-four Levitical priestly divisions or a conglomerate of the apostles and patriarchs by virtue of their ceaseless worship,[104] their κίθαραι, and their offerings of incense (5:7), are depicted in "white robes" (ἱματίοις λευκοῖς). So, too, are the bowl judgment angels dressed in "pure bright linen" (λίνον/λίθον καθαρὸν λαμπρὸν; 15:6). While this clothing is not

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[103] Elgvin, "Jewish Light on the Book of Revelation," 265.

[104] As Caird writes, "[T]he elders are undoubtedly both kings and priests, and therefore fitting representatives of the people of God, which Christ has made 'a royal house of priests to his God and Father' (i. 6)" (Caird, *Revelation*, 64).

actually described as "white," its brightness carries the same suggestive weight, since white clothing glows (and this, indeed, may be the implication, if the reading λίνον is to be taken, though if the λίθον manuscript tradition is to be trusted, then the luminosity probably does not suggest whiteness). The heavenly armies at the end of the book appear dressed in pure white linen (βύσσινον λευκὸν καθαρόν; 19:14), which is earlier in the same chapter equated with "the righteous deeds of the saints" (19:8). The conformity of the apparel suggests two things. First, it suggests that the earthly priesthood has been conformed to the heavenly priesthood: the earthly priests are clothed like the heavenly priests so that, as is standard in the apocalyptic traditions reviewed in chapter 2, they may participate in the heavenly cult.[105] But second, it also implies that the earthly saints have been deified to share in angelic glory.

This is particularly clear elsewhere in biblical tradition, where the white garment is worn by God or angels and investiture is explicitly said to connote transformation into a divine or angelic body (as in 2 En. 22).[106] Although no transformation of the saints is explicitly narrated in the Apocalypse, their clothing hints that they undergo such a change. To begin with, if the saints are truly conformed to the angelic priesthood by investiture in their garments, then one would expect that the glory of the angelic priests—

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[105] See Martha Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 29-46. Beale argues that the image of the white garment in Revelation "connotes a purity that has been demonstrated by persevering faith in Christ's redemptive death" (Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 437), but Beale does not go on to say what this purity is for. As discussed in the last chapter, purity is intrinsically connected to cult, and in the Second Temple period (and particularly the early Christian movement), when ritual and moral purity were often conflated with one another, one would expect that the purity of the saints is intended to permit them participation in the cult, as the book itself explicitly says is the case (Rev 7:15).

[106] See Leslie Baynes, "Jesus the Revealer and the Revealed," in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Tradition and the Shaping of New Testament Thought*, ed. Benjamin E. Reynolds and Loren T. Stuckenbruck (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), 26-27.

or at least their ability to stand in the midst of the divine glory—would also be acquired. First, the figure of the Christophany in 1:12-16 is luminescent: he has a head and hair "white as wool" (λευκὸν ὡς χιὼν), eyes "as a flame of fire" (ὡς φλὸξ πυρὸς), and feet "like bronze having been fired in a furnace" (ὅμοιοι χαλκολιβάνῳ ὡς ἐν καμίνῳ πεπυρωμένης; 1:14-15). The twenty-four elders are near the divine throne; the mighty angel of 10:1-11 has "a rainbow about his head" and a face "like the sun" (10:1); the bowl angels are described as having "bright" (λαμπρὸν) clothing.

Other sartorial imagery—specifically, that of precious metals, stones, and jewels— connotes conformity not just to the angels but to Christ himself. If the bride of the Lamb in 19:7-8 is to be identified both with the community of the earthly saints (which seems to be implied by the interpretation in 19:8 that the linen with which she is clothed "are the righteous deeds of the saints")[107] and with the heavenly Jerusalem that descends in 21:9-22:5 (which seems to be implied by the clear identification of the city as "the bride of the Lamb" in 21:9), then it seems likely that John understands an eschatological transformation of the saints into precisely the sort of beauty that the city possesses. If the city "has the glory of God and a radiance like a very rare jewel, like jasper, clear as crystal" (21:11), and the city is in some sense coextensive with the saints, then it seems to follow that the saints will also possess this luminous glory.[108] This glory is defined by bright, luminescent precious metals and stones like gold, jasper, sapphire,

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[107] See Donal A. McIlraith, "'For the Fine Linen Is the Righteous Deeds of the Saints': Works and Wife in Revelation 19:8," *CBQ* 61 (1999): 512-529. McIlraith argues that the fine linen is a "bridal garment" (525), and as a "nuptial symbol [it] shows that covenant and relationship are central in theological discussion" (527).

[108] As Swete writes, "The Church possesses the Divine Presence, which, with its illuminating and elevating powers, she brings with her from her place of origin, and she is transfigured by it…Her luminary resembled a rare crystalloid gem, every facet of which is radiant with a Divine light" (Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John*, 281).

agate, emerald, onyx, chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase, jacinth, and amethyst [21:19-22], at least two of which, jasper and emerald, are used in 4:3 to describe God himself, and all of which seem to intentionally mimic the breastplate of the high priest.[109] Indeed, the high priestly allusions both here and in 22:4-5 are indicative not merely of deification but of participatory deification, since, as demonstrated above, John's Apocalypse presents Christ as the high priest of the heavenly cult. The promise that all the saints will enjoy the right of beholding God face to face (itself suggestive of deification, since humans and even some of the angelic orders are ordinarily not able to behold the divine Glory directly)[110] in the New Jerusalem and have his name written upon their foreheads[111] are possibly allusions to high priesthood. The city and the saints, then, will

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[109] See Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 1080-1088, especially 1080-1082. As he writes, "[t]he list of twelve jewels adorning the foundation stones of the wall is based on the list in Exod. 28:17-20 and 39:8-14 of the twelve stones on the high priest's 'breastpiece of judgment'"; "[e]ight of the stones in Exodus are repeated here in Rev. 21:19-20, and the differently named stones in Revelation are semantic equivalents of the ones in Exodus" (1080). The "appli[cation of] the jewels of the priest's breastpiece from Exod. 28:17-21 to parts of the structure of the latter day Jerusalem" finds precedent in Isa 54:11-12 (1082-1085; 1085), Ezek 28:13, and Tob 13:9-18 (1086-1087). See also William W. Reader, "The Twelve Jewels of Revelation 21:19-20: Tradition History and Modern Interpretations," *JBL* 100.3 (1981): 433-457 for an overview of interpretive options, particularly 435-448 for an overview of ancient Jewish interpretations of the twelve stones. Reader offers a "negative" answer, that "[t]he enumeration of the stones in the Johannine Apocalypse does not correspond to any known list of stones in late Judaism, neither to a Hebrew, nor a Greek, nor an Aramaic list," though indeed agrees that "John obtained his material from a living late Jewish tradition of twelve stones which was originally rooted in the cultus" (455). See also the table in Koester, *Revelation*, 818.

[110] E.g., Himmelfarb: "In most of the later apocalypses the visionary undergoes some kind of physical transformation in order to stand before God, a transformation that is shaped by the understanding of heaven as a temple" (Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 29). As Aune writes, "[i]n early Judaism and early Christianity the privilege of seeing God is often considered an eschatological blessing…while in the Greco-Roman world mention is made of the post-mortem ability of souls to behold the gods (Plutarch *De Iside* 78)" (Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, WBC 52c [Waco, TX: Word, 1998], 1180-1181). Aune is, however, incorrect in his suggestion that "The phrase 'seeing the face of God' is a metaphor in Judaism and early Christianity for a full awareness of the presence and power of God" (1179); he fails to take seriously the possibility that divine corporeality was a real option for ancient Jews and Christians, especially for apocalyptically minded ones.

[111] Both Beale (*The Book of Revelation*, 1114) and Koester (Koester, *Revelation*, 818) make a connection between the name of God written upon the forehead and the high priestly tiara, which bore the name of YHWH in gold upon it. As Beale notes, the whole phrase in Exod 28:36-38 need not be present, since other Greek-speaking Second Temple writers say that the crown only bore the divine name (e.g., Philo, *Mos.* 2.114ff; Josephus, *A.J.* 3.187).

participate in Christ's own unique privileges and radiant glory as high priest in the eschaton.

One other image ought to be addressed together with garments and jewels: Christ's promise to give the saints the morning star (τὸν ἀστέρα τὸν πρωινόν; 2:28), which he later identifies himself with (as the "bright morning star," ὁ ἀστὴρ ὁ λαμπρὸς ὁ πρωϊνός; 22:16; cf. 2 Pet 1:19). Here, the two major interpretive options have been that the image "refers to the OT-Jewish tradition that the suffering saints will be made like stars to shine forever when they are raised from the dead (see above on 1:19), so that the overcomer's immortality is emphasized here," or "is representative (by metonymy) of messianic rule, as is evident from its use in 22:16 as a further explanation of the Isa. 11:1 prophecy[.]"[112] Both views have merit: as already seen, solar or astral radiance is a normative aspect of deification in antiquity and particularly in ancient Judaism, where the glorification of the righteous typically involves coming to shine like the stars.[113] On the other hand, in both passages where the morning star appears in Revelation, it is explicitly connected with Davidic messianic rule: 2:28 follows an allusion to Ps 2 in 2:27 which promises rule over the nations to the conqueror, "just as [Christ] received from [his] Father," and then offers the promise of the morning star; in 22:16, Christ identifies himself as the morning star in the same breath that he confesses himself "the root and offspring of David." But this is a false dilemma. In Second Temple Judaism, as Eva Mroczek has argued at length, David was "an ideal figure associated in a variety of texts with different combinations of features like ethical perfection, physical transfiguration,

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[112] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 268.

[113] See, e.g., Willem F. Smelik, "On Mystical Transformation of the Righteous into Light in Judaism," *JSJ* 26 (1995): 122-144.

discourse with demons and angels, scriptural production and divine inspiration, wisdom

teaching, and, indeed, heavenly ascent," among which is included celestial luminosity.[114]

11QPsalms[a] 2, for example, says that "David, son of Jesse, was wise, and luminous like

the light of the sun"; his "sun-like radiance is reminiscent of the luminescence of Moses's

face after his descent from Sinai, the descriptions of Enoch and the angels in the

apocalyptic literature, and the luminous transfigured Jesus in the gospels."[115] This is also

the case in Apoc. Zeph. 9:4-5, where David is glorious enough to speak in friendship with

the great angel who is too glorious for the visionary (3:9), and in *Apoc. Paul* 29, where

Paul beholds David at the celestial altar, and his "countenance shone as the sun," thus

"signifying divine transfiguration."[116] Even if the referent of the morning star is a

messianic interpretation of Num 24:17, the "star" that arises from Jacob, Fletcher-Louis

is probably correct when he writes that "[i]n the post-biblical period to speak in such

astral terms is, unavoidably, to speak of an angelomorphic, heavenly figure."[117] In short,

ancient Jewish expectation would have associated Davidic, messianic rule with heavenly

splendor, and so the image in John's Apocalypse ought to be read both as indicative of

rule and of celestial luminosity. Moreover, since Christ identifies himself with the

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[114] Mroczek, "'David Did Not Ascend Into the Heavens,'", 229.

[115] Mroczek, "'David Did Not Ascend Into the Heavens,'" 240-241.

[116] Mroczek, "'David Did Not Ascend Into the Heavens,'" 234-237. As Mroczek notes, "Across these traditions, luminosity is a sign of divine transformation and a perfected, heavenly state, an image applied to both angels and transfigured human beings in early Jewish and Christian texts" (239).

[117] Crispin H.T. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, STDJ 42 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 10. As Fletcher-Louis notes, this text was important to the Bar Kochba revolt, and may have been interpreted similarly by Bar Kochba and his followers, since some traditions seem to remember him as having claimed heavenly origin and status (e.g., Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 4.6.1-4; Jerome, *Ruf.* 3:31; see Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam*, 10-11).

morning star which he gives to the saints, the image ought to be taken as an example of participatory deification. [118]

Golden wreaths are another image that imply both priesthood and deification (among other things) in the Apocalypse. The conqueror is promised the "wreath of life" by Christ (στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς; 2:10) and the church in Philadelphia is commanded to "let no one deprive you of your wreath" (3:12). The twenty-four elders wear "golden wreaths" (στεφάνους χρυσοῦς; 4:4). A στέφανος is given to the rider on the white horse (6:2). The woman clothed with the sun wears a "wreath" (στέφανος 12:1), as does the one like a son of man of 14:14-20 (στέφανον χρυσοῦν; 14:14). The Rider on the white horse, however, wears several diadems (διαδήματα; 19:12). As Stevenson notes, "Interpreters commonly identify the diadem in Revelation as the crown of royalty, while the organic and golden wreaths are most frequently identified as either the wreath of victory or the wreath of royalty."[119] It is certainly true that wreaths in the Apocalypse (and in antiquity more generally) can carry victorious and royal connotations. The wreath of life is promised to the conqueror together with rule over the nations and a seat on Christ's throne (2:26-27; 3:21); the wreaths of the twenty-four elders are connected to their thrones (4:4); the διαδήματα of Christ help to designate him as "King of kings and Lord of lords" (19:16).[120] Royal connotations are natural to this image. However, while wreaths, particularly golden wreaths, can also denote royalty, they possess a larger

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[118] Hence Swete: "If the Churches are λυχνίαι and their angels ἀστέρες, the Head of the Church may fitly be the ἀστὴρ ὁ πρωινός, the brightest of stars, whose advent ushers in the day…Thus the promise points to the Parousia, and yet does not exclude the foretastes which are given to the faithful in the growing illumination of the mind and the occasional flashings upon it of the yet distant light of 'the perfect day' (Prov. iv. 18)" (Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John*, 47).

[119] Stevenson, "Conceptual Background," 257-258.

[120] See Stevenson, "Conceptual Background," 259-260,

connotative range. As I argued above, following Stevenson, one of the possible meanings of golden wreaths was priesthood, and in at least two cases in Revelation—the one like a son of man in 14:14-20 and the twenty-four elders in chs. 4-5—such a connotation is clear.

Golden wreaths as priestly emblems may also have had a particular significance for John, given the extreme issue that he takes with the imperial cult, since "[t]he golden crown also had a place within the ruler cult," and "apparently represented a divine honor when either worn by or placed upon the statue of a ruler during the Hellenistic-Roman period."[121] Since the emperors were priests of the Roman state, if John is using golden crowns in a subversive way in the Apocalypse, it is a subversion that includes rather than ignores priestly claims: that is, the true priesthood of Christ, the angels, and the saints stands in contrast to the false priesthood(s) of the imperial Roman cult.[122]

However, this priestly significance expands the golden wreath imagery in a further way: golden wreaths are appropriate for priests because they suggest divinity. Victory wreaths in general were "considered sacred to the deity in whose honor the games were played, and it was likely this relationship that moved those who were awarded wreaths of victory to dedicate them to the deity afterwards. This relationship between victory and divine glory may also be reflected in the Jewish belief that the 'crown of glory' was the heavenly reward for a righteous life."[123] In general, "wreaths were sacred to the gods," and "each deity possess[ed] his or her own crown, which in turn

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[121] Stevenson, "Conceptual Background," 267.

[122] E.g., Augustus Caesar was the high priest of the SPQR; etc.

[123] Stevenson, "Conceptual Background," 259. He offers 1QH 9:25; 1QS 4:7f; T. Benj. 4:1; 2 Bar. 15:8 as examples (259 fn13).

represented that deity."[124] Wreaths were "frequent aspect[s] of the description or iconography of any god or goddess, whether it be in literature, on coins, sculpture, pottery, or even jewelry," and gold wreaths in particular, since "gold…was [thought to be] an appropriate symbol of divinity."[125] Indeed, "on at least one occasion, [the gold wreath] even served as proof of one's divinity (Pausanius, *Descr. Greece* 1.17.2-3)," and "[t]he practice of honoring a deity by crowning his or her statue was a common practice in the Greco-Roman world."[126] This was also a practice in early Diaspora synagogues, particularly in Alexandria, and on one occasion a golden wreath was offered in the Jerusalem temple, "apparently with no objection from the Jews" (Josephus, *B.J.* 1.357; *A.J.* 14.488)." [127]

The wreaths of the Apocalypse, then, suggest both priesthood and divinity. The "wreath of life" in 2:10 seems to connote deification in the sense of immortality, both because it is promised in exchange for fidelity to unto death and because it is attached to the promise to freedom from "the second death" (2:11; cf. Jas 1:12).[128] The crowns of the

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[124] Stevenson, "Conceptual Background," 260.

[125] Stevenson, "Conceptual Background," 261. Hence, most Roman emperors, with the exceptions of Caligula, Nero, and Domitian, "expressly rejected" the creation of gold statues of themselves, since it would have been an open statement of their complete divinity, and for an emperor to wear a gold crown "required a special act of the Senate (Dio Cassius, *Rom. Hist.* 45.6.5; Appian, *Civil Wars* 3.28)" (264).

[126] Stevenson, "Conceptual Background," 261-262.

[127] Stevenson, "Conceptual Background," 262. For an older but still useful overview of crowns in Judaism, see Erwin R. Goodenough, "The Crown of Victory in Judaism," *The Art Bulletin* 28.3 (Sep., 1946): 139-159. Of interest to the present discussion, Goodenough argues that votary wreaths at death were expressions of hope for apotheosis (141-145). He also gives helpful images of Jewish and Christian use of wreaths on 149, 151-152. This "is the process of assimilation: the crown seems to have become Jewish, as it became Christian, by shedding completely its pagan mythology but keeping its basic value unchanged" (158).

[128] J.R. Harrison, "The Fading Crown: Divine Honour and The Early Christians," *JTS* 54 (October, 2003): 493-529, says that "although the 'crown of life' has particular Smyrnaean reference, echoes of the intertestamental literature remain (*WisSol* 5.15-16)" (509-509). The passage from Wisdom reads, "the righteous live forever, and their reward is with the Lord; the Most High takes care of them. Therefore they

twenty-four elders seem more explicitly connotative of divinity: per Stevenson, "the

thrones in Revelation 4 symbolize royal authority, whereas the golden wreaths are

intended to symbolize divinity and honor."[129] Here the identity of the twenty-four elders

becomes a matter of greater concern. If they are to be taken, following Victorinus, as a

conglomerate of the twelve patriarchs of Israel and the twelve apostles of the Lamb,[130]

or, more generally, as Beale suggests, "angels representing all saints…representing thus

all the people of God,"[131] then the elders constitute a group of already deified human

beings in the Apocalypse. Their number may be an intentional reference to the "twenty-

four priestly courses of the second temple period described in 1 Chr 23:6; 24:7-18";[132] in

any event, as argued above, the elders are clearly a priestly group. The casting of the

crowns before the divine throne on the basis of God's act of creation (4:10-11) signifies

both submission to God and that the divinity of the elders is a participatory, derivative

divinity, and their parallel act of falling down and worshiping the Lamb who is "in the

midst of the throne" suggests that the Lamb, too, is to be seen as the source of their

glorification (5:14). Finally, the saints who worship before the throne of God and the

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will receive a glorious crown and a beautiful diadem from the hand of the Lord, because with his right hand he will cover them, and with his arm he will shield them" (NRSV).

[129] Stevenson, "Conceptual Background," 269. He goes on: "The golden wreaths along with the white clothing) of the elders express an association with the divine. Given the frequency in antiquity with which the golden crown as associated with divinity (by Greeks, Romans, and Jews), it is hard to imagine that the mention of golden wreaths worn by celestial beings in Revelation 4 would not have communicated such an association" (269-270).

[130] Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 289.

[131] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 322. Aune also makes the suggestion that they could be "[i]ndividual Christians who had sealed their faith through martyrdom, now glorified and participating in an exalted heavenly life" (Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 290).

[132] Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 288-289. There seems to me no reason why this referent could not also be intended; specifically, insofar as the twenty-four courses were thought to have been established by David (289) and the twenty-four elders worship the Davidic, messianic Lamb, some echo of this reality from the cult is probably unavoidable.

Lamb and behold the face of God in 22:4-5 may be implicitly crowned, as the name of God written upon their foreheads may be an allusion to the high priestly tiara which had the name of God upon it. If, as I have suggested, the ability to behold God connotes deification, and there is in fact here an allusion to the crown of the high priest, then the crown here, too, suggests deification, indeed, participatory deification, since in the New Jerusalem the saints have been made like Christ, the high priest of the heavenly cult.

While each of these images has been drawn from Jewish tradition—especially the apocalyptic tradition of angelic deification sketched in the previous chapter, whereby human priests (and later all righteous humans) are conformed to angelic glory so as to be able to participate in the heavenly liturgy and priesthood—they have been reconfigured within a participatory model, by which identification with, imitation of, and fidelity to Christ are the means by which deification is attained. Christ in himself has shown fidelity unto death, which has resulted in his conquest over the underworld (1:18) and entitled him to the heavenly high priesthood, messianic rule over the nations, and divine glory. In turn, if the earthly community of the saints shows the same fidelity, they too will "conquer" and enjoy priestly service, royal rule, and divine glory, just as Christ himself received, and, indeed, in the New Jerusalem will enjoy a full participation in Christ's glory as high priest. Conversely, those who are unfaithful unto death, who compromise in the face of Roman imperial oppression, are at risk of losing this reward of deification. Hence the rhetorical force of the Apocalypse's summons to "wash [your] robes" so that those who do so might enjoy access to the tree of life (and hence to immortality) and enter the city by the gates (22:14; cf. 7:14). The equation of the fine linen, which as I argue above indicate both priesthood and divinity, with "the righteous deeds of the

saints" (19:8)[133] implies that the metaphor of washing is a command to repent while there is still time and to ensure a place in the heavenly and eschatological kingdom and cult. Deification, for John, is not only reward but impetus to present fidelity, and, in the same way, deification in the manner described above represents the culmination of the earthly vocation of the saints to martyric witness and worship of God as "a kingdom and priests" (1:6). This model of deification in John's Apocalypse fits the pattern of the *communicatio idiomatum*: the "exchange of attributions" between Christ and the saints whereby Christ has already shared in what is human (suffering and death) and, in turn, human beings may share in what is Christ's (divine, angelomorphic glory). John thus represents a case study in the transformations of Jewish soteriology in early Christianity, embodying both a continuity with older Jewish tradition as well as discontinuity insofar as that tradition has now been freshly reconceived in and through the significance of Christ.

Conclusion: Apocalyptic Deification Between Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity

I have set out to demonstrate three things. First, ancient Jews and early Christians were participants in a wider intercultural and interreligious landscape where liminality and transformation between humans and gods—deification—was assumed, articulated, practiced, and sought. Ancient Jews and Christians, in their own (early on and for an indefinite period afterward, overlapping) religious contexts, developed their own anthropologies and soteriologies of divine humanity in conversation and competition with

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[133] Again, it is a false dilemma to suggest that the robes must be either a metaphor for deeds or a symbol of deification, since virtue was one of the principal mechanics for deification in antiquity. See M. David Litwa, *We Are Being Transformed: Deification in Paul's Soteriology*, BZNW 187 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 193-225.

a variety of Hellenistic and Roman alternatives (Chapter 1). Second, one particularly strong example of this kind of soteriology in ancient Judaism was a tradition of angelic deification, which centered on an analogy between angels and priests that formed the foundation for speculation about earthly participation in the heavenly liturgy and the transformation of priests (and later all humanity) into divine beings/angels. Belief in a heavenly temple in which the angels serve a celestial liturgy as priests and the belief that the earthly community of the righteous may proleptically or eschatologically participate in that angelic liturgy is clearly evident in John's Apocalypse (Chapter 2). Third, and finally, John's Apocalypse utilizes this tradition of angelic deification of the priesthood, but reconceives it in the context of an early Christian participatory model of deification, a *communicatio idiomatum* whereby the community achieves divine glory through participation in and conformity to Christ. Specifically, John's angelomorphic Christology, whereby the essentially divine Christ is portrayed in the language and imagery of several angelic figures from apocalyptic tradition, possesses a priestly element derived from that same tradition that the earthly saints explicitly participate in; in turn, the images which are used in the Apocalypse to speak of the future glorification of the saints conform them both to the angelic priesthood and to the angelomorphic Christ. In this sense, John's Apocalypse represents one example of the transformation of Jewish notions of deification in a Christian context, even if that Christian context was at this point still itself within Judaism. I hope that the present work will add Revelation not only to a conversation about early Christian soteriology per se, but also to a conversation about the catalytic confluence of soteriology between ancient Jews and early Christians.

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