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## Biblical Interpretation in Jubilees 3:1-31

*J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten*

The Book of Jubilees is presented as a revelation which Moses received at Mount Sinai. It actually consists of a rewriting and interpretation of the biblical narrative from Genesis 1 to Exodus 16. It corresponds to the biblical text very closely, but sometimes the author feels free to deviate considerably from his example.

In this paper I confine myself to Jubilees 3, a rewriting of the second creation narrative in the Bible, the story of Eden. The text of Jubilees corresponds to the text of Genesis 2:4b-3:34, but a close examination of both texts makes clear that Jubilees 3 disagrees in many respects with its model. Apart from the *additions*, the author *omits* passages, and *modifies* at other points. In order to get a clear picture of the exegetical methods it is necessary to employ the synoptic perspective in a thoroughgoing way. And it would have been better if I could go through the text with you, from the beginning to the end, to show you how variations in sequence or detail reflect hermeneutical assumptions and exegetical techniques. However, since there is not much time for a short note, I decided to restrict myself to some striking conclusions.

It is undeniable that the author of Jubilees reads at certain points his own views into the biblical text. However, very often his so-called biases arises from his exegesis of the text. The writer was a careful reader of the biblical text. He was, at the same time, influenced by current interpretations of certain aspects of the text. The biblical text posed some difficulties to the author of Jubilees, and his composition as such tries to solve many of these.

The most important strategy is *harmonisation*. The author removes repetitions and reconciles contradictions in biblical passages. The totality of the Bible is the word of God, and therefore it is perfect, and the writer of Jubilees cannot accept that passages disagree or contradict one another. This hermeneutical assumption has some important implications for the rewriting of the biblical text. I mention only the most important.

For the author of Jubilees, Genesis 2 cannot be the second account of the creation. It is the chronological continuation (in the second week) of the creation, which took place in the first week. The plants and the animals were already created (Jub 2:1-16; cf. Gen 1:1-2:3), so the plants are not mentioned again in Jubilees 3, which describes the second week; neither the animals are created again, they are only brought to Adam in the second week. Also man was created

in the first week. So he is not created again in the second. Adam was created – male and female. Within Adam the female is present as one of his bones. So the woman was also already created in the first week. However, in the second she is actually taken out of the man, and she is presented to him. So the formation of the woman in the second week is mainly a presentation of her to Adam.<sup>1</sup>

A second hermeneutical assumption is that imperfection in the creation and the imperfection of God in his work is unacceptable. This has also some important implications. In Gen 2:18-24 it is God who observes that the man is alone (v. 18a). He creates the animals (v. 19), but he must admit that he has not created something that suits the man (v. 20b). Only then he decides to build the woman (v. 21-22). In Jub 3:1-4 God's formation of the animals is not a mistaken attempt at finding a partner for Adam. The animals which have just been created (in the first week) are brought to Adam in the second week (v. 1) and he gives them names (v. 2). He observes the animals and he sees that they are 'male and female according to every kind' and observes that he is alone, that there is none who is like himself, who would help him (v. 3). It is the man himself who observes that he does not have anybody. Only then God decides to make a helper (v. 4). With the variation in sequence and the modification of some details the author solves his problem of the imperfection of God.

The modifications in Jub 3:1-7 reveals in another way that rewriting is at the same time interpretation.<sup>2</sup> In this passage the bringing of the animals to Adam gets a new goal. Not only do they get their name, but they reveal to Adam, while he is observing them, that he is alone, and that he is in fact longing for a female. The bringing of the animals seems to have a pedagogical function. The additions and modifications in Jub 3:3 ('Adam was observing all of these, male and female according to every kind which was on the earth, but he was alone'; 'and there was none he found for himself'), and Jub 3:6 ('And he knew her') make clear that Adam has searched for a time under the animals for a partner, but he did not find anybody, but now, this time, he has find his partner.

It is a very striking modification of the story that in Jubilees the woman is formed outside the garden. Their first sexual marital relation does not take place in the garden of Eden, but *before* they enter.<sup>3</sup> The author emphasizes their sexual

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1 See Jub 3:8: 'In the first week Adam and his wife, the rib, were created, and in the second week he showed her to him'. For a discussion about the creation of Eve, see J. R. Levison, *Portraits of Adam in Early Judaism. From Sirach to 2 Baruch* (JSPSS 1) (Sheffield, 1988), pp. 90-91, 214-215 (note 10).

2 For the following compare G. Anderson, "Celibacy or Consummation in the Garden? Reflections on Early Jewish and Christian Interpretations of the Garden of Eden", *HTR* 82 (1989) pp. 121-148 (esp. p. 128).

3 Cf. Anderson, "Celibacy or Consummation", pp. 128-131.

encounter in the modifications in his rewriting of Gen 2:22b-23 in Jub 3:6 ('And He brought (him) to her. *And he knew her* and he said to her: This is now bone from my bone and flesh from my flesh. This one will be called *my* wife, for she was taken from *her* husband'). And only after forty days can Adam enter the garden and his wife must wait eighty days. What is the reason for this modification?

According to Jubilees Eden is conceived as a holy place, more holy than any land (Jub 3:12), it is a sanctuary (Jub 4:26). In fact, Eden is the prototype of the Temple.<sup>4</sup> This opinion can be found also in some Qumran-texts and the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs. It is quite probable that laws concerning the Temple are applied to the Garden of Eden.

I point to the laws of Leviticus, for example: 'If a man lies with a woman and has an emission of semen, both of them shall bathe themselves in water, and be unclean until the evening' (Lev 15:18).<sup>5</sup> There is a very strict application of this law in some Qumran texts. Baumgarten has pointed to 4Q265,<sup>6</sup> and to the Temple Scroll which says that after having sex it is not allowed to enter in the city of the temple for three days.<sup>7</sup>

Because of the *contemporary* conception of Eden as the prototype of the Temple, the author has difficulties with the view that the consummation of the sex-

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4 Cf. Jub 8:19: 'He knew that the Garden of Eden is the holy of holies and is the residence of the Lord'. On the connection of the Garden of Eden and the Temple, see Anderson, "Celibacy of Consummation", p. 129; C. T. R. Hayward, "The Figure of Adam in Pseudo-Philo's Biblical Antiquities", *JSJ* 23 (1992) pp. 1-20 (esp. pp. 6-7); J. M. Baumgarten, "Purification after Childbirth and the Sacred Garden in 4Q265 and Jubilees", in G. J. Brooke – F. García Martínez (eds.), *New Qumran Texts and Studies. Proceedings of the First Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies, Paris 1992* (STDJ 15) (Leiden, 1994), pp. 3-10.

5 cf. Lev 22:4-7: '[Anyone] of the line of Aaron .... who has an emission of semen .... shall be unclean until the evening and shall not eat of the holy things unless he has bathed his body in water'.

6 Cf. Baumgarten, "Purification", pp. 3-10.

7 The text of 11QTemple 45:11-12 reads as follows: 'Anyone who lies with his wife and has an ejaculation, for three days shall not enter anywhere in the city of the temple in which I shall install my name ...'; cf. The Damascus Document (CD 11:21-12:2): '... And everyone who enters the house of prostration should not enter with impurity requiring washing .... No man should sleep with his wife in the city of the temple, defiling the city of the temple with their impurity'. Cf. Baumgarten, "Purification", p. 7. Cf. also 4QTohora<sup>a</sup> (4Q274), which states that if a man 'has an emission of semen, his touch transmits impurity'. For a discussion see J. Milgrom, "4QTohora<sup>a</sup>: an Unpublished Qumran Text on Purities", in D. Dimant – L. H. Schiffman (eds.), *Time to Prepare the Way in the Wilderness. Papers on the Qumran Scrolls* (STDJ 16) (Leiden, 1995), pp. 59-68.

ual relationship of Adam and Eve took place inside the Garden. With his modification of the story he solves this problem.

It is not yet clear why Adam has to wait until the fortieth day after his creation, and his wife until the eightieth. Here, another difficulty in a biblical text seems to play a role, this time not in the text of Genesis, but in the text of Leviticus. The entrance of Adam and Eve into the Garden of Eden is namely related to the law concerning the woman who is giving birth in Leviticus 12. The mother observes seven days of impurity and thirty-three days of purification for a boy, and fourteen days of impurity and sixty-six of purification after the birth of a girl. The reason for this disparity between the sexes remains obscure. The author of Jubilees tries to give an explanation for this disparity by integrating Lev 12 in the story of the second week of the creation. The author explains why in Lev 12 the period of impurity following the delivery of a girl will be double that of a boy. It is because Eve was introduced to Adam in the second week of the creation, seven days after he and his bone had been created. Although the situation in Leviticus 12 does not completely fit the model of Jubilees, it is clear that the author tries to give an etiological reason for the disparity between the sexes.<sup>8</sup> The author does not only project certain aspects of the Mosaic Law back to the time of the Garden of Eden, but his radical changes of the text reveal also an exegetical effort to solve the problem of the lack of sufficient details in Leviticus 12.

The emphasis which the author lays on the covering of the nakedness is one of the few examples in Jubilees 3 (but a clear one) of 'applied exegesis'.<sup>9</sup> The addition in Jub 3:30-31 is not caused by a philological difficulty requiring specific exegesis, nor by a lack of sufficient details, nor by a contradiction of a passage with other passages, nor by unacceptable meanings. These verses contain a protest against the nakedness of the athletes in the gymnasium introduced in Jerusalem by Jewish Hellenists (1 Macc 1:13-14). This bias of the author causes also some modifications in the description of the first man elsewhere in this chapter (e.g. Jub 3:15-16, 21-22)

Connected with the covering of the nakedness is the priestly dignity of Adam. He is described as one who is offering incense after he left the garden (Jub 3:27). The emphasis on the priestly dignity of Adam can of course also be

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8 See J. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 3) (New York, 1991), p. 750; Baumgarten, "Purification", p. 5.

9 For the expression 'applied exegesis' see: G. Vermes, "Bible and Midrash. Early Old Testament Exegesis", in G. Vermes, *Post-Biblical Jewish Studies* (Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity, 8) (Leiden, 1975), pp. 60-91 (esp. pp. 80-90); cf. G. Vermes, "Genesis 1-3 in Post-Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic Literature before the Mishnah", *JJS* 43 (1992) pp. 221-225 (esp. p. 222).

an example of applied exegesis. Jubilees originated in a priestly milieu, and it can be an attempt to project the priesthood back to the days of creation. However, I think it is possible that also here the starting-point is a difficulty in the text. It is the text of Gen 3:21 which causes problems for the author. Why should the man be dressed once again? He was already dressed in Gen 3:7 (cf. Jub 3:21-22)? The addition in Jub 3:27 implies that according to Jubilees the second clothing is something different from the first clothing. It is the clothing of Adam as a priest. The use of *kotnot 'or* (Gen 3:21) offers him the opportunity for this interpretation. Among the things in which the priests are dressed are also the *kutonot*. So the meaning of Gen 3:21 (cf. Jub 3:26) is that God has clothed the man in *priestly* clothing. Hereafter Adam is allowed to offer incense. In this interpretation the writer of Jubilees seemed to be influenced by current interpretations. It is a strong line in the history of interpretation to consider Adam as a highpriest who is dressed in Eden with priestly robes.<sup>10</sup> Because he was influenced by this tradition it might have been difficult for him to see the clothing of Adam in a different way.

In this short paper I tried to show that the author of Jubilees 3 is not only putting his own views into the biblical text. He is in the first place a careful reader of Genesis 2-3 and other biblical texts. The biblical text posed some difficulties to him (contradictions, unacceptable meanings, a lack of sufficient details) and he tries to solve many of these with his rewriting. Characteristic of this rewriting is especially harmonisation. Sometimes he supplies details for explaining the text. The point of departure is most often the biblical text itself, although, at the same time, he seemed to be influenced by current interpretations of certain aspects of the text (Eden as a sanctuary; Adam as a priest). And because of this influence it might have been difficult for him to see the text of Genesis in another way.

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10 I mention only Ezek 28:13 (MT; LXX; Tg) and Ben Sira 49:16. Cf. S. N. Lambden, "From Fig Leaves to Fingernails. Some Notes on the Garments of Adam and Eve in the Hebrew Bible and Select Early Postbiblical Jewish Writings", in P. Morris – D. Sawyer, *A Walk in the Garden. Biblical, Iconographical and Literary Images of Eden* (JSOTSS 136) (Sheffield, 1992), pp. 74-90 (esp. pp. 79-80).

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