ABSTRACT

Re-imaging the Warrior: Divine Warrior Imagery
in the Book of Revelation

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The focus of this dissertation is to investigate whether the ancient motif of Divine Warrior imagery can aid in understanding the violent imagery in the book of Revelation. The specific strategy is to examine how John's intended readers would perceive the violent imagery in light of the horizon of expectations regarding Divine Warfare and how the text challenges those expectations.

In order to get a sense for how John's late first century C.E. intended readers would hear the imagery of Divine War, a diachronic investigation of Divine Warrior imagery is a major portion of the study. This is necessary in order to discern how Divine Warrior imagery has been adapted into these contexts. The study begins by investigating the way gods fight in literature from the ancient Near East. A significant part of this discussion focuses on the Baal Epic from Ugarit. The next phase of the study discusses the various ways the texts of the Hebrew Scriptures adapt the ancient Near Eastern imagery into the context of ancient Israel. The literature of early Judaism then appropriates the same imagery, primarily through the foundation of authoritative

scriptural texts. A number of developments are apparent in early Jewish usage of the imagery now put into still different contexts. Finally, the book of Revelation appropriates Divine Warrior imagery from a context that understands the Hebrew Scriptures as authoritative, is steeped in the general mindset of early Judaism, and lives in the provinces of the Roman Empire. The conclusion of the dissertation is that Divine Warrior imagery, as primarily the imagery of power, shows considerable flexibility. Using the imagery of conquering and war, John's visions redefine victory from a divine perspective: true power conquers by dying, not by killing. The violent imagery of God and Jesus Christ at war must be read in light of this understanding of what it means to conquer.

Re-Imaging the Warrior: Divine Warrior Imagery
in the Book of Revelation

by

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A Dissertation

Approved by the Department of Religion

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W. H. Bellinger, Jr., Ph.D., Chairperson

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
Baylor University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy

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May 2012

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A simple acknowledgment seems inadequate in light of all that has transpired during the course of completing this study, as the true number of those who provided various means of support exceeds my ability to express my appreciation in so short a space.

First, I want to thank my committee, Dr. Lidija Novakovic, Dr. Bruce W. Longenecker, and Dr. Jeffrey S. Hamilton for their willingness to be a part of this project. I am especially appreciative of my Doktormutter, Dr. Lidija Novakovic, for her willingness to take over as my mentor at such a late date and helping me to piece together my mass of information into a final product of which I can be proud. My very sincere and heartfelt thanks also go to Dr. Charles H. Talbert, who started me on the path of this dissertation. The positive elements of this dissertation are primarily due to the influence and guidance of Dr. Novakovic and Dr. Talbert.

My deep gratitude also goes out to Dr. Sharyn Dowd for believing in me at the beginning of my time at Baylor and whose own insight into the Divine Warrior in Mark's Gospel planted the seeds of this journey. Special thanks go to Dr. J. Randall O'Brien for his encouragement, guidance, friendship, and faith. Sincere thanks also go to Dr. Beth Allison Barr, whose advice, input, and encouragement cannot be overstated. Dr. Rodney J. Decker deserves specific mention for seeing some potential in a young undergrad so many years ago and continuing to provide insight and encouragement over the years.

My deepest appreciation and love go to my parents, Roy V. and Helen Millhouse, who continue to sacrifice so much for their sometimes-wayward son. The same holds

true for my in-laws, Ron and Debbie Fry, whose continued love and support has meant so much.

Others who merit special attention for their sacrifice and support include Greg and Marty Nelson, Brian and Erin Davis, Dr. Mike and Dr. Karol Hardin, Mrs. Betsy Rowland, Dr. Dave and Deena Rozeboom, John Mark and Desireé Rutter, Dave and Sheila Hunt, Beau and Amanda Patrick, Joe and Karen Clark, and Justin and Myrriah Gottlieb. Michael Busenitz provided invaluable assistance on a number of difficult German secondary sources. Thank you!

Dr. Mike and Elizabeth Bickley and Dr. Mike and Dotty Hendren provided incredible encouragement when studying for a terminal degree at Baylor was only a dream. Judge Travis, III, and Becky Bryan were divinely appointed to provide the influence, encouragement, and example I needed to overcome my final obstacles and enable me to finish.

The congregations of three churches provided spiritual, emotional, and financial support along the way: Little River Baptist Church of Cameron, TX, Fellowship Bible Church of Waco, TX, and Fellowship Bible Church of Russellville, AR. Thank you all.

No one paid more of a price during this journey than my family. You endured my virtual absence with patience and love. Benjamin, Jillian, and Matthew, I love you very much. Your dad is back! Mikki, you are my heart and soul. I love you. Thank you for your support, patience, and, especially, love.

I am greatly humbled by the grace and goodness of the Lord Jesus Christ for allowing one such as I the privilege of studying such a fascinating topic at a high level of scholarship. May my Lord be glorified with this humble offering.

To Mikki: ever and always

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1. *The Divine Warrior and the Violence of the Book of Revelation*

The visions of John recorded in the book of Revelation provide contemporary readers of the New Testament with some of its most difficult imagery. One aspect of this imagery that many today find particularly troubling is the prevalence of violent language throughout the book. At first glance, such language seems to be at odds with the tenor of the New Testament, not to mention outside the bounds of decency in today's society. The violence of much of John's imagery is so pronounced that today's readers sometimes express revulsion or embarrassment. Tina Pippen, for instance, notes the severity of the language of violence and dismisses Revelation as beyond redemption:

> But does the Apocalypse give us hope? In the Apocalypse hope comes through a rape, through massive violence and the total destruction of the earth. The believers revenge their victimness (martyrdom). So is there no hope? I would say no, but we look to the wrong texts and invest these texts with power. If hope is a moral action, we must be moral about the way we hope. Perhaps I despair over the biblical text; I do not choose to lay my hope there.[1]

There is also a fear that some will take the violence of Revelation as a license for more violence. According to David L. Barr, "it is a short step from literary justification of violence, to the political justification of violence, to the use of violence against the enemy."[2] Whether or not such a conclusion necessarily follows, Barr's fear is not

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[1] Tina Pippin, *Apocalyptic Bodies: The Biblical End of the World in Text and Image* (London: Routledge, 1999), 8.

[2] David L. Barr, "Doing Violence: Moral Issues in Reading John's Apocalypse," in *Reading the Book of Revelation: A Resource for Students* (ed. David L. Barr; SBLRBS 44; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 99.

isolated.[3] The perception remains that the violence found in the text of Revelation, even if tempered against the tenor of the rest of the New Testament, can be dangerous in the wrong hands.[4]

An indication of how much the violent imagery of Revelation troubles readers is the bewildering number of attempts to make sense of it. Recently, Skaggs and Doyle highlighted the different ways contemporary scholarship has tried to tackle the problem, with special attention on attempts from the last fifty years or so.[5] Though such studies sometimes come to similar conclusions, Skaggs and Doyle find a rather large number of distinctive approaches to the problem. To date, however, none has come close to "winning the day," leaving the problem as pressing as it has been at least since Bauer caustically commented, "Der Apokalyptiker atmet einen glühenden Haß gegen alle Feinde und Berfolger des Christentums und berauscht sich in Gedanken an den

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[3] See also Stephen D. Moore, "Revolting Revelation," in *The Personal Voice in Biblical Interpretation* (ed. Ingrid R. Kitzberger; London: Routledge, 1999), 192: "If the slaughter of the 'ungodly' should be permissible at the Parousia, then why not before?"

[4] Against this, note Christopher Rowland, "Apocalypse and Violence: The Evidence from the Reception History of the Book of Revelation," in *Apocalypse and Violence* (ed. Abbas Amanat and John J. Collins; YCIAS Working Paper Series; New Haven: Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 2004), 1: "Despite its reputation as a violent book which in turn has stimulated violence, the Apocalypse has only rarely been directly linked with the promotion of violence." On the complexity surrounding the correlation and causation between scriptural texts and the violent actions of believers, see D. Andrew Kille, "'The Bible Made Me Do It': Text, Interpretation, and Violence," in *Sacred Scriptures, Ideology, and Violence* (ed. J. Harold Ellens; vol. 1 of *The Destructive Power of Religion: Violence in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*; Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2004), 55-73. Finally, I think it worth mentioning that the related matter of the role of violent media in the perpetration of violence, the "common sense" conclusion that depictions of violence lead to violence has proven very easy to pronounce but very difficult to demonstrate. See, e.g., Marjorie Heins, *Not in Front of the Children: "Indecency," Censorship, and the Innocence of Youth* (2d ed.; New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 228-53, or the more technical analysis of Christopher J. Ferguson and John Kilburn, "The Public Health Risks of Media Violence: A Meta-Analytic Review," *Journal of Pediatrics* 154 (2009): 759-63.

[5] Rebecca Skaggs and Thomas Doyle, "Violence in the Apocalypse of John," *CBR* 5 (2007): 220-34.

gräßlichen Strafen, die sie erwarten."[6] The fact that there are so many distinct attempts to understand the violent imagery of Revelation indicates a clear need for continued study. Thus, further reflection on how such language fits the strategies by which the text of Revelation guides its readers can aide today's interpreters as they try to understand what such language might imply about Christianity or the Christian God.

In this dissertation I directly address an essential aspect of this problem: how John's intended reader would have understood the violent imagery of the book of Revelation. In order to evaluate this, I focus on one significant aspect of violent imagery in the visions: Divine Warrior imagery, the war-like depictions of God or his allies against his foes. My specific research question is this: Did an ancient motif of Divine Warrior imagery impact the way John's intended reader might have understood the violent imagery of the book of Revelation?

1.2. *Definition and Methodology*

An important first step is to establish clarity in my understanding of what constitutes *Divine Warrior imagery* since, as will become apparent, I understand the concept less paradigmatically than much of recent scholarship. I define such imagery simply as *descriptions of how deities fight*.[7] Divine Warrior imagery may describe the

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[6] Walter Bauer, "Das Gebot der Feindesliebe und die alten Christen," *ZTK* 27 (1917): 40.

[7] In this sense, my formulation is what Jacques Waardenburg, "Symbolic Aspects of Myth," in *Myth, Symbol, and Reality* (ed. Alan M. Olson; Boston University Studies in Philosophy and Religion 1; Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980), 55, calls a mythic element. Mythic elements are "the meaningful but not fully developed elements of a potential story." This is similar to what Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology* (trans. Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf; New York: Basic Books, 1963), 210-11, labels a "mytheme," a sentence that comprises a "gross constituent unit" of a myth. For Lévi-Strauss, *The View From Afar* (trans. Joachim Neugroschel and Phoebe Hoss; New York: Basic Books, 1984), 144-45, a mytheme, as an isolated unit, is meaningless. "Its meaning can emerge only from its correlative and oppositive relations with other mythemes within the myth. This meaning does not really belong to any of the mythemes; it results from their combination." More recently Wendy Doniger, *The Implied Spider: Politics and Theology in Myth* (2d ed.; Columbia Classics in Religion; New York:

way deities fight amongst each other, a common motif in ancient Near Eastern literature, or it may describe how deities fight on behalf of or against humans, a common motif in the Hebrew Scriptures. In the Hebrew Scriptures, the Divine Warrior is YHWH, who fights on behalf of his people, Israel. In the book of Revelation, God wages war from the background, while Jesus Christ fights in all the splendor of a Divine Warrior.

I approach the use of Divine Warrior imagery from the perspective of the *intended reader*. According to Rabinowitz, the intended reader is one of a text's "hypothetical readers."[8] A hypothetical reader is an "ideal reader whose existence is created by a critic himself or herself—for instance, as a model to explain the ways that texts ideally operate or as an ideal for us to copy."[9] The intended reader, whom Rabinowitz had previously labeled the "authorial audience," is "the hypothetical reader who the author hoped or expected would pick up the text."[10] This intended reader is a

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Columbia University Press, 2011), 99-107, calls this concept a "micromyth." A micromyth is a "neutral structure . . . a nonexistent story with no point of view." She sees the micromyth as a heuristic scholarly construction that "serves . . . not just as the pivot of two things being compared but as the hub of a wheel to which an infinite number of spokes may be connected." A micromyth is "a sentence with a subject noun and a verb often also with an object" that "must be situated at the intersection between our question and those asked by other cultures." The micromyth then "makes it possible for us to find meanings shared by all the cultures that share the myth, meanings over and behind the individual cultural inflections."

[8] Peter J. Rabinowitz, "Whirl without End: Audience-Oriented Criticism," in *Contemporary Literary Theory* (ed. G. Douglas Atkins and Laura Morrow; Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989), 83-86.

[9] Rabinowitz, "Whirl," 83.

[10] Rabinowitz, "Whirl," 85 for the nomenclature of intended readers. See also idem, *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 20-42, and idem, "Truth in Fiction: A Reexamination of Audiences," *Critical Inquiry* 4 (1977): 121-41. The concept of the intended reader or the authorial audience is similar to the idea of an implied reader. Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 34, defines the implied reader as "a textual structure anticipating the presence of a recipient without necessarily defining him: this concept prestructures the role to be assumed by each recipient, and this holds true even when texts deliberately appear to ignore their possible recipient or actively exclude him." Thus, Iser concludes that the implied reader "has his roots firmly planted in the structure of the text." For Rabinowitz, "Whirl," 84-85, the intended reader may or may not arise from the text since this reader is already presupposed by it. The intended reader is, thus, "not reducible to textual features but can be determined only by an examination of the interrelation between the text and the context

contextualized reader, a construct of the culture, outlook, worldview and assumptions that form the backdrop of the text.

The implications of such an approach are significant for biblical studies. As a writer such as John inserts imagery such as that of the Divine Warrior into a text, the writer assumes—consciously or not—that this intended reader understands the imagery because of the shared horizon of the author and the intended reader. This means that today's reader, who picks up the book of Revelation some 2,000 years after its composition, will find that his or her ability to make sense of the imagery in the text directly relates to this reader's ability to enter into the contextual world of the intended readers of John's Apocalypse.

> To read as authorial audience is to attempt to answer the question: If the literary work fell into the hands of an audience that closely matched the author's target audience in terms of knowledge brought to the text, how would they have understood the work? This type of reading involves trying to adopt the perspectives of the authorial audience so that one may become a member of the author's original audience's conceptual community. To do this, modern readers must gain an understanding of the values of the authorial audience and the presuppositions upon which the original text was built. We must reconstruct the conceptual world that was used in the creation and original reception of the text.[11]

Jauss calls the contextualized, conceptual world of *any* reader of a text the "horizon of expectation." He defines this as a product of the reader's "pre-understanding of the genre, from the form and themes of already familiar works, and from the opposition between poetic and practical language."[12] Recreating the horizon of

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in which the work was produced." Thus, Rabinowitz sees the intended reader as a "*contextualized* implied reader" (original emphasis).

[11] Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Luke-Acts in its Mediterranean Milieu* (NovTSup 107; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 15-16.

[12] Hans Robert Jauss, "Literary History as Challenge," in *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* (trans. Timothy Bahti; Theory and History of Literature 2; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 22. According to Gerda de Villiers, "Understanding Gilgamesh: His World and His Story" (D. Litt. thesis,

expectation of a particular reader, then, gives clues as to how this reader may have received a text. Recreating the horizon of the intended reader gives clues to how the first readers may have received a text, since these readers would likely share much of the horizon of expectation of the intended reader.

When a text makes some type of reference to the contextualized, conceptual world of the intended reader, it becomes part of what Iser calls the "repertoire," which consists of "references to earlier works, or to social and historical norms, or to the whole culture from which the text has emerged."[13] The repertoire, then, is that part of the contextualized, conceptual world of the intended reader that is present or implied in the text. A text's repertoire provides "guidelines for the 'dialogue' between text and reader."[14] The idea of the repertoire is important in considering texts that make use of other texts, since a reader sees the reference or allusion to another text, even if the reader

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University of Pretoria, 2005), 193, " horizon of expectations . . . indicates the expectations and beliefs from a particular historical period in time." Jauss, "The Identity of the Poetic Text in the Changing Horizon of Understanding," in *Reception Study: From Literary Theory to Cultural Studies* (ed. James L. Machor and Philip Goldstein; New York: Routledge, 2001), 8, calls the "notion of horizon . . . a fundamental concept in both literary and historical hermeneutics." According to David Vessey, "Gadamer and the Fusion of Horizons," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 17 (2009): 534, this notion of horizon has its roots in phenomenology where the horizon consists of "the range of vision that includes everything from a particular vantage point," a concept that he traces to Edmund Husserl. For Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy: First Book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology* (trans. F. Kersten; vol. 2 of *Edmund Husserl: Collected Works*; Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic, 1998), 107, the horizon is not the limit or range of perception; rather, it speaks to the potential that lies beyond the direct realm of perception. Any horizontal limits derive from the typology of the perceived object, not the limitations of the one perceiving the object: "Any actual experience points beyond itself to possible experiences which, in turn, point to new possible experiences and so ad infinitum. And all of that is effected involving species and regulated forms restricted to certain *a priori* types." Vessey, "Gadamer," 534, defines this phenomenological horizon as "everything we are aware of in the perception of an object above and beyond what is given directly to our senses. It is what is 'co-given' in the perception of the object that makes it intelligible to us as an object." Vessy states that Gadamer then applied this phenomenological concept of horizon to the dialogue inherent in communication (ibid., 536). Jauss, "Identity," 13, then applied the concept of horizon to the dialog between text and reader.

[13] Iser, *Act*, 69.

[14] Iser, *Act*, 80.

is unaware that it is a reference.[15] The presence of the reference indicates that something about the reference is important in the referring text. Thus, the reference guides the reader's understanding, fulfilling its role as part of the referring text's repertoire.

The references, by their very presence, "establish a frame of reference in the form of the thought system or social system from which they were selected."[16] Since, without question, the Hebrew Scriptures[17] are a significant part of the repertoire of the book of

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[15] As Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein, "Figures in the Corpus: Theories of Influence and Intertextuality," in *Influence and Intertextuality in Literary History* (ed. Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein; Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 26, note, Iser's idea of the repertoire and Jauss' concept of the horizon of expectation are similar to the concept of intertextuality, "because the reader's horizon is constructed by an inherited system of norms and conventions." According to Graham Allen, *Intertextuality* (The New Critical Idiom; New York: Routledge, 2000), 3, the idea of intertextuality is usually traced back to Julia Kristeva and her attempt to combine the literary and linguistic theories of Mikhail Bakhtin and Ferdinand de Saussere. Graham further notes that the term is fluid and resists a "fundamental definition" (ibid.). Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine, and Leon S. Roudiez; New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 66, sees the "notion of intertextuality" to be a reformulation of the Bakhtinian concepts of dialogue and ambivalence: "each word (text) is an intersection of word (texts) where at least one other word (text) can be read" and, thereby, "any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another." Kristeva, *Desire*, 36, defines a text as "a trans-linguistic apparatus that redistributes the order of language by relating communicative speech, which aims to inform directly, to different kinds of anterior or synchronic utterances. The text is therefore a *productivity*, and this means: first, that its relationship to the language in which it is situated is redistributive (destructive-constructive), and hence can be better approached through logical categories rather than linguistic ones; and second, that it is a permutation of texts, an intertextuality: in the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another" (original emphasis). According to Clayton and Rothstein, "Figures," 19, for Kristeva, intertextual relationships are not closed systems: "the intersection of textual surfaces in a literary word can never be circumscribed, is open to endless dissemination." Kristeva's ideas on intertextuality have subsequently been taken in a number of different directions that have resulted in a number of different "intertextual" approaches. Clayton and Rothstein boil the approaches to three: 1) deconstructive approaches, 2) semiotic approaches, and 3) social and political approaches (ibid., 21-29). Graham, *Intertextuality*, 6, in summarizing intertextuality states, "Every text has its meaning, therefore, in relation to other texts . . . [and] this relationality can itself be figured in various ways: it can involve the radical plurality of the sign, the relation between signs and texts and the cultural text, the relation between a text and the literary system, or the transformative relation between one text and another text. However it is used, the term intertextuality promotes a new vision of meaning, and thus of authorship and reading: a vision resistant to ingrained notions of originality, uniqueness, singularity and autonomy." While ideas of reception can be an aspect of intertextuality, I prefer to avoid the ambiguity inherent in the concept and thus work within the narrower frames dictated by reception theory.

[16] Iser, *Act*, 93.

[17] I use the term "Hebrew Scriptures" as opposed to "Hebrew Bible" or "Old Testament" to avoid the anachronistic associations of the concepts of canon and Bible, in an acknowledgement of how the intended reader of Revelation received Scripture in an attempt. For definitions of Scripture, canon, and Bible, I follow Eugene Ulrich, "Methodological Reflections on Determining Scriptural Status in First

Revelation, references in Revelation to Hebrew Scripture establish such a frame of reference for Revelation.[18] It is at this very point, however, that even today's most informed reader struggles to recreate the book's horizons of expectation. This is due to the uncertainty of how the text of Revelation uses Hebrew Scripture. For instance, despite significant and numerous allusions to Hebrew Scriptures, there are no explicit citations.[19]

> [Revelation] seems . . . to resist efforts to understand its relationship to the OT. Rather than quoting or citing the OT, the book interacts with it in the most

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Century Judaism," in *Rediscovering the Dead Sea Scrolls: As Assessment of Old and New Approaches and Methods* (ed. Maxine L. Grossman; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 148-49. Thus, "a book *Scripture* is a sacred authoritative work believed to have God as its ultimate author, which the community, as a group and individually, recognizes and accepts as determinative for its belief and practice for all time and in all geographical areas" (original emphasis). A canon is an "official, exclusive list of books accepted by the community as authoritative, because inspired, Scripture." A Bible, "in the singular, denotes a textual form of the collection of canonical books." If, as James A. Sanders, "The Issue of Closure in the Canonical Process," in *The Canon Debate: On the Origins and Formation of the Bible* (ed. Lee Martin McDonald and James A. Sanders; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2002), 256-57, suggests, the idea of a closed canon, a "Bible," implies a stable text, then the stabilization of Hebrew Scripture was still in process in the first century C.E. Further, Hebrew Scripture appears in Revelation in a way that David A. deSilva, *Seeing Things John's Way: The Rhetoric of the Book of Revelation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 159, finds more in line with the idea of a "*regula fidei*, as it were, of the Old Testament." Such considerations make it safer to present what would become the Old Testament as still in the process of stabilization when John wrote Revelation. Thus, similar to James C. VanderKam, "Questions of Canon Viewed through the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Canon Debate: On the Origins and Formation of the Bible* (ed. Lee Martin McDonald and James A. Sanders; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2002), 109, I avoid terms that denote fixivity such as "Bible" and "Old Testament" for the more generic referent, "Scripture" in order to denote religious authority while avoiding anachronism.

[18] Jon Paulien, "Dreading the Whirlwind: Intertextuality and the Use of the Old Testament in Revelation," *AUSS* 39 (2001): 5: "I know of no one who would argue that an understanding of the OT [Old Testament] is irrelevant to an understanding of the Apocalypse. When reading the book, one is plunged fully into the atmosphere of the OT. No other book of the NT [New Testament] is as saturated with the OT. One cannot expect, therefore, to penetrate the symbolism of the book without careful attention to its OT antecedents." Following Richard Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies in the Book of Revelation* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993), 1-37, I understand the book of Revelation to be a literary unity composed by one author.

[19] Paulien, "Dreading," 9-10: "While a handful of scholars argue for anywhere from one to eleven 'quotations' of the OT in the book of Revelation, the overwhelming majority of scholars conclude that there are none."

> allusive manner. A word here and a phrase there, the barest hint of an echo in another place: this is the substance of how Revelation evokes the OT.[20]

The allusive quality of the references to the Hebrew Scriptures creates further confusion because of the authoritative status of the alluded texts.

> The pervasiveness of Old Testament recontextualizations and allusions in Revelation leads naturally to questions about *how* and *how well* or *how faithfully* John is interpreting these Scriptures. The conversation has tended to center on the question of John's sensitivity to the original literary context of the scriptural verses upon which he draws. Does John simply use the language of the Jewish Scriptures with little interest in the significance or meaning that a verse or an image or an idea originally had, or does he honor the original meaning and intent of those texts that he borrows in the way that he brings them to bear on his audience's situation?[21]

The problem here is that such a question may stem from the horizons of expectation of today's reader. A greater understanding of the intended reader's horizons of expectation, specifically, how the intended reader may have understood an allusion to an authoritative, scriptural text, becomes an important consideration.

Two preliminary observations seem pertinent. First, the scriptural allusions serve to put John's words within an authoritative prophetic stream, marking the visions "as a firsthand revelation from God."[22] This is more than simply an appropriation of the prophetic mantle; it also sets the Hebrew Scriptures as the key to understanding the new vision. In this manner, the scriptural allusions provide what Conte calls the code to

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[20] Paulien, "Dreading," 5, who notes an expected corollary for a work with no direct citations: while John wrote Revelation in Greek, there is little agreement on what language and text tradition stands behind his allusions to Hebrew Scripture.

[21] DeSilva, *Seeing*, 150-51.

[22] DeSilva, *Seeing*, 128.

understanding the text.[23] Their authoritative presence indicates that readers should see that "John regards himself as standing *under* the authority of the Hebrew Bible."[24]

Second, the scriptural allusions bring the alluded texts into the contemporary world of the intended reader. The allusive nature of Hebrew Scripture in Revelation allows "the horizons of the biblical world and the congregation's world to blend and interact more directly."[25] One clue in understanding this interaction of horizons is the role of the author, such as John, as a reader of the alluded text from Hebrew Scripture.[26] John inserts the scriptural allusion because *his* reading of the scriptural text leads him to find it relevant to a situation he implies for his intended readers.[27]

Both of these observations lead to a third, critical observation: the placement of the allusions into new contexts impacts the allusions themselves. They become "component parts of a structure which transcends both the individual schema [their role

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[23] Gian Biagio Conte, *The Rhetoric of Imitation: Genre and Poetic Memory in Virgil and Other Latin Poets* (trans. Charles Segal; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 31. In noting Virgil's use of Homer in the *Aenid*, Conte sees Virgil using Homer as "the representative of the epic institution that guarantees the ideological and literary functions of poetry itself." Note also deSilva, *Seeing*, 158: "Allusion and reference to the content of these books [Hebrew Scripture] manifests John's conviction that all prophets, himself and Jezebel [Rev 2:20] included, stand accountable before this greater tradition, in light of which their utterances are to be tested."

[24] DeSilva, *Seeing*, 157 (original emphasis).

[25] DeSilva, *Seeing*, 157.

[26] What follows adapts the theory of Craig Kallendorf, "Virgil, Milton, and the Modern Reader," in *Classics and the Uses of Reception* (ed. Charles Martindale and Richard F. Thomas; Classical Receptions; Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 68-70. See also Stephen Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry* (Roman Literature and Its Contexts; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 47-51.

[27] Such a statement takes no position on the "reality" of John's visions. Whether he is simply an author or is recording a visionary experience, in either case the earlier scriptural text informs his writing/vision in a way that has meaning for John. On the issue of John as a visionary see deSilva, *Seeing*, 121-24.

in a new context] and the original context from which the schema was taken."[28] The very selection of a particular allusion creates a foreground/background relationship between the allusion in its new context and its prior context. Its new context becomes the foreground, "where new meanings come to the fore."[29] Meanwhile the allusion's prior context becomes background as the allusion "drags its original context in its wake, so to speak, because it is only against the background of that context that it can take on its new form."[30] Kallendorf outlines the process of foregrounding and backgrounding a reference or allusion to another text:

> The alluding author begins the process by reading an earlier text, then working out an interpretation of that text. As he or she begins writing, the new text unfolds in dialogue with the old one, in such a way that the potential meaning of one or more words resonates against their original usage in another text, where they meant something that is seen as relevant again.[31]

Thus, the allusion's prior context is "transformed into a virtual background against which the new subject matter can stand out in clear relief."[32]

Beale describes a number of different ways that allusions to Hebrew Scriptures appear in the book of Revelation.[33] One of these is a "thematic use" of Scripture, an allusion to themes rather than to particular passages. Beale considers Divine Warrior imagery as a prominent example of this thematic use of Scripture.[34] While Divine

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[28] Iser, *Act*, 93.

[29] Iser, *Act*, 93.

[30] Iser, *Act*, 93.

[31] Kallendorf, "Virgil," 68.

[32] Iser, *Act*, 80.

[33] G. K. Beale, *John's Use of the Old Testament in Revelation* (JSNTSup 166; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 60-128.

[34] Beale, *John's*, 93-94.

Warrior imagery from the Hebrew Scriptures is certainly prominent in Revelation, the imagery itself is more than something appropriated from Hebrew Scripture and recontextualized into Revelation. The Divine Warrior imagery in Hebrew Scripture shows marked similarities to Divine Warrior imagery in ancient Near Eastern mythology.[35] This correspondence suggests that Divine Warrior imagery in the Hebrew Scriptures is, in itself, evidence of a prior appropriation of received mythological imagery. Thus, the mythical nature of Divine Warrior imagery within authoritative texts merits still further considerations.

Myths, by their very nature, are flexible.[36] This made it possible for early Israelites to adapt mythical imagery familiar to them from surrounding cultures and place it into their own contexts. This same mythical imagery then finds further use and adaptation—now seen through an authoritative scriptural lens—in early Jewish literature, including the early Christian writings that would become the New Testament and, thus, Revelation. Thus, Divine Warrior imagery is part of the literary repertoire of three general but distinct horizons: the broader ancient Near East, the Hebrew Scriptures, and

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[35] My understanding of the concept of myth follows the formulation of Michael Fishbane, *The Exegetical Imagination: On Jewish Thought and Theology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 87: "myth is fundamentally the creative representation of existence as divine actions described in human terms."

[36] Th. P. van Baaren, "The Flexibility of Myth," in *Sacred Narratives: Readings in the Theory of Myth* (ed. Alan Dundes. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 284, states that myths are flexible "not in the sense of degeneration or secularization when a certain myth is in process of losing its function, sometimes followed by complete disappearance, but in the sense of its adaptability to new situations and challenges. The occurrence of changes in a myth as such does not mean that the myth in question is beginning to lose its function and will probably disappear in time; on the contrary, changes in myth occur as a rule to prevent loss of function or total disappearance by changing it in such a way that it can be maintained. Doniger, *Implied*, 89-90, speaks of a "transparency of myth" that permits "a variety of constructions of meaning" and the "neutral structure" of myth that "allows paradoxical meaning to be held in a charged tension."

early Jewish literature.[37] These broad horizons contribute to the background of each subsequent recontextualization and have the potential to contribute to the meaning of any subsequent recontextualization.[38] This is particularly important with regard to mythical imagery because myths have the potential to transmit meaning from all previous interpretations—and any expression of the myth is an interpretation—as well as invite new interpretations.[39]

This does not mean that *all* potential meanings from previous expressions are necessarily accessible to the intended readers of a particular recontextualization. First, the ability to realize what the background of a reference or an allusion contributes to the new context depends upon the degree to which a reader is able to construct the

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[37] Some clarity as to how I define these categories is necessary. Following Theo P. J. van den Hout, "Forward," *JANER* 1 (2002): 1, by "ancient Near East" I refer to the region encompassing "Egypt, Mesopotamia, Syria-Palestine, and Anatolia, as well as immediately adjacent areas under their cultural influence, from prehistoric times to the beginning of the common era." This can also include "the Biblical, Hellenistic, and Roman worlds as part of the Ancient Near East," though I generally treat these categories differently. I consider the "Hebrew Scriptures" to consist of Israelite authoritative sacred writings as exemplified in the Hebrew Bible but without implying any concept of canonization. By "Early Jewish literature," I refer to all Jewish writings from the beginning of the Hellenistic Period (333 B.C.E.) to the end of the first century/early second century C.E.

[38] Here the formulation of Roland Barthes, "Myth Today," in *Mythologies* (trans. Annette Lavers; New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), 117-27, provides help in understanding how meaning becomes background in subsequent reformulations. Barthes understands two different planes of "signifiers" in myth, the linguistic "meaning" and the mythical "form." As meaning becomes form—a meaningful myth becomes the form of subsequent retellings—meaning begins to fade; "it empties itself, it becomes impoverished, history evaporates, only the letter remains." However, the mythical "form does not suppress the meaning, it only impoverishes it, it puts it at a distance, it holds it at one's disposal. One believes that the meaning is going to die, but it is a death with reprieve; the meaning loses its value, but keeps its life, from which the form of the myth will draw its nourishment. The meaning will be for the form like an instantaneous reserve of history, a tamed richness, which it is possible to call and dismiss in a sort of rapid alternation: the form must constantly be able to be rooted again in the meaning and to get there what nature it needs for its nutriment; above all, it must be able to hide there." Thus, the earlier meaning survives, though impoverished, available for use in a mythical concept, what is signified by the myth (power, goodness, etc.), though the combination of form and concept, the signification, what is essentially a new myth, will distort or deform the latent meaning (or form or context) to a greater or lesser extent.

[39] Debra A. Moddelmogg, *Readers and Mythic Signs: The Oedipus Myth in Twentieth-Century Fiction* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993), 6.

background from his or her personal repertoire.[40] Second, the myths themselves come "highly charged with meaning and ambiguity" that may obscure or distort some of the background or allow mythically imagery the flexibility to serve in contradictory contexts.[41] Third, a particular horizon of expectation or a particular text may still "privilege a particular version or interpretation" of a myth or various mythic concepts and thus obscure or distort other contexts or interpretations.[42]

These considerations have important implications for a common tendency in comparative studies of myth: the reconstruction of a genealogical history of a myth back to an original ur-myth, which then becomes a paradigm for interpreting the various expressions of the myth. In the first place, such a genealogical approach seems ultimately doomed from the outset. Lévi-Strauss highlights a major obstacle:

> Properly speaking, there is never any original: every myth is by its very nature a translation, and derives from another myth belonging to a neighbouring, but foreign community or from a contemporaneous one belonging to a different social sub-division—clan, sub-clan, descent group, family or brotherhood—that some listener tries to plagiarize by translating it into his personal or tribal language, sometimes to appropriate it and sometimes to refute it, and therefore invariably distorting it.[43]

Mondi expands on this by noting how reception plays a role in obscuring any supposed ur-myth:

> Such conceptual building blocks [mythic elements or mythemes] can be *consciously* arranged in linear order and actualized as a narrative by any member of a society when the occasion demands (allowing, certainly, that some can do this more artfully or professionally than others); and it is of course true that

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[40] Iser, *Act*, 93-95. Recall that the author of the referring text is a reader of the referred text.

[41] Moddelmogg, *Readers*, 15.

[42] Moddelmogg, *Readers*, 5.

[43] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Naked Man* (trans. John Weightman and Doreen Weightman; vol. 4 of *Introduction to a Science of Mythology*; New York: Harper & Row, 1981), 644-45.

> should one such actualization become fixed in a popular and widely known version (tradition or written), this *particular* narrative will then indeed become a permanent part of the cultural memory.[44]

Harding argues that a genealogical approach that attempts to recover a purported archetype risks completely misunderstanding the role of myth in a particular text:

> A theory of archetypes misdirects attention from a text's logical strategies and ideological predisposition, from the subtle transactions, the purposeful misreadings and reinterpretations, that are in fact taking place. At best, identifying an archetype is a precritical exercise in imaginative play, a way of codifying certain kinds of 'reader response.'[45]

Thus, the continual reuse and adaptation of a mythic theme such as Divine Warrior imagery obscures earlier formulations of a myth or related mythic themes through continual reinterpretation in new contexts. Aspects of these new contexts might then become the basis for further reuse and adaptation within another horizon of expectation, where their context so overwhelms the background of earlier contexts—including the recreated ur-myth—that such background is largely inaccessible within a particular horizon of expectation.

The second problem in reconstructions of mythic genealogies is that the proposed genealogical parallels present their own difficulties. Similarities or parallels do not necessarily contribute meaning to any particular reconstruction. Mondi caustically outlines pitfall of such dangers:

> When . . . methodological restraint is wanting, and a variety of mythic representations, on the basis of either the slightest or the most general similarities, can be declared to be in some essential way the 'same myth,' there is a virtual irresistible tendency toward the erection of great transcultural monomyths. The

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[44] Robert Mondi, "Greek Mythic Thought in the Light of the Near East," in *Approaches to Greek Myth* (ed. Lowell Edmunds; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 145 (original emphasis).

[45] Anthony John Harding, *The Reception of Myth in English Romanticism* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1995), 20.

> attempt has generally foundered either because the similarities are so general and intuitive as to be without compelling significance, or because the patterns and parallels have been 'discovered' through a naïve or highly idiosyncratic interpretation of some of the texts involved—an interpretation often based more on predisposition than on critical analysis.[46]

Sandmel, commentating on biblical studies in particular, famously labeled this tendency "parallelomania."[47]

While a particular mythic parallel *may* inform meaning as part of the background of an allusion in another text, meaning is not dependent upon the parallel. Again, Mondi asserts:

> It must be recognized from the outset that comparison is not in and of itself an autonomous strategy for the interpretation of myth. The comparison of a particular myth with an analogue in another mythological system cannot replace the interpretation of that myth within its own system; it can at best contribute to the elucidation of its significance or functional role in its own system. Origin ought not to be construed as explanation.[48]

Rather, parallels contribute the understanding of what Mondi calls the "diffusion of mythic ideas."[49] Various recontextualizations of a myth or its elements serve as the "specific realizations of an underlying stratum of mythic thought rather than necessarily the actual vehicles of transmission."[50] In this way, one particular expression of a myth or its elements can be examined as an intersection, as it were, of different horizons. Rather than attempting to trace a genetic relationship, each specific realization can be examined for how it appears in a particular context. Thus, if Divine Warrior imagery is part of the

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[46] Mondi, "Greek," 143-44.

[47] Samuel Sandmel, "Parallelomania," *JBL* 81 (1962): 1-13.

[48] Mondi, "Greek," 144.

[49] Mondi, "Greek," 151.

[50] Mondi, "Greek," 150-51.

repertoire of the broader ancient Near Eastern myth in general and early Hebrew myth in particular, Hebrew myth can be studied for how it uses and adapts the common imagery.

The importance of studying mythic diffusion is that it provides a basis for investigating how a particular expression of mythical imagery may impact a particular text's intended readers. In particular, closer examination may then uncover whether the presence of mythical imagery serves to affirm or overturn the intended reader's horizon of expectation. Jauss calls the degree to which a text confirms or subverts the horizon of expectation the "aesthetic distance" of the text. The greater the aesthetic distance between the text and the reader's horizon of expectation, the more the text signals a "change of horizon" to the reader.[51] In other words, a literary allusion may be more than a simple reference that, in the case of a scriptural allusion, serves to confer the authority of the alluded text onto the referring text or to contemporize the alluded authoritative text in a new setting. The allusion may also function as a means either to affirm or reorient a reader's horizon by using the authoritative text in a way that meets the reader's expectation or it may cause the reader to view both the allusion and the text in a surprising way.

Still, in early Judaism, the Hebrew Scriptures had an authoritative status that served to "privilege a particular version or interpretation" of a myth or various mythic concepts that are found there.[52] When it comes to the mythological imagery in the Hebrew Scriptures, this is one part of a process that began when Israelite writers adapted imagery from the surrounding cultures.

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[51] Jauss, "Literary," 25. Jauss calls the degree to which a text initiates a change of horizon its "aesthetic distance."

[52] Moddelmogg, *Readers*, 5.

> [T]he Hebrew Bible draws on a fund of Near Eastern myths that in turn has its own history. Over this span of time the content and forms of the myths naturally change, though it is also the case that each successive stage makes use of the accumulating bundles of tradition of the culture.[53]

The early Hebrew texts where not immune to the same kinds of interpretation and adaptation as the material they had adapted from the broader ancient Near East. This inner-cultural adaptation took place even as some of the earlier texts gained a measure of authoritative status; later texts—some that may eventually become scriptural as well—drew from mythical elements the early Hebrew texts had adapted from the ancient Near East.

> The integration and reworking of many types of tradition at many different times and places thus had the result of incorporating non-Israelite and local Israelite materials into a national corpus whose telling and retelling was a new basis for cultural memory . . . When old mythic theomachies are subsequently reused to underpin purely historical narratives or hopes (as the motif of YHWH against the chaotic waters in Exod. 14– 15, Isa. 11: 11– 16, or 51: 9– 11 suggests), or when foreign legenda are reused to illustrate national fate (as in Amos's reuse of the narrative of Sodom's destruction, 4: 11), the remarkable capacity of tradition radically to transform a diverse inheritance and thereby *continually* to build up a sense of national history and destiny is fully attested.[54]

Though Israel's early scriptural tradition of texts was fluid and the texts themselves were open to change, an authoritative, scriptural status indicated that some works were understood as having divine origin and, therefore, divine authority.[55] Such status meant that these works "could be cited to settle a dispute, explain a situation, provide an example, or predict what would happen."[56] By the third century B.C.E., these

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[53] Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 23.

[54] Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Early Israel* (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 1985), 7 (original emphasis).

[55] Ulrich, "Methodological," 146-47.

[56] VanderKam, "Questions," 91.

authoritative texts became a focal point as their accepted divine origin gave them a timeless sense that could serve in new situations far removed from their initial reception. Fishbane calls this use of authoritative scriptural texts "inner-biblical exegesis."

> In tradition–history, written formulations are the final of many oral stages of *traditio* during which the traditions themselves become authoritative; by contrast, inner-biblical exegesis begins with an authoritative *traditum*. To be sure, the oral traditions would not be transmitted were they not, to some degree, authoritative in the first place. But the authority of these traditions is singularly assured by the very process of their transmission and final stabilization. Inner-biblical exegesis, on the other hand, takes the stabilized literary formulation as its basis and point of departure. Responses to it are thus interpretations of a basically fixed *traditum*, despite the somewhat fluid record of the most ancient biblical manuscripts and versions.[57]

Thus, a typical Jewish horizon of expectation in early Judaism includes a repertoire of authoritative, scriptural texts often cited as a lens through which early Jewish literature sought to understand contemporary situations.

> To begin with, the dynamics we have begun to explore between *traditum* and *traditio* in ancient Israel can be reformulated, without distortion, as those between (increasingly) authoritative teachings or traditions whose religious—cultural significance is vital (and increasingly fundamental), and the concern to preserve, render contemporary, or otherwise reinterpret these teachings or traditions in explicit ways for new times and circumstances.[58]

The book of Revelation fits into this process at this point, where certain texts, understood to have scriptural authority, become the lens through which to view contemporary situations. When it comes to mythical elements, such as Divine Warrior imagery, the context of earlier ancient Near Eastern expressions becomes background. This background is mediated—and distorted—through its recontextualization in what would become the Hebrew Scriptures.

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[57] Fishbane, *Interpretation*, 7-8. Fishbane defines the *traditum* as the body of tradition and the *tradition* as the transmission of the *traditum*.

[58] Fishbane, *Interpretation*, 8.

This process of reception points to the necessity of both a diachronic and synchronic investigation into the use of Divine Warrior imagery in the book of Revelation. The diachronic aspect focuses on the way mythological elements of Divine Warrior imagery change across cultures and within cultures and the possible reasons for the changes, with an eye to how the changes impact subsequent receptions.

> [A diachronic study] seeks to correlate changes at different points along a given morphological spectrum, and considers the factors that make for the differences. For any number of reasons (whether the vagaries of creativity or survival) there is no necessarily clear or straight line of development among the various forms, and, what is more, some of the processes may not even be represented at the textual level. Nevertheless, the diachronic factor is of particular value for understanding the history of myths—especially when . . . the myths are carried or conserved in vastly different bodies of literature and produced for different cultural circles over the course of several millennia.[59]

Fishbane makes clear that the process of adaptation is as important as the adaptations themselves.

> After all, the mythic topics taken over by biblical and rabbinic monotheism were stimulating and attractive to the tradents themselves, or they would have been completely ignored or suppressed; and it is this very fascination that underlies their reformulation or re-creation, guided by a different religious spirit and different literary universe. One must add that the process of acculturation may include inner-cultural dynamics, as well, insofar as the myths in any one theological stratum may need to be significantly changed to fit another, quite different conceptual or intellectual universe.[60]

A synchronic aspect seeks to understand what Harding relates as "the strategies by which texts use, interpret, ironize, or subvert" mythical imagery from within a particular text's horizon of expectations. This then leads to a hermeneutical exercise

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[59] Fishbane, *Mythmaking*, 24.

[60] Fishbane, *Mythmaking*, 24.

"that enables one . . . to pose questions that the text gave an answer to, and thereby discover how the contemporary reader could have viewed and understood the work."[61]

In this dissertation, my goal is to show how adaptations to Divine Warrior imagery, as part of the repertoire of Revelation inherited from the ancient Near East but transmitted through authoritative Hebrew Scripture and recontextualized in early Jewish literature, contribute to understanding the horizon of expectation of Revelation's intended readers. I can then suggest how a reading of John's intended readers might inform our own horizons of expectation, especially with regard to the violence portrayed in the text.

1.3. *Divine Warrior Imagery in Contemporary Scholarship*

My research builds on the work of a number of studies that have sought to develop how Divine Warrior imagery was used in the ancient Near East, Hebrew Scriptures and the literature of early Judaism. In general, such study has focused on the explication of what Adela Yarbro Collins has labeled the "combat myth," a literary motif that "depicts a struggle between two divine beings and their allies for universal kingship."[62] These studies all have their root in the groundbreaking work of Herman Gunkel.

1.3.1 *Herman Gunkel*

Any attempt to demonstrate that ancient mythology influenced the thinking of ancient Israel and early Christianity owes enormous debt to Herman Gunkel.[63] In

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[61] Jauss, "Literary," 28.

[62] Adela Yarbro Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars, 1976; repr. Portland, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2001), 57.

[63] Hermann Gunkel, *Creation and Chaos in the Primeval Era and in the Eschaton: A Religio-Historical Study of Genesis 1 and Revelation 12* (trans. K. William Whitney, Jr.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,

contrast to late nineteenth century source critics, Gunkel was one of the first to attempt to understand "how ancient traditions came together and interacted to form 'the present tradition'" of the Hebrew Scriptures.[64] For Gunkel, one place where this influence is evident is in the creation story of Gen 1.[65] Gunkel further noted that the Hebrew Scriptures contained a number of parallels with Babylonian myth, especially the Babylonian creation epic, *Enuma Elish*.[66] In particular, Gunkel noted the parallels between the two cultures in what he called the "chaos myth," where Yahweh/Marduk wages war against the monstrous personification of chaos. Both the *Enuma Elish* and Israelite Scripture describe a cosmic rebellion of a Chaos Monster followed by the arming of the Divine Warrior, the Warrior's rebuke of his foes, and the Warrior's victory in battle, won through his strength and wisdom.[67]

Gunkel also suggested that, in a number of cases, the use of the chaos myth in the Hebrew Scriptures came with an "eschatological twist" whereby the defeat of the Chaos Monster now happens in the future instead of the primordial past.[68] Further, Babylonian materials continued to wield influence in early Jewish and Christian writings, including a

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2006), trans. of *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit: Eine religiongeschichtliche Untersuchung über Gen. 1 und Ap. Jon 12* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1895).

[64] K. William Whitney, "Translator's Preface" in Gunkel, *Creation*, xxv.

[65] Gunkel, *Creation*, 5-12, 78-111.

[66] Gunkel, *Creation*, 21-77.

[67] Gunkel, *Creation*, 74-77.

[68] Gunkel, *Creation*, 58. See also 74-75: "There is mention of the 'fact' that the sea, in the final days, rages against YHWH's creation and that then, however, the rebuke of YHWH puts it to flight. This prophecy may be described as a formulaic image of the final attack of the heathen and the great judgment of the peoples in the future."

number of parallels in the book of Revelation.[69] For Gunkel, Babylonian influence in early Christianity both reaches its mythical height and returns to its Near Eastern roots in Rev 12, where the chaos myth returns in full force to portray the eschatological end of evil.

> We have recognized, with the assistance of the Creation myth [Gen 1] how the Babylonian tradition has fructified the Israelite tradition at many different points. For the kinds of acquired materials and the appropriation thereof Genesis 1 and Revelation 12 are characteristic. It is basically the same materials which appear here two times, although in a different form. In the early periods it is a myth of primal times, a myth which made its way from Babylon to Israel. In the later period it is a prophecy about the end time.[70]

Though the Ugaritic materials discovered at Ras Shamra would call into question many of Gunkel's specific conclusions—especially the idea of Israelite dependence on *Enuma Elish*—he nevertheless paved the way for the investigation of how mythology from a wider ancient Near Eastern milieu could aid in understanding Israelite and Christian scriptural texts.

3.2 *Frank M. Cross*

Of special importance in any discussion of the Combat Myth and Divine Warrior imagery is the work of Frank M. Cross.[71] Cross bases his research on the parallels between the "Canaanite" Baal Epics from Ugarit and ancient Hebrew Poetry.[72] He finds that early Israelite literature—indeed, the cultic background of early Israel—was a

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[69] Gunkel, *Creation*, 181-238.

[70] Gunkel, *Creation*, 250.

[71] Frank M. Cross, "The Divine Warrior in Early Israel's Cult," in *Biblical Motifs: Origins and Transformations* (ed. Alexander Altmann; Studies and Texts 3; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), 11-30; ibid., *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973).

[72] Cross, *Canaanite*, 112-13.

mixture of adapted Canaanite mythic themes and epic historical events. These two features functioned together to integrate the history of Israel with their transcendent god, YHWH. "In Israel, myth and history always stood in strong tension, myth serving primarily to give a cosmic dimension and transcendent meaning to the historical, rarely functioning to dissolve history."[73]

For Cross, the Canaanite theogonic myths of Baal and Anat provide the basic mythological background that we see in ancient Hebrew poetic battle hymns such as the Song of Moses in Exod 15:1-18 and the Song of Deborah in Judg 5:1-31.[74] Two basic elements serve as the background for this mythical imagery: 1) the march of the gods to war or 2) the gods' triumphant return and enthronement. This mythology is based upon what Cross calls an "archaic mythic pattern" of a Divine Warrior:

1. The Divine Warrior goes forth to battle against chaos.
2. Nature convulses (writhes) and languishes when the Warrior manifests his wrath.
3. The warrior-god returns to take up kingship among the gods, and is enthroned on his mountain.
4. The Divine Warrior utters his voice from his temple, and nature again responds. The heavens fertilize the earth, animals writhe in giving birth, and men and mountains whirl in dancing and festive glee.[75]

Cross suggests that Israelite writers of Scripture use this pattern to outline YHWH's involvement in historical events, such as Creation, the Exodus, or the Conquest.[76] While Cross sees this specific pattern as essentially Canaanite, he does suggest that theses mythic themes are found in the surrounding cultures as well. He

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[73] Cross, *Canaanite*, 90.

[74] Cross, *Canaanite*, 112-144.

[75] Cross, *Canaanite*, 162-63.

[76] Cross, *Canaanite*, 163.

notes, especially, the *Enuma Elish* and the Greek myth of Zeus' defeat of Typhon, especially in Hesiod.[77] Mondi also sees this same pattern in the victorious return of Ninurta in the Sumerian *Angim*.[78]

Cross' paradigm of the Divine Warrior became the foundation for a number of subsequent studies, including that of Patrick D. Miller[79] and Paul D. Hanson.[80] Its continuing influence is evident in that it is still commonly cited as the basis for understanding the Divine Warrior imagery of the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament.[81]

3.3 *Paul D. Hanson*

As a component of his discussion on the roots of Jewish apocalyptic eschatology, Paul D. Hanson builds upon Cross' work in his analysis of Divine Warrior imagery in the earliest strands of Israelite apocalyptic literature. Foundational to Hanson's discussion is his recreation of the shift from the mythical elements adapted from Canaanite and ancient Near Eastern literature to the primarily historical focus that he finds in the Hebrew Scriptures.[82] For Hanson, the early, borrowed mythical imagery eventually became associated exclusively with the royal cult. Accordingly, it appears in dramatic fashion in

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[77] Cross, *Canaanite*, 113. Mondi, "Greek," 177-79.

[78] Mondi, "Greek," 178.

[79] Patrick D. Miller, *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (HSM 5; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973).

[80] Paul D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* (Rev. ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979).

[81] E.g., Kevin J. Madigan and Jon D. Levenson, *Resurrection: The Power of God for Christians and Jews* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 192-96.

[82] Hanson, *Dawn*, 16-31.

places such as Pss 29, 47 and 48.[83] In the meantime, Israel's prophets largely avoided mythical imagery and focused on "historicizing Israel's religion, . . . integrating the cosmic vision into history, . . . [and] causing myth to retreat before a more 'secularized,' 'humanistic' worldview."[84] Hanson considers this development to be "revolutionary":

> In a world which viewed divine activity primarily on the cosmic level, and which looked upon the flux and change of the historical realm as something to be overcome through the ritual of the cult, prophetic faith began to speak of a God who effected the salvation of his people precisely in the flux and change of history.[85]

Hanson sees in the prophets a tension that tried to hold the cosmic and historical together but often proved difficult to maintain. Thus, the Deuteronomic History, which "traces the history of Israel as a unified movement from the renewal of the patriarchal promise to Moses down to its fulfillment in Josiah," largely abandons this prophetic strategy. Instead, the Deuteronomic History serves an expression of absolute historical cause and effect.[86]

This historical cause and effect became untenable due to the tragedy of the Exile. The historical situation had turned so horribly wrong that new explanations were needed to explain the disaster. For Hanson, some Israelites saw the way forward in the reincorporation of the old mythic themes. This finds its fullest expression in the prophecies of Second Isaiah.

> [I]t was . . . Second Isaiah who gave formulation to the faith which was able to rescue the exiled community from despair. In powerfully dramatic terms Israel was reintroduced to a God who was creator and ruler of the entire universe.

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[83] Hanson, *Dawn*, 304-08.

[84] Hanson, *Dawn*, 17.

[85] Hanson, *Dawn*, 18.

[86] Hanson, *Dawn*, 22-23.

> While acting in history, he was yet the God "who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in" (Isa 40:22).[87]

Second Isaiah adapts here the cosmic vision of the royal cult. The literature of the royal cult had retained the trappings of Israel's mythical heritage and now, Second Isaiah, by recasting the mythical imagery of YHWH as Divine Warrior, wanted to broaden the scope of YHWH's involvement "from the limited sphere of Jerusalem and those events impinging on her to the vast universe with all its nations and hosts."[88] In this light, the current crisis brought on by the Exile was, in fact, not a crisis at all; it was the hand of the Divine Warrior chastising his own and a demonstration of the power of YHWH through his "saving activity in events which on the surface seemed like reversals."[89] Hanson suggests that what Second Isaiah did was to reintroduce the tension between cosmic and historical, as the text pictures YHWH as transcendent, yet working for the deliverance of his people from Exile. Hansen sees the hope of national restoration as what holds the tension together, as the Divine Warrior moves historical Israel closer to realizing the fulfillment of his promises.

According to Hanson, a major shift then occurs "upon the loss of this reasonable optimism."[90] Once the hope of prophetic fulfillment wanes, Second Isaiah's re-forged tension between history and myth snaps and the prophetic successors look for new ways to understand YHWH's salvific work. Some do this by condemning the present historical order as hopelessly corrupt and understanding the divine promises to point toward a

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[87] Hanson, *Dawn*, 23.

[88] Hanson, *Dawn*, 24.

[89] Hanson, *Dawn*, 24.

[90] Hanson, *Dawn*, 26.

future *Endzeit*. Thus, prophets would no longer be concerned with tying together history and the divine realm; now they would focus on the revelation of the divine apart from history.

> That the element of myth should enjoy a tremendous resurgence in apocalyptic is thus understandable; once the visionary's responsibilities to a political order had become tenuous, his role returned increasingly to the spiritual role of relating the events of the cosmic realm, a role akin to that of the mythmaker. The mythic elements of Second Isaiah were torn from their mooring in history and interpreted with a fresh literalness. As a result, by envisioning fulfillment not on the level of historical events but with the cosmic realm of myth, a realm let unsullied by the bitter disappointments of this world, mythic motifs began to serve less the function of giving cosmic significance to Yahweh's historical acts than of offering a means of escape from the growing contradiction between glorious promise and harsh reality.[91]

For Hanson, this shift is expressed by the development of apocalyptic eschatology he finds in Third Isaiah and Zechariah.[92] These works do not completely set aside historical events, however. Rather, they begin to use them in a new way, as signposts that point toward the final Eschaton. Since the present epoch was irredeemable, the new hope was a restoration that would occur "only after a disruptive and devastating series of events in which Yahweh would annul the order established at the creation of the world, supplanting it with a new paradisiacal order of harmony and prosperity."[93] History only becomes a consideration as it points to this end.

> In apocalyptic eschatology we detect historical events being used less and less frequently to construct a *Heilgeschichte*, increasingly as data for learned

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[91] Hanson, *Dawn*, 26-27.

[92] Hanson, *Dawn*, 11, defines apocalyptic eschatology as "a religious perspective which focuses on the disclosure (usually esoteric in nature) to the elect of the cosmic vision of Yahweh's sovereignty—especially as it relates to his acting to deliver his faithful—which disclosure the visionaries have largely ceased to translate into terms of plain history, real politics, and human instrumentality due to a pessimistic view of reality growing out of the bleak post-exilic conditions within which those associated with the visionaries found themselves."

[93] Hanson, *Dawn*, 405.

> speculation regarding the cosmic timetable: according o the events of the world, how close do we stand to the day of Yahweh, that turning point from the old era of decay to the new world of shalom?[94]

In his conclusion, Hanson also notes two developments that he traced directly to apocalyptic visionaries. First is the "salvation-judgment oracle," an oracle that enabled the prophet to "deliver a word which was simultaneously a word of salvation and a word of judgment."[95] For Hanson, this meant, "there was no longer *one* Israel being promised salvation or judgment, but two Israels, one the object of Yahweh's saving acts, the other of his wrath and judgment."[96]

The second development was the rampant use of a form from Israel's royal cult: the Divine Warrior hymn:

> Stressing the cosmic aspect of Yahweh's acts and thus contrasting sharply with the austere historical orientation of pre-exilic prophecy, these hymns revivified themes which pointed toward an ultimate source of origin in ancient Near Eastern myth. In its fullest form these hymns incorporated the complete scenario of the ancient conflict myth. Thus on the level of the history of genres, a dynamic was visible which was recasting the prophetic oracle in radically new forms, and thereby transforming prophetic genres into the genres of apocalyptic. [97]

Hanson's investigation of the origins and development of apocalyptic eschatology led him to four basic conclusions:

1. The sources of later apocalyptic eschatology lie solidly within Israel's prophetic tradition.
2. The period of origin is in the sixth to 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 [the cosmic realm—the realm amenable to the use of mythic themes] into historical terms.

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[94] Hanson, *Dawn*, 405-06.

[95] Hanson, *Dawn*, 404.

[96] Hanson, *Dawn*, 404.

[97] Hanson, *Dawn*, 404-05.

4. The historical and sociological matrix of apocalyptic is found in an inner-community struggle in early Judaism between visionary and hierocratic elements.[98]

The fourth conclusion is actually Hanson's starting point for the bulk of *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, and from where this work has drawn considerable criticism.[99] Hanson's most important conclusion for my purposes is the first, establishing that apocalypticism is not a foreign import into early Judaism but a development from earlier Hebrew literature through the reuse of mythic themes such as Divine Warrior imagery.[100]

3.4 *Adela Yarbro Collins*

The work of Adela Yarbro Collins spearheaded the investigation of the combat myth in the New Testament.[101] Yarbro Collins' work is largely a structural investigation that relies on form, source and redactional criticism both in determining the sources behind Rev 12 and how Rev 12 then fits into the book of Revelation as a whole. For Yarbro Collins, Rev 12 is a clear expression of the ancient combat myth set within a literary structure where "the combat myth is the conceptual framework which underlies the book as a whole."[102]

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[98] Hanson, *Dawn*, 29.

[99] Stephen L. Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism: The Postexilic Social Setting* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995). See also Robert P. Carroll, "Twilight of Prophecy or Dawn of Apocalyptic?" *JSOT* 14 (1979): 3-35.

[100] This is not to say that every feature of apocalyptic literature has its roots in the Hebrew Bible. The importance of Hanson's work is in recognizing that there is continuity between prophecy and apocalyptic. On some of the features of apocalyptic literature that do not appear to have their roots in the Hebrew Bible, see John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 23-25.

[101] Yarbro Collins, *Myth*.

[102] Yarbro Collins, *Myth*, 231.

Yarbro Collins suggests that Rev 12 "is not a unitary composition" but rather an adaptation of two different sources, 1) the conflict between the woman with child and the dragon and 2) the war in heaven.[103] First, Yarbro Collins outlines various examples of the combat myth from a number of surrounding cultures in an attempt to discover whether any examples display enough similarities to the conflict between the woman and dragon in Rev 12 in a way that, to her, suggests dependency.[104] Here Yarbro Collins finds a number of "striking similarities" between Rev 12 and the Greek Python-Leto myth that lead her to conclude that Rev 12 is an adaptation of this myth.[105] In the Python-Leto myth, the dragon Python pursued Leto, the mother of Apollo and Artemis only to be killed by Apollo.[106]

As for the war in heaven, Yarbro Collins suggests a dependence on the Jewish myth of the rebellion of Satan. Here Yarbro Collins notes the similarities between Rev 12 and the fall of Satan in the *Life of Adam and Eve*, where Satan is cast out of heaven for his refusal to worship Adam, a myth she traces, ultimately, to the Canaanite myth of Athtar.[107] Thus, Rev 12 presents an example of John adapting material familiar to him in order to further his purpose in the book as a whole.

Whether one accepts Yarbro Collin's source-critical conclusions or not, she makes several helpful observations. One of the more important ones for my purposes is that the mythical materials were not just re-used, but adapted to a new context. For

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[103] Yarbro Collins, *Myth*, 101.

[104] Yarbro Collins, *Myth*, 57-100.

[105] Yarbro Collins, *Myth*, 83.

[106] Yarbro Collins, *Myth*, 63-65.

[107] Yarbro Collins, *Myth*, 129-30.

instance, she suggests that the Christian adaptation of the Typhon-Leto myth could serve "as a mysterious reference to the birth and ascension of Christ."[108] Further, John fits the myth into his present context as a way of "shifting the emphasis from a nationalistic conflict between the Jewish people and Rome to a universal, cosmic conflict."[109] In its Greek form, the myth represented a conflict concerning the rule of the gods.[110] Yarbro Collins sees the Jewish adaptation as "a figurative expression of a situation of political and religious conflict."[111] For John, the myth represents the duality of cosmic conflict impacting God's people in their earthly realm.[112]

Yarbro Collins then turns to examining how Rev 12 fits within the book of Revelation as a whole. She sees the chapter as the introduction to the second half of John's visions as well as the mythic framework for Revelation as a whole.[113] Yarbro Collins' close examination details how Rev 12 works within the larger structure and heightens the book's narrative and especially impacts its thematic development.[114]

Yarbro Collins sees part of Rev 12's key role to stem from seeing the combat myth underlying the thrust of John's visions.[115] Yarbro Collins suggests that various manifestations of the pattern of the combat myth appear throughout the book of

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[108] Yarbro Collins, *Myth*, 105.

[109] Yarbro Collins, *Myth*, 144.

[110] Yarbro Collins, *Myth*, 64-65.

[111] Yarbro Collins, *Myth*, 119.

[112] Yarbro Collins, *Myth*, 131.

[113] Yarbro Collins, *Myth*, 157.

[114] Yarbro Collins, *Myth*, 157-206.

[115] Yarbro Collins, *Myth*, 207-43.

Revelation. She finds this pattern "in a fragmentary way in the earlier series [of visions], but in a quite detailed and striking manner in the last two series."[116] For Yarbro Collins, the repetition of a pattern from the mythical source of Rev 12 indicates the pivotal place of this chapter within the whole book.

> The paradigmatic character of Revelation 12 for the book as a whole may be illustrated in terms of the pattern of the combat myth. The pattern is repeated in each series of visions and in fullest form at the end. Such repetition is characteristic of mythic language and is an indication that the structure of the events narrated is the "message" rather than the particular details of any one story or image. The overcoming of the threat, the defeat of chaos and the re-establishing of order is thus the fundamental significance of each of the cycles of visions and of Revelation as a whole. The paradigmatic nature of Chapter 12 is evident in the fact that the pattern of the combat myth is reflected in quite full form with this single chapter.[117]

From this observation, Yarbro Collins draws two conclusions. First, the purpose of the combat myth is to make clear that the eschatological divine victory should be understood as divine victory and vengeance for the martyrs.[118] Second, it highlights the importance of martyrdom—non-violent resistance—to the final victory of the Divine Warrior. "If there is a fixed number of martyrs who must meet their deaths before the end can come, then each martyr's death brings the eschaton closer.[119] Thus, John's visions serve to encourage non-violent resistance—and the acceptance of martyrdom—in the face of the persecution wrought by Rome.

> The combat myth in Revelation thus functions to reinforce resistance to Rome and to inspire willingness for martyrdom. It does this by depicting for the readers the

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[116] Yarbro Collins, *Myth*, 211.

[117] Yarbro Collins, *Myth*, 232.

[118] Yarbro Collins, *Myth*, 234.

[119] Yarbro Collins, *Myth*, 234.

> ultimate resolution in which they are involved, i.e., their own ultimate salvation and the eventual defeat and destruction of their adversaries.[120]

For Yarbro Collins, it is the pattern of the combat myth that indicates this function for the book of Revelation. The structural pattern of recapitulation subsumes the importance of the individual pieces, while the recapitulation of the combat myth—with increasing clarity—indicates that the basic meanings underlying this myth is the key to understanding the force of the book.

3.5 *Yoder Neufeld, Longman, Bauckham*

Three other works further develop Yarbro Collins' discussion of the combat myth and are important for my research as well. Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld attempts to trace the development of one particular motif associated with Divine Warrior imagery, the Divine Warrior's armor.[121] Neufield's goal is to show how this motif, drawn from Isa 59, was then used and adapted in Early Jewish literature and the New Testament. Yoder Neufeld focuses specifically on Divine Warrior imagery in Isa 59; Wis 5; 1 Thess 5; and Eph 6.

Yoder Neufeld's understanding of the Divine Warrior motif itself is more general than the one proposed by Cross, Hanson, or Yarbro Collins for the Combat Myth. He defines the Divine Warrior motif as the representation of "general metaphors of strength in combat, attendant emotions attributed to Yahweh, occasional references to weapons such as sword or bow, and more often references to phenomena such as storm, flood or

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[120] Yarbro Collins, *Myth*, 234.

[121] Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld, *'Put on the Armour of God': The Divine Warrior from Isaiah to Ephesians* (JSNTSupp 140; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997). See also ibid., "Power, Love, and Creation: The Mercy of the Divine Warrior in the Wisdom of Solomon," in *Peace and Justice shall Embrace: Power and Theopolitics in the Bible* (ed. Ted Grimsrud and Loren L Johns; Telford, Pa.: Pandora, 1999), 174-91.

plague."[122] The strength of this definition is that it does not create tenuous parallels among texts in order to assert one expression of the myth as holding the key to the meaning of another. Instead, Yoder Neufeld focuses on the way later texts adapt the motif of the Divine Warrior's armor to fit their own situations, using familiar imagery in new ways.

Yoder Neufeld attempts to show that Isa 59 represents a key interpretive turning point by reinterpreting the Divine Warrior's armor as his virtues.[123] In turn, Wis 5 ties the motif of the virtuous armor of the Divine Warrior to the Suffering Servant of Second Isaiah.[124] In 1 Thess 5, the Divine Warrior's virtuous armor is now in the hands of the Thessalonians themselves where the "militant exercise of faith, love, and the hope of salvation" becomes the way the saints wage divine battle against those who belong to darkness.[125] In Eph 6, the battle returns to the heavenlies, where it is a war waged "by the performance of 'good works.'"[126] The importance of Yoder Neufeld's work for my own study is his demonstration of the dramatic re-orientation of Divine Warrior imagery and the concept of Holy War, the battle of God on behalf of or alongside his people. Yoder Neufeld sees New Testament examples of Divine Warrior imagery to shift the concept of Holy War as one of a future battle within the temporal realm to a spiritual battle waged with the armor of the moral character of the community of believers.[127]

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[122] Yoder Neufeld, *Armour*, 25.

[123] Yoder Neufeld, *Armour*, 36-37.

[124] Yoder Neufeld, *Armour*, 68-69.

[125] Yoder Neufeld, *Armour*, 91-93.

[126] Yoder Neufeld, *Armour*, 151

[127] Yoder Neufeld, *Armour*, 154-56.

Tremper Longman's work on Divine Warrior imagery is important in showing that Divine Warrior imagery appears throughout what would become the canon of Christian Scripture. Longman's first consideration of Divine Warrior imagery summarizes its appearances in the New Testament.[128] He concludes that Divine Warrior imagery in the New Testament is either eschatological or non-eschatological.[129] The bulk of Longman's survey focuses on the book of Revelation's eschatological use of Divine Warrior imagery. Here Longman suggests that instances such as the picture of Jesus Christ the Cloud Rider in Rev 1:7 are reflections of YHWH at war that now serve as examples of Jesus Christ's "warring activity."[130]

Longman, in collaboration with Daniel Reid, follows this article with a fuller work that traces Divine Warrior imagery throughout the Protestant canon.[131] Here Longman and Reid build upon Hanson's idea that Divine Warrior imagery moved from a focus on historical events in the Old Testament to an otherworldly, eschatological motif in the New Testament. They see the apex of the otherworldly battle in the New Testament as the death and exaltation of Jesus Christ.[132]

Richard Bauckham has shown a keen awareness of the issues of the use of Divine Warrior imagery in his collection of essays on Revelation.[133] Here I only focus on the

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[128] Tremper Longman, III, "The Divine Warrior: The New Testament Use of an Old Testament Motif," *WTJ* 44 (1982): 290-307.

[129] Longman, III, "Divine Warrior," 291.

[130] Longman, III, "Divine Warrior," 297.

[131] Tremper Longman, III, and Daniel J. Reid, *God is a Warrior* (SOTBT; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995).

[132] Longman and Reid, *Warrior*, 17.

[133] Bauckham, *Climax*.

presentation in the essay, "The Lion, the Lamb and the Dragon."[134] In this essay Bauckham makes several observations that are foundational to my own study. First, he states that the imagery in the Apocalypse must be examined "through reconstruction of their resonances in their historical context."[135] By this Bauckham asserts that whatever archetypal meaning may be embodied in Revelation's use of earlier mythical expressions, they must be understood in light of "the association they were capable of evoking in . . . the late first century A.D."[136] Second, John's images are "visualized forms of metaphorical figures."[137] In other words, Bauckham understands John to often take metaphors from scriptural prophecy and then to recast them in the forms of visions. Here Bauckham makes note of the importance the Hebrew Scriptures as a primary part of the repertoire of the book of Revelation. Third, John's visions serve as "vehicles of the cosmic significance of historical events." Thus, John ties heaven and earth together with his visions. This way the visions "often resemble the images of myth, while retaining the historical reference that genuine myths lack."[138]

1.4. *Plan*

In this study, I seek to add to the discussion of Divine Warrior imagery outlined above by using the reception of the imagery as a hermeneutical tool for understanding its presence in Revelation. As an application of reception theory, I seek to understand how

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[134] Bauckham, *Climax*, 174-98.

[135] Bauckham, *Climax*, 179.

[136] Bauckham, *Climax*, 179.

[137] Bauckham, *Climax*, 184.

[138] Bauckham, *Climax*, 186.

Divine Warrior imagery impacts the various horizons of expectation of the intended readers of texts that contain such imagery and how any impact influences subsequent horizons of expectation. Thus, I am not concerned to seek for paradigmatic expressions of an interpretive ur-myth so prevalent in many of the earlier discussions of Divine Warrior imagery. Instead, I am attempting first to understand some of the ways Divine Warrior imagery creates aesthetic distance in the horizons of expectation of the intended readers in texts containing the imagery. Then, I look to discern how the aesthetic distance created by such texts impacts the horizon of expectation for the intended readers of later texts that also contain Divine Warrior imagery. Once again, I seek to understand how the imagery creates aesthetic distance for these intended readers as well. This builds, finally, to a consideration of the horizon of expectation that Divine Warrior imagery creates for the intended readers of Revelation and the aesthetic difference that particular examples of the presence of Divine Warrior imagery creates for these readers in particular contexts.

Since the investigation of Revelation is my goal, my study emphasizes the importance of texts that I find useful in understanding how Divine Warrior imagery fits into the textual repertoire of the book of Revelation. The Hebrew Scriptures form the most prominent aspect of the textual repertoire for the book of Revelation and the background they contribute is a key focus. I acknowledge that Revelation's production in the midst of the late first century Roman Empire certainly indicates that Greco-Roman culture forms another important aspect of Revelation's repertoire and horizon.[139]

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[139] Iser, *Act*, 69, "The repertoire consists of all the familiar territory within the text. This may be in the form of references to earlier works, or to social and historical norms, or to the whole culture from which the text has emerged—in brief, to what the Prague structuralists have called the 'extratextual' reality."

However, the sheer force of the Hebrew Scriptures as they flow through the text of Revelation indicates these texts are the most important aspect of Revelation's repertoire. Thus, Divine Warrior imagery as it appears in the Hebrew Scriptures plays a prominent and foundational role in my study.

In an effort to understand how Divine Warrior imagery fits into the repertoire of the book of Revelation, I must first understand how it fits into the repertoire of the Hebrew Scriptures. To do this, I first investigate ancient Near Eastern Divine Warrior imagery as part of the mythical repertoire of the ancient Near East. I then consider Divine Warrior imagery mediated through the ancient Near East as part of the repertoire of early Israelite texts. In turn, I discuss Divine Warrior imagery as part of the repertoire of early Jewish literature received through the now-authoritative Israelite texts. Finally, I consider how these three broad areas of reception have impacted Divine Warrior imagery as part of the repertoire of the book of Revelation.

While this line of inquiry indicates that I give considerable attention to the diachronic reconstruction of various horizons of expectation and their influence on later receptions, my goal remains the reconstruction of the horizon of expectation for the intended reader of the Divine Warrior imagery of Revelation. This then allows me to further investigate how this imagery creates aesthetic difference for the intended reader and thus impacts that reader's understanding of the text. In the end, my aim is exegetical: I seek to explain the violent language of the text of Revelation through the way its intended readers may have understood how the use of Divine Warrior imagery impacted their understanding of the book.

The diachronic aspect of my study dictates the structure of my work. In Chapter two, I present the background of Divine Warrior imagery in the context of the broader ancient Near East. I divide this discussion into two sections. In the first section, I investigate Divine Warrior imagery in the ancient Near East as a whole, where I note recurring themes that appear across cultures and are often incorporated into what would become Hebrew Scripture. I note these themes from two aspects: 1) how deities fight within the divine realm and 2) how deities intervene in human affairs as Divine Warriors. Throughout, I highlight descriptions of the deities, their weaponry, and their battles. I also discuss various interpretations of the mythology that uses Divine Warrior imagery and consider how various cultures adapt these aspects into their stories, sometimes in ways that reorient whole myths.

In the second section, I investigate the Ugaritic Baal Epic in the same manner. This is a necessary component since much of the mythological imagery of Hebrew Scripture shows significant correspondence with the mythology exemplified in the Baal Epic. Here I draw special attention to Baal and Anat as Divine Warriors and note the type of imagery used for these deities, especially imagery that reappears in Hebrew Scripture. In this section I note the connection between descriptions of Baal and Anat and the broader ancient Near East. I also discuss the vexing problem of the meaning and purpose of the Baal Epic. This section serves to set stage for my discussion of the use of similar imagery in Hebrew Scripture in the next chapter.

Chapter three is an investigation of how the Hebrew Scriptures use and adapt inherited Divine Warrior imagery. I approach Divine Warrior imagery in Hebrew Scripture from four different aspects. First, I demonstrate the similarities in the use of

Divine Warrior imagery in Hebrew texts and in the material from the broader ancient Near East and I present important themes where Divine Warrior imagery often appears. My purpose here is to demonstrate that Israelite writers knew, used, and adapted Divine Warrior imagery from surrounding cultures and adapted to fit different contexts. The second aspect is to display some of the imagery related to the Divine Warrior, such as his armies, his attendants, and his personified weaponry. Third, I discuss the types of enemies the Divine Warrior battles, from the supernatural realm to the historical realm, noting how these enemies appear in the texts. My fourth and final investigation in this chapter is a brief discussion of a number of notable examples where Divine Warrior imagery provokes aesthetic difference by using the imagery in contexts texts where it is clear that divine battle is not in view. Such use of Divine Warrior imagery can challenge the horizons of expectation of a particular text's intended reader and thus has the potential to become part of the horizon of a later text.

Chapter four is an overview of how early Jewish writers used and adapted Divine Warrior imagery. In this chapter I discuss examples of Divine Warrior imagery related to God, his allies—angels, messianic figures, and humans—as well as enemies, both supernatural and terrestrial. In each case I note important adaptations and developments that aid in understanding how Jewish readers might have understood various aspects of imagery related to God at war.

In chapter five, I present a detailed investigation of Divine Warrior imagery in the book of Revelation. My investigation in this chapter notes how the text of Revelation adapts familiar aspects of Divine Warrior imagery to create or minimize aesthetic difference in the use of the imagery for the text's intended readers. As in chapter four, I

discuss Divine Warrior imagery in light of how various characters relate to God. Thus, I begin by discussing God as the Divine Warrior and follow this with Jesus Christ as the Divine Warrior. I then discuss two allies of the Divine Warrior, angels and the faithful. I follow this by investigating prominent enemies of the Divine Warrior in Revelation. Finally, I draw conclusions over how the various images inform the violence of the text. Throughout, I pay close attention to how Divine Warrior imagery impacts the various texts, especially in light of other features, such as scriptural allusions or Greco-Roman imagery.

In chapter six, my conclusion, I suggest that Divine Warrior imagery guides the intended reader to understand significant contexts in ways beyond the simple violence of the imagery. The book of Revelation is a book about power and victory. This power is wielded in a different manner from what the intended readers would see in front of them. The victory in this battle is won in an opposite manner from how the great power(s) of the world win battles. The result is a new order where the expression of power in the manner of the old order has no place.

CHAPTER TWO

The Imagery of the Divine Warrior in the Ancient Near East

Since a number of cultures have stories and myths that describe the gods at war, I begin with an overview of Divine Warrior imagery in the ancient Near East in general. Then I move to a discussion of the imagery as it appears in the Baal Epics from Ugarit. By establishing that there were a number of common motifs and images that describe divine battle over a long period of time and in diverse cultures throughout the region, we can begin to see how various pieces of myths were changed and adapted as they were placed in new contexts, yet still retained some residual meaning. We can then begin to understand how the Divine Warrior imagery has been appropriated, used, and transformed in the Hebrew Scriptures, a primary source for imagery Jewish apocalyptic literature in general and the book of Revelation in particular.

In this chapter, I outline this investigation in two main sections. In the first section, I look at the general milieu of the ancient Near East. I begin with examples of Divine Warriors and their weaponry, where I investigate descriptions of Divine Warriors, how they fought, and the kinds of contexts in which such imagery appears. I then look at how the ancient Near East depicts the gods' involvement in human warfare, where I discuss the significance of divine involvement and the relationship of the earthly king to the Divine Warrior. Finally, using one myth, *Enuma Elish,* as an exemplar, I outline the some of the ways that later myths adapt the imagery of earlier myths.

In the second section, I give a detailed description of Divine War in the Ugaritic Baal Epic. Here I focus on the two primary Divine Warriors, Baal and Anat. I discuss

the ways in which the depiction of these warriors fits the broader ancient Near East as well as outlining some of the significant motifs that appear with these Divine Warriors.

2.1. *The Divine Warrior in the Ancient Near East*

Literary imagery of gods at war is ancient, reaching back into the third millennium B.C.E. in the ancient Near East.[1] Thus, by the time Israel was firmly established as a kingdom in the ninth century, various cultures had made use of the concept of a warrior-god with a number of abiding features for well over 1,000 years.

2.1.1. *The Descriptions and Weaponry of Divine Warriors*

In the ancient Near East divine warfare could take place on two levels: 1) between the gods and 2) the gods intervening in human affairs. The battles between the gods provide some of the better-known and graphic episodes of divine war in the ancient Near East. In these myths the divine battle is often explicit and detailed. A prominent and well-known example is *Enuma Elish*, a late second millennium Babylonian creation epic

[1] Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness: A History of Mesopotamian Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 77-81, speculates that such imagery arose in Mesopotamia with the development of the institution of kingship in the third millennium. He considered the fourth millennium to be a relatively peaceful time while the third millennium was a time of constant banditry and raids. The authoritarian power of the king then came to be reflected in various descriptions of the gods, especially warrior-gods. Jean Bottéro, *Religion in Ancient Mesopotamia* (trans. Teresa Lavender Fagan, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 8-9, 52-55, considers the rise of Mesopotamian kingship to be more a product of the increased centralization needed to oversee the growing task of maintaining irrigation canals, which he considers the backbone of early Mesopotamian civilization. Nevertheless, he draws a conclusion similar to Jacobsen's by noting that, in general, the perception of the gods tended to mimic the human political setting, a process that saw its ultimate expression in the institution of increasing unity around a king by the end of the third millennium. It should be noted that evidence from Egypt seems to suggest that such conceptions arose there in the fourth millennium. David P. Silverman, "Divinities and Deities in Ancient Egypt," in *Religion in Ancient Egypt: Gods, Myths, and Personal Practice* (ed. Byron E. Shafer; Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991), 13-15, discusses the various behaviors portrayed on various artifacts and concludes that "[d]ivinities of the Predynastic Period [c. 5000–2950 B.C.E.] often took the forms of animals, and the animal was frequently shown engaged in a human activity, such as conquering enemies." While early concepts of religion will certainly remain shrouded in mystery, what is clear for my purposes is that by the end of the third millennium evidence from Mesopotamia to Egypt shows gods regularly engaged in battle.

that chronicles the exaltation of Marduk.[2] The story vividly relates Tiamat's preparation for battle:

> Mother Hubur (Tiamat), who can form everything,
> Added countless invincible weapons, gave birth to monster snakes,
> Pointed of fang, with merciless incisors,
> She filled their bodies with venom for blood.
> Fierce dragons she clad with glories,
> Causing them to bear auras like the gods, (saying)
> "Whoever sees them shall collapse from weakness!"
> "Wherever their bodies make onslaught, they shall not turn back!"
> She deployed serpents, dragons, and hairy hero-men,
> Lion monsters, lion men, scorpion men,
> Mighty demons, fish men, bull men,
> Bearing unsparing arms, fearing no battle.
> Her commands were absolute, no one opposed them;
> Eleven indeed on this wise she created.[3]

Marduk, the champion in the battle against Tiamat, also has a vast array of fearsome weaponry:

> The gods, his fathers, ordained the Lord's (Marduk's) destiny,
> On the path to success and authority did they set him marching.
> He made the bow, appointed it his weapon,
> He mounted the arrow, set it on the string.
> He took up the mace, held it in his right hand,
> Bow and the quiver he slung on his arm.
> Thunderbolts he set before his face,
> With raging fire he covered his body.
> Then he made a net to enclose Tiamat within,
> He deployed the four winds that none of her might escape;
> South Wind, North Wind, East Wind, West Wind
> Gift of his grandfather Anu; he fastened the net at his side
> He made ill wind, whirlwind, cyclone,
> Four-ways wind, seven-ways wind, destructive wind, irresistible wind:
> He released the winds which he had made, the seven of them;
> Mounting in readiness behind him to roil inside Tiamat.
> Then the Lord raised the Deluge, his great weapon,
> He mounted the terrible chariot, the unopposable Storm Demon,

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[2] Benjamin Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature* (2 vols.; Bethesda: CDL Press, 1993), 1:351.

[3] "Epic of Creation" (*Enuma Elish*), 1.133-146 (Foster, *Muses*, 1:358-59).

He hitched to it the four-steed team, he tied them at his side:
"Slaughterer," "Merciless," "Overwhelmer," "Soaring."
Their lips are curled back, their teeth bear venom,
They know not fatigue; they are trained to trample down.
He stationed at his right gruesome battle and strife,
At his left the fray that overthrows all formations
He was garbed in a ghastly armored garment,
On his head he was covered with a terrifying aura.[4]

Several elements stand out from these passages. First, while some of the weaponry is conventional, such as Marduk's spear, club, bow, and net, most are otherworldly. Second, many of Tiamat's weapons are, in fact, living creatures. She creates them for the purpose of battle. Third, Marduk's weaponry includes elements of the storm, such as various winds and the deluge. Note also that Marduk uses the storm as a chariot harnessed to four wild, destructive horses. Fourth, Marduk's raiment also indicates splendor and terror, as he is clothed "in a ghastly armored garment" and crowned with "overpowering brightness." Fifth, the horses, part of Marduk's armament, are named according to their role. As is evident in this passage, descriptions of the gods in battle array often push the limit of human imagination in terror and splendor.

Enuma Elish presents the creation of the cosmos as the result of the battle between Marduk and Tiamat. Marduk takes the carcass of the vanquished deity and uses it as the basis for the material world.

Then the Lord [Marduk] was inspecting her carcass,
That he might divide the monstrous lump and fashion artful things
He split her in two, like a fish for drying,
Half of her he set up and made as a cover, (like) heaven.
He stretched out the hide and assigned watchmen,
And he ordered them not to let her waters escape.
He crossed heaven and inspected (its) sacred places,
He made a counterpoint of Apsu, the dwelling of Nudimmad.
The Lord measured the construction of Apsu,

[4] "Epic of Creation," 4.33-58 (Foster, *Muses*, 1:373-74).

The Great Sanctuary, its likeness, he founded, Esharra.
The Great Sanctuary, Esharra, which he built, (is) heaven,
He made Ea, Enlil, and Anu swell in their holy places.[5]

In other words, in *Enuma Elish* creation is a direct result of a divine battle. Such a scenario is not extant in other Akkadian and Sumerian works that mention creation.[6] However, it is present in creation stories from some of the surrounding regions.[7]

The mythology in *Enuma Elish* also represents a fairly typical example of what scholars call the *Chaoskampf,* the combat myth. The *Chaoskampf* myth is ancient and widespread, appearing in various cultures as widely scattered as ancient India, Greece, and Egypt.[8] In the ancient Near East there is evidence of aspects of the *Chaoskampf* that appear as far back as the Old Akkadian period.[9] At its core, the *Chaoskampf* myth is

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[5] "Epic of Creation," 4.135-146 (Foster, *Muses*, 1:376-77).

[6] Sumerian traditions tend to portray creation an aspect of a union of heaven and earth or as a chthonic; see Richard J. Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible* (CBQMS 26; Washington: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1994), 22-49. Akkadian stories generally portray creation as a secondary aspect of a larger story. *Enuma Elish* is an example of this, as it functions primarily as the story of the exaltation of Marduk and uses creation to illustrate that argument (Clifford, *Creation*, 54-98). I discuss the purpose of *Enuma Elish* below.

[7] E.g., in the theogony contained in the Hurrian "Song of Kumarbi" (Harry A. Hoffner, Jr., *Hittite Myths* [SBLWAW 2; Atlanta: Scholars, 1990], 40-43), the gods Tessub, Tasmisu, and the Tigris River result from the combat between Kumarbi and his father Anu.

[8] Joseph P. Fontenrose, *Python: A Study of Delphic Myth and Its Origins* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), 1-2. The origins of the *Chaoskampf* remain obscure. In an oft cited essay, Thorkild Jacobsen, "The Battle between Marduk and Tiamat," *JAOS* 88 (1968): 104-08, suggests that the *Chaoskampf* myth may be West Semitic in origin and was then taken east. However, the evidence presented by Jean-Marie Durand, "Le mythologème du combat entre le dieu de l'orage et la mer en Mésopotamie," *MARI* 7 (1993): 41-61, shows that the motif was present in Mesopotamia considerably earlier than what Jacobsen suggested, further muddying the waters concerning ultimate origins. Fontenrose, *Python*, 217, asserted in 1959 that tracing the origins of the myth is fraught with speculation. The intervening years have not enabled us to move beyond speculation. Fontenrose proposes that study of the myth's use and adaptation, working toward a specific expression of it, is of greater value than a focus on origins, a suggestion that fits well with my current aims.

[9] Daniel Schwemer, *Die Wettergottgestalten Mesopotamiens und Nordsyriens im Zeitalter der Keilschriftkulturen: Materialien und Studien nach den schriftlichen Quellen* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 2001), 118-19, who is careful to note that the evidence is much too slim to trace anything like a full-blown *Chaoskampf* motif to this period. Suffice to say that the *Chaoskampf* myth is ancient, going back to the second millennium B.C.E. Durand, "Le mythologème," 43, makes strong claims for a

simply a god, usually a storm-god, fighting against and defeating the forces of chaos, often represented by the sea and often in the form of a dragon.[10] Following this victory, the divine warrior is then exalted to kingship over the gods. The fact that pieces of the *Chaoskampf* myth may be found in a variety of cultures over a wide range of time periods throughout the ancient Near East, including Ugarit and Israel, makes it an important aspect of this study.

Many of the early descriptions of gods involved in war are strictly anthropomorphic: the god fights in a manner strikingly similar to his or her subjects with weapons that are just as familiar, albeit both aspects take on a super-human hue.[11] As with Marduk in *Enuma Elish*, the weapons of the gods are familiar but often beyond the ability of a human subject to fashion, or they may even be natural forces. An example appears in the Babylonian *Weapon Name Exposition*, a philological work from the late third or early second millennium that gives Akkadian interpretations to the names of

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24th-century B.C.E. example but Nick Wyatt, "Arms and the King: The Earliest Allusions to the *Chaoskampf* Motif and their Implications for the Interpretation of the Ugaritic and Biblical Traditions," in *There's Such Divinity Doth Hedge a King: Selected Essays of Nicolas Wyatt on Royal Ideology in Ugaritic and Old Testament Literature* (SOTSMS; Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2005), 152-53; repr. in '*Und Mose schrieb dieses Lied auf ' Studien zum Alten Testament und zum Alten Orient* (ed. Manfried Dietrich and Ingo Kottsieper; AOAT 250; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1998), suggests that Durand has pushed this evidence farther than it will allow while still accepting the likelihood of Durand's early dating for the motif.

[10] Nick Wyatt, *Myths of Power: A Study of Royal Myth and Ideology in Ugaritic and Biblical Tradition* (UBL 13; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1996), 122. See also Adela Yarbro Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation* (HDR 9; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars, 1976; repr., Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2001), 57-59. Fontenrose, *Python*, 9-10, posits ten themes generally found in the various expressions of *Chaoskampf* throughout ancient history.

[11] It is generally true that Mesopotamian gods were described anthropomorphically. Concerning the imagery of the gods, Jean Bottéro, *Religion*, 64-65, notes that "[t]he gods' image was basically anthropomorphic . . . [projecting] the human model onto a grandiose and fascinating screen." Zoomorphic imagery was much more complex and seemed to be representative emblems of divinity rather an expression of the god or goddess itself.

Sumerian deities or divine weapons.[12] Here we see depictions of a familiar weapon with immense power and a force of nature wielded as a divine weapon:

> Fifty-headed weapon: Foremost weapon of Enlil.
> . . .
> Relentless storm: His invincible weapon.[13]

Further, the description of the actual god could also be of a more resplendent nature, as shown in the late third millennium *Hymn to Enlil* from Sumer, a work that is notable for its uncharacteristic portrayal of Enlil as humanity's benefactor:[14]

> Having occupied the throne dais
> on (his stage tower) Imhursag,
> he (then), like the rainbow,
> for his part encircles heaven,
> goes like a floating cloud
> in its awesome nimbus.
>
> He is the one prince of heaven,
> the monarch of earth,
> august, tutelary god
> of the gods of high descent.[15]

In another Sumerian work, the epic Ninurta Myth *Lugal-e*, Ninurta, a storm-god, battles his rival from the mountains, Azag.[16] A notable feature of Ninurta's weapons is that they are personalized. For instance, Ninurta's weapon Sharur functions as much as a messenger, adviser, and devoted servant as he does a weapon throughout the epic.[17]

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[12] Alasdair Livingstone, *Mystical and Mythological Explanatory Works of Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), 58-61.

[13] "The Weapon Name Exposition," lines 13, 26 (Livingstone, *Mystical*, 55-57).

[14] Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Harps that Once . . .: Sumerian Poetry in Translation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 101.

[15] "Hymn to Enlil," 97-101 (Jacobsen, *Harps*, 107).

[16] Jacobsen, *Harps*, 233.

[17] Jacobsen, *Harps*, 237, n. 7, notes that Sharur's name likely means, "the one who lays low multitudes" and he is further associated with "the flood storm of battle."

Then, when Ninurta arms himself to head into battle, his other weapons are in one sense conventional, but in another sense they are personified and function much like an army.

> Unto [Azag's] stronghold
> he attained,
> stood in front line of battle
> in the rebel country,
> gave his long spear instructions,
> wound fear (in)to its bindings,
> the lord called upon his weapons,
> set out most completely arrayed.
> Into the fray the warrior rushed,
> —and the sky sank down unto the tilth,
> bow and battle-sling he wielded well,
> shattered was the highland, it dissolved;
> and alongside of Ninurta's battle array,
> as the warrior ordered his weapons,
> "Gird yourself!"[18]

Through Sharur, Ninurta, as a storm-god, also uses nature itself as a weapon, to dramatic effect against the allies of Azag.

> Sharur [sent] a storm up on heaven,
> it scattered its people,
> like a chastiser
> it swept along,
> its venom (all) by itself
> destroyed cities.
> the weapon, going to reconnoiter
> the border areas, cast fire upon the highlands.[19]

It is important to note the magical component of much of Ninurta's weaponry, a common motif of the gods' armament. Such weapons could empower the wielder to be able to complete the task at hand.[20] The Babylonian myth *Anzu*, portions of which date from the early second millennium, relates how Ninurta proved himself before his fellow

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[18] "The Ninurta Myth Lugal-e," 158-64 (Jacobsen, *Harps*, 244).

[19] "The Ninurta Myth Lugal-e," 253-56 (Jacobsen, *Harps*, 248).

[20] For divine weapons empowering human kings, see below.

gods and won their allegiance by defeating the hideous Anzu, a bird of great power, and harnessing its power.[21] At one point, Ninurta is stymied when his arrows cannot reach Anzu since Anzu holds the tablet of destinies—which Anzu had stolen in order to claim Enlil's throne—and uses the power of it to incant against Ninurta's weapons:

> Shaft which has come, go back to your thicket,
> Frame of the bow to your forests,
> Bowstring to the sheep's sinews, feathers to the birds: go back![22]

Ninurta's victory comes through the furious use of his own weaponry: storms, winds, and floods, along with traditional weaponry of the bow and spear. Ninurta is able to deprive Anzu of the ability to use the power of the tablet in Anzu's incantations and win the tablet. Significantly, the victorious Ninurta keeps the tablet of destinies for himself despite Enlil's plea for its return.

> Why [surrender] the trap[pings of kingship]?
> [My utterance has become] like that of the ki[ng of the gods].
> I will not re[turn] the tablet of destinies.[23]

Generally, the weapons of the gods are familiar human weapons imbued with supernatural power or they could be magically enhanced. Storm-gods also made use of the strength and power of the storm as part of their armament, giving them a fearsome presence as warriors.

Modern scholarship's attempt to determine the meaning of the various myths and the accompanying imagery is fraught with difficulty.[24] However, it is clear that many

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[21] Foster, *Muses*, 1:461-62.

[22] "Anzu," 2.63-65 (Foster, *Muses*, 1:477-78). The extant version of this portion dates from either the late Assyrian or Neo Babylonian period (middle of the first millennium).

[23] "Anzu," 3.20'-22' (Foster, *Muses*, 1:477-78).

[24] The range of meanings could include cosmogonic, seasonal, cultic ritual, explanatory, or any combination thereof. For instance, *Enuma Elish* is thought by some to be primarily a creation epic, the

instances of combat between gods have, as a central theme, the idea that the victor has the right to rule the vanquished; the victor receives kingship. Again, this is clear in *Enuma Elish*. First, Marduk agrees to battle Tiamat in return for kingship over those gods who enlist his aid:

> If indeed I am to champion you,
> Subdue Tiamat and save your lives,
> Convene the assembly, nominate me for supreme destiny!
> Take your places in the Assembly Place of the Gods, all of you, in joyful mood.
> When I speak, let me ordain destinies instead of you.
> Let nothing that I shall bring about be altered,
> Nor what I say be revoked or changed.[25]

After the battle the gods are more than willing to fulfill their promise and exalt him to the throne.

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victory of order over chaos. This victory would then be celebrated during a yearly—or biannual—Akitu festival at the onset of the new year as *re-creation*—the renewal of order over chaos, of life over death—at the close of winter (e.g., Wilfred G. Lambert, "The Great Battle of the Mesopotamian Religious Year," *Iraq* 25 [1963]: 189-90). Others hold that while it certainly does explain creation, it is primarily a theogonic myth, explaining the ascendency—and creation—of Marduk (e.g., Bernard F. Batto, *Slaying the Dragon: Mythmaking in the Biblical Tradition* [Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1992], 33), a previously minor god. Further interpretations focus on the political function of the myth. For instance, Jacobsen proposes that behind the cosmogony and theogony, *Enuma Elish* establishes the pattern and, therefore, authority for kingship in Babylon (i.e., Jacobsen, *Treasures*, 183-91). Jonathan Z. Smith, *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 90-96, on the other hand, sees it as part of a defense of the legitimacy of a *foreign* king. Schwemer, *Wettergottgestalten*, 232-33, sees the victory over Tiamat as, primarily, a victory over a historical, political enemy. Much of this debate hinges on the level of import one gives to the ideas of the "myth-and-ritual school," following the ideas developed by S. H. Hooke, "The Myth and Ritual Pattern of the Ancient East" in *Myth and Ritual: Essays on the Myth and Ritual of the Hebrews in Relation to the Culture Pattern of the Ancient East* (ed. S. H. Hooke; London: Oxford University Press, 1933), 1-33, who espouses a seasonal interpretation. While I tend to find Jacobsen's argument persuasive for *Enuma Elish*, Benjamin D. Sommer, "The Babylonian Akitu Festival: Rectifying the King or Renewing the Cosmos?" *JANES* 27 (2000): 82, n. 7, makes the point that myths in general and *Enuma Elish* in particular may have filled a variety of functions and should not necessarily be tied exclusively to a seasonal, mythic-ritual interpretation. Further, the amount of historical recreation necessary to attempt to explain the background and use of the myths quickly becomes problematic. See, e.g., the scathing attack on the idea of a seasonal pattern in *Enuma Elish* in Allan Rosengren Petersen, *The Royal God: Enthronement Festivals in Ancient Israel and Ugarit?* (JSOTSupp 250; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 44-48. Note that Petersen does not say that a seasonal element is not possible. Rather, he asserts that the evidence used to assert the seasonal pattern is circular. At any rate, my particular focus is on descriptions of divine battle in myths such as *Enuma Elish*. Nevertheless, due to the influence of the seasonal pattern on the Ugaritic studies and, subsequently, biblical studies, I will return to portions of this debate below.

[25] "Epic of Creation," 2.157-163 (Foster, *Muses*, 1:366).

O Marduk, you are our champion,
We bestow upon you kingship of all and everything.
Take your place in the assembly, your word will be supreme.
May your weapon never strike wide but dispatch your foes.
Lord, spare his life who trusts in you,
But the god who has taken up evil, snuff out his life![26]

Earlier Sumerian myths display this same trait. In the Ninurta myth *Lugal-e*, Ninurta, secure in his kingship, receives a warning from his weapon, Sharur, that there is trouble in the realm. Azag, a "fearless warrior," has incited rebellion in Ninurta's realm.[27] Ninurta then moves to protect his kingship. His march to war causes heaven, earth, and its inhabitants to recoil.[28] He then pronounces sentence on Azag, Ninurta's right as his conqueror. However Azag's apparent defeat causes dismay among the gods. Eventually, Ninurta prevails through the force of the storm. His victory gives him the right to pronounce judgment upon Azag:

From this day on may (the name) of Azag
not be spoken, let 'stone' be its name,
let 'stone,' '*zalag* stone' be its name,
let 'stone' be its name!
May thus its extinction be bitter
and its warrior status be for the lord![29]

Ninurta then uses the authority won by his victory to bring changes to the created order—though he does not create.[30] His return to his home following the battle brings the obeisance of his fellow gods.

To meet the warrior

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[26] "Epic of Creation," 4.13-18 (Foster, *Muses*, 1:372).

[27] "The Ninurta Myth Lugal-e," 16-69 (Jacobsen, *Harps*, 236-40).

[28] "The Ninurta Myth Lugal-e," 70 -95 (Jacobsen, *Harps*, 240-41).

[29] "The Ninurta Myth Lugal-e," 327-30 (Jacobsen, *Harps*, 251).

[30] "The Ninurta Myth Lugal-e," 334-620 (Jacobsen, *Harps*, 251-67).

coming safe from battle,
into the house came the Anunnaki gods,
prostrated themselves
and [laid] hand on the breast,
prayerfully they saluted the lord,
and verily soothed thereby
the heart for the lord in (its) raging.[31]

Finally, Ninurta's victory enhances his status as king, as Enlil makes clear:

Ninurta, king Uta-ulu,
lifted up the head
and his father, Enlil,
conferred (new) status on him (saying:)
(. . .)
"May a pleasant reign to not be changed,
(o) server of An,
and life unto distant days,
(o) trust of Enlil,
be your gift, king of towering strength!"[32]

The Divine Warrior, then, demonstrates his claim to the throne and his fitness to rule through victory in divine warfare.

As we have already seen, a significant part of divine weaponry makes use of storm imagery and the forces of nature as formidable weapons. Even very early literature, such as the Sumerian *Lugal-e* myth, details theophanic appearances of various gods couched in the imagery of the storm and a number of recurring characteristics of storm-gods at war are found in the literature of a number of cultures throughout the ancient Near East.[33] Further, there are a number of recurring motifs involving divine warfare that make use of meteorological or cosmological phenomena, whether or not the wielder is a weather-god. Weinfeld pieced together seven recurring motifs from various

[31] "The Ninurta Myth Lugal-e," 678-82 (Jacobsen, *Harps*, 270).

[32] "The Ninurta Myth Lugal-e," 683-84; 698-700 (Jacobsen, *Harps*, 270-71).

[33] Alberto R. W. Green, *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East* (BJS 8; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 1-3.

descriptions of divine war throughout the ancient Near East, Egypt, and the Mediterranean:

1. Shooting stars fighting from heaven.
2. The use of fire and clouds from heaven as offensive weaponry, perhaps as divine messengers or allies.
3. Annihilating natural forces.
4. Hail or stones from heaven.
5. Thunder as part of theophany.
6. The hiding cloud.
7. The god affecting the movement of the heavens, such as stopping the sun, in order to bring victory.[34]

Despite this motif of the storm as a weapon, early materials, like those from Sumer, indicate that early storm imagery was not necessarily martial; many of the various storm-gods were beneficent gods who were associated with fecundity. In a hymn to the Sumerian god Enlil, "Lord Wind," whom Green considers the archetypical storm-god,[35] is resplendent in his role as the provider of east wind that brings with it the moist rains that give sustenance to creation:[36]

> O mighty one, you hold the rains of heaven
> and the waters of the earth,
> Enlil, you hold the halter of the gods (of nature),
> Father Enlil, you are the one
> who makes the vines grow up,
> Enlil, your (warm) glow brings in the deep the fish to maturity,
> you let the birds in heaven, the fish in the deep, eat their fill.[37]

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[34] Moshe Weinfeld, "Divine Intervention in War in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East," in *History, Historiography and Interpretation: Studies in Biblical and Cuneiform Literature* (ed. H. Tadmor and M. Weinfeld; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1984), 121-47.

[35] Green, *Storm-God*, 41: "these earliest mythical attributes of Enlil represent the archetypal profile of every subsequent ancient Near Eastern Storm-god. In order to exert the requisite authority and influence over a city, state, or region, each succeeding Storm-god was conceived either as an offspring of the great Enlil, endowed with all of his important prerogatives, or revealed a marked similarity to Enlil in his own activities." See also Jacobsen, *Treasures*, 101-02.

[36] Jacobsen, *Treasures*, 98-99.

[37] "Hymn in Enlil's Honor," (Jacobsen, *Treasures*, 99).

However, the wind also brings destructive storms. A Sumerian lament blames Enlil for the destruction wrought by the storm:

> The mighty one, Enlil,
> whose utterance cannot be changed,
> He is the storm, is destroying the cattle pen,
> uprooting the sheepfold.
> My forests are torn up! My forests denuded![38]

Surviving iconography demonstrates these attributes as well. While depictions of a deity would often be anthropomorphic, depictions of the deity's attendants often indicated functioning attributes of the deity.[39] Early storm-god iconography tended to center on four primary attendants who could appear in isolation or in combination with one another: 1) the bull, 2) the lion, 3) the lion-headed bird, or 4) the dragon.[40] These four could appear individually or in composite form, as the emphasis would change depending on culture and era. However they might be changed and adapted, they would continue to provide the base for the depiction of the storm-god. This appears to indicate that however the storm-god was adapted in various cultures, the older concepts would remain part of the character of the god, though they may be less prominent.[41]

After Enlil, storm-gods were more martial in nature, though the fertility aspect never disappears.[42] These later manifestations of the storm-god display a greater reliance

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[38] "Lament," (Jacobsen, *Treasures*, 101).

[39] Green, *Storm-God*, 4. "[E]ach symbolic representation of a semi-divine attendant of the divinity characterizes the society's increasing awareness of the specific functions. Analyzed regionally, culturally, and/or politically, the analysis determines that each of these characteristics was conceived as the primary function of the divinity."

[40] Green, *Storm-God*, 13.

[41] Green, *Storm-God*, 33-34.

[42] I.e., Ningrisu/Ninurta is often represented by a bull, a typical representation of fecundity (Green, *Storm-God*, 18, 47-78).

on mythical description as well. This type of manifestation appears dramatically in the descriptions of Ninurta in the *Lugal-e* myth.

> The lord cried woe! It shook heaven,
> made earth shiver under his feet,
> he let it out again unto their borders,
> and Enlil grew perturbed, left Ekur,
> mountains were shattered,
> and the Anunnaki (high gods) scattered then and there,
> the warrior slapped his thigh,
> and the gods dispersed,
> like sheep the Anunnaki ran out
> in (all) the world.
>
> Rising, the lord abutted heaven,
> Ninurta marching into battle
> kept abreast of the (hurrying) hours,
> a very storm he went to war,
> rode on seven gales against the rebel country.[43]

Increasingly, storm-gods take on the persona of war, with the storm itself functioning as the voice, weaponry, and transport of the god.

2.1.2. *Divine Warriors and the Human Realm*

Divine warfare where gods fight on behalf of their human subjects is well attested but in many instances is less vivid than the action between gods.[44] The evidence for such historiographical descriptions is widespread and significant.[45] Generally divine intervention in the human realm followed a basic pattern: 1) a king needed divine

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[43] "The Ninurta Myth Lugal-e," 69-76 (Jacobsen, *Harps*, 240).

[44] Thorkild Jacobsen, "Religious Drama in Ancient Mesopotamia" in *Unity and Diversity: Essays in the History, Literature, and Religion of the Ancient Near East* (ed. Hans Goedicke and J. J. M. Roberts; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 65-97, argues that toward the end of the second millennium B.C.E. and into the early first, the emphasis of mythology had moved from themes like fertility to historical-political issues such as warfare.

[45] My understanding of historiography derives from J. J. M. Roberts, "Myth *versus* History," *CBQ* 38 (1976): 3, n. 15: "a literary phenomenon involving the recording and analysis, explicit or implicit, of past events." For an overview of ancient Near Eastern historiography, see Sa-Moon Kang, *Divine War in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East*. BZAW 177 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989), 1-7.

approval prior to initiating battle; 2) any hope of victory in battle required the divine presence; and 3) victors needed to properly respond to divine intervention by paying homage to the Divine Warrior who brought victory.[46]

Human warfare, then, was dependent on the gods. Rulers fought and conquered at the command of the gods.[47] A chronicle of Tiglath-Pileser's I (1114–1076) expedition to the Mediterranean Sea found on a clay foundation document for the Anu-Ada temple in Ashur demonstrates this:

> Tiglath-Pilesar, the legitimate king, king of the world, king of Assyria, king of (all) the four rims (of the earth), the courageous hero who lives (guided) by the trust-inspiring oracles given (to him) by Ashur and Ninurta, the great gods and his lords, (and who thus) overthrew all of his enemies . . . At the command of my lord Ashur I was conqueror from beyond the Lower Zab River to the Upper Sea which lies toward the West.[48]

The chronicle not only attributes Tiglath-Pileser's victories to the gods Ashur and Ninurta, it describes the expedition itself as a response to the command of the god Ashur.

Kings directly attributed the results of a battle to divine action in victory or inaction in the case of defeat.[49] Typical is a statement that appears on at least four inscriptions from the reign of Adad-narari I (1307–1275 B.C.E.) of Assyria:

> With the strong weapons of the god Ashur, my lord with the support of the gods An, Enlil, and Ea, Sin, Shamash, Adad, Ishtar, and Nergal most powerful among the gods, my lords; I captured by conquest the city of Taidu, his great royal city.[50]

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[46] Bernhard Lang, *The Hebrew God: Portrait of an Ancient Deity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 50-52.

[47] Kang, *War*, 13-14.

[48] "Tiglath-Pileser I (1114–1076): Expeditions to Syria, the Lebanon, and the Mediterranean Sea," (trans. A. Leo Oppenheim; ANET, 274-75).

[49] Kang, *War*, 14-23.

[50] Adad-Narari I, Inscriptions 3, 4, 5, 6 (*ARI*, 1:59-60).

There are instances where divine intervention takes a spectacular form. The Tukulti-Ninurta Epic, an early example of Assyrian royal epic, highlights this kind of intervention. The epic recounts the activities of Tukulti-Ninurta I (1243–1207) during his campaigns in Syria, Anatolia, and Babylonia.[51] In his decisive battle with the Babylonian king Kashtiliash IV (ca. 1232–1225), the divine army stands at the forefront:

> The lines of battle were drawn up,
> combat was enjoined on the battle field.
> There was great commotion,
> the servants were quivering among them.
> Assur went first, the conflagration of defeat burst
> upon the enemy,
> Enlil was whirling in the midst of the foe, fanning the blaze,
> Anu set the pitiless mace to the opponent,
> Sin, the luminary, laid upon them the tension of battle,
> Adad, the hero, made wind and flood pour down
> over their fighting,
> Shamash, lord of judgment, blinded the eyesight of the army
> of Sumer and Akkad,
> Valiant Ninurta, vanguard of the gods,
> smashed their weapons,
> Ishtar flailed her jump rope, driving their warriors berserk!
> Behind the gods, his allies, the king at the head of the army
> sets to battle,
> He let fly an arrow, the fierce, overwhelming,
> crushing weapon of Assur, he felled one slain.[52]

As this example shows, such depictions show the various gods using the weapons of his of his or her realm to aid the favored monarch.

A god's favorable intervention indicated divine favor. This intervention could take dramatic forms that brought terror to temporal foes. We see an example of this on the Gebel Barkal stele of Thutmose III (d. 1426 B.C.E.). This stele is an example of an Egyptian "seance" or "sitting of the king," a description of an event where a pharaoh

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[51] Foster, *Muses*, 1:209.

[52] "Tukulti-Ninurta Epic," v (= A rev) 31'-42' (Foster, *Muses*, 1:224-25).

makes announcements to his courtiers that often include descriptions of his foreign campaigns.[53]

> Listen up, you people of the Southland who are in the Holy Mountain ; then you will know the Manifestation of [Amun-re] in the presence of the Two Lands entire!
> [. . .] the [. . .] had sneakily come to launch a night engagement, at the posting of the regular watch, when two hours had elapsed. Coming of a celestial body, moving to the south of them—an incomparable event—dashing forward straight ahead. Not one of them could stand their ground [. . . They fled, tumb]ling headlong; for lo! there was [fire] behind them and flames in front of them! Not one of them screwed up his courage nor looked back. They had no horses, (for) they had bolted into [. . .] to let all the foreigners see My Majesty's power. So I turned back southward with a happy heart, and celebrated my lord [Amun-re Lord of Karnak], the one who ordained the victory, and set dread of me in the hearts of barbarians [. . .] in my reign, when he placed fear of me among [all] the foreigners, so that they fled on me afar off.[54]

Amun-Re sends the star to terrorize Thutmose's enemies, putting a dread of Thutmose in their hearts. Thus, Amun-Re's action demonstrates his approval of Thutmose's campaign and paves the way for victory.

One of the major considerations in the interplay between mythology and history is the importance of the actions of the Divine Warrior in legitimizing the rule or campaign of the king. This motif is ancient, going back into the 3rd millennium B.C.E. and does more than simply affirm that a particular king won victory or obtained his rule at the

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[53] Donald B. Redford, *The Wars in Syria and Palestine of Thutmose III* (Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 16; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 101.

[54] "The Gebel Barkal Stele" 13 (Redford, *Wars*, 112-13). For another translation see Weinfeld, "Intervention," 125. Note that Weinfeld's translation emphasizes the death of the enemy, or at least their horses. Redford's rendering emphasizes that the star (Egyptian: *sb3*) brings a panic that causes the enemy to flee. In either case, the star serves as a weapon of the god to ensure the victory of Thutmose. While the motif of the stars or comets appearing as divine weaponry was common in Egypt, it was less so in the ancient Near East (note, however, the discussion of Weinfeld "Intervention," 124-31). It does, however, appear in Hebrew Scripture (e.g., Judg 5:20-25, "The stars fought from heaven . . .") and, later, in the book of Revelation where stars perform a number of roles. Stars do appear in the ancient Near East as omens, shields, and personified messengers and divinities. On the portrayal of stars in the ancient Near East, see Francesca Rochberg, "Personifications and Metaphors in Babylonian Celestial Phenomena," *JAOS* 116 (1996): 475-85.

approval of the gods. The gods affirm the king by arming him with the very weapons of divine warfare, weapons that may have played a prominent role in the gods' mythical battles. Durand notes a clear early example from Mari as the god Adad anoints Zimri-Lin as king:[55]

> Je t'ai ramené sur le trône de ton père et les armes avec lesquelles je m'étais battu contre Têrnturn (Tiamat), je te les ai données.
> Je t'ai oint de l'huile de ma victoire et nul ne s'est tenu face à toi.[56]
>
> I have returned you to the throne of your father and the weapons with which I fought against Têrnturn (Tiamat), I gave them to you.
> I anointed you with the oil of my victory and no one has opposed you.

Thus, Zimri-Lin is reinstalled as king on his father's throne.[57] He not only has Adad's approval as king, he receives an expression of Adad's power with the gift of the very weapon by which Adad defeated Tiamat. The "power and efficacy" of the divine weapon "is evidently to be transmitted to the king."[58]

2.1.3. *The Adaptation of Myth and Imagery to New Contexts*

It is also clear that in the ancient Near East motifs and even entire myths could be borrowed, adapted, and developed as they appeared in different periods or cultures. Later myths make use of pieces or motifs from older myths and then fit them to their own particular context. Hooke notes this adaptation taking place in three ways: 1) adaptation, where pieces of myth are taken and fit into the current context; 2) disintegration, where

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[55] Wyatt, "Arms," 160, calls this the earliest extent extra-biblical allusion to anointing.

[56] *ARM* A 1968, 2'–3' (Durand, "Le mythologème," 45).

[57] For the confusing political situation surrounding the return of Zimri-Lin to the throne see Amélie Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East c. 3000–300 B.C.* (2 vols.; RHAW; London: Routledge, 1995), 1:98-99.

[58] Wyatt, "Arms," 162. This was also a prominent motif in Egypt (Kang, *War*, 89, 99).

aspects of the original mythic pieces have no meaning in the current cultural context; these items lose any sense of their original context, either becoming devoid of meaning or redefined by the borrowing culture; 3) and degradation, where continued borrowing makes the "original myth" impossible to discern behind the layers of adaptation and disintegration.[59]

We find numerous examples of adaptation in *Enuma Elish* where telling the story of Marduk and Tiamat makes use of a variety of different images that also appear in earlier myth. For instance, the first millennium Babylonian god-list *An = Anum* includes a creation account that builds upon material in earlier Sumerian myths. The older material is similar to the scene detailing the creation of the gods in *Enuma Elish* I.10-20.[60]

However, there are significant differences that suggest the later myth made use of familiar imagery in a different way. For instance, while there are similarities to the description of creation in the god-list of *An = Anum*, there are significant adaptations in *Enuma Elish*. One adaptation is the removal of the genealogy of Ki and her offspring, especially Enlil. This is an important omission as it may point to a primary purpose of the myth: the explanation for the ascendency of Marduk and the primacy of his city, Babylon. In earlier myths, Enlil holds the role that Marduk wins in *Enuma Elish* and is housed in Nippur. Thus, it would make sense for *Enuma Elish* to ignore Enlil since the story is not about Marduk displacing Enlil but an explanation for why Marduk is king of

[59] Hooke, *"Myth*," 5-7. The aspect of degradation indicates one of the difficulties of using source criticism to find the ur-myth behind a given myth. Various mythologems may be so far "degraded" from any connection with earlier examples that a particular usage may obscure meaning retained from earlier uses. Similarly, Fontenrose, *Python*, 7-8, notes the type of adaptations that took place with the *Chaoskampf* as it was brought into new situations.

[60] Jacobsen, *Treasures*, 168-69.

the gods.[61] A second adaptation from *An = Anum* is that the writer makes *Enuma Elish* primarily a theogony as opposed to a cosmology.[62] Rather than creation being a prominent feature, it is Marduk's victory and ascendency to the throne that leads to the creation of the cosmos and humanity. The importance of this adaptation is that it is theological in nature; it serves to highlight the prominence of a different god from earlier myth, making even issues surrounding the creation of the world secondary to the god Marduk's victory and enthronement.

Another significant motif that has undergone adaption in *Enuma Elish* is that of the storm-god battling the sea, a version of the *Chaoskampf*. As noted earlier, Marduk comes to battle with the roar of the storm and wielding the weapons of the storm. Marduk's foe, Tiamat, is the personification of the salty sea.[63] The description of Marduk and the general outline of the story are similar to that found in such earlier sources as the Ninurta myth *Lugal-e*.[64] Both Marduk and Ninurta are clothed with the storm, ride in the storm, and are armed with the weapons of the storm.[65] However, the forces of chaos have changed. In *Enuma-Elish* the foe is Tiamat, the salty sea. Ninurta's foe, Azag, appears to be some kind of tree whose activity clearly represents a threat for

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[61] Jacobsen, *Treasures*, 169, 190. Jacobsen also suggest that Enlil would likely have been considered one of those who sided with Tiamat during the conflict with Marduk (see *Enuma Elish* I. 110-24) and therefore not worthy of the high position afforded to Marduk.

[62] Jacobsen, *Treasures*, 169. Of course, cosmology is present in *Enuma Elish*. However, it takes place much later in the story and is simply one aspect of Marduk's ascendency.

[63] Jacobsen, *Treasures*, 168.

[64] Schwemer, *Wettergottgestalten*, 188.

[65] Compare "Epic of Creation," 4.33-58 (Foster, *Muses*, 1:373-74) with "The Ninurta Myth Lugal-e," 1-15 (Jacobsen, *Harps*, 235-36).

the Sumerian cities.[66] This difference may be due to different culture and geography. The Babylonians, separated from the sea, may have held some fear of it while the Sumerians, who were desert-dwellers, may have had some fear of forests.[67] Whatever the reason, it is clear that the *Chaoskampf*, present in both *Lugal-e* and *Enuma Elish*, has been adapted in the later work to fit the new context and culture. Two motifs also connect *Enuma Elish* to the earlier Babylonian flood story, *Atrahasis*, though in both instances, the motive behind the changes is not clear. First, both make use of the motif of gods being disturbed by noisy underlings[68] and second, both include the idea that humanity is created from the blood of a vanquished god.[69] Thus, similar imagery is changed to fit a new cultural situation.

It is also possible that the use of significant motifs in *Enuma Elish* that are present in earlier myths is an intentional attempt to replace the earlier works.[70] Batto suggests that the opening line of *Enuma Elish* does just this to *Atrahasis* by making the timeline of

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[66] See, e.g., "The Ninurta Myth Lugal-e," lines 26-47 (Jacobsen, *Harps*, 237-39). On the god Azag from the *Lugal-e* myth, see Jacobsen, *Harps*, 237-38, n. 8.

[67] On items such as geography playing a role in how gods were viewed—especially in relation to storm-gods, see Green, *Storm-God*, 2-4. On the climate and topography of ancient Babylon and Sumerian, see Green, *Storm-God*, 8-13.

[68] Jacobsen, *Treasures*, 167. In *Atrahasis* I. 335-60, the human race has become noisy, disturbing the peace of the gods, leading to the intervention of the god Enki and the heroics of the human Atrahasis. In *Enuma Elish*, this motif appears twice. First, in I. 21-54, where it is the noisy offspring of Apsu and Tiamat provoking Apsu to attempt to destroy the gods, an attempt that ended in his own death (I. 60-78). Second, it is Marduk who provokes unnamed gods, initiating the confrontation between Marduk and Tiamat that ends with Marduk's victory (I. 80-132).

[69] In *Atrahasis* I. 221-47, humanity is made from clay mixed with the blood of the slaughtered We-ilu, apparently the leader of the rebellion against Enlil. In *Enuma Elish*, VI. 1-38, Qingu, Tiamat's consort after the death of Apsu and the commander of the armies that fought Marduk, is executed for his role and his blood serves as the material by which humanity is created. According to Clifford, *Creation*, 54, the idea that humanity had to be created from blood is a later development. He suggests that earlier myths simply mixed water with clay. An example of this is the "Song of the Hoe," lines 18-27 (trans. Gertrud Faber; *COS* 1.157: 511-12), where Enlil creates humanity by planting human beings as a crop.

[70] Batto, *Dragon*, 38-39.

Enuma Elish prior to that of *Atrahasis*.[71] Further, in *Atrahasis* 222, the creation of humanity is the idea of Enki. In *Enuma Elish*, Enki (called Ea) is significant, first as the one who slays Apsu and second as Marduk's father, but the credit for the idea to create humanity belongs to Marduk.[72] Thus, two similar mythologems have been adapted, possibly as a polemic on the earlier work.

A further dramatic aspect of adaptation and development took place in the Assyrian version of *Enuma Elish*. Since the Babylonian version had, at its core, the exaltation of Marduk and his city, Babylon, the Assyrians could not make use of the story as it stood. Thus, the Assyrian version of *Enuma Elish* puts Assur in the role of the hero, otherwise leaving the story essentially unchanged.[73]

2.1.4. *Summary*

To summarize, depictions of the gods at war extend back into the third millennium B.C.E. in the ancient Near East. Divine warfare had two recurring backgrounds. Some depictions might explain the creation of the world. Others, often adapting the motif of the *Chaoskampf*, a god at war with a dragon-type figure, demonstrate the right of a god to rule. In the case of *Enuma Elish*, both features are present, as creation happens as a result of Marduk's victory over Tiamat. This same victory established Marduk as king of the gods.

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[71] "When on high no name was given to heaven," in "Epic of Creation," I.1 (Foster, *Muses*, 354). Contrast this with the opening line from *Atrahasis*: "When gods were men . . .," in "Flood Story," a.1 (Foster, *Muses*, 1:159). In other words, the *Enuma Elish* takes place before the creation of the gods—and in fact, describes their creation—while *Atrahasis* takes place after their creation. Batto, *Dragon*, 38, takes this as a "not too subtle polemic" that puts the *Enuma Elish* in a more authoritative position by setting it in the earlier context.

[72] Batto, *Dragon*, 39.

[73] Foster, *Muses*, 1:351.

Descriptions of Divine Warriors often used anthropomorphic imagery and pictured familiar weaponry such as spears or bows. However, divine weapons were much more than human weapons. They could have superhuman features or they could be magically enhanced. A recurring aspect of divine weaponry was the gods' use of the destructive forces of the storm. Over time depictions and descriptions of Divine Warriors show an increasingly martial aspect, with various aspects of the storm at the Warrior's control for transport, weaponry and the roar signaling an approach to war.

The gods also fought on behalf of their human subjects, where their presence ensured victory for a favored king and their absence was a sign of disfavor and the reason for a king's defeat. Kings fought after seeking divine approval, the gods fought on behalf of the king with the weapons of their realm, and the gods could bestow divine weapons on a favored king.

Finally, it is also clear that different aspects of mythological imagery underwent development and adaptation as they are reworked into other myths. In using *Enuma Elish* as an example, we noted that adaptation took place in at least two contexts: theological and cultural. We see theological adaptation when later myth uses the same imagery to highlight the favored god. Cultural adaptation takes place when the imagery involved is adapted into a new setting.

Such adaptation may also include replacement, where earlier images are changed in a way that attempts to set aside an earlier myth. As new empires replaced old empires, the new attempted to minimize the hold of earlier myths by telling new, related myths with familiar imagery, or simply rewriting the old myths to fit new situations.

2.2. *The Divine Warrior in the Ugaritic Baal Epic*

The discovery of the Ugaritic texts at Ras Shamra present an opportunity to investigate a significant corpus of literature from a culture that is geographically and linguistically close to the focus of my next chapter, the Hebrew Scriptures.[74] In this section my goal is to give an overview of how the Ugaritic texts describe the gods at war in advance of specific consideration of Divine Warrior imagery in Hebrew Scripture.

Most of the martial imagery from Ugarit takes place in the Baal Epic (KTU 1.1-6), making this collection the focus of my investigation. The Baal Epic is the cycle of myths that outline the battles of Baal in his quest to hold his kingship and establish his palace.[75] The general outline of the Baal Epic focuses on Baal's battle against Yam, Baal's attempt to build a palace befitting his status, and Baal's battle against Mot.

The primary purpose of Baal's battle against Yam is to determine who will rule.[76] Yam, "Beloved of El," receives El's blessing to build a palace, take the throne[77] and to do

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[74] For a recap of discovery and early decipherment of the Ugaritic materials, see Mark S. Smith, *Untold Stories: The Bible and Ugaritic Studies in the Twentieth Century* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2001), 13-16. On the general affinity between Israel and Canaan, see Mark S. Smith, *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel* (2d ed.; Biblical Resource Series; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 19-25 and John Day, "Ugarit and the Bible: Do They Presuppose the Same Canaanite Mythology and Religion?" in *Ugarit and the Bible: Proceedings of the International Symposium on Ugarit and the Bible, Manchester, September 1992* (ed. George J. Brooke, Adrian H. W. Curtis, and John F. Healy; UBL 11; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1994), 35-52. I return to this issue in more detail in the next chapter.

[75] Scholars generally consider the Baal Epic as a related set though there is some debate about the exact order of the tablets. In what follows, I follow Nick Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit* (2d ed.; BS 53; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 23—who in turn follows KTU^2—with regard to the order of tablets. I am well aware of the contentious nature of the debate over the order of the tablets of the Epic but such concerns are beyond the scope of this work. For a summary of views and issues, see Mark S. Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle* (vol. 1; VTSup 55; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 2-25.

[76] The authority of this dominion is limited under the overall authority of El who never relinquishes his rule in the Baal Epic. El, ruler of the gods, parcels out dominion as he sees fit. Baal, meanwhile, becomes lord of the earth and, apparently, the patron of Ugarit. For the nature of the rule of El on the Ugaritic pantheon, see E. Theodore Mullen, Jr., *The Assembly of the Gods: The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature* (HSM 24; Chico, Calif.: Scholars, 1980), 8-110 and Lowell K.

away with Baal. Baal, however, obtains powerful, divine weapons and returns to battle Yam. With the aid of these weapons he is able to defeat Yam.

Now victorious, Baal is distressed that he lacks a palace like the other gods, a palace to serve as the symbol of his kingship. Needing the permission of El to build his palace, Baal enlists the goddess Anat to his cause. Anat then threatens El but her threat apparently fails.[78] Thus, they both enlist El's consort, Athirat, to aid in persuading El. Finally, El agrees and Baal's temple is built. Following its completion Baal hosts a celebration banquet amongst the gods.

The celebration banquet sets the scene for Baal's battle with Mot, as Mot is incensed at not being invited. Mot then slays Baal and, in turn, Anat slays Mot. Both are somehow resurrected and, after seven years, battle again. However, the god Shapsh intervenes and convinces Mot that defeating Baal will bring the enmity of El upon him, costing Mot his own domain. Mot, fearful of such a result, agrees to allow Baal to retain Baal's kingship.

Divine warfare in the Baal Epic focuses on two deities in particular, Baal and his sister/consort, Anat.[79] The imagery associated with these two Divine Warriors is an essential component of later descriptions of YHWH as Divine Warrior in the Hebrew

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Handy, *Among the Host of Heaven: The Syro-Palestinian Pantheon as Bureaucracy* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 65-130.

[77] El apparently gives Baal's throne to Yam because of some unspecified rebellion on the part of Baal. See KTU 1.1.vi.22-25 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 49-50).

[78] There are significant lacunae in the text. We know that Anat has failed because of subsequent events.

[79] Patrick D. Miller, Jr., *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (HSM 5; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 24-48.

Scriptures. My discussion of Divine Warrior imagery in the Baal Epic thus has these two gods as primary exemplars.

2.2.1. *Baal the Divine Warrior*

Baal is a warrior. In the finds from Ugarit, he alone is consistently called upon to defend or regain his position through warfare. His most frequent epithet, *aliyn b'l*,[80] is clearly martial in outlook.[81] Baal also claims the epithet *aliy qrdm*, "Valiant Warrior," for himself.[82] Though far less attested and the subject of some controversy as to exactly what it means, the title *dmrn* also indicates Baal's martial character:[83]

> Enemies of Hadd, you should indeed fear,
> you should indeed fear the weapons of *dmrn*.[84]

Further, though weather elements seem muted in the Baal Epic, Baal's appearances also make generous use of the violence of the storm.[85] Another common appellate for Baal is *rkb 'rbt*, "Rider of the Clouds," storm terminology which carries a

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[80] E.g., KTU 1.1.iv.22 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 80). According to Nick Wyatt, "The Titles of the Ugaritic Storm-God," *UF* 24 (1992): 405, this title appears at least 68 times in the extant Ugaritic literature. The title is translated variously as "Most Mighty Baal" (Ulf Oldenburg, *The Conflict between El and Ba'al in Canaanite Religion* [DHRP 3; Leiden: Brill, 1969], 58, n. 10), "Victor Baal" (G. R. Driver, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* [OTS 3; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1971], 75, col. 2, line 22), "Mightiest Baal" (J. C. L. Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* [2nd ed.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1978], 39), or "Valiant Baal" (Wyatt, *Texts*, 80).

[81] Miller, *Warrior*, 39-41. Wyatt, "Titles," 405, states, "the title alludes to Baal's characteristically violent nature and victory in combat."

[82] E.g., KTU 1.3.iv.8 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 80).

[83] Wyatt, "Titles," 410-12, concedes that the entire section is difficult and reviews the various proposals. If the title refers to Baal, which seems likely, it is clearly martial in context.

[84] KTU 1.4.vii .38-39 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 110).

[85] Smith, *Ugaritic*, 97: "The weather elements often serve as indications of Baal's power."

definite martial overtone.[86] "The clouds are the war chariot of the storm god as he goes to battle."[87] The martial tone is also explicit when parallelism connects Baal's role as warrior with his role as weather god.

> Baal is dead!
> What has become of the Powerful One?
> The Son of Dagan!
> What has become of the Tempest?[88]

Baal's roar comes from the force of the storm and causes a considerable reaction from his enemies and from creation itself.

> Baal opened a rift in the clouds;
> his holy voice Baal gave forth;
>
> Baal repeated the is[sue of] his lips.
>
> At his h[oly] voice the earth quaked;
> at the issue of his [lips] the mountains were afr[aid].
>
> The ancient [mountains] were afraid;
> the hills of the ear[th] tottered.
>
> The enemies of Baal took possession of the forests,
> those hating Hadd the flanks of the mountain.[89]

Baal's weaponry seems based upon storm imagery as well. His "definitive weapon" is the spear (*mrḥ*), which is usually understood as a lightning bolt, especially

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[86] Moshe Weinfeld, "'Rider of the Clouds' and 'Gatherer of the Clouds,'" *JANES* 5 (1975): 421-26, who notes that throughout the ancient Near East, the rider of the clouds "is mostly associated with war activity." See also Smith, *History*, 81-82.

[87] Miller, *Warrior*, 41.

[88] KTU 1.6.i.6-8 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 129). For how the parallelism informs the sense of "Tempest" (*hmlt*), see Wyatt, "Titles," 412-15. For discussion of the title "Powerful One" (*lim*), see Wyatt, "Titles," 417-19.

[89] KTU 1.4.vii.29-37 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 109).

when coupled with iconographic evidence such as the "Baal au foudre" stele.[90] The stele itself matches well the description of Baal with his weaponry in KTU 1.4.vii 40-42:

> Baal spoke;
> the axe his (left) hand indeed brandished,
> the cedar (was) in his right hand.[91]

In his battle with Yam he receives two specially made weapons from the craftsman-god Kathar-wa-Hosis: maces named "Expeller," to expel Yam, and "All-Driver," to drive Yam away.[92] The first of these weapons fails in its task but the second hits its mark:

> Then the mace leapt from the hand of Baal,
> like a falcon from his fingers.
>
> It struck the skull of Prince Yam,
> the brow of Ruler Nahar.
>
> Yam collapsed in a heap;
> he fell to the ground.
>
> His joints trembled,
> and his visage was discomposed.
>
> Baal gathered up
> and drank <Prince> Yam to the dregs;
> he exterminated ruler Nahar.[93]

Both of these weapons are a type of mace or club (*ṣmd*). Such a weapon is "peculiar to the gods and swoops like an eagle."[94] The charge for the weapon to leap

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[90] Gregorio del Olmo Lete, "The Divine Panoply (KTU 1.65:12-14)," *AuOr* 10 (1992): 254-55.

[91] KTU1.4.vii.40-42 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 110-111).

[92] KTU 1.2.iv.11-15 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 65-66).

[93] KTU 1.2.iv.24-28 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 67-68).

[94] Yigael Yadin, "Symbols of Deities at Zinjirli, Carthage and Hazor," in *Near Eastern Archaeology in the Twentieth Century: Essays in Honor of Nelson Glueck* (ed. James A. Sanders; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970), 213.

forth like a bird of prey gives it a characteristic beyond human weaponry, further enhanced by their commission to strike at specific parts of Yam's body.[95] Their divine character is also demonstrated when Kothar names the weapons according to the direct purpose for which he fashioned them, similar to what we saw with Marduk's horses.[96] Generally, these weapons are also thought to be weather-related and are understood as lightning.[97] This gives Baal's weapons a nature beyond anything available in the human realm, and demonstrates Baal's ability to use the elements of the storm.

Baal makes use of other weapons as well, though the character of these weapons is not always clear.[98] Given the brief mention of the weapons with no defining characteristics, such weapons are likely only divine in the sense that the divine Baal uses them. Interestingly, gods use such mundane weapons in their confrontations with other gods:

> Baal seized the sons of Athirat.
>
> The great ones he smote with a blade,
> the brilliant ones he smote with a mace,
> the small ones he smote to the earth.
>
> And Baal went up to the throne of his kingship,
> [to the back-rest], to the siege of his dominion.[99]

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[95] Smith, *Ugaritic*, 343-46.

[96] Smith, *Ugaritic*, 342-43.

[97] See especially Yadin, "Symbols," 213-14.

[98] For a summary of divine weapons mentioned in the Baal Epic, see del Olmo Lete, "Panoply," 255-56.

[99] KTU 1.6.v.1-5 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 140).

Baal faces two primary opponents in the Baal Epic: Yam and Mot. Yam, the personified Sea, generally appears to represent the forces of chaos and destruction.[100] Baal himself calls the power of Yam a "sieve of destruction" in KTU 1.2.iv.3.[101] As a sea deity, Yam probably is a serpent in the same manner as Tiamat from Babylonian myth.[102] If this is the case, then Yam may also be identified in Ugaritic myth as the serpent/dragon *ltn*, Lotan.

Equating Yam with Lotan has not won unanimous support, primarily because there is no clear connection between Yam and Lotan in any confrontation with Baal. Further, there is no hint in the Baal/Yam conflict that Yam takes any form like that of a dragon while Yam is often described anthropomorphically.[103] Finally, the name Lotan does not appear anywhere in connection with Baal's defeat of Yam in KTU 1.2.[104] Instead, it is Mot who mentions the defeat of the Lotan, at the beginning of Mot's confrontation with Baal.[105]

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[100] E.g., Smith, *Ugaritic*, 59: "Yamm embodies the chaos that threatens the life of the world." On equating Yam with chaos, note the caution of Samuel E. Loewenstamm, *Comparative Studies in Biblical and Ancient Oriental Literatures* (AOAT 204; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1980), 350, who finds the only chaotic element related to Yam in the Baal/Yam conflict is the general association of chaos with the sea.

[101] Wyatt, *Texts*, 63. See Smith, *Ugaritic*, 331, for the difficulties presented by surrounding context. Despite these difficulties, it seems clear that Baal calls Yam's power a sieve of destruction.

[102] E.g., Frank M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 119-20, who supposes that Baal's battle with Yam is a variant of the myth of Lotan. Cross also calls attention to the fact that the biblical evidence equates Yam and Leviathan, the Hebrew version of Lotan.

[103] See, e.g., KTU 1.2.iv.15-25 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 66-67), where Kothar impels his weapons to strike a decidedly anthropomorphic Yam.

[104] John Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (UCOP 35; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 14. Smith, *History*, 85-86, lists three separate enemies of Baal: Yam, Lotan, and Mot.

[105] KTU 1.5.i .1-5 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 115-16).

Two points argue in favor of allowing for the possibility of identifying Lotan with Yam. First, in KTU 1.3.iii 39-41, Anat boasts in such a way that appears to equate Yam, Nahar, and Lotan:

> Surely I smote the beloved of El, Yam?
> Surely I exterminated Nahar, the mighty god?
> Surely I lifted up the dragon,
> I overpowered him?
> I smote the writhing serpent,
> Encircler-with-seven-heads![106]

The equation of Yam and Nahar is common throughout the Baal Epic.[107] This suggests that the parallelism in Anat's outburst identifies Lotan with Yam as well.[108] Thus it may be that Yam, Nahar and the Dragon are all alternative designations for Yam.[109]

Second, while Yam is indeed personified in his fight with Baal, this does not rule out him being described as a dragon elsewhere.[110] Yam represents the chaotic Sea as well, something less than an anthropomorphic description. In this case, Yam's multi-

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[106] KTU 1.3.iii.38-42 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 79).

[107] Yam is commonly designated as "Prince Yam, Ruler Nahar" throughout the Baal Epic. See, e.g., the first mention of Yam, KTU 1.21.iv.13-14 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 48).

[108] Wayne T. Pitard, "Just How Many Monsters Did Anat Fight (KTU 1.3 III 38-47)?" in *Ugarit at Seventy-Five* (ed. K. Lawson Younger, Jr.; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 80-82. There are two main components to Pitard's argument. First, the particle *l-*, "surely," unites the terms in the first three lines. There has never been any question that Nahar refers to Yam. Thus, it is likely that, given the structure, Lotan refers to Yam as well. Second, if Lotan is the name of a distinct being, it is the only such name in the passage that lacks an El-related epithet. Note, however, Green, *Storm-God*, 184: "There is no indication . . . that either Lotan, the 'Crooked Serpent,' or Yam is of the same form, nor do the names *Yam* and *Lotan* ever appear in parallelism. In the one recorded instance in which they do appear together, in the Anat text . . . , they represent two creatures, *each* of which is successively conquered by the goddess." Green's argument rests on the portrayal of Yam and Lotan elsewhere in Ugaritic literature rather than on the analysis of the one isolated passage. It should be noted that Pitard, "Monsters," 80, cautions, "a definitive answer cannot be given" for the question of whether Yam and Lotan are different names for the same being in KTU 1.3.

[109] Pitard, "Monsters," 83.

[110] Pitard, "Monsters," 82-83.

faceted description echoes that of Tiamat, who could be described anthropomorphically, as a dragon, and as the ocean. Such multiform presentations of gods were common throughout the ancient Near East.

Regardless of how this question should be answered, it is clear that the Sea is a significant force that stands against Baal, the storm-god. If Yam and the dragon are not connected, Baal's defeat of the multi-headed dragon is itself a significant event. Battles against multi-headed dragons are recorded on seals that date into the 3rd millennium B.C.E.[111] This event is often tied to the *Chaoskampf*, though the fact that Lotan's defeat only appears in passing makes further elaboration speculative. The dragon's defeat is mentioned twice in the Baal Epic and alluded to in other texts, such as KTU 1.83.[112] If Lotan is distinct from Yam, then the actual battle is not described.

In any case, the defeat of the chaotic Sea is a common motif, as we saw earlier in relation to Tiamat and further illustrated by various seals and stelae reaching as far back as the Mari discoveries (late second millennium, B.C.E.).[113] The portrayal of the chaotic Sea as an enemy of the gods is not only common in literature throughout the ancient Near East. We shall see it again in a number of prominent passages in the Hebrew Scripture.

Baal's other adversary is Mot, death—or diminishing—personified. [114] Mot's sinister nature may be seen in a text outside the Baal Epic, KTU 1.127, where Mot is a

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[111] Smith, *History*, 86.

[112] For the text and translation of this fragment, see Giovanni Mazzini, "The Defeat of the Dragon in KTU 1.83.4-10," *UF* 35 (2003): 391-406.

[113] Smith, *History*, 85-86.

[114] Stefanie Ulrike Gulde, *Der Tod als Herrscher in Ugarit und Israel* (FAT II/22; Tübingen : Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 116. Paul L. Watson, "The Death of 'Death' in the Ugaritic Texts," *JAOS* 92 (1972): 62, states, "Mot is consistently portrayed throughout the Ugaritic material as the malevolent opponent of all fertility and vitality." Soon after the publication of the Ugaritic texts, those who held to a seasonal

personified plague.[115] Mot's constant threat is that he will devour his adversaries, swallowing them into his wide throat, a fate with which Mot threatens Baal:[116]

> When I [Mot] tear you in pieces
> I shall devour (you)
> elbows, blood and forearms;
>
> you will indeed go down into the throat of divine Mot,
> into the maw of the Beloved of El, the hero.[117]

Later, the threat is fulfilled. Mot vividly describes his swallowing of Baal to Anat to explain to her why Anat's search for Baal has been in vain:

> It was I who approached Valiant Baal:
> It was I who offered him up like a lamb in my mouth.
> Like a kid in the opening of my maw.[118]

Mot swallowing his enemies is an important motif that, as we shall see, continues in Hebrew Scripture. Mot's primary focus, then, is death and its realm. Gulde suggests that Mot "steht . . . für das individuelle Lebensende von Menschen und Göttern."[119] Baal, then, holds off Death and the two combatants cease hostilities.

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interpretation focused on Mot as a god involved in the fertility process. In an article originally published in 1942, Umberto Cassuto, "Baal and Mot in the Ugaritic Texts," *IEJ* 12 (1962): 77-86, correctly noted that Mot's character and domain did not fit well with the seasonal interpretation. Though some of the Cassuto's details have not stood the test of time, his basic argument and suppositions are still used in opposition to a seasonal interpretation of this passage. Cassuto, "Baal," 81, summarized his thinking by noting that "Mot's function . . . was to cut off life and cause death, in the widest possible meaning of this conception" and that "the dominion over Sheol was the essence of Mot's nature and that, so far from being in any way connected with fertility, he actually symbolizes the forces opposed to it."

[115] Gulde, *Tod*, 113, calls Mot a "göttlicher Repräsentant einer tödlichen Epidemie." Smith, *History* 87-88, notes Mot's sinister nature in this passage, calling attention to Mot's demon-like nature. Earlier, Smith, *Ugaritic*, 19, suggested that Mot started as a demon associated with pestilence and developed into a "figure larger than life."

[116] Gulde, *Tod*, 117.

[117] KTU 1.5.i.5-8 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 116).

[118] KTU 1.6.ii.21-23 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 134).

[119] Gulde, *Tod*, 113.

Smith suggests that the character of Baal's enemies tells us as much about Baal as it does about Yam and Mot. In other words, the characterization of an opponent may indicate that the protagonist embodies the opposite characterization, whether or not this is directly stated. In particular, if Yam and Mot are chaos and death personified, then Baal represents order and life.[120]

Generally, Baal does not war against the human race. One possible exception, however, is a scene that takes place during the building of Baal's palace:

> He (Baal) travelled [from city to] city
> he went from tow[n to to]wn.
> He seized sixty-six cities;
> seventy-seven towns.
> Eighty Baal [smote]
> ninety Baal [captured].[121]

With this possible exception, Baal's battles are primarily, if not exclusively, in the divine realm. Even in this passage, however, the primary focus is his war against two gods: Yam, whom he defeats, and Mot, whom he battles to a draw.

Cross, in comparing similar motifs accompanying divine warfare in both the Ugartic texts and in Hebrew Scripture, notes two specific patterns of cosmic, mythical warfare. The first is the march of the Warrior into battle,

> bearing his terrible weapons, the thunderbolt and the winds. He drives his fiery cloud-chariot against his enemy. His wrath is reflected in all nature. Mountains shatter; the heavens collapse at his glance. A terrible slaughter is appointed. All nature wilts and languishes.[122]

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[120] Smith, *Ugaritic*, 19.

[121] KTU 1.4.vii.7-12 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 108).

[122] Cross, *Myth*, 155-56.

Not all of the pieces Cross notes are present in each of Baal's various battles. In fact, in Baal's battle against Yam, Baal does not march; he simply begins to fight as soon as he receives his weaponry from Kothar-and-Hasis.[123] However, all of the elements of Cross' paradigm are present in the episode immediately following the completion of Baal's palace, a passage I noted above in regard to Baal's theophany:

> Baal opened a rift in the clouds;
>
> his holy voice gave forth;
> Baal repeated the is[sue of] his lips.
>
> At his h[ol]y voice the earth quaked;
> at the issue of his [lips] the mountains were afr[aid].
>
> The ancient [mountains] were afraid;
> the hills of the earth tottered.
>
> The enemies of Baal took possession of the forests,
> those hating Hadd the flanks of the mountain.
> And Valiant Baal said:
>
> 'Enemies of Hadd, you should indeed fear,
> You should indeed fear the weapons of the Mighty One!
>
> Baal spoke:
>
> The axe his (left) hand indeed brandished,
> the cedar (was) in his right hand.
> Then Baal returned to his house.[124]

Cross' second pattern is the return of the victorious Warrior to his temple or to his mountain.[125] Though Baal is often on his mountain, Mt. Saphon, perhaps the best example of this pattern of a return to his home takes place sometime between Baal's

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[123] KTU 1.2 vi.11-32 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 65-69).

[124] KTU 1.4 vii. 28-42 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 109-111).

[125] Cross, *Myth*, 156.

resurrection after Mot's swallowing and just prior to Baal's defeat of—or, perhaps, truce with—Mot.

> Baal seized the sons of Athirat.
> The great ones he smote with a blade,
> the brilliant ones he smote with a mace,
> the small ones he smote to the earth.
> And Baal went up to the throne of his kingship,
> [to the back-rest], to the siege of his dominion.[126]

Cross then combines the two patterns and their aggregate pieces and proposes that there is an archaic mythic pattern behind the Divine Warrior imagery from the Ugaritic literature and in the Hebrew Scriptures:

> a) The Divine Warrior goes forth to battle against chaos ("Yamm," "Leviathan," "Môt").
> b) Nature convulses (writhes) and languishes when the Warrior manifests his wrath.
> c) The warrior-god returns to take up kingship among the gods and is enthroned on his mountain.
> d) The Divine Warrior utters his voice from his temple, and Nature responds. The heavens fertilize the earth, animals writhe in giving birth, and men and mountains whirl in dancing and festive glee.[127]

While some of the individual pieces of Cross' paradigm are clearly recurring in both the Ugaritic texts and Hebrew Scripture, it is nevertheless far from clear that there is a consistent mythic pattern such as Cross suggests. It also seems to ask too much of the texts to reduce all instances of divine warfare to a battle of order against chaos. Further, some of Cross's pieces appear in features removed from the idea of cosmic conflict. For instance, nature regularly convulses at theophanies, not simply during warfare. Also, the description of the enthronement of the gods likely mimics the enthronement of human kings rather than being an expression of a mythic pattern of divine war. Finally, the

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[126] KTU 1.6.v.1-6 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 140).

[127] Cross, *Myth*, 162-63.

seasonal interpretation, which I discuss in more detail below, is itself questionable and thus a tenuous background for the reconstruction of a mythic paradigm of divine war. Thus, I prefer to take each of the pieces of Cross' proposal and examine the pieces on their own merit rather than to assume the appearance of the pieces indicates that Cross' whole paradigm lurks in the background.

The types of problems I note in Cross' reconstruction also become evident in much of the speculation concerning the purpose of the Baal Epic, where the conclusions here then serve to interpret similar passages in the Hebrew Scriptures. Smith's survey still remains one of the better overviews of the various proposals for the purpose of the Baal Epic.[128] He reduces the various proposals into three basic types: ritual and seasonal theories, cosmological interpretations, and historical and political views. However, no type has garnered anything close to a scholarly consensus, as any approach quickly struggles against significant problems.[129]

The problem with any interpretation of the Baal Epic, as well as the other myths in the Ugaritic material, is a lack of context that clearly ties the myths to any particular interpretation. Two factors impact this. First, there are numerous lacunae in the extant materials.[130] In the Baal Epic, for instance, more than half of the story is missing, sometimes at particularly crucial junctures for determining the flow of the story, let alone its meaning. Second, the stories provide little context for understanding them. This has

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[128] Smith, *Ugaritic*, 58-96. Smith's own interpretation (*Ugaritic*, 96-114) attempts to make use of the stronger elements of the other proposals and focuses on the "limited exaltation of Baal."

[129] Smith, *Ugaritic,* 58, notes well the passing comment of Neal H. Walls, *The Goddess Anat in Ugaritic Myth* (SBLDS 135; Atlanta: Scholars, 1992), 185, that the Baal Epic "remains largely impervious to comprehensive interpretation."

[130] Smith, *Ugaritic*, 4.

led to sharp disputes over the basic continuity of the story as well as the order of the tablets.[131] For instance, the only note external to the story of the battle between Baal and Mot appears at the very end:

> "Ilimilku the Shubanite wrote (it), the student of Attanu the diviner, chief of priests, chief of the temple herdsmen, sacrificer of Niqmad king of Ugarit, Lord of Yagrub and Ruler of Sharruman."[132]

Such paucity of evidence frustrates any attempt to determine how the texts fit into Ugaritic society, culture, and religion.

For the most part, a seasonal interpretation has held a sure popularity. This view interprets the Baal Epic as the ritual response to the change of seasons in Northwest Syria. In other words, myth and ritual work together to explain the Syrian seasonal patterns and any vagaries that may occur. However, recent years have seen this view fall on hard times due to the lack of clear evidence for a seasonal interpretation from the texts found at Ugarit. Further, the underpinnings of the seasonal interpretation, developed from a myth-and-ritual perspective, have been found wanting as the myth-and-ritual approach has lost favor.[133] Nevertheless, the influence of older scholarship remains, causing Wyatt to quip that "the seasonal corpse continues to twitch."[134]

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[131] This debate is thoroughly summarized in Smith, *Ugaritic*, 2-19.

[132] KTU 1.6.vi.54-58 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 145-46). The postscript naming the author, rare in ancient literature, appears to point to the text as part of a scribal exercise (Wyatt, *Texts*, 35).

[133] For a devastating critique of the myth and ritual school see, Joseph E. Fontenrose, *The Ritual Theory of Myth* (University of California Folklore Studies 18; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 2-25. For a discussion of the issues surrounding this debate as it pertains to later Hebrew Scripture, see Cross, *Myth*, 79-90.

[134] Wyatt, "Arms," 152. For a summary of the criticisms of the seasonal interpretation, see Smith, *Ugaritic*, 60-75 and Wyatt, *Myths*, 134-58.

Smith has noted that the various interpretations, including the seasonal interpretation, have two elements in common: first, the Baal Epic is primarily a story of conflict, with Baal's battles with Yam and Mot somehow reflecting the battle between order/life and chaos/death and, second, that this conflict uses the language of kingship.[135] This emphasis is clear from the beginning of the Baal Epic. Early on, El makes clear the antagonism between him and Baal.[136] For reasons that are unclear but seem to indicate a response to some kind of rebellion, El hands Baal's throne to Yam and promises Yam a palace.

> Your (Yam) name is "Beloved of E[l]"
> [I shall give you a house of silver,
> [a palace] out of [gold],
> from the hands of Valiant Ba[al]
> Since he has scorned me [ ].
> Drive him from the thro[ne of his kingship],
> [<from the back-rest,>]
> From the seige of his dominion![137]

The rest of the story of Baal versus Yam focuses on Baal gaining back his position of king, something he could only obtain through conflict,[138] as the craftsman-god Kothar-and-Hasis, makes clear:

> Indeed I say to you, O Prince Baal,
> I repeat, O Charioteer of the Clouds,
> now your foe, Baal,
> now your foe you must smite;

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[135] Smith, *Ugaritic*, 58-60. Wyatt, *Myths*, 156, points out that divine kingship is a focus in four episodes involving four different gods: Yam, Baal, Mot, and Athtar.

[136] Gregorio del Olmo Lete, "Notes on Ugaritic Semantics III," *UF* 9 (1977): 36. See also KTU 1.12.i.14–ii.56 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 163-67), where El orders Baal's destruction and even fills Baal's role as Weather God in Baal's absence.

[137] KTU 1.1.iv.20-25 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 49-50).

[138] Baal's need to fight to retain his kingship is often contrasted with El's kingship, which is never questioned.

now you must destroy your adversary!
Take your everlasting kingdom,
your eternal dominion![139]

Kothar-and-Kasis' commissioning of Baal's weapons further emphasizes that kingship is central to the battle. He charges both weapons with the express task of removing Yam from his throne.[140]

The consistent portrayal of Baal as fighting to retain his kingship is at odds with the other expressions of kingship found in the Baal Epic. For instance, El's reign and authority is clear and unquestioned from the beginning; he never battles to ascend or retain his position. Neither do subordinate gods attain their thrones through warfare. Mot's dominion is simply stated without elaboration. Yam receives his throne by appointment, in place of Baal, as we have seen above. Athtar also receives his authority by appointment, as El intends to give Baal's realm to Athtar after Mot had defeated Baal.[141] However, Athtar is only capable of reigning over a portion of Baal's domain:

Then Athtar the Brilliant went up into the uttermost parts of Saphon;
he sat on the throne of Valiant Baal.
[But] his feet did not reach the footstool;

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[139] KTU 1.2.iv.7-10 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 65); KTU 1.2.iv.20 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 67).

[140] KTU 1.2.iv.12-13 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 66)

[141] However, Athtar, like Baal, had previously lost a kingship to Yam when El appointed Yam over Athtar. For an unknown reason (due to lacunae), Athtar either was unable or unwilling to face Yam in battle (KTU 1.2.iii.13-24 [Wyatt, *Texts*, 55-57]). However, evidence from Old Akkadian texts indicates that Athtar may have had a strong martial component (Hugh Rowland Page, Jr., *The Myth of Cosmic Rebellion: A Study of its Reflexes in Ugaritic and Biblical Literature* [VTSupp 65; Leiden: Brill, 1996], 57; Athtar appears to have fulfilled the same role as Baal in South Arabia and his lesser status at Ugarit may therefore be cultural (André Caquot, "Le dieu 'Athtar et les textes de Ras Shamra," *Syria* 35 [1958]: 58. Athtar is the only god described as *dū mulki*, "possessor of kingship" in the Ugaritic texts (Page, *Myth*, 82). Finally, one of Athtar's titles is *'rẓ*, often rendered as "terrible" or "tyrant" (Wyatt, *Texts*, 132, n. 72). Note that Wyatt himself prefers "brilliant." See, however, Page, *Myth*, 79-92, for a translation of Ugaritic texts pertaining to Athtar that makes Athtar much more aggressive than most scholars would currently accept.

his head did not come to the top.
Then Athtar the Brilliant said:

"I shall not rule in the uttermost parts of Saphon!"

Athtar the Brilliant came down,
he came down from the throne of Valiant Baal,
and ruled in the earth.[142]

Meanwhile, Yam must defend his throne from Baal's assault, and, eventually, Baal defeats Yam and regains his throne. However, El appears to be reluctant to acknowledge Baal's victory. Not only had he already appointed Yam over Baal—whom Baal then defeated in battle—El refuses to grant permission for Baal to build a palace as a symbol of his rule. Finally, El relents and allows Baal's palace, though it takes the intercession of El's consort Athirat for Baal to receive El's blessing. As we have seen, even Anat's violent threats could not sway El to look with favor on Baal. But following Athirat's intercession, El seems to accept Baal's position. Note El's change in attitude in the ensuing episode between Baal and Mot: First, El is distressed to find that Baal has perished.

Then the Wise One, the perceptive god (El),
went down from his throne:
he sat on his footstool.
And from his footstool
he sat on the ground.
He poured the ashes of affliction on his head,
the dust of groveling on his skull.[143]

Then, as Baal and Mot again take to battle following their respective resurrections, Shapsh persuades Mot to cease his hostilities rather than tempt the disfavor of El. It appears that El now favors Baal:

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[142] KTU 1.6.i.56-65 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 132).

[143] KTU 1.5.vi.11-19 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 126-27).

Listen, pray, O divine Mot!

How can you fight with Valiant Baal?
How will Bull El your father not hear you?
He will surely pull down the pillars of your dwelling,
he will surely overturn the throne of your kinship,
he will surely break the scepter of your rule.[144]

Thus, at the very least, the focus of the Baal Epic is similar to *Enuma Elish*: the latter explains the rise of Marduk to the head of the pantheon of the Babylonians. The former explains the rise of Baal in the pantheon of Ugarit.[145] Baal, son of the god Dagan and not a child of El, attains a high place in the religious life of Ugarit. The Baal Epic serves as an etiology to explain Baal's rise; the son of Dagan gains his throne through victorious battle with the sons of El. This etiology makes use of and adapts motifs that were common in ancient Near Eastern descriptions of divine battle.

2.2.2. *Anat*

Anat, a warrior goddess, also figures prominently in the Baal Epic and Ugaritic myth. When Baal or El summon her, they appear to be calling her away from battle or, at least, from her war-like demeanor:

Bury war in the earth;
set strife in the dust;

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[144] KTU 1.6.vi.24-29 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 143).

[145] See Smith, *Ugaritic*, 96, "The theme of Baal's kingship provides an appealing starting point for interpreting the Baal Cycle . . ." and 104, "Like Marduk, Baal is a figure raised to a position of primary importance" and the accompanying discussion. Nick Wyatt, "The Religious Role of the King in Ugarit," *UF* 37 (2005), 696-707, as well as in numerous other articles, suggests that the motif of kingship in the Baal Epic should be linked to the political situation at Ugarit. Thus, the Baal Epic serves to legitimize the reign of Niqmaddu III-IV: "Baal represented the martial aspect of kingship because the divine victory is a paradigm for royal victories" (Wyatt, "Role," 702). While I find Wyatt's circumstantial case to be compelling, at least in its broad outlines, the Baal Epic itself gives no clear indicator that it serves to display in the divine realm a particular situation on earth.

pour a libation into the midst of the earth,
honey from a jar into the midst of the steppe.[146]

Specific descriptions of Anat at war are graphic in their detail. The scene commonly known as "Anat's Bloodbath"[147] paints a particularly gruesome picture in its depiction of Anat at war:

And lo,

Anat fought in the valley;
she battled between the two towns.

She smote the people of the sea-shore,
she destroyed the men of the sunrise

beneath her like balls were hea[ds];
above her like locusts were palms,
like grasshoppers heaps of palms of warriors.

She fixed heads to her back;
she attached palms to her girdle.
Her knees she stee[ped] in the blood of soldiers;
her thighs in the gore of warriors.

With shafts she drove out the old men;
with the string of her bow the townfolk.[148]

Though Anat returns to her home following the grisly scene, her taste for violence still remains; she continues her slaughter, finally rejoicing in the carnage.

Fiercely she fought and looked;
Anat battled and considered.

Her liver shook with laughter;
her heart was filled with joy,
the liver of Anat with triumph.

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[146] KTU 1.1.ii.20-21 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 41); KTU 1.3.iii.15-16 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 78); KTU 1.3.iv.9-10 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 81). See also Anat's reply in KTU 1.3.iv.24-31 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 81-82).

[147] The term was coined by John Gray, "The Blood Bath of the Goddess Anat in the Ras Shamra Texts," *UF* 11 (1979): 315-24).

[148] KTL 1.3.ii.5-16 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 72-74).

As she steeped her knees in the blood of soldiers,
her thighs in the gore of warriors

until she was sated she fought in the house
she battled between the tables.[149]

This second battle poses problems for interpreters, as it takes place within Anat's abode. In preparation for the battle, the scene appears to have the trappings of a feast:

She set chairs for warriors
she put tables for armies,
footstools for heroes.

Fiercely she fought and looked;
Anat battled and considered.[150]

Some commentators suggest that Anat is actually feasting on the conquered warriors from the just-completed melee.[151] Anat's setting of the furniture indicates that some sort of feast takes place in relation to the bloodshed she incurs in the palace. The question is whether or not the "guests" for this banquet consist of the prisoners from the previous battle or are some other foe. Smith argues that, generally, the scene fits the motif of the West Semitic *ḥrm*, "ban," known not only from Hebrew Scripture but also from other artifacts from the Levant such as the Mesha stele. He outlines the pattern of *ḥrm* as 1) the divine pursuit of warfare proper, 2) the deity's return to the heavenly abode, and 3) the divine consumption of the opposition warriors.[152] The differences from this

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[149] KTU 1.3.ii.23-30 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 75).

[150] KTU 1.3.ii.21-24 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 75).

[151] E.g., Gray, "Bloodbath," 170-71. See also J. B. Lloyd, "Anat and the 'Double Massacre' of KTU 1.3 ii" in *Ugarit, Religion and Culture* (UBL 12; ed. N. Wyatt, W. G. E. Watson, and J. B. Lloyd; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1996), 151-65.

[152] Mark S. Smith, "Anat's Warfare Cannibalism and the West Semitic Ban" in *The Pitcher is Broken: Memorial Essays for Gösta W. Ahlström* (ed. Steven W. Holloway and Lowell K. Handy; JSOTSupp190; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995), 379-83.

pattern that we see here may result from the divine perspective of Anat's slaughter. Further, other instances of the *ḥrm*, such as Mesha stele and those in Hebrew Scripture, have a political/historical component that is lacking in the extant version of Anat's Bloodbath. It may be that it serves primarily as a religious expression of the personification of war.[153]

Smith notes that two other factors point to Anat's action in KTU 1.3.ii.4-30 as an expression of *ḥrm*.[154] First, Anat does not cease until she is *šb'*, "sated." The use of this verb parallels cognate terms in *ḥrm* texts biblical literature and the Mesha inscription.[155] Second, the use of viticultural imagery is a significant part of the *ḥrm*.[156] Anat's victory makes grisly use of such imagery:

> Her knees she steeped in the blood of soldiers
> her thighs in the gore of warriors.[157]

Harvest and viticultural imagery are prominent in descriptions of Anat and her warfare throughout the extant Ugaritic literature.[158] Thus, Anat's action of wading through the blood of the slain is actually part of the harvest of war, what Good calls "a first Ugaritic metaphor of battle."[159] He contends, "[i]t is therefore not said that Anat

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[153] Wyatt, *Texts*, 75, n. 34. Lloyd, "Anat," 157-63 suggests that Anat's actions do have a historical/political component in that the story is the ritual behind the practice of the king. Thus, Anat's slaughter does not refer to a particular event but as a divine paradigm reflected in the actions of the terrestrial king.

[154] Smith, "Warfare," 382-83.

[155] Phillip D. Stern, *The Biblical Ḥerem: A Window on Israel's Religious Experience* (BJS 211; Atlanta: Scholars, 1991), 32.

[156] See also Robert M. Good, "Metaphorical Gleanings from Ugarit," *JJS* 33 (1982): 57.

[157] KTU 1.3.ii.14-15 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 74). See also KTU 1.3.ii.28-29 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 75).

[158] Good, "Gleanings," 55-59.

[159] Good, "Gleanings," 58.

wades in the blood of survivors but rather, 'Knee-deep she gleaned amid the blood of soldiers.' She is looking for survivors, intent that there be none."[160]

Anat does more than simply battle human opponents; she also battles other gods. Perhaps most significant within the context of the Baal Epic, Anat defeats Mot, the swallower of Baal, a victory that somehow allows Baal to return to life. Vivid descriptions of Anat's violence appear once again:

> She seized divine Mot,
>
> with a knife she split him;
> with a fan she winnowed him;
> with a fire she burnt him;
> with millstones she ground him;
> with a sieve she sifted him;
> on the steppe she abandoned him;
> in the sea she sowed him.
>
> His remains the birds did indeed eat,
> his scraps the sparrows did indeed consume,
>
> remains to remains cried out.[161]

Those who favor a seasonal interpretation of the Baal Epic often consider the viticultural component here to be key evidence: Anat's actions here are said to be indicative of the harvesting or planting of wheat or corn.[162] However, the mere presence of agricultural imagery does not *necessarily* imply a seasonal interpretation. Further, a seasonal interpretation here loses sight of the destructive aspect of the imagery, not all of

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[160] Good, "Gleanings," 58.

[161] KTU 1.6.ii.31-37 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 135-36).

[162] E.g., John Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan* (JSOTSupp 265; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 195: " . . . the destruction of Mot is no ordinary destruction, since it is clear that the treatment given to him corresponds to that given during the harvesting and sowing of corn. Mot therefore corresponds in some way with the corn, which strongly supports the seasonal interpretation of the Baal text at this point."

which is agricultural.[163] For instance, Anat splits Mot with a knife, burns him, and abandons him in an inhospitable place. These are acts of war, not the work of harvest. Mot is pictured as thoroughly split, scattered and overcome. When Mot *is* sown in KTU 1.6.ii.35-36, he provides fodder for the birds rather than seedlings for next harvest or he is sown in the ocean and thus lost at sea. Anat's actions are not fructifying; rather, they are pure acts of war. The viticultural imagery actually serves the violent imagery of a Divine Warrior rather than pointing to the Baal Epic as reflecting Ugaritic seasonal rituals.

Anat also takes credit for slaying a number of divine foes. As we saw earlier, when Anat sees Baal's approaching messengers she reacts in fear that some new enemy has overtaken Baal. She recounts previous divine foes she herself has slain:

> Why have Gupan and Ugar come?
>
> What manner of enemy has arisen against Baal?
> of foe against the Charioteer of the Clouds?
>
> Surely I smote the Beloved of El, Yam?
> Surely I exterminated Nahar, the mighty God?
> Surely I lifted up the dragon,
> I overpowered him?
> I smote the writhing serpent,
> Encircler-with-seven-heads!
>
> I smote the Beloved of El, Arsh,
> I finished off El's calf, Atik,
>
> I smote El's bitch, Fire,
> I exterminated El's daughter, Flame.
>
> I fought for the silver,
> I took possession of the gold

[163] Watson, "Death," 62-63, who also notes that Mot is never portrayed as any type of grain god in Ugaritic literature. This role is left to Dagan, father of Baal.

of those who drove Baal from the heights of Saphon,
knocking him like a bird from his perch,
(who) drove him from the throne of his kingship,
from the back-rest,
from the siege of his dominion.[164]

Anat's weaponry does not seem to be particularly notable, as she commonly fights with a spear, a mace, and a bow.[165] It is perhaps worth observing in this regard that the spear and mace are also the weapons of Baal. Further, in addition to her use of the bow in the Baal Epic, Anat seeks after the bow of Aqhat, a bow fashioned by Kothar-and-Hasis who then gave it to Aqhat as a gift.[166] This bow itself, which Anat was not able to obtain, apparently had some magical ability. In this episode Anat also makes use of divine beings as weapons. In the attempt to gain Aqhat's bow Anat calls upon the divine mercenary, Yatipan. Anat then flies above Aqhat and releases Yatipan, who fights as a bird of prey. Overall, though not always as explicitly as with Baal's weaponry, it does appear that Anat's weapons befit those of a god. The characteristics and effects of her weaponry are far beyond the ability of humanity's weaponry.

Determining Anat's role in the Baal Epic has proven difficult. Clearly, Anat's battles have little to do with gaining or maintaining her own divine position. However, she does fight on behalf of Baal and his kingship. Still, elsewhere she engages in battle for no other apparent reason than the pure joy of fighting.[167]

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[164] KTU 1.3.iii 37-iv 3 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 79-80).

[165] For the spear and mace, note the common summons of Anat, discussed above. Immediately following the summons, Anat is told to "Grasp your spear and mace" (e.g., KTU 1.3.iii.18 [Wyatt, *Texts*, 78]).

[166] KTU 1.18.iv.5- 39 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 282-87).

[167] Walls, *Anat*, 210.

Because no clear reason for Anat's brutality can be derived from the Ugaritic texts, it is commonly supposed that Anat represents a hypostasis of Baal's violent aspects.[168] However, such a supposition only arises from the Baal Epic when one is predisposed to see Anat's actions explicitly tied to Baal.[169] There is no clear connection to Baal in Anat's Bloodbath. Further, outside the Baal Epic, Anat works directly against Baal when it suits her purposes, as she does in the Legend of Aqhat.[170] Finally, if Anat is Baal's hypostasis, it is interesting to note that Anat does not aid Baal in his fight against Yam in KTU 1 and KTU 2 (though note KTU 1.3.iii 39), nor is she described anywhere in the extant Ugaritic literature as fighting at Baal's side.[171]

Other interpreters conclude that Anat is a type of fertility goddess intimately tied to Baal, though such a view is often dependent upon a seasonal interpretation of the Baal Epic. Again, however, the evidence of Anat's role in fertility is weak.[172] Rather, her persona fits more that of a Divine Warrior and a hunter, with any fertility aspects serving to illustrate her violent traits. Walls notes that Anat's general characteristics as a female

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[168] See especially Charles H. Bowman, "The Goddess 'Anatu in the Ancient Near East," (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Berkeley, 1978), 260-69.

[169] Walls, *Anat*, 174.

[170] Walls, *Anat*, 174. For the Legend of Aqhat, see KTU 1.17 – 1.19 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 246-313). In the story, Baal intercedes before El on behalf of King Danel. He asks El to provide Danel an heir. El agrees and grants Danel a son, whom Danel names Aqhat. Aqhat receives a bow as a gift from the divine craftsman, Kothar-and-Hasis. Anat sees the bow and desires it for herself. First she offers gifts to Aqhat, including immortality. Aqhat does not believe her and refuses. Anat ends up killing Aqhat to gain the bow, thus destroying the very thing Baal sought for Danel.

[171] Walls, *Anat*, 175. For further discussion of why Anat is unlikely to be a hypostasis of Baal see Walls, *Anat*, 185-86.

[172] Walls, *Anat*, 172-73, who notes that apart from one episode—which itself is the center of considerable controversy—"the evidence for Anat's direct association with natural fertility is scant."

Divine Warrior fit a common pattern in the ancient Near East.[173] We also see evidence of feminine divine hunters as well.[174]

In the Ugaritic texts, it seems best to take Anat's role from what appears to arise naturally from the text: Anat is a Divine Warrior and hunter. Anat's natural state is one of violence and war, as indicated by the common summons used by both El and Baal. In order to interact with her they must call Anat away from battle. The brutality of Anat's warfare thus amply demonstrates her prowess as a warrior and a huntress.

Independently of one another, both Walls and Day have proposed that Anat reflects, primarily, an adolescent female with her war-like and exuberant nature stemming from the gender ambiguity of that stage of life.[175] If this is so, Anat's violence does not stem from an understanding of how gods fight; it is actually an anthropomorphism of the gods' behavior. Anat's violence, then, is modeled on the actual observed conduct of war, over-dramatized to fit the status of the gods. The violent depiction may well tell us as much or more about a society's conception of the horror of war as it does about the character of its gods.

2.2.3. *Summary*

The significance of the battles of Baal and Anat is that the descriptions employ a number of motifs related to Divine Warfare, many of which are similar to those we have

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[173] Walls, *Anat*, 26-66

[174] Walls, *Anat*, 202-06. See also Peggy L. Day, "Why is Anat a Warrior and Hunter?" in *The Bible and the Politics of Exegesis: Essays in Honor of Norman K. Gottwald* (ed. David Jobling, Peggy L. Day, and Gerald T. Sheppard; Cleveland: Pilgrim, 1991), 143.

[175] Walls, *Anat*, 217-19, and Day, "Anat," 144-46. Both suggest that Anat is in a state of perpetual adolescence, evidenced by her common title, *btlt ʿnt*, "Virgin Anat" and her propensity to act outside of cultural norms expected for adult females.

noted within the broader scope of the ancient Near East. This shows a general continuity for such imagery across time and culture. At Ugarit, Baal's status as a storm-god fits the common pattern: his presence causes the earth to respond in fear, he makes use of the cloud-chariot, and his weaponry includes the elements of the storm. Also, in the battles of Baal against Yam and Mot, we see the elevation of Baal, as the events describe how he gained his preeminent status at Ugarit. Finally, as much as Baal is defined by his status as a storm-god and as *aliyn* Baal, he is also defined in contrast to his foes, all of which personify hostile forces. Baal defeats the raging, chaotic Sea. He also, at least, achieves a status quo with Death; Death victoriously swallows Baal once but the threat of El's anger causes Death to back away in a subsequent battle with Baal.

Anat's warfare, whether against human or divine foes, presents us with vivid descriptions of divine war, both in the human and divine realm. Anat's warfare may reflect the concept of the *ḥrm*, the total destruction of a foe on behalf of one's god, where she is the image of the deity devouring an enemy. The imagery associated with Anat also makes use of viticultural and agricultural images in portraying her lust for blood and war, with the brutality of her actions making a seasonal interpretation of her role unlikely. It is Anat who slays the god Mot and she boasts of the brutal killing of other gods as well. Her weaponry, however, is not depicted as spectacular in the Baal Epic—though she gains prominent weaponry in other myths. There is no clear consensus on Anat's specific role or the meaning behind her violence. She is likely simply the divine representation of war and the hunt. As far as the personification of pure war, Anat has no equal, not even Baal.

2.3. *Conclusion*

We observed a number of recurring features in how the various ancient Near Eastern myths and historical documents describe Divine Warriors. Two particular contexts where Divine Warrior imagery is prominent are creation accounts and/or descriptions of how various gods ascended to their thrones. These two themes may overlap, as in *Enuma Elish*, where the victory of the god Marduk results not only in his ascendancy but in creation as well. The god Marduk manifests a number of different themes prominent in depictions of divine warfare, as his weapons are otherworldly and immensely powerful. He also makes use of the forces of the storm in his battle with Tiamat. Marduk's battle also fits with the *Chaoskampf* tradition, the battle of a god against the forces of chaos, where these opposing forces are often depicted as a dragon. The supernatural nature of the Divine Warrior's weaponry is also important and ties into what developed into a significant motif: the Divine Warrior using aspects of the storm: his roar in the thunder, the clouds as his chariot, and the destructive forces as his weaponry.

These same motifs appear in various historiographical depictions of divine involvement in human warfare as well. In these descriptions, the presence or absence of the Divine Warrior indicates whether the earthly king held divine favor or enmity. Divine favor leads to victory, at times described as the fantastic intervention of the Divine Warrior, often including the use of the forces of nature. Divine favor might even be shown to a particular monarch when the Divine Warrior grants the monarch use of heavenly weapons.

Such imagery appears in numerous places but also shows signs of adaptation in different contexts. Imagery from earlier descriptions of a Divine Warrior may be adapted to show the importance of a new or different deity—theological adaptation. Adaptation may also take place when cultural considerations make earlier imagery of lesser value in a new context. Finally, whole myths could be rewritten or adapted to fit new situations as empires replaced empires in the ancient Near East.

The Baal Epic from Ugarit displays the adaptation of a number of common images from ancient Near Easter descriptions of the gods at war. The god Baal, who carries a number of martial titles, makes ready use of the violence of the storm and wields other incredible weapons of divine origin. An aspect of this is the upheaval of nature that takes place in response to his appearance. Baal fights two primary foes, Yam, the personified Sea, and Mot, the personification of death. Though there is considerable uncertainty concerning the *sitz im Leben* of the Baal Epic, these battles against familiar foes appear to serve as an etiology to explain Baal's place in the Ugaritic pantheon. There are no clear examples of Baal intervening in human affairs, but this does not mean that the Ugaritic people did not perceive Baal as active in history; it simply means we have no clear record of it.

The goddess Anat, a violent Divine Warrior, fights against human foes, reveling in the carnage she has wrought. "Anat's Bloodbath" depicts overwhelming ferocity against human foes and may reflect the divine perspective of the concept of the *ḥrm*, the "ban," where an enemy and all associated with the enemy is completely destroyed. Anat's violence is described in viticultural imagery as well. Anat's harvest, though, argues against a seasonal interpretation of the Baal Epic; the imagery of the harvest does

not inform on Anat's role in the Ugaritic agricultural year. Rather, the imagery serves to illustrate the extent of Anat's slaughter. Anat also battles divine foes, even destroying the god Mot. She describes her own role as destroyer of other divine enemies, all slain in brutal fashion. Her role in the Ugaritic pantheon is unclear, though she may simply serve as the divine personification of war and the hunt.

These various images are important because of their recurrence throughout the ancient Near East. While my discussion is in no sense exhaustive, it is illustrative of some common themes. The importance of these themes is their reoccurrence in Hebrew Scripture, where their use and adaption becomes foundational for later Jewish and Christian literature.

CHAPTER THREE

The Divine Warrior in the Hebrew Scriptures

A cursory reading of Israel's Scriptures easily betrays the fact that the ancient Hebrews considered YHWH to be a god of war. The scriptural writers commonly depict YHWH actively involved in fighting supernatural denizens, the terrestrial enemies of Israel, or even a disobedient Israel. While much of the mythological imagery has a marked affinity with similar imagery from the wider ancient Near East, Israelite writers changed and adapted such material to fit their own purposes and to draw the material in line with their understanding of YHWH.

In this chapter, I present a broad overview of Divine Warrior imagery in Hebrew Scripture. In the first section, I begin with a discussion of the Divine Warrior himself, first by comparing and contrasting YHWH as Divine Warrior with the Divine Warriors of the ancient Near East. I then discuss some of the broader contexts where YHWH appears as a Divine Warrior. The second section looks at the imagery associated with YHWH as a Divine Warrior, especially the types of beings or personifications that make up his army, attendants, and weaponry. In the third section, I investigate some of the more prominent enemies of YHWH as Divine Warrior, both supernatural and historical. Section four is a discussion of a number of texts that show the Divine Warrior imagery in Hebrew Scripture used in ways not directly related to war. This section highlights the adaptability of Divine Warrior imagery in the Scriptures and sets the stage for the use of Divine Warrior imagery in early Jewish literature and, eventually, the book of Revelation.

3.1. *YHWH at War: The Divine Warrior of Hebrew Scripture*

Depictions of YHWH as the Divine Warrior show a clear affinity with the features of Divine Warrior from the broader ancient Near East. However, these depictions also display some marked differences. In this section, I begin by comparing and contrasting YHWH as the Divine Warrior with his ancient Near Eastern counterparts. I then overview four broad contexts where we find Divine Warrior imagery in the Hebrew Scriptures. First, I look at YHWH's role as the Divine Warrior in Holy War. Second, I discuss how the imagery of YHWH as Divine Warrior provides assurance to those who face difficult or impossible odds. Third, I highlight a prominent theme that develops in the prophetic books: YHWH as the Divine Warrior who confronts his people as his adversary. Fourth and finally, I look at some of the broad ways later prophetic literature uses Divine Warrior imagery in their visions and oracles.

3.1.1. *YHWH the Warrior and the Divine Warriors of the Ancient Near East*

Any comparison of the various descriptions or attributes of YHWH, the God of Israel, at war shows noticeable similarities to those in the previous chapter of ancient Near Eastern gods at war. This is especially true of the Divine Warrior imagery found in the Ugaritic materials; descriptions of YHWH at war reflect descriptions of Baal in the myths in the Baal Epic.[1]

A prominent connection between YHWH and Baal is the use of storm imagery. Both ride storm chariots into battle and use the elements of the storm as weapons. Nature recoils in terror at the presence of the warrior-gods. Both deities reside on their holy

[1] Mark S. Smith, *The Early History of God: YHWH and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 81.

mountains from which they roar and march into battle. The two gods also fight similar opponents and are often accompanied by divine beings of lesser rank in battle.[2]

However, just as the Ugaritic materials display evidence of the adaptation of common imagery and themes of divine warfare, the scriptural writers also used and adapted the same imagery for their own purposes. One prominent difference between Ugarit—and the wider ancient Near East—and Hebrew Scripture is that the Hebrew texts lack complete stories of the great mythological battles found in the surrounding cultures, especially the battles between the gods. However, numerous passages make use of the imagery and themes found in these epic battles where they appear as vestiges of those great myths.[3] Often, Hebrew writers fit such images into contexts as a way to make a point; they look back to those great mythological battles as evidence for that point. Thus, the great battles were assumed if never related. A prominent example is Ps 74:12-17:

> Yet God my King is from of old,
> working salvation in the earth.
> You divided the sea by your might;
> you broke the heads of the dragons in the waters.
> You crushed the heads of Leviathan;
> you gave him as food for the creatures of the wilderness.
> You cut openings for springs and torrents;
> you dried up ever-flowing streams.
> Yours is the day, yours also the night;
> you established the luminaries and the sun.

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[2] The literature comparing Baal and YHWH is legion. For a recent summary, see Smith, *Early*, 80-91, and the attendant literature.

[3] Abraham Malamat, *Mari and the Bible* (SHCANE 12; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 30, labels such occurrences "faint echoes." F. Stoltz, "Sea," *DDD*, 740, calls them "a complex of mythological elements within the context of hymns, prayers, etc."

You have fixed all the bounds of the earth;
you made summer and winter.[4]

Psalm 74 is a lament for the loss of the Jerusalem Temple. In the psalm, the psalmist laments the absence of God after an enemy has overrun the Temple and cries out for YHWH to destroy the adversary in the midst of the national calamity. The psalmist recalls YHWH's past actions in verses 12-17 where YHWH defeated a greater foe. On the basis of YHWH's past actions, the psalmist then pleads for YHWH's intervention in the current crisis. However, the actions the psalmist considers in verses 12-17 are not those through which YHWH intervened on behalf of Israel. Rather, the psalmist recalls YHWH's power in subduing an opponent, ים, the sea, at the creation of the world.[5] The psalmist looks to an event from primordial history to make a statement of hope in the power of God for the present crisis.

The language is reflective of the *Chaoskampf*. The *Chaoskampf* battle is never fully developed in Hebrew Scripture.[6] Nevertheless, we do see language and structure that are reflective of Baal's combat with Yam in the Ugaritic texts.[7] When such language appears in the Hebrew texts, it is invariably in passages that highlight the power of YHWH.

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[4] Unless otherwise noted, English translations follow the NRSV. I also follow English versification while noting any differences with the versification of the Masoretic Text (MT) parenthetically.

[5] Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51–100* (WBC 20; Dallas: Word, 1990), 251.

[6] F. Stolz, "Sea ים", *DDD*, 740: "In the tradition as preserved, the battle concept is only a complex of mythological elements within the context of hymns, prayers, etc."

[7] Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms II: 51-100* (AB 17; 3d ed.; New York: Doubleday, 1983), 203-07, notes a number of the similarities between Psalm 74 and the texts from Ugarit. Nick Wyatt, *Myths of Power: A Study of Royal Myth and Ideology in Ugaritic and Biblical Tradition* (UBL 13; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1996), 134, considers the Mari text ARM A 1968 to be a closer thematic parallel than the Ugaritic material.

This correspondence offers the temptation to use materials from Ugarit to fill in the missing pieces of the Hebrew accounts—or to use the Hebrew accounts to fill in missing pieces from Ugarit.[8] However, similar motifs and imagery could serve vastly different purposes for Israel and Ugarit. Both cultures used common motifs and imagery, but each culture adapted them in ways distinct from the other. The case of either YHWH or Baal's battle with the sea demonstrates this.[9] For Ugarit, the Baal Epics portray the sea as a deity, Yam, a peer and rival of Baal. Baal must defeat Yam in order to claim his throne. There is no mention of creation and it seems unlikely that the story, even indirectly, relates to creation.[10] Meanwhile, the Hebrew texts never portray the sea on an equal standing with YHWH. Further, the sea is never a deity. At best, the sea takes on the persona of a dragon, Rahab, or Leviathan, as in Ps 74:12-15.[11] At other times the sea is nothing more than a natural force whose monstrous beasts simply live within it, as in Ps 104:24-26.[12] In a number of instances, the sea stands as a symbol of a concrete

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[8] For instance, Rainer Albertz, *Weltschöpfung und Menschenschöpfung: Untersucht bei Deuterojesaja, Hiob und in den Psalmen* (CWT 3; Stuttgart, Calwer, 1974), 111-18, argues that Ps 74:12-17 cannot refer to creation because there is no mention of creation in Baal's conflict with Yam. John Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (UCOP 35; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 23, rejects this reasoning based upon the psalm's clear reference to creation within the same pericope (vv. 16-17) and because of other passages that connect YHWH's conflict or control of the sea to creation. The danger of circularity in these attempts is noted by Rebecca S. Watson, *Chaos Uncreated: A Reassessment of the Theme of 'Chaos' in the Hebrew Bible* (BZAW 341; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 19-25.

[9] Wyatt, *Myths*, 122-26, discusses this issue in much more detail.

[10] On the myriad of problems in understanding the Baal Epics as creation accounts, see Mark S. Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle* (vol. 1; VTSup 55; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 75-87.

[11] See, e.g., Pss 74:12-15; 89:8-10 (89:9-11 MT). I investigate this in more detail below.

[12] Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *In Search of God: The Meaning and Message of the Everlasting Names* (trans. Frederick H. Cryer; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 99, notes that in Hebrew Scripture there is "great emphasis on the fact that God is superior to the forces of chaos." He suggests that this is sometimes emphasized by demythologization, or the removal of mythological elements from concepts that the surrounding cultures—and earlier Israelite religion—saw as mythical. On the issue of demythologization, note, especially, Wyatt, *Myths*, 200, whose comments on Gen 1 apply to the larger whole: "I am not

enemy. In such cases, Egypt, or Pharaoh, is the enemy most often depicted using the language of the violent, chaotic sea (e.g., Isa 51:9-11).[13]

A further difference between how Ugarit and the Hebrew texts portray the battle with the sea is that YHWH does not gain his cosmic throne through victory. YHWH's throne is his from the moment he creates.[14] While there are threats to his rule, all are soundly defeated. Still, even these are not true threats.[15] Once YHWH is aroused all enemies are vanquished. This is also seen in the examples of the *Chaoskampf*. The sea rises in rebellion against YHWH but has no chance against the angry deity. YHWH's lopsided defeat of the rebellion simply demonstrates the fitness of his established rule.

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prepared to accept . . . that this reduction of gods to creatures constitutes demythologization. A narrative theology which fills the sea with dragons and structures the whole creative process according to strongly ideological principles . . . is precisely mythological in nature." Wyatt, idem, 376-78, suggests that the tendency to see demythologization in Scripture is often tied to the idea that Canaanite religion was a nature-religion where natural phenomena were personified while Hebrew religion was historical in character.

[13] Day, *Conflict*, 88-113.

[14] Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (trans. D. R. Ap-Thomas; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004; repr. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), 114-15. Note that Mowinckel draws a distinction between YHWH's eternal throne over creation and YHWH becoming king over Israel at a particular time, "i.e., the election, at the Exodus from Egypt, or at the making of the covenant on Mt. Sinai." With regards to his reign, YHWH is more like Ugaritic El than Baal. Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, "Fighting the Forces of Chaos and Hell—Towards the Biblical Portrait of God," *ST* 39 (1985): 22-23, describes El's reign as "static and eternal" and Baal's as "dynamic. El *is* king, while Baal *becomes* king." The similarities between YHWH and El are pronounced. See, e.g., Smith, *Early*, 32-43. However, imagery of YHWH as the Divine Warrior is more reflective of Baal than El. Given that scholars generally conclude that YHWH, in some sense, derived from El and not Baal, there have been numerous attempts to assert that El, like Baal, was a Divine Warrior. The evidence for any martial tendencies in El is uncertain at best. W. Hermann, "El," *DDD*, 276, calls such evidence "unfounded." Frank M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 59, admits to the lack of evidence but nevertheless proposes that El must have had a martial character. The best attempt at asserting El's martial character remains Patrick D. Miller, "El the Warrior," *HTR* 60 (1967): 411-31, who incorporates evidence from Philo of Byblos, a first century C.E. historian whose data dates from the sixth century B.C.E. Nevertheless, Miller (idem, 428-29) allows that the martial imagery of YHWH is more reflective of Baal than what is known of El.

[15] Patrick D. Miller, *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (HSM 5; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 67-68, notes that even when the Hebrew writers acknowledged other gods they were portrayed as "ministers and servants" of YHWH. See, e.g., Ps 82.

Finally, the Hebrew materials often place the combat with the sea as a primordial event tied to creation. While not all examples of the *Chaoskampf* appear in contexts that reference creation, a significant number do.[16] Thus, in some sense, Hebrew writers saw in the *Chaoskampf* ideas that resonated with their understanding of YHWH as creator. Wyatt suggests that in Hebrew texts, the *Chaoskampf* is the "archetypal soteriological act, whereby YHWH creates a world for his people and both creates and redeems them."[17]

Any conclusions must necessarily be tentative due to the limited evidence from each culture.[18] Still, the manner in which Hebrew Scripture and the Ugaritic Epics each used the motif of the battle with the sea gives an indication of how each adopted and adapted familiar imagery. This demonstrates the flexibility of Divine Warrior imagery; it can be used by a variety of cultures in a variety of contexts for a variety of purposes. The essential meaning, the meaning that remains when the imagery is put into different contexts, must necessarily be broad in order for it to fit this variety of contexts. As far as the combat with the sea, the differences between the Hebrew texts and the Ugaritic materials demonstrate that themes such as creation or the attainment of kingship are not essential to the use of such imagery. However, *Chaoskampf* imagery does display opposition.[19] Both cultures made use of the sea as an opponent for the primary deity. In

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[16] Carola Kloos, *Yhwh's Combat with the Sea: A Canaanite Tradition in the Religion of Ancient Israel* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 75-83, lists all of the references to the sea within contexts of creation and/or combat. In a number of cases, there is clear reference to divine combat in the context of creation (e.g., Pss 65, 74, 89, 93, 104). However, in a number of other contexts, the danger from the sea was perennial and the ultimate defeat of the sea could be portrayed as yet future. Kloos, *Combat*, 86, concludes that while the combat with the sea was often referenced with regards to creation, Scripture does not indicate that creation was a *result* of YHWH's defeat of the primordial sea.

[17] Wyatt, *Myths*, 165.

[18] Bertil Albrektson, *History and the Gods: An Essay on the Idea of Historical Events as Divine Manifestations in the Ancient Near East and Israel* (ConBOT 1; Lund: Gleerup, 1967), 115.

[19] Wyatt, *Myths*, 126.

the combat with the sea, Israelite and Ugaritic writers both found that the chaotic nature of the sea allowed it to serve well as an adversary of the primary deity.

The Hebrew adaptations of Ugaritic and ancient Near Eastern mythological material such as Divine Warrior imagery are usually explained as a product of ancient Israel's distinct outlook on the universe, especially in comparison with Ugarit and the broader ancient Near East. For instance, Hanson describes Canaanite—Ugaritic—religion as a cultic reenactment of the "primordial adventures of the gods" that serves the fertility rituals or proffers the divine legitimization of monarchy. Meanwhile, for Hanson, Israelite religion has its focus on the "events leading up to Israel's emergence as a people." Stated broadly, this outlook sees Canaanite religion as a nature religion whose myths personify the natural order. Israelite literature, even when it retains a mythopoeic outlook, is then understood as historically based, with the actions of YHWH focused on events rather than the natural order.[20]

Increasingly, such a view has come under fire for overstating the differences between Ugaritic and Israelite religion.[21] Further, as I demonstrated in the previous chapter, several examples from the broader ancient Near East show the gods involved in historical, temporal battles. Nevertheless, the extant evidence for the ancient Near East

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[20] Paul D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology* (rev. ed.; Fortress: Philadelphia, 1979), 13-18. Note that one should not equate the term *history* with historicity. The term *history* speaks of the narrative setting as being within the space-time continuum. More specifically, in Paul D. Hanson, "Jewish Apocalyptic against its Near Eastern Environment," *RB* 78 (1971): 40-41, he describes the Israelite concept of history as "the *account* of the relationship between two distinct entities, YHWH the god who inhabits the cosmic realm, and Israel a people dwelling on the earth" (my emphasis). Similarly, Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982), 13, states that ancient Israel sees history as a theophany "filled predominately with the actions of men and women and the deeds of Israel and the nations." I use the term *history* in this general sense as well. As this study is concerned with a literary motif, the historicity of the events portrayed in the narratives is beyond the scope of my study.

[21] Note, for instance, the pointed and scathing denunciation of Wyatt, *Myths*, 373-424.

does indicate a greater focus on theological issues than on a deity's role in history.[22] For instance, in the evidence from Ugarit, Baal's battles do not seem to have any historical focus. Even in the battles of Anat, who does fight human foes, there is no overt attempt to place her battles within the realm of historical events.

On the other hand, YHWH's role in history—his divine guidance of history—is a primary motif in the Hebrew Scriptures.[23] This is due to a clear theme that runs throughout their unified final form: YHWH's dealings with the nation of Israel.[24] While the ancient Near East does provide examples of cultic texts celebrating a god's action in history, the overwhelming pervasiveness of this idea in the Hebrew texts causes Albrekston to conclude:

> Nevertheless it appears evident that the deity's saving acts in history are nowhere afforded so central a position in the cult as in Israel, where they dominate the Passover and other ancient feasts. This, then, is a field where we may be entitled to speak of something distinctive. The distinctiveness is not, however, found in the conception as such but in its relative importance, its capacity for influencing the cult.[25]

When the scriptural writers made use of Divine Warrior imagery, they generally adapted it to fit into the general idea of YHWH's actions in the historical realm. Thus, imagery such as the *Chaoskampf*, placed outside of time and in the realm of the divine at

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[22] Albrektson, *History*, 115-16.

[23] James R. Linville, *Amos and the Cosmic Imagination* (SOTSMS; Burlington: Ashgate, 2008), 26.

[24] Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (2 vols.; trans. D. M. G. Stalker; OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 1:106; translation of *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (2 vols.; Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1957). Von Rad compares the focus of Hebrew Scripture to the general tenor of the broader ancient Near East and concludes that "the theological radius about what Israel said about God is conspicuously restricted compared with the theologies of other nations—instead, the scriptural writings confine themselves to representing Jahweh's relationship to Israel and the world in one aspect only, namely as a continuing divine activity in history."

[25] Albrektson, *History*, 116.

Ugarit, is brought into the historical realm by Israel as the actions of YHWH on behalf of his creation and, specifically, Israel.[26] As YHWH creates, he immediately fights—not to attain a throne, but to prepare the earth for his people. Scriptural writers then appeal to this battle as evidence of YHWH's ability to overcome the present distress. It is on this basis that the psalmist appeals to YHWH the Divine Warrior in Ps 74. The psalmist cries out to YHWH to act with the same intensity and power in the present crisis as YHWH has demonstrated in the past.[27]

3.1.2. *YHWH and Divine Warrior Imagery in the Hebrew Scriptures*

While any number of themes may be discerned in how Hebrew Scripture uses imagery of YHWH at war, a few stand out as prominent. One of these is Holy War, where YHWH, as Divine Warrior, fights with his people, empowering them to victory even in the face of overwhelming odds. Another prominent way imagery related to YHWH as a warrior is used is as a sign of assurance that indicates the power, protection, and favor of YHWH. On the other hand, YHWH the Divine Warrior also fights against his own people when they fall into sin, a prominent theme that appears throughout the Scriptures. Finally, some prophetic works adapt imagery related to the Divine Warrior in a number of different ways that tie together in a different way the realm of heaven and existence on earth.

3.1.2.1. *Holy War*. One of the characteristic ways that YHWH the Divine Warrior involves himself in Israel's history is through the motif of what has come to be called

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[26] Richard J. Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible* (CBQMS 26; Washington: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1994), 152-53.

[27] Day, *Conflict*, 21-22.

Holy War.[28] The episode of the defeat of Sisera in Judg 4–5 illustrates this.[29] Judg 4 details the victory of Deborah, Barak, and Jael over Sisera, especially detailing Jael's interactions with and eventual killing of Sisera.[30] In Judges 4, Deborah's prophecies (vv. 7, 9, 14) and the subsequent results (vv. 15, 23) explicitly in attribute victory to YHWH. That emphasis is highlighted by the unexpected shift that takes place in Judg 4:9.

> And she [Deborah] said, "I will surely go with you [Barak]; nevertheless, the road on which you are going will not lead to your glory, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman."

Deborah assures Barak that she will *accompany* him. Nevertheless, the Divine Warrior goes out *before* Barak and brings panic to the armies of Sisera. Further, while there are three primary human participants—Deborah, Barak, and Jael— and all have roles to play, the role of each is subordinate to YHWH.[31] In the end, there is no description of the battle beyond Judg 4:15, leaving vague YHWH's direct actions. Nevertheless, YHWH the Divine Warrior has fought on behalf of Israel and won.

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[28] Sa-Moon Kang, *Divine War in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East* (BZAW 177; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989), 108, states that the basic concept of Divine or Holy War "is that god is a warrior who fights against the [historical] enemy." Generally, this refers to YHWH fighting alongside Israel's army. Gerhard von Rad, *Holy War in Ancient Israel* (trans. and ed. Marva J. Dawn; Introduction by Ben C. Ollenburger; Bibliography by Judith E. Sanderson; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991; repr. Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2000), set in motion the plethora of studies that have followed concerning the concept of Holy War. Kang, *Divine*, demonstrated that the concept of Holy War was itself a motif in the broader ancient Near East that had affinity to, but was distinct from, the divine warrior motif. For a recent discussion of von Rad and his legacy regarding the motif of Holy War see Aarnound van der Deijl, *Protest or Propaganda: War in the Old Testament Book of Kings and in Contemporaneous Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (SSN 51; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 10-73.

[29] Judges 4–5 is notable for being one of two examples where archaic poetry accompanies prose historiography (the other being Exod 14–15). The relationship between the two passages is the focus of considerable debate. Charles L. Echols, *"Tell Me, O Muse": The Song of Deborah (Judges 5) in the Light of Heroic Poetry* (LBH/OTS 487; London: T. & T. Clark, 2008), 95-96, presents five typical solutions but ultimately concludes that "the literary relationship is impossible to determine" between the two passages.

[30] Barnabas Lindars, *Judges 1–5: A New Translation and Commentary* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1995), 168.

[31] Yairah Amit, *The Book of Judges: The Art of Editing* (trans. Jonathan Chipman; BIS 38; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 202-04.

The poetry of Judg 5 broadens the scope of the narrative and describes divine actions with heightened Divine Warrior imagery.[32] In Judg 5:4-5, YHWH's march causes nature to cower in fear. In 5:20, even the stars fight against Sisera.[33] The נחל קישון, "torrent Kishon" (Judg 5:21), fights for YHWH in a manner similar to the way YHWH uses the Red Sea of Exod 15.[34] In both passages, a traditional enemy of the Divine Warrior, the sea, becomes nothing more than a weapon at YHWH's disposal. Also, the מלאך יהוה, "angel of YHWH," appears in verse 23 to take part in the battle, pronouncing a curse on those who did not aid Israel. Thus, the poetic account fleshes out YHWH's battle with vivid Divine Warrior imagery. The poetry of Judg 5 is an example of hymnic praise for YHWH's active deliverance.

3.1.2.2. *Signs of Assurance.* The Divine Warrior not only fights with Israel, he also provides guidance, direction, and assurance. For instance, the Elijah–Elisha narratives show considerable use of familiar Divine Warrior imagery throughout. In one such episode, in 2 Kgs 3:4-27, the kings of Israel, Edom, and Judah are allied against Moab. As they march through the desert to take the battle to Moab, the allies grow discouraged at the lack of water (3:9-10). King Jehoshaphat of Judah then seeks

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[32] Victor H. Matthews, *Judges and Ruth* (NCBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 76.

[33] Peter C. Craigie, "Three Ugaritic Notes on the Song of Deborah," *JSOT* 2 (1977): 33-49, who considers the stars to be YHWH's celestial army. Craigie finds Ugaritic parallels in KTU 1.3.ii.41 and, especially, 1.13.R.13, where, despite the poor condition of the text, the stars are described as warriors. See Nick Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit* (2nd ed.; BS 53; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 171, n. 17 for the reconstruction. Note also Echols, *Muse*, 122-23, who is more reserved in his consideration, allowing that the stars may be the source of the flooding of the Kishon (Judg 5:21) and may then figuratively refer to rain or offer a "cosmological merismus for the alliance of the heavens and earth against Sisera." For the range of interpretations, see Lindars, *Judges 1–5*, 268-69.

[34] Susan Niditch, *Judges: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 80.

assurance from the prophet Elisha, who promises the three kings that YHWH would fill the desert with water, so much water that even their cattle can drink (3:11-17). According to Elisha, the water will do more than slake their thirst.

> This is only a trifle in the sight of the LORD, for he will also hand Moab over to you. You shall conquer every fortified city and every choice city; every good tree you shall fell, all springs of water you shall stop up, and every good piece of land you shall ruin with stones (3:18-19).

The next morning the water arrives (3:20).

The water serves two purposes. Not only does the water provide them refreshment, it serves as a sign that YHWH will fight on their behalf. As it turns out, the water itself is the very means YHWH uses to defeat the enemy. The Moabites see this water reflecting red in the morning sun and assume that the allies had turned on one another. In their desire to take advantage of the situation, the Moabites leave their defensive positions to attack the allies, only to be subsequently slaughtered (3:21-27).[35] YHWH the Divine Warrior sends the sign, indicating that he is not only able to quench their thirst, but also to defeat their enemy.

A similar passage of the Divine Warrior granting comfort appears in another episode involving Elisha, 2 Kgs 6:8-23. Here the prophet Elisha faces a threat due to his giving the king of Israel intelligence concerning the whereabouts of an enemy, the king of Aram. When the Aramite king sends troops to take Elisha, one of Elisha's servants responds with fear. Elisha tells his fearful servant not to be afraid and asks YHWH to open the servant's eyes. In 2 Kgs 6:17 the servant sees the reason for Elisha's confidence:

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[35] As Deijl, *Protest*, 185-88, suggests, this story has considerable ties to a number of stories from the Pentateuch, including the Exodus event, where water is turned to blood and a first-born son dies.

> So the Lord opened the eyes of the servant, and he saw; the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

Elisha then asks that YHWH strike the army of Aram with blindness in 2 Kgs 6:18. After YHWH blinds the troops Elisha delivers them to Samaria. When the Israelite king asks if he should destroy the captives, Elisha makes clear this episode is *not* a case of Holy War (2 Kgs 6:22):

> No! Did you capture with your sword and your bow those whom you want to kill? Set food and water before them so that they may eat and drink; and let them go to their master.

The only human involvement in the Divine Warrior's victory is Elisha's prayer. Thus, we see in both examples that Divine Warrior imagery serves as a means of assurance in the face of insurmountable odds.

3.1.2.3. *The Divine Warrior Fights His Own.* Israel's prophets make considerable use of Divine Warrior imagery. One prominent motif is the prophetic warning of YHWH's war against his own people. The book of Amos is an excellent example of this due to the prominent nature of Divine Warrior imagery throughout the prophecy. Amos opens with YHWH as the roaring Divine Warrior who sends fire on his enemies and uses the destructive forces of nature at his whim.[36] Amos 1–2 presents the earliest example of the Oracles against the Nations, a genre of prophetic literature where the Divine Warrior turns his wrath against other nations whether or not they are directly involved in oppressing Israel.[37] However, YHWH's wrath against the nations in Amos is

[36] For YHWH as the roaring lion, see Amos 1:2 and 3:4. YHWH sends fire against all seven adversaries in Amos 1–2.

[37] Duane L. Christensen, *Prophecy and War in Ancient Israel: Studies in the Oracles Against the Nations in Old Testament Prophecy* (BMS 3; Berkeley: BIBAL, 1989), 17.

not part of a promise of divine deliverance from Israel's oppressors. Rather, YHWH's anger is a result of the nations' offensive conduct toward other nations, apart from their conduct toward Israel or Judah.[38] YHWH's wrath burns against humanity's obvious mistreatment of their neighbors in Amos 1:3–2:3. Just treatment, even of an adversary, was a matter of common knowledge, in other words, a part of YHWH's general revelation to all humanity.

In the book of Amos, the conduct of the nations serves as a foil that point toward the seriousness with which YHWH takes disobedience to his specific divine decrees.[39] There is one more step. After condemning the nations, in Amos 2:4-6 YHWH reviles Judah's outright refusal to consider his specific revelation. Now the Divine Warrior's wrath is directed against those who reject both general and specific revelation. This should demonstrate that Israel—the recipient of both general revelation and an incredible amount of specific revelation—should *expect* the wrath of the Divine Warrior if they ignore that revelation. In fact, they have done just that in their mistreatment of their fellow Israelites, YHWH's own people. Amos makes the measure of Israel's guilt explicit in Amos 3:2:

> You only have I known
> of all the families of the earth;
> therefore I will punish you
> for all your iniquities.

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[38] Paul Noble, "Israel Among the Nations" *HBT* 15 (1993): 65.

[39] Most commentators tend to view Amos' rhetoric in chapters 1–2 as a process of getting the nation of Israel to the point of having to accept their own condemnation in Amos 2:6-16, what Karl Möller, *A Prophet in Debate: The Rhetoric of Persuasion in the Book of Amos* (JSOTSup 372; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 214-15, calls a "rhetoric of entrapment."

The focus of the Oracles against the Nations in Amos 1–2, then, is not the impending wrath of the Divine Warrior against the nations but the certainty of the wrath of the Warrior against his own rebellious nation.

In fact, the bulk of Amos reflects YHWH's anger against his own people. Throughout the prophetic oracles of Amos, YHWH describes himself with the imagery of the marching Divine Warrior who wields destruction and whose very presence causes nature to recoil in fear.[40] YHWH's anger is fierce and he expresses it with a threat in Amos 4:12:

> Therefore, thus I will do to you, O Israel;
> because I will do this to you,
> prepare to meet your God, O Israel!

The God they will meet is YHWH, the Divine Warrior.

> For lo, the one who forms the mountains, creates the wind,
> reveals his thoughts to mortals,
> makes the morning darkness,
> and treads on the heights of the earth—
> the Lord, the God of hosts, is his name! (Amos 4:13)

As a whole, the threat to Israel is clear. Through Divine Warrior imagery YHWH is making his intentions known. Just as he created the mountains and can tread victoriously over them, he will tread victoriously over Israel, also his creation. The description is one of pure power.[41] The absolute power of the Divine Warrior, expressed

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[40] Every chapter of Amos has some reference to YHWH as a warrior. Amos 4:12-13; 6:8-14; and 9:5-6 depict reactions to his presence. Amos 2:13-16; 3:4:1-11; 5:6-9; 6:8-14; 7:1-6; 8:2-3; and 9:8 all depict the activities of the Divine Warrior or the aftermath of his warfare against Israel.

[41] Linville, *Amos*, 93. On the violent imagery of דרך, "tread," see James L. Crenshaw, "wedōrēk 'al-bāmŏtê 'āreṣ," *CBQ* 34 (1972): 42-44, who suggests that the term is not mythical in Amos 4:13 but refers to "YHWH's conquest of his foes, especially the Canaanite-influenced sanctuaries." This is, of course, possible, but it seems unwise to try to be too precise with the referent.

in his ability to create, reveal, and overturn creation, is the God whom Israel now faces as an enemy.[42]

Amos also introduces the term, יום יהוה, "Day of the YHWH" or "Day of the Lord," to Hebrew Scripture in Amos 5:20.[43] Given the matter-of-fact statement, it appears that Amos presents a known concept.[44] There are various disagreements on the history behind the concept and, thus, what it means in Amos 5:18-20.[45] Whatever the background of the concept, a prominent feature of depictions of the Day of the Lord is Divine Warrior imagery;[46] the Day of the Lord is the day when YHWH defeats his enemies.[47]

3.1.2.4. *The Divine Warrior and Israel's Prophets.* Like Amos, Israelite prophecy in general makes use of Divine Warrior imagery quite regularly. Here I want to

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[42] Crenshaw, "wedōrēk," 43.

[43] Cornelius van Leeuwen, "The Prophecy of the *Yōm Yhwh* in Amos V 18-20," in *Language and Meaning: Studies in Hebrew Language and Biblical Exegesis* (OtSt 19; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974), 118.

[44] Yair Hoffmann, "The Day of the Lord as a Concept and a Term in the Prophetic Literature," *ZAW* 93 (1981): 40-41.

[45] The various options are spelled out by A. Joseph Everson, "The Days of YHWH," *JBL* 93 (1974): 329-30.

[46] Contra Meir Weiss, "The Origin of the Day of the Lord Reconsidered," *HUCA* 37 (1966): 37, who sees the Day of the Lord as a theophany and suggests that four of the fifteen "self contained" Day of the Lord texts "have not been found to contain any allusion whatsoever to an event of war," Isa 34:8; Joel 1:15; 3:14 (4:14 MT), Obad 15; and Zeph 1:14. However, each passage is surrounded by Divine Warrior imagery. Whether or not the passages Weiss considers refer to battle in a "historical" sense, they nevertheless *picture* YHWH as a warrior. Weiss, "Origin," 29-63, does effectively counter Gerhard von Rad, "The Origin of the Day of YHWH," *JSS* 4 (1959): 97-108, who understands the origin of the Day of the Lord as a development of Israel's concept of Holy War. Nevertheless, Weiss does not adequately deal with imagery associated with YHWH at war.

[47] Everson, "YHWH," 329-37. Note, however, the caution of Hoffmann, "Day," 43: "It is likely that in some people's minds [the Day of the Lord] was generally believed to be a day on which God would reveal his power by defeating his enemies. But the defeat was not necessarily considered a real battle." Leeuwen, "Prophecy," 124, points out that Amos 5:18-20 is an example of a Day of the Lord reference that lacks any hint of battle, though the threat is ominous.

draw attention to three notable trends when it comes to the prophetic use of Divine Warrior imagery. First, prophetic works may expand upon and even interpret earlier writings of Hebrew Scripture. A common expression of this is to draw together images that appeared in distinct sources into a blended, new image.

A second trend is the injection of heightened symbolism into Divine Warrior imagery by moving mythical imagery from the divine realm into the human realm. For instance, prophets may use mythical enemies to symbolize historical enemies in a manner that identifies a historical enemy with the ancient foe. However, the symbolism retained an allusiveness that made it polyvalent and, in a sense, timeless, giving the prophets' words the ability to speak to a variety of situations beyond the context of the immediate utterance.

Third, there is a distinctive shift in how the prophets related their visions to the historical realm. Earlier prophets tended to display what Hanson describes as a "one to one correspondence"[48] between the activity of the Divine Warrior and a historical situation. For much of preexilic prophecy, the eschatological viewpoint is that "the final redemptive intervention of God will be the immediate outcome of the present historical situation."[49] In the preexilic prophets, YHWH fights to initiate a shift in the historical circumstance.[50] In the postexilic period this becomes more fluid. Sometimes the

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[48] Hanson, "Apocalyptic," 47, who sees this concept as part of the understanding of the pre-exilic prophets and as the primary outlook presented in the Deuteronomic History.

[49] Benjamin Uffenheimer, "From Prophetic to Apocalyptic Eschatology," in *Eschatology in the Bible and in Jewish and Christian Tradition* (ed. Henning Graf Reventlow; JSOTSup 243; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 201.

[50] Bob Becking, "Expectations about the End of Time in the Hebrew Bible: Do They Exist?" in *Apocalyptic in History and Tradition* (ed. Christopher Rowland and John Barton; JSPSup 43; London: Sheffield, 2002), 44-59, argues that this is the case in all of the scriptural texts.

prophets still see the activity of the Divine Warrior in a specific situation. Increasingly, however, the prophets focus on an emerging eschatological imagery and see the activity of the Divine Warrior in a period far removed from their present situation in ways that may transcend the temporal. According to Uffenheimer, this is eschatology in its broadest sense: not necessarily an end of history or time but "a vision of the ideal conditions expected to materialize in the near future, that is within the scope of the visionary's perception."[51] Two prophets whose oracles fit this general format are worth noting: Ezekiel and Second Isaiah.

The prophet Ezekiel illustrates the uses of Divine Warrior imagery in all three of the trends just discussed: Ezekiel interprets earlier writings, the context is often clearly symbolic, and many of the oracles temporally remote. Ezekiel 1:4-28 is an example that draws together the first two trends, with the prophet using what Fitzgerald calls "an interweaving of the themes of the storm theophany and the throne theophany" to depict the Divine Warrior coming in battle and judgment.[52] Allen sees Ezekiel's combination of scriptural images serving as a means to shift from the concept of a static heavenly throne to a heightened sense of *enthroned* divine mobility.[53] The power and mobility in the imagery reflects the emphasis of Amos 9:1-4, the utter impossibility of avoiding the wrath of the Divine Warrior.[54] Later chapters make this clear as Ezekiel prophesies

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[51] Uffenheimer, "Prophetic," 200.

[52] Paul E. Fitzpatrick, *The Disarmament of God: Ezekiel 38–39 in its Mythic Context* (CBQMS 37; Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2004), 122.

[53] Leslie C. Allen, "The Structure and Intention of Ezekiel 1," *VT* 43 (1993): 153: "[the theophany imagery] has influenced the throne tradition by transforming what was static into something mobile."

[54] Allen, "Structure," 153-61. Though Allen also notes that a majority of interpreters see the vision as a harbinger of divine favor, at least to Ezekiel, if not to all of Israel. His discussion highlights the

YHWH's wrath descending on YHWH's own people[55] *and* on the nations.[56] The imagery in Ezek 1 makes clear from the outset that YHWH comes fully armed, riding his throne into battle.

The section of Oracles Against the Nations, Ezek 25–32, displays a marked use of symbolism. For instance, the prophet describes Egypt as one of YHWH's mythical foes, the dragon, (תנין) in Ezek 29:1-7 (see also Ezek 32:1-10). This connection, however, is more than a way to describe the fierceness of a historical enemy. For Ezekiel, Egypt actually becomes "the chaos monster incarnate," the earthly aspect of YHWH's ancient supernatural foe.[57] As such Egypt becomes the mirror-opposite of God's intention for his creation. Ezekiel presents YHWH's fight against Egypt as YHWH's battle against the dragon.

Thus, the Oracles are much more than God's wrath against the nations. Like Amos, they further serve as a warning, as "object lessons," for Israel as well.[58] The nations graphically depict the fate of the enemies of YHWH. This is where Israel has found herself—an enemy of YHWH. Further, the roster of nations is notable for the fact

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attendant literature. Note also Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel* (2 vols.; NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 1:106-09, who finds the vision both encouraging and "ominous."

[55] As demonstrated by YHWH's abandonment of the Temple in Ezek 8–11. Fitzpatrick, *Disarmament*, 125, notes that in the ancient Near East, the destruction of a temple followed the deity's abandonment of the temple for a variety of reasons, including the deity's anger at the worshippers. He concludes that, "[Ezekiel] chapters 8–11 present Yhwh's divine abandonment of his Temple as a severe judgment with cosmogonic implications for the people." The threat of judgment is fulfilled in Ezek 33:21-22.

[56] E.g., Ezek 25–32, the Oracles Against the Nations.

[57] Fitzpatrick, *Disarmament*, 163.

[58] Ellen F. Davis, "'And Pharaoh Will Change His Mind . . .' (Ezekiel 32:31): Dismantling Mythical Discourse," in *Theological Exegesis* (ed. Christopher Seitz and Kathryn Greene-McCreight; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 228.

that it lists the enemies of *Babylon*, not the enemies of Israel.[59] For Ezekiel, Babylon is an instrument of YHWH and standing against Babylon is no different than standing against YHWH. Fitzpatrick considers this to have the effect of giving the Oracles a timeless element. He notes that the prophet "is using the particularities of one historical period to communicate a message translatable to other historical periods."[60] The message is simple: those who stand against YHWH—or his chosen instrument—face the wrath of the Divine Warrior.

In Ezek 38–39, we see a further significant development: the idea of a future, final battle between YHWH and the forces of evil, a battle that will then usher in a new age.[61] This development is part of the rise of eschatological speculation that started during the Exile.[62] The final battle according to Ezek 38:8, takes place מימים רבים, "after many days," an indeterminate phrase that pushes the event into the distant future. In that

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[59] Davis, "Pharaoh," 228, notes the lack of any oracle against "the archenemy Babylon" and the fact that Tyre and Egypt, the objects of the two most significant oracles, are, along with Judah, the only nations still holding out against Babylon. In that sense, Tyre and Egypt are more allies than enemies.

[60] Fitzpatrick, *Disarmament*, 134.

[61] E.g., Fitzpatrick, *Disarmament*, 180-81, who views the passage as one where "Yhwh gathers all possible future enemies under the leadership of Gog, leads them against Israel and destroys them." Gog, then, is a symbol of the nations aligned against Israel. YHWH brings Gog and the nations against Israel for the express purpose of destroying them. Bernard F. Batto, *Slaying the Dragon: Mythmaking in the Biblical Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 153-67, sees Gog as the "symbol of metahistorical evil," contrasted to Egypt, the "personification of historical evil." Thus, Gog is the ultimate representation of chaotic, supernatural foes aligned against God. Contra, e.g., Daniel I. Block, "Gog and Magog in Ezekiel's Eschatological Vision," in *Eschatology in Bible and Theology: Evangelical Essays at the Dawn of a New Millennium* (Kent E. Bower and Mark W. Elliott, eds.; Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity, 1997), 94, who suggests that, "the claim that this text transcends temporal and historical realities derives from inadequate attention to the social environment from which the prophecy derives and to which it speaks." For Block, the text simply looks to Israel's future salvation, not to an eschatological event.

[62] John J. Collins, "Prophecy, Apocalypse and Eschatology: Reflections on the Proposals of Lester Grabbe," in *Knowing the End from the Beginning: The Prophetic, the Apocalyptic and their Relationships* (ed. Lester L. Grabbe and Robert D. Haak; JSPSup 46; London: T. & T. Clark, 2003), 48. I am using the term "eschatology" in the sense of a shift initiated by God between the present epoch and a new, final epoch. See, e.g., Henning Graf Reventlow, "The Eschatologization of the Prophetic Books: A Comparative Study," in *Eschatology in the Bible and in Jewish and Christian Tradition* (ed. Henning Graf Reventlow; JSOTSup 243; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 169-71.

distant future, YHWH himself gathers the enemy nations under the leadership of Gog and brings them to Jerusalem where YHWH the Divine Warrior destroys them himself. Their destruction ushers in the peace and prosperity of Ezek 40-48.

This same concept is reflected in other prophets as well. Zechariah 12:1-9 depicts a final battle against Israel's foes, though the passage here is reflective of Holy War, as YHWH grants this final victory to Israel. Joel 2:28–3:21 (3:1–4:21 MT) also depicts YHWH's final judgment against the nations, enemies whom he has called to Jerusalem for that judgment. The second half of Joel's prophecy also endows the Day of the Lord with a distinct eschatological flavor.[63]

Scholars generally see Second Isaiah as important for understanding the direction of prophecy in the exilic and postexilic period.[64] Isaiah 40–55 does make considerable use of Divine Warrior imagery. Isaiah 51:9-11, for instance, calls upon a variety of familiar themes. These verses recall YHWH's battle with the sea, with the prophet calling on YHWH to arise and act now as he did in that primordial battle. The same passage blends the imagery of the defeat of the sea with Exodus imagery to predict a glorious return in the pattern of the Exodus.[65]

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[63] Hoffmann, "Day," *ZAW* 93 (1981): 46-47. I return to this in more detail below.

[64] E.g., Robert P. Carroll, *When Prophecy Failed: Cognitive Dissonance in the Prophetic Traditions of the Old Testament* (New York: Seabury, 1979), 151, who notes that with Second Isaiah, "the prophetic task was no longer one of denunciation and critique of society but a proclamation of comfort and forgiveness." As for the designation "2 Isaiah," I do not imply there was ever a distinct work, a book of Second Isaiah, as it were. The designation as I use it refers to the distinct literary unit within the final form of canonical Isaiah that speaks to an exilic audience and is bounded by literary features that distinguish it from Isa 1–39 and 56–66. See, e.g., John Goldingay and David Payne, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 40–55* (2 vols.; ICC; London: T. & T. Clark, 2006), 1:1-8, and Richard J. Coggins, "Do We Still Need Deutero-Isaiah?" *JSOT* 80 (1998): 77-92.

[65] Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, 2:236-38.

Probably the most significant contribution that Second Isaiah adds to the motif of the Divine Warrior is his discussion of משיחו, "my anointed," in Isa 45:1. The language clearly recalls Davidic kingship (e.g., Ps 18:50 [51 MT]).[66] The referent, no doubt surprisingly, is Cyrus, the Persian ruler. The impact of this is well put by Westermann: "Deutero-Isaiah makes an assertion which his hearers found both incredible and highly obnoxious, namely that in the rise of the king of Persia, which had never before come within the sphere of YHWH's action, he saw the hand of the God of Israel."[67]

Divine Warrior imagery surrounds Cyrus. In Isa 41:2-4, the prophet introduces Cyrus as the one to whom YHWH has delivered the nations, who is either raised up by a personified צדק, "righteousness," or whom YHWH has named Righteous.[68] In 45:2, YHWH the Divine Warrior goes before his anointed, preparing Cyrus' way by obliterating obstacles.[69] The surprising emphasis is clear: Cyrus may be outside the covenant (Isa 45:4-5) but he is not beyond the realm of YHWH's anointing for YHWH's purpose: to defeat Babylon and restore Israel.

The prophet's message asserts that YHWH is still the Lord of history.[70] The Divine Warrior's realm is not beyond using the unexpected or unlikely to accomplish his

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[66] Klaus Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah: A Commentary on Isaiah 40–55* (trans. Margaret Kohl; Herm; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 224-25.

[67] Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66: A Commentary* (trans. David M. G. Stalker; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 65.

[68] Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, 1:142-43.

[69] Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 159.

[70] Hanson, *Dawn*, 24: "Second Isaiah answered the charge that the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of the people were proof that YHWH was impotent to save his people. When divine plans seemed to men to be frustrated, it was not because of limitation in YHWH's power, but either because men's' sins had brought upon them the curses of the covenant or men's limitation prevented their discerning YHWH's saving activity in events which on the surface seemed like reversals."

purpose. The basic idea is not new; earlier prophets highlighted foreign nations as the means by which the Divine Warrior judges his own rebellious people.[71] In Second Isaiah, this concept gains a further nuance: the foreign ruler is actually YHWH's anointed one. This non-Israelite anointed one inverts the acts of the punishing nations; he brings Israel *from* their judgment of exile *to* the blessing of their return.

The use of Divine Warrior imagery in Israel's prophetic works asserts that YHWH, the Divine Warrior, has is in control of every situation, even when all appearances would seem to dictate otherwise. Prophets like Ezekiel and Second Isaiah emphasize this by interpreting or reinterpreting earlier Scripture and by reusing and adapting earlier themes and imagery, including that of the Divine Warrior.

3.1.3. *Summary*

While YHWH as the Divine Warrior of Hebrew Scripture shows some commonality with the Divine Warriors of the broader ancient Near East, there are significant differences as well. One is that the familiar mythology never appears in complete stories. Rather, it is in a variety of contexts in order to make a point. In this regard, we noted Ps 74:12-17, where the psalmist uses imagery of YHWH's ancient battle with the sea to seek YHWH's same power in the present circumstance. Another prominent difference is that YHWH never battles to win his throne. His victories show that he is worthy of the throne, but no scriptural text hints that YHWH had to win the throne. Further, YHWH's battle with the sea is exclusively tied to creation, thus grounding it in history. This is an aspect of the final distinction, the greater involvement of YHWH in the historical events of his people.

[71] See, e.g., Amos 7:17, where the nation that YHWH intends as his weapon is not named.

I touched on several themes that make use of Divine Warrior imagery. Most prominent here is the idea of Holy War, where YHWH fights with his people to ensure their victory. Here I briefly discussed Judg 4–5, where the narrative account of Judg 4 calls attention to the acts of the human participants but still asserts YHWH's control over events. The victory song of Judg 5, then, explicitly ties the battle to YHWH's activity.

Signs of assurance are another type of context where Divine Warrior imagery appears. Here I examined 2 Kgs 3, where YHWH, through Elisha, promises king Jehoshaphat of Judea and his allies that YHWH will fill the desert with water, both as a means to quench the allies' thirst and as a sign of victory. The Divine Warrior then uses this sign to bring about victory, as the Moabite enemies see the sign and misinterpret it, leading to their ruin.

A prominent motif in Hebrew Scripture is that of YHWH the Warrior threatening his own people for their lack of faith, disobedience, or rebellion. The book of Amos provides an excellent example here, as Amos begins with an oracle against the nations for how the nations treat one another, not how they treat Judah or Israel. The nations should know how to treat one another. Then Judah comes under YHWH's wrath for not only ignoring what they should know but for ignoring what YHWH specifically revealed to them. All of this serves to indict Israel, as Israel utterly failed to heed either general or special revelation, a fact clearly demonstrated by the way Israel treats its own people. Thus, YHWH the Warrior rises to fight Israel. Just as YHWH defeated creation when it turned hostile, YHWH can defeat hostile Israel, another creation of his. It is also in Amos that we see the beginning of the idea of the Day of the Lord, a day of judgment against YHWH's enemies.

Finally, I also noted how exilic and post-exilic prophecy made some important adaptations in some significant ways: 1) they may expand or interpret earlier scriptures; 2) they may use heightened symbolism that moves the mythological elements of things like Divine Warrior imagery into the historical realm; and 3) in some cases they demonstrate a shift in how the prophets relate to history. Instead of the preexilic call for a change in the historical circumstance, later prophets began to conceive of YHWH's activity in a period removed from the historical present, a broad eschatology. Ezekiel served as my primary example here, as the throne of Ezek 1 drew together imagery from the throne theophany and the storm theophany. Ezek 29 demonstrated the intertwining of the heavenly mythology with earthly circumstance, as Egypt is not simply likened to the primordial sea, it is an expression of the sea, an ancient enemy of the Divine Warrior. Finally Ezek 38–39 depicts a battle in the distant future with evil nations, a battle that results in a new age of peace. Second Isaiah added to this as well, as here I focused on the portrayal of Cyrus as the Lord's anointed, YHWH the Warrior empowering someone outside of the people of Israel as more than just God's agent, he is God's anointed agent.

3.2. *YHWH at War: The Armies and Personified Weaponry of the Divine Warrior*

Like the gods of the surrounding nations in the ancient Near East, YHWH the Warrior has a fearsome army and supernatural weapons. Israelite writers are clear that YHWH's power is such that he does not need an army or attendants. Their presence may be part of the typical understanding of monarchy by which the attendants enhanced the aura of the ruler.[72] Thus, the attendants that make up the divine army serve the same

[72] Johannes C. de Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism: The Roots of Israelite Monotheism* (rev. and enlarged ed.; BETL 91: Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997), 257.

purpose as Divine Warrior imagery in general: it as a way to express YHWH's overwhelming force. YHWH, the invincible Divine Warrior, יהוה צבאות, "YHWH of the Hosts," leads an invincible army.[73] Though often left vague, Hebrew writers sometimes describe YHWH's troops very specifically and in such cases, his army takes on a hue familiar to the attendants and lesser deities of the broader ancient Near East. At other times, however, the personification of these warriors would fade into the background and the warrior would be a weapon. It was also common as well for YHWH to demonstrate his power by using foes as weapons. At times, the description of YHWH's weaponry sometimes recalls familiar human weapons. In such cases, however, this weaponry was still supernatural, endowed with incredible power.

In this section I present an overview of the army, attendants, and personified weapons of YHWH the Divine Warrior. In discussing the army, I look at the various angelic beings that directly fight on behalf of the Divine Warrior. I then note the way natural forces such as meteorological phenomena serve as attendants and/or weapons of the Divine Warrior. Here I also look at how YHWH uses his enemies against his own rebellious people.

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[73] T. N. Mettinger, "YHWH Zebaoth יהוה צבאות," *DDD*, 920-24, notes that "the martial character of YHWH Zebaoth is amply attested" in passages such as 1 Sam 4:4; Isa 10:23; 13:13; 14:24-27; 19:16; 22:5; 24:21-23; Jer 32:18; 50:25; Nah 2:14; 3:5; Pss 24:8, 10; 46:8, 12, and 59:6. See also John H. Choi, "Resheph and *YHWH ṢĔBĀ'ÔT*," *VT* 54 (2004): 17-28, who sees the martial imagery as derived from similar imagery for the ancient Near Eastern god Resheph. Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (2 vols.; trans. J. A. Baker; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961–1967), 1: 192-93, finds the martial concept in close connection with the Ark of the Covenant, where the title was "a favourite designation of God as a warrior" but cautions that in the prophetic works, where it appears most often, it appears to have lost the primary martial component. He suggests that the later writers use the title as an affirmation of YHWH's authority over all hosts, all of the created order.

3.2.1. *The Divine Army*

The most recognizable of YHWH's attendants who serve as soldiers is the מלאך, "angel" or "messenger." As a general class, they are also labeled בני אלהים, "sons of God," קדשים, "holy ones."[74] Such figures are familiar from the Ugaritic texts, where they are often referred to generically as "angels" or "lesser deities," and make up the "fourth tier" of the Ugaritic pantheon.[75] In both cultures, they generally appear to parallel the retinue of an ancient Near Eastern monarch.[76] However, there is a distinct difference between such figures in the Hebrew texts and those from Ugarit. The structured level of rank that we see in the Ugaritic materials is largely absent from the scriptural writings, with the exception of some designation of rank in the book of Daniel. Instead, YHWH is portrayed as the king of the heavenly hosts; all other supernatural figures are minor powers who function as expressions of YHWH's attributes and activities.[77] In Hebrew Scripture such figures never function autonomously from YHWH.[78]

With regard to YHWH's conduct of war, these figures often appear as an indistinct group, part of YHWH's Divine Council or as his army.[79] Their titles are

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[74] Aquila H. I. Lee, *From Messiah to Preexistent Son: Jesus' Self-Consciousness and Early Christian Exegesis of Messianic Psalms* (WUNT II/192; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 85-86. For the full range of terms for such beings, see Darrell D. Hannah, *Michael and Christ: Michael Traditions and Angel Christology in the New Testament* (WUNT II/109; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 16-17. The most common term, מלאך, is not necessarily indicative of a divine figure. The term could also be used to described human "messengers" as in 1 Sam 23:27, to cite one of numerous examples.

[75] Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 46.

[76] Hannah, *Michael*, 17.

[77] Smith, *Origins*, 47.

[78] Hannah, *Michael*, 16.

[79] E.g., Deut 33:2. Saul M. Olyan, *A Thousand Thousands Served Him: Exegesis and the Naming of Angels in Ancient Judaism* (TSAJ 36; Tübingen: Mohr, 1993), 15.

generic and their roles are often vague.[80] Outside of the book of Daniel, there is little indication of rank. Further, it is only in Daniel that we find any divine figure other than YHWH with a name, another distinction from Ugarit where such figures are often named.[81] However, while the Hebrew Scriptures—outside of Daniel—do not name YHWH's divine servants, a number of them do have specific titles. Of these figures, the most prominent and common is a מלאך יהוה, "Messenger of YHWH" or, commonly in English, "Angel of the Lord,"[82] also called a מלאך אלהים, "Messenger" or "Angel of God." This figure appears prominently in the Pentateuch and in Judges but only rarely in later prophetic materials.[83] The title has proven enigmatic, as a number of instances seem to conflate YHWH himself with the messenger.[84] This ambiguity appears in Israel's preexilic literature but is entirely absent from postexilic literature, where the Angel of YHWH is always distinct, separate, and submissive to YHWH.[85]

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[80] For an overview of the titles, names, and duties of angels, see Olyan, *Thousand*, 22-30.

[81] While most of the lesser deities from Ugarit are anonymous, a number do have personal names. For an overview of named low-level deities from the Ugaritic texts, see Sang Youl Cho, *Lesser Deities in the Ugaritic Texts and the Hebrew Bible: A Comparative Study of Their Nature and Roles* (DAAW 2; Piscataway, N.J.; Gorgias, 2007), 155-62; 221-29, who considers such named figures to be the prototypes for the ἀρχάγγελους, "archangels," of early Jewish literature.

[82] The term "angel" generally serves in English to represent the entire divine realm and מלאכים in particular. S. A. Meier, "Angel I מלאך," *DDD*, 47.

[83] In the prophets, the Angel of the Lord is unique to Zechariah with two exceptions: Isa 37:36, the parallel passage to 2 Kgs 19:35, and Hos 12:5.

[84] Basically, the confusion lies in whether the Angel of the Lord is a figure distinct from YHWH or is, in some way, an anthropomorphic manifestation of YHWH. S. A. Meier, "Angel of YHWH מלאך יהוה," *DDD*, 54-57, lists ten passages where the מלאך אלהים is "perplexingly and inconsistently identified with YHWH himself," Gen 16:7-13; 22:11-18; Exod 3:2–4:17; 4:24 (LXX); Num 22:23-35; Judg 2:1-4; 6:11-23; 13:3-23; 1Kgs 19:5-7; and Zech 3:1-6. For a summary of viewpoints, see Lee, *Messiah*, 87-88, who reduces the options to seven different types.

[85] See, e.g., Zech 1:12. Hannah, *Michael*, 21-22. According to Olyan, *Thousand*, 20, this development was a result of theological speculation over older texts.

In several cases, the Angel of the Lord appears as a warrior. In Num 22:31-34, the Angel of the Lord stands with his sword ready to fight with the wayward prophet Balaam. In 2 Sam 24:15-16, it is the Angel of YHWH who administers plague. Thus, the Angel of the Lord wields both conventional and otherworldly weapons. The most dramatic example of the Angel of the Lord conducting warfare is 2 Kgs 19:35 (Isa 37:36; see also 2 Chron 32:21), where the angel of the Lord slaughters Sennacherib's troops while they sleep.

A second divine figure who serves YHWH in war appears in Josh 5:13-15 and describes himself as the שר־צבא־יהוה, "Prince of the host of YHWH." The Prince holds a drawn sword, setting the episode "in the tradition of divine war."[86] In Hebrew Scripture, this title and figure is unique to this passage in Joshua, though in Dan 8:11, Daniel describes the horn exalting itself over the שר־חצבא, a term that recalls the enigmatic Prince from Josh 5:14,[87] though in Dan 8:11, the term likely indicates God himself.[88] Elsewhere in Daniel, the angel Michael is described in similar terms. After the demise of the arrogant king in Dan 11:40-45, the angel Michael appears.

> At that time Michael, the great prince, the protector of your people, shall arise. There shall be a time of anguish, such as has never occurred since nations first came into existence. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book (Dan 12:1).

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[86] Richard D. Nelson, *Joshua: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 81. The drawn sword is the pose of the Angel of YHWH in Num 22:23 and 1 Chr 21:16, both instances of imminent warfare. Despite the obvious parallels to the Angel of YHWH, the figure, whose title is unique, should not be equated with the Angel of the Lord or with a theophany of YHWH. Miller, *Warrior*, 131, notes that this title "is very specific and unusual and must be taken seriously."

[87] Norman Porteous, *Daniel* (2d revised ed.; OTL; London: SCM, 1979), 125.

[88] John J. Collins, *A Commentary on the Book of Daniel with an Essay, "The Influence of Daniel on the New Testament," by Adela Yarbro Collins* (Herm; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 333, "there can be no doubt the reference is to God."

Daniel's angelic interpreter mentions Michael three times in Dan 10–12. Each time Daniel's angelic messenger describes Michael in a slightly different manner though his role appears to be similar in each. In Daniel 10:13, Michael, אחד השריד "one of the chief princes," aids the divine messenger in his struggle with the Prince of Persia. In Daniel 10:21, Michael, שרכם, "your Prince," contends with the messenger of 10–12 against the opposing princes. The second person plural indicates that Michael is the prince of Israel in a role parallel to the princes of Persia and Greece.[89] Finally, in Daniel 12:1, Michael is the השר הגדול העמד על־בני עמך, "the great prince, the protector of your people."

A third divine figure serving at YHWH's bidding is the משחית, "Destroyer." The term as a clear title for a divine figure occurs only in Exod 12:23 and 2 Sam 24:16 (see also 1 Chr 21:15) though it should probably be understood in this manner in Jer 51:1, 25 and 2 Kgs 23:13.[90] As a divinized figure, the Destroyer appears to be YHWH's agent of death on a massive scale.[91] This figure shares this function with the ancient Near Eastern gods Namtar and Resheph. Also like these deities, the Hebrew Destroyer is associated

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[89] Collins, *Daniel*, 376, calls this the earliest occurrence of Michael as Israel's prince, though note *1 En.* 20:5: "Michael, one of the holy angels, who has been put in charge of the good ones of the people." All translations of *1 Enoch*, unless noted otherwise, are from George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch: A New Translation based on the Hermeneia Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004).

[90] Cho, *Lesser*, 235-36.

[91] S. A. Meier, "Destroyer משחית," *DDD*, 240-44. Partly on the basis of this definition, Meier also sees the Destroyer behind the mass slaughter in Num 17 and 2 Ki 19 (Isa 37) and the angels of Ezek 9. Meier is careful to distinguish the Destroyer from an angel of death, asserting that in Hebrew Scripture, "the Destroyer does not kill all humans, nor is he dispatched by God to kill isolated individuals. Furthermore, unlike the angels of death who bring death of any sort (both natural and premature), the Destroyer specifically brings a premature and agonizing death." Given, however, the paucity of scriptural references, it may be that Meier concludes too much.

with plague in both Exod 12 and 2 Sam 24.[92] It may be in this sense that Death, not normally a part of YHWH's host or armament, is also brought into the service of YHWH.

3.2.2. *Natural Forces as Personified Attendants or Weaponry*

Besides angelic figures, YHWH's army also has a number of personified figures that, in other contexts, are simply weapons. Generally, such figures are destructive in nature. For instance, Hab 3:5 portrays דבר, "Deber" (NRSV: "pestilence,), and רשף, "Resheph" (NRSV: "plague"), as the vanguard of the Divine Warrior as he marches forth from his mountain.[93] Deuteronomy 32:23-25, meanwhile, features a number of arrows that many consider to be part of the army of YHWH as opposed to mere weaponry due to the passage's antiquity and affinity with Ugaritic themes.[94] This is especially true of רשף.[95] The figure קטב, "destruction" (NRSV: "pestilence"), is often thought to correspond with an ancient Near Eastern god of destruction.[96] The term בהמות, "beasts,"

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[92] Meier, "Destroyer," *DDD*, 241-42.

[93] As an attendant, רשף is personalized along the lines of the Canaanite deity Resheph, though certainly subordinate and submitted to YHWH. Resheph was well known throughout the ancient Near East as a warrior-god who was guardian of the gates of the Netherworld and was feared as the god of disease and pestilence (P. Xella, "Resheph רשף," *DDD*, 700-02). Resheph also appears in a number of other Hebrew texts as a personified figure, most clearly in Deut 34:24, Ps 78:48-49 and, perhaps, Job 5:7. For a discussion of Resheph in Hebrew Scripture, see John Day, *YHWH and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan* (JSOTSup 265; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 197-208. Given the parallelism, it is likely that Deber reflects a divinized figure as well, though evidence from the ancient Near East is largely silent on Deber as a divinized figure. See here Theodore Hiebert, *God of My Victory: The Ancient Hymn of Habakkuk 3* (HSM 38; Atlanta: Scholars, 1986), 92-93. See also Ps 78:48, where Resheph and Deber are again paired and personified.

[94] E.g., Mark S. Smith, *Early*, 56.

[95] Day, *Yahweh*, 203, understands the phrase לחמי רשף in a military sense, "fought by Resheph." Jonas C. Greenfield, "Smitten by Famine, Battered by Plague (Deut 32:24)," in *Love and Death in the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope* (ed. John H. Marks and Robert M. Good; Guilford, Conn.: Four Corners, 1987), 151-52, understands the phrase לחמי רשף as "battered" by Resheph.

[96] A. Caquot, "Sur quelques démons de l'Ancien Testament (Reshep, Qeteb, Deber)," *Sem* 6 (1956): 65-68. Robert Gordis, "The Assertive Kaph in Ugaritic and Hebrew, *JAOS* 63 (1943): 177-78,

is sometimes likened to the supernatural beast בהמות in Job 40:15-24.[97] Because of its appearance here with other terms known to refer to deities some consider, רעב, "hunger," as part of the divine army as well.[98]

Later writings made significant use of the type of imagery found in Deut 32:23-25. Ezek 14:21 presents four destructive forces that echo Deut 32: sword, famine, wild animals, and pestilence.[99] More typical is a triad of destroying weapons of this nature—sword, famine, and pestilence—a triad that has echoes throughout the Israelite Scriptures.[100] The various groupings, personified or not, indicate the totality of destruction behind YHWH's wrath.[101] Whether one tries to flee or hide, the wrath of YHWH is there. In Ezek 6:11-12, the sword, famine, and pestilence identify "the objects

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suggests that מרירי is the divine figure and understands קטב מרירי as "the devastation of Meriri." However, he has found few supporters, as the term is a hapax legomenon and there is at least some evidence for קטב as a god. On the weakness of Gordis' proposal, see K. van der Toorn, "Meriri מרירי," *DDD*, 568-69.

[97] Walter L. Michel, *Job in the Light of Northwest Semitic* (vol. 1; BibOr 42; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1987), 279-80, calls it "'the Beast' *par excellence*."

[98] K. van der Toorn, "Meriri מרימרי," *DDD*, 568-69.

[99] The terminology in Ezek 14:21 is similar in concept but is not an exact match to Deuteronomy 32:23-25. According to Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20* (AB 22; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983), 116-17, this list of destroyers is a combination of elements from Deut 32:23-25 and Lev 26:14-33. John Wolf Miller, *Das Verhältnis Jeremias und Hesekiels sprachlich und theologisch untersucht, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Prosareden Jeremias* (TBib 28; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1955), 93, suggests that Ezekiel is dependent upon Jeremiah 15:2-3, where the destroyers are death, sword, famine, and captivity.

[100] Caquot, "Demons," 66, notes the three as "parmi lés instruments de la vengeance de Yahvé." The triad is a particular favorite in the Deuteronomic History, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. See O. Kaiser, "חרב II," *TDOT*, 5:164-65 for the triad and its variations. Kaiser suggests the triad only appears in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and 1 and 2 Chronicles. H. G. L. Peels, *The Vengeance of God: The Meaning of the Root NQM and the Function of NQM-Texts in the Context of Divine Revelation in the Old Testament* (OtSt 31; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 105, n. 185, catalogs a wider usage.

[101] H. A. Brongers, "Merismus, Synekdoche und Hendiadys in der Bibel-Hebräischen Sprache," in *כה: 1940–1965* (ed. P. A. H. de Boer; *OtSt* 14; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965 *OtSt* 14 (1965): 103-105, notes that the number of destructive forces, whether three, four, or five, indicates the total range of YHWH's destructive wrath.

of YHWH's wrath in terms of three concentric circles: those afar off, that is, the scattered population; those nearby, that is, those outside the walls; and those inside the city."[102]

Forces of nature, especially those familiar from the ancient Near Eastern storm gods, also appear as personified attendants in YHWH's army. In Ps 104:4, the רוחות, "winds," are YHWH's messengers while אש, "fire," and להט, "flame," are his ministers.[103] While Ps 104:3 is the clearest example of a personified wind, the wind serves YHWH the Warrior in other ways.[104] In Pss 18:10 (11 MT) and 104:3, the wind is YHWH's war chariot. In Ezek 1:4, a רוח סערה, "stormy wind," precedes Ezekiel's vision of the throne and the glory of YHWH. In a number of places the wind is an indefensible weapon that pushes,[105] scatters,[106] knocks down,[107] and dries up.[108] The wind becomes a varied and powerful weapon in the hands of the One who controls and manipulates the storm.

At times, the wind is nothing less than the רוח of YHWH. A prominent example appears in Ps 18:15 (16 MT), where the רוח of YHWH is parallel with his גערה,

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[102] Block, *Ezekiel*, 1:236.

[103] Wind and fire serve as the weapons of YHWH in Ps 11:6. See also Isa 29:6.

[104] This is the clearest example of the personification of wind in Israelite Scripture. Steve A. Wiggins: "Tempestuous Wind Doing YHWH's Will: Perceptions of Wind in the Psalms," *SJOT* 13 (1999): 23, also allows that personification may be behind the imagery in Ps 78:26 (קדים, "east wind" and תימן, "south wind"), where the east wind is sent and the south wind is led, and Pss 107:25; 148:8, where the wind is commanded. Wiggins also lists Ps 104:30 as a possible example of personification but note Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms III: 101–150* (ABD 17A; Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1970), 46.

[105] E.g., in Exod 10:13, the wind pushes the locusts into Egypt.

[106] E.g., in Jer 49:36, the four winds scatter Elam.

[107] E.g., in Ezek 27:36, the wind shatters the ships of Tyre.

[108] The wind dries up the sea in two notable contexts: Gen 8:1and Exod 14:21. See also Isa 11:5 and Ps 18:15 (16 MT).

"rebuke," tying together the two concepts.[109] Kennedy defines the גער of YHWH as "a forceful, irresistible wind accompanied by a frighteningly loud and disconcerting noise."[110] YHWH's גער is a "uniquely violent expulsion of divine breath" that devitalizes and forcefully thrusts away his opponent.[111] Thus, in passages such as Ps 18:5 (6 MT) and Isa 50:2, YHWH's גער debilitates the sea and thrusts it back while in Isa 17:13, YHWH's גער thrusts back the nations even as the nations try to instill fear with their own שאן, "roar."[112] Finally, in Isa 30:33 and 33:1, YHWH's breath is a consuming fire.

A second divine attendant from Ps 104:4 is אש, "fire." Fire is also a divine attendant in Ps 97:3 and, perhaps, in Joel 2:3.[113] At Ugarit, fire is often the lightning bolt of the storm-god or, more generically, a divine weapon. Fire also appears as a lower ranked Divine Warrior.[114] In the Hebrew texts, fire can be an aspect of YHWH's presence as in Deut 9:3 or as a favored weapon as in Lev 10:2. Miller notes that "devouring fire" is a common imagery for "the Divine Warrior's wrath and destruction" in Israelite historiography.[115] In a number of passages, YHWH's, ברק, "lightning," leaps forth as a weapon. For example, in Ps 18:14 (18:15 MT), YHWH's lightning is an arrow.

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[109] A. Caquot, "גער," *TDOT* 3:51.

[110] James M. Kennedy, "The Root *G'R* in the Light of Semantic Analysis," *JBL* 106 (1987): 58.

[111] Kennedy, "Root," 51-52.

[112] Kennedy, "Root," 58.

[113] W. G. E. Watson, "Fire אש," *DDD*, 332. Also note Exod 3:2, where the Angel of the Lord appeared "as a blazing fire" (בלבת אש).

[114] Patrick D. Miller, "Fire in the Mythology of Canaan and Israel," *CBQ* 27 (1965): 256-58.

[115] Miller, "Fire," 259.

In Deut 9:3 and Ps 97:3, fire from heaven destroys enemies. In Ps 18:8 (18:9 MT), fire shoots from the mouth of the Divine Warrior, as lightning does in Hos 6:5. Finally, in Jer 5:14, YHWH made the prophet's words fire—i.e., he empowers Jeremiah with divine weaponry—to devour the rebellious people.

3.2.3. *Enemies as Weapons of the Divine Warrior*

A marked pattern in the Hebrew Scriptures is that of YHWH using enemies as weapons. Such instances serve to demonstrate YHWH's absolute mastery of every aspect of creation. Supernatural and/or natural adversaries would align themselves against YHWH but would be used by YHWH as instruments of war for his purpose. A prominent example of this concept is YHWH's use of the sea at the Exodus. In passages such as Ps 74:12-15, the sea is a distinct foe of YHWH while in Exod 15:8-10, the sea becomes the overwhelming weapon of YHWH. Here the familiar imagery of the ancient Near Eastern combat with the sea is given a distinct flavor: YHWH splits the sea—as Marduk split Tiamat and Baal split Yam—and then reunites the sea in order to destroy the Egyptians.[116] The sea is also YHWH's weapon at the Flood in Gen 7:10-12.[117] Meanwhile, in Jer 51:42, YHWH uses the sea against Babylon in what is likely a

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[116] Day, *Conflict*, 98, who sees this as an example of historicizing myth. However, Batto, *Slaying*, 110, claims, "there can be no doubt the sea is heavily laden with mythological overtones." F. Stolz, "Sea ים," *DDD*, 741, says that in the passage "'natural,' 'historical,' and 'mythical' qualities are inseparably conflated." That said, Kloos, *Combat*, 152, goes too far in suggesting that YHWH fights two battles in Exod 15, one against the Sea and another against the Egyptians. There is no hint in Exod 15:8-10 that YHWH handles the sea as anything other than a weapon in his own arsenal.

[117] Batto, *Slaying*, 85-86, suggests that in P, Gen 7:10-12, YHWH is not the actor: "Thus the onslaught of the water resulted from a rupture in the firmament, rather than being directly caused by God." Batto concludes from this that it was humanity's own evil—chaos—that caused the irruption of the waters by allowing chaos to have a hold in YHWH's good creation. "Thus chaos . . . was responsible for snuffing out life. God only confirmed what humans had brought upon themselves through their own violence." In the final form of Genesis, however, it is clear that YHWH initiated the Flood.

mythological reference though some have understood it as a historical reference.[118] In Isa 8:7-8, after Israel rejects the gentle waters, YHWH sends the King of Assyria, "the mighty flood waters," to overwhelm Israel in judgment initiated by YHWH.[119]

Passages like Isa 8:7-8 mix their imagery with another common weapon of YHWH the Divine Warrior: YHWH uses the nations, especially Assyria and Babylon, as weapons against other foes. This is a common motif in prophetic literature.[120] In Isaiah, this role often falls to Assyria while in Jeremiah it is Babylon.[121] In Isa 10:5, Assyria is YHWH's rod and Assyria's club is YHWH's anger. In Jer 21:1-2, Zedekiah seeks the same deliverance from Babylon that Hezekiah sought from Sennacherib in 2 Kgs 19. Instead Zedekiah discovers that his foe is not Babylon; Babylon is a mere instrument. In Jer 21:5-7, YHWH is the actual warrior.[122] In such instances, however, the weapon of the Divine Warrior runs the risk of overplaying its hand. Brueggemann notes Isa 47:5-9 as offering the paradigm in this regard. YHWH expresses anger at Israel, in anger he

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[118] Martin Kessler, *Battle of the Gods: The God of Israel Versus Marduk of Babylon* (SSM; Assen: Van Gorcum, 2003), 130-31. Walter Brueggemann, "A Subversive Reading of the Empire," in *Reading the Book of Jeremiah: A Search for Coherence* (ed. Martin Kessler; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 478-79, suggests that the referent is both: "Though the language is cosmic and mythical, the actual mode of such inundation is likely a historical enemy, even though no reference to such an enemy is made. The delicacy of interpretation is to see that such cosmic claims are not all removed from concrete experience into an irrelevant supernaturalism."

[119] Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 73. Day, *Conflict*, 103, notes the affinities this passage has with Ugaritic literature.

[120] Terence E. Frethem, *God and World in the Old Testament: A Relational Theology of Creation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2005), 161, states that this motif is "perhaps the most common" for divine agents of wrath.

[121] Göran Eidevall, *Prophecy and Propaganda: Images of Enemies in the Book of Isaiah* (ConBOT 56; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 179-80.

[122] John Hill, *Friend or Foe? The Figure of Babylon in the Book of Jeremiah MT* (BIS 40; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 75-76.

hands Israel over to the foreign nation, YHWH accuses his own avenger of overreach, and, finally, YHWH sends judgment on the avenger.[123]

3.2.4. *Summary*

I discussed a number of features of the divine army and weaponry. The prominent are the angels, figures related to the lesser deities from Ugarit. Here I noted the Angel of the Lord, an enigmatic figure who, at times, seems conflated with YHWH, though in later, postexilic literature there is a clear distinction. This figure fights, as seen by his confrontation with Balaam, whom the Angel of the Lord stood ready to battle as Balaam was traveling to serve Balak. Another angelic figure is the " Prince of the Host," an obscure figure who has a clear military cast to him. The closest parallel in Hebrew Scripture is Michael in Daniel, as he and other angels are designated princes and Michael, in particular is the "great prince, the protector of your people" (Dan 12:1). One last angel of this type is the Destroyer, who appears in Exod 12:23 and 2 Sam 24:16. This angel appears to be a figure of death on a massive scale.

Personified forces, generally destructive, also appear as attendants or weapons of the Divine Warrior. Here I looked at a number of figures from Deut 32:23-25 that appear to have parallels in Ugaritic literature, such as Deber (plague) and Resheph (plague). Ezekiel 14:21 mentions four personified destructive forces, the sword, famine, wild animals, and pestilence. More common, however, is the trio of sword, famine, and pestilence. Other personified force at YHWH's disposal include the winds and fire, as in Psalm 104:4. The winds serve as an attendant, a chariot, a weapon, and even as the

[123] Brueggemann, "Subversive," 122-24. Brueggemann actually considers only Isa 47:5-7 and concludes the paradigm with a rebuke of Babylon. However, vv. 8-9 initiates judgment on the heels of the rebuke, a judgment that continues through verse 15.

rebuke of YHWH, whose breath is a consuming fire in Isa 33:11. Fire, at Ugarit equated with Baal's lightning, also appears as a divine attendant or as an aspect of YHWH's presence. A devouring fire commonly expresses YHWH's wrath.

Finally, the hostile nations also serve as the weapons of the Divine Warrior when he makes war against his own people. Here Assyria, and Babylon stand out. However, the nations always overstep the bounds the Divine Warrior sets for them, leading to his wrath against these nations. Isaiah 47:5-9 offers the typical paradigm, as YHWH's anger is kindled against Israel, he hands the rebellious action over to a foreign power, the foreign power goes beyond the designs of YHWH, and YHWH sends judgment on the foreign power.

3.3. *The Enemies of the Divine Warrior*

YHWH often engages in war against cosmological foes represented as supernatural or natural forces and against historical nations that oppose his people. In this section I investigate both types. The first two enemies I discuss are the two most prominent opponents of Baal in the Ugaritic Baal Epics, ים, "sea," and מות, "death." In the Hebrew Scriptures, these opponents, especially the sea, appear in a number of different contexts and, in some cases, are likely multivalent.[124] I also discuss the figure of the satan in Hebrew Scripture, as such a figure is a prominent enemy in early Jewish literature and in the New Testament. The nations are a prominent temporal enemy, as they often set themselves against God's people. Even when this happens at God's

[124] Peter Riede, *Im Netz des Jägers: Studien zur Feindmetaphorik der Individualpsalmen* (WMANT 85; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2000), 388, states this negatively: "sind diese Bilder nicht einlinig zu interpretieren."

direction, they overstep God's intention and suffer his wrath. Finally, I consider the motif of the arrogant wicked ruler, especially as it is presented in Dan 8.

3.3.1. *The Sea*

As noted in the previous chapter, Yam, the Ugaritic god of the sea, was a formidable foe for Baal. Israelite Scripture retains this theme, though there is no divine enemy of YHWH who battles him on an equal footing. Numerous passages reflect enmity between ים, "sea," and YHWH. Often, the scriptural writers use this motif in relation to a battle that appears tied to YHWH's creative act, an adaptation that does not appear in the Baal Epic, as we saw in the previous chapter.[125]

In the Hebrew texts, when scriptural writers mention YHWH's combat with the sea, the motif only appears briefly and never as an independent and complete narrative.[126] This seems to be a product of the fact that the enmity with the sea is never the primary focus of the passage; rather, it serves to amplify some other primary point. Often, YHWH's victory over the sea serves as the basis for the praise of his unequaled power and majesty while highlighting his establishment of boundaries and order.[127] The Hebrew writers also recall the victory over the sea in a plea for YHWH to display his

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[125] According to Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 34-36, a battle at creation was one of two creation models in Scripture. The two models are the *logos* model of creation, one that emphasizes the authority of divine speech (e.g., Gen 1 and Psa 33), and an *agon* model of creation, one that emphasizes strife and resistance to YHWH's creative act. Wyatt, *Myths*, 194-210, finds within Gen 1 the intertwining of a "making creation" and a "speaking creation."

[126] Kloos, *Combat*, 75-83, compiled a list of all of the references to the sea in contexts of creation and/or combat. One noticeable observation is the brevity of the references.

[127] E.g., Pss 65:5-8 (6-9 MT); 93:1-5; 104:5-9. See also Job 26:1-14, where Job contrasts his power with the power of Elohim, who subdued the earth at creation.

strength as he has in times past.[128] An example that expresses the power of YHWH appears in Ps 89:8-10 (89:9-11 MT), where the psalmist recalls YHWH's defeat of the sea as part of an exposition of YHWH's power in order to make clear that the current crisis—the apparent loss of the Davidic king—is not a result of YHWH's weakness. Rather, it is a result of his anger (v. 38 [39 MT]).

The suitability of the sea as an opponent of YHWH resides in the sea's unruly, destructive nature. The consistent emphasis is that YHWH alone can keep the sea in its place. This makes the sea a symbol that is easily adapted to different contexts. For instance, in Ps 124:2-5 the imagery of the chaotic sea is intertwined with the imagery of death as the psalmist's enemies are likened to the chaotic sea that would flood and swallow (בלע) Israel. More typical of death (see below), the sea is personified here as having an insatiable appetite.[129] The combination of imagery from these different motifs throughout the psalm indicates the intensity of the situation.[130] Psalm 124 is an example a common theme; it symbolizes the onslaught of temporal enemies through the sea's chaotic nature.[131] Isaiah 17:12 depicts the nations as roaring and chaotic rough seas,

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[128] E.g., Pss 74:12-17; 89:8-10 (9-11 MT); Isa 51:9.

[129] As I will discuss below, the imagery of swallowing is commonly used to illustrate the voracious appetite of death. For further mixing of sea and death imagery, see also Ps 69:15 (16 MT), and, especially, Jer 51:34, where Nebuchadnezzar is portrayed as a dragon who swallows and crushes his prey.

[130] Riede, *Netz*, 105-06. As Mamy Raharimanantsoa, *Mort et Espérance selon la Bible Hébraïque* (ConBOT 53; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiskell, 2006), 161-64, notes, a further motif of death, a hunter's snare, appears in Ps 124:7. The drawing together of motifs for the chaotic nature of the sea and of death within the passage heightens YHWH's accomplishment of deliverance in the psalm by intensifying the enemy.

[131] Most credit Hermann Gunkel, *Creation and Chaos in the Primeval Era and in the Eschaton: A Religio-Historical Study of Genesis 1 and Revelation 12* (trans. K. William Whitney, Jr.; Biblical Resource Series; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 66-74: translation of *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit: Eine religiongeschichtliche Untersuchung über Gen. 1 und Ap. Jon 12* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1895), with the initial description of this motif, often called the *Völkerkampf*. Gunkel saw this motif as a development of the *Chaoskampf*. Day, *Conflict*, 125-138, sees this motif as an example of the

enemies whose roar is heard from a distance and who devour anything in their path.[132] Ultimately, only YHWH can hold in check or defeat such adversaries.

Three distinct terms often appear in conjunction with or as part of poetic parallelism with the sea in a way that personalizes the sea as a foe: תנין, רהב, and לויתן. The term תנין, often translated as "dragon" or "sea monster," refers to a denizen of the sea and is found in a number of different contexts in the Israelite Scriptures.[133] At times, it may simply refer to the beasts that dwell in the sea (e.g., Gen 1:21; Ps 148:7) while other instances appear to refer to serpents or snakes (e.g., Exod 7:9, 10, 12; Deut 32:33; Ps 91:13).[134] At other times the best sense is to understand the term as a subordinate or hypostasis of the hostile sea as in Job 7:12 and Ps 74:13.[135] In these cases, the imagery

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demythologization of the *Chaoskampf*, to represent the "inviolability of Zion" that appears in later eschatological contexts.

[132] This adaptation was common throughout the ancient Near East and appears often in Israelite Scripture. On the ancient Near East, see the summary by Riede, *Netz*, 378-79. For Hebrew examples, especially from the Psalms, see Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (trans. Timothy J. Hatlett; New York: Seabury, 1978), 100-08.

[133] G. C. Heider, "Tannin תנין," *DDD*, 833-34.

[134] Leslie S. Wilson, *The Serpent Symbol in the Ancient Near East* (SJ; Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2001), 74, notes that in Exod 7, נחש "snake," and תנין are interchangeable and that the two terms are "frequent parallels." However, the parallels listed by Wilson, *Serpent*, 87-88, are not always exact parallels. In fact, the only clear parallel is Isa 27:1. Note, however, Deut 32:33 and Ps 91:13, where תנין is parallel with פתן, "asp."

[135] This understanding is strengthened by comparison with the surrounding ancient Near East. Note, for instance, the obvious parallels between Ps 74:13-14 and Anat's cry in KTU 1.3.iii.39-40:

Psalm 74:13-14:

You divided the ים by your might;
You broke the heads of תנינים in the waters.
You crushed the heads of לויתן;
You gave him as food for the creatures of the wilderness.

KTU 1.3.iii.39-40 (Wyatt, *Texts*, 79):

Surely I smote the Beloved of El, *ym*?
Surely I exterminated Nahar, the mighty god?

Surely I lifted up *tnn*,
I overpowered him?

I smote the writhing *ltn*,
Encircler-with-seven-heads!

was flexible enough that in a few instances תנין symbolizes an earthly power to emphasize that ruler's enmity with YHWH or the enemy's great strength. Thus, in Jer 51:34-37, Nebuchadnezzar—Babylon—is a תנין, a dragon, who swallows, spews, and tears flesh.[136]

The term רהב, "Rahab," has the same range. The word itself is rare but in its few references the tie to the sea is evident.[137] Six of the seven references to Rahab clearly present Rahab as an enemy of YHWH, with two of these as a name for Egypt.[138] Thus, the term refers to the chaotic adversary of YHWH and can be used to paint temporal enemies in that light.[139]

The term לויתן, "leviathan," appears only five times in Hebrew Scripture, but shows the same type of range as תנין and רהב. One example, Ps 104:23, presents leviathan as nothing more than a sea creature. However, the remaining examples are best understood as related to the motif of the sea as a supernatural enemy. In some cases, this is clear by parallelism, such as Ps 74:13-14 and Isa 27:1. Job 3:8, despite some measure

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[136] Walter Brueggemann, *A Commentary on Jeremiah: Exile and Homecoming* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 478, comments that the imagery portrays Nebuchadnezzar as having behaved "like a sea-monster, like the very embodiment of chaos and evil." Two other passages, Ezek 29:3 and 32:2 (if תנין is read for the MT תונים) describe Pharaoh as the dragon in order to portray Pharaoh as an enemy of YHWH. See, e.g., Walther Eichrodt, *Ezekiel: A Commentary* (trans. Coslett Quinn; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970), 403, 432.

[137] K. Spronk, "Rahab רהב," *DDD*, 684-85.

[138] Job 26:12; Pss 40:4 (40:5 MT; plural); 87:4; 89:10 (89:11 MT); Isa 30:7 and 51:9. Egypt is called Rahab in Ps 87:4 and Isa 30:7. The remaining passage, Job 9:13, describes the "helpers of Rahab" bowing in fear, somehow the recipients of God's anger. The referent is difficult, if not impossible, to determine. For two contrasting options, see Day, *Conflict*, 40-41, who holds that the term must refer to YHWH's battle with the sea, and Watson, *Chaos*, 313, who suspects that there is a historical referent. Given the context of Job as a whole, I find myself predisposed to a mythical outlook. However, this need not exclude a historical referent. Anything more specific goes beyond the meager evidence of the passage.

[139] K. Spronk, "Rahab רהב," *DDD*, 684-85 is likely correct in suggesting that the "reference to Rahab in the OT should be read against the background of ancient Near Eastern mythology."

of controversy surrounding the text, likely uses leviathan as a referent for the hostile sea.[140] Job 41, an extended narrative concerning leviathan, is hotly debated over whether the beast is a dramatic representation of a natural creature or a mythical creature.[141] In either case, in Job 41, the incredible power of leviathan serves to emphasize God's power as the one who could subdue the beast, a feat beyond Job's ability to even contemplate.[142]

The sea and its various personifications thus serve as a formidable opponent of YHWH, at times in language quite similar to that used of Yam, one of Baal's opponents at Ugarit. However, the scriptural writers found the imagery to be readily adaptable, as the sea or its mythological denizens refers to natural creatures, supernatural enemies, or the temporal enemies of YHWH's people. The chaotic and fearsome nature of the sea serves as the means to illustrate the enemies. In such instances, the temporal enemies are not *like* the sea. Rather, they become the manifestation of the fierce, cosmic enemy of YHWH, an enemy that can only be defeated by YHWH.

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[140] E.g., Norman C. Habel, *The Book of Job* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985), 108-09. A number of scholars, following Gunkel, *Creation*, 37-39, emend the MT of 3:8, reading ים, "sea," for the MT יום, "day." If this emendation is accepted, it makes the passage a dramatic parallel to concepts from the ancient Near East and with other scriptural passages that reflect YHWH's battle with the sea. However, Watson, *Chaos*, 323-26, shows that the reading of יום fits the context too well and the emendation should be rejected.

[141] Contrast, e.g., these two statements: Habel, *Job*, 560, "The figure of Leviathan has obvious mythological associations in Canaan and Israel. It is difficult to imagine that an Israelite audience would have heard the name Leviathan without making these associations." Watson, *Chaos*, 333, "The majority view is that Behemoth is the hippopotamus and Leviathan the crocodile, and certainly this is more persuasive than the opposing 'mythological' interpretation." However, Watson, *Chaos*, 333, goes on to assert that "it must be appreciated that the distinction between 'real' and 'mythological' creatures is not one which the ancient Israelites would have been likely to have recognized" and that such an appreciation would more likely to support a "natural" interpretation. It seems to me that such an appreciation serves the opposite. Further, note the common mythical traits of leviathan discussed by Day, *Conflict*, 68-72.

[142] This would seem to favor a mythological understanding of leviathan as well. E.g., Habel, *Job*, 561: "The God who countered the claims and threats of chaos in the beginning portrays that chaos monster in all his terrifying splendor before Job. Job can match neither the magnificent arm of El against the wicked of the world nor the overwhelming fury of a chaos monster threatening YHWH and his cosmic order. Yet YHWH honors Job by coming out of hiding to confront this mortal hero with the challenge to gird up his loins and try."

3.3.2. *Death*

Death, an important enemy of Baal in the Ugaritic literature, also appears in Israelite literature. While the Hebrew Scriptures describe death in a number of ways,[143] the concept of a conflict between YHWH and death is not as pronounced.[144] Still, there are some notable examples where death or death's realm, שאל, stands in opposition to YHWH or his people.[145] In this opposition, the Hebrew portrayal of death as an enemy is not so much a representation of the end of existence as it is the personification of the entirety of destructive forces that are opposed to life and vitality.[146]

Gulde finds two primary motifs in the personification of death: death as a devourer and as a thief.[147] In these instances, Israelite descriptions of death have an affinity with Ugaritic descriptions of Mot. However, Hebrew writers never personify death to the extent that the Baal Epic personifies Mot.[148] The most significant example is Job 18:11-14, where death the devourer has a kingdom and an army.[149]

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[143] Philip S. Johnston, *Shades of Sheol: Death and Afterlife in the Old Testament* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2002), 23-65.

[144] Smith, *Origins*, 130-31.

[145] Johnston, *Shades*, 28-31.

[146] Stefanie Ulrike Gulde, *Der Tod als Herrscher in Ugarit und Israel* (FAT 22; Tübingen: Mohrs Siebek, 2007), 133-34.

[147] Gulde, *Tod*, 126-80. Death as a devourer appears clearly in Hab 3:5 and, in opposition, in Isa 25:7. Death appears as a robber in Jer 9:20. Gulde, *Tod*, 181-238, also notes two lesser personifications of death: shepherd and covenant maker. Raharimanantsoa, *Mort*, 149-94 notes a number of other common examples of "personification" (some of the items are zoomorphic).

[148] J. F. Healy, "Mot מות," *DDD*, 601. This is also noted by Nicholas J. Tromp, *Primitive Conceptions of Death and the Nether World in the Old Testament* (BibOr 21; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969), 107, who tends to see the personification and mythological portrayal of death as more prevalent than most.

[149] While the passage is difficult, it is likely to reflect a personified view of death as an active enemy. See, e.g., Nahum M. Sarna, "The Mythological Background of Job 18," *JBL* 82 (1963): 316-18. Habel, *Job*, 286-88, sees three direct references to personified Death in the passage: רעב, "The Hungry

In a manner similar to what we saw with the sea, Hebrew writers often described physical, temporal enemies as the personification of death.[150] Like temporal enemies described with the imagery of the sea, this is more than a metaphor. The petitioner sees his foes as the personification of death.

> [T]he way malefactors are thus put on a level with the Evil One [Death] suggests that there is more than a superficial correspondence between them. Human enemies appear as Death himself in visible shape: just as Death's sway becomes visible in the ill-fated situation, so his personal activities show themselves in the efforts of human adversaries.[151]

In Isa 25:8, the motif of death as a devourer is overturned as YHWH swallows the swallower:

> [H]e will swallow up death for ever.
> Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces,
> and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,
> for the Lord has spoken.

YHWH turns death's own means of destruction upon itself. In a single act the prophet both shows the inferiority of even the dreaded figure of death before YHWH, and looks toward the final, ultimate defeat of an ancient enemy. Eschatological salvation is complete when death, the primordial enemy, is not just defeated, but devoured.[152]

One," in verse 12, בכור מות, "Firstborn Death," in verse 13, and מלך בלהות, "King of Terrors," in verse 14. While one need not follow Habel to see mythological influence on the passage, his proposal, if correct, would provide a vivid parallel to Ugaritic descriptions of Mot.

[150] See, e.g., Pss 18:5 (6 MT) and 124:2-5. On enemies personified as death, see Martin Leuenberger, "Das Problem des vorzeitigen Todes in der israelitischen Religions- und Theologiegeschichte," in *Tod und Jenseits im alten Israel und in seiner Umwelt* (ed. Angelika Berlejung and Bernd Janowski; Tübingen: Mohrs Siebeck, 2009), 158-59. See also Tromp, *Primitive*, 110-14.

[151] Tromp, *Primitive*, 111.

[152] Dan G. Johnson, *From Chaos to Restoration: An Integrative Reading of Isaiah 24–27* (JSOTSup 61; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1988), 65.

Thus, Israelite writers portray death not only as an enemy of YHWH but also an enemy that he alone can defeat. Once again, Israelite use of Divine Warrior imagery demonstrates that no conceivable power stands above YHWH's.

3.3.3. *Satan*

It is unlikely that the noun שטן appears as the personal enemy, Satan, a concept that rises in the second century B.C.E.[153] A number of contextual and linguistic considerations lead to the conclusion that a personal, powerful enemy of YHWH does not appear in Hebrew Scripture. Significantly, Num 22:22 names the יהוה מלאך as a satan. If this passage is postexilic, as Day suggests, it seems unlikely that the term שטן could also be used as a name for the archenemy of YHWH in passages that are roughly contemporaneous.[154] In the sixth century, it appears the term was not specific and stood as a reference to an adversary whose identity might change depending on the context.

A more difficult case appears in 1 Chr 21:1, where a figure referred to as שטן, "satan," stands against Israel and entices David to take a census. A common suggestion here is that the Chronicler indicates a separate satan, or adversary, in order to clean up the theological implications of 2 Sam 24:1, where YHWH causes David to conduct the census because of YHWH's anger against Israel.[155] According to this understanding, the Chronicler denotes a satan as Israel's enemy who incites David to take the census. The

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[153] Peggy L. Day, *An Adversary in Heaven: śāṭān in the Hebrew Bible* (HSM 43; Atlanta: Scholars, 1988), 147-50.

[154] C. Breytenbach and P. L. Day, "Satan שטן," *DDD*, 730.

[155] E.g., Jacob M. Myers, *I Chronicles* (AB 12; Garden City, N.Y.; Doubleday, 1965), 147: The Chronicler "cannot attribute, in his time, the source of evil to God."

effect is that David is now the sole responsible party, absolving YHWH for being angry with David even though YHWH had incited David.[156]

Elsewhere, however, we see YHWH's willingness to provoke Israel. For example, in 2 Chr 18:16-22, YHWH sends a lying spirit against Ahab. Thus, ascribing YHWH as the one who incites sin does not seem to be a concern of the Chronicler.[157] Neither is it likely that שטן is a proper name, as this development began to take shape much later than the time of the Chronicler.[158] The options for understanding שטן here seem to be two: the adversary is simply *a* satan, an unnamed divine figure who incites David to act wrongly in the manner of Job 1:6–2:7,[159] or a human adversary. While the context offers little evidence to make a firm determination, Beentjes notes that in the Hebrew Scriptures, whenever the term שטן is anarthrous, it is always a human adversary. Meanwhile, השטן always refers to a divine being.[160] It would therefore be unique if the anarthrous שטן of 1 Chr 21:1 is a divine figure. Thus, I favor Beentjes' proposal and see David's foe as an earthly adversary who, in some way, incites David to conduct the census.[161]

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[156] Sara Japhet, *I & II Chronicles: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM, 1993), 373-74.

[157] Day, *Adversary*, 135-36, though Day does conclude that YHWH would not act this way against *David*.

[158] Day, *Adversary*, 135-36.

[159] E.g., Peter B. Dirksen, *1 Chronicles* (trans. Anthony P. Runia; HCOT; Leuvan: Peeters, 2005), 257, and Day, *Adversary*, 143-44.

[160] All seventeen are either in Job 1:6–2:7 or Zech 3.

[161] Pancratius C. Beentjes, *Tradition and Transformation in the Book of Chronicles* (SSN 52; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 375, who notes that with regards to the literary structure, "this anonymous schemer is the antithesis of Joab, who tries hard to dissuade David from his plan."

3.3.4. *The Nations*

YHWH also fights against earthly, temporal enemies. At times YHWH fights on behalf of an individual against personal, individual enemies. A number of psalms, such as Ps 18 or Ps 124, depict the personal enemy of psalmists as the enemy of YHWH. Often, YHWH's enemies are the national enemies of Israel, something we have already noted within the context of Holy War and even when YHWH uses the nations as his weaponry. In such cases, as with the personal enemies, the enemy of Israel is the enemy of God.[162] However, Israelite prophecy began to nuance this concept and portray the nations as the enemies of YHWH regardless of their relationship with Israel. As we have seen, the nations of Amos 1–2 incite YHWH's wrath because of how they treat each other; there is no mention of Israel as victim. Later examples of Oracles against the Nations continue this theme. Finally, in places like Ezek 38–39 and Joel 3 (4 MT), the nations gather for an eschatological battle against YHWH making clear their determined intent to oppose him.

A common theme throughout the Hebrew Scriptures is that God's people could, through covenant infidelity, find themselves as the enemies of the Divine Warrior. The warnings of covenant infidelity in Deut 28 touch on a number of images, from the triad of pestilence, hunger, and sword (28:21-26) to the promise of exile (28:36).[163] Such themes are expounded upon in the prophets where, as we saw in Amos 4:12-13, the Divine

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[162] John Goldingay, *Psalms* (3 vols.; BCOT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 2:327 notes on the appearance of this concept in Psalm 68:21 that in such cases God either "treats Israel's enemies as God's own, or God's enemies become the people's enemies because of Israel's association with God."

[163] Richard D. Nelson, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002) 326-29, sees a four-stage development in the curses of Deut 28, a passage he calls "thoroughly Yahwistic" and, thus, pre-exilic, though the final form is the product of "scribal reworking of borrowed political curse material for theological purposes."

Warrior rages against Israel. In a number of passages, the prophets even go so far as to announce a Day of YHWH against Israel.[164]

3.3.5. *The Wicked King*

The idea of a wicked, arrogant eschatological king who attacks Israel and even attempts to usurp YHWH's place reaches its fullest scriptural expression in the four visions of Dan 7–12.[165] Daniel's vision of an arrogant little horn in Dan 8:9-14 and the subsequent interpretation of this portion of the vision in Dan 8:23-25 present the epitome of this ruler in Hebrew Scripture. Daniel 8:9-12 is part of a vision of an aggressive goat whose great horn had been broken and four horns had grown in its place (Dan 8:1-8), with the horns as a clear reference to Alexander the Great and the Didachoi, his four successors. Out of one of the horns another "little horn" came out "grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the beautiful land" (8:9). Yet the

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[164] Elizabeth Boase, *The Fulfillment of Doom? The Dialogic Interpretation between the Book of Lamentations and the Pre-Exilic/Early Exilic Prophetic Literature* (LHB/OTS 437; New York: T. & T. Clark, 2006), 126-27, summarizes the pre-exilic and exilic prophets use of the Day of YHWH against Israel and categorizes all but Zeph 3 as oracles of judgment, though she notes that there is judgment against the nations in Zeph 3.

[165] For the generally accepted paradigm for the composition and compilation of Daniel, see John J. Collins, *Daniel*, 38. Until the rise of critical scholarship, the book of Daniel was considered the product of a historical Daniel in the sixth century B.C.E. Now, however, critical scholars are near unanimous in positing the date of the visions of Dan7-12 between 168 and 165 B.C.E., the period between the decree of Antiochus IV Epiphanes outlawing Jewish religious practice and the rededication of the Jerusalem Temple, with the tales of Dan 1–6 compiled from earlier writings. For a recent summary of some of the issues that originally informed a second century date for Daniel, see Paul L. Reddit, "Daniel 11 and the Sociohistorical Setting of the Book of Daniel," *CBQ* 60 (1998): 463-65. On how the visions fit into a second-century provenance, see Gabriele Boccaccini, *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism: An Intellectual History, from Ezekiel to Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 169-201. On Daniel's quick acceptance as authoritative Scripture, see Klaus Koch, "Stages in the Canonization of the Book of Daniel," in vol. 2 of *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception* (ed. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flynt; VTSup 83, 2; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 427-32, who notes that the Qumran community "held Daniel in high esteem right from the outset of the second century B.C.E." and the person of Daniel was considered a prophet like Isaiah and Ezekiel. Koch, ibid., 432-37, also notes that by the first century C.E., Daniel, especially the visions of Dan 7–12 , provided significant background and method for a "new wave of apocalypticism."

little horn wants more. The little horn desires to reach into heaven and strike at God himself.[166]

> [The little horn] grew as high as the host of heaven. It threw down to the earth some of the host and some of the stars, and trampled on them. Even against the prince of the host it acted arrogantly; it took the regular burnt offering away from him and overthrew the place of his sanctuary. [In the course of transgression],[167] the host was given over to it together with the regular burnt offering; it cast truth to the ground, and kept prospering in what it did (Dan 8:10-12).

The historical incident is certainly Antiochus' IV Epiphanes attack on the Jerusalem Temple.[168] In Daniel's vision, this event as an attack on heaven itself. The little horn assaults the צבא, "host," casting the כוכבים, "stars," to earth. The horn even acts belligerently against the שר־הצבא, "Prince of the Hosts" and takes away the Prince's תמיד, "regular burnt offering" and overthrows the מכון מקדשו, "place of his sanctuary."[169]

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[166] Holger Gzella, *Cosmic Battle and Political Conflict: Studies in Verbal Syntax and Contextual Interpretation of Daniel 8* (BibOr 47; Rome: Pontifical Bible Institute, 2003), 115-20, notes that verses 11-12 "heavily focus on the consequences of the growing of the last horn. In total, they contain, despite their shortness, no less than seven verbal sentences and so apparently aim at an extremely graphic picture of what is going on. This stylistic feature suggests to the reader that they depict the crucial point of the whole narrative."

[167] Here I follow Collins, *Daniel*, 335, for the sense of בפשע. The NRSV reads, "Because of wickedness." Collins states that the causal interpretation is "anomalous" since the פשע must be that of the little horn and not the host and because Daniel does not attribute the current crisis as punishment for sin. John Goldingay, *Daniel* (WBC 30; Dallas: Word, 1989), 211, is similar: "the Jews have been portrayed as sinned against rather than sinning." The focus of the passage and of the interpretation is the character of the little horn, the wicked king who rebels against God. Goldingay also notes that in 8:13, פשע clearly refers to the actions of the little horn.

[168] This is nearly unanimous. For instance, Susan Niditch, *The Symbolic Vision in Biblical Tradition* (HSM 30; Chico, Cal.; 1980), 228, states that "[i]t is clear that we are dealing with a reference, however exaggerated, to Antiochus' disruption of cult and defilement of the altar." It is important to keep in mind that the reference is specific to Antiochus' IV Epiphanes actions against the Temple and not to confrontations with the Jews in general, as the latter is suggested by Dan 8:9.

[169] Both תמיד and מכון מקדשו are somewhat unusual. Gzella, *Cosmic*, 116, n. 309, notes that the term תמיד is only used in this fashion in Dan 8 and calls its presence "striking." Following Goldingay, *Daniel*, 211, I suspect that it refers to "the religious practices of the temple in general." Most, like the NRSV, understand תמיד more narrowly, as an ellipsis of the term for the daily burnt offering, עלת תמיד from Exod 29:42; Num 28–29; Ezra 3:5; and Neh 10:34. As for מכון מקדשו, while each word is common in reference to the temple, according to Winfried Vogel, *The Cultic Motif in the Book of Daniel* (New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 53, n. 162, they only appear as a genitival construct in Dan 8:11. However, the two do

The little horn then casts אמת, "truth," to the ground.[170] Despite this assault on heaven itself, the little horn continues to prosper at whatever it does.

Daniel 8:11-12 is filled with Divine Warrior imagery. The צבא is a reference to the divine army, familiar imagery that also recalls the divine epithet, יהוה צבאות.[171] The כוכבים are also familiar as part of the divine army of Judg 5:20 and elsewhere as part of the divine retinue.[172] Finally, Daniel describes the horn exalting itself over the שר־חצבא a term that recalls the enigmatic figure from Josh 5:14, the שר־צבא־יהוה, commander of the divine army.[173] In Dan 8:11, the term likely indicates God himself.[174] This is an inversion of Holy War. The assault does not provoke the Divine Warrior to respond and fight from heaven. Rather, the little horn mimics the Divine Warrior as he throws down,

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appear in parallel in Exod 15:17. According to K. Koch, "כון, כן, מכון, מכונה, תכונה," *TDOT* 7:90, the term מכון in the singular always refers "to holy places, the place of Yahweh's presence. The singular form accounts for 16 of the 17 appearances of the term. This is significant in identifying the Prince and in understanding the Temple as the intersection between heaven and earth. The plural appears only in Ps 104:5, where it refers to the 'foundations' of the earth.

[170] Most find here an allusion to the actions of Antiochus IV Epiphanes and take אמת to refer to the concrete Torah or Jewish religion in general as opposed to the concept of truth. See, e.g., André Lacocque, *The Book of Daniel* (trans. David Pellauer; Atlanta: John Knox, 1979), 145. Contra Collins, *Commentary*, 163, who calls attention to Mal 2:6 (תורת אמת). However, in Dan 8:26, אמת is used to emphasize that the vision is not deceptive. Gabriel goes to great lengths to emphasize that the little horn/king *is* deceptive in Dan 8:23-25: the king makes מרמה, 'deceit' prosper. Thus, the casting of truth to the ground may be an indictment of the little horn's character: the horn, in casting truth to the ground, revealed his low regard for truth, something then emphasized in the interpretation when the king caused deceit to prosper. On אמת as that which trustworthy and reliable, more than simply opposite of falsehood, see R. W. L. Moberly, "אמן," *NIDOTTE* 1:428-29.

[171] Collins, *Daniel*, 331-32. See also T. N. D. Mettinger, "Yahweh Zebaoth," *DDD*, 920-24.

[172] Matthias Albani, " 'Kannst du die *Sternbilder* hervortreten lassen zur rechten Zeit . . .? (Hi 38:32): Gott und Gestirne im Alten Testament und im Alten Orient," in *Das biblische Weltbild und seine altorientalischen Kontexte* (ed. by Bernd Janowski and Beate Ego; FAT 32: Tubingen : Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 201-03. Albani also sees the starry army appearing in Isa 40:26 and notes that Josh 10:12-13 "ist in diesem Sinne interpretiert worden."

[173] Porteous, *Daniel*, 125.

[174] Collins, *Daniel*, 333.

tramples, takes away, casts down, and prospers in everything. Not only does the God of heaven not intervene, the passive תנתן, "was given over," may indicate that God himself delivered the divine army into the little horn's hand.[175] If this is so, God's purpose in delivering the host into the hands of his enemy is left vague.

This imagery is not metaphorical; the hosts, stars, and prince are not divine symbols for Temple attendants or guards and the High Priest.[176] Rather, the vision portrays the attack on the Jewish Temple and cult as an attack on the intersection between earth and heaven.[177] As such, the attack has consequences in both realms.[178] The impact on earth is clear: the horn takes away the offering and overthrows the sanctuary.

Significantly, the actions of the little horn against God in Dan 8:10-12 begin as a reflection of the prideful הילל, "Day Star," of Isa 14:12-20. However, the little horn

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[175] Enno Janssen, *Das Gottesvolk und seine Geschichte: Geschichtsbild und Selbstverständnis im palästinensischen Schrifttum von Jesus Sirach bis Jehuda ha-Nasi* (Neukirchener-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1971), 53: "Die Passivkonstruktion in 8,12 . . . zeigt, daß der Apokalyptiker hier Gottes lenkende Hand sieht, während das griechische Weltreich nur die Vollstreckerin dieses göttlichen Willens war." See also Collins, *Daniel*, 336, who, commenting on 8:13, notes, "God has not been mentioned directly but whose control of the course of events is assumed throughout."

[176] Contra Lacocque, *Daniel*, 162-63, who understands the host and the sanctuary as "the saints" and takes the prince to be the High Priest Onais II but notes that since שר always designates an angel in Daniel, "one must think not only of the High Priest, but also of the archangel Michael, the prince of Israel." Here Lacocque seems to have equated the entirety of Antiochus' actions against Judea with 8:10-12 when the vision only addresses the assault on the cult.

[177] Gzella, *Cosmic*, 118-19. See also Mettinger, *Search*, 131-33.

[178] Helge S. Kvanvig, *Roots of Apocalyptic* (WMANT 61; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1988), 581-82. See also John G. Gammie, "Spatial and Ethical Dualism in Jewish Wisdom and Apocalyptic Literature," *JBL* 93 (1974): 366-67, who notes that Daniel's vision is vague on the details of how this happens, "but the teaching of the Hebrew of this verse remains: an earthly ruler effected a fall to earth from among the host of heaven."

succeeds where the Day Star failed. After successfully ascending, the little horn's actions actually mimic the actions of the Divine Warrior *against* the Day Star of Isa 14:12-20.[179]

Daniel 8:10-12	Isaiah 14:12-20
The little horn grows as high as the host of heaven (8:10)	The Day Star sought to ascend to heaven, set his throne above the stars, and sit upon the mount of the assembly (14:13)
The little horn causes the host/stars to fall (נפל) (8:10)	YHWH looks upon the fallen (נפל) Day Star (14:12)
The little horn casts (שלך) truth to the ground (ארצה) (8:12)	The Day Star is cut down (גדע) to the ground (ארצה) (14:12), brought down (ירד) to Sheol (14:15), and cast out (שלך), away from his grave (14:19)
The little horn tramples (רמס) the host (8:10) and an angel wonders how long the host and sanctuary are given over to be trampled (מרמס) (8:13)	After being cast away from his grave, the Day Star is like a corpse trampled (בוס) under foot (14:19) [180]

In Dan 8:11, the little horn actually takes the offering that rightly belongs to the Prince. The little horn is thus much more than an antagonist who desires to rise above his appointed station; he attempts to take the role of the Divine Warrior for himself. He even attempts to do to the God of heaven and his armies what YHWH did to the Day Star of Isa 14.

[179] As Collins, *Daniel*, 332, states, "the relation with Isaiah 14 is generally affirmed." Note that Collins sees this relationship to only extend to Isa 14:12-15 alone; he considers the motif of the throwing down of the stars to have a different background.

[180] The difference in the words used for the trampling in Dan 8 and Isa 14 is probably due to the imagery in each passage. In Dan 8, the imagery of beasts attacking and trampling is prominent. In Dan 8:7, the goat threw down (שלך) the ram and trampled (רמס) it, just as in Dan 8:10 the little horn of the goat threw down (שלך) the host and trampled (רמס) them. Thus, the imagery is consistent between the goat of 8:7, who threw down and trampled the ram, and the goat's horn of 8:10, who threw down and trampled the host. According to E.-J. Waschke, "רמס, מרמס," *TDOT* 13:509-14, the verb רמס is often used of the trampling of an animal. As for the verb in Isa 14:19, בוס, it is often used in connection with the trampling of charging army. Both terms are appropriate for Divine Warrior imagery, as Isa 63:3 uses them in parallelism.

The imagery of the vision draws to a close in Dan 8:13-14 as Daniel hears a heavenly conversation that deals with the restoration of divine order. One of the participants wonders how long the events in the vision will last. In response Daniel hears a 'holy one' announce a specific, set period of time. It will be "2,300 evenings and mornings" until the sanctuary is cleansed (NRSV: "restored to its rightful state"). There is no further elaboration and the answer mentions nothing of the fate of the little horn. Still, the announcement of a very specific length of time emphasizes two things. First, the set duration indicates that there is nothing the little horn can do to lengthen or shorten the time of his prosperity. At the same time, there is nothing Daniel or the Jews can do to change the time either. The horn, the enemy of God, cannot manipulate his success into a longer period and delay his ultimate end, nor can God's people manipulate a shorter duration. The length of the horn's success is wholly in the hands of the Divine Warrior. Second, this set duration emphasizes that the power of the little horn power is limited, despite appearances to the contrary.[181] The horn only acts at the sufferance of God. When the duration of the set period comes complete, the horn's prosperity abruptly and unmistakably ends.

Following the vision, a confused Daniel receives the interpretation from the angel Gabriel in 8:15-26.[182] Gabriel's interpretation is brief, often less detailed than the vision

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[181] Lacocque, *Daniel*, 165.

[182] Daniel 8:16 is the first scriptural appearance of a named angel. Gabriel appears by name in 9:21 as well. The only other named angel in Hebrew Scripture is Michael, who appears by name only in Dan 10:13, 21 and 12:1. According to Kevin P. Sullivan, *Wrestling with Angels: A Study in the Relationship between Angels and Humans in Ancient Jewish Literature and the New* Testament (*AGJU* 55; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 63, Gabriel's role is the "delivery and interpretation of divine information." Benedikt Otzen "Michael and Gabriel: Angelological Problems in the Book of Daniel," in *The Scriptures and the Scrolls* (ed. by F. García Martínez, et. al., VTSup 49; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992), 121, calls the role of Gabriel in Daniel that of the classical *angelus interpretus*. While the book of Daniel is the only canonical book to name angels, it is not the earliest Jewish work to do so, as the *Book of Watchers*, which, according

itself. Gabriel interprets the first part of the vision, in 8:20-22, in a pesher-like style as his gives historical perspective and Daniel discovers that the horns represent kings.[183] When Gabriel turns to the little horn in 8:23-25, the style changes dramatically.[184] Here Gabriel's sole focus is on the character of the little horn, the final king. This begins with the divine perspective on the king's arrival in 8:23:

> At the end of their rule, when the transgressions have reached their full measure, a king of bold countenance shall arise.

Gabriel describes this "king of bold countenance" as one who arises "when transgressions have reached their full measure (תמם)." The transgressions are the transgressions of the goat, the Greek Empire.[185] The "full measure" emphasizes once again the limited nature of the power of the four kingdoms and the final king.[186] Though the successors of Alexander the Great ran with impunity over the word, their end would come at the point when God, in essences, says, "Enough!"

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to John S. Bergsma, "The Relationship between Jubilees and the Early Enochic Books (Astronomical Book and the Book of the Watchers)," in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees* (ed. Gabriele Boccaccini and Giovanni Ibba; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 39-41, dates to third century B.C.E., names four angels, including Gabriel and Michael, in *1 En*. 9:1, while *1 En*. 20:1-8 names seven. Matthew Black, *The Book of Enoch* or *I Enoch: A New English Edition* (SVTP 7; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985) 129, suggests that the reference in *1 En.* 9:1 "preserves an old, probably the oldest, tradition of the names of the four archangels."

[183] Gzella, *Cosmic*, 151, sees 8:20-22 is a type of continuous pesher. The term arises from the distinction first proposed by Jean Carmignac, "Le Document de Qumran Sur Melkisédeq," *RevQ* 7 (1969–1970): 360-62, who identifies a continuous pesher as one where "un ouvrage de la Bible est 'interprété' systématiquement, lambeau par lambeau, en sorte que l'ordre des 'interprétations' est purement et simplement l'ordre du texte biblique." In Dan 8:20-22, of course, it is the vision that Gabriel systematically interprets.

[184] Gzella, *Cosmic*, 152.

[185] Collins, *Daniel*, 339.

[186] See, especially, Gary A. Anderson, *Sin: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 85-89, who emphasizes that the "full measure" must be seen from the perspective of God; God will not act until the sin of the kingdoms reaches "a predetermined tipping-point," a tipping-point reached by the onset of the king who would rise to battle against God himself. I return to this concept below in the discussion of Israel's sin in Daniel 9.

This king of bold countenance is "skilled in intrigue," makes "deceit prosper" and destroys "without warning." In sum, Gabriel emphasizes that this king is more than arrogant; he is the epitome of deceit and violence. This king not only inverts holy war, he inverts divine wisdom as well, using his שכל for intrigue and personal gain.[187]

In completing his interpretation, in Dan 8:26 Gabriel highlights an aspect that Daniel's vision conspicuously lacked and even the subsequent angelic dialog only implied: this king's end will come. The description of the king's end is brief: "But he shall be broken, and not by human hands." Gabriel thus describes this demise with the language of divine war: the final king will be broken (שבר). Gabriel indicates that the king's end does not come from the revitalization of Holy War. This is not a battle where God's people fight their enemy aided by the divine armies of the Divine Warrior; humanity has no role in the end of the king. His demise, though not specific, comes directly from the hand of the Divine Warrior.[188]

3.3.6. *Summary*

The enemies of YHWH, both supernatural and terrestrial, all share one thing in common: none have any realistic chance of overcoming YHWH. In the end, only the

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[187] J. C. H. Lebram, "König Antiochus im Buch Daniel," *VT* 25 (1975): 738-43. Lebram especially notes the tie to Isa 10:12-14 and Ezek 28:2-5.

[188] Antiochus IV Epiphanes did indeed come to a death without "human hands," apparently dying from an illness during a campaign to reassert his dominion in the eastern part of the Seleucid Empire. However, as Collins, *Daniel*, 341, this should not be taken to indicate that the writer was cognizant "of the real circumstances of the king's death." Rather, the point is "ideological or theological." Human effort will not remove this king. Goldingay, *Daniel*, 218, cautions that this need not necessarily be read as criticism of the Maccabean revolt. It does, however, make clear that human efforts will not, ultimately, break the king. On the death of Antiochus, see Franz Mittag, *Antiochus IV. Epiphanes: Eine politische Biographie* (KBAG 11; Berlin: Akademie, 2006), 328-31.

wicked king of Dan 8 appears to have anything close to success, but even his exploits only come at YHWH's indulgence and for YHWH's purpose.

Though the portrayal of the sea has much in common with Ugaritic descriptions of Yam, in the Hebrew Scriptures, the sea appears as an enemy only in contexts where YHWH's unequal power is exalted and passages that highlight YHWH's establishment of divine order. The suitability of the sea as an opponent for YHWH rests in the sea's unruly, destructive nature. YHWH alone can restrain and tame the sea.

Three terms can appear in conjunction with the sea or as denizens or hypostases of the sea, תנין, often translated "dragon" or "sea monster," Rahab, and Leviathan. Rahab and תנין also appear as designations of rulers who display enmity with YHWH, while Leviathan appears most often related to the sea as a supernatural entity. This is less clear in Job 41, but even here Leviathan represents that which YHWH can tame while Job can only cower.

Death as an opponent in conflict is not as pronounced in Hebrew Scripture as the sea is, but there are some notable examples. When Death is personified, he appears as a devourer and a thief, similar to the portrayal of Mot at Ugarit. As with the sea, enemy kings can be portrayed as the personification of death. Death personified is not so much the opposition to existence as it is the opposition to life and vitality. One of the most significant passages concerning death in Hebrew Scripture, Isa 25:8, pictures YHWH swallowing the ancient swallower, turning Death's destruction upon itself. In Isa 25:8, eschatological salvation takes place when Death is not just defeated, but devoured.

In agreement with the scholarly consensus, I suggested here that Satan, the personified leader of evil from the second century B.C.E. onwards, is not a personal

enemy in Hebrew Scripture. Notable here is that the Angel of the Lord is called a satan in Num 22:22. In probably the most difficult passage in this regard, 1 Chr 21:1, I concluded that the satan likely indicates an earthly adversary who incites David to number Israel.

Throughout this chapter I have touched on the nations as enemies of the Divine Warrior. A notable development that takes place in some prophetic works is that the nations are the enemies of YHWH even apart from their attitude toward Israel. I had already discussed Amos and Ezek 29 in this regard.

Finally, I detailed Dan 8 as a vision and interpretation that presents the epitome of the motif of the arrogant wicked ruler. In Dan 8, the little horn, a symbol for the historical Antiochus Epiphanes IV, acts as a divine warrior in an inversion of the Holy War motif. Instead of the Divine Warrior descending to fight on behalf of the people of God, the little horn ascends into heaven to assault the divine army. Daniel thus portrays Antiochus' historical assault on the Temple as an attack on the intersection of earth and heaven. The little horn acts in a manner very similar to the way the Divine Warrior acted toward the daystar of Isa 14. Even so, the little horn is limited, only accomplishing what he does as YHWH permits. He is limited to a set period of time, after which YHWH himself overthrows the horn. In Gabriel's interpretation of Daniel's vision, he sets out the basic character of the ideal wicked tyrant: a bold countenance (arrogant), skilled in intrigue and makes deceit prosper (deceitful) and kills without warning (violent).

3.4. *The Flexibility of the Divine Warrior*

Israel, like the surrounding cultures of the ancient Near East, saw the deity's involvement in war as part of his involvement in the history of the nation and in the

entirety of life.[189] War, unfortunately, was a prominent element in Israel's history. Craigie relates the Israelite view of YHWH and war in this manner: "To describe God as a warrior is thus to say that God participates in human history, through *sinful human beings*, and through what have become the 'normal' forms of human activity."[190] Thus, it is certain that when the Hebrew writers recorded their reflections concerning Israel's past, they understood YHWH to have actively taken part in violent activity. However, not all of the violent imagery related to the Divine Warrior depicts the violence of Holy War. Several representative examples follow of the unique usage of Divine Warrior imagery.

3.4.1. *Psalm 46: War as the Enemy*

One such example is Ps 46, which uses Divine Warrior imagery in a manner that gives Israel hope, assurance and protection. Part of Israel's hope is that the Divine Warrior will emerge victorious over war itself as YHWH makes war his enemy. In Ps 46:8-9 (9-10 MT), the psalmist looks to the day when war is a defeated enemy.

> Come, behold the works of the Lord;
> see what desolations he has brought on the earth.
> He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
> he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear;
> he burns the shields with fire.

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[189] John Goldingay, *Theological Diversity and the Authority of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 162-63.

[190] Peter C. Craigie, *The Problem of War in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 41. John Goldingay, *Israel's Faith* (Downers Grove, Ill.; Intervarsity, 2006), 738, notes that warriors did not seek peace; it was YHWH, the stronger Warrior, overwhelming their ability to wage war. See also Ps 76:3 (4 MT) and Zech 9:10. See, however, Isa 2:4 (cf. Mic 4:3). On this passage, Hans Wildeberger, *Isaiah 1–12: A Commentary* (trans. Thomas H. Trapp; CC; Minneapolis: Fortress, 199), 93, notes a significant adaptation of the concept that YHWH destroys the implements of war: "YHWH does not shatter the weapons which belong to the enemies who are storming the city of God, but the peoples do it themselves, after they have been confronted by God up on Zion." Other passages that look to the end of war are Isa 9:5; 11:6-9; 60:17-18; 65:25.

YHWH the Divine Warrior displays his power and the instruments of war are destroyed. This passage is notable by its overturning of expectations. Psalm 46:8 (9 MT) is a call to see the שמות, "desolations" wrought by the Divine Warrior who simply speaks and the earth melts (מוג; 46:8 [46:9 MT]). The passage sets up the expectation of a litany of divine war but, instead, we see strident defeat of *war* over the entire earth (46:9 [46:10 MT]).[191] Brettler notes that this overturning of expectations was common in Israelite poetry. He suggests that such "examples illustrate how the expected entailments of the metaphor may be reversed to show how God could not be bound by the metaphor."[192]

3.4.2. *Zechariah 9: The Divine Warrior and Peace*

In Zech 9, likely a Persian-period text,[193] the prophet mixes the imagery of the Divine Warrior with the imagery of peace. Most see the chapter's overall structure to consist of at least two distinct poems that cover similar themes.[194] However, the material used in Zech 9 presents an interesting thematic arrangement. Zech 9:1-8 presents YHWH the Divine Warrior subduing the nearby enemies of Israel as they either surrender or face destruction.[195] At the other end of the chapter, Zech 9:11-17 depicts the Divine Warrior

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[191] Marc Brettler, "Images of YHWH the Warrior in the Psalms," *Sem* 61 (1993): 146.

[192] Marc Zvi Brettler, *God is King: Understanding an Israelite Metaphor* (JSOTSup 76; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1989), 164.

[193] David L. Petersen, *Zechariah 9–14 and Malachi: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 3-5, notes the wide range of proposals for dating Zech 9–14 but settles on three reasons for a Persian era date: 1) the prevalence of allusions to sixth century scriptural texts; 2) the language; and 3) the prevalence of allusions to Achaemenid imperial structures.

[194] Petersen, *Zechariah 9–14*, 56. For a detailed discussion of the structure of the chapter see Magne Sæbø, *Sacharja 9–14* (WMANT 34; Neukirchener-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1969), 135-207.

[195] Byron G. Curtis, *Up the Steep and Stony Road: The Book of Zechariah in Social Location Trajectory Analysis* (SBLAB 25; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 170.

raging against בניך יון, "your sons, O Yawan," generally understood as Greece.[196] The passage is an example of Holy War, as YHWH uses Israel and Judah as his weapons. The imagery is graphic, especially in Zech 14-15:

> Then the Lord will appear over them,
> and his arrow go forth like lightning;
> the Lord God will sound the trumpet
> and march forth in the whirlwinds of the south.
> The Lord of hosts will protect them,
> and they shall devour and tread down the slingers;
> they shall drink their blood like wine,
> and be full like a bowl,
> drenched like the corners of the altar.

Between the bookends of the battles of the Divine Warrior, Zech 9:9-10 mixes the imagery of battle and peace to emphasize a message of peace.

> Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion!
> Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem!
> Lo, your king comes to you;
> triumphant and victorious[197] is he,
> humble and riding on a donkey,
> on a colt, the foal of a donkey.
> He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim
> and the warhorse from Jerusalem;
> and the battle-bow shall be cut off,
> and he shall command peace to the nations;
> his dominion shall be from sea to sea,
> and from the River to the ends of the earth.

Commentators note that Zech 9:9-10 presents a number of unexpected shifts concerning familiar imagery.[198] First, the proclamation of the coming king is given in the

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[196] Petersen, *Zechariah 9–14*, 62-63.

[197] צדיק ונושע, "righteous and having salvation."

[198] Terry Collins, "The Literary Contexts of Zechariah 9:9," in *The Book of Zechariah and its Influence* (ed. Christopher Tuckett; Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2003), 37, considers such shifts to have "continuity in the form [but] . . . discontinuity in the ideas" and calls this a "sophisticated stylistic feature, consciously used, in which expectation is fulfilled in the form but is foiled in the contents."

language of theophany, as in Zech 2:10, yet the king appears to be a human ruler.[199] Second, the herald of the coming king begins with the praise for his victory yet emphasizes his humility.[200] Third, amidst all the language of violence in the chapter, the future king brings peace—not just peace to Ephraim and Jerusalem, but also peace to the nations.[201] Thus, the imagery of the Divine Warrior emphasizes the inevitability of the king's impending victory where he overturns the current state. The description of the coming king is one of an ideal king, a king where peace characterizes the nature of his reign.

3.4.3. *Joel and the Day of the Lord*

The prophet Joel makes use of the concept of the Day of YHWH in a manner that makes clear that the Day of the Lord in Joel is a day of war, a day of judgment.[202] What is unique in Joel is that there appears to be *two* distinct Days: the first, in Joel 1:1–2:27, is a Day of YHWH against Israel, and the second, in Joel 2:28–3:21 (3:1–4:31 MT), is a

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[199] Collins, "Literary," 39, calls the king an "ideal" or "messianic" king. For related imagery, which Collins, "Literary," 35, considers examples of an oracular "literary form, see, e.g., Isa 30:27; 35:4; 40:9-11; 62:11; Zeph 3:14-17; and Zech 2:10. The thematic ties between these passages and Zech 9:9 are set out by Collins, "Literary," 34-37.

[200] I understand the humility and mounting of the donkey as an unexpected aspect of the king based upon the parallelism between "coming in righteousness and having salvation" and "coming in humility and riding on a donkey." So Curtis, *Road*, 172, but contra E. Lipinski, "Recherches sur le Livre de Zacharie," *VT* 20 (1970): 50-52, who cites parallels from Israelite Scripture and the literature of the ancient Near East to show that the donkey was a proper mount for a monarch. However, Lipinski appears to recognize the problem presented by the parallelism of the passage when he attempts to understand עני as the feminine "chante" (sing) as opposed to the masculine form routinely rendered "humble."

[201] Not all commentators see the imagery of דבר שלום to necessarily be peaceable. Curtis, *Road*, 172, understands it as a threat—as does the NRSV. However, Petersen, *Zechariah 9–14*, 54-55, translates, "He will offer peace," tying it to the similar phrasing in Deut 20:10. Paul Lamarche, *Zacharie IX–XIV: Structure littéraire et messianisme* (*EBib*; Paris: Gabalda, 1961), 45, thinks that the structure of the passage emphasizes the peacefulness of the King-Messiah in Zech 9:10. I am better convinced by the arguments emphasizing the offer of peace rather than the enforcement of peace. Emphasizing a threatening aspect does not seem to adequately account for the shifting metaphors.

[202] Douglas Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah* (WBC 31; Waco: Word, 1987), 231.

Day of YHWH against the nations.[203] The first Day consists of a locust swarm sent by YHWH to overwhelm Israel (1:4). The manner and intensity of the description likely indicates a literary construct rather than a historical reflection.[204] The second Day is eschatological and consists of YHWH drawing the armies of the nations to Jerusalem in order for him to destroy them (3:11-13 [4:11-13 MT]).

The flexibility of Joel's use of the Day of YHWH, as well as his consistent interplay of themes between the two major sections of the book, are crucial in understanding the imagery as a whole.[205] In the end, what arises from Joel is the intensity of YHWH's battle against sin. His imagery is familiar (to Israel) and violent—locust swarms and military invasion—but, in the end, it is primarily theological in outlook. Deist aptly summarizes this when he concludes that Joel is best understood not as referential—in terms of actual events, but theological—in terms of what it tells us about YHWH and his Day.[206] The imagery of the Divine Warrior on his Day emphasizes the response of the hearers to the announcement of the arrival of that Day. In Joel 1–2:27, Israel hears the threat, gathers in the Temple—in Jerusalem—and cries out in repentance.

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[203] Joseph Bourke, "Le jour de Yahvé dans Joël," *Revue Biblique* 66 (1959): 5, who states that "dans chacune de ces sections se trouvent des allusions au jour de Yahvé, et il est évident que l'auteur pense à deux jours distincts."

[204] Ferdinand E. Deist, "Parallels and Reinterpretation in the Book of Joel: A Theology of the Yom YHWH?" in *Text and Context: Old Testament and Semitic Studies for F. C. Fensham* (ed. W. Claassen; JSOTSup 1988; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1988), 64-67. Contra, e.g., Bourke, "Jour," 22, who sees the locust swarm as a historical event. See also Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah*, 232-34, who sees the locusts as a metaphor for the invasion of an enemy army. Such an interpretation, however, tends to ignore the literary shifts that take place in Joel. For one example, as Bourke, "Jour," 13-14, notes, "tandis que, dans la première section, les sauterelles (un phénomène *agricole*) avaient été décrites en termes *militaires*, comme une armée, dans la seconde section, *l'armée* des Gentils est décrite en termes *agricoles*, comme une récolte" (original emphasis). Thus, the two Days are compared and contrasted, often using the same imagery.

[205] The best and most detailed analysis of the literary structure of Joel remains Bourke, "Jour," 5-31, 191-212.

[206] Deist, "Parallels," 75.

The nations hear the threat in Joel 2:28–3:21 (3:1–4:21 MT) and also come to Jerusalem. There is no repentance here, however. The nations come to fight.[207]

3.4.4. *Psalm 18: The Power and Intensity of the Divine Warrior*

Poetic descriptions of YHWH the Warrior often use Divine Warrior imagery to heighten his role in something. The imagery can relate YHWH's intensity on behalf of his favored, the seriousness with which he regards a set of circumstances, or his power in the face of overwhelming circumstances. The psalmist or prophet relates YHWH to the situation in the way that best produces the desired effect. For instance, Ps 18, one of the oldest scriptural poems, has this effect. It is often stated that Ps 18:7-15 (18:8-16 MT) is a theophany.[208] For the psalmist, however, this description is not so much a theophany as an application of the *imagery* of a theophany. YHWH's deliverance, expressed in dramatic and theophanic terms in 18:14-15 (18:15-16 MT), is undoubtedly the same deliverance of 18:16-17 (18:17-18 MT) and 18:37-40 (18:38-41 MT). Thus, the psalmist looks back on YHWH's victory on his behalf and describes YHWH's role using the heightened imagery of theophany, rife with the imagery of the Divine Warrior. In doing so there is an identification of the experience of the psalmist with the activity of the Divine Warrior; the psalmist faces defeat and YHWH rushes from heaven in full array and splendor. In essence, the psalmist ties his earthly experience to the divine realm.

Note that in Ps 18:4-15 (5-16 MT), the enemies of the psalmist are Death (vv. 4-5 [5-6 MT]) and the Sea (v. 15 [16 MT]). Even when the scene shifts from the divine

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[207] Bourke, "Jour," 205.

[208] Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50* (2d ed.; with 2004 supplement by Marvin E. Tate; WBC 19; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 173-74.

realm to earth beginning in verse 16 (17 MT), the enemy is still supernaturally described. Thus, in 18:16 (18:17 MT), the psalmist describes the enemy as ממים רבים, "many waters." However, despite the mythical language, in 18:17 (18:18 MT) and what follows, it is clear that the psalmist's enemy is an earthly foe.[209]

Day suggests this is an example of "demythologizing," where Israel, rejecting its mythical past, adapts the mythical language to illustrate something in the historical realm. I suggest opposite: the psalmist is actually moving the historical situation into the mythical realm; he is *mythologizing* his enemies, not demythologizing an ancient myth. In other words, the situation is so dire that the psalmist's enemies appear to come at him with the strength of divine foes. The psalmist's only hope is divine assistance. The psalmist, in essence, moves the earthly battle into the cosmological realm. The psalmist's foes are supernatural in strength; he requires supernatural empowerment for victory. The psalmist, then, uses Divine Warrior imagery to indicate YHWH's deliverance in the face of overwhelming odds.

3.4.5. *Isaiah 40: The Shepherding Warrior*

Isaiah 40:1-11 shows the use of Divine Warrior imagery that dramatically shifts expectations. As is often noted, the entire chapter overturns the calamity of Isa 6.[210] As an introduction to Second Isaiah, it sets the general tenor for what follows as well as setting the prophet's "initial" vision. The vision of comfort for Israel is filled with the imagery of YHWH the Divine Warrior. Verse 3 calls for the building of a highway for

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[209] Day, *Conflict*, 123.

[210] E.g., Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, 1:58, "The commission to speak to calamity [in Isa 6] gives way to a new commission to speak of restoration."

the marching Divine Warrior whose glory is returning to Jerusalem, drawing on the Exodus tradition and ancient Near Eastern parallels to present a New Exodus.[211] Isaiah 40:10 then takes the imagery one step further:

> See, the Lord God comes with might,
> and his arm rules for him;
> his reward is with him,
> and his recompense before him.

The prophet intends to evoke the spectacle of a triumphant Divine Warrior on the march. He comes with חזק, "might." His arm, an image of war, משלה "rules."[212] He brings reward and recompense.[213]

The imagery is immediately turned on its head in Isa 40:11:

> He will feed his flock like a shepherd;
> he will gather the lambs in his arms,
> and carry them in his bosom,
> and gently lead the mother sheep.

YHWH arrives as the Warrior marching in battle array. His actions, though, are those of a shepherd. The Divine Warrior is Israel's shepherd, who cares for his people, gathers them together, and leads them home.[214] Isaiah's vision is meant to bring hope, not to

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[211] Neville Tidwell, "The Cultic Background of Isaiah 40:1-11," *JTSA* 3 (1975): 43-47, suggests that Isa 40:3-5 purposely counters the imagery of the Exodus, where there was "no easy route, no highway" to the New Exodus, with its straight, level, paved way home. Further, the imagery of the highway is *not* for the returning exiles but for the return of the Divine Warrior. Tidwell discounts the ancient Near Eastern parallels. On these parallels note Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, 1:74-75, who also suggest that the "prophecy . . . apparently assumes that Yhwh has abandoned Jerusalem and is now to return along a new royal highway."

[212] Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, 1:89: "Both phrases promise release from bondage for Israel through suggesting divine power exercised on its behalf against its enemies."

[213] Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, 1:90, suggest that the phrase "nuances the portrait of Yhwh the victorious warrior, who comes accompanied by the booty won in battle.

[214] John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34–66* (WBC 25; Waco: Word, 1987), 90: "God's return promises pastoral, royal concern and care for all of them, particularly for the weak and needy." John L. McKenzie, *Second Isaiah* (AB 20; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968), 19, notes that YHWH's actions are often likened to a shepherd's, a motif familiar from ancient Near Eastern and Israelite kingship.

suggest violence. The Divine Warrior on the march is certainly capable of restoring Jerusalem; his people need not fear. Yet the Warrior does not march to overthrow Israel—or any other nation—but to shepherd Israel. Isaiah's announcement of comfort is YHWH's unparalleled strength and tender concern.

3.4.6. *Amos 8: The Absence of the Warrior*

There are a number of instances in which YHWH's actions, though couched in Divine Warrior imagery, clearly refer to something other than divine war. For instance, Amos 8:11 makes a shift in YHWH's use of the destructive forces of famine and drought:

> The time is surely coming, says the Lord God,
> when I will send a famine on the land;
> not a famine of bread, or a thirst for water,
> but of hearing the words of the Lord.

Amos 8:7-10 with the graphic depiction of the Divine Warrior poised to wage war against rebellious Israel, sets an expectation of continued violence in the form of famine and drought. However, this famine is something else entirely; it is a symbol of *divine absence*. The change continues in verse 12, where Israel wanders מים עד־ים, "from sea to sea," seeking sustenance that will not be found.[215] Thus, in Amos 8:11, the Divine Warrior battles Israel by removing himself from Israel's reach.

3.4.7. *Daniel 7: The Ancient of Days and the Son of Man*

The vision of Dan7 depicts four beasts, representing four empires, which rise in succession from the sea (7:1-7). The last beast had ten horns and an eleventh little horn,

[215] Linville, *Amos*, 155: "Famine and drought were supposed to lead Israel to return to God in 4:6-8. That chastisement failed, and so now it is not the food and water that is withdrawn, but God himself. There is great irony here, that the "thirst" leads people from sea to sea. They seek YHWH, but find the cosmic enemy Yam instead."

a horn with human eyes and an arrogant mouth that took the place of three horns that had been plucked up by their roots (7:8). As Daniel watches the little horn's rise and hears its arrogant speech, he sees thrones set up and another incredible being takes his throne: the Ancient of Days, עתיק מים (NRSV: 'Ancient One'). In Dan 7:9b-10b, Daniel describes this figure with the imagery of the Divine Warrior:

> his clothing was white as snow,
> and the hair of his head like pure wool;
> his throne was fiery flames,
> and its wheels were burning fire.
> A stream of fire issued
> and flowed out from his presence.
> A thousand thousands served him,
> and ten thousand times ten thousand stood attending him.

Three items related to Divine Warrior imagery are immediately apparent: 1) The Ancient of Days sits on a wheeled throne of fire, a scene reminiscent of Ezek 1, where, as we saw above, the wheels emphasized the mobility of the Divine Warrior; 2) the Ancient of Days is surrounded by fire, recalling Ps 97:3 where fire is an attendant of the Divine Warrior;[216] 3) a heavenly army surrounds the Ancient of Days, recalling the vision of the prophet Micaiah ben Imlah in 1 Kgs 22:19.

The arrival of the Ancient of Days signifies the end of the little horn and the fourth beast that spawned him, as well as the removal of the dominion of the first three beasts. But Daniel does not see the fourth beast defeated in battle. Rather, the scene in Dan 7:11 is juridical, depicting the final beast as slain in judgment, its corpse destroyed, and the destroyed corpse annihilated by fire.[217] The severity of the punishment recalls

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[216] Collins, *Daniel*, 302.

[217] André Lacocque, "Allusions to Creation in Daniel 7," in vol. 1 of *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception* (ed. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flynt; VTSup 83, 1; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 117-18.

the sin of Achan in Josh7, a classic passage of Holy War. Achan had taken spoil from Jericho, spoil that was חרם. As a result, Yahweh commanded Joshua to have Achan stoned and following the stoning, the Israelites then burned his corpse and covered the ashes with stones (Josh 7:25-26). The punishment of the fourth beast may reflect a status of חרם for the beast, as the beast had taken what did not belong to it. At the very least, the step of burning the corpse is imagery that is particularly degrading and utterly destructive.[218] Thus, the symbolism is explicit; The Ancient of Days, as Divine Warrior, emphatically and completely ends the empire that spawned the little horn.

Daniel's use of Divine Warrior imagery for the Ancient of Days highlights the figure's majesty, power, and authority. It is important to note that, in this case, Divine Warrior imagery does not indicate warfare. Rather, the imagery serves to emphasize that fourth beast, for all its ferocity, and the little horn, for all of his bluster, cannot withstand the direct intervention of the Ancient of Days. Daniel's emphasis is not the violent nature of the end of the little horn but rather the inevitability and totality of his end, an emphasis repeated in the interpretation of Dan 7:26, where king's dominion is consumed and destroyed, a scene that, once again, emphasizes totality rather than violence.

The next scene, Dan 7:13, makes use of imagery very familiar from the motif of the Divine Warrior:

> As I watched in the night visions,
> I saw one like a human being
> coming with the clouds of heaven.

[218] On the ritual function of the rare use of cremation, see Mark W. Hamilton, *The Body Royal: The Social Poetics of Kingship in Ancient Israel* (BIS 78; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 166-67.

This passage has drawn more attention than any other passage in the book of Daniel.[219] For the purposes of this study, the essential element is the Divine Warrior imagery, the cloud-vehicle of the כבר אנש, "son of man" (NRSV: "one like a human being"). The passage, however, is not one of divine war. In Dan 7:14, the Ancient of Days bestows authority on the cloud rider but does not send the Rider into battle against the little horn. In fact, the cloud rider does nothing but arrive and receive dominion.

Nevertheless, the cloud rider is the climax of Daniel's first vision, as he embodies all that lacks in the four beasts. In this regard, the son of man imagery serves as a direct counterpart to the four beasts.[220] The similarities that set the contrast are notable: as the four kingdoms are *like* various monstrous beasts, the cloud rider is *like* a son of man; as the four beasts are given various degrees of authority, the cloud rider is given everlasting and total authority. The two parts of the vision thus tie the vision into a coherent whole that begins with the emergence of the beasts from the sea and their enactment of authority, moves to the judgment of the Ancient of Days upon the beasts, and culminates with the son of man coming upon the clouds and receiving authority—directly and explicitly—from the Ancient of Days. Thus, within the framework of the vision, the

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[219] For a history of interpretation of Dan 7:13, see the excursus in Collins, *Daniel*, 304-10. Elsewhere, John J. Collins, "Current Issues in the Study of Daniel," in vol. 1 of *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception* (ed. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flynt; VTSup 83, 1; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 8-9, notices that those who "take the Hebrew Bible as the primary context for interpretation" see the son of man as a symbol for Israel while "those who read Daniel in the context of ancient myth" tend to find the son of man as a referent to an individual, usually the angel Michael.

[220] Maurice Casey, *Son of Man: The Interpretation and Influence of Daniel 7* (London: SPCK, 1979), 24-30. See also Helge S. Kvanvig, "Throne Visions and Monsters: The Encounter between Danielic and Enochic Traditions," *ZAW* 117 (2005): 264. Further, Jürgen-Christian Lebram, *Das Buch Daniel* (ZBKAT 23; Zurich: Theologischer, 1984), 88-89, suggests that the second beast, by rising up on one side, reflects a motif of a progressive lessening of humanity in the beasts from the first, who has some human characteristics—it walked like a human and had a human mind—to the last, who is monstrous. The little horn is then notable for its arrogant speech but it still "had eyes like human eyes and spoke." The beasts' lack of "humanity" characterizes their inadequacy for dominion, a situation only rectified only when the "one like the son of man" is given authority.

importance of the son of man riding on the clouds is that it emphasizes the *origin* of the son of man as opposed to the origin of the beasts. The son of man comes from the divine realm, from the dwelling place of God. The clouds, the vehicle of the divine warrior, transport the son of man, revealing his divine origin.

Thus, the figures of the Ancient of Days and the son of man have trappings of Divine Warrior imagery attached to them but neither fight in battle. The Ancient of Days is a judge who enacts justice on the fourth beast and its arrogant little horn. The son of man is a figure who rides the clouds to indicate his origin. He does not fight; he is granted authority.

3.4.8. *Summary*

My primary purpose in this section was to showcase a number of examples where Divine Warrior imagery is used in different kinds of contexts that range from the opposite of war to a juridical perspective. The first passage I investigated, Ps 46 is notable for the fact that the Divine Warrior makes war against *war*. Zechariah 9:9-10 uses Divine Warrior imagery to characterize a future ideal human king and emphasize his humility. The king's reign will be one of peace for all of the nations.

Of all of the examples in this section, the book of Joel retains the closest connection to Divine Warrior imagery in the context of war. Joel depicts two separate Days of the Lord, one for Israel and one for the Nations, set in a context that emphasizes YHWH's hatred of sin more than his acts of war and judgment. The oracles focus on the response to the announcement of the two days. Israel repents but the nations gather to fight on that Day.

Psalm 18 depicts the desperate situation of the psalmist, who likens his plight to an assault by the mythical enemies of the Divine Warrior. The psalmist uses the language of theophany to bring the earthly, historical situation into the divine realm. In essence, the psalmist mythologizes his experience and calls on the power of the Divine Warrior for deliverance.

Isaiah 40 offers a shift of expectations, as the imagery of the Divine Warrior marching in battle array is prominent. However, the Divine Warrior doesn't march to war; he marches to shepherd his people. Divine Warrior imagery provides a background of power and certainty. Israel's shepherd will guide them home. Amos 8:11 also reverses expectations, as the oracle appears to present the Divine Warrior ready to unleash a plague of famine upon Israel. However, the plague of famine is not a lack of food, it is the lack of the word of God. No prophecy will come to this people, as the Divine Warrior unleashes the plague of his absence.

Finally, Dan 7 presents the imagery of the Ancient of Days seated on an incredible throne, judging the four beasts of the vision. The imagery surrounding the Ancient of Days is that of the Divine Warrior. The Ancient of Days comes for justice, not to make war. After the execution of his judgment, "one like the son of man" comes riding on the clouds, the divine chariot symbolizing his origin. The Ancient of Days then bestows eternal authority on the one like the son of man. The son of man does not ride to war; he rides to receive authority from the righteous judge, the Ancient of Days.

3.5. *Summary and Conclusion*

In this chapter I presented a broad overview of YHWH as Divine Warrior in the Hebrew Scriptures. First, I considered YHWH as the Divine Warrior comparing and

contrasting him with the broader ancient Near East. There are several key contrasts. First, the familiar mythology never appears in complete stories in the Hebrew Scriptures; it only appears as imagery to illustrate YHWH's power. Second, YHWH never battles to win his throne. While YHWH's battles show his worthiness, his throne belongs to him from eternity. Third, YHWH's actions are tied to the historical realm, especially to Israel. Even the battle with the sea becomes an event of primordial creation, something never specified at Ugarit.

I then touched on several themes that make use of Divine Warrior imagery. Most prominent here is the idea of Holy War, where YHWH fights with his people to ensure their victory. Even when human activity dominates the narrative, passages like Judg 4–5 clearly indicate YHWH's essential involvement. The Divine Warrior also assures his people of his presence, favor, and victory, as in the passages from 2 Kgs 3 and 6. Another prominent motif is the threat of the Divine Warrior against his people when they are unfaithful to the covenant. The book of Amos develops this in a distinctive way. Finally, in this section I noted concepts that developed in some exilic and postexilic prophetic texts that use Divine Warrior imagery as they may expand or interpret earlier scriptures, to heighten the connection between the divine and human realm, or to shift the outlook of history from that of a change in the present circumstance to an undefined future response by the Warrior.

I then discussed a number of features of the divine army and weaponry. I first investigated angelic figures here, with special attention on the Angel of the Lord, an enigmatic figure sometimes conflated with YHWH. Another angelic figure is the "Prince of the Host," an obscure figure who has a clear military cast to him but only appears in

Josh 5. The closest parallel to the Prince in Hebrew Scripture is Michael, one of the angelic princes in the book of Daniel. Michael is the "great prince, the protector of your people" (Dan 12:1). A final figure of this type is the Destroyer, whose two appearances tie him to death on a massive scale. Personified forces, generally destructive, also appear as attendants or weapons of the Divine Warrior. Some of these figures, such as Deber (plague) and Resheph (plague), may reflect Ugaritic parallels while others are destructive forces such as the sword, famine, wild animals, and pestilence. Also prominent are two weather-related phenomena, the winds and fire, both attendants and weaponry of the Divine Warrior. The wind is also a chariot for YHWH and his rebuke, his wind, is a potent weapon, even likened to a consuming fire. A devouring fire commonly expresses YHWH's wrath. Hostile nations also serve as the weapons of the Divine Warrior when he makes war against his own people, with Assyria and Babylon prominent in this regard. These weapons fit a pattern where YHWH's anger is kindled against Israel, he hands the rebellious action over to a foreign power he has assigned, the foreign power goes beyond the designs of YHWH, and YHWH sends judgment on the foreign power.

In discussing the enemies of YHWH the Divine Warrior in general, I noted that all share one thing in common: none are equal to or have any chance of overcoming YHWH. The portrayal of the sea as an enemy has much in common with Ugaritic descriptions of Yam, though in an Israelite context, the sea only appears as an enemy as a way to depict YHWH's power. The suitability of the sea as an opponent for YHWH rests in the sea's unruly, destructive nature, as YHWH alone can restrain and tame the sea. Three terms can personify the sea, תנין (the "dragon" or "sea monster"), Rahab, and Leviathan. These foes can also be intertwined with temporal rulers hostile to YHWH as a

means to tie hostile nations and rulers to the hostile supernatural world. Death appears less often as a personified opponent. When it does, Death is a devourer and a thief, similar to the portrayal of Mot. As with the sea, enemy kings can be portrayed as the personification of death. Death personified is not so much the opposition to existence as it is the opposition to life and vitality. In Hebrew Scripture, the satan is not the personified leader of evil. As for the nations, their hostile status is apparent in that YHWH considers them an enemy even in contexts outside the nations' relationship to Israel. One final enemy is the arrogant wicked ruler, a figure epitomized in the vision and interpretation of Dan 8. This type of wicked tyrant is recognized by his arrogance, even towards YHWH, his deceitfulness, and his violence.

Finally, I examined a number of passages that show Divine Warrior imagery being used in contexts that do not necessarily involve actual war. These included Psalm 46, where the Divine Warrior makes war against *war* and Zech 9:9-10 where Divine Warrior imagery helps to depict a future ideal human king who is humble and whose reign is characterized by peace for all of the nations. The book of Joel uses Divine Warrior imagery as part of two separate Days of the Lord, one for Israel and one for the Nations, where the importance of the imagery is in the response to the announcement of each day. In Joel, Israel repents but the nations respond by gathering to fight against the Divine Warrior. Psalm 18 uses the imagery of a Divine Warrior theophany to depict the heavenly response to the psalmist's earthly situation; the psalmist mythologizes his experience in order to call on the power of the Divine Warrior for deliverance. Isaiah 40 depicts a marching Divine Warrior but describes his actions as those of a shepherd. Amos 8:11 pictures the Divine Warrior sending a plague of famine—a famine of his

absence. Finally, Dan 7 uses Divine Warrior imagery to present the Ancient of Days dispensing justice and then bestowing eternal authority on another figure described with such imagery, the one like a son of man coming on a cloud. The cloud does not indicate his arrival for battle; rather, it indicates his origin is with the Ancient of Days.

In the Hebrew Scriptures, Divine Warrior imagery appears in ways familiar from the ancient Near East, yet it has been significantly adapted to fit into a new context. Whether the context is Holy War or personal crisis, YHWH the Divine Warrior alone stands above all and any opposition. This expression of power reaches beyond a mere assertion of authority. YHWH even uses that power to defeat war, to bring peace, and assert justice.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Imagery of the Divine Warrior in Early Jewish Literature

In investigating whether the various uses of Divine Warrior imagery can impact an understanding of the depictions of divine violence in the book of Revelation, a discussion of early Jewish literature plays an essential role. Early Jewish writers use the Hebrew Scriptures as foundational texts, and the way they read and reuse Scripture informs the use of Scripture in Revelation. This literature also testifies to a number of adaptations and expansions of familiar imagery that provide background for similar items in Revelation. Motifs that play a significant role in a variety of early Jewish texts also appear in Revelation.

I limit early Jewish literature covered in this chapter to writings dating from the late fourth/early third century B.C.E. (i.e., the *Book of the Watchers*) to around the end of the first century C.E. (i.e., the date of Revelation's composition). This is a significant amount of literature, including the Jewish Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Jewish writers such as Josephus. Thus, my investigation is by no means exhaustive. My goal is to highlight texts that illustrate both the continuity of Divine Warrior imagery and the various ways writers of the period used, adapted, and changed the imagery to meet specific needs, both theological and existential.

To that end, I divide the chapter into three broad sections: 1) God as the Divine Warrior, 2) Allies of the Divine Warrior, and 3) Enemies of the Divine Warrior. In the first section, I divide the discussion into reflections of God as the Divine Warrior in Israel's past and present, as well as eschatological speculation where God appears as the Divine Warrior. In the second section, I discuss angels, messianic figures, and the people of God as allies of

the Divine Warrior. Finally, I discuss the enemies of the Divine Warrior by dividing the discussion between otherworldly enemies and temporal enemies.

4.1. *God as the Divine Warrior*

There has been some tendency to assert that depictions of God in early Jewish texts portray him as remote and transcendent, primarily working through intermediaries rather than by direct intervention in human affairs.[1] However, the increased development and use of intermediaries in early Jewish literature takes place alongside God's active role in history, including his role as Divine Warrior.

The imagery of God as Divine Warrior appears in three different contexts: 1) reflections on God's involvement in Israel's past, 2) God's direct intervention in contemporary events, and 3) an eschatological future depicted as both judgment and battle. While many examples are eschatological in outlook, there are a number of notable examples that reflect God's past activity and his present involvement.

4.1.1. *Reflections on the Divine Warrior in Israel's History*

A number of early Jewish texts make direct use of events related in Hebrew Scripture or rewrite those same scriptures, usually as a summary but often adding details not present in the received text.[2] Given the ubiquitous nature of God as the Divine Warrior in Hebrew

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[1] E.g., Shaye J. D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* (LEC 7; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1989), 23, "The God of second temple Judaism was much more 'transcendent' than the God of pre-exilic Israel. God needed intermediaries to run the world, and humanity needed intermediaries to reach God."

[2] On the rewriting of Scripture see Anders Klostergaard Petersen, "Rewritten Bible as a Borderline Phenomenon—Genre, Textual Strategy, or Canonical Anachronism?" in *Flores Florentino* (ed. Anthony Hilhorst, Emile Puech, and Eibert Tigchelaar; Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 122; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 285-306. My understanding of what constitutes a scriptural text prior to canonization follows that of Armin Lange, "The Status of the Biblical Texts in the Qumran Corpus and the Canonical Process," in *The Bible as Book: The Hebrew Bible and the Judaean Desert Discoveries* (ed. Edward D. Herbert and Emanuel Tov; London: The British Library, 2002), 21-22, who defines Scripture as books that "were understood in the

Scripture, it comes as no surprise that the texts that use or rewrite Scripture include imagery of God as a warrior. *Fourth Ezra*, a late first century C.E. apocalyptic work set in the late exilic period, provides an excellent example.[3] In *4 Ezra* 3:17-19, part of Ezra's prayer recounts the exodus from Egypt and God's subsequent giving of the Law in dramatic imagery.

> And when you led his descendants out of Egypt, you brought them to Mount Sinai. You bent down the heavens and shook the earth, and moved the world, and caused the depths to tremble, and troubled the times. Your glory passed through the four gates of fire and earthquake and wind and ice, to give the law to the descendants of Jacob, and your commandment to the posterity of Israel.[4]

This passage is part of Ezra's initial prayer of *4 Ezra* 3:3-36, a lament at the severity of God's punishment of exile, a punishment that Ezra sees as unjust.[5] This part of the lament describes God's giving of the Mosaic Law in a such a way that this event shines above all of God's other activities related in the prayer.[6] Ezra's description also goes far beyond its scriptural antecedents by giving the gift of the Law a cosmic, universal dimension that further emphasizes the importance of this gift.[7] In *4 Ezra* the heavens bend down, the earth

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second and first centuries B.C.E. to have had a religious authority." A particular book's religious authority is shown through a particular sect's penchant for interpreting, quoting, or referring to that book.

[3] For an introduction to *4 Ezra*, see Michael E. Stone, *Fourth Ezra: A Commentary on the Book of Fourth Ezra* (Herm; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 1-47.

[4] Translations of all Apocryphal books are from the NRSV unless otherwise noted. In the Apocrypha, 2 Esd 3–14 corresponds to *4 Ezra*.

[5] On *4 Ezra* 3:1-36 as a lament, see Karina Martin Hogan, *Theologies in Conflict in 4 Ezra: Wisdom, Debate, and Apocalyptic Solution* (JSJSup130; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 103. Hogan calls this lament "a parody of the covenant *rîb* form, since Ezra uses a selective recital of *Heilsgeschichte* (from the creation of Adam to the fall of Jerusalem to Babylon) to indict God."

[6] Bruce W. Longenecker, *2 Esdras* (Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995), 35.

[7] Kristine Johnson Ruffatto, "Visionary Ascents of Moses in Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*: Apocalyptic Motifs and the Growth of Visionary Moses Tradition" (Ph.D. diss.; Marquette University, 2009), 123-24, who is primarily concerned with the exalted status of the Law in similar passages in Pseudo-Philo, *L.A.B.* 11.4-5; 15.6; 23:10; 32:7-8, but notes the same pattern in *4 Ezra* 3:18-19 as well.

shakes, the whole world moves, the deep trembles, and the times are troubled when God comes to present the Law to Moses (cf. Pseudo-Philo, *L.A.B.* 11:4-5; 15:6; 23:10; 32:7-8). Ezra describes the giving of the Law in the language of theophany, as he weaves together images from Ps 18 and other theophanic scriptural passages.[8]

For Ezra, the picture of incredible power at the giving of the Law in *4 Ezra* 3:17-19 stands in stark contrast with the lack of divine action in 3:20-22:

> Yet you did not take away their evil heart from them, so that your law might produce fruit in them. For the first Adam, burdened with an evil heart, transgressed and was overcome, as were also all who were descended from him. Thus the disease became permanent; the law was in the hearts of the people along with the evil root; but what was good departed, and the evil remained.

Ezra complains that while God gives the Law with the power of his overwhelming presence, God still does nothing to remove humanity's evil heart, making the breaking of this Law inevitable. Thus, the Divine Warrior imagery of the passage emphasizes God's power in the giving of the Law, stressing its importance to God. In the narrative, Ezra uses that demonstration of power and importance to indict God for not empowering his people to be able to keep the Law.

A second example of recalling the past activities of the Divine Warrior also mentions the exodus from Egypt. The apocryphal book of Judith is Jewish folktale with a literary

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[8] Albrecht Scriba, *Die Geschichte des Motivkomplexes Theophanie: Seine Elemente, Einbindung in Geschehensabläufe und Verwendungsweisen in altisraelitischer, frühjüdischer und frühchristlicher Literatur* (FRLANT 167; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), 181-82, notes the scriptural precedents to the theophanic expansions in both *4* Ezra and *L.A.B.* and considers heightened responses of *4 Ezra* 3:18 to be in line with the scriptural tradition of theophany applied to the Sinai tradition that serves as an effect of the storm when God passes through the four gates of *4 Ezra* 3:19. *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum* is a recounting of scriptural history from the creation of Adam to death of Saul that dates from first century C.E. On the date of *L.A.B.* as subsequent to the destruction of Jerusalem and thus contemporaneous to *4 Ezra*, see Howard Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's* Liber antiquitatum biblicarum *with Latin text and English Translation* (2 vols.; AGJU 31; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 1:199-210. On the genre of *L.A.B.* see ibid., 1:211-13.

setting in the early sixth century B.C.E.[9] It dates from the late second century B.C.E. or later, probably representing a statement on events surrounding Antiochus IV Epiphanes' assault on the Jews.[10] The book begins with Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Assyrians, sending his general Holofernes to subdue the west (Jdt 1–3).[11] The Israelites alone, however, resisted his advance (4:1-15). Furious, Holofernes seeks an answer as to why the Israelites would resist (5:1-4). Achior, leader of the Ammonites, warns Holofernes not to take Israel too lightly because their God may be fighting for them (5:5-24). Part of that warning emphasizes the nature of the power of the God who fights for the Israelites.

> They [Israel] cried out to their God, and he afflicted the whole land of Egypt with incurable plagues. So the Egyptians drove them out of their sight. Then God dried up the Red Sea before them, and he led them by the way of Sinai and Kadesh-barnea. They drove out all the people of the desert (Jdt 5:12-13).

Achior warns Holofernes that even Israel's recent history demonstrates this. When Israel did not sin the Divine Warrior fought for them because "the God who hates iniquity is with them" (5:17). But when the Israelites began to sin, God allowed their defeat and they were eventually taken captive and their Temple razed (5:18). Now, however, they are back in their city (5:19). Achior implies that this indicates divine favor and, if so, it would be best for Holofernes to pass by Israel, "for their Lord and God will defend them, and we shall become the laughingstock of the whole world" (5:21).

The passage is an important hinge in the narrative, as subsequent events will flesh out Israel's status. If Holofernes is able to overrun Israel, then Israel is in a state of sin. If

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[9] On Judith as a folktale, see Carey A. Moore, *Judith: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 40; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1985), 70-76. On the literary setting of Judith, see idem, 49-52.

[10] Moore, *Judith*, 67-70. See also Daniel J. Harrington, *Invitation to the Apocrypha* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 28-29.

[11] On the historical discrepancies in Judith, see Moore, *Judith*, 52-56.

Holofernes is defeated, then Israel is faithful.[12] As the narrative continues, the Israelites are suffering in a besieged city (7:8-14). In response, they unwittingly offer an interpretation of what Achior's words to Holofernes mean. Israel must be in sin. Thus, it is better to surrender than to suffer (7:24-28). One of the magistrates convinces the people to give God five days to deliver them from Holofernes. If God does not deliver them within that time, the magistrate will end their suffering and he will surrender (7:30-31).

It is at this point that Judith arrives on the scene. Her character confronts two issues. First, she eviscerates the passive character of faith that waits for God and sets limitations on his activity (8:12-17). Judith asserts that they are not sinning as their forefathers had been and that their surrender would only lead to the downfall of all of Israel, a downfall that would be upon their heads (8:18-23). Thus, their present situation is a test from God (8:24-27). For Judith, this is to demonstrate faith through action.[13] For the intended readers, Judith's speech likely reflects a positive statement on the action of the Maccabees and asserts the expectation of God's continued deliverance.[14]

Second, Judith's character accentuates the power of the Divine Warrior to work in overwhelming situations through unorthodox means. Judith, the woman, the non-warrior, becomes the hand of God against Israel's adversaries. Achior's warning (5:21) becomes reality; God not only defeats Holofernes, God humiliates him (13:17). Achior warned Holofernes of the power of the Divine Warrior to push back the sea. Yet the power of the

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[12] Moore, *Judith*, 161: "Only time will tell which is the greater lord: the one who will attack Israel or the one who will defend her."

[13] George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction* (2d ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 98.

[14] Nickelsburg, *Jewish*, 101-02.

Divine Warrior comes to Holofernes in the form of weakness; the divinely empowered woman of weakness defeats the man of power.

In both of these examples, the imagery of the Divine Warrior serves to emphasize the power of God. Whether an attempt to understand a situation or to persevere and respond to one, God's power is unquestioned. His actions as the Divine Warrior of Israel's past demonstrate his power. His actions in the present may look different but they still have the same power behind them.

4.1.2. *Divine Intervention in Contemporary Events*

Divine intervention in contemporary battles, or Holy War, appears in early Jewish texts, especially in conjunction with the Maccabean revolt against Antiochus IV Epiphanes and his heirs (166–142 B.C.E.). The most dramatic imagery in this regard appears in 2 Maccabees, an epitome of a non-extant work from the mid-second century B.C.E. that related the Jewish response to Antiochus IV.[15] The work is an intriguing mix of Jewish religious outlook and Hellenistic style,[16] and the imagery of God as a Divine Warrior reflects the blending of both. In this regard, two particular developments are of note: divine epiphanies and the Divine Cavalier.

4.1.2.1. *Divine Epiphanies: 2 Maccabees 2:19-22*. In the book of 2 Maccabees, God's visible presence, an epiphany (ἐπιφάνεια), is a clear display of divine power and it

[15] In 2 Macc 2:23, the writer claims that 2 Maccabees is the "attempt to condense into a single book" what had been "set forth by Jason of Cyrene in five volumes," a work no longer extant. Thomas Fischer, "Maccabees, Books of: 1 and 2 Maccabees," (trans. Frederick Cryer) *ABD* 4:443, calls 2 Maccabees "an aretology and didactic narrative of the wonder-working power of God." The specifics on the dating and background of 2 Maccabees are much debated. For an overview, see Daniel R. Schwartz, *2 Maccabees* (Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), 3-15.

[16] Christian Habicht, *2 Makkabäerbuch* (JSHRZ 1.3; Güttersloh: G. Mohn, 1976), 185: "Theologiegeschichtlich ist das Buch rein jüdisch, literaturhistorisch gesehen vornehmlich griechisch."

plays a central role in the book.[17] We see the necessity of the epiphanies of the Divine Warrior at the very beginning of the narrative.

> The story of Judas Maccabeus and his brothers, and the purification of the great temple, and the dedication of the altar, and further the wars against Antiochus Epiphanes and his son Eupator, and the appearances (ἐπιφανείας) that came from heaven to those who fought bravely for Judaism, so that though few in number they seized the whole land and pursued the barbarian hordes, and regained possession of the temple famous throughout the world, and liberated the city, and re-established the laws that were about to be abolished, while the Lord with great kindness became gracious to them (2 Macc 2:19-22).[18]

This introductory statement makes clear that the overthrow of Antiochus' superior forces, the repossession of the Temple, the liberation of Jerusalem, and reestablishment of the Mosaic Law all come as a result of the "appearances that came from heaven" (2 Macc 2:21). There are six epiphanies in 2 Maccabees (3:24-26; 5:2-4; 10:29-31 [φαίνω]; 11:6-8 [φαίνω]; 12:21-23; 15:25-27). All six exhibit some kind of visible divine manifestation and all appear in the context of battle. In this sense, the descriptions fit the general idea of a Greek ἐπιφάνεια, where the Greek gods appeared in order to defend their cities or temples.[19] The epiphanies are nevertheless distinctly Jewish, as demonstrated by such features as an

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[17] Robert Doran, *Temple Propaganda: The Purpose and Character of 2 Maccabees* (CBQMS 12; Washington: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1981), 98-104. Habicht, *2 Makkabäerbuch*, 187, states that ἐπιφάνεια "ist geradezu ein Schlüsselwort in 2 Makk."

[18] All translations of 2 Maccabees are from the NRSV unless otherwise noted.

[19] Doran, *Temple*, 47. See also Rudolph Bultmann and Dieter Lührman, "ἐπιφαίνω, ἐπιφανής, ἐπιφάνεια," *TDNT* 9:8. Note that in *TDNT* the definition of ἐπιφάνεια follows the conclusion of Dieter Lührman, "Epiphaneia: Zur Bedeutungsgeschichte eines griechlischen Wortes," in *Tradition und Glaube: Das frühe Christentum in seiner Umwelt* (ed. Gert Jeremias and Hartmut Stegemann; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), 191, who draws a sharp distinction between an epiphany and an ἐπιφάνεια: "Überspitzt formuliert: Die Erscheinung der Göttin im Traum ist eine 'Epiphanie,' ἐπιφάνεια aber ist die Rettung der Stadt." However, Andrew Y. Lau, *Manifest in Flesh: The Epiphany Christology of the Pastoral Epistles* (WUNT 2/86; Tübingen: Mohr, 1996), 178-89, marshals considerable evidence to demonstrate that "both the ideas of visible appearance or divine manifestation and helping intervention overlap one another and at times the line of demarcation between the two cannot be . . . sharply defined." Thus, I emphasize ἐπιφάνεια in a military context. For a thorough presentation of Greek military epiphanies, see W. Kendrick Pritchett, *The Greek State at War* (5 parts; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971–1991) 3:11-46.

emphasis on the source of the manifestations: ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, "from heaven," the place where God dwells.[20] Further, they contain elements of Hebrew Scripture as well.[21] Thus, a Hellenistic feature, the epiphany, is adapted into a Jewish context. The result is the Divine Warrior's involvement in Holy War against the enemies of Israel:

> With the frequent allusion—in every chapter except chapter 7—to the temple of God, especially regarding its profanation and purification, the Epitomist depicts the Maccabees as Hebrew warriors aided by Yahweh's ἐπιφάνειας and led by Judas; he is eager to prove that the holy temple, though threatened several times by the pagans, is continually protected by God in new and wonderful ways.[22]

Descriptions of God's appearances in early Judaism emphasize that God's power transcends that of earthly rulers and that he still defends his people and his Temple. In many cases, however, there is still a strong Deuteronomic outlook and the divine response is conditional. God withholds his hand, even in defense of the Temple, in the face of disobedience from his own people.[23] For instance, because of Israel's sin, Antiochus IV Epiphanes enters the temple and plunders it (5:15-17). Further, Antiochus suffered no ill effects from his assault. This is not a result of Antiochus' greater strength or ability. Rather, in order to punish Israel, God allows Antiochus a free hand:

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[20] Lau, *Manifest*, 192-93. Hans Bietenhard, *Die himmlische Welt im Urchristentum und Spätjudentum* (WUNT 2; Tübingen: Mohr, 1951), 80-81, sees the idea of heaven as "ein Ersatzwort für Jahve" to have developed due to a reluctance to use the divine name and the prevalence of the title "Gott des Himmels" in Ezra and Nehemiah. According to G. Bartlemus, "שמים," *TDOT* 15:233, the apocryphal books, and 1–4 Maccabees, especially, generally portray "heaven" as "the dwelling place of deity" and "often identified with deity." Helmut Traub, "οὐρανός," *TDNT* 5:510, calls the phrase "the most expressive description of God in Hellenistic Judaism," while earlier, similar phrases anticipate "the later replacement of the name of God by the concept of heaven" seen in the books of the Maccabees. Lau, *Manifest*, 192, contrasts ἐξ οὐρανοῦ with what he calls the typical Greek epiphany, "τὰς ἐπιφανείας τῶν θεῶν," thus making the ἐπιφάνειαι of 2 Macc 2:21 "exclusively monotheistic."

[21] Lau, *Manifest*, 198-99.

[22] Lau, *Manifest*, 195.

[23] See also Doran, *Temple*, 53-55.

> But if it had not happened that they were involved in many sins, this man would have been flogged and turned back from his rash act as soon as he came forward, just as Heliodorus had been, whom King Seleucus sent to inspect the treasury. But the Lord did not choose the nation for the sake of the holy place, but the place for the sake of the nation. Therefore the place itself shared in the misfortunes that befell the nation and afterward participated in its benefits; and what was forsaken in the wrath of the Almighty was restored again in all its glory when the great Lord became reconciled (2 Macc 5:18-20).

This actually goes a step further in 2 Maccabees. In 2 Macc 6:12-16, punishment such as that inflicted by God through Antiochus is actually a sign of divine mercy.

> Now I urge those who read this book not to be depressed by such calamities, but to recognize that these punishments were designed not to destroy but to discipline our people. In fact, it is a sign of great kindness not to let the impious alone for long, but to punish them immediately. For in the case of the other nations the Lord waits patiently to punish them until they have reached the full measure of their sins; but he does not deal in this way with us, in order that he may not take vengeance on us afterward when our sins have reached their height. Therefore he never withdraws his mercy from us. Although he disciplines us with calamities, he does not forsake his own people.

This concept appears in Dan 8–9. In Dan 8:23, God waited until the sins of the kingdoms reached the tipping point, their full measure (LXX: πληρουμένων τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν), while in Dan 9:24, God decreed punishment on Israel to complete sin (LXX: συντελεσθήναι τὴν ἁμαρτίαν), to atone for it.[24] In 2 Macc 6:14-15, God delays his wrath on the nations until their sin is complete (ἐκπλήρωσιν ἁμαρτῶν), while he punishes his own people immediately so that they never reach the end of their sin (τέλος ἀφικομένων ἡμῶν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν). Divine mercy takes place in response to chastened Israel's penitential prayer. In 2 Maccabees, such

[24] In Theodotian, Dan 9:24 reads τοῦ σθντελεσθῆναι ἁμαρτίαν.

prayer leads to the epiphanies that result in deliverance (e.g., 2 Macc 3:15-21; 3 Macc 2:1-20).[25]

4.1.2.2. *The Divine Cavalier: 2 Maccabees 3:24-26*. The very first epiphany of 2 Maccabees, 3:24-26 is significant since it appears to be a visible appearance of the Divine Warrior himself.[26] The passage's setting is the high priesthood of Onais, during the reign of Seleucus IV Philopator (187–175 B.C.E.). Heliodorus, a representative of Seleucus, had come to inspect the temple treasury with the intent of taking what he found back to Seleucus.

> But when he arrived at the treasury with his bodyguard, then and there the Sovereign of spirits and of all authority caused so great a manifestation that all who had been so bold as to accompany him were astounded by the power of God, and became faint with terror. For there appeared to them a magnificently caparisoned horse, with a rider of frightening mien; it rushed furiously at Heliodorus and struck at him with its front hoofs. Its rider was seen to have armor and weapons of gold. Two young men also appeared to him, remarkably strong, gloriously beautiful and splendidly dressed, who stood on either side of him and flogged him continuously, inflicting many blows on him.

Many commentators understand the rider of the horse to be an angel.[27] In fact, in 2 Macc 3:24, the manifestation comes from τῶν πνευμάτων . . . δυνάστης, "the Sovereign of the

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[25] On 3 Macc 2:1-20 in particular, see Rodney A. Werline, *Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism: The Development of a Religious Institution* (SBLEJL 13; Atlanta: Scholars, 1998), 179-81, who further notes the prominence of arrogant foreign rulers in such scenes.

[26] A very close parallel appears in 4 Macc 4:9-14. The setting, however, is different in that the Temple confrontation is set in the reign of Seleucus IV Philopater (187–175 B.C.E.). In 4 Maccabees, Apollonius, Seleucus' Syrian governor, attempts to enter the temple and, in 4:10, "while Apollonius was going up with his armed forces to seize the money, angels on horseback with lightning flashing from their weapons appeared from heaven, instilling in them great fear and trembling." Apollonius saw angelic horsemen but, unlike Heliodorus, was not physically attacked by them. On the differences between 2 and 4 Maccabees here and on 4 Macc 4:9-14 in general, see David A. deSilva, *4 Maccabees: Introduction and Commentary on the Greek Text in Codex Sinaiticus* (Septuagint Commentary Series; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 116-18. DeSilva, idem., xiv- xvii, prefers a late first century C.E. date for 4 Maccabees while noting a range of proposed dates from the early first to early second centuries C.E.

[27] E.g., Doran, *Temple*, 102, "in the Jewish narrative of 2 Maccabees, it is always the angels of ministers of God who do his work for him."

spirits," possibly marking the rider's angelic nature.[28] Further, this manifestation has noticeable similarities to the manifestation in 2 Macc 11:8.[29] In this passage, the angelic horseman is the answer to the request of Judas Maccabeus in 11:6, where Judas and his colleagues ask the Lord to send a ἀγαθὸν ἄγγελον, "good angel," to save them.[30]

However, the epiphany of 2 Macc 3:24 does have a different character to it. Thus, it may express the appearance of the Divine Warrior himself. First, in 3:25, the verb ὤφθη appears, which is usually associated with a true theophany in the LXX.[31] Second, in 3:30, the people in the temple rejoiced τοῦ παντοκράτορος ἐπιφανέντος κυρίου, "the almighty Lord had appeared," language that also generally reflects a theophany.[32] Third, this manifestation alone is a response to Heliodorus' assault on the Jerusalem temple; the other manifestations in 2 Maccabees took place on the battlefield. The unique nature of the Temple setting may call for direct divine intervention.[33] Fourth, the two young men—angelic figures whose

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[28] Michael Mach, "Concepts of Jewish Monotheism During the Hellenistic Period," in *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism* (ed. Carey C. Newman, James R. Davila and Gladys S. Lewis; Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 63; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 37. See also Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 201.

[29] Jonathan A. Goldstein, *II Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 41A; New York: Doubleday, 1983), 405-06.

[30] Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 401.

[31] Jacob Kremer, "ὁράω," *EDNT* 2:528.

[32] Michael LeFebvre, *Collections, Codes, and Torah: The Re-characterization of Israel's Written Law* (Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 451; London: T. & T. Clark, 2006), 217.

[33] LeFebvre, *Collections,* 218: "it may be that Yahweh acts personally because he is party to this case: it is his house that is being robbed." LeFebrve suggests that God does not intervene directly from this point on because of the apostasy that followed the murder of Onias (4:34). In fact, during a second threat in 5:15-17, when Antiochus IV Epiphanes did plunder the temple, we find in vv. 18-20 that Israel's sin did indeed anger God. Otherwise, "this man would have been flogged and turned back from his rash act as soon as he came forward, just as Heliodorus had been" (v.18).

appearance has parallels in Greek epiphanies[34]—warn Heliodorus in 3:33-34 that the cavalier's attack would have killed Heliodorus if not for the intervention of the High Priest Onais. They tell Heliodorus that only Onais' sacrificial offering stayed the hand of the Divine Warrior. In contrast to the other epiphanies in 2 Maccabees, this manifestation appears to consist of the active physical involvement and potentially lethal activity of the Divine Warrior.[35]

Second Maccabees 3:24-26 would then mark a rare instance of the Divine Warrior on horseback. The divine horseman is almost non-existent in Jewish tradition, though the divine charioteer was a common feature. Goldstein suggests that the strong scriptural injunctions against relying on horses (e.g., Isa 31:1) "must have led Israelites to see their horses and chariotry, if needed, as coming from God, whether in the person of prophets or of apparitions."[36] However, the lack of horsemen in scriptural or Jewish tradition led Bickerman to conclude that the imagery had to be borrowed from the Greeks.[37] Indeed,

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[34] Michael Mach, *Entwicklungsstadien des jüdischen Engelglaubens in vorrabbinischer Zeit* (TSAJ 34; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992) 248-49.

[35] Daniel J. Harrington, *The Maccabean Revolt: Anatomy of a Biblical Revolution* (OTS 1; Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1988), 40.

[36] Goldstein, *II Maccabees*, 213. Still, the idea of a divine horseman—distinct from the divine charioteer— is not completely absent in Hebrew Scripture. In Zech 10:3, YHWH promises to make Judah, כסוס הודו במלחמה "like his proud war horse." In Zech 1:8, a divine figure sits on a red horse. This rider is not YHWH, through Zech 1:10-12 identifies the horseman as the Angel of the Lord, it also distinguishes the Angel of the Lord from YHWH. On the tradition of a divine rider on a white horse in Judaism, see Erwin R. Goodenough, *Symbolism in the Dura Synagogue: The Second of Three Volumes* (vol. 10 of *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*; Bollingen Series 37; New York: Pantheon, 1964), 172-79. On the relationship of 2 Maccabees to Hebrew Scripture, see Daniel R. Schwartz, "On Something Biblical about 2 Maccabees," in *Biblical Perspectives: Early Use and Interpretation of the Bible in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. Michael E. Stone and Esther G. Chazon; *STDJ* 28; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 223-32. Schwartz, idem, 225, calls 2 Maccabees "a Jewish book, not a biblical book" since the book's emphasis on "God's divine involvement in history—invoked and realized" is "as much a tenant of Judaism as it is of the Hebrew Bible" while "it is very difficult to find use of the Bible in 2 Maccabees" and the scriptural use "we do find is not very impressive."

[37] E. J. Bickerman, "Heliodorus in the Temple in Jerusalem," in *Studies in Jewish and Christian History* (2 vols.; AGJU 68; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 451-53.

mounted divine warriors commonly appear in Greek literature and, at times, they are clad in gold armor.[38]

4.1.3. *The Eschatological Appearance of the Divine Warrior*

The increased focus on eschatological events in early Judaism naturally includes a number of speculations on what this period would be like.[39] Here two particular texts draw attention to a number of important features that we find in depictions of God's direct involvement in eschatological war. The first text, the theophany of *1 En.* 1, highlights the scope of God's activities. The second, the *War Scroll* (1QM) from Qumran emphasizes the necessity of God's direct involvement in eschatological war even as human beings and angels play a significant part.

4.1.3.1. *The Theophany of* 1 Enoch 1 *and Related Imagery.*

A dramatic example of the eschatological appearance of the Divine Warrior appears at the beginning of the *Book of the Watchers* (*1 En.* 1–36). The *Book of the Watchers* is one of the earliest Jewish apocalypses, probably dating to the late fourth or early third century B.C.E.[40] *First Enoch*

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[38] Sarah Iles Johnston, "Riders in the Sky: Cavalier Gods and Theurgic Salvation in the Second Century A.D.," *CP* 87 (1992): 307-20.

[39] On the rise of eschatological expectation, see Mach, *Entwicklungsstadien*, 114-22, whose focus is on the depiction of angels, but is also valid for Divine Warrior imagery since the activities of the Divine Warrior imagery often involve angels in early Jewish literature.

[40] For a short summary of the issues surrounding the date of the *Book of the Watchers*, see 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: The Evidence of Jubilees* (ed. Gabriele Boccaccini and Giovanni Ibba; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 39-41.

1:3b-9 is an introductory prophetic oracle of future judgment resplendent in its Divine Warrior imagery:[41]

> The Great Holy One will come forth from his dwelling
> and the eternal God will tread from thence upon Mount Sinai.
> He will appear with his army,
> he will appear with his mighty hose from the heaven of heavens.
> All the watchers will fear and [quake],
> and those who are hiding in all the ends of the earth will sing.
> All the ends of the earth will be shaken,
> and trembling and great fear will seize them (the watchers)
> unto the ends of the earth.
> The high mountains will be shaken and fall and break apart,
> and the high hills will be made low and melt like wax before the fire.
> The earth will be wholly rent asunder,
> and everything on the earth will perish,
> and there will be judgment on all.
> With the righteous he will make peace,
> and over the chosen there will be protection,
> and upon them will be mercy.
> They will all be God's,
> and he will grant them his good pleasure.
> He will bless (them) all,
> and he will help (them) all.
> Light will shine upon them,
> and he will make peace with them.
> Look, he comes with the myriads of his holy ones,
> to execute judgement on all
> and to destroy the wicked,
> and to convict humanity
> for all the wicked deeds that they have done,
> and the proud and hard words that wicked sinners
> spoke against him.[42]

[41] Lars Hartman, *Asking for a Meaning: A Study of 1 Enoch 1–5* (ConBNT 12; Uppsala: CWK Gleerup, 1979), 40, calls this passage "one of several more or less 'regular' theophanies in Jewish postbiblical texts."

[42] All translations of *1 Enoch*, unless noted otherwise, are from George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch: A New Translation based on the Hermeneia Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004).

The oracle displays the totality of God's judgment at the end of time as the Divine Warrior arrives at Mt. Sinai.[43] The passage draws together a number of scriptural allusions from theophanic appearances of the Divine Warrior.[44]

One of the notable features of the passage is that "the God of the universe, the Holy Great One" comes from his heavenly dwelling (Greek: ἀπό τοῦ οὐρανοῦ τῶν οὐρανῶν) to tread upon Sinai.[45] The conflation of Deut 33:2 and Mic 1:3 leads to the Divine Warrior not marching *from* Sinai but arriving to tread *upon* Sinai. The reference to Sinai does not have a prominent role in the Enochic literature, and appears by name only here.[46]

Though it is possible that the imagery indicates that Sinai is the place from where judgment is dispensed, the presence of Divine Warrior imagery makes this unlikely.[47] For instance, as we have seen, the Divine Warrior's trampling is an indication of his judgment. In Mic 1:3 and Amos 4:13, YHWH דרך על־במתי, "treads upon the high places" of the earth, his enemies' sacred places, in judgment.[48] In Hebrew Scripture, what the Divine Warrior

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[43] On the theophany as an eschatological appearance, see J. VanderKam, "The Theophany of Enoch I 3b-7, 9," *VT* 23 (1973): 131-32. The two primary points in favor of this being an eschatological theophany are that *1 En.* 1:2 indicates the vision is for a distant generation while 1:7 notes that the earth itself will be destroyed, not just the wicked upon it.

[44] For a listing of various quotes and allusions from Hebrew Scripture in *1 En.* 1:3-9, see Hartman, *Asking*, 23-25.

[45] VanderKam, "Theophany," 135, suggests that the concept of God's dwelling (Greek: κατοίκησις) reflects the LXX (e.g., 1 Kgs 8:30).

[46] Anathea E. Portier-Young, *Apocalypse against Empire: Theologies of Resistance in Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 299, finds allusions to Sinai at *1 En.* 18:8, 24:3, 25:3, 77:1, and 89:29-33.

[47] The predominant view sees Sinai, in some sense, as the seat of God's justice. See, e.g., VanderKam, "Theophany," 136-38 and Hartman, *Asking*, 42-44, who understand Sinai as metonymy for the law, making Sinai the means or standard of judgment. This interpretation is largely based on the idea that Sinai is metonymy for the Mosaic Law in early Judaism. Most refer here to A. Dillmann, *Das Buch Henoch* (Leipzig: Vogel, 1853), 90: "Vom Sinai her, wo Gott einst in glänzender Erscheinung sein Gesetz der Welt gab, wird er wieder erscheinen, um die Welt nach diesem Gesetze zu richten; der Sinai hat fast appellative Bedeutung als der Ort der Gerechtigkeitsoffenbarung Gottes."

[48] James L. Crenshaw, "Wedōrēk 'al-bāmŏtê 'āreṣ," *CBQ* 34 (1972): 43-44.

tramples is never the means or place of judgment; rather, it is the object his judgment. For *1 En.* 1:4, this would indicate that the judgment is upon Sinai as a sacred place.

Given this, what the judgment upon Sinai indicates has proven difficult to interpret.[49] Portier-Young provides clarity when she suggests that the passage is part of a polemic against the cultural and political situation of the Hellenistic era.[50] Two considerations emerge from this suggestion. First, the emphasis on the figure of Enoch moves the working of YHWH to the primeval period instead of limiting it to Israel's historical situation.[51] Moses' authority, then, derives from an earlier figure who is prior to and independent of Israel.[52]

> Enoch's privileged view of heavenly realities and his guided tour of the ends of the earth challenged imperial claims to authority in ways that Mosaic revelation could not do. The scope of Mosaic revelation was too "earth-bound," local, and particular to fully undercut the ideology that supported imperial ambitions of world domination.[53]

Second, it may be that the Divine Warrior of *1 En.* 1 begins his judgment upon Sinai because the religious structures of the time functioned under imperial approval. According to Josephus, *Ant*. 12.138-44, Antiochus III the Great, soon after winning the region from the Ptolemies in 200 B.C.E., rewarded the people of Judea. He made provision for Temple sacrifices and the restoration of the Temple, he allowed the Jews the freedom to govern

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[49] For George W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch* (vol. 1; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 145, the treading is a response to the breaking of the Sinai covenant by Israel, an idea not too far removed from seeing the Mosaic Law as the basis for judgment. On the concept of the covenant in *1 En.* 1:3b-9 see Hartman, *Asking*, 44-48.

[50] Portier-Young, *Apocalypse*, 295-307.

[51] Kenneth E. Pomykala, "A Scripture Profile of the Book of the Watchers," in *The Quest for Context and Meaning* (ed. Craig A. Evans and Shemaryahu Talmon; Biblical Interpretation Series 28; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 277.

[52] Portier-Young, *Apocalypse*, 301-02.

[53] Portier-Young, *Apocalypse*, 304.

themselves κατὰ τοὺς πατρίους νόμους, "according to ancestral laws," he exempted government and religious officials from taxation, and he handed out other non-religious privileges.[54] Thus, the foreign king became directly involved in Jewish religious practice and specifically endorsed the Mosaic Law.[55] This is not to suggest a direct connection between the trampling of Sinai in *1 En.* 1:4 and the actions of Antiochus III. However, since the imagery of *1 En.* 1:4 reflects a negative view of Sinai, a Jewish religious establishment seen as "bearing a royal stamp of approval," may provide an explanation.[56]

The fearful response to the Divine Warrior is another prominent motif in *1Enoch* 1:3b-9. While textual problems in *1 En.* 1:5 make interpretation difficult, the fearful response to the theophanic presence of the Divine Warrior is still the dominant imagery of the verse.[57] Isaac's translation in *OTP* of *1 En.* 1:5-6 emphasizes three groups who respond in terror to the arrival of the Divine Warrior: "everyone" (likely the whole of humanity), the "Watchers," and "the mountains and high places."[58] As we have seen, scriptural theophanies

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[54] James Ellis Taylor, "Seleucid Rule in Palestine" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1979), 103-05. For a thorough discussion of the background to Josephus, *Ant.*12.138-44, see Taylor, "Seleucid," 51-107.

[55] The Greek text of Josephus, *Ant.* 11–20 is from LCL. Scholars are virtually unanimous in understanding the rule "κατὰ τοὺς πατρίους νόμους," as the Mosaic Law. See, e.g., Taylor, "Seleucid," 85.

[56] Portier-Young, *Apocalypse*, 307. Cf. Dan 11:14, which reflects a negative view of Jewish alignment with Antiochus III. The interpreting angel tells Daniel that the פריצי עמך, "lawless among your own people," will align with the king, "but they shall fail." Also, divine judgment on YHWH's people fits the broader context of Mic 1:2-7, where YHWH's trampling of the mountains, threatens עמים כלם, "all peoples," including, in 1:5, Judah and Samaria. Thus, the negative attitude toward Sinai expressed in its trampling may reflect antagonism toward foreign influences in Jewish religious practice reflected in an expression of universal judgment beginning with God's people.

[57] Scriba, *Geschichte*, 53-58. On the considerable textual problems in the manuscript evidence for *1 En.* 1:5, see VanderKam, "Theophany," 140-43.

[58] Following Scriba, *Geschichte*, 75. Contra VanderKam, "Theophany," 140, who sees in "everyone" a reference to both humanity and the Watchers, and Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 142, 146, who cites the parallel phrasing in *1 En.* 13:3, "on which this passage most likely depends," to suggest that "everyone" indicates "all the watchers" and only the Watchers. Both agree that the Watchers express fear at the coming of the Divine Warrior.

regularly cite the fearful response of nature—here the mountains and high places—to the appearance of the Divine Warrior, including Mic 1:4, where the mountains melt "like wax near the fire."[59] Human fear is also a common response, especially the fear of the nations.[60]

The fearful response of the Watchers, however, is not clearly derived from Hebrew Scripture and is rare in other early Jewish literature. In *1 Enoch*, the term "Watchers" almost always refers to rebellious angels.[61] The fear of the Watchers appears again in the *Book of the Watchers* at *1 En*. 13:3, where the terror results from hearing the message of divine judgment from Enoch. A third example is also from Enochic literature. In *1 En.* 60:1-2, part of the late first century B.C.E. *Book of Parables* (*1 En.* 37-71), the heavens shake and the angelic host become "greatly disturbed" at the eschatological theophany of God.[62] Outside of the Enochic literature, this motif appears in the *T. Levi* 3:9, where an Angel of the Lord tells Levi, "When the Lord looks upon us we all tremble." In the New Testament, the fearful response of angelic figures may also lie behind the shaking of "the powers in heaven" at the arrival of the Son of Man in Mark 13:25 (cf. Matt. 24:29; Luke 21:26).[63]

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[59] VanderKam, "Theophany," 145, who comments: "Although at first glance it may seem that this simile refers to a volcanic eruption, that is unlikely. Rather, it aims to express most vividly the fact that the mountains simply disappear before the terrifying advent of the angry God." He also calls attention to the identical wording in the Greek version of *1 En.* 1:6 and the LXX of Mic 1:4: "τακήσονται ὡς κηρὸς ἀπὸ προσώπου πυρός." Cf. Isa 64:19–64:1 (LXX).

[60] Scriba, *Geschichte*, 70-76, who sees the fearful response of the nations as a development of the motif of the fearful response of nature.

[61] On the "Watchers" in *1 Enoch*, see Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 140-41. I return to the subject of the Watchers below.

[62] On the date of the *Book of Parables*, see James H. Charlesworth, "Can We Discern the Composition Date of the Parables of Enoch?" in *Enoch and the Messiah Son of Man: Revisiting the Parables* (ed. Gabriele Boccaccini; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 450-68.

[63] Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 146.

More common is a motif we have seen from Hebrew Scripture, the fearful response of heaven to the Divine Warrior.[64] Early Jewish texts depict the shaking of heaven as well. The heavens shake at the final judgment in *1 En.* 102: 2. In *T. Levi* 3:9, the heavens shake in the presence of the Warrior's majesty. In Sir 16:18, the heavens and highest heaven shake at the Divine Warrior's appearing.[65] The fearful response of heaven often appears in conjunction with the fearful response of celestial phenomena, which Scriba characterizes "als unterste Bewohner der Himmelswelt."[66] A passage that demonstrates this is the Greek version of *1 En.* 102:1-3, part of the early second century B.C.E. *Epistle of Enoch* (*1 En.* 92–105):[67]

> And when he throws down against you a wave of burning fire, where will you flee to and be safe? And when he gives forth his voice against you will you (not) be shaken and frightened by the mighty sound? And the entire earth (will) be shaken and tremble and be thrown into confusion. And the angels will complete what is commanded them, and the heaven and the stars will be shaken and all the children of the earth will tremble. But you, O sinners, are cursed forever; you will have no joy.[68]

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[64] Early texts, such as Judg 5:4 and Ps 68:8 (68:9 MT) depict the heavens responding to the presence of the Divine Warrior by pouring out rain. Another early text, 2 Sam 22:8, describes the trembling and shaking of the מוסדות, "foundations," of the heavens at the appearance of the Warrior (in the parallel passage, Ps 18:7 [18:8 MT], it is the foundations of the mountains that tremble and shake). In Job 26:11, the "pillars" of the earth tremble and are astounded at the rebuke of the Warrior. In Isa 13:13, the heavens shake at the wrath of the Divine Warrior on the Day of the Lord. In Joel 2:10, the heavens tremble at the onslaught of the Divine Warrior's army on the Day of the Lord while in Joel 3:16 (4:16 MT), the heavens shake at the roar of the Divine Warrior. Finally, in Hag 2:6, a passage quoted in Heb 12:26, the shaking of heaven is not a response to the presence of the Divine Warrior, but his direct action against heaven (and the earth, sea, dry land, and nations) to bring riches to the Temple. Scriba, *Geschichte*, 77-78, states that "die Erschütterung des ganzen Himmels" only appears in postexilic texts.

[65] Note 1QH[a] XI, 34, where God's holy dwelling roars in response to the roar of the Divine Warrior, and *1 En* 57:2, where the holy ones of heaven marvel and the pillars of heaven are shaken at the approach of the exiles returning to Jerusalem.

[66] Scriba, *Geschichte*, 78.

[67] On the date and provenance of the *Epistle of Enoch*, see Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *1 Enoch 91–108* (Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 211-15. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 14, states that *1 Enoch* was probably translated into Greek "by the end of the first century" C.E. Stuckenbruck *1 Enoch*, 186, cautions that the extant Greek text of the *Epistle of Enoch*, Chester Beatty–Michigan papyrus XII, "seems to have been hastily copied, is riddle with errors and can only be used with caution." On the Greek text of *1 En*. 102:1-3, see Stuckenbruck *1 Enoch*, 484-86.

[68] The English translation is from Stuckenbruck, *1 Enoch*, 482-83.

Here the fearful response is to the sound of the Warrior's voice (102:1). Four different groups fear this voice: the earth, the heaven (ὁ οὐρανός), the stars (οἱ φωστῆρες), and all the children of the earth (ἅπαντες οἱ υἱοὶ τῆς γῆς).

In Hebrew Scripture, the response of celestial phenomena appears in theophanic texts concerning the Day of the Lord, especially Isa 13:9-13, Joel 2:10-11, and Joel 3:14-16 (4:14-16 MT). In such passages, however, the celestial phenomena do not shake; they darken. We see this in the early first century C.E. text, *T. Mos.* 10:3-7:[69]

> For the Heavenly One will arise from his kingly throne.
> Yea, he will go forth from his holy habitation with indignation and wrath
> on behalf of his sons.
> And the earth will tremble, even to its ends shall it be shaken.
> And the high mountains will be made low.
> Yea, they will be shaken, as enclosed valleys will they fall.
>
> The sun will not give light.
> And in darkness the horns of the moon will flee.
> Yea, they will be broken in pieces.
> It will be turned wholly into blood.
> Yea, even the circle of the stars will be thrown into disarray.
>
> And the sea all the way to the abyss will retire,
> to the sources of waters which fail.
> Yea, the rivers will vanish away.

[69] On the dating and background of the *Testament of Moses*, see John J. Collins, "The Date and Provenance of the Testament of Moses," in *Studies on the Testament of Moses: Seminar Papers* (ed. George W. E. Nickelsburg, Jr.; SBLSCS 4; Cambridge: Society of Biblical Literature, 1973), 15-32. Note, however, George W. E. Nickelsburg, "An Antiochan Date for the Testament of Moses" in *Studies on the Testament of Mos.: Seminar Papers* (ed. George W. E. Nickelsburg, Jr.; SBLSCS 4; Cambridge: Society of Biblical Literature, 1973), 33-38, who argues that the historical allusions in *T. Mos.* 8–9 reflect eye-witness accounts of persecution under Antiochus IV Epiphanes and is thus forced to conclude that *T. Mos.* 6–7, with a number of clear allusions to events during the reign of Herod the Great, are an addition from of a later updating of the work. Though influential, this view has come under increasing attack. Recently, Kenneth R. Atkinson, "Herod the Great as Antiochus *Redivivus*: Reading the Testament of Moses as an Anti-Herodian Composition," in *Ancient Versions and Traditions* (ed. Craig A. Evans; vol. 1 of *Of Scribes and Sages: Early Jewish Interpretation and Transmission of Scripture*; Library of Second Temple Studies 50; London: T. & T. Clark, 2004), 134-49, has argued that the *Testament of Moses* does not refer to events in the second century B.C.E., but uses the imagery in literary depictions of Antiochus to present Herod as a ruler on the Antiochene model of the wicked tyrant. Further, *T. Mos.* 8–9 does contain some allusions to historical events from the period just after the death of Herod the Great.

For God Most High will surge forth, the Eternal One alone.
In full view will he come to work vengeance on the nations.
Yea, all their idols will he destroy.

Most of this theophany describes the reaction of various elements of the cosmos to the appearance of the Divine Warrior. Much of the imagery is familiar from Hebrew Scripture, such as the shaking of the earth and mountains, as well as the retreat and disappearance of the sea.[70] We also see the sun turn black, the "horns of the moon" (*cornua lunae*) flee and turn into blood, and the stars go into disarray. In the *T. Mos.* 10:3-7, the entirety of the created realm fears the going forth of the Divine Warrior.[71]

A third aspect of the theophany of *1 En.* 1:3b-9 is the blessing in *1 En.* 1:8.

With the righteous he will make peace,
and over the chosen there will be protection,
and upon them will be mercy.
They shall all be God's
and he will grant them his good pleasure.
He will bless them all,
And he will help them all.
Light will shine upon them,
and he will make peace with them.

The blessing is an expression of protection in the midst of judgment, a concept with its roots in Hebrew Scripture and gains prominence in early Judaism. The motif of the blessing reflects the LXX of Num 6:24-26, highlighting peace, protection, and mercy for the elect.[72] In *1 En.* 1:8, the elect receive divine ownership, God's good pleasure, blessing, help, and light. The elect's favor expands even more in *1 En*. 5:6-7:

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[70] Scriba, *Geschichte*, 53-54. Both appear together in Ps 18:7-15 (18:8-16 MT); 77:16-20 (17-21 MT); and 114:3-8. See also *4 Ezra* 8:23.

[71] Johannes Tromp, *The Assumption of Moses: A Critical Edition with Commentary* (SVTP; Leiden: Brill, 1993), 228. See also Isa 13:9-13, for reactions to the wrath of the Lord, Joel 2:10-11 for reactions to the divine army, lead with the roar of YHWH, and Joel 3:14-16 (4:14-16 MT), for responses to the roar of the Divine Warrior on his Day.

[72] Hartman, *Asking*, 25.

But all the chosen will rejoice;
and for them there will be forgiveness of sins
and all mercy and peace and clemency.
For them there will be salvation, a good light,
and they will inherit the earth.
But for all you sinners there will be no salvation,
but on all of you a curse will abide.
For the chosen there will be light and joy and peace
and they will inherit the earth.
But for you wicked there will be a curse.

These verses draw out the sharp contrast in the whole of *1 En.* 1–5 between God's attitude toward the "righteous elect" (1:1, "ἐκλεκτοὺς δικαίους") and "all you sinners" (5:6, "πᾶσιν ὑμῖν τοῖς ἁμαρτωλοῖς") or "you wicked" (5:7, "ὑμῖν . . . τοῖς ἀσεβέσιν").[73] While the elect receive forgiveness, peace, and clemency, the wicked are denied salvation and put under a curse. *First Enoch* 1:9 emphasizes this same contrast:

Behold, he comes with myriads of his holy ones,
to execute judgment on all,
and to destroy all the wicked,
and to convict all flesh
for all the wicked deeds that they have done,
and the proud and hard words that wicked sinners spoke against him.

The condemnation is repeated in *1 En.* 5:4:

But you have not stood firm nor acted according to his commandments;
but you have turned aside, you have spoken proud
and hard words with your unclean mouth against his majesty.
Hard of heart! There shall be no peace for you!

These two passages provide bookends that contrast with the obedience of the created order in *1 En.* 2:1–5:3. This obedience is characterized in *1 En.* 5:1b-2:

[73] Unless otherwise noted, the Greek text of *1 Enoch* is from Pierpaolo Bertalotto, Ken M. Penner, and Ian W. Scott, eds. "1 Enoch," in The Online Critical Pseudepigrapha (ed. Ian W. Scott, Ken M. Penner, and David M. Miller; pre-publication edition; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), n.p. [cited 21 February 2012]. Online: http://www.purl.org/net/ocp/1Enoch.html.

> Contemplate all these works, and understand that he who lives for all the ages made all these works. And his works take place from year to year and they carry out all their works for him, and their works do not alter, but they all carry out his word.

This makes clear that the wicked deeds and hard words of 1:9, which brought forth the Divine Warrior at the head of his army, relate to the inability of the wicked to maintain their assigned place in the divine order, as did the heavenly and natural world. In 5:1b-2, various aspects of creation carry out (ἀποτελοῦσιν) their assigned roles and they do not deviate (οὐκ ἀλλοιοῦσιν) from what God has commanded.[74] Meanwhile, the sinners have not stood firm (ἐμμένω),[75] they have not acted according to God's commandments, and they have turned aside (ἀφίστημι). In other words, contrary to other aspects of creation, the sinners have actively turned against and tried to change their assigned role.[76]

The target of divine wrath in *1 En.* 5:4-7, like Isa 65–66, is apostate Israel.[77] If the primary sin is one of deviating from divinely ordained roles, the threat of divine wrath

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[74] For examples of the common motif of nature's obedience contrasted with human disobedience, see Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 152-55.

[75] Hartman, *Asking*, 87-88, suggests that ἐμμενεῖν is a result of a Greek scribe adapting the text of *1 En.* 5:4 to the LXX of Deut 27:26 (οὐκ ἐμμένει ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς λόγοις τοῦ νόμου τούτου τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτούς) since 4Q201 I, 12 reads, "you changed your works," which forms "a good parallelism with the preceding line." Hartman further suggests that if the scribe was a Christian, he may have been influenced by Gal 3:10, "which deviates slightly from the LXX but which also uses ἐμμενεῖν." He does note, however, "The general theme of keeping faithful to the commandments appears both positively and negatively (against apostates) in our [Early Jewish] texts as well as others which deal with topics of the covenant. Still, Hartman concludes, "even if the Greek is secondary, the man behind it certainly has got a feeling for what he is doing: his changes of the text are in harmony with its fundamental frames of reference."

[76] David R. Jackson, *Enochic Judaism: Three Defining Paradigm Exemplars* (Library of Second Temple Studies 49; London: T. & T. Clark, 2004), 31. In this way, the wicked are like the Watchers, whose judgment for the same type of sin, ignoring their created purpose and walking away from the commandments of God, led to the binding of the Watchers and the destruction of the Giants, the offspring of the Watchers and their human wives (e.g., *1 En* 6–9; 14–16). Hartman, *Asking*, 144, calls attention to the description of sins of the Watchers in *1 En* 18:15, "they did not come out in their appointed times"; 21:6, "These . . . transgressed the command of the Lord"; and 16:3, "Why have you forsaken the high heaven, the eternal sanctuary?" Jackson, *Enochic*, 21-28, labels this "paradigm of deviation" as the overriding paradigm of *1 Enoch*.

[77] Jackson, *Enochic*, 4: "The primary focus of hostility and warning is directed against Israelites who either fail to accept or oppose the author's world-view/lifestyle."

toward apostate Israel makes the promise of peace and blessing a call for perseverance in the face of some kind of pressure to apostatize.[78] There are also indications of a call to repentance for apostates.[79] We see this in the introduction of the indictment in *1 En.* 2:1 ("Contemplate all his works . . . "), the use of the second person plural to describe the wicked in 5:4-9, the emphasis in the oracle of judgment of 5:5-9 on forgiveness (5:6), and the promise of 5:8b-9a:

> And they [the righteous] will sin no more,
> nor will they sin all the days of their life,
> nor will they die in the heat of God's wrath

The promise of protection, then, in *1 En.* 1:8 and 5:9, is to those who persevere even as those around them abandon their divinely assigned role. God protects the righteous elect from his own wrath as he marches with his army against all those who have turned against his commands. This judgment begins at Sinai, with the apostates of God's people, and eventually encompasses all of the created order.

4.1.3.2. *The* War Scroll *(1QM) and Related Imagery from Qumran*. There are a number of examples of God appearing as the Divine Warrior in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Dead Sea Scrolls are a collection of more than 900 manuscripts found hidden in eleven different caves near the ruins of Qumran, a site occupied by some Essenes from sometime

[78] On the social context of *1 Enoch* as a whole, Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 63, comments, "the dualism that is constitutive in 1 Enoch's worldview expresses a recurring perception on the part of these authors that they, their communities, and their nation were parties to conflict and victims of violence, oppression, and persecution. "Perception" is the key word. Whatever the empirical circumstances of their authors, these texts are driven by and oriented around an experience of conflict, alienation, and victimization."

[79] Similarly, Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 132-33.

around 150 B.C.E. to around 68 C.E. The various writings themselves range in date from the late third or early second century B.C.E. to the first century C.E.[80]

The literature from Qumran affirms God as the ruler of the universe. As such, he has decreed the course of all of human history and he remains active in bringing history to its appointed end.[81] The Scrolls make use of Divine Warrior imagery in a number of contexts, but it is most prominent in eschatological contexts. There the Divine Warrior defeats the forces of evil in a final, climactic battle.[82]

The most detailed description of the eschatological battle is found in the *War Scroll* (1QM). As is well documented, 1QM derives much of its imagery from Dan 10–12, and especially Dan 11:40–12:3.[83] Probably dating from the first century B.C.E., 1QM describes

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[80] For an overview of the Qumran site, the Essenes, and the documents found there, see James C. VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).

[81] By painting a "general picture," I do not imply that the Scrolls are systematic. In actuality, the various writings display evidence of development and diversity across the corpus. See here L. H. Schiffmann, "The Messianic Idea," in *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Jerusalem: The Jewish Publication Society, 1994), 326. Edward M. Cook, "What Did the Jews of Qumran Know about God and How Did They Know It?" in *The Judaism of Qumran: A Systematic Reading of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, (ed. Alan J. Avery-Peck, Jacob Neusner and Bruce Chilton; vol. 2, *World View: Comparing Judaisms*, part 5 of *Judaism in Late Antiquity*; HO 1/57; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 14-15, comments that "the God of Qumran is unmistakably the God of the Bible. This is not to say that the Scrolls do not have their characteristic emphases or even novelties. They do; but they never wholly detach themselves from the scriptural umbilical cord."

[82] Again, the Scrolls are not systematic and thus do not present a unified eschatology. According to Annette Steudel, "אחרית הימים in the Texts from Qumran," *RevQ* 16 (1993): 231, who analyzed the thirty three occurrences of the phrase אחרית הימים, "end of days," known to her in 1993, the "end of days" refers to "a limited period of time, that is the last of a series of divinely pre-planned periods into which history is divided." John J. Collins, "The Expectation of the End in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. Craig A. Evans and Peter W. Flint; SDSSRL; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 86, suggests that the scrolls reflect the understanding of the "end" as the inauguration of "a new phase in the eschatological drama" that marked a "dramatic advance towards the extermination of evil." Meanwhile, "end of days" consisted of "this 'end' and some of the events that would follow it directly." Some texts also tie the "end" to the rise of one or two messianic figures and some texts include a final battle. On the Teacher of Righteousness, see Michael A. Knibb, "Teacher of Righteousness," *EDSS* 2:918-21.

[83] John J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (LDSS; London: Routledge, 1997), 14, considers the mythical understanding of divine battle in Dan 10–12 "essential background for the expectation of an eschatological war in the scrolls." For a detailed discussion of Dan 11:40–12:3 as both historical and linguistic background for 1QM, see Brian Schultz, *Conquering the World: The War Scroll (1QM) Reconsidered* (STDJ 76; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 91-102.

an eschatological battle between the "sons of light" and the "sons of darkness" and includes detailed instructions for the sons of light to use in preparation for the battle.[84] The eschatological battle will last forty years (1QM II, 1-14), beginning when the sons of light return from exile to the "wilderness of Jerusalem" (1QM I, 3) and culminating in the "annihilation of the sons of darkness" (1QM I, 16).

In the overview of the battle in 1QM I, 8-15, the "day on which the Kittim fall,"[85] the army of the sons of light and their angelic allies vacillate between advance and retreat over a period of six "lots;" in three lots, the sons of light "shall stand firm so as to strike a blow at wickedness" and in three lots the "army of Belial" causes the hearts of the sons of light to melt and forces a retreat (1QM I, 13-14). Despite the "strength of God" strengthening their hearts, the sons of light cannot obtain final victory, nor can the army of Belial gain final victory after forcing a retreat. In the seventh lot, everything changes:

> In the seventh lot, the great hand of God shall overcome [ ]
> the angels of his dominion and all the men of [ ].
> [ ] the holy ones shall shine forth in support of [ ] the truth for the annihilation of the Sons of Darkness (1QM I, 14-15; *DSSR* 1:211).[86]

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[84] For a detailed introduction to 1QM, see Jean Duhaime, "War Scroll (1QM, 1Q33)," in *Damascus Document, War Scroll, and Related Documents* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; vol. 2 of *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations*; PTSDSSP; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 80-95.

[85] Schultz, *Conquering*, 97-98, notes the similarities of this "day" (1QM I, 9, 11, 12) to the biblical Day of the Lord and that this day covers all seven lots of the battle (1QM I, 12-13). This suggests that 1QM does not present this day as a literal twenty-four hour period but neither is it to be "a lengthy, drawn out affair." On the Kittim, Hanan Eshel, "The Kittim in the *War Scroll* and in the Pesharim," in *Historical Perspectives: From the Hasmoneans to Bar Kokhba in the Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. David M. Goodblatt, Avital Pinnick, and Daniel R. Schwartz; *STDJ* 37; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 29, notes that in early Judaism the Kittim, from Num 24:24, came to represent an enemy that arrived in Judea by boat, thus either the Greeks or the Romans. Since Num 28 was largely understood eschatologically in this period, the Kittim also represented the eschatological enemy.

[86] All quotations of the Dead Sea Scrolls are from Donald W. Parry and Emmanuel Tov, ed., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader* (6 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 2004–2005), hereafter *DSSR*. To aid the reader, throughout I note the volume and page number of quoted passages from *DSSR*.

It is only the hand of God that brings final victory. Though God's actions are not spelled out in any detail, the *War Scroll* makes clear that only God's direct intervention brings victory. This recalls Isa 31:8, where "the Assyrian shall fall by a sword, not of mortals; and a sword, not of humans, shall devour him."

The importance of Isaiah 31:8 for 1QM is clear by its explicit quotation in 1QM XI, 11-12.[87] Isaiah 31 also appears in 1QM XV, 3 and XIX, 10. In these passages, Flusser understands the "the sword of God" (חרב אל) as "an established eschatological term."[88] In 1QM XII, 11-12 and XIX, 4, the prayer asks for God "to let your sword devour flesh." Finally, in 1QM XVI, 1, "the God of Israel has called out a sword against all nations." In the *War Scroll*, the sword of God is the Divine Warrior's primary weapon.

The sword of God appears in the *Hoyadot* (1QH) in 1QH[a] XIV, 20-33 as well, a passage explicit in its Divine Warrior imagery. Specifically, the sword of God initiates the eschatological battle in 1QH[a] XIV, 29-33.

> Then the sword of God shall hasten to the time of judgement and all the children of His truth shall awaken to put an end to [the children of] wickedness, and all the children of his guilt shall be no more. The hero shall draw his bow, and the fortifications shall open [ ] as an open country without end. The eternal gates shall open to bring out the weapons of war, and they shall be migh[t]y from one end of the world to the other. But there is no escape for the creatures of guilt, they shall be trampled down to destruction with no rem[nant. And there is no] hope in the abundance of, and for all the heroes of war there is no refuge. For [ ] belongs to God most high [ ] (*DSSR* 5:37).

[87] David Flusser, "Apocalyptic Elements in the War Scroll," in *Qumran and Apocalypticism*, (trans. Azzan Yadin; vol. 1 of *Judaism of the Second Temple Period*; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 150-51.

[88] Flusser, "Apocalyptic," 151.

The imagery of the eschatological battle serves as encouragement for the psalmist, who had described himself as under fierce attack and looking to God for protection.[89] His situation is such that in 1QH[a] XIV, 22-24, he uses imagery that recalls the ancient enemies of Hebrew Scripture, the sea and death, to describe how overwhelmed he is.

> I have become as a sailor on a ship, when
> the seas stir up their waves and all their breakers come over me. A staggering wind roars
> [without] calm to revive the soul nor any
> paths to make a straight way over the waters. The depths roar to my groaning and [my]
> sou[l approaches] the gates of death (*DSSR* 5:37).

The psalmist then looks to God for protection and God puts the psalmist on a foundation of a city with fortified walls built by God (1QH[a] XIV, 20-24). As the psalmist waits securely behind the walls God has built for a fortified city, he looks ahead to the time when God's sword initiates the final conflict of 1QH[a] XIV, 29-33.

The passage in 1QH[a] XIV, 29-33 is different from the *War Scroll* in that it seems to indicate that God fights the eschatological battle alongside his people, leading and empowering them to victory. Here God is the גבור, "hero," a term familiar from scriptural Divine Warrior imagery (e.g., Deut 7:21; Isa 10:21). His sword hastens the time of judgment and his bow sends a signal that unleashes his army.

4.1.4. *Summary of God as the Divine Warrior in Early Judaism*

One of the more prominent themes in the use Divine Warrior imagery is to proclaim the power of God. This theme appears in both *4 Ezra* and in Judith, texts of very different

[89] Andrew R. Angel, *Chaos and the Son of Man: The Hebrew* Chaoskampf *Tradition in the Period 515 B.C.E. to 200 C.E.* (Library of Second Temple Studies 60; London: T. & T. Clark, 2006), 55-56.

genres and from two different periods. Both look back to God's activity as the Divine Warrior in the history of Israel as a means for reflection in the current crisis.

In 2 Maccabees, God is active in the present circumstances, as his epiphanies bring Judas Maccabeus and his troops victory in the face of overwhelming odds. The epiphanies make Judas' war into Holy War, as the Divine Warrior fights alongside Judas and brings him victory. An important development that we see in 2 Maccabees is the adaptation of Greco-Roman motifs into a Hellenistic Jewish context. Not only do the epiphanies themselves betray the influence of Greek epiphanies, Greek imagery such as the divine cavalier, very rare in Hebrew Scripture, plays an important role in 2 Maccabees.

In the passages we discussed concerning Divine Warrior imagery in eschatological contexts, a number of important features appeared. The theophany of *1 En.* 1:3-9 weaves together a variety of scriptural elements to portray the eschatological arrival of the Divine Warrior. One of the key features was the treading of God upon Sinai. Though the imagery is certainly obscure, it hints of divine judgment beginning with God's people. The eschatological theophany also broadens the scope of the fearful response to the Divine Warrior's arrival even to include angels. In early Judaism, this motif draws on scriptural imagery to extend the fearful response to all of the created order.

The texts from Qumran, especially 1QM, emphasize that the final battle with the forces of Belial will only be won by the direct intervention of the Divine Warrior. One of the key components of the divine armor, the sword of God, comes to special prominence as an eschatological weapon. In 1QH[a] XIV, 20-33, the psalmist, safe behind the fortified wall of the Divine Warrior, looks to the final deliverance initiated by the sword of God.

4.2. *Allies of the Divine Warrior: Angels, Messiahs, and Temporal Allies*

Without question, the most dramatic adaptation of Divine Warrior in early Judaism is its use with two classes of divine allies, angels and messianic figures. While there are still significant examples of temporal allies fighting in Holy War, one significant adaptation that begins in this period is the idea of martyrdom as a means of fighting Holy War.

My discussion of the allies of the Divine Warrior consists of three subsections to deal with each of the broad categories I noted above. First, I highlight some key texts that make use of Divine Warrior imagery to depict the activity of angels, both corporately as the angelic army and as individual angels in the angelic hierarchy. Second, in the most substantial discussion of this chapter, I look at the messianic use of Divine Warrior imagery, dividing it into usage in texts from Qumran, usage in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. Finally, I investigate the use of Divine Warrior imagery for temporal allies of the Divine Warrior. Here I focus on the two developing adaptations to this motif, martyrdom as Holy War and the concept of spiritual warfare.

4.2.1. *Angels and Divine Warrior Imagery*

Literature from the early Jewish period is notable for a significant increase in the role of angelic figures.[90] Though there is considerable debate over what may have influenced this increase, the primary motivation most likely came from reflection on scriptural texts.[91] Mach

[90] Mach, *Entwicklungsstadien*, 114: "Nur wenige Autoren jener Epoche werden die Engel aus ihren Werken verbannen." See the various appendices in Maxwell J. Davidson, *Angels at Qumran: A Comparative Study of 1 Enoch 1–36, 72–108 and Sectarian Writings from Qumran* (JSPSup 11; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 325-42, for a listing of the various terms for angelic figures in much of the literature in early Judaism.

[91] R. M. M. Tuschling, *Angels and Orthodoxy: A Study in their Development in Syria and Palestine from the Qumran Texts to Ephrem the Syrian* (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 40; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 28, who, commenting on possible Persian influence, concludes, "the nature of Persian influence should be characterised as a reinterpretation and development of original Jewish concepts, rather than the wholesale importation of new ideas, except small narrative details."

considers the concept of the Divine Council to be foundational here.[92] Indeed, Tuschling subsumes the roles of angels in early Jewish literature to two related concepts: 1) praising and attending God in heaven and 2) warriors in the heavenly army.[93] Given that the Divine Council is often attached to Divine Warrior imagery in Hebrew Scripture, it comes as no surprise that Divine Warrior imagery saturates descriptions of angelic activity in early Judaism. While Mach cautions that angelic depictions often lack detail beyond basic names and/or functions, nevertheless, "[d]as Ergebnis der angelologischen Entwicklung dieser Zeit ist die Durchdringung der meisten Vorstellungsbereiche mit Engeln, die durch vielfache Delegation göttlicher Aufgaben immer selbständiger werden."[94] This is especially true of the military role of angels and related Divine Warrior imagery.

4.2.1.1. *The Angelic Army*. The angelic army appears throughout the literature of early Judaism. In roles familiar from Hebrew Scripture, we see the angelic army in battles against temporal foes as well as in the final battle at the end of the ages. This imagery sees some of the more dramatic development in the early Jewish period.

Related to the prominence of the epiphanies of God in the book, 2 Maccabees features the angelic army at war with the enemies of God's faithful in a number of detailed descriptions. In a pattern similar to Hebrew Scripture, 2 Macc 10:24-38, is an example of Holy War where angelic armies intervene to bring victory to Judas Maccabeus and his

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[92] Mach, *Entwicklungsstadien*, 124: "Aus den biblischen Traditionen fließen jene Elemente, die mit dem himmlischen Rat als Diener des Königs verbunden waren. Diese werden verbunden mit dem neu erwachten kultischen Interesse. Dabei kommt den Engeln nun noch die Aufsicht über den Ablauf der Natur zu. Nicht selten sind sie auch Vorbilder oder Ideale für den Menschen."

[93] Tuschling, *Angels*, 108. See also Mach, *Entwicklungsstadien*, 124-27, and Archie T. Wright, "Angels," in *Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism*, 329-30, for detailed summaries of the role of angels in early Jewish literature.

[94] Mach, *Entwicklungsstadien*, 127.

troops. In the passage, Timothy, a prior adversary, approaches with a force "of no small number" (v. 24).[95] Judas and his men plead with God "to be gracious to them and to be an enemy to their enemies and an adversary to their adversaries" (v. 26; cf. Exod 23:22). The outbreak of hostilities the next day offers a clear contrast between the two opposing forces.[96]

> Just as dawn was breaking, the two armies joined battle, the one having as pledge of success and victory not only their valor but also their reliance on the Lord, while the other made rage their leader in the fight (2 Macc 10:28).

The contrast in attitude is a direct result of the level of each army's reliance upon God. Judas' confidence is rewarded when God answers his prayer with an angelic epiphany that turns the tide of a fierce battle in 2 Macc 10:29-31.

> When the battle became fierce, there appeared to the enemy from heaven five illustrious men on horses with golden bridles, and they were leading the Judeans. Two of them took Makkabaios between them, and shielding him with their own suits of armor and weapons, they kept him unharmed. They showered arrows and thunderbolts on the enemy so that, confounded by blindness, they fled in complete disorder. Twenty thousand five hundred were slaughtered, besides six hundred cavalry.[97]

Only Timothy's troops—Judas' enemies—can see the five heavenly horsemen, clearly angelic figures.[98] The divine cavaliers, as in the epiphany of 2 Macc 3:24-26, indicate the influence of Greco-Roman imagery, as angelic epiphanies have parallels with Greek

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[95] On the historical problems associated with the person of Timothy in 2 Maccabees and various proposed solutions, see Victor L. Parker, "Judas Maccabaeus' Campaigns against Timothy," *Bib* 87 (2006): 457-65.

[96] Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 387, notes that "such contrasts are frequent" in 2 Maccabees where characters are "arranged opposite one another as if on stage," and that "[a]llowing θυμός to be one's guide is the arch-characteristic of the wicked."

[97] This translation is from Albert T. Piersma and Benjamin G. Wright, ed., *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[98] Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 388.

epiphanies.[99] From the fifth century B.C.E., Herodotus, *Histories* 8.37-39 contains a similar scene.

> It is truly amazing that weapons of war should of their own accord appear on the ground outside the Temple, but what happened next was quite astonishing, even given all the marvelous things (πάντων φασμάτων) that have happened in the world. Just as the Persians (βάρβαροι) were approaching the sanctuary of Athena Before the Temple, thunderbolts (κεραυνοὶ) crashed down on them from the sky, and two crags broke off from Mount Parnassu, hurtled toward them with a terrible noise, and hit a large number of them, and at the same time the sound of a loud shout and a war-cry emerged from the sanctuary. The combination of all these events filled the invaders with fear (φόβος τοῖσι βαρβάροισι ἐνεπεπτώκεε), and they began to run away. When the Delphians found out about this, they set off in pursuit and killed quite a few of them. The survivors fled straight back to Boeotia. I have learnt that the Persians who made it back claimed to have witnessed further miracles (θεῖα), over and above the ones already mentioned; they said they were followed by two heavily armed men of superhuman height (δύο γὰρ ὁπλίτας μέζονας ἢ κατ' ἀνθρώπων φύσιν ἐόντας), who harried them and killed them (κτείνοντας καὶ διώκοντας). The Delphians say that these two were the local heroes (ἥρωας)[100] of Delphi, Phyclacus and Autonoüs, whose precincts are located near the sanctuary.[101]

Here we see manifestations that, apparently, were only seen by the enemy. Thunderbolts caused fear and confusion, enabling the Delphians to pursue and kill "quite a few of" the Persians. Apparently during the chase, two incredible military figures harassed and killed Persians as well.[102]

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[99] Mach, *Entwicklungsstadien*, 242-45.

[100] According to A. M. Bowie's commentary in Herodotus, *Histories VIII* (ed. A. M. Bowie; Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 129, "Greek heroes were usually mortals whose remarkable exploits, good or bad, had marked them out as superhuman and worthy of reverence and fear after death." Such beings become "local deities who rise from their tombs to help worshippers."

[101] Herodotus, *Histories* 8.37-39 (Herodotus, *The Histories* [trans. Robin Waterfield; introduction and notes by Carolyn Dewald; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998], 500).

[102] On the phrase κατ' ἀνθρώπων φύσιν ἐόντας, Bowie, in Herodotus, *Histories VIII*, 129, notes that κατά + the accusative case indicates comparison. In J. Enoch Powell's commentary in Herodotus, *History VIII* (ed. J. Enoch Powell; Bristol Classical Press, 1982), 94, he notes that κατ' ἀνθρώπων φύσιν is a recurring "standing phrase." The sense is "more than human nature" or "greater than human nature." If the phrase modifies the adjective μέζονας, the sense is "men of superhuman height," as in Waterfield's translation. If the

The passage in 2 Maccabees contains echoes of Hebrew Scripture as well. The passage as a whole reflects Ps 91, a promise of divine deliverance for the one who trusts in YHWH. We see this especially in the comparison between 2 Macc 10:30 and Ps 91:11 (90:11 LXX), where angels protect Judas and the psalmist from harm. The panic the appearance of the horsemen causes is a consistent pattern in Holy War texts as well.[103] Also, there is a marked tendency that 1 and 2 Maccabees portray the Seleucids as a "latter-day Assyrian empire."[104] Twice—in 2 Macc 8:19 and 15:22 (cf. 1 Macc 7:41; 3 Macc 6:5)—Judas invokes YHWH's divine deliverance during the siege of Sennacherib (2 Kings 18:13–19:37; Isa 36–37). Another echo of Hebrew Scripture appears as 2 Macc 10:29-31 inverts Isa 30:15-17.[105] In Isa 30:15-17, YHWH vows—because Israel does not trust YHWH—"at the threat of five you shall flee." In contrast, the Maccabean army does rely on the Lord (10:28). As a result, the threat of five angelic figures throws Timothy's forces into panic. Finally, in Isa 30:30 (LXX), God κεραυνώσει βιαίως, "thunders violently," against the Assyrians and this thundering voice will destroy them, while the five angels of 2 Macc 10:30 τοξεύματα καὶ κεραυνοὺς ἐξερρίπτουν, "shower arrows and thunderbolts" on Timothy's troops.

This demonstrates a continuing pattern of early Jewish writers finding commonality between the motifs from surrounding cultures and established Scriptural patterns. In such cases, the writers felt the freedom to draw both elements together to create new patterns.

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phrase modifies ὁπλίτας μέζονας, the sense is more in line with Godley's translation "men-at-arms of stature greater than human." I am inclined toward the latter.

[103] Gerhard von Rad, *Holy War in Ancient Israel* (trans. Marva J. Dawn; Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2000), 49, "Yahweh's intervention in the form of a confusing divine terror was an indispensible element of the [Holy War] tradition."

[104] Goldstein, *II Maccabees*, 392.

[105] Goldstein, *II Maccabees*, 392.

Such adaptation occurs frequently in 2 Maccabees. Nevertheless, Jewish writers consistently find ways to emphasize that God is still the source of any heavenly assistance or deliverance and thus, any victory.[106]

The heavenly army could also serve as an omen. For instance, in 2 Macc 5:2-4, the residents of Jerusalem see a vision of armies in the sky and hope the vision is a good omen. Subsequent events indicate, however, that it was actually a portent of Antiochus IV Epiphanes' assault on Jerusalem. In *Sib. Or.* 3.796-808, composed in a mid-second century B.C.E. Jewish community, one of the signs of the eschatological end is a "battle of infantry and cavalry in the clouds."[107] In *B. J.* 6.296-297, Josephus describes a heavenly army as one of several ominous portents concerning the city:

> Besides these, a few days after that feast, on the one and twentieth day of the month Artemisius, [Jyar,] a certain prodigious and incredible phenomenon appeared: I suppose the account of it would seem to be a fable, were it not related by those that saw it, and were not the events that followed it of so considerable a nature as to deserve such signals; for, before sun-setting, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armor were seen running about among the clouds, and surrounding of cities.[108]

This is one of a list of eight prodigies (τέρατα) that Josephus relates as warnings indicating God's intention to allow the city's destruction (*B. J.* 6.288-310). Unfortunately, the Jews were unable to discern the importance of the portents, since they let themselves be deceived by false prophets (*B. J.* 6.288). For Josephus, however, the biggest error was the

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[106] Mach, *Entwicklungsstadien*, 249, where he also notes the increasing tendency to attribute divine intervention to angelic assistance in works such as Pseudo-Philo, *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*.

[107] On the date and provenance of the third Sibyl, see John J. Collins, "The Third Sibyl Revisited" in *Things Revealed* (ed. Esther G. Chazon, David Satran, and Ruth A. Clements; Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplements 89; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 3-20.

[108] The translation is from Josephus, *The Complete Works of Josephus* (trans. William Whitson; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1987), 742.

Jews' inability to see a scriptural prophecy of a messianic figure need not signify that the messianic figure had to be a Jew.

> But now, what did the most elevate to them in undertaking this war, was an ambiguous oracle that was also found in their sacred writings, how, "about that time, one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth." The Jews took this prediction to belong to themselves in particular, and many of the wise men were thereby deceived in their determination. Now this oracle certainly denoted the government of Vespasian, who was appointed emperor in Judea (*B. J.* 6.312-13).[109]

A similar list of prodigies (*prodigia*) appears in Tacitus *Hist.* 5.13.1. Tacitus notes that despite these prodigies—which he understood as bad omens for the Jews, the Jews were still confident because they had prophecies of the "triumph of the East" and that "from Judea would set out men destined to rule the world" (5.13.2). Tacitus, like Josephus, understands Jewish prophecy to refer not to Jews, but to the Romans who overrun Jerusalem (5.13.2):

> This mysterious prophecy really referred to Vespasian and Titus, but the common people, true to the selfish ambitions of mankind, thought that this mighty destiny was reserved for them, and not even their calamities opened their eyes to the truth.[110]

The similarity between Josephus and Tacitus is such that "some sort of dependency is indicated."[111] This hints that, for Josephus, the character of the army is more along the lines of a Greco-Roman omen than an adaptation of Scripture. Indeed, all of Josephus' prodigies have close parallels in Greco-Roman literature.[112]

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[109] Josephus, *Works*, 743.

[110] Tacitus, *The Histories* (trans. Kenneth Wellesly; rev. Rhiannon Ash; Penguin Classics; New York: Penguin, 2009), 252. Cf. Suetonius, *Vespasian* 4.5

[111] Steve Mason, "Josephus, Daniel, and the Flavian House," in *Josephus and the History of the Greco-Roman Period* (ed. Fausto Parente and Joseph Sievers; StPB 41; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 187-89.

[112] S. V. McCasland, "Portents and Prophecies in Josephus and in the Gospels," *JBL* 51 (1932): 323-35.

In both 2 Maccabees and Josephus, the army in the sky was a bad omen.[113] Generally the Romans understood a prodigy of armies in the sky in a negative sense as well. For instance, Tacitus included this particular prodigy to illustrate Jerusalem's fate.[114] For the Romans, any prodigy "is a peculiar event described in the sources as a sign that the *pax deorum* has been disturbed, and this type of portent calls for expiation to be performed in public."[115]

An omen could be more than this. For example, in some cases, it is clear that the prodigy actually indicates an enemy's impending destruction. For instance, Pliny, in *Nat.* 2.148, recounts some prodigies that took place during the war against the Cimbri and Teutons, Germanic tribes who had invaded Italy from Gaul:

> We have heard, that during the wars with the Cimbri a noise of clanging armour and the sounding of a trumpet were heard from the sky, and that the same thing has happened frequently both before then and later. In the third consulship of Marius, the inhabitants of Ameria and Tuder saw the spectacle of heavenly armies advancing from the East and the West to meet in battle, those from the West being routed.[116]

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[113] Contra Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 251-52, who considers the Jewish prodigy of an army in the sky to be ambiguous. While it is true that 2 Macc 5:2-4 appears ambiguous in that "everyone prayed that the apparition might prove to have been a good omen" (v. 4), later events made clear it was a bad omen. Josephus (*BJ* 6.288) is clear that the omens he lists were portents of disaster: "they neither gave heed to nor believed those clear and announced prodigies of the coming desolation" (my translation: "τοῖς δ'ἐναργέσι καὶ προσημαίνουσι τὴν μέλλουσαν ἐρημίαν τέρασιν οὔτε προσεῖχον οὔτ' ἐπίστευον").

[114] See also Virgil, *Georgics*, 476-77, where the sound of armies fighting in the heavens is a bad omen.

[115] Susanne William Rasmussen, *Public Portents in Republican Rome* (Analecta Romana Instituti Danici Supplement 34; Rome: Bretsschneider, 2003), 35. Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price, *Religions of Rome* (2 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1998, 1:252, note that by the Augustan period, public prodigies—or at least their official reporting—had waned, largely limited to matters related to the birth and death of emperors, since "these random intrusions of divine displeasure must have appeared incongruous in a system where divine favour flowed through the emperor." Livy, *History of Rome*, 43.13.1, blames this on the spirit of the age: "I am well aware, that, through the same disregard of religion, owing to which the men of the present day generally believe that the gods never give portents (*portendere*) of any future events, no prodigies (*prodigia*) are now either reported to government, or recorded in histories" (Schlesinger, LCL).

[116] Pliny the Elder, *Nat*. 2.148 (Rackham, LCL). Cf. Plutarch, *Mar.* 17:4 (Perrin, LCL), "Many signs also appeared, most of which were of the ordinary kind; but from Ameria and Tuder, cities of Italy, it was reported that at night there had been seen in the heavens flaming spears, and shields which at first moved in different directions, and then clashed together, assuming the formations and movements of men in battle, and

The battle of the heavenly armies appeared in cities far removed from the front lines of the battle but nevertheless indicated Marius' impending victory, since the armies in the western sky—towards Gaul—were the ones routed. In both of our examples from Jewish sources, the inevitability of the omen is evident as well.

Angelic armies also appear in prominent roles at the final eschatological battle. We have already noted the arrival of the army from heaven at the eschatological theophany of *1 En.* 1:9.

> Behold! He will arrive with ten million of the holy ones
> in order to execute judgment on all.

Early Jewish writers had a wealth of scriptural imagery to use in portraying the eschatological angelic army, as this army regularly accompanies the Divine Warrior in Hebrew Scripture.[117]

In the *War Scroll* (1QM) from Qumran, the angelic forces do more than accompany God when he arrives as the Divine Warrior. Angelic armies align with the Sons of Light to battle the Sons of Darkness and the forces of Darkness in the battles before the eschaton.[118]

> On the day when the Kittim fall there shall be a battle and horrible carnage before the God of Israel, for it is a day appointed by Him from ancient times as a battle of annihilation for the Sons of Darkness. On that day the congregation of the gods and the congregation of men shall engage one another, resulting in great carnage. The Sons of Light and the forces of Darkness shall fight together to show the strength of God with the roar of a great multitude and the shout of gods and men; a day of disaster (1QM I, 10-11; *DSSR* 1:211).

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finally some of them would give way, while others pressed on in pursuit, and all streamed away to the westward."

[117] VanderKam, "Theophany," 148-50. Cf. Deut 33:2; Ps 68:17 (68:18 MT), and Zech 14:5

[118] The Qumran texts have a number of designations for angels, often within the same work. For the various terms used for angels in the Dead Sea Scrolls, see Yigael Yadin, *The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 230-32.

Accordingly, the presence of angels in their midst mandates a high level of ritual purity for the armies of the Sons of Light.

> No one crippled, blind, or lame, nor a man who has a permanent blemish on his skin, or a man affected with ritual uncleanness of his flesh; none of these shall go with them to battle. All of them shall be volunteers for battle, pure of spirit and flesh, and prepared for the day of vengeance. Any man who is not ritually clean in respect to his genitals on the day of battle shall not go down with them into battle, for holy angels are present with their army (1QM VII, 3-6; *DSSR* 1:223).

An eschatological role for the angelic armies appears in a number of early Jewish texts.[119] In such instances, the text largely reflects the imagery of Hebrew Scripture or the angelic army is only mentioned in passing.

4.2.1.2. *Individual Angels in Warrior Roles*. Along with the increasing depiction of individual angels in a number of different roles in early Judaism, we also find individual angelic figures involved in the battles of God or his people. In a number of places individual angels perform acts of war on behalf of the Divine Warrior, sometimes in a role where they exhibit a high rank or exalted status. Two expressions of this are of note for my purposes, the addition of angels to some events in rewritten Scripture and the development of the concept of exalted angels or archangels.

The retelling of scriptural history in the first century work of Pseudo-Philo, *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, depicts angelic figures in contexts where angels do not appear in Hebrew Scripture.[120] A number of these additions include angels aiding Israel in battle or performing violent missions for the Divine Warrior.[121] One example, in *L.A.B.* 25–28,

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[119] E.g., 1 QM XII, 6-8; 1QH[a] IX, 34-36; *Sib. Or.* 4.805; *T. Levi* 3:3; 11Q13 II, 12-14; Matt 13:41; Mark 13:27; 2 Thess 1:7; and Jude 14-15.

[120] For an introduction *L. A. B.*, see Jacobson, *Commentary*, 1:195-280.

[121] For a summary of such passages, see Christopher Begg, "Angels in Pseudo-Philo," in *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings–Origins, Development and Reception* (ed. Friedrich V. Reiterer, Tobias Nicklas,

involves a man named Kenaz, the brother of Caleb and father of the judge Othniel (Judg 1:13). Unlike in the book of Judges, Kenaz plays a significant role in *L.A.B.* 25–28, where he is Joshua's successor. In *L.A.B.* 27.9, as Kenaz prepared to fight the Amorites, the "spirit of the Lord clothed him," giving him a sword that shone "like a lightning bolt." In 27.10-11, Kenaz approached the Ammonite camp "with the spirit of power" and the Lord ensured victory with angelic intervention.

> But the LORD sent before him the angel Ingethel, who is in charge of hidden things and works invisibly, and another powerful angel was helping him. And Ingethel struck the Amorites with blindness so that, when each saw his neighbor, they thought they were adversaries and killed one another. And Zeruel, the angel who is pre-eminent in military might, bore up the arms of Kenaz lest they should sink down.

Here two named angels battle Israel's foes and strengthen the leader of God's people. While there are a number of scriptural precedents here, especially concerning Divine Warrior imagery,[122] with the story in *L.A.B.* 27.7-12, the angelic intervention is noticeably similar to that in 2 Macc 10:24-32, Judas Maccabeus' battle with Timothy. Thus, we see another example of the blending of Greco-Roman with Divine Warrior imagery from Hebrew Scripture.[123]

One further example from Pseudo-Philo is worth noting as well. In *L.A.B.* 38, Pseudo-Philo fills in the gap between the terse scriptural description of Jair's judgeship in

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and Karin Schöpflin; Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Yearbook 2007; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 550-51.

[122] Frederick J. Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo: Rewriting the Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 125, sees this story patterned after the story of Gideon. Jacobson, *Commentary*, 2:790-92, discusses a number of parallels.

[123] I note the following parallels between *L.A.B.* 11.7-12 and 2 Macc 10:24-32: 1) a numerically superior enemy; 2) the prayer for divine intervention; 3) the contrast between Israel's reliance upon God and the enemy's reliance on nymphs (*L.A.B*) or their own wrath (2 Macc); 4) angels that protect Israel's leader and assault Israel's enemy; 5) lightning; 6) blindness and ensuing panic. Note that I am not arguing for any sort of dependence of *L.A.B.* on 2 Maccabees. I am, however, noting the general correspondence that suggests *L.A.B.* has adapted motifs similar to those in 2 Maccabees.

Judg 3:3-5 and the ominous note of Judg 3:6, "The Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, worshiping the Baals . . . " In *L.A.B.*, it is Jair who leads Israel to worship Baal. Thus, In *L.A.B.* 38.1, Jair threatens, "Everyone who will not sacrifice to Baal will die."[124] Seven men defy the order so Jair responds, "Burn them in the fire, because they have blasphemed against Baal" (38.3). As the sentence is being carried out, the Divine Warrior responds by the hand of an angel.

> And when they had put [the seven] in the fire, Nathaniel, the angel who was in charge of fire, came forth and extinguished the fire and burned the servants of Jair. But he let the seven men escape in such a way that none of the people saw them, because he had struck the people with blindness. And when Jair came to the place, he was burned with fire; and before he burned him up, the angel of the LORD said to him, "Hear the word of the Lord before you die. And these words the Lord says: 'I have raised you up from the land and appointed you leader over my people (*populos meo*), but you rose up and corrupted my covenant and deceived them (*eos*) and sought to burn them (*servos meo*) with flame because they chastised you. Those who were burned with corruptible fire, now are made alive with a living fire and are freed; but you will die, says the Lord, and in the fire in which you will die there you will have a dwelling place.'" And afterward he burned him up, and he came to the pillar of Baal and demolished it and burned Baal along with the people who stood by, that is, a thousand men (*L.A.B.* 38.3-4)

Two things are of note. First, three actions incite the wrath of God against Jair: 1) Jair corrupted God's covenant; 2) Jair deceived God's people (*populos meo*); and 3) Jair sought to burn God's servants (*servos meo*). God further describes the seven martyrs, faithful in the face of certain death, as *servos meo*, indicating that included in God's wrath is his response to Jair's attack on the men.[125]

Second, while the flame is a common component of Divine Warrior imagery, here it serves to turn Jair's own designs back upon himself. Jair intends to burn to death those who

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[124] Jacobson, *Commentary*, 2:940, notes that this story has a number of parallels with the story of Elijah vs. Ahab in 1 Kgs 17. Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo*, 161, notes the connection to the trials in Dan 3 and 2 Maccabees 7.

[125] Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo*, 162.

are faithful to God. In the end, the angel of the Lord in charge of fire, Nathaniel, delivers the seven men and, instead, Jair burns to death. God himself makes clear the divine reversal: the seven that Jair intended to burn with "corruptible fire" (*igne corruptibili*) are now made alive by "living fire" (*igne vivo*) and Jair's fire will kill only Jair, and Jair will now inhabit that fire (*et in quo igne morieris in eo habebis habitationem*). Nathaniel then burns the image of Baal, along with a further thousand Baal-worshippers.[126] Jair's designs are not only reversed, they are turned on their head. In a manner that is similar to, yet distinct from, the Deuteronomic element of Hebrew Scripture, early Jewish texts regularly makes use of the Divine Warrior turning the means of enemy not only back upon that enemy, but also in a way that overwhelms the enemy.

Individual angels of high rank also perform acts of war in early Jewish texts. The concept—if not necessarily the term—of archangels (ἀρχάγγελοι) is already established by the third century B.C.E.[127] Our earliest evidence of this is in the *Book of the Watchers*, where two different lists of exalted angels appear. The first list, in *1 En.* 9:1-11, lists four archangels: Michael, Sariel, Gabriel, and Raphael.[128] Meanwhile, in the second list, in *1 En.*

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[126] Jacobson, *Commentary*, 2:945.

[127] For an overview of archangels, see Christoph Berner, "The Four (or Seven) Archangels in the First Book of Enoch and Early Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period," in *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings–Origins, Development and Reception* (ed. Friedrich V. Reiterer, Tobias Nicklas, and Karin Schöpflin; Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Yearbook 2007; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 395-411. As to the term itself, Berner, "Archangels," 396, finds the earliest appearance of ἀρχάγγελος in the Greek version of *1 En* 20:8. Nickelsburg *1 Enoch 1*, 14, suggests that the Greek version of *The Book of the Watchers* "is the product of a Jewish translator who worked before the turn of the era." Despite its late appearance, Berner, "Archangels," 396, suggests that the term archangel "remains appropriate even with regard to earlier texts, insofar as it precisely expresses the idea of a group of supreme angels." However, Josh 5:13-15 (LXX) and Dan 8:11 (LXX) use the term ἀρχιστράτηγος, which, as D. E. Aune, "Archai," *DDD* 81, notes, is a synonym for ἀρχάγγελος in a number of texts.

[128] This is the listing in 4Q202 III 7 (cf. 1QM IX 15-16). In the Greek version of *1 En.* 9:1, Uriel replaces Sariel. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 202-205, discusses the textual evidence and concludes that the Greek tradition reflects confusion over σ and ο.

20:1-8, we see seven archangels: Uriel, Raphael, Reuel, Michael, Sariel, Gabriel, and Remiel.

Such exalted angels fill a number of roles in various texts. One of these roles is the ἀρχιστράτηγος, a chief military commander. The title appears to derive from Josh 5:13-15 (LXX) where ἀρχιστράτηγος δυνάμεως κυρίου translates שר־צבא־יהוה, "commander of the army of the LORD."[129] Most often, the ἀρχιστράτηγος is Michael, though in *Jos. Asen.* 14 the ἀρχιστράτηγος is not named and in *Gk. Apoc. Ezra* 1:4, the ἀρχιστράτηγος is Raphael—though in *Gk. Apoc. Ezra* 4:24, the ἀρχιστράτηγος is Michael. The exalted status of Michael is also evident from scriptural Daniel, as in Dan 12:2-3, Michael is "the protector" (העמד) of Daniel's people, who "shall arise" (יעמד) during this unprecedented "time of anguish." Mach considers the importance of Michael as ἀρχιστράτηγος to have its source here.[130] Interestingly enough, though the title implies a military role, in no passage later than Daniel does the ἀρχιστράτηγος appear in a military context.

Michael's importance as an individual angel goes beyond his exalted status as an archangel and chief military commander. A number of texts define Michael's role along the lines that we saw in Dan 12:2-3, where Michael is the protector of Israel. In *1 En.* 20:1-8, a passage that predates the book of Daniel, Michael is the fourth exalted angel, the one responsible for "the good ones of the people," faithful Israel.[131] Michael is tied to the

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[129] Darrell D. Hannah, *Michael and Christ: Michael Traditions and Angel Christology in Early Christianity* (WUNT II/109; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 40. Cf. M. Mach, "Michael," *DDD* 570.

[130] Mach, *Entwicklungsstadien*, 250. He cautions, however, that "dieser Text ist selbst spät."

[131] Hannah, *Michael*, 34. On the textual problems here, see Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 294.

fortunes of Israel in the *War Scroll* as well. In 1QM XVII, 6-8, Michael's exaltation over the אלים, "gods"—the angels—parallels Israel's dominion over all flesh.[132]

> He will send eternal support to the company of His redeemed by the power of the majestic angel of the authority of Michael. By eternal light He shall joyfully light up the covenant of Israel—peace and blessing for the lot of God—to exalt the authority of Michael among the gods (באלים) and the dominion of Israel among all flesh (*DSSR* 1:239).

A number of texts describe the angelic patron of Israel without naming the angel. In the *T. Levi* 6.6, an angel "makes intercession for the nation Israel, that they might not be beaten." In the *T. Dan* 6.1-5, the "angel of peace" intercedes for Israel and stands "in opposition to the kingdom of the enemy." In 1QM XIII 10, the God of Israel had "from of old appointed the Prince of light" to assist Israel. In 2 Macc 11:7-9, the charging Maccabean army sees a vision "a horseman appeared at their head, clothed in white and brandishing weapons of gold," a vision that emboldens Judas' troops to fight "like lions against the enemy."

4.2.1.3. *Summary of Angels and Divine Warrior Imagery*. The epiphanic appearances of angels in 2 Maccabees are examples of the adoption and adaptation of Greco-Roman imagery into the motif of Holy War. Thus, we see angelic armies assistant and encouraging the Maccabean army after the pattern of Hebrew Scripture and we see these armies serving as omens in order to communicate divine displeasure. In eschatological texts such as the 1QM, the angelic army assists the people of God at the final battle.

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[132] Darrell D. Hannah, "Guardian Angels and Angelic National Patrons in Second Temple Judaism and Early Christianity," in *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings–Origins, Development and Reception* (ed. Friedrich V. Reiterer, Tobias Nicklas, and Karin Schöpflin; Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Yearbook 2007; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 422-23.

Individual angels play an increasing role in early Jewish texts. In Pseudo-Philo's *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, individual angels become part of scriptural scenes as a way to flesh out unattended details in the scriptural account. Of particular note is the common early Jewish motif of the Divine Warrior turning an enemy's assault back on to itself in an overwhelming fashion. Finally, exalted angels, archangels, also play an increasing role, both as defender and protector of God's people.

4.2.2. *Messiahs as Divine Warrior Figures*

The issue of messianic thought in early Judaism has provoked a considerable amount of debate.[133] There is little consensus on a variety of issues, from a basic definition of what constitutes a messianic text, to the degree of the presence of messianism in earlier Hebrew Scripture, the degree of messianic fervor and/or continuity within early Judaism, or on the type of messianic expectations that we find in texts from 200 B.C.E. to 100 C.E. While many of the questions raised by such issues are beyond the scope of my study, the issue of definition remains important. In defining what I mean by a "messiah," I make clear the basis behind my choice of representative texts. Here I follow the definition proposed by Chester, who understands the early Jewish concept of a messiah as simply involving "an agent of final deliverance."[134]

Note that such a definition allows for a wider range of thought than limiting discussion of messiahs to texts that contain the term משיח (or foreign equivalents such as

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[133] For a recent summary of proposals, see Andrew Chester, *Messiah and Exaltation: Jewish Messianic and Visionary Traditions and New Testament Christology* (WUNT 207; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 193-205.

[134] Chester, *Messiah*, 326. See also John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 16-20, who finds that "it is best to reserve the English term 'messiah' for figures who have important roles in the future hope of the people."

χριστός).[135] It also emphasizes the eschatological role of a messiah in order to distinguish early Jewish messianic expectation from Israelite kingship ideology.[136] Finally, it allows for the diversity present in the types of messiahs we see in early Jewish literature.[137] While my focus is on messianic activities that parallel those of the Divine Warrior, this definition provides the basis for the texts selected below.

In what follows, I discuss the Messianic Warrior of early Judaism by grouping the literature into two categories. First I turn to the literature from Qumran and overview the entire corpus. Second, I group together all of the material in the Jewish Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha and overview this literature as well.

4.2.2.1. *The Davidic Messianic Warrior of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. A number of the Dead Sea Scrolls reflect a tradition of a Davidic, kingly messiah who plays a significant role in the eschatological war. According to Collins, the Qumran documents consistently

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[135] Collins, *Scepter*, 17, "In short, a messiah is an eschatological figure who sometimes, but not necessarily always, is designated as a משיח in the ancient sources.

[136] The importance of the eschatological role of the messiah as a central component of messianism is a major point of contention in recent studies. See, for instance, the summary of contrasting arguments in Chester, *Messiah*, 193-230. Nevertheless, as Antti Laato, *A Star is Rising: the Historical Development of the Old Testament Royal Ideology and the Rise of the Jewish Messianic Expectations* (University of South Florida International Studies in Formative Christianity and Judaism 5; Atlanta: Scholars, 1997), 3-4, the term or its equivalents had become "a *terminus technicus* for a coming eschatological figure." For this reason, Chester, *Messiah*, 202-03, finds the eschatological component important to a definition of a messiah as well: "in view of the clearly eschatological connotations that messianic hope takes on in subsequent Jewish understanding, it seems simply to confuse the matter to use the term [messiah] in relation to *any* future king or ruler" (my emphasis). This is not to deny the roots of Jewish messianism in the scriptural concept of kingship ideology. On this background, see the summary in Laato, *Star*, 236-40. However, my emphasis on an eschatological component in messianism indicates that I do accept the widely held assertion that there is little clear evidence of sustained messianic hope in early Judaism from the early fifth to the late second century B.C.E. On this point see, e.g., Collins, *Scepter*, 37-41 and Chester, *Messiah*, 281-82. For an argument on the "prevalence of messianism in the Second-Temple period," see William Horbury, *Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ* (London: SCM, 1998), 36-63.

[137] Collins, *Scepter*, 18, outlines four messianic paradigms: 1) king; 2) priest; 3) prophet; and 4) heavenly messiah.

describe such an ideal king as "the scepter who will smite the nations, slay the wicked with the breath of his lips, and restore the Davidic dynasty."[138]

There are a number of diverse titles for this figure besides messiah, משיח, which itself does not always refer to an eschatological messiah.[139] Two of the most important are the "Branch of David" (צמח דויד), drawn from Jer 23:5 (cf. Isa 11:1), and the "Prince of the Congregation" (נשיא העדה).[140] Both titles are used to designate a warrior-messiah who fights in eschatological battle. Other important messianic titles demonstrate the importance of Hebrew Scripture in the development of the Messianic Warrior such as the scepter (שבט) of Gen 49:10 and the scepter (שבט) and star (כוכב) of Num 24:17.[141]

A notable text concerning the Messianic Warrior is the *War Rule*, 4Q285, which portrays the Davidic messiah as a conquering judge.[142] Fragment 4 appears to be the

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[138] Collins, *Scepter*, 77.

[139] For the complete list of the various titles of messianic figures in the Dead Sea Scrolls, see Martin G. Abegg and Craig A. Evans, "Messianic Passages in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Qumran Messianism: Studies on the Messianic Expectations in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. James H. Charlesworth, Hermann Lichtenberger, and Gerbern S. Oegema; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 191-203. On the use of the term in the Dead Sea Scrolls, see Géza G. Xeravits, *King, Priest, Prophet: Positive Eschatological Protagonists of the Qumran Library* (*STDJ* 47; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 130-35.

[140] Collins, *Scepter*, 68-71. On the background of the "Prince of the Congregation," which has its roots in Hebrew Scripture but appears to be a development from Qumran, see Abegg and Evans, "Passages," 194-97.

[141] Craig A. Evans, "The Messiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Israel's Messiah in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. Richard S. Hess and M. Daniel Carrol R.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 91-94. Martin C. Albl, *'And the Scripture Cannot Be Broken': The Form and Function of Early Christian Testimonia Collections* (NovTSup 96; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 211, notes that in early Judaism, Isa 11:1-10, Gen 49:10-11, and Num 24:17 "were at the heart of messianic expectation, and were often conflated in quotations and allusions."

[142] Xeravits, *King*, 64, dates the copy of 4Q285 to the late first century B.C.E. on paleographical grounds. On the basis of 4Q285's relationship to the *War Scroll*, 1QM, the date of composition must post-date the *War Scroll*. If Eshel, "Kittim," 29, is correct in suggesting that the reference to the Kittim in 4Q285 is dependent on 4Q161, since, according to J. D. Amusin, "The Reflection of Historical Events of the First Century B.C. in Qumran Commentaries (4Q161; 4Q169; 4Q166)," *HUCA* 48 (1977): 123-34, 4Q161 likely interprets Isa 10 in light of Ptolemy Latharus' campaign against Alexander Jannaeus in 103–102 B.C.E. and was therefore likely composed soon after this event. On the identity of the Kittim in 4Q285, see the note below.

description of a battle between the Prince of the Congregation and the Kittim.[143] Lines 6-7 appear to be the end result of the Prince's victorious battle, with him in pursuit of his defeated enemy. In line 10, the defeated Kittim are brought before the Prince for judgment.

Fragment 7 of 4Q285 then provides an interesting puzzle due to its poor condition. Lines 1-2 open with a quotation of Isa 10:34–11:1, a passage that has clear eschatological connotations in the Qumran literature.[144] In fact, 4Q285 7, 3-4 interprets Isa 10:34–11:1 in light of the eschatological battle.

> [ ] the Branch of David, and they will enter into judgment with
> [ ] and the Prince of the Congregation, the Bran[ch of David,] shall put him to death (*DSSR* 1:245).

Lines 3-4 have been the source of controversy in past scholarship due to ambiguity in the scroll as to whether the Prince is doing the killing or being killed.[145] However, few today dispute that the Prince should be seen as the slayer, not the one slain.

Thus, in 4Q285 the Prince of the Congregation leads Israel in a victorious eschatological battle against the Kittim. The Prince then pursues the defeated Kittim and their defeated ruler is brought before the Prince. In 4Q285 7, 4, then, the Prince of the Congregation—here identified as the Branch of David—executes the defeated leader of the

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[143] Eshel, "Kittim," 38-41, suggests that the Kittim in 4Q285 may be the Greeks since 4Q285 makes use of Isa 10 and, as we saw in the note above, Amusin, "Reflection," 123-34, 4Q161 likely interprets Isa 10 in light of Ptolemy Latharus' campaign against Alexander Jannaeus in 103–102 B.C.E. Eshel, "Kittim," 38, did note that in 4Q285, all of the references to the Kittim are in an eschatological context, making it "impossible to know to whom the author of [4Q285] referred."

[144] See, e.g., 4Q161, *Peshar on Isaiah*[a], which interprets Isa 10–11. Note also the discussion of Xeravits, *King*, 206-07.

[145] The difficult phrase is: והמיתו נשיא העדה צמ[ח]. In the critical text, P. S. Alexander and G. Vermes, ed. "4Q**285** (4QSefer ha-Milḥamah)," in *DSSR* 1:244, the מ at the end of the line is unclear but probable. Robert H. Eisenman and Michael Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered: The First Complete Translation and Interpretation of 50 Key Documents Withheld for over 35 Years* (Rockport, Mass.: Element, 1992), 29, translated the phrase as "they will put to death the Leader of the Community, the Bra[nch of David]. Against this, see especially Martin G. Abegg, Jr., "Messianic Hope and 4Q285: A Reassessment," *JBL* 13 (1994): 81-91.

Kittim.[146] In this recreation, the martial role of the Prince stands out, as well as the judicial role of the victor over the vanquished, as the Prince leads the congregation into the new order. In this sense, the prince's messianic role derives from the scriptural concept of an ideal Davidic king who, armed with the might of the Divine Warrior, conquers all foes.[147] In the messianic passages of the Dead Sea Scrolls, this ideal king is an eschatological figure.

Another important passage with imagery of a Messianic Warrior is the *Melchizedek* scroll, 11Q13 (11QMelch), which dates from the mid-first century B.C.E.[148] In this scroll, Melchizedek, the king of Salem from Gen 14:17-20 and a mysterious priest in Ps 110:4, not only leads an eschatological army, he is the executor of eschatological judgment. Melchizedek's role is outlined in 11Q13 II, 7-14.

> And the D[ay of Atone]ment i[s] the e[nd of] the tenth [ju]bilee,
> in which atonement shall be made for all the sons of [light and for] the men [of] the lot of Mel[chi]zidek [ ] over [th]em [ ] accor[ding to] a[ll] their [doing]s, for
> it is the time for the year of grace of Melchizedek and of [his] arm[ies, the nati]on [of] the holy ones of God, of the administration of justice, as it is written
> about him in the songs of David, who said: "Elohim shall [st]and in the ass[embly of God]; in the midst of the gods he shall judge." And about him he sa[id: "And] above [it,]
> to the heights, return: God shall judge the nations. And for what he sa[id: "How long will you] judge unjustly, and be par[tial] to the wick[e]d. [Se]lah,"
> The interpretation of it concerns Belial and the spirits of his lot wh[o], in [the]ir tur[ning] away from God's commandments to [commit evil].
> And Melchizedek will carry out the vengeance of by Go[d]'s judgments [and on that day he will f]r[ee them from the hand of] Belial and from the hand of all the s[pirits of his lot.]

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[146] Xeravits, *King*, 148.

[147] Xeravits, King, 205-13. According to Stefan Schreiber, *Gesalbter und König: Titel und Konzeptionen der königlichen Gesalbtenerwartung in frühjüdischen und urchristlichen Schriften* (BZNW 105; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000), 215, "Die Anwendung des für die königliche Gesalbtentradition nicht typischen Titels נשיא (anstelle eines gebräuchlicheren משיח oder מלך, vgl. PsSal 17) läßt sich möglicherweise auf dem zeitgeschichtlichen politischen und sozialen Hintergrund als antihasmonäische Polemik erklären, da sich die Hasmonäer . . . den Königstitel beilegten."

[148] Florentino García Martínez, "The Traditions about Melchizedek in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Qumranica Minora II: Thematic Studies on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. J. C. Tigchelaar, *STDJ* 64; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 97, n. 11.

And all the gods [of justice] are to his help; [and h]e is (the one) wh[o] all the sons of God and he will [ ] (*DSSR* 2:25, 27).

Here we see Melchizedek's lot apparently equated with the sons of light; Melchizedek's army is the nation (עם) of the Holy Ones, and the eschatological Day of Atonement is the year of Melchizedek's grace (רצון). Melchizedek is the fulfillment of the judgment of God described in Pss 82:1-2 and 7:8-9 and he carries out the vengeance of God and frees his people.

While Melchizedek's activities are clear enough, the reference to Melchizedek has proven much more difficult to decipher. The text of 11Q13 describes Melchizedek with exalted language usually reserved for angelic figures, especially Michael.[149] On the other hand, the extant text of 11Q13 does not specifically label Melchizedek a מלאך, "angel," nor is such an identification implied in the scriptural references to Melchizedek.[150] Moreover, Melchizedek functions as a messianic figure in 11Q13.[151] The condition of the manuscript makes any firm conclusion difficult but it does seem that the earthly background of the

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[149] Paul J. Kobelski, *Melchizedek and Melchireša*[c] (CBQMS 10; Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1981), 71-74, notes, "The only figure appearing in Jewish and Christian tradition to whom the same attributes and the same role are applied as to Melchizedek in 11QMelch is the archangel Michael." Kobelski concludes that the writer of 11Q13 used Melchizedek to emphasize a priestly component for the heavenly warrior/protector of Israel. Adam S. van der Woude, "Melchisedek als himmlische Erlösergestalt in den neugefundenen eschatologischen Midraschim aus Qumran Höle XI," in *כה 1940–1965* (*OtSt* 14; Leiden: Brill, 1965), 367-73 appears to have been the first to identify Melchizedek in 11Q13 with Michael. Though there are some dissenting voices, understanding Melchizedek as an angelic figure who is to perhaps be identified with Michael appears to be the dominant position at this time. For a recent affirmation of this view, see Xeravits, *King*, 191-204.

[150] Martínez, "Traditions," 100, who further notes that the "earthly origins of [Melchizedek] have not been forgotten completely and the primordial qualities of the Melchizedek of Gen 14 (royalty) and Ps 110 (the priesthood) have been preserved and transferred to the heavenly person." Paul Rainbow, "Melchizedek as a Messiah at Qumran," *BBR* 7 (1997): 184, finds no clear reference to the tradition of an angelic Melchizedek outside of Qumran before the medieval period.

[151] According to Paolo Sacchi, "Esquisse du développement du messianisme juif à la lumière du texte qumranien 11 Q Melch," in *Lebendige Forschung im Alten Testament* (ed. Otto Kaiser; Supplement to *ZAW* 100; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998), 209, "Toutes ses fonctions sont typiquement messianiques, parce qu'il s'agit de fonctions liées au salut."

scriptural Melchizedek would indicate a non-angelic exalted figure. While this does not necessarily "exclude the possibility of his (re)interpretation as an angel,"[152] it does urge caution in drawing conclusions about the early Jewish portrayal of Melchizedek or Michael based upon 11Q13. Further, while early Jewish literature does describe individuals or groups as being *like* an angel, it is not clear that there was a widespread belief that humans could *become* angels.[153] In this case, it seems likely that Melchizedek is an exalted human being who somehow takes over eschatological activates on behalf of God. The issue may be one of position: Melchizedek has a rank above the angels.[154] In any event, Melchizedek does indicate the high status of an eschatological figure who leads in battle and performs judgment on behalf of the Divine Warrior.

One final passage from Qumran is important not only for its martial description of the messiah but also for the creative use of imagery from Hebrew Scripture. The passage is in the *Rule of Blessings*, a work that probably dates from before the early part of the first century, B.C.E.[155] This work consists of different blessings composed for recitation by the

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[152] Xeravits, *King*, 201.

[153] Kevin P. Sullivan, *Wrestling with Angels: A Study of the Relationship between Angels and Humans in Ancient Jewish Literature and the New Testament* (AGJU 55; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 85-141. Note Sullivan's summary on page 41: "The evidence . . . indicates that, although there are texts in which human beings are described in angelomorphic terms, a distinction appears to be maintained between humans and angels."

[154] Sullivan, *Wrestling*, 107, considers the same issue with regard to the angelomorphic portrayal of Moses: "The problem in modern interpretation seems to be that either all types of heavenly beings are seen as angels or each type is considered separate. Thus, Moses goes to heaven, mediates between God and humans, and is therefore an angel. Or, although Moses goes to heaven, he is not explicitly called an angel, nor does he seem to be an angel; if anything, he is above that status. This may be a problem of categorization."

[155] Xeravits, *King*, 28, who notes that the copy of 1Q28b dates to 100–75 B.C.E., making this the *terminus ante quem* for the date of composition. Émile Puech, *La croyance des Esséniens en la vie future: immortalité, résurrection, vie éternelle?* (2 vols.; *EBib* New Series 21-22; Paris: Gabalda, 1993), 2:440, comments, "Par la vocabulaire, le style et le contenu, ces passages dénotent une étroite parenté avec 1QS, 1QM et 1QH et peuvent avoir un auteur commun ou du moins contemporain."

Instructor (משכיל, 1Q28b I, 1). The final blessing, 1Q28b V, 20-29, focuses on the Prince of the Congregation.

> Belonging to the Instructor, by which to bless the Prince of the Congregation whom [ ]
> [ ] And He shall renew for him the Covenant of Da[v]id,[156] so as to establish the kingdom of his people forev[er, that with righteousness he may judge the poor,]
> [and] decide with equity for [the me]ek of the earth, walk before Him blameless on all the ways of [ ]
> and establish His coven[ant as holy in] distress for those who seek H[im. May] the Lord li[ft] you up to an eternal height, a mighty tower in a wall
> securely set on high! Thus may you d[estroy peoples] by the might of your [mouth,] lay waste the earth with your rod! With the breath of your lips
> may you kill the wicked! May He give [you a spirit of coun]sel and eternal might [rest upon you], the spirit of knowledge and the fear of God. May righteousness
> be the belt [around your waist, and faithful]ness the belt around your loins. May He make your horns iron and your hoofs bronze!
> May you gore like a bu[ll. May you trample nati]ons like mud in the streets! For God has established you as a scepter
> over the rulers; bef[ore you peoples shall come and bow down, and all nat]ions shall serve you. He shall make you mighty by His holy name,
> so that you shall be as a li[on;] your [sword will devour] prey, with none to resc[ue.] Your [sw]ift steeds shall spread out upon [ ] (*DSSR* 5:431, 433, with the change noted above)

The prior blessings, in 1Q28b I–V, 20, all revolve around the scriptural imagery of Num 6:24-26.[157] The prince's blessing, however, is of a different character. Here the primary scriptural imagery is that of Isa 11:2-5, a passage either quoted or alluded to in four

[156] I adopt here the reading of דָ[ו]ִיד, "Da[v]id" proposed by Hartmut Stegemann, "Some Remarks to 1QSa, to 1QSb, and to Qumran Messianism," *RevQ* 17 (1996): 499, instead of הָ[י]דת, "the [Ass]ociation," as in *DSSR* 5:430. Stegemann, "Remarks," 499, states that Milik's reading is too large for the space available in the gap in the manuscript. Note that the *DSSR* edition does not express the initial ה as a probable reading as does J. T. Milik in D. Barthélemy and J. T. Milik, ed., *Qumran Cave 1* (DJD 1; Oxford: Clarendon, 1955), 127, on which the Hebrew text in *DSSR* is based. See here the photograph of fragment 25, line 10, in Barthélemy and Milik, *Cave 1*, plate 29.

[157] Xeravits, *King*, 205-13.

of the ten lines of extant text. The importance of Isa 11:2-5 in the blessing likely highlights the prince's role as a Davidic messianic figure.[158]

The clear theme of the blessing is divine favor for the prince in the eschatological war.[159] In lines 24-25, the prince is blessed in order to destroy by the might of his mouth, lay waste to the earth with his rod, and kill the wicked with his breath. Lines 26-29 makes generous use of animal imagery in order to instill concepts of ferocity and power. In the eschatological battle, the blessed messianic Prince appears as an unrelenting and powerful figure of offensive military might.

This blessing is important not only for its detailed description of the prince in battle, but also for the way the writer infuses the passage with scriptural imagery. Isaiah 11 was an important messianic text in a variety of early Jewish writings and it continued to retain this importance in early Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism.[160] Other scriptural imagery has messianic overtones as well, such as the Covenant of David in line 21, which was certainly drawn from 2 Sam 7:16.[161] Line 24 looks forward to the messiah's laying waste of the earth with his rod, an allusion to Ps 2:8-9.[162] The mention of imagery such as the scepter, the

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[158] Esther G. Chazon, "Hymns and Prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment* (vol. 1; ed. Peter W. Flint and James C. VanderKam; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 263. This is further emphasized if the reading of Stegemann, "Remarks," 499, discussed in the notes above, is correct.

[159] Puech, *Croyance*, 2:440-41.

[160] Darrell D. Hannah, "Isaiah within Judaism of the Second Temple Period," in *Isaiah in the New Testament* (ed. Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken; The New Testament and the Scriptures of Israel; London: T. & T. Clark, 2005), 11-22.

[161] Stegemann, "Remarks," 499.

[162] Schreiber, *Gesalbter*, 216.

nations subservient to the prince, and the lion and its prey in lines 27-29 are allusions to Gen 49:9-12. All of these texts played a role in messianic speculation in early Judaism.[163]

Further imagery comes from scriptural allusions that were not necessarily understood as messianic but could be read eschatologically. For instance, the trampling of the nations like mud in the streets in line 27 alludes to Mic 7:10.[164] While this passage could be understood as messianic, this is not attested in contemporary literature.[165] Line 26 asks for the messiah to receive horns of iron and hoofs of bronze, quoting Mic 4:13. While Mic 4:13 can be understood as eschatological, it is hardly messianic.[166] The Divine Warrior has brought the nations to "Daughter Zion" and he has given her an iron horn and bronze hoofs in order to plunder and destroy them even as the nations assumed they were coming to Zion to her.[167]

Line 23 ties together an eternal height (רום עולם) and a strong tower in a wall (בחומה מגדל עוז). The eternal height reflects the dwelling place of God from Ps 92:9 (92:8 MT), "but

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[163] Cf. Num 24:17. Xeravits, *King*, notes that Gen 49:8-12, Jacob's Blessing of Judah, has elements "that were open to an eschatological interpretation," but that "the original intention was perhaps to eulogize the Davidic dynasty in its historically present form." In early Judaism, a number of texts understand the Blessing as messianic, e.g., 4Q252 V, 1-6.

[164] J. T. Milik, "Recueil de prières liturgiques (1Q34)," in *Qumran Cave 1* (ed. Dominique Barthélemy and J. T Milik; DJD 1; Oxford: Clarendon, 1955), 136, who also notes Ps 18:42 (18:43 MT) and Zech 10:5 as parallels for the imagery of trampling an enemy like mud in the streets.

[165] A factor that may read against a messianic understanding is the fact that in the Hebrew text of Mic 7:7-10 the speaker is feminine. According to Ehud Ben Azi, *Micah* (FOTL 21B; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 174, this probably indicates that Zion is the speaker.

[166] In its received context, Philip Peter Jenson, *Obadiah, Jonah, Micah: A Theological Commentary* (Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 496; London: T. & T. Clark, 2008), 153, considers Mic 4:11-13 to look to "the far future" and notes that "the metaphorical language makes it difficult, and perhaps inappropriate, to apply the passage to any specific historical period."

[167] Rick R. Marrs, "'Back to the Future': Zion in the Book of Micah," in *David and Zion* (ed. Bernard F. Batto and Kathryn L. Roberts; Grand Rapids: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 88-89. See also Jan A. Wagenaar, *Judgement and Salvation: The Composition and Redaction of Micah 2–5* (VTSup 85; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 287, who discusses the role of Mic 4:11-13 as an example of the motif of the *Völkerkampf*, the nations gathering in Zion in opposition to the Divine Warrior, a common theme from Hebrew Scripture.

you, O Lord, are on high forever" (מרום לעלם). The strong tower in a wall reflects Prov 18:10-11.[168] Thus, 1Q28b V, 20-29 takes the messianic imagery rooted in Isa 11:2-5 and then enhances this imagery by drawing on a variety of scriptural images from a variety of contexts to paint the picture of a powerful, triumphant messiah.

One other observation on scriptural reflection in 1Q28b V, 20-29 stands out. The description of the blessing of the prince also goes to some length to cast the prince in direct opposition to the imagery of Isa 30:12-17, a passage that condemns Judah's lack of trust in the Holy One of Israel.[169] Note the following contrasts:

Isaiah 30:12-17	1Q28b V, 20-29
Judah rejects "this word," the prophetic oracle that comes in the midst of the crisis,[170] and instead trusts in and relies on oppression and deceit for protection (12).	God renews the covenant by blessing the prince; the Prince "judges in righteousness" and "decides with equity." (21)
Judah's iniquity is like "a break (פרץ—a breach) in a high wall" that bulges out, ready to collapse (13), and crashes "like a potter's vessel," leaving nothing but shards (14).	The prince is taken up to an eternal height, "like a strong tower in a high wall."[171] From his secure height he destroys, lays waste to, and kills the enemies of God (23-24).
Judah's attempt to flee the Assyrian threat on "swift steeds" only provokes the Divine Warrior, who then empowers their foe with greater swiftness (16).	The prince pursues the Divine Warrior's foes on swift steeds (29).

[168] Milik, "Recueil," 129. Note, however, that in the proverb, the strong tower (מגדל-עז) is the name of the Lord while the wicked imagines that their wealth is like a high wall (חומה נשגבה).

[169] As Willem A. M. Beuken, *Isaiah II* (trans. Brian Doyle; Historical Commentary on the Old Testament; Leuvan: Peeters, 2000), 159, notes, the "broad consensus" holds that Isa 30:8-17 directly refers to Judah's alliance with Egypt in the face of the Assyrian threat in the late eighth century B.C.E. According to Antii Laato, *'About Zion I Will Not Be Silent': The Book of Isaiah as an Ideological Unity* (ConBOT 44; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1998), 117-21, the passage is part of a continuing motif in Isa 1–39 that exhorts Judah to trust YHWH alone rather than any earthly political power.

[170] Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah: A Continental Commentary* (3 vols.; trans. Thomas H. Trapp; CC; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 2:151-52. Note Isa 30:10: "let us hear no more about the Holy One of Israel." Beuken, *Isaiah II*, 164, sees 11:12 as referring directly to the prophetic assertion of Egypt's impotency in 30:7.

[171] My translation: וכמפדל עוז בחומה נשגבה.

These contrasts lead to the conclusion that the blessing of the prince in 1Q28b V, 20-29 calls for the Divine Warrior to turn from his wrath against his own people and direct it back toward their enemies. It is nothing less than the call for the renewal of the covenant in the person of the prince. Thus, the portrayal of the Messianic Warrior in 1Q28b V, 20-29 is thoroughly scriptural, but it weaves together a variety of images in creative ways to describe the messianic figure. At the same time, it directly contrasts a passage of divine disfavor. In doing so, the picture that emerges is one of a messiah empowered for the eschatological battle, a battle that indicates the renewal and fulfillment of the divine covenant, thus bringing comfort in the midst of any present distress brought on by disobedience.

4.2.2.2. *Early Jewish Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphal Depictions of the Messianic Warrior.* Similar to what we have just witnessed with the Dead Sea Scrolls, depictions of the Messianic Warrior in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha are largely based upon descriptions of the ideal Davidic king from Hebrew Scripture. Thus, in what follows my main focus is to draw attention to ways the messiah's warrior activity was read, especially those that, like 1Q28b V, 20-29, indicate that there is more to the imagery than an allusion to Scripture or a depiction of battle.

One of the earliest clearly messianic passages in early Jewish literature is *Ps. Sol.* 17:21-46.[172] The *Psalms of Solomon* are a collection of psalms which often deal with the fate of the Jews in light of Pompey's conquest of Jerusalem in 63 B.C.E. and subsequent events,

[172] According to Rodney A. Werline, "The *Psalms of Solomon* and the Ideology of Rule," in *Conflicted Boundaries in Wisdom and Apocalypticism* (SBLSymS 35; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 77, prior to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, *Ps. Sol.* 17 was "the *locus classicus* for understanding Jewish messianic expectation."

likely dating the final collection to the late first century B.C.E.[173] *Psalm of Solomon* 17 begins and ends with the proclamation of God's kingship (17:1, 46) and emphasizes the divine establishment of the Davidic throne (17:4). However, the psalm laments the current rise of a non-Davidic throne where "sinners" (17:3) "with pomp . . . set up a monarchy because of their arrogance; they despoiled the throne of David with arrogant shouting" (17:6).[174] In response, the psalmist asserts that God will overthrow the usurpers and bring "a person who is foreign to our race" (ἄνθρωπον ἀλλότριον γένους ἡμῶν) to throw them off of the throne (17:7).[175] Thus we see again the scriptural pattern of the Divine Warrior using the enemies of his people to discipline and punish his rebellious people.

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[173] Nickelsburg, *Jewish*, 238. Unless otherwise noted, all translations of the *Psalms of Solomon* are from R. B. Wright, *OTP* 2:639-70.

[174] This is generally considered a reference to the Hasmonean Dynasty, e.g., recently, Mikael Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous: A Comparative Study of the Psalms of Solomon and Paul's Letters* (ConBNT 26; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1995), 12-13. The Hasmoneans initially ruled as High Priests—albeit with the symbolism of kingship—beginning with Simon Maccabeus (142–135 B.C.E.). According to Josephus, *Ant.* 13.301, Aristobolus (104–103 B.C.E.) was the first Hasmonean to take the title of King (διάδημα πρῶτος ἐπιτίθεται) since the Exile. Numismatic evidence suggests that his successor and brother, Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 B.C.E.) was the first to emphasize the claim. On the Hasmoneans and kingship, see Tessa Rajak, "Hasmonean Kingship and the Invention of Tradition," in *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome: Studies in Cultural and Social Interaction* (AGJU 48; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 39-60. For brief overview of the reign of Alexander Jannaeus, see Peter Schäfer, *The History of the Jews in the Greco-Roman Period* (London: Routledge, 2003), 73-74. Note, however, Benedikt Eckhardt, "PsSal 17, die Hasmonäer und der Herodompeius," *JSJ* 40 (2009): 465-492, who sees the passage as a reference to Herod.

[175] Scholarship has largely held that the foreigner is probably Pompey and that verses 8-9 refer to his conquest of Jerusalem in 63 B.C.E. See, e.g., Winninge, *Sinners*, 12-13. Note, however, the recent discussion of Eckhardt, "PsSal 17," 465-92, who suggests that the foreigner of 17.7 is Herod the Great, an argument occasionally proposed in the literature on *Ps. Sol.* 17. However, Eckhardt argues that what is known of the historical background of both Pompey and Herod is inadequate to aid in determining the referent, except to note how poorly it matches what is known of Pompey's dealings with the Hasmoneans. Instead, Eckhardt suggests a connection to the description of Herod in the *T. Mos.* 6.2 and proposes the existence of a motif of Herod the Great as the last ruler of Israel before the reign of the messiah. Eckhardt further suggests this motif is alluded to in 4Q252 and Matt 2.

Psalm of Solomon 17:11 then begins a lament over "the lawless one" (ὁ ἄνομος), who "devastated the land so that it was uninhabitable."[176] His activity reflects another prominent motif, the arrogance of the foreign ruler toward God (17:13). In the process, the lawless one led "the children of the covenant" astray as they adopted his practices (17:15). The devout fled and were "scattered over the whole earth by these lawless ones" (17:16-18). As the psalmist looks on the condition of God's people, he cries out in lament in 17:20:

> From their leader to the commonest of the people, they were in every kind of sin:
> The king was a criminal
> and the judge disobedient;
> and the people sinners.

The psalmist looks for divine intervention and begins to describe that expectation in 17:21-25. The psalmist begins by asking for God's deliverance through the sending of a Davidic messiah—in God's time—to overturn both the usurpation of the unrighteous and overreach of the Gentiles in 17:21. In *Ps. Sol.* 17:22-25, the psalmist uses scriptural imagery to take the plea for a messiah a step further, asking God for specific action. The whole of 17:21-25 gives us an example of messianic expectation in early Judaism.

> See, Lord,
> and raise up for them their king, the son of David,
> in the season you know, Lord
> to rule over Israel, your servant,

[176] Scholarship largely equates the ἄνθρωπον ἀλλότριον γένους ἡμῶν of 17:7 with ὁ ἄνομος of 17:11. See, e.g., Kenneth Atkinson, *An Intertextual Study of the Psalms of Solomon* (Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 49; Lewiston, N. Y.: Edwin Mellen, 2001), 335, "The psalmist wrote that Jerusalem's sinful non-Davidic monarchy had been removed by a man that is foreign to our race (PsSol 17.7). PsSol 17's writer also called this man the lawless one (PsSol 17.11)." Eckhardt, "PsSal 17," 475-85, proposes that the ἄνθρωπον of 17.7 is Herod the Great while ὁ ἄνομος in 17.11 is Pompey. However, Eckhardt, "PsSal 17," 477-78, concedes that in its final form, the two figures are tied together: "Dies [the work of the editor(s)] ist dann entweder zu einem Zeitpunkt geschehen, an dem die 'ingroup-language' schon nicht mehr jedem verständlich und also nicht mehr klar war, dass der Fremde und der Gesetzlose unterschiedliche Personen waren, oder—und das ist ohnehin eine wahrscheinliche Überlegung—es geschah aufgrund einer Intention, die nicht primär auf historische Exaktheit abzielte." In the end, Eckhardt sees this figure as a typological "Endtyrannen" patterned as a blended "Herodompeius" who represents "die Voraussetzung für die Ankunft des χριστός."

and arm him with strength
to crush unrighteous rulers
to purify Jerusalem from the nations who are treading over her in destruction

with wisdom and righteousness
to expel sinners from the inheritance
to wipe out the arrogance of sinners like a potter's vessel

with an iron rod
to shatter all of their power
and
to destroy lawless nations
with the word of his mouth

with his threat
to make nations flee from his presence
and
to convict sinners
with the word of their heart (my translation).

In many respects, the imagery of *Ps. Sol.* 17:21-25 is similar that of 1Q28b V, 20-29, which I discussed above. For instance, Isa 11:1-5 plays an important role, as does Gen 49:10 and Ps 2:9, and even Isa 30:14.[177] Also, rather than presenting a prophetic pronouncement, both 1Q28b and *Ps. Sol.* 17:21-25 offer messianic imagery that highlights their *expectations* for the messianic figure, and both derive their expectations from the scriptural texts. We further find that both passages describe the anticipated messianic activity with unambiguous military terminology. With regard to *Ps. Sol.* 17:21-25, the psalmist seeks a messiah who would crush, purify, expel, wipe out, shatter, destroy, cause to flee, and convict. The violence inherent in the language causes some to conclude, "The initial role of this king is undeniably violent."[178]

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[177] Atkinson, *Intertestamental*, 329-78, provides detailed investigation of the relationship of *Ps. Sol.* 17 to Hebrew Scripture.

[178] Collins, *Scepter*, 58. See also Schreiber, *Gesalbter*, 171, "Der erbetene König übt so eine militärische Funktion unter Anwendung gewaltsamer Machtmittel gegenüber seinen Gegnern aus."

Nevertheless, there are indications within 17:21-25 to perhaps temper some of the violence inherent in the imagery. First, the psalmist looks for the messiah to overturn current conditions, not only with regard to whoever is reigning in or infesting Jerusalem, but also concerning the very tenor of these conditions.[179] If the sinners of 17:5-7 have set up their own royal house, then the psalmist asks God to raise up Israel's king in 17:21.[180] If the actions of these sinners include revolting against, attacking, expelling, and seizing from the righteous, then the psalmist looks to the messiah to crush, expel, shatter, and convict on behalf of the righteous in 17:22-25. If the lawless one of 17:11-14 has devastated the land and eliminated and sent away its inhabitants, then the psalmist asks for a Davidic messiah to purge, destroy, and scatter the Gentiles in 17:22-25. While the sinners act with arrogance (17:6) and the lawless one acts on account of his magnificent wrath" (17:12; ἐν ὀργῇ κάλλους αὐτοῦ) and arrogance (17:13), and though none of the people of the covenant act with mercy or truth (17:16), the psalmist asks God to empower the messiah to act "with wisdom, with righteousness." Then, once the messiah establishes his reign of righteousness, *Ps. Sol.* 17:26-46 details the conditions expected during that reign.[181]

The second indication that tempers the description of messianic violence is that the psalmist asks for a messiah who overthrows the present order in an entirely different manner. Unlike the passages we noted from Qumran, the psalmist does not expect this messiah to lead

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[179] Werline, "Psalms," 77-81.

[180] Note also *Ps. Sol.* 17:7, where God "will cast down" (καταβαλεῖς, my translation) the sinners "by raising up" (ἐν τῷ ἐπαναστῆναι, my translation, taking the prepositional phrase instrumentally) "a man alien to our race."

[181] Schrieber, *Gesalbter*, 173, "Der zweite Schritt der Durchsetzung der messianischen Herrschaft besteht in der Sammlung, Begründung und Regierung eines heiligen Volkes, d.h. darin, dass der König über ein geheiligtes Volk Israel, aus dem das Unrecht, die Sünder und die Fremden entfernt sind, in Gerechtigkeit richtet und regiert (VV. 26-28)."

an army. Rather, the messiah is a divinely empowered individual. He does not confront his foes with the instruments of war; he confronts them with the attributes of deity: strength (ἰσχύν), wisdom (ἐν σοφίᾳ), righteousness (ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ), an iron rod (ἐν ῥάβδῳ σιδηρᾷ), the word of the messiah's mouth (ἐν λόγῳ στόματος αὐτοῦ), the messiah's threat (ἐν ἀπειλῇ αὐτοῦ), and, surprisingly, "the word of their heart" (ἐν λόγῳ καρδίας αὐτῶν).[182]

The attributes are a mix of images from prominent messianic passages in early Judaism and Divine Warrior passages. As I already noted, imagery of the Messianic Warrior of Isa 11:1-5 figures prominently, especially as we see reflected in the LXX (strength, wisdom, righteousness, rod,[183] word of his mouth[184]). There is also imagery from Ps 2:9 (rod of iron), another early Jewish messianic passage.[185] *Psalm of Solomon's* portrayal of these same images reflect Divine Warrior imagery from Pss 89, 104, and Isa 59. Finally, we have noted previously how the Divine Warrior's thundering voice causes creation (Ps 18:7-15 [18:8-16 MT]) to recoil and flee in terror, while his own people do the same at the Divine Warrior's roar (Jer 25:30).

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[182] Several commentators notice the character qualities of the messianic king of *Ps. Sol.* 17:21-25 and conclude the messiah is basically non-violent. E.g., B. L. Mack, "The Christ and Jewish Wisdom," in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; Fortress: Minneapolis, 1992), 203, who, concerning the messianic king of *Ps. Sol.* 17, states, "the desired king is cast as one who will rule, not by means of the customary instruments of power, but by his wisdom and the word of his mouth. No ordinary ruler, this king, for he will be among the people and the nations as their teacher!" See also Laato, *Star*, 281-82, who emphasizes the messiah's wisdom and righteousness. See also James H. Charlesworth, "The Concept of the Messiah in the Pseudepigrapha," *ANRW* 19.1:197-99.

[183] In the LXX of Isa 11:5, the rod is "girded with righteousness" (ἔσται δικαιοσύνῃ ἐζωσμένος τὴν ὀσφὺν).

[184] The MT of Isa 11:4 has שבט, "rod," while the LXX has λόγος, "word."

[185] Darrell D. Hannah, "Isaiah," 15, calls *Ps. Sol.* 17:21-25 a "catena of allusions to Isa. 11:1-5 sprinkled with a few allusions to Psa. 2:8-9."

The one item of the Messianic Warrior's arsenal that does not readily arise from messianic or Divine Warrior passages, the condemning nature of the sinners' own thoughts (*Ps. Sol.* 17:25), reflects a common scriptural motif of YHWH turning a sinner's sin back upon the sinner. For instance, in Jer 2:19, it is Israel's own wickedness and apostasy that condemns them.

> Your wickedness will punish you,
> and your apostasies will convict (MT: יכח; LXX: ἐλέγχω) you.
> Know and see that it is evil and bitter
> for you to forsake the LORD your God;
> the fear of me is not in you,
> says the Lord GOD of hosts.

The thoughts of the sinners also appear in Ezek 6:8-10, where God promises to scatter rebellious Israel among the nations, from where they will realize the depth of their sin and mourn (κόψονται πρόσωπα αὐτῶν, LXX, "they will beat their faces").[186] In *Ps. Sol.* 17:25, the foundation of the sinners' sin, the arrogance that arose from the thoughts of their hearts in 17:6, provides the sinners' condemnation.[187]

The third and final item that cautions the taking of the violence of the messiah at face value is the poetic structure of the Greek text of *Ps. Sol.* 17:21-25. Here we discern some important relationships between what the psalmist hopes the messiah will do and how the psalmist expects the messiah will accomplish these things. Below I have structured the

[186] See also Ezek 20:30-38, which has considerable imagery and vocabulary in common with *Ps. Sol.* 17:22-25 but does not focus on the hearts, the thinking, of the sinners.

[187] Schreiber, *Gesalbter*, 173, "Die Konkretisierung der Strafe mittels des durch ἐν eingeleiteten Präpositionalausdrucks enthält diverse, korrelierte Konnotationen. So kann an den Strafort gedacht werden, d.h. die Züchtigung trifft die Sünder im innersten Wesen; damit hängt natürlich die Ursache der Strafe im von Gott abgekehrten Wesen der Sünder zusammen; überdies wird der Sinn der Strafe deutlich, die den inneren Grund der Sündhaftigkeit zunichte macht; ob als Resultat die Umkehrmöglichkeit oder die völlige Vernichtung der Sünder angezielt ist, bleibt offen."

Greek text to highlight these relationships, a structure that also guides my translation of 17:21-25 above.

Ἴδε, κύριε
καὶ ἀνάστησον αὐτοις τὸν βασιλέα αὐτῶν
υἱὸν Δαυίδ εἰς τὸν καιρόν ὃν ἴδες σύ ὁ θεός
τοῦ βασιλεῦσαι ἐπὶ Ἰσραὴλ παῖδά σου

καὶ ὑπόζωσον αὐτὸν ἰσχύν
τοῦ θραῦσαι ἄρχοντας ἀδίκους
καθάρισαι Ἱεροθσαλὴμ ἀπὸ ἐθνῶν καταπατούντων ἐν ἀπωλείᾳ

ἐν σοφίᾳ ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ
ἐξῶσαι ἁμαρτωλοὺς ἀπὸ κληρονομίας
ἐκτρῖψαι ὑπερηφανίαν ἁμαρτωλοῦ ὡς σκεύη κεραμέως

ἐν ῥάβδῳ σιδηρᾷ
σθντρῖψαι πᾶσαν ὑπόστασιν αὐτῶν
ὀλοθρεῦσαι ἔθνη παράνομα
ἐν λόγῳ στόματος αὐτοῦ

ἐν ἀπειλῇ αὐτοῦ
φυγεῖν ἔθνη ἀπὸ προσώποθ αὐτοῦ
καὶ
ἐλέγξαι ἁμαρτωλοὺς
ἐν λόγῳ καρδίας αὐτῶν.[188]

In *Ps. Sol.* 17:21-22, we see two finite verbs, both aorist imperatives (ἀνάστησον, ὑπόζωσον) followed by articular aorist infinitives (ἀνάστησον: τοῦ βασιλεῦσαι; ὑπόζωσον: τοῦ

[188] For the critical text of *Ps. Sol.* 17:22-25, I follow the text of Robert B. Wright, *The Psalms of Solomon: A Critical Edition of the Greek Text* (Jewish and Christian Texts in Contexts and Related Studies 1; London: T. & T. Clark, 2007), 188, with one exception: the reading of καθάρισαι in verse 22. Wright offers the reading of the manuscript evidence, καθάρισον. However, the finite verb simply does not make sense in this context, as even Wright, ibid, 189, appears to concede in his translation. Thus, I follow the emendation to καθάρισαι suggested by Oscar Leopold von Gebhardt, *ΨΑΛΜΟΙ ΣΟΛΟΩΝΤΟΣ: Die Psalmen Salmo's zum ersten Male mit Benutzung der Athoshandscriften und des Codex Casantensis* (TUGAL 13, part 2; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1895), 131. Wright, *Psalms*, 38-39, considers Gebhart's critical edition to have "reduced prior [critical] editions to historical curiosities, and his text has been the basic text of reference for virtually all subsequent analyses of the *Psalms of Solomon*." For the emendation of καθάρισαι, Gebhardt, without further comment, indicates that he follows P. Edward Ephraem Geiger, *Der Psalter Salomo's herausgegeben und erklärt* (Augsburg: J. Wolff, 1871), 93, who offers the emendation without explanation, simply stating, "Statt καθάρισαι bieten beide Codd. und alle Ausgaben καθάρισον."

θραῦσαι and καθάρισαι, taking καθάρισαι as governed by τοῦ in the preceding phrase). This gives us a summary of what the psalmist wants God to do: to raise up a king and to arm the king with strength. The infinitives provide the purpose for raising and arming the king: to rule over Israel and to crush the unrighteous and purge Jerusalem of the nations.

Verse 22 gives us the familiar image of a messianic warrior who comes armed with strength (ἰσχύν)[189] to defeat the foes of the righteous. Specifically, the king's divinely endowed strength becomes the means by which the messiah accomplishes his purpose of destroying and crushing. The military imagery of verse 22 is clear; the psalmist seeks a messianic warrior. Further, the verb, ὑποζώννυμι, hints at both the foundation of the king's strength and adds to its militaristic tenor. This word, which generally carries the sense of "to undergird," is not common.[190] When we do see it in military contexts, it often carries the sense of being dressed and/or armed for battle, sometimes completely or in general,

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[189] Though the dative ἰσχύϊ might be expected here, or even ἐν ἰσχύϊ, in light of 17:23-25, according to Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* (Biblical Languages, Greek 2; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 89, αὐτὸν ἰσχύν is an example of a double accusative, "where the quality or attribute of one accusative is given to the other." In this case, "the primary object of the verb . . . is a pronoun." See also Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 189, fn. 50, who labels such accusatives the "cognate accusative," which is "the thing in a person-thing double accusative." However, there is also a lexical consideration. Albrecht Oepke, "ζώννυμι (ζωννύω), διαζώννυμι, περιζώννυμι (περιζωννύω), ζώνη-," *TDNT* 5:304, notes that in the LXX, ζώννυμι and its cognates often indicate "what is put on" with the accusative case, though at times this is indicated by the dative case, sometimes "in Hebraic fashion with the instrumental ἐν." Oepke does not specifically discuss ὑποζώννυμι. See also Robert Helbing, *Die Kasussyntax der Verba bei den Septuaginta: Ein Beitrag zur Hebraismenfrage und zur Syntax der Κοινή* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1928), 47-48, who only discusses ζώννυμι and περιζώννυμι.

[190] "Ὑποζώννυμι," *LSJ*, 1181. A search of the Greek materials in TLG database yields 330 instances of ὑποζώννυμι, which is used rarely before the third century B.C.E. and appears most often from the first century B.C.E. onwards. A considerable number of the examples are in medical contexts.

sometimes with regard to specific weaponry.[191] In *Ps. Sol*. 17:22, then, it seems best to render ὑποζώννυμι with the sense of "arm."

Following the basic request for the sending of a Messianic Warrior in messianic military in 17:22, verses 23-25 expand the description through the same pattern, as each clause indicates the manner of the divine armor and the purpose for its endowment.[192] However, there is a structural change. Now the translator uses the preposition ἐν to indicate means or manner. Along with each prepositional phrase, we see anarthrous infinitives to indicate purpose. The change in structure strengthens the suggestion that 17:23-25 serves to amplify 17:22. With 17:22 providing the basic prayer of the psalmist, in 17:23-25, ἐν + its object highlights the means by which the Messianic Warrior fulfills 17:22, and the anarthrous infinitives indicate the purpose for which the Warrior employs the various means. In other words, *Ps. Sol.* 17:23-25 provides the specific examples of what the messiah's divine strength will accomplish in the crushing of the unrighteous and purging Jerusalem of the trampling nations.

This leads to a consideration of exactly what the psalmist wants the messianic warrior to accomplish in *Ps. Sol.* 17:21-25. The psalmist calls for God to arm the messianic warrior for two purposes in 17:22. First, he is to use his strength to "destroy the unrighteous rulers."

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[191] Examples indicating that the subject is ready for battle or is armed include Appian *Bell. Civ.* 3.7.45; and Josephus, *Ant.* 19.55, 85; Philo, *Flaccus*, 113; and Heraclitus, *Homeric Problems*, 7.12. At times, the armor or weaponry is concealed. Examples of this include Appian, *Hist. Rom.* 7.6.32; *Bell. Civ.* 5.8.73; Josephus, *Life*, 293; and Plutarch, *Ti. C. Gracch.* 15.1. The hidden nature of the armor or weapon is clear from the context, not from the sense of ὑποζώννυμι. Josephus, *J. W.* 2.275 also uses ὑποζώννυμι in the sense of the supporting brigands who were, figuratively, the weapons of the worthless ones (τῶν πονηρῶν) who terrorized the public after bribing Festus Albinus (2.274). See also Plutarch, *Rom.* 26.2, who stated that after Romulus had consolidated power, he had some men ὑπεζωσμένοι δ' ἱμάντας (who were girt with thongs; LCL) travel with him in case Romulus would order anyone to be bound. In many cases where ὑποζώννυμι refers to being armed with particular weaponry, that weapon is a sword.

[192] On messianic attributes as weaponry in *Ps. Sol.* 17:21-25, see Schreiber, *Gesalbter*, 170.

These unrighteous rulers are certainly the sinners of 17:5-6. Second, he is to use his strength "to purge Jerusalem of the nations." This is clearly a reference to the lawless one who overstepped his bounds in 17:11-14. Verses 23-25 then detail the psalmist's understanding of the destruction of the unrighteous and the purging of the nations from Jerusalem.

The psalmist invokes most of his invective toward the destruction of the unrighteous in *Ps. Sol.* 17:23-25. Four specific actions spell out the destruction of the unrighteous: the messiah will use his wisdom and righteousness to 1) drive the sinners (=unrighteous) out of their inheritance and 2) smash their arrogance (17:23), use an iron rod in 3) to "shatter all of [the sinners'] power" (17:24a; ὑπόστασιν),[193] and use the sinners' own consciences to 4) dismiss them from his presence (17:25b). Thus, with regard to the apostate, unrighteous sinners, their destruction is not the destruction of physical battle but of that of the imposition of divinely appointed rule. The very imposition of messianic rule indicates consequences for the sinners' revolt against divine order.

In this sense, their destruction is juridical and carries within it the response to the Messianic Warrior's presence. The sinners are driven from the inheritance they obtained through stealth, the arrogance by which they set up their rule is smashed, their rule itself is shattered, and their hearts are such that they flee from the messiah's presence. This is not, then, the imagery of messianic war, but the imagery of the imposition and subsequent presence of divine order mediated through the Messianic Warrior. Thus, *Ps. Sol.* 17:21-25 is not a picture of a bloodthirsty Messianic Warrior whom the psalmist calls forth for revenge.

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[193] Helmut Köster, "ὑπόστασις," *TDNT* 8:572-84, notes the difficulty in determining the sense of ὑπόστασις in any context. For *Ps. Sol.* 17:25, Wright renders it "substance" in the *OTP* (Wright, *OTP* 2:667), while in his later critical edition he renders it "resources." In the latter he also notes the possibility of "substance," "foundation," or "confidence" in a footnote (Wright, *Psalms*, 189). Köster, "ὑπόστασις," *TDNT* 8:583, suggests "basis," "power," "plan," or "design." Here I find the imagery of the iron rod from Ps 2:9, a symbol of authority, strongly suggestive in this regard. Thus, I prefer the idea "power."

Rather, the Warrior's presence restores divine order. This restoration carries consequences to those who have sought to seek a different kind of order with the help of the nations, but it is not a simplistic hope for bloody revenge on apostates.

The purging of Jerusalem from the nations involves two specific actions of purification: the destruction of the nations by the word of the messiah in 17:24 and the scattering of nations with the messiah's threat in 17:25. The word of the messiah's mouth in 17:24 produces the destruction of the nations akin to the demolishing of the sinners.[194] Scriptural precedent also indicates the ominous nature of the divine threat, especially as we see it in LXX of Hab 3:12 (LXX):

> with a threat you will diminish the earth
> and in wrath you will destroy nations (my translation).[195]

In *Ps. Sol.* 17, the pronouncements of the Messianic Warrior have a purifying effect. The Messianic Warrior speaks to the ἔθνη παράνομα, "law-breaking nations," and it leads to their destruction. This language has a strong forensic sense to it. In fact, the messianic threat forces the nations to flee from his presence. In any event, the psalmist does not view the imposition of messianic rule as the annihilation of the enemy (cf. 18:3) as much as a time when Jerusalem is made pure by the presence and pronouncement of the Messianic Warrior.

Other early Jewish texts understand the divine/messianic utterance in a juridical sense as well. We see this, for example, in *4 Ezra* 13, a passage with imagery similar to that of *Ps. Sol.* 17.[196] Ezra's vision of the eschatological battle begins with a great wind stirring the sea

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[194] Schreiber, *Gesalbter*, 171, the rod and the word are "in drastischer Parallelisierung" in 17:24.

[195] ἐν ἀπειλῇ ὀλιγώσεις γῆν
καὶ ἐν θυμῷ κατάξεις ἔθνη

[196] Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 386.

and drawing out "something like the figure of a man" from "the heart of the sea" (*4 Ezra* 13:3). The imagery reflects Dan 7, though *4 Ezra* 13 reverses it; the sea that spawned the beasts that opposed the Divine Warrior of Dan 7 now gives rise to the messianic figure who defeats the divine enemies.[197] The man rides the clouds, indicating his divine origin, and he immediately displays the features of the Divine Warrior, as all who see him tremble (13:4).[198] The man's voice, like the messiah of *Ps. Sol.* 17 and Hebrew Scripture, also has a profound effect in *4 Ezra* 13:4.

> Whenever his voice issued from his mouth, all who heard his voice melted as wax melts when it feels the fire.

Despite the effect of the man's voice, "an innumerable multitude of people" throughout the whole earth actually gathered as an army to fight the man, who had "carved out for himself a great mountain and flew to it" (13:5-7). Yet there is no battle. The man simply opens his mouth and the opposing army burns to ashes as the army in *4 Ezra* 13:9-11.

> When he saw the onrush of the approaching multitude, he neither lifted his hand nor held a spear or any weapon of war; but I saw only how he sent forth from his mouth something like a stream of fire, and from his lips a flaming breath, and from his tongue he shot forth a storm of sparks. All these were mingled together, the stream of fire and the flaming breath and the great storm, and fell on the onrushing multitude that was prepared to fight, and burned up all of them, so that suddenly nothing was seen of the innumerable multitude but only the dust of ashes and the smell of smoke.

Ezra is emphatic that the man carries no weapon and does not even bother to strike a threatening pose;[199] he simply opens his mouth. The manner of attack is similar to that of the Shoot of Jesse of Isa 11:5 (MT) and the Divine Warrior of Isa 33:27-28 (MT) in that what proceeds from the man's mouth, breath, and lips carries a destructive force and, like the

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[197] Gregory K. Beale, "The Problem of the Man from the Sea in IV Ezra 13 and Its Relation to the Messianic Concept in John's Apocalypse," *NovT* 25 (1983): 182-88.

[198] Longenecker, *2 Esdras*, 79.

[199] Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 386. Cf. *Ps. Sol.* 17:37-38.

Divine Warrior of Isa 33, whose mouth, breath, and lips issue fiery destruction. The victory is such that nothing remained but "the dust of ashes and the smell of smoke." Following this, the man descends from his mountain and initiates the new order, calling "another multitude that was peaceable" to himself (*4 Ezra* 13:12-13a).

Though there is no battle, the language is gruesome in its violent character. However, there is more to the passage than simply the depiction of the wholesale slaughter of divine enemies. As in previous visions, Ezra is confused and seeks understanding and his interpreting angel (the angel Uriel, cf. 4:1) comes with an explanation (13:13b-20). Uriel makes a number of key points that guide Ezra—and the reader—in understanding the vision.

First, the angel tells Ezra that the man is a messianic figure, the one who "who will himself deliver [the Most High's] creation; and he will direct those who are left" (13:26). Then, though the man's voice caused dread in 13:4, it nevertheless resulted in the gathering of a multitude for war. Uriel tells Ezra that the man's voice actually draws the nations to the messiah *in rebellion*.

> When all the nations hear his voice, all the nations shall leave their own lands and the warfare that they have against one another; and an innumerable multitude shall be gathered together, as you saw, wishing to come and conquer him (13:33-34).

The nations gather with the intent of overthrowing the messiah (*4 Ezra* 13:34-36) and their coming to him ensures that Mt. Zion becomes the focus of eschatological events. They even cease their battles with one another in order to gather against the Messianic Warrior.

In the vision, the man opens his mouth and " something like a stream of fire," "flaming breath," and "a storm of sparks" annihilates those gathered (13:9-11). Uriel's interpretation recasts this imagery of the fiery death of the man's opponents.

> Then my Son,[200] will reprove the assembled nations for their ungodliness (this was symbolized by the storm), and will reproach them to their face with their evil thoughts and the torments with which they are to be tortured (which were symbolized by the flames), and will destroy them without effort by means of the law (which was symbolized by the fire) (13:37-38).

The first item to notice is the manner in which Uriel's explanation functions as an interpretation of Ps 2.

Psalm 2	4 Ezra 13:33-38
The nations conspire and set themselves against YHWH's anointed (1-3).	The nations desire to come and conquer the messiah (33-34).
YHWH mocks his enemies (4).	He reproaches the nations "to their face" (38).
YHWH speaks to the assembled nations in wrath (5).	The messiah speaks with fiery fury (37-38).
YHWH sets his king on Zion, his holy mountain (6).	The messiah stands on Zion, "the mountain carved out without hands" (35-36).
YHWH bestows the title of "my son" upon the king (7).	The Messiah is called "my son" (37).
YHWH promises that the king will break the nations and dash them in pieces (9).	The messiah promises the nations torments and delivers destruction (38).

This connection to Ps 2 demonstrates a messiah who not only takes on the mantle of a Davidic king, but also stands as the divinely appointed judge of the nations; both figures

[200] On the messianic title "Son of God" and its variations, which appear in *4 Ezra* 7:28, 29; 13:32, 37, 52; and 14:9, see Stone, *4 Ezra*, 207-08, who considers it likely that the Latin *filius* translates the Greek παῖς which, in turn, probably translates the Hebrew עבד, a conclusion he bases on the tendencies of Christian translators and the probable sources for the readings—or lack thereof—in other versions. Michael A. Knibb, in R. J. Coggins and Michael A. Knibb, *1 and 2 Esdras* (Cambridge Bible Commentary; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 169, notes that the other possibility here, that *filius* translates ὑιός—which may translate בן—could reflect a messianic interpretation of Ps 2:7. While the evidence for the early Jewish understanding of Ps 2 as messianic is overwhelming, Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 208, considers the evidence for Ps 2:7 as messianic is too late to indicate anything for the first century C.E. Nevertheless, Hogan, *Theologies*, 195-98, suggests that the reliance on Ps 2, similar language in 4Q 246, and a better fit in the context of *4 Ezra* indicates, "While the textual evidence may favor 'my servant' as the original reading, it is not conclusive (as Stone suggests), and the exegetical background strongly favors 'my son.'"

respond directly to the rebellion of the nations. The interpretation in *4 Ezra* 13 also heightens the juridical role of the imagery by the way the divine interpreter explains Ezra's vision.[201] Thus, Ezra discovers that his vision is not one of eschatological war; instead, he learns that the martial imagery of his vision depicts the eschatological judgment of the nations.

The legal context derives from the language of Uriel's interpretation. The interpreter describes the man-like figure in the vision as, "my Son," who *arguet*, "will reprove," *inproperabit*, "will reproach," and *perdet*, "will destroy" the nations. The terms draw together a legal pronouncement and indicate a charge against the nations that carries a sentence of destruction.[202]. First, the Latin term *arguo* often translates the Greek word ἐλέγχω, which, in the LXX, often translates יכח.[203] In eschatological contexts, both *arguo*

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[201] Michael E. Stone, "The Messiah in 4 Ezra," in *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christain Era* (ed. Jacob Neusner, William Scott Green, and Ernest S. Frerichs; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 213-14, who notes that in the initial vision, the description of the man consists of "biblical descriptions of epiphanies of God" such as the winds, the cloud chariot, fire, and the melting of enemies, but the only one of these features that appears in the interpretation is fire, which is "explicitly interpreted in legal terms."

[202] On the sense of יכח, see G. Mayer, "תוכחה, תוכחת, יכח" *TDOT* 6:64-71, who defines the word with the sense of a forensic charge or appeal, or with the sense of a pedagogical rebuke. On the sense of ἐλέγχω, see Friedrich Büchsel, "ἐλέγχω," *TDNT* 2:473-75, who notes that in the LXX, "the meaning and use of ἐλέγχω is largely determined by [יכח]" and sees it in the LXX to denote "the disciplining and educating of man by God as a result of his judicial activity." My own investigation further demonstrates the strong forensic component of *arguo*. In the thirty-eight instances of *arguo* in the Vulgate Old Testament, twenty-four appear in clear juridical contexts. Thirteen others appear in clear pedagogical contexts, however, seven of these are in Proverbs. Further, in the Vulgate Old Testament, *arguo* translates יכח twenty-eight times. In comparing these twenty-eight examples with the LXX, the Greek version always translates יכח with ἐλέγχω (the LXX does not translate יכח at all in three instances, all of which are forensic passages). Finally, in one example, Prov 18:17, the Vulgate uses *arguo* and the LXX uses ἐλέγχω to translate חקר (*DCH* 3:304-05, "search [out], explore, investigate; *HALOT* 1:347-48, "explore, search out" in cross-examination).

[203] According to Theodore A. Bergren, *A Latin-Greek Index of the Vulgate of the New Testament based on Alfred Schmoller's Handkonkordanz zum griechischen Neuen Testament* (SBLRBS 26; Atlanta: Scholars, 1991), 14-15, in the New Testament, the Vulgate uses *arguo* to translate ἐλέγχω and ἐγκαλέω. Alfred Schmoller, *Handkonkordanz zum griechischen Neuen Testament* (15th ed.; Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1973), 139, lists the Vulgate translating ἐλέγχω with *arguo* nine times and ἐγκαλέω with *arguo* twice.

and ἐλέγχω carry a sense of condemnation;[204] the fact of the reproof of the messianic figure indicates the guilt of the nations and leads to the ultimate, just end.

Second, the Latin *inpropero* can also indicate a forensic setting relating to divine judgment. The Vulgate sometimes uses *inpropero* to translate the word ὀνειδίζω in the New Testament.[205] In the LXX, ὀνειδίζω regularly translates חרף.[206] This can also have a forensic sense with regard to divine judgment. We see this, for example, in Matt 11:20, where ὀνειδίζω is used of Jesus' pronouncements of woe on Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum.[207]

> Then [Jesus] began to reproach (ὀνειδίζειν) the cities in which most of his deeds of power had been done, because they did not repent.[208]

Third, ultimate destruction (*perdo*) of the nations does not come on the battlefield but in the very expression of the Law. The Law becomes the standard that condemns the nations' guilt, a guilt manifested by their ungodliness and evil thoughts.[209] Ezra's interpreter does not further explain either the nations' torments or destruction; he simply makes clear to

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[204] Paul Volz, *Die Eschatologie der jüdischen Gemeinde im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter, nach den Quellen der rabbinischen, apokalyptischen und apokryphen Literatur* (vol. 2 of *Jüdische Eschatologie von Daniel bis Akiba*; Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1966; repr., Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1934), 302, who states, "Dieses arguere, ἐλέγχειν, ist eine 'vernichtende' Überführung im eigentlichen Sinne des Wortes." See also Mayer, "יכח," 68, who notes that when YHWH is the subject of יכח, "Since God does not hold court when the outcome is unknown, the meaning of *ykḥ* often moves in the direction of 'punish.'"

[205] Schmoller, *Handkonkordanz*, 362, the Vulgate translates three of the eleven New Testament examples of ὀνειδίζω with *inpropero* (*impropero*) (Matt 27:44; Rom 15:3; Jas 1:5). Bergren, *Latin-Greek*, 76, has the Vulgate New Testament only using *inpropero* (*impropero*) for ὀνειδίζω.

[206] E. Kutsch, "חרף II," *TDOT* 5:215, notes that the Vulgate Old Testament more often uses the synonymous *exprobro* for חרף. The Vulgate does use *inpropero* in for חרף in Ps 74:10, 18 (Ps 73:10, 18, MT, LXX), where it refers to the taunts of the psalmist's enemies.

[207] See also the stronger statement in Ps 2:4, a psalm generally taken as messianic in early Judaism: "He who sits in the heavens laughs (שחק, ἐκγελάω, *inrideo*); the LORD has them in derision (לעג, ἐκμυκτηρίζω, *subsanno*). YHWH also laughs at and mocks the nations in Ps 59:8 (59:9 MT; 58:9 LXX, Vulgate), while in Ps 37:13 (36:13 LXX, Vulgate), he laughs at the unrighteous.

[208] The Vulgate uses *exprobro* here.

[209] Hogan, *Theologies*, 192.

Ezra that the nations' guilt will self-manifest and lead to their end. Thus, the destruction is not the outcome of battle, but the forensic penalty for rebellion.

A final note is how the three fiery similes refer directly to the plight of the nations rather than to the activity, so to speak, of the messianic warrior. What spews from the mouth of the messianic figure is not a supernatural weapon but the actual guilt of the nations. The fiery storm is the nations' impieties, the flames combine the nations' evil thoughts and their resulting torture, and, finally, the fire is the Law that destroys.

Thus, the interpretation of Ezra's vision casts the vision as eschatological judgment, not eschatological battle. Whether or not the nations have gathered for war in opposition to the messianic figure, the following aftermath is merely the imagery of war. In the end, there is no war, only the messianic figure's fiery spewing of the nations' guilty deeds and thoughts, along with the standard of the Law that brings their destruction. Once again, the pattern is one of the Messianic Warrior turning an enemy's own actions back upon the enemy. The nations gather to conquer the messiah; this very act leads to their destruction.

The forensic nature of the emissions of the divine/messianic mouth is a prominent feature in early Jewish literature. We also see it in Wis 18:14-16, where the "all-powerful" divine word leapt from God's throne and carried "the sharp sword of [God's] authentic command and stood and filled all things with death" depicts the tenth plague of the exodus, the slaying of the first-born. The sage portrays the event as the just response to the Egyptians' treatment of God's people (18:5-7). The idea of divine justice in the slaying of the firstborn appears again in 18:17-19, as the victims have dreams that announce why they are dying. Another example appears in the *Epistle of Enoch* in *1 En.* 102:1-2, where the Divine Warrior "hurls out the terror of fire" and "flings his word" against sinners in

eschatological justice. The parallelism couples fire and the divine word as identical means of the sinners' destruction.[210] The divine response is juridical: the sinners are liable for their actions and what is in their hearts (104:9). Finally, the idea of the divine word revealing thoughts as well as actions appears as a warning in Heb 4:12, looking forward to a final rendering in verse 13.[211]

> Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account.[212]

4.2.2.3. *Summary of the Messianic Warrior.* In the Dead Sea Scrolls, 4Q285 demonstrated the pattern of the Messianic Warrior as the ideal Davidic king. In this regard, he leads troops in the eschatological battle, where he defeats the enemy and pronounces their judgment. Another text, 11Q13 presents a number of interpretive difficulties but nevertheless portrays the scriptural character of Melchizedek as an exalted figure who functions in much the same way as the Messianic Warrior of 4Q285. Meanwhile, the blessing of 1Q28b V, 20-29 presents an exalted Messianic figure involved in battle, but does so by making creative use of Hebrew Scripture. The blessing's foundational passage is Isa 11:1-5, a text commonly understood as messianic. The writer of the blessing wove together images from other texts understood as messianic, as well as other texts that were not necessarily used messianically but could still be seen as eschatological. A notable feature is

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[210] Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 387.

[211] G. W. Trompf, "The Conception of God in Hebrews 4:12-13," *ST* 25 (1971): 123-32. Contra Gene R. Smillie, "'Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΩΕΟΥ' in Hebrews 4:12-13," *NovT* 46 (2004): 338-59, who sees the sword (μάχαιρα) as a surgical knife and the divine wielding of it as benevolent rather than judicial. Such an understanding fails to adequately account for the adaptation of the scriptural motif, nor does it adequately relate the fact that Christ himself "was tested," πεπειρασμένον, and the probing divine word found him "without sin."

[212] Unless otherwise noted, all translations of the New Testament are my own.

how the blessing paints the Messianic Warrior as the opposite of the portrayal of Israel in Isa 30:12-17. The blessing thus uses scriptural imagery to provide a contrast between present experience and future exaltation. What is now cursed will once again be blessed, as the Messianic Warrior receives the divine blessing, the renewal of the covenant, and then defeats the enemies of God's people.

The apocryphal *Ps. Sol.* 17:21-25 made use of scriptural imagery in a similar fashion to 1Q28bV, 20-29, even drawing on some of the same passages, such as Isa 11:1-5. The psalmist called on God to send the Messianic Warrior to initiate the destruction of the apostates among God's people and the nations that had polluted the purity of Jerusalem. The language of violence in the passage is tempered, however, when it is clear what the psalmist wanted the Messianic Warrior to accomplish and how the psalmist wanted the Warrior to accomplish it. In the end, the passage is not one where the psalmist seeks revenge on an enemy. Rather, the psalmist desires the Messianic Warrior to impose divine order and purify Jerusalem. By very presence of the Messianic Warrior, the sins of the sinners and the nations come back upon them and they flee from the threat of the Warrior or are condemned by their own consciences.

Ezra's vision in *4 Ezra* 13 also redirects the violent imagery of the vision. While in the vision itself, the one like a man destroys the gathered opponents without battle; they are destroyed by the fiery proceeds of the man's mouth. Once again, the vision alludes to numerous passages of Scripture, including Isa 11:1-5. In the explanation the angel Uriel gives to Ezra, an abundance of legal language indicates that the destruction is actually the judgment of the nations for their attempt to overthrow the Messianic Warrior. Uriel also describes the weaponry of the Messianic Warrior—the fiery proceeds of his mouth—as the

nations bringing their own wickedness and rebellion back upon themselves. In a number of early Jewish texts that use imagery of the proceeds of the Divine or Messianic Warrior's mouth, the forensic nature of the imagery is pronounced.

4.2.3 *Temporal Allies of the Divine Warrior: Martyrdom*

We have already noticed a number of early Jewish texts that make use of the Holy War motif to indicate divine assistance in temporal battles. Texts such as 1 and 2 Maccabees use Holy War symbolism to assert divine assistance in temporal battles against earthly foes. Likewise, the *War Scroll* (1QM) depicts Holy War as part of the final eschatological battle. Another motif that has its basis in the concept of Holy War started to develop in early Judaism as well. Persecution and martyrdom became a way that the faithful could battle as holy warriors against the enemies of God. In other words, the faithful, through their endurance of unjust suffering, participate in the divine battle against their enemies. The earliest expressions of suffering and martyrdom as an aspect of Holy War appear in 2 Maccabees and 4 Maccabees, texts that relate the Jewish defeat of Antiochus IV.[213]

In 2 Maccabees, the martyrdoms of Eleazar the Scribe and the seven brothers and their mother play a key role as the means by which God turns from his punishment of Israel

[213] Warren J. Heard, "The Maccabean Martyrs' Contribution to Holy War," *EvQ* 58 (1986): 291. He notes two other texts, the book of Daniel and the *Testament of Moses*, where righteous suffering plays an important role but neither text presents suffering and martyrdom as victorious battle. See here Robert Doran, "The Martyr: A Synoptic View of the Mother and Her Sons," in *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism: Profiles and Paradigms* (ed. John J. Collins and George W. E. Nickelsburg; SBLSCS 12; Chico, Calif.: Scholars, 1980), 189, who sees Dan 3 and the related tale in Dan 6 as examples of "court conflict stories where a supernatural helper intervenes" as opposed to adaptations of the Holy War motif where the sufferers actually die. Doran also notes that in *T. Mos.* 9, the manner of how Taxo and his sons die is not explicit—it appears to be suicide or non-resistance to attacker—and is not the active resistance of the martyrs in 2 Maccabees. These martyrs are forced to testify before Antiochus IV Epiphanes and they choose to testify in a manner that brings death.

to avenging Israel.[214] These martyrdoms share elements of the Greco-Roman concept of the "noble death," an important background to Jewish and Christian concepts of martyrdom.[215] As was typical, the motif underwent significant adaptations in Jewish contexts. A measure of the degree of adaptation is seen by the portrayal of non-Jewish assertions that Jewish martyrdoms were senseless (2 Macc 6:29) because they so often flaunted Greco-Roman ideas of the proper means of death, especially with regard to the physical torment and disfigurement that the Jewish martyr willingly accepted.[216]

A second distinction is that the Jewish outlook on suffering and martyrdom are wedded into a Deuteronomic outlook on suffering. Deuteronomic theology, as we have seen, revolves around a paradigm of the sin of Israel leading to divine punishment often enacted through a hostile foreigner that, in turn, leads to Israel's repentance and culminates in divine deliverance.[217] Second Maccabees accepts this basic outlook but reinterprets it in a

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[214] Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 272-273, who contrasts this with 1 Maccabees, where martyrdom "is part of the problem" and divine favor comes as a result of Judas' heroism (1 Macc 3:8). In 2 Maccabees, the martyrs are the solution to the problem.

[215] L. Arik Greenberg, "My Share of God's Reward": Exploring the Roles and Formulations of the Afterlife in Early Christian Martyrdom (Studies in Biblical Literature 121; New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 59-60 sees three primary components to the "noble death": 1) death as a volitional choice, 2) death as obedience to God, virtue, or the state, and 3) death as vicarious, benefiting humanity in some way. Greenberg states the concept of noble death as he has defined it "spans the gamut of the Greco-Roman, Jewish, and Christian martyrdoms." Greenberg has simplified and broadened the scope of definitions of David Seely, *The Noble Death: Graeco-Roman Martyrology and Paul's Concept of Salvation* (JSNTSup 28; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 13, and Jan Willem van Henten and Friedrich Avemarie, *Martyrdom and Noble Death: Selected Texts from Graeco-Roman, Jewish and Christian Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 2002), 3. See also Jan Willem van Henten, "Noble Death in Josephus: Just Rhetoric?" in *Making History: Josephus and Historical Method* (ed. Zuleika Rodgers; Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 110: Leiden: Brill, 2007), 195.

[216] Marie-Françoise Baslez, "The Origin of the Martyrdom Images: From the Book of Maccabees to the First Christians," in *The Books of the Maccabees: History, Theology, Ideology* (ed. Géza G. Xeravits and József Zsengellér; Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 118; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 120-22. See also Jean-Pierre Vernant, "A 'Beautiful Death' and the Disfigured Corpse in Homeric Epic," in *Mortals and Immortals: Collected Essays* (ed. Froma I. Zeitlin; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 50-74, who notes a number of factors that invalidate a noble death, including a lingering death or any disfigurement that deprive a corpse of its "wholeness, integrity, and beauty" by making it unrecognizable.

[217] Deuteronomy 28–31. See here Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 299. On how various early Jewish texts adopted or adapted the basic Deuteronomic paradigm, see George W. E. Nickelsburg, "Judgment, Life-After-

significant manner by adding martyrdom. In 2 Maccabees, Israel's suffering at the hand of Antiochus IV is God's response to their sin, making Antiochus the divinely appointed means of punishment.

> Antiochus was elated in spirit, and did not perceive that the Lord was angered for a little while because of the sins of those who lived in the city, and that this was the reason he was disregarding the holy place. But if it had not happened that they were involved in many sins, this man would have been flogged and turned back from his rash act as soon as he came forward, just as Heliodorus had been, whom King Seleucus sent to inspect the treasury (2 Macc 5:17-18; cf. 7:18; 31-34).

The change in the Deuteronomic outlook comes from how the Jews regain God's favor. Israel does not repent. Instead, her righteous remnant unjustly suffers, with the nine martyrs serving as exemplars of all those who suffer (cf. 2 Macc 7:42). Thus, it is the faithful endurance of some in the face of suffering and martyrdom that restores the nation to a place of divine favor. The speech of the seventh son in 2 Macc 7:37-38 anticipates this turn of events.

> I, like my brothers, give up body and life for the laws of our ancestors, appealing to God to show mercy soon to our nation and by trials and plagues to make you confess that he alone is God, and through me and my brothers to bring to an end the wrath of the Almighty that has justly fallen on our whole nation.

The death of the martyrs does more than restore the nation to divine favor; it incites the Divine Warrior to vengeance. Instead of the means of divine vengeance, Antiochus is now its target. He is the instrument of God's wrath because he arrogantly overstepped his bounds, which he demonstrates by unjustly killing the martyrs. The efficacy of the martyrs' blood forms the basis of the Maccabean prayer in 2 Macc 8:2-4.

> They implored the Lord to look upon the people who were oppressed by all; and to have pity on the temple that had been profaned by the godless; to have mercy on the

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Death, and Resurrection in the Apocrypha and the Non-Apocalyptic Pseudepigrapha," in *Death, Life-after-Death, Resurrection and the World-to-Come in the Judaisms of Antiquity*, (part 4 of *Judaism in Late Antiquity*; ed. Alan J. Avery-Peck and Jacob Neusner; HO sec. 1, vol. 49; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 141-62.

> city that was being destroyed and about to be leveled to the ground; to hearken to the blood that cried out to him; to remember also the lawless destruction of the innocent babies and the blasphemies committed against his name; and to show his hatred of evil.

The request in 2 Macc 8:3 for God "to hearken to the blood that cried out to him" alludes to the blood of Abel crying out to God in Gen 4:10, part of a tradition of the necessity of vengeance for spilt blood in Hebrew Scripture.[218] A more prominent allusion, given the importance of Deut 32 to 2 Macc 7, is that 2 Macc 8:3 also reflects the LXX of Deut 32:43.[219]

> Rejoice, O heavens, with him
> and let all of the sons of God worship him,
> Rejoice, O nations, with his people
> and let the angels of God prevail with him.
>
> Because of the blood of his children
> he will exact vengeance, avenge, and punish the enemies
> and on the ones who hate
> the Lord of the earth will exact vengeance and vindicate his people (Deut 32:43; my translation).

Here, as elsewhere in Hebrew Scripture, divine vengeance is the response of the Divine Warrior to injustice against his people. As Israel's King, Judge, and Warrior, he responds to injustice by repaying with justice.[220] As king, YHWH's vengeance determines justice; as judge, YHWH's vengeance pronounces justice; as warrior, YHWH's vengeance imposes justice. Peels thus defines YHWH's vengeance in light of these three roles.

> The punishing retribution of God,
> who in kingly sovereignty

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[218] John Downing, "Jesus and Martyrdom," *JTS* 14 (1963): 283.

[219] Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 302-03, 327.

[220] H. G. L. Peels, *The Vengeance of God: The Meaning of the Root NQM and the Function of NQM-Texts in the Context of Divine Revelation in the Old Testament* (OtSt 31; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 280, who concludes for Hebrew Scripture, "The vengeance of God is a manifestation of his justice. His vengeance is in no way illegitimate, but is precisely intended to bring the punishing judgment of the kingly Judge."

– faithful to his covenant –
judging and fighting
arises to defend the honour of his name,
insures the maintenance of his justice
and works for the liberation of his people.[221]

In 2 Maccabees, the death of the martyrs is able to reverse the direction of events. In response to their unjust suffering, the Divine Warrior arises to assert justice, and thus ensures the defeat of the enemies of God's people, enemies who had turned the justice of God into injustice. Second Maccabees 8:5 reflects the new situation.

> As soon as Maccabeus got his army organized, the Gentiles could not withstand him, for the wrath of the Lord had turned to mercy.

What we see implied, then, is the necessity of the martyrs in the function of Holy War in 2 Maccabees.[222] Israel could not escape divine wrath without the suffering of the martyrs, nor could she resist Antiochus without divine assistance. Since divine assistance in 2 Maccabees is the outworking of vengeance for the blood of the martyrs, Judas and his army could not succeed without the vicarious and victorious sufferings and deaths represented by Eleazer and the seven sons and their mother.

What is implied in 2 Maccabees seems explicit in 4 Maccabees, as there we find the frequent use of military imagery used to depict the same martyrs as victorious warriors.[223] In 4 Macc 7:4, Eleazar, who held out better than any besieged city, ἐνίκησεν τοὺς πολιορκοῦντας

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[221] Peels, *Vengeance*, 277 (original structure).

[222] William H. Brownlee, "From Holy War to Holy Martyrdom," in *The Quest for the Kingdom of God* (ed. H. B. Huffmon, F. A. Spina, and A. R. W. Green; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 288: "It was the heroism and zeal of the martyrs in 2 Maccabees which as an overplus of national suffering made expiation and thereby made possible the military victories of Judas . . . Implicitly, to suffer martyrdom is to engage in Holy War.

[223] According to Albert-Marie Denis, "Le Livre 4 des Machabées et autres écrits mis sous leurs noms," in *Pseudépigraphies de l'Ancien Testament* (vol. 1 of *Introduction à la littérature religieuse judéo-hellénistique*; Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 571-72, the dates proposed for the composition of 4 Maccabees run from the first century B.C.E. to the early second century C.E. However, he finds most probable option is a date in the first century C.E., prior to 50. He suggests the place of origin as Antioch.

διὰ τὸν ὑπερασπίζοντα τῆς εὐσεβείας λογισμόν, "conquered the besiegers through the shielding reverent reason." In 9:18, the oldest son warns the tyrant that μόνοι παῖδες Εβραίων ὑπὲρ ἀρετῆς εἰσιν ἀνίκητοι, "only the children of the Hebrews are invincible in defense of virtue" and, in 9:23-24, he urges his brothers μή μου τὸν ἀγῶνα λειποτακτήσητε, "you should not desert my position in the struggle," and to ἱερὰν καὶ εὐγενῆ στρατείαν στρατεύσασθε περὶ τῆς εὐσεβείας, "wage the sacred and noble war of reverence." In 13:16, the seven brothers encourage one another by saying καθοπλισώμεθα τοιγαροῦν τὴν τοῦ θείου λογισμοῦ παθοκρατείαν, "let us be fully armed with the self-control of divine reason." In 16:14, the writer praises the mother as a soldier: ὦ μῆτερ δι' εὐσέβειαν θεοῦ στρατιῶτι πρεσβῦτι καὶ γύναι, "O mother! Soldier through the reverence of God! Old woman!" Finally, in 17:23-24, Antiochus recognizes the military value of the nine martyrs' sacrifice, as he makes those he martyred examples to his soldiers because of the τὴν ἀνδρείαν αὐτῶν τῆς ἀρετῆς, "courage of their virtue" and αὐτῶν ὑπομονὴν, "their endurance." The story inspires Antiochus' soldiers, making them γενναίους καὶ ἀνδρείους, "noble and courageous." The tyrant thus uses the memories of those he martyred as a means to bring victory to his own forces.

Two related items urge caution in any attempt to draw too close of a connection between the military imagery of 4 Maccabees and the motif of Holy War. First, 4 Maccabees makes frequent use of terms familiar from Stoic philosophy suggesting a strong Hellenistic influence on the work.[224] Second, the prevalence of military imagery and athletic imagery in

[224] Stephen D. Moore and Janice Capel Anderson, "Taking it Like a Man: Masculinity in 4 Maccabees," *JBL* 117 (1998): 252, note that in 4 Maccabees, the four cardinal virtues of Greek thought, φρόνησις (prudence), σωφροσύνη (temperance), δικαιοσύνη (justice), and ἀνδρεία (courage), are exemplified as manifestations of εὐσεβὴς λογισμός (reverent logic; Moore and Anderson translate it as "devout reason"). Victor C. Pfitzner, *Paul and the Agon Motif: Traditional Athletic Imagery in the Pauline Literature* (NovTSup 16; Leiden: Brill, 1967), 58, sees in the phrase εὐσεβὴς λογισμός a Jewish adaptation of Stoic philosophy: "Not

4 Maccabees reflects Greek religious and philosophical discussion.[225] This leads to a perception of the military and athletic imagery of 4 Maccabees that is more in line with Hellenistic concepts than with the Jewish concept of Holy War.[226] In essence, 4 Maccabees has adapted Hellenistic philosophical imagery and submitted it to a Jewish theological outlook. Thus, Pfitzner concludes, "The contest of the martyrs is not only against persecution and suffering, but also the struggle for the preservation of godliness *in* suffering."[227] Nevertheless, the story of the weak (aged man, young boys, aged mother) overthrowing the hostile strength of the tyrant by overturning the concept of true power does resonate with the motif of Holy War. The divinely empowered people of God overcome stronger and more numerous foes in an entirely new way.

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the natural reason of the Stoics but only devout, God-fearing reason can control the senses and exercise true virtue, that is, reason which is directed by the norm of the divine Law." On the affinity of 4 Maccabees to Stoic thought, see Robert Renehan, "The Greek Philosophical Background of Fourth Maccabees," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 115 (1972): 232-38. Not also the observation of Denis, "Livre," 561: "Bien qu'il fasse une commémoration de martyrs, un rhéteur judéo-helléniste veut unir la tradition biblique et l'hellénisme dans un traité philosophique, cas unique dans la littérature judéo-hellénistique."

[225] Moore and Anderson, "Taking," 59-62. Note that 2 Maccabees 17:11-16 summarizes the martyrs' activities by casting it in light of an athletic ἀγὼν, "struggle," where Antiochus is the antagonist and the "world and the human race" are the spectators. On the athletic imagery, Pfitzner, *Paul*, 61, states, "The character of the Agon in IV Macc as an Agon of endurance in suffering suggests the image of the wrestler, boxer, or pancratiast who suffers blows standing directly over against his opponent, rather than that of the runner who strains forward toward the goal."

[226] Nickelsburg, *Jewish*, 256, summarizes, "The author of 4 Maccabees transposes the stories of the martyrs in 2 Maccabees 6–7 into the key of Greek philosophy and embodies them in a discourse that demonstrates—mainly on the basis of these stories—that reason is sovereign over the passions." I would only add here that it is εὐσεβὴς λογισμός that triumphs over the passions. Contra Richard Bauckham, in *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993), 237, who acknowledges that the military and athletic imagery of 4 Maccabees is common in Greek philosophical discussion but nevertheless concludes, "But behind this Hellenistic moral philosophy we must postulate a tradition which had already interpreted the deaths of the martyrs as their participation in God's Holy War against his enemies."

[227] Pfitzner, *Paul*, 191.

4.3. *The Enemies of the Divine Warrior*

As part of my discussion of Divine Warrior imagery for God and his allies in early Judaism, I have already touched on a number of issues related to the depiction of the enemies of God and his people. Thus, rather than repeat much of the material already covered, this section serves to summarize some of the basic characterizations and to highlight a few aspects of these enemies that require further discussion.

4.3.1. *Otherworldly Enemies*

In early Judaism, otherworldly forces play a prominent role as adversaries of the Divine Warrior and his people. This period witnesses the concept of an individual, personified leader over all of the forces of evil. These forces also appear in a variety of roles in early Judaism.

4.3.1.1. *The Personified Leader of Evil Forces*. The early Jewish period witnesses an increasing understanding of the submission of forces of evil to one personified enemy of God. This is probably a result of the increasing development of the concept of the angelic rule of nations derived from scriptural texts such as Deut 32:8-9 and Dan 10:13-21.[228] Early Jewish literature calls this personified leader by a number of different names and titles, though in the New Testament he is known as the devil or Satan.[229] The earliest attestation of

[228] Generally, the rise of the concept of an individual leader of evil forces is thought to have been an adaptation of Persian dualism. For instance, Chad T. Pierce, "Satan and Related Figures," *Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism*, 1198, considers the two primary factors to have been Jewish exposure to Zoroastrianism and the concept of the wicked ruler exemplified in Antiochus IV Epiphanes. John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 153, considers Persian influence on the two opposing spirits in the *Treatise of the Two Spirits* (1QS III, 13–IV, 26) to be "clearly derived from Zoroastrian dualism, although it is inevitably modified in its Jewish context." Meanwhile, D. G. Reid, "Satan, Devil," *DPL* 862-63, cautions that "this influence is difficult to prove."

[229] For a list of the names and titles, see Reid, "Satan," *DPL* 863.

a personified leader of rebellious or evil angelic beings is in the *Book of the Watchers*. In *1 En.* 6:2, the "sons of heaven," the Watchers, angelic beings, desire to have the "beautiful and comely" (6:1) "daughters of men" as wives and to have children with them. This introduces an expansion of the myth concerning events that precipitated the flood that appears in Gen 6:1-4. In *1 En.* 6:3, the leader of the sons of heaven, Shemihaza, fears that his cohorts will not follow him in this "great sin."[230] Shemihaza appears again in 6:7, at the head of the hierarchy of the sons of heaven. In 8:3, Shemihaza is the one who taught humanity "spells and the cutting of ropes." In 10:11, God commands Michael to bind Shemihaza and the Watchers "who have mated with the daughters of men so that they were defiled in them by their uncleanness." Once bound, the Watchers must witness the destruction of their illicit children, which followed by the Watchers' imprisonment in the earth for seventy generations (10:12). At the end of the seventy generations, the Watchers "will be lead away to a fiery abyss, and to torture, and to the prison where they will be confined forever" (10:13).

This is the earliest known Jewish expression of a motif where fallen angels are imprisoned for a time, judged at the conclusion of that time, and then punished by fire. The story may be an expansion of Isa 24:21-22, a text with a number of significant parallels.[231]

> On that day the LORD will punish
> the host of heaven in heaven,

[230] On Shemihaza, see Corrie Molenberg, "A Study of the Roles of Shemihaza and Asael in 1 Enoch 6–11," *JJS* 35 (1984): 136-46, who notes that the angel Asael is prominent in the *Book of the Watchers* as well (cf. 10:8, where he is responsible for all of the sins of humanity). Asael is also the first accused by the archangels (9:6) and the first punished (9:4-8; where Asael is bound by Raphael). Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 190-91, suggests the blending of two different traditions on the origin of evil, a myth of Shemihaza and the Watchers and a myth of Asael and the angels who teach forbidden knowledge. Without disputing the reconstruction, Annette Yoshiko Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of the Enochic Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 29, cautions that since there is no evidence that two distinct myths circulated independently, such reconstructions tend to obscure the roles of Shemihaza and Asael in the received text by glossing over the tension the contrasting characters introduce to the story.

[231] Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 221.

and on earth the kings of the earth.
They will be gathered together
like prisoners in a pit;
they will be shut up in a prison,
and after many days they will be punished.

Scholars also point out the significant parallels between Greek myths of the Titans and the fall of the Watchers.[232]

The motif of the imprisonment of rebellious angels and their subsequent judgment and punishment appears in a number of early Jewish texts, as well as in the New Testament. There is some variation of the details, especially with regard to the place of imprisonment,[233] but the overall picture remains constant. The sin of the Watchers leads to their binding and imprisonment. Following their judgment at the eschaton, they are sent into eternal punishment.

An otherworldly leader of the enemies of God also plays a role in the book of *Jubilees*, a mid-second century B.C.E. retelling of Genesis and the first half of Exodus.[234] In *Jub.* 10:1, demons had begun to lead Noah's children "to folly and destroy them" after the flood. In response, Noah asks God for deliverance (10:3-6). In the prayer, he asserts that

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[232] The myth of the titan Prometheus is notable here. In Aeschylus, *Prom.* 1–81, Zeus has the rebellious Prometheus chained in the wilderness. Eventually, Zeus decides to punish Prometheus by entombing him and, at a later time, torturing him. This myth is proposed as a source for *1 Enoch* by T. F. Glasson, *Greek Influence in Jewish Eschatology; with Special Reference to the Apocalypses and Pseudepigraphs* (Biblical Monographs 1; London: SPCK, 1961), 65. Birger Pearson, "A Reminiscence of Classical Myth at 2 Pet 2:4," *GRBS* 10 (1969): 72-75, sees further parallels with the myth of the Titans' war with Zeus, the *Titanomachia* as it appears in Hesiod, *Theog.* 713–735. He concludes, "These similarities are such that one can safely assert that *1 Enoch* has been profoundly influenced by Greek mythology."

[233] The place of imprisonment could be somewhere on earth (*1 En* 10:4-6, 12; 67:4), in the depths of the earth (*1 En* 14:9; *Jub.* 5:6; 4Q206 2–3 1 XII, 1), the second heaven (*2 Enoch* 7:1-3;), some type of abyss (*1 En* 54:3-6; 56:1-3; 88:1-3), Tartarus (2 Pet 2:4), or it may not be specifically mentioned (2 Bar. 56:10-16; 1 Pet 3:9). Many texts tie the imprisonment to darkness (*1 En* 10:4; *T. Naph.* 3:5; Jude 6; 2 Pet 2:4).

[234] For an introduction to *Jubilees*, see Michael Segal, *The Book of Jubilees: Rewritten Bible, Redaction, Ideology, and Theology* (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 117; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 2-44.

these demons are the offspring of the Watchers (10:4), the angels who had taken human wives and thus corrupted all flesh and had been imprisoned in the depths of the earth (5:1-2).[235] Noah desires these spirits to be sent to "the place of judgment" as well (10:5). God indeed commands his angels to bind these spirits (10:7). But at this point, an angelic figure name Mastema makes a request of God in 10:8.[236]

> O Lord, Creator, leave some of them before me, and let them obey my voice. And let them do everything which I tell them, because if some of them are not left for me, I will not be able to exercise the authority of my will among the children of men because they are (intended) to corrupt and lead astray before my judgment because the evil of the sons of man is great.

God grants Mastema's request leaving Mastema a tenth of the spirits. In 10:11, these become the forces of darkness.

> And we [the Angel of the presence and his allies] acted in accord with all of his [God] words. All of the evil ones, who were cruel, we bound in the place of judgment, but a tenth of them we let remain so that they might be subject to Satan upon the earth.

Eventually, these spirits manage to corrupt Noah's offspring and, in *Jub.* 11:4-6, they are enthusiastically aided by their ruler.

> And [the sons of Noah] began making graven images and polluted likenesses. And cruel spirits assisted them and led them astray so that they might commit sin and pollution. And the prince, Mastema, acted forcefully to do all of this. And he sent other spirits to those who were set under his hand to practice all error and sin and all transgression, to destroy, to cause to perish and to pour out blood upon the earth.

Thus, *Jub.* 11:4-6 describes "cruel spirits" to be behind idolatry, sin, and violence. In the postdiluvian world, Satan and his demons are responsible for the sinful activity of

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[235] In a deviation from the main story in *1 En* 6–12, this passage explains the origin of demons. See here Loren T. Stuckenbruck, "The Book of Jubilees and the Origin of Evil," in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees* (ed. Gabriele Boccaccini and Giovanni Ibba; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 301-03.

[236] On Mastema as an angelic figure with more authority than a demon or evil spirit, see Segal, *Jubilees*, 176-77.

humanity.[237] Nevertheless, it is important to note here that Mastema has no authority outside the realm appointed to him by God, a realm limited in scope and duration. As we saw in *Jub.* 10:8, Mastema himself is aware of his limits and of his role. He seeks the help of the evil spirits so that he can fulfill his role before he faces his own judgment.

In the Dead Sea Scrolls an individual "Prince of the Kingdom of Evil" has a very explicit role in leading a heavenly army opposed to God, his angels, and his people. Typically, this leader is named Belial, though occasionally he is called Satan or Mastema, and he is especially prominent in 1QH, 1QS, and, 1QM.[238] Belial has a number of titles beyond the Prince of the Kingdom of Evil, including the Angel of Darkness, the Angel of Hostility, the Wicked One, the Angel of the Pit, or the Spirit of Abaddon, all pointing to his high rank and malevolent purpose.[239]

In the discussion of the *War Scroll*, 1QM, I noted Belial's role as commander of the armies of darkness. Despite this "lofty" status, like in *Jubilees*, Belial is never an opponent of equal stature to God in the Dead Sea Scrolls.[240] On the contrary, God created Belial and

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[237] Segal, *Jubilees*, 181-82.

[238] Pierce, "Satan," 1198.

[239] The names Mastema and Melkiresha are also used for this figure. See Annette Steudel, "God and Belial," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls Fifty Years after Their Discovery* (ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman, Emanuel Tov, and James C. VanderKam; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2000), 332-33, and Kobelski, *Melchizedek*, 81. The idea of Belial as the personified name of the divine enemy of God probably derives from two passages from Hebrew Scripture that are heavy in Divine Warrior imagery, Nah 1:15 (2:1 MT), where the wicked (בליעל) is no longer a threat because he has been cut off, and Ps 18:4-5 (5-6 MT), where בליעל appears in parallelism with מות, "death" and associated with שאול, "Sheol." This does not imply, however, an understanding of Belial as the personification of evil in these texts. See here Peter von der Osten-Sacken, *Gott und Belial: Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Dualismus in den Texten aus Qumran* (SUNT 6; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969), 74-77 and S. D. Sperling, "Belial," *DDD* 169-70. Finally, though a majority of scholars see Belial as a personified figure, some prefer to understand the term בליעל to carry the impersonalized sense of "worthlessness," at least in a majority of its appearances. On this see, e.g., Richard A. Horsley, *Revolt of the Scribes: Resistance and Apocalyptic Origins* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010), 130.

[240] Steudel, "God," 334: "In no text is Belial described as the negative equivalent of God. Belial is always subordinated to God; he is God's instrument."

appointed Belial's purpose (e.g. 1QS III, 25; 1QM XIII, 10-12).[241] Belial, then, is not the direct dualistic opposite of God. Rather, as in the *Treatise of the Two Spirits* (1QS III, 13–IV, 36), he is the opposite of the Prince of Light. Thus, we see in 1QS III, 20-22 that Belial's primary purpose is to instigate the downfall of the righteous and, in that role, he is the source of sin.

> The authority of the Angel of Darkness further extends to the corruption of all the righteous. All their sins, iniquities, shameful and rebellious deeds are at his prompting, a situation God in his mysteries allows to continue until His era dawns. Moreover, all the afflictions of the righteous, and every trial in its season, occur because of this Angel's diabolic rule. All the spirits allied with him share but a single resolve: to cause the Sons of Light to stumble (1 QS III, 20-22).

Belial's time is limited until, as the *Treatise* notes, "His [God's] era dawns." Thus, the current period is the time of Belial's dominion (1QS I, 16-26; 1QM XIV, 9; 4Q177 1-4, 8). This period ends at the time God has already ordained for it to end (e.g., 1QM I, 8).[242] In the *War Scroll,* Belial's end comes at the hand of God (1QM I, 14-16). In the very damaged fragment of 11Q13 III, 7, Belial's end comes from fire (אש), similar to the end of Shemihaza in *1 En.* 10:13.

Belial—Beliar in Greek texts—appears in other early Jewish works in this same general pattern, though outside the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, he does not appear with the frequency of the documents from Qumran. In apocryphal and pseudepigraphal works, Beliar is the leader of evil or rebellious angels (*T. Ash.* 6:4; *1 En.* 54:5), demonic spirits (*Martyrdom of Isaiah* 1:8), and destructive forces (*T. Jud.* 25:3; *T. Zeb.* 9:8). He also

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[241] Davidson, *Angels*, 215-16. Note, however, that Steudel, "God," 333, n. 13, states that the idea that God created evil only appears in 1QS III, 25. Yadin, *Scroll*, 322, understands צשיתה בליצל לשחת, "made Belial to corrupt" to mean that God "appointed him for the task."

[242] Davidson, *Angels*, 222-224, who calls special attention to the prevalence of the terms מועד, "appointed time," and רז, "mystery," to highlight God's absolute control of events.

works to lead people astray and, in that role, has caused the nations to be led astray (*1 En.* 69:28), even into idolatry (*T. Job* 2–3). Early Jewish literature also depicts him as the accuser from Hebrew Scripture (*Jub.* 48:15, 18). At the eschaton, his defeat comes and his end is sure (*T. Mos.* 10:1; *1 En.* 54:6). The *T. Jud.* 25:3 expresses Beliar's end as an eternal fire: "There shall no more be Beliar's spirit of error, because he will be thrown into eternal fire." A fiery end is the fate of Belial's army as well in *1 En.* 54:6, "for their unrighteousness in becoming servants of Satan, and leading astray those who dwell on the earth." The same end befalls "the impious" in the *T. Zeb.* 10:3, as God "will throw down fire upon them.[243]

4.3.1.2. *The Otherworldly Forces Aligned with Satan.* As a number of the passages we have discussed have indicated, a satanic figure is not the sole adversary of God. Satan leads an army of demonic forces in his attempt to fulfill his goals.[244] A few early Jewish works consider their role in the origin of evil in the world, placing it as the inevitable result of the disruption of the creation when the Watchers took human wives.[245] Since the Watchers are spirits and their wives flesh, their offspring, the Giants, are both spirit and flesh. When the flesh of the Giant dies, the spirit remains. In *1 En.* 15:6-10, part of Enoch's oracle to the Watchers, Enoch explains this (cf. *Jub.* 10:5; 4Q531 1, 1-8).

> But you [the Watchers] originally existed as spirits, living forever,
> and not dying for all the generations of eternity;
> therefore I did not make women among you.
> The spirits of heaven, in heaven is their dwelling;
> But now the giants who were begotten by the sprits and flesh—
> they will call them evil spirits on the earth,
> for their dwelling will be on the earth.

[243] M. de Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Study in Their Text, Composition, and Origin* (2d ed.; Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1975), 95.

[244] Davidson, *Angels*, 219-20.

[245] Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 229.

> The spirits that have gone forth from the body of their flesh are evil spirits,
> for from humans they came into being, and from the
> holy watchers was the origin of their creation.
> Evil spirits they will be on the earth, and evil spirits they will be called.
> The spirits in heaven, in heaven is their dwelling;
> but the spirits begotten on the earth, on the earth is their dwelling.

As the oracle continues, Enoch not only explains the origin of the evil spirits, he explains their role in *1 En.* 15:11-12.

> And the spirits of the giants lead astray, do violence, make desolate, and attack and wrestle and hurl upon the earth and cause illnesses. They eat nothing but abstain from food and are thirsty and smite. These spirits will rise up against the sons of men and against the women, for they have come from them.[246]

Jubilees 15:31 adds to the list of demonic activity their role as the spiritual authority behind the Gentile nations. Their demonic purpose is clear.

> And he [God] sanctified them [Israel] and gathered them from all of the sons of man because (there are) many nations and many people, and they all belong to him, but over all of them he caused spirits to rule so that they might lead them astray from following him.

While demons rule over the nations, in *Jubilees* God directly prohibits them from exerting authority over God's people.[247] In *Jub.* 15:31, God "did not cause any angel or spirit to rule" over Israel in order to protect, guard, and bless his chosen people. Earlier, in *Jub.* 10:13, the evil spirits are "restrained from following the sons of Noah" after Noah had asked God to protect his children.

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[246] Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 23, observes that the text switches from poetic parallelism to "heaping up verbs" to describe the activities of the demons.

[247] James C. VanderKam, "The Demons in the Book of Jubilees," in *Die Dämonen/Demons: The Demonology of Israelite-Jewish and Early Christian Literature in Context of their Environment* (ed. Armin Lange, Hermann Lichtenberger, and K. F. Diethard Römheld; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 345-46.

A number of important concepts concerning demonic forces are reflected in the Dead Sea Scrolls.[248] This is reflected in 4Q510 1, 4-8, a passage we noted above. The listing presents a demonic realm that covers a vast spiritual sphere, including the possibility of leading astray the sons of light.

> all the spirits of the destroying angels, spirits of the bastards, demons, Lilith, howlers and [desert dwellers]
> and those which fall upon men without warning to lead them astray from a spirit of understanding and to make their heart and their [ ] desolate during the present dominion of
> wickedness and predetermined time of humiliations for the sons of lig[ht], by the guilt of the ages of [those] smitten by iniquity—not for eternal destruction (*DSSR* 6, 171).

The long listing of demonic powers gives some indication of the extent of their realm.[249] While the text makes clear the present nature of the demonic onslaught, it also indicates that the demonic realm is temporary, as it is the "present dominion of wickedness," limited to a "predetermined time of humiliations of the sons of light," a period that does not consist of "eternal destruction." Rather, the demonic realm only wields power in this "era of humiliations for transgressions" committed by the sons of light. But in this realm, in this

[248] Philip S. Alexander, "The Demonology of the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment* (2 vols.; ed. Peter W. Flint and James C. Vanderkam; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 2:332-33, finds in the Dead Sea Scrolls "a rather complex demonic world which embraces different orders or classes of demons." Using 4Q510 1, 5; 4Q511 10, 1-2; and 11Q11 2, 3-4, he finds six classes of demons. However, he also notes that while Qumran demonology was complex, it also "turns out to be somewhat vague" and shows little interest in systemization (ibid., 336). On the character of Qumran demonology being essentially Enochic, derived from the *Book of the Watchers*, see Alexander, "Demonology," 2:331-53, and a response to Alexander by Andy M. Reimer, "Rescuing the Fallen Angels: The Case of the Disappearing Angels at Qumran," *DSD* 7 (2000), 334-53, who accepts Alexander's thesis that Qumran demonology seems to be Enochic but cautions that some of Alexander's conclusions are overstated.

[249] Alexander, "Demonology," 2:332-33, calls this list "a standard, formulaic inventory of the demonic world." He notes in this regard the similar, though fragmentary, list in 11Q11 2, 3-4.

age, the demons work to lead people astray and make their hearts desolate. Similar wording appears in 4Q511 4, 8 and the general themes are present in 11Q11 as well.[250]

In 1QM XIII, 10-12, the limited scope for Belial and his minions remains clear. However, the passage also asserts the motivation behind Belial's forces.

> You yourself made Belial for the pit, an angel of malevolence, his [ ] in darkne[ss] and his counsel is to condemn and convict. All the spirits of his lot—angels of destruction—walk in accordance to the rule of darkness, for it is their only [des]ire (*DSSR* 1:233).

In such a role, these demons "inflict suffering, lead one to sin, and threaten life in every aspect."[251] Their weaponry consists of the three nets of Belial, unchastity, arrogance, and defilement of the sanctuary. In 4Q560 1 I, we find various maladies personified as demons. As we saw above, only the power of the Divine Warrior, either through his direct intervention, incantation that summons his power, or simply through the appropriation of that power, can subdue the forces of evil.[252] Some early Jewish texts appear to acknowledge the validity of Greek medicine in fighting issues related to illness.[253] Even in such instances, the outlook remains similar to what we see at Qumran: at its root, illness is a spiritual matter, primarily a matter of sin.[254]

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[250] Philip S. Alexander, "'Wrestling against Wickedness in High Places': Magic in the Worldview of the Qumran Community," in *The Scrolls and the Scriptures: Qumran Fifty Years After* (ed. Stanley E. Porter and Craig A. Evans; JSPSup 26; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 318-29.

[251] Hermann Lichtenberger, "Demonology in the Scrolls and the New Testament," in *Text, Thought, and Practice in Qumran and Early* Christianity (ed. Ruth A. Clements and Daniel R. Schwarz; *STDJ* 84; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 276.

[252] Lichtenberger, "Demonology," 276.

[253] Armin Lange, "The Essene Position on Magic and Divination," in *Legal Texts and Legal Issues* (ed. Moshe Bernstein, Florentino García Martínez, and John Kampen; STDJ 23; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 384, who points to *Jubilees*, Tobit and Ben Sira as examples of texts that seek to integrate Greek medical practices into this context.

[254] Alexander, "Demonology," 2:348, reflecting on the comparatively small weight the Qumran community gave to magical or medicinal cures, concludes, "This probably reflects the predominately spiritual

There is also a military aspect to demonic activity. In the *War Scroll*, the present era is "the dominion of Belial," (1QM XIV, 9). Thus, Belial's demonic army will resist the end of the present age. In 1QM I, 14-15, Belial's supernatural army consists of the "angels of (Belial's) dominion." In 1QM XIII, 2, this army consists of the "spirits of (Belial's) lot," further described in line 12 as the "angels of destruction."

In a few passages, demonic forces serve as God's agents. We noted above *Jub.* 10:8, where Mastema asked God's permission to spare some demons—whom God decreed to be bound—and put them under Mastema's authority, otherwise "I [Mastema] will not be able to exercise the authority of my will among the children of men." God's granting this request at least implies divine design behind the role of Mastema and his demons "to corrupt and lead astray . . . because the evil of the sons of men is great."

In the Dead Sea Scrolls, Belial or his angels of destruction (מלאכי חבל) serve as God's agents for punishing his enemies. In the *Damascus Document*, this idea is prominent in CD VIII, 2 (CD XIX, 14), where those unfaithful to the covenant "will have a visitation for destruction at the hand of Belial."[255] In CD II, 5-6, those who willfully depart from the covenant face "strength and power and a great anger with flames of fire by the [hand] of all the angels of destruction." This thought is echoed in 1QS IV, 11-14, where all those who walk in the ways of the Spirit of Deceit will find themselves suffering "multiple afflictions at the hand of all the angels of perdition."[256] Though it is possible to see the angels of

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and theological perspective of the sect. Physical disorders are the result of spiritual disorders; it is logical that if one treats the spiritual disorder, the physical disorder should also disappear." Cf. Lange, "Essene," 384-85.

[255] Unless otherwise noted, all translations of the *Damascus Document* (CD) are from Florentino García Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English* (trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson; 2d ed.; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 33-71.

[256] Davidson, *Angels*, 157-58.

destruction in these passages as servants of God and not of Belial,[257] the similarities of wording and context CD VIII, 2 and CD II, 6 would indicate the opposite: both passages deal with the same group—apostates—who face similar punishments.[258] These punishments are administered either "by the hand of Belial" (ביד בליעל; CD VIII, 2) or "by the hand of all the angels of destruction" (בי כל מלאכי חבל; CD II, 6).[259] Thus, God makes use of his enemies in the discipline of his children.

4.3.2. *Temporal Enemies of the Divine Warrior*

In early Judaism, temporal, earthly enemies still play a prominent role. Along with the various depictions noted above, two final motifs are important. First, early Judaism witnesses a developing motif of an individual wicked tyrant who seeks to impose his will on the people of God. Second, the nations, as allies of the tyrant and Satan, remain a prominent adversary of the Divine Warrior.

4.3.2.1. *The Wicked Tyrant.* As we have seen, the concept of a wicked tyrant who becomes the earthly embodiment of evil appears prominently in the book of Daniel. We noted this is an adaptation of earlier depictions of the leaders of enemy nations who overstep their assigned roles and, as a result, face the wrath of the Divine Warrior. Increasingly, this

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[257] Davidson, *Angels*, 164-65, 180-84.

[258] Maxine L. Grossman, *Reading for History in the Damascus Document: A Methodological Study* (STDJ 45; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 177-84.

[259] On reading בי as ביד in CD II, 6, see Joseph M. Baumgarten and Daniel R. Schwartz, "Damascus Document," in vol. 2 of *Damascus Document, War Scroll, and Related Documents* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; vol. 2 of *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations*; PTSDSSP; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 14 n. 4.

individual figure is portrayed as an eschatological tyrant, characterized by his arrogance, his disregard of divinely assigned boundaries, and his outright hostility to God.[260]

Frequently, Antiochus IV Epiphanes serves as the foil for depictions of the tyrant, most likely due to reflection on the book of Daniel.[261] Thus, various works often portray the tyrants with the same qualities depicted for Antiochus, even if such qualities are not necessarily reflective of the actual historical figure targeted in the new work. One prominent example is non-eschatological in nature, but contains significant imagery related to the wicked tyrant. *Psalm of Solomon* 2 describes Pompey's assault on Jerusalem.[262] Two items are notable in the psalm. First, the psalmist does not name the wicked foreigner, he simply labels him a sinner (ἁμαρτωλός) and that the sinner acted ἐν ὑπερηφανεύεσθαι, "arrogantly" when he smashed the city walls. Despite the havoc wrought by the sinner, the psalmist nevertheless understands the assault on the city as a result of the sins of the "sons and daughters of Jerusalem" (2:6-7). Second, in the recounting of the death of the sinner in 2:25-29, the psalmist emphasizes the height of the arrogance of the oppressor of Jerusalem and the subsequent depths of his humiliation.

> Do not delay, O God, in retaliating against their leaders
> by disgracing the dragon's arrogance.
> I did not have long to wait until God showed me his arrogance.
> Stabbed on the sand dunes of Egypt,

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[260] L. J. Lietaert Peerbolte, *The Antecedents of the Antichrist: A Traditio-Historical Study of the Earliest Christian Views on Eschatological Opponents* (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 49; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 341.

[261] G. W. Lorein, *The Antichrist Theme in the Intertestamental Period* (JSPSup 44; London: T. & T. Clark, 2003), 229, "In any case we can conclude that the topical value of the book of Daniel was the main drive behind the development of the Antichrist theme . . . This development can mainly be explained by the historical actions of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, which placed the prophecies of Daniel in the spotlight, but also by their after-effect."

[262] Kenneth Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord: A Study of the Psalms of Solomon's Historical Background and Social Setting* (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 84; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 21-22.

he was more despised than anything in the whole world.
His body was violently carried over the waves
and there was no one to bury him,
because God contemptuously despised him.
He did not realize that he was merely mortal,
and he did not think about the future.
He said, "I will be lord of the whole world;"
he failed to recognize that it is God who is great,
who is mighty in his great strength.

Here the writer weaves together various allusions to scriptural passages to demonstrate the arrogance that leads to the sinner's demise. The psalmist calls the wicked ruler the dragon (2:25; δράκων), an image that recalls the ancient enemy of YHWH (cf. Ps 74:13-14 [73:13-14 LXX]), as well as prophetic depictions of Pharaoh (Ezek 29:3; 32:2) and Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 51:34 [28:34 LXX]).[263] The dragon is pierced (ἐκκεντέω) in Egypt (*Ps. Sol.* 2:26), an allusion to Pompey's actual death by beheading in Egypt,[264] while in Isa 27:1, the Divine Warrior kills the dragon with his "holy and great sword" (LXX).

More significant are the parallels with the LXX of Isa 14:12-21, where the "Day Star" (Isa 14:12), the king of Babylon, meets his end at the hand of the Divine Warrior.

Psalm of Solomon 2:25-29	Isaiah 14:12-21 (LXX)
The dragon was "stabbed (ἐκκεκεντημένον) on the sand dunes (τῶν ὀρέων) of Egypt" (26).	The Day Star "will be flung to the mountains (ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσιν) like stinking corpse" as those "stabbed (ἐκκεκεντημένων) by swords" (19).
The dragon "was more despised than anything in the whole world (26)	The Day Star's present disgrace contrasts with his fearsome and arrogant past (16-17).
There was no one to bury the dragon (27)	The Day Star's corpse is flung away (18-19).
The dragon did not know he was merely human and sought to rule the world (28-29).	The Day Star sought a throne above the stars and to be like the Most High (13-14).

[263] Atkinson, *Cried*, 36.

[264] See Atkinson, *Cried*, 32 n. 43 for a lengthy list of Greco-Roman sources that depict the death of Pompey.

In the end, both tyrants attempted to ascend the heights and both die in humiliation.[265] The tie to Isa 14 also draws attention to the little horn of Dan 8, the exemplar of the wicked ruler.

The overall sense of the psalmist's portrayal of Pompey is one of unfettered arrogance that rivals the ancient enemies of God's people. Pompey is like the king of Babylon, the king of Assyria, and the pharaoh of Egypt: entrusted by God with a purpose, the wicked tyrant cannot help but overstep his purpose because of his hubris. He thus meets a certain end. In *Ps. Sol.* 2, the psalmist depicts Pompey as a wicked tyrant by blending allusions to historical details with allusions to scriptural texts in a manner that asserts divine authority over a significant historical event. In this way, the psalmist imitates the strategy of Daniel's depiction of Antiochus IV.

The *Testament of Moses* also describes an eschatological tyrant. Toward the end of a portrayal of Jewish history, we see the present age drawing to a close with the reigns of Herod the Great and his sons (*T. Mos.* 5–6).[266] "When this has taken place, the times will quickly come to an end" (7:1). The initial stage of the eschaton will feature the rule of "destructive and godless men" (7:3) who are deceitful, hiding their evil nature and deeds under a veneer of righteousness (7:4-10). Tromp suggests that the description of the rulers, those who "represent themselves as being righteous" (7:3), may indicate that the rulers are part of the people of God.[267] In any case, their impiety causes the Divine Warrior to send forth his wrath by stirring up "a king of the kings of the earth," an eschatological tyrant (8:1). What follows is primarily a description of eschatological persecution (8:2-5), the resistance

[265] Atkinson, *Cried*, 36, also points to similar parallels in Ezek 32:1-11.

[266] Tromp, *Assumption*, 206.

[267] Tromp, *Assumption*, 207

of which the episode of Taxo and his sons exemplifies (9:1-7). This eschatological tyrant is not so much a melding of scriptural and historical imagery, as in *Ps. Sol.* 2, but a melding of allusions to the contemporary historical setting—the aftermath of the reign of Herod the Great—with imagery from another wicked tyrant, Antiochus IV.[268]

A notable effect here is that the demise of the tyrant is not described in the *Testament of Moses*. In *T. Mos.* 11:1 the tyrant's empire has reached to the ends of the earth. When it does, the New Age comes. But the description of the turn of the ages in 11:1 pictures the demise of another figure: "Then the devil will have an end. Yea, and sorrow will be led away with him." By short-circuiting the reader's expectation of a description of the end of the tyrant's empire and instead depicting the end of Satan, the *Testament of Moses* ties the tyrant and his activities to Satan.[269] Thus, in calling forth the tyrant as punishment on his rebellious people, the Divine Warrior not only enlists the tyrant for his purposes, but also, by implication, the head of the tyrant, the devil.

A number of early Jewish documents portray the leader of the Roman Empire as the eschatological tyrant. In *4 Ezra* 5:6, "one shall reign whom those who inhabit the earth do not expect" appears as one of a number of messianic woes at the end of Ezra's first vision (5:4-13). This brief sentence is all of the information Ezra receives on the tyrant; the accompanying signs do not relate to the ruler in particular and thus there is no further elaboration of the ruler or his character.[270] The only other piece of information we have is that the signs will occur when "the land that you [Ezra] now see ruling shall be a trackless

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[268] Atkinson, "Herod," 134-49.

[269] Lorein, *Antichrist*, 142.

[270] Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 112, calls attention to *4 Ezra* 5:7b, "and one whom the many do not know shall make his voice heard by night, and all shall hear his voice," as a possible reference to the tyrant, but this is not clear.

waste, and people shall see it desolate" (*4 Ezra* 5:3). The desolate land is a prophetic image of Babylon (cf. Jer 25:12), and Babylon, in turn, is a common symbol for Rome. Thus, the unexpected ruler is the ruler of the Roman Empire, the last kingdom before the end of the age. The Eagle Vision of *4 Ezra* 11–12 makes the tie to the Roman Empire clear, as the eagle of the vision is Rome, the last of the four kingdoms of the present age (11:44; 12:11-12). In the Eagle Vision, historical allusions appear to mark the Flavians as the final three rulers in the vision.[271]

In *Sib. Or.* 3, 4 and 5, the emperor Nero is the exemplar of the wicked tyrant. Nero figures prominently in book five, a work that probably originated in Egypt in the late first century C.E.[272] The book consists of six oracles, with Nero appearing in four of them, the first, third, fourth, and fifth.[273] Nero's first appearance, in *Sib. Or.* 5.28-34, fleshes out his basic character.

> One who has fifty as an initial will be commander,
> a terrible snake, breathing out grievous war, who one day
> will lay hands on his own family and slay them, and throw everything into confusion,
> athlete, charioteer, murderer, one who dares ten thousand things.
> He will also cut the mountain between the two seas and defile it with gore.
> But even when he disappears he will be destructive. Then he will return
> declaring himself equal to God. But he will prove that he is not.

The passage is an invective on the life of Nero, a δεινὸς ὄφις, "terrible snake." His initial (ν′) corresponds to the number fifty. He ordered the death his mother Agrippina in 59

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[271] E.g., Peerbolte, *Antecedents*, 310-11.

[272] John J. Collins, *OTP* 1:590. The six oracles are 1-51; 52-110; 111-78; 179-285; 286-434; and 435-530.

[273] Collins, *OTP* 1:590, sees Nero in each of the first five oracles. However, 5.93-110, the second oracle, more likely reflects the hostility between Persia and Egypt beginning with Cambyses' II conquest of Egypt in 525 B.C.E. On the identification of "the Persian" of 5.93 as imagery from this earlier period, see Jan Willem van Henten, "*Nero Redivivus* Demolished: The Coherence of the Nero Traditions in the *Sibylline Oracles*," *JSP* 21 (2000): 14-17.

C.E. Nero traveled to Greece in 66 C.E. to participate in the Olympic games.[274] He purportedly began the cutting of the canal on the isthmus at Corinth, for which Vespasian sent 6,000 Jewish prisoners of war as labor.[275] After Nero's suicide in 68 C.E., rumors persisted that he had not actually died but had fled to the Parthians and would return in force.[276] After he returned from Greece, he developed a fascination with Hercules and began to act out scenes from Greco-Roman myth on stage and in his life.[277]

A similar summary of the violence and hubris of Nero appears in *Sib. Or.* 5.137-54, which adds to Nero's flaws his debauchery (5.146) and a clear statement of hostility toward God's people: he will lurk with Parthians "against a true people," the Jews (5.149). The sybil then attributes to Nero the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple and adds that Nero "burned the citizens and people who went into it" (5.150-51), events that properly belong to the reign of Vespasian though the campaign against the Jews began in Nero's reign.

Nero next appears in *Sib. Or.* 5.214-27, where he has returned from the east as the instrument of the Divine Warrior.

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[274] On Nero's participation in the Olympics, see Edward Champlin, *Nero* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 53-61, who notes that acting and singing competitions were added to the games at Nero's behest.

[275] David Shotter, *Nero Caesar Augustus: Emperor of Rome* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2008), 135.

[276] See Hans-Josef Klauck, "Do They Never Come Back? *Nero Redivivus* and the Apocalypse of John," *CBQ* 63 (2001): 683-86, for an overview Greco-Roman historians on contemporary doubts regarding Nero's death. In biblical studies, the myth of Nero's return is routinely described as *Nero redivivus*, "Nero revived," where the myth implies Nero's actual death and that his return is a resurrection. See, e.g, Larry Kreitzer, "Hadrian and the Nero 'Redivivus' Myth," *ZNW* 79 (1988): 92-115. However, the idea of a resurrected Nero is not clear in any text, especially the Greco-Roman texts. Neither is it clear in the *Sibylline Oracles*, the texts most often said to display it. On the absence of a clear indication of Nero returning from death, see Henten, "*Nero*," 3-17, and Klauck, "Never," 683-98. The most likely candidate is *Sib. Or.* 5.367, ἧς χάριν ὤλετό τ' αὐτός, ἑλεῖ ταύτην παραχρῆμα, "He [Nero] will immediately seize the one because of whom he himself perished." The passage is difficult, mainly due to the problem of discerning the referent of ἧς and ταύτην, both feminine pronouns. Henten, "*Nero*," 9, suggests that if the pronouns refer to Rome, ὄλλυμι may refer to Nero's being deposed, giving the word a sense of "come to an end." According to *LSJ*, "ὄλλυμι," 1331, this sense is possible for the word.

[277] Champlin, *Nero*, 136-38.

> You, too, Corinth, bewail the mournful destruction within you. For when the three sister Fates, spinning with twisted threads, lead the one who is now fleeing deceitfully beyond the bank of the isthmus on high so that all may see him, who formerly cut out the rock with ductile bronze, he will destroy and ravage your land also, as is decreed. For to him God gave strength to perform things like no previous one of all the kings. For, first of all, cutting off the roots from three heads mightily with a blow, he will give them to others to eat, so that they will eat the flesh of the parents of the impious king. For murder and terrors are in store for all men because of the great city and righteous people which is preserved throughout everything, which Providence held in special place.

The means to identify Nero are clear: the deceitful flight (5.216), the cutting of the rock of the Corinthian isthmus (5.218), and the allusion to his matricide (5.224) all identify the king as Nero. There are also a number of new features. While Nero is, at the moment, "fleeing deceitfully," the Fates ἄξουσιν μετέωρον, "will lead [him] on high" (*Sib. Or.* 5.217), imagery that reflects the son of man coming in the clouds in Dan 7:13.[278] More significant, Nero is clearly God's instrument of vengeance, as God gave Nero superhuman strength (5.220-21). Nero's strength serves a purpose, as "murders and terrors" are in store because of "the great city and righteous people which is persevered through everything" (5.225-27), Jerusalem and the Jews. The reference to Corinth's destruction may indicate vengeance for the death of the Jewish prisoners who built the canal. This makes the reason for God's wrath the maltreatment of his people and his people's preservation. An interesting note is that while those of Corinth are held accountable for their treatment of God's people in this passage, the returning tyrant is not.

The three depictions of Nero in *Sib. Or.* 5 we have seen so far each increase in intensity. First, Nero's historical footprint becomes fodder for the depiction of a wicked tyrant with an allusion to hostility towards God's people (5.28-34). Next, the image of the tyrant is maintained, now including a direct assault on God's people (5.137-54), even if Nero,

[278] Klauck, "Never," 688.

historically, was only the initiator of this assault. This is followed by Nero returning as the instrument of divine vengeance for the treatment of God's people (5.214-227). The tyrant's final appearance depicts him at his worst. In *Sib. Or.* 5.361-85, Nero is the eschatological tyrant, whose gruesome war leads to his destruction.

> There will come to pass in the last time about the waning of the moon a war which will throw the whole world into confusion and be deceptive in guile. A man who is a matricide will come from the ends of the earth in flight and devising penetrating schemes in his mind. He will destroy every land and conquer all and consider all things more wisely than all men. He will immediately seize the one because of whom he himself perished. He will destroy many men and great rulers, and he will set fire to all men as no one else ever did. Through zeal he will raise up those who were crouched in fear. There will come upon men a great war from the West. Blood will flow up to the bank of deep-eddying rivers. Wrath will drip in the plains of Macedonia, an alliance to the people from the West but destruction for the king.

Along with the guilt of his "matricide," Nero returned is now the perpetrator of "penetrating schemes" (5.363) with a lust for power (5.365) and revenge (5.367), as well as being a man with a heart of cruelty (5.368-69). His guile and zeal ultimately prove ineffective, for as he meets his former empire in battle in Macedonia, where "blood will flow up to the bank of deep-eddying rivers," and a Roman alliance leads to βασιλῆι δ' ὄλεθρον, "the destruction of the king." Thus, in *Sib. Or.* 5, the tyrant comes to an anticlimactic end.

The end of the tyrant does not bring his conquerors what they expect. Immediately following the tyrant's destruction, *Sib. Or.* 5.375-80 depicts events on earth taking a turn for the worse.

> Then a wintry blast will blow through the land,
> and the plain will be filled again with evil war.
> For fire will rain on men from the floors of heaven,
> fire and blood, water, lightning bolt, darkness, heavenly night,
> and destruction in war, and a mist over the slain
> will destroy at once all kings and noble men.

There is little that is clear here except for the obvious intervention of the Divine Warrior, related as an attack where the weaponry of the Divine Warrior ἀπ' οὐρανίων δαπέδων βρέξει μερόπεσσιν, "will rain on men from the floors of heaven" (5.377-79). The destruction of "all kings and noble men" (5.380) leads to the end of all war (5.381-83) and allows a "wise people" to experience peace after their long experience of evil (5.384-85).

Nero's portrayal in *Sib. Or.* 5 offers the main images of the eschatological tyrant we have noted so far: arrogance, impiety, and disregard for divine order, and hostility to the people of God. The oracles also emphasize features of the Greco-Roman concept of the tyrant, especially highlighting Nero's cruelty.[279] These literary features are built around a historical outline that points the reader toward an understanding of the eschatological tyrant as someone who, if not Nero returned, is Nero exemplified.

One further note on the *Sibylline Oracles* concerns the relationship of the eschatological tyrant to Satan. *Sib. Or.* 3.63-74 actually identifies the tyrant with Beliar.

> Then Beliar will come from the Sebastenoi
> and he will raise up the height of mountains, he will raise up the sea,
> the great fiery sun and shining moon, and
> he will raise up the dead, and perform many signs
> for men. But they will not be effective in him.
> But he will, indeed, also lead men astray, and he will lead astray

[279] On the development of Greco-Roman literary and rhetorical portrayals of a tyrant, see J. Roger Dunkle, "The Greek Tyrant and Roman Political Invective of the Late Republic," *TAPA* 98 (1967): 151-71, and idem, "The Rhetorical Tyrant in Roman Historiography: Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus," *CW* 65 (1971): 12-20. Dunkle notes four recurring types that make up the literary and rhetorical motif of the tyrant, *vis* (force or violence), *superbia* (arrogance), *libido* (sexual depravity), and *crudelitas* (cruelty). Two other very common character types are *impius* (impiety) and *avaritia* (greed). Dunkle, "Rhetorical," 14, notes that later Roman literature made more use of the term *saevitia* to describe the tyrant's cruelty. He defines *saevitia* as cruelty with "connotations of hysteria and maniacal sadism." Dunkle sees *crudelitas* or *saevitia* as the most prominent characteristic in this motif: "It is no doubt due to the influence of the rhetorical tyrant of the *controversia* that *saevitia* with its related forms, *saevus*, *saeve*, and *saevio*, became inseparably linked with tyranny." On the *controversia*, a rhetorical exercise where the student makes a "mock legal speech . . . as the advocate of the dispossessed or as the vindicating champion of injured or outraged family and state," see W. Martin Bloomer, "Roman Declamation: The Elder Seneca and Quintilian," in *A Companion to Roman Rhetoric* (ed. William J. Dominik and Jon C. R. Hall; Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World 17; Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 297-307.

many faithful, chosen Hebrews, and also other lawless men
who have not yet listened to the word of God.
But whenever the threat of the great God draws nigh
and a burning power comes through the sea to land,
it will also burn Beliar and all overbearing men,
as many as put faith in him.

Beliar's origin, ἐκ δὲ Σεβαστηνῶν, "from the Sebastoi," makes it likely that the figure in mind is Nero, though this is uncertain.[280] Whether or not the passage refers to a historical figure or not, the imagery *Sib. Or.* 3:63-74 describes the eschatological tyrant in a manner that makes him superhuman. The human Beliar performs acts similar to that of the Divine Warrior, allowing him to lead many astray, even "faithful, chosen Hebrews."

4.3.2.2. *The Nations*. Similar to Hebrew Scripture, early Jewish literature often presents the nations as the enemies of God and his people.[281] As enemies, a predominant motif is the certain eschatological destruction of the nations in their attempt to subvert God's authority.[282] At times, such enemies could be portrayed as YHWH's mythological foes. One example here is the interpretation of Nah 1:4 in 4QpNah (4Q169) 1-2, 3-4:

He rebukes the sea and it dries up. Its interpretation: 'the sea' is all the Ki[ttim] to execute judgment and to exterminate them from the face of [the earth].

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[280] E.g., Peerbolte, *Antecedents*, 337-38. Against this is Valentin Nikiprowetzky, *La troisième Sibylle* (Etudes juives 9; Paris: Mouton, 1970), 140-43, who notes that in 25 B.C.E. the city of Samaria was renamed Sebaste. Peerbolte, *Antecedents*, 337, calls the suggestion that the eschatological tyrant would be from Samaria "without parallel" but notes that *Mart. Ascen. Isa.* 4:2 is a parallel to the equation of Beliar with Nero. Klauck, "Never," 690, further concludes that since *Mart. Ascen. Isa.* 4:2 is a late first century C.E. Christian interpolation, it provides evidence of a Jewish-Christian tradition that equates Nero with Satan.

[281] E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 214, lists six different eschatological fates for the nations that early Jewish works derived from Hebrew Scripture. Some overlap and most are decidedly negative: 1) the wealth of the nations will flow to Israel; 2) the kings of the nations will bow to Israel and the nations will serve Israel; 3) Israel will be a light to the nations and salvation will go to the ends of the earth; 4) the nations will be destroyed and Israel will occupy their cities; 5) divine vengeance will defeat the nations; and 6) the nations will survive but will not dwell with Israel.

[282] See here especially the detailed discussion in Michael E. Fuller, *The Restoration of Israel: Israel's Re-gathering and the Fate of the Nations in Early Jewish Literature and Luke-Acts* (BZNW 138; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006), 102-96.

The clearest expression of the hostile nature of the nations is in their eschatological gathering for war with the Divine Warrior. *Jubilees* 23:22-25 pictures this assault purely in terms of an attack on God's people, an attack initiated by God.[283] However, 23:26-31 clearly depicts the New Age, and at least implying the willing nature of the nations' assault.[284] We saw in *4 Ezra* 13:33-38 a blatant assault on the Messianic Warrior by the nations.

A similar scenario appears in *1 En.*90:6-19, part of Enoch's second dream vision (*1 En.* 85–90), a vision of the four ages of world history followed by a fifth eschatological age. *First Enoch* 90:6-15 is the vision of the fourth and final age of history before the new age. In the vision, the fourth age is an evil period before the eschaton, portrayed as a battle of an alliance of various animals and birds and wild sheep, who symbolize the nations and rebellious Jews, against the sheep, faithful Jews, who are led by a sheep with a great horn, probably a reference to Judas Maccabeus.[285] The imagery seems to reflect the contemporary situation of the Maccabean Revolt and appears to describe the battle of Beth-Zur as the final battle before the appearance of the Lord of the Sheep, the messiah (*1 En.* 90:17-19).[286] When the Lord of the Sheep appears, he strikes the earth, causing the beasts and birds to fall away. The sheep are then armed and they force the remaining beasts to flee. This scene moves immediately into the final judgment of the Watchers (as shepherds; 90:20-27) and the beginning of the New Age (90:28-39).

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[283] Gene L. Davenport, *The Eschatology of the Book of Jubilees* (StPB 20; Leiden: Brill, 1971), 34-35, considers the passage to reflect the writer's own situation, that the writer considered the current distress the eschatological woes. R. Doran, "The Non-Dating of Jubilees: Jub. 34–38; 23:14-32 in Narrative Context," *JSJ* 20 (1989): 1-11, considers the passage far too general in nature to be able to tie it to any particular situation.

[284] Peerbolte, *Antecedents*, 242.

[285] Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 396.

[286] Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 400. This battle is depicted in 2 Macc 11:6-12.

One final point concerns the portrayal of Rome as an enemy. In early Jewish literature, the earliest references to Rome appear in conjunction with the Maccabean War (Dan 11:30; numerous references in 1 Maccabees). In 1 Maccabees, the portrayal of Rome is generally positive, while the lone scriptural reference, Dan 11:30, is benign.[287] This begins to change following Pompey's occupation of Jerusalem and entry into the Temple in 63 B.C.E.[288] *Psalm of Solomon* 2:1-2 depicts this event in harsh terms.

> When the sinner contemptuously used his battering-ram to smash down the fortified walls, you [God] did not interfere. Gentiles who worship other gods went up to your altar; they brazenly trampled around with their sandals on.

Some of the Dead Sea Scrolls, portrayed the Romans, called the Kittim, as terrifyingly violent.

> For I am now about to raise up the Chaldeans, that br[utal and reckle]ss people.[289]
> This refers to the Kittim, w[ho ar]e swift and mighty
> In war, annihilating many. [The land shall be] under the rule of
> The Kittim. They shall inherit man[y] [lands] and have no faith in
> the laws of God (1QpHab II, 10-15; *DSSR* 2:81).

The apex of negative portrayal of Rome appears in 1QM, where the Kittim are the eschatological adversaries of the people of God.[290] This same outlook may be behind the

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[287] Geza Vermes, "Ancient Rome in Post-Biblical Literature," in *Post-Biblical Jewish Studies* (SJLA 8; Leiden: Brill, 1975), 215-16: "Second century B. C. Jews portrayed the Romans as powerful and steadfast allies, in spite of the absence of any concrete intervention on their behalf." He notes Dan 11:30 refering to the Romans as the Kittim (LXX: Ῥωμαῖοι). A positive portrayal of Rome appears in 1 Macc is 8:1-2a: "Now Judas heard of the fame of the Romans, that they were very strong and were well-disposed toward all who made an alliance with them, that they pledged friendship to those who came to them, and that they were very strong."

[288] Mireille Hadas-Lebel, *Jerusalem against Rome* (trans. Robyn Fréchet; Interdisciplinary Studies in Ancient Culture and Religion 7; Leeuvan: Peeters, 2006), 30. Vermes, "Rome," 216, notes, "In the first century B. C., during the great republican expansion in the East, Rome was metamorphosed from a distant and kindly giant, into a tangible and not so sympathetic reality."

[289] Hab 1:6a.

[290] Philip S. Alexander, "The Evil Empire: The Qumran Eschatological War Cycle and the Origins of Jewish Opposition to Rome," in *Emmanuel* (ed. Shalom Paul, Robert A. Kraft, Lawrence H. Schiffman, and Weston W. Fields; VTSup 94; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 17-32.

words of the Matthean Jesus in Matt 24:28, ὅπου ἐὰν ᾖ τὸ πτῶμα, ἐκεῖ συναχθήσονται οἱ ἀετοί, "wherever the corpse is, the eagles will be gathered." If this reading is correct, the Divine Warrior gathers the eagles—the Romans—for judgment.[291]

The symbolism of Rome as an eagle is prominent in Roman writings.[292] This symbol, along with Babylon, is one of two primary symbols that *4 Ezra* uses to depict the Roman Empire.[293] The eagle appears in Ezra's fifth vision, the "Eagle Vision" of *4 Ezra* 11–12. Notable here is the description of the eagle in *4 Ezra* 11:1-4.

> On the second night I had a dream: I saw rising from the sea an eagle that had twelve feathered wings and three heads. I saw it spread its wings over the whole earth, and all the winds of heaven blew upon it, and the clouds were gathered around it. I saw that out of its wings there grew opposing wings; but they became little, puny wings. But its heads were at rest; the middle head was larger than the other heads, but it too was at rest with them.

Other than the obvious reference to Rome, the imagery is very difficult to interpret. Ezra himself is perplexed and needs the help of Uriel, his angelic interpreter, to decipher some meaning (12:10-36). The primary piece of information is that the wings and heads are

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[291] Warren Carter, "Are There Imperial Texts in the Class? Intertextual Eagles and Matthean Eschatology as 'Lights Out' Time for Imperial Rome (Matt 24:27-31)," *JBL* 122 (2003): 467-87. The consensus view of the passage, e.g., W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997), 3:355-56, is that "the coming of the Son of man will be as public and obvious as eagles or vultures [ἀετοί] circling over [συναχθήσονται] carrion [πτῶμα]." The strength of Carter's argument against the consensus is that, 1) despite a common assertion, ἀετός is not a term for "vulture" (γύψ) but is a term for "eagle"; 2) the verb συνάγω is here in the passive voice and the passive of συνάγω often appears in eschatological contexts where the subject is being gathered for judgment in the LXX and the New Testament, and 3) πτῶμα rarely stands for carrion in the LXX or the New Testament (only in Job 15:23). He also points to the persistent image of the eagle as an imperial power judged by the Divine Warrior. Thus, Carter understands the passage as an assertion of Rome's defeat at the hand of the Divine Warrior at the Parousia.

[292] Carter, "Imperial," 474-76.

[293] Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 161, who also notes a third symbol, Esau, in *4 Ezra* 6:8-10. Gerson Cohen, "Esau as a Symbol in Early Medieval Thought," in *Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies* (ed. Alexander Altmann; Studies and Texts 7; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 19-20, notes this reference makes it the earliest to equate Esau with Rome, though he finds rabbinic evidence for the equation as early as the middle of the second century. Cf., Mireille Hadas-Lebel, "Jacob et Esaü ou Israël et Rome dans le Talmud et le Midrash," *RHR* 201 (1984): 372-75.

kings and thus represent in some way the leadership of the Roman Empire in some manner.[294] The spreading of its wings pictures: "the shadow of its [the eagle's] rule over the whole earth."[295]

Also of note is the arrival of another creature, a lion. In *4 Ezra* 11:39, the lion speaks to the eagle about the eagle's purpose.

> Are you not the one that remains of the four beasts that I had made to reign in my world, so that the end of my times might come through them?

The lion is a messianic figure who pronounces an indictment on the eagle.[296] The lion informs the eagle that the Most High has decreed that the eagle's time is at an end (11:44). The eagle's judgment appears in 11:45-46, where the Lion asserts that "you, eagle, will surely disappear." In *4 Ezra* 12:11-12, Ezra receives an interpretation of the vision that indicates the importance of where the imagery has its source.

> The eagle that you saw coming up from the sea is the fourth kingdom that appeared in a vision to your brother Daniel. But it was not explained to him as I now explain to you or have explained it.

The eagle is the fourth beast of Dan 7. In Dan 7, as we saw, Daniel did not identify the type of beast, only that it was a monstrosity that was "terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong" and that it had ten horns. As the whole of Dan 7–12 made clear, the fourth beast was a fearsome representation of the Greeks and the various horns represented rulers. The "little horn" that forced its way through at the expense of three other horns was Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

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[294] For an overview of attempts to place the depictions of the wings and heads within the history of the Roman Empire, see Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 363-65.

[295] Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 349.

[296] Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 351.

The eagle of *4 Ezra* becomes a new reading of the fourth beast, made clear by Uriel. Daniel's fourth beast has become something that was not told to Daniel (*4 Ezra* 12:12). As an eagle, it is now clear that the fourth beast, the eschatological final kingdom, is not Greece, but Rome. Like the vision in Dan 7, the monstrous nature of the fourth beast, so contrary to divine order, indicates its hostility to God. This is stated clearly by the lion in *4 Ezra* 11:43, where, like Dan 7, it is the insolence and pride of the eagle that leads it to overstep its divinely appointed role. However, the presence of an interpretation within the text guides the reader beyond the familiar motif of the arrogant beast meeting its eschatological demise. Longenecker argues that the concept of the salvation of a *remnant* of Israel at the demise of Rome (12:34) is the key feature of the interpretation of the vision since 1) this idea does not appear in the vision proper, 2) is prominent in the second and third visions in *4 Ezra*, and 3) is the very last interpretive feature the interpreter explains to Ezra.[297] Thus, we again see an example of a familiar motif, here accompanied with fantastic imagery, adapted in a way that draws attention to an unexpected feature.

The second primary symbol of Rome in *4 Ezra* is the city of Babylon (cf. *4 Ezra* 3:1, 27-29; 12:40, 50).[298] Babylon as a symbol of Rome appears primarily in apocalyptic and prophetic literature that postdates the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 C.E. and in later rabbinic literature.[299] The significance of Babylon as a symbol for Rome lies partly

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[297] Bruce W. Longenecker, *Eschatology and the Covenant: A Comparison of 4 Ezra and Romans 1–11* (JSNTSup 57; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 115-17.

[298] Philip F. Esler, "Rome in Apocalyptic and Rabbinic Literature," in The Gospel of Matthew in its Roman Imperial Context (ed. John Riches and David C. Sim; JSNTSup 276; London: T. & T. Clark, 2005), 21-22. Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 56, notes the interesting feature of Babylon in *4 Ezra* as serving the narrative by placing Ezra in the city of his appearance in Hebrew Scripture (Ezra 7:6) and as a symbol of the work's own milieu, as "[d]oubtless the words spoken against Babylon are really directed against Rome."

[299] Harald Fuchs, *Der geistige Widerstand gegen Rom in der antiken Welt* (2d ed.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1964), 62-73. Note, however, 1QpHab II, 10-15.

in both empires' role as destroyers of Jerusalem and the Temple. Thus, Rome, like Babylon, destroyed the Temple of God and God, like he did with Babylon, will destroy Rome.[300]

4.4. *Summary*

Given the authoritative nature of the Hebrew Scriptures, it comes as no surprise to see considerable continuity between the Scriptures and early Jewish literature in the portrayal of the Divine Warrior and related imagery. Many of the same themes continue, such as the Divine Warrior's power and strength, his deliverance of his people through his direct involvement or by empowering his people in Holy War. We see again the presence of the divine army. The nations continue to demonstrate hostility toward God's people and, when God uses them to discipline his own people, they overstep their mandate and bring upon themselves the threat of Divine Wrath.

There were also a number of ways that texts adapted Divine Warrior imagery in early Judaism. The marked interest in eschatology led to a number of developments. I discussed in this regard the eschatological theophany in *1 En.* 1:3-9, where features such as an eschatological judgment on unfaithful Israel, angelic beings, and hostile nations were tied to Hebrew Scripture and other unknown sources. Within this theophany, the blessing of *1 En.* 1:8 promised the faithful divine protection from God's wrath as he marched forth to tread upon his enemies.

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[300] Hadas-Lebel, *Jerusalem*, 463-68, notes that post-70 C.E. apocalyptic literature (*4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch*, Revelation) used Babylon as a symbol of Rome's impending destruction but coupled it with other images to highlight Rome as the final kingdom at the end of the age. Richard J. Bauckham, "The Martyrdom of Peter in Early Christian Literature," *ANRW* 26.1: 542-43, notes that the portrayal of the destruction of Babylon in Hebrew Scripture indicates that the prophetic/apocalyptic descriptions need not necessarily imply the destruction of the Temple as a necessary connection; the imagery could be derive from scriptural prophecy about Babylon's destruction alone.

Angelic beings were the subject of increased speculation and early Jewish writers made use of them in a variety of ways. I noted here the variety of ways the angelic army appeared, noting the impact of the Greco-Roman concept of omens in 2 Maccabees. Another development related to the hierarchy of angels, as the presence of individual exalted archangels as the exalted heads of the angelic army became prominent. The period also witnessed an increasing speculation concerning the ideal Davidic king, a messiah who either leads God's people in the eschatological battle or defeats the eschatological foe on his own. Here I noted the use of Divine Warrior imagery in creative ways. For instance, we saw in *Ps. Sol.* 17:21-25 how the psalmist's prayer appeared, on the surface, to be a request for the Messianic Warrior to exact revenge for the oppression of the faithful. However, a closer reading indicated that the prayer actually calls for the Messianic Warrior to impose divine order. The result of this imposition of order would have clear consequences for the enemies of God and his people, but these consequences were an aspect of the expression of divine order, not the desire for revenge.

I also noted the beginning of a motif related to the imagery of Holy War, the concept of martyrdom as victorious battle. I observed in 2 Maccabees the importance of the faithful martyrs in turning God from acting through Antiochus IV Epiphanes against disobedient Israel to God acting against Antiochus for his arrogant killing of the martyrs. The martyrs were thus able to instigate the return of God's people to a status of blessing and turn God's hostility against Antiochus.

Depictions of the enemies of the Divine Warrior also demonstrated considerable development, as the concept of a personified leader of the hostile powers, Belial, or Satan, becomes prominent, along with a demonic horde. While this figure is hostile to God's

people, he is never more powerful than God, who makes use of Satan and his allies for his own purposes. An important development in the depiction of temporal enemies was the portrayal of the wicked tyrant, often the ruler of the final hostile kingdom before the shift of the ages. The nations continued as an enemy, with works from later in the period specifying Rome as the final kingdom before the end.

In these discussions, I drew attention to a number of features of note. One especially important feature is the way texts in early Judaism could creatively combine elements and imagery from a variety of scriptural passages in order to draw out features of the Divine or Messianic Warrior. Though this feature was ubiquitous during the period, I called special attention to 1Q28b V, 20-29, for the manner in which it took a recognized messianic text as a base, Isa 11: 1-5, and fleshed out the imagery by adding details from a number of other scriptural passages. An important consideration here is the way the blessing of 1Q28b V, 20-29 used the imagery of Isa 30:12-17 in the background as a way to emphasize the overturning of the current hostility of God by the eschatological renewal of the covenant in the person of the messiah.

Another common feature was the turning of evil back upon itself. This could be in a Deuteronomic sense, such as the expansion of the story of the judge Jair in Judg 3:3-5 in *L.A.B.* 38. Jair had condemned seven men who refused to bow to Baal to a fiery death. But this sentence was never carried out, as God sent an angel to slay Jair with fire.

I also touched on a number of passages that continued a motif from Hebrew Scripture of God using his enemies for his own purpose. In early Judaism, we see this expanded to include hostile forces, such as Satan, ancient foes such as the sea, and the demonic realm. Though the sense of dualism in this period was prominent, there is never a sense where any

force of darkness even begins to approach the level of God's equal. God makes of any enemy as he sees fit. This takes place even to the point where the hostile forces actively—albeit unwittingly—participate in their own demise.

CHAPTER FIVE

Divine Warrior Imagery and Revelation

The book of Revelation, without question, offers some of the most graphic depictions of divine warfare in the New Testament. The book claims to be the visions of a man named John,[1] whose allegiance to Jesus Christ had brought him to the island of Patmos, probably as an exile.[2] At the command of Christ, John then sent the work to seven churches located in the Roman province of Asia. Most scholars date the book of Revelation to the late first century, probably toward the very end of the Emperor Domitian's reign (81–96 C.E.).[3]

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[1] For a thorough discussion on the authorship of Revelation, see David E. Aune, *Revelation* (3 vols.; WBC 52A-C; Nashville: Nelson, 1999), xlvii-lvi, who finds that the only certain conclusion in the identification of the author is that in the received text, the author identifies himself as John, though there is no evidence to tie Revelation to a particular John or even to identify Revelation as pseudepigraphal. Aune, *Revelation*, 1:li, does mention that the tradition of John the Apostle is as early as the mid-second century C.E. statement of Justin, *Dial.* 81.4. Finally, Aune, ibid., l, suggests that "there is strong evidence to suggest the author was a Palestinian Jew." Since R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of Saint John* (ICC; 2 vols.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1920), 1:xliv, this has been the prevailing scholarly opinion. Note, however, Robert K. MacKenzie, *The Author of the Apocalypse: A Review of the Prevailing Hypothesis of Jewish-Christian Authorship* (Mellen Biblical Press Series 51; Lewiston, N. Y.: Mellen Biblical, 1997), who suggests that the three basic pillars of the prevailing view, 1) John's use of Jewish customs and traditions; 2) John's use of Greek suggests Aramaic as his first language; and, especially, 3) understanding John's scriptural allusions as coming from Hebrew texts as opposed to the LXX, are not as clear as Charles asserts. MacKenzie, ibid., 166-69, concludes that the evidence is vague enough to allow for the suggestion that the author is neither Jewish nor from Palestine and may be a Gentile from Asia.

[2] On the possible reasons for John's presence on Patmos, see Aune, *Revelation*, 1:79-80, who discusses Roman practices of banishment and exile and then concludes that John probably had been exiled to Patmos as opposed to traveling there to either preach the gospel or to receive revelation.

[3] On the date of Revelation, see G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdman's, 1999), 4-27, who finds the weight of the evidence pointing to a date late in Domitian's reign, following a long tradition that dates back to the late second century C.E. (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.30.3). Contra J. Christian Wilson, "The Problem of the Domitianic Date of Revelation," *NTS* 39 (1993): 587-605, who argues for the composition of Revelation during Nero's reign. See also Thomas Witulski, *Die Johannesoffenbarung und Kaiser Hadrian: Studien zur Datierung der neutestamentlichen Apokalypse* (FRLANT 221; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 219-37, who sees events from the life of the emperor Hadrian (117-138) as best fitting the portrayal of the first beast of

The book of Revelation opens with an incredible vision of Jesus Christ who commands John to write seven letters to seven churches in the Roman province of Asia. The letters, in all likelihood, respond to issues facing the Christian congregations of these cities, though the broad scope of the letters makes them adaptable to a wider audience.[4] John follows the letters with a series of visions of "what must take place after these things" (4:1). The visions blend together scriptural, early Christian, and Greco-Roman allusions and imagery to give a dramatic account of the end of the age and the subsequent shift to the New Age in order to challenge the recipients to faithfulness in the midst of various pressures that could cause them to set aside their witness for Christ. At the same time, the visionary depicts himself standing in the tradition of the prophets of Hebrew Scripture.[5]

John's use of scriptural imagery is unique in the New Testament since he offers a prophetic "revelation of Jesus Christ" (Rev 1:1; ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) that speaks with authority in its own right.[6] Thus, one aspect of John's scriptural imagery is that it asserts the same type of authority for Revelation that it does in its scriptural context.[7] In fact, the imagery of Revelation comes together in a manner that makes the book what Bauckham calls the "climax" of prophecy.

Rev 13, the most important aspect of his attempt to date the book of Revelation to sometime between 132–135. As with the issue of authorship, the issue of dating is not crucial in my discussion, but I assume the late first century date.

[4] David A. deSilva, *Seeing Things John's Way: The Rhetoric of the Book of Revelation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 63.

[5] Ian K. Boxall, "Exile, Prophet, Visionary: Ezekiel's Influence on the Book of Revelation," in *The Book of Ezekiel and Its Influence* (ed. Henk Jan de Jonge and Johannes Tromp; Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2007), 158-60, who sees John as primarily "assuming Ezekiel's prophetic mantle."

[6] On the way John develops the authority of his prophetic voice, see deSilva, *Seeing*, 17-45.

[7] DeSilva, *Seeing*, 129-30.

> John was writing what he understood to be a work of prophetic scripture, the climax of prophetic revelation, which gathered up the prophetic meaning of the Old Testament scriptures and disclosed the way in which it was being and was to be fulfilled in the last days.[8]

Thus, the authoritative nature of Hebrew Scripture is a key issue for an audience's perception of Revelation. Allusions to imagery outside of scripture, such as the Roman emperor cult or divine prodigies, are subsumed and transformed by the overwhelming number of allusions to an authoritative text. The authoritative text is transformed as well, with the new text not only claiming the same kind of authority, but also presenting itself as the final fulfillment of the prophetic word.[9]

Though many describe the work as a challenge for Christians to persevere in the face of some kind of persecution, it is notable that five of the seven letters focus more on threats of compromise from within than with the threat of violence from the outside.[10]

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[8] Richard Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993), xi.

[9] See chapter one for a detailed discussion on the relationship of Revelation to Hebrew Scripture.

[10] The view that John's visions arise from an era of fierce persecution under Domitian largely stems from the perception of Domitian as the instigator of state-sponsored persecution of Christians. Near-contemporary historians such as Tacitus, Pliny and Suetonius Domitian's outline Domitian's cruelty and megalomania and his antagonistic attitude toward Christians due to their failure to participate in the emperor cult is feature of early Christian portrayals of Domitian. See, e.g., Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 32-33. This view largely held sway until the 1980s. Leonard L. Thompson, *The Book of Revelation: Apocalypse and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 95-115, argues convincingly that the portrayal of Domitian as a cruel, mad, and debauched, has its source in historians writing during the reign of Trajan (98–117) who seek to elevate Trajan at Domitian's expense. Thompson, ibid., 95, less convincingly concludes that, most probably, "the seer and his audience did not live in a world of conflict, tension and crisis. Christians lived quiet lives, not much different from other provincials." On the portrayal of Domitian, note also the historians' use of the Greco-Roman literary and rhetorical motif of the tyrant I discussed in the previous chapter. See here J. Roger Dunkle, "The Rhetorical Tyrant in Roman Historiography: Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus," 65 *CW* (1971): 18-19, where he discusses how Tacitus portrays Domitian "in the worst possible colors." However, Dunkle, idem, also cautions, "The vices of the rhetorical tyrant are indeed rhetorical commonplaces but they also describe rather well the way real tyrants of antiquity behaved." Thus, Allen Brent, *The Imperial Cult and the Development of Church Order: Concepts and Images of Authority in Paganism and Early Christianity before the Age of Cyprian* (Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 45; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 164-209, counters that Domitian did indeed change and heighten the status of the emperor cult, making Christians who refused to participate targets of local persecution as a hindrance to divine order. He adds that *1 Clement* hints at this in Asia for the very time Revelation was written. Thus, Brent sees Domitian as a "second

While themes of martyrdom and endurance are prominent in the visions—the most prominent sin committed by the nations is shedding of the blood of the faithful—the book of Revelation is probably best understood as what Talbert calls "anti-assimilation literature."[11] In fact, the seven letters deal with a range of problems, such as hostility from the surrounding culture, hostility from "traditional" Jewish sects, the presence of divergent teaching within the congregations, and economic issues related to a society that often wedded commerce and religion.[12] Whether the call to endurance confronts the threat of death, hostility, false teaching, or the temptation to align with the present culture, the call of Revelation is ultimately a call to purity, a call epitomized by those who maintain their testimony even when it cost them their lives.

John fleshes out the impetus behind this call in the visions that follow the letters, painting a fantastic picture of a time of great tribulation before the final battle that initiates the reign of Christ. The visions describe the end of history as a period highlighted by the active involvement of God as the Divine Warrior and of Jesus Christ as the Messianic Divine Warrior, as both unleash their wrath against the enemies of God, his Christ, and his people. Such conflict is inevitable when the divine perspective on

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Nero." However, Brent's assertion of the persecution of Christians during the 90s, even in Asia, is inferred from the way he reads the evidence. More balanced—and likely correct—is deSilva, *Seeing*, 50-55, who suggests John writes from a climate of hostility toward Christians that could easily devolve into persecution.

[11] Charles H. Talbert, *The Apocalypse: A Reading of the Apocalypse of John* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 11-12. Similarly, Robyn J. Whitaker, "Falling Stars and Rising Smoke: Imperial Apotheosis and Idolatry in Revelation," in *Imagery in the Book of Revelation* (ed. Michael Labahn and Outi Lehtipuu; CBET 60; Leuvan: Peeters, 2011), 199, asserts, "To preserve the counter-cultural worship and theology of the Christian church, the writer of Revelation proffers Christians a critique of the prevailing culture's idolatrous worship of emperors in a subtle narrative encoded with Hebrew Bible and Greco-Roman imagery. John's strong rhetorical critique unveils the poverty of Imperial apotheosis when juxtaposed with the richness of worshipping the one true God."

[12] DeSilva, *Seeing*, 48-50.

power, authority, and culture stands beside earthly expressions of power, authority, and culture.

The issue at hand is whether or not John's graphic language of divine warfare indicates anything more than God simply being *more* powerful than those who are hostile to him, his Christ, and his people. Moore suggests that this is exactly the case.

> Note in particular . . . that the promised reward for faithful Christian discipleship in Revelation is joint rulership of the empire soon destined to succeed Rome, a messianic empire established by means of mass-slaughter on a surreal scale calculated to make the combined military campaigns of Julius Caesar, Augustus and all of their successors pale in comparison. All of this suggests the Revelation's overt resistance to and expressed revulsion toward Roman imperial ideology is surreptitiously compromised and undercut by covert compliance and attraction.[13]

Is this true? Or does the way we have seen Divine Warrior imagery employed offer the means to understand the book differently?

In this chapter, I discuss the various ways that John receives, reuses, and adapts Divine Warrior imagery in the book of Revelation for his authorial audience. Specifically, I note John's use of Divine Warrior imagery as he reads it from Hebrew Scripture and in light of how early Jewish literature may indicate ways the imagery was adapted in new contexts. I also consider the use of Divine Warrior imagery in light of John's multitude of scriptural allusions and adaptations of Greco-Roman imagery. Roughly along the lines of the previous chapter, I begin with a discussion of God as the Divine Warrior of Revelation. I then turn to an investigation of Jesus Christ as the Messianic Divine Warrior of Revelation. Following this, I look at the allies of the Divine Warrior in Revelation, both angelic and human. I end my analysis with a discussion of

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[13] Stephen D. Moore, "Revelation," in *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings* (ed. Fernando F. Segovia and R. S. Sugirtharajah; The Bible and Postcolonialism 13; New York: T. & T. Clark, 2007), 447-48.

the enemies of the Divine Warrior in Revelation, dividing this between the heavenly and the earthly realm as well. Finally, I draw all of these features into a conclusion concerning the depiction of the violence of the Divine Warrior in the book of Revelation.

5.1. *God as Divine Warrior*

God is active as the Divine Warrior throughout the book of Revelation, though not always in an explicit fashion. John describes much of the direct activity of God through the means of a literary feature known as the *divine passive*.[14] The divine passive has its roots in formal courtly language from Hebrew Scripture, where its use indicates respect for the sovereign.[15] In early Judaism, the divine passive is a common feature of apocalyptic literature, often emphasizing the certainty of an event by foregrounding that event rather than the actor.[16] At the same time, by not specifying the actor there can be a further sense of affirming God as the ultimate source of what takes place in the visions, whether he is the actor, the designator or the one who gives of permission.

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[14] Commentators are quick to tie the divine passive to the specific third person passives of δίδωμι, ἐδόθη or ἐδόθησαν, forms that often occur in Revelation in connection with the activity of God (Rev 6:2, 4, 8, 11; 7:2; 8:3; 9:1, 3, 5; 11:1, 2; 13:5, 7, 14, 15; 16:8; 19:8; 20:4), e.g., James L. Resseguie, *The Revelation of John: A Narrative Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 49-50. Other examples of passive constructions also point to God as the actor (e.g., 11:19, where the temple of God in heaven ἠνοίγη, "is opened").

[15] Christian Macholz, "Das 'Passivum divinum,' seine Anfänge im Alten Testament und der 'Hofstil,'" *ZNW* 81 (1990): 247-53.

[16] Marius Reiser, *Jesus and Judgment: The Eschatological Proclamation in its Jewish Christian Context* (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 272. Reiser suggests that the passive voice in such contexts is *not* a circumlocution to avoid the naming of God. Rather, the divine passive is a true passive in that it places the emphasis on the object rather than the subject. Contra Joachim Jeremias, *The Proclamation of Jesus* (vol. 1 of *New Testament Theology*; trans. John Bowden; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), 13, who sees the divine passive's origin in apocalyptic literature where it can serve two primary functions: "It was not only out of reverence, to avoid uttering the name of God, but served above all as a way of describing in veiled terms God's mysterious activity in the end-time."

In this section, I discuss the Divine Warrior as the sender of prodigies that warn the inhabitants of the earth of his impending wrath, as well as the signs that indicate the assurance of his activity and control of history. I then look specifically at examples where God exhibits direct control over events in Revelation as a means of assurance that God is in control even in the midst of great hostility toward his people. Finally, I investigate the final gathering of the nations to battle the people of God in Rev 20. The imagery of fire descending from heaven and devouring the gathered nations is the specific focus of my discussion here.

5.1.1. *Prodigies and Signs of the Wrath of the Divine Warrior*

A prominent feature of the book of Revelation is the constant disruption of the normal order of the heavens and the earth in a manner that warns the inhabitants of the earth of God's impending wrath.[17] In some cases, the prodigies expose the nature of the hearts of the ones who are the targets of the prodigies. In the book of Revelation, these harbingers often take the form of weather-related phenomena in a manner that invokes the ominous threat of the anger of the Divine Warrior. Thus, it is significant that weather phenomena first appear at the throne of God in Rev 4.

After the vision of Christ in Rev 1 and the letters to the churches in Rev 2–3, Rev 4 begins a new vision where John sees a door open into heaven and he is instantly transported there (Rev 4:1-2).[18] Once in heaven, he sees God seated on an incredible

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[17] According to John M. Court, *Myth and History in the Book of Revelation* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1979), 46, "ominous happenings of every kind" are one of the initial indicators of the approaching Eschaton in Jewish apocalyptic writings.

[18] Aune, *Revelation*, 1:281-82 notes the prevalence of an open door with regard to Greco-Roman epiphanies and cultic inscriptions as a way to refer to the heavens as accessible to the visionary.

throne (4:2).[19] Around this throne are twenty-four other beings seated upon their own thrones (4:3-4). John's next impression is both visual and audible.

> And from the throne, lightnings (ἀστραπαὶ), crashes (φωναὶ),[20] and thunders (βρονταί) went out (Rev 4:5).[21]

The same formula of lightnings, crashes, and thunders appears three more times in the book of Revelation, each time with increasing intensity.[22]

> And the angel took the censer and filled it from the fire of the altar and threw it on the earth and there were thunders, crashes, lightning and an earthquake (σεισμός) (Rev 8:5).

> And the temple of God in heaven was opened and the Ark of the Covenant was seen in his temple. And there were lightnings, crashes, thunders, an earthquake, and great hail (χάλαζα μεγάλη) (Rev 11:19).

> And the seventh angel threw his bowl into the air and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne saying, "it is done." And there were lightnings and crashes and thunders, and a great earthquake took place, unlike any from when humanity came to the earth was it so great. And the great city was split into three parts and the cities of the nations fell and Babylon the great was remembered before God in order to give to her the cup of the wine of the anger of his wrath. All the islands fled and no mountain could be found. Great hailstones (χάλαζα μεγάλη), about one talent (ταλαντιαία),[23] came down from heaven upon the people (Rev 16:17-21a).

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[19] See Albrecht Scriba, *Des Geschichte des Motivkomplexes Theophanie: Seine Elemente, Einbindung in Geschehensabläufe und Verwendungsweisen in altisraelitischer, frühjüdischer und frühchristlicher Literatur* (FRLANT 167; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), 103, on the imagery of God seated on the throne indicating judgment.

[20] Aune, *Revelation*, 1:294, notes that in this type of theophanic context, φωνή is virtually synonymous with βρονταί.

[21] Unless otherwise noted, all translations of the book of Revelation are my own.

[22] Bauckham, *Climax*, 202-03.

[23] J. Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (AB 38; New York: Doubleday, 1975), 265, who translates ταλαντιαία as "hundredweight," states that the talent weighed anywhere between one hundred eight to one hundred thirty pounds.

These final three examples all appear in conjunction with the seventh and last of the series of which they are a part, whether that be the seals, trumpets, or bowls.[24] In Rev 8:5, right after the silence following the opening of the seventh seal, the same phenomena from 4:5 appear, though in a slightly different order (thunders, crashes, lightnings) and with the addition of an earthquake. The imagery immediately precedes the seven trumpets in 8:6.

In Rev 11:19, the lightnings, crashes, thunders, and earthquake appear after the blowing of the seventh trumpet, the announcement of the imminent reign of God (11:15). In this instance, "great hail" (χάλαζα μεγάλη) follows the earthquake. The weather phenomena then lead directly into the appearance of the two signs in heaven that lead to the casting of the dragon to the earth in Rev 12.

Finally, in Rev 16:17-21a, the weather phenomena appear as an effect of the pouring of the seventh bowl into the air (16:17). Lightning, crashes, and thunder appear in response to the pouring of the bowl. Following these, there is an earthquake of epic proportions. John tells us this earthquake is the greatest in human history, resulting in the splitting of "the great city" (ἡ πόλις ἡ μεγάλη) into thirds, the falling of the cities of the nations, and the announcement of the falling of Babylon (16:19). Parts of nature react in terror: the islands flee and the mountains cannot be found (16:20). The outpouring of the seventh bowl concludes with massive hailstones—"great hail weighing a talent" (χάλαζα μεγάλη ὡς ταλαντιαία)—raining down upon the earth (16:21). As the hail falls upon humans, they curse God for the severity of the onslaught.

[24] Bauckham, *Climax*, 7-8.

The connection of meteorological phenomena such as lightning, thunder, earthquakes, and hail to theophanies from Hebrew Scripture—especially the Sinai theophany of Exod 19:16—is readily recognized.[25] These episodes also allude to other passages from Hebrew Scripture, with Ezekiel most prominent.[26] The phenomena are also prominent in theophanies in early Jewish texts as well.[27] Finally, such phenomena also form part of the panoply of Greco-Roman deities, especially Zeus/Jupiter.[28]

Less often noted with regard to these prodigies is that Greco-Roman prodigies are often warnings of divine displeasure.[29] This is significant in that three of the throne-related phenomena appear in contexts that place them toward the end of their series and thus ever closer to the end of the age.[30] Thus, the appearance of meteorological phenomena is not necessarily a judgment in itself, though they would warn of the inevitability of the coming final judgment.

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[25] E.g., Bauckham, *Climax*, 202. I include earthquakes as weather phenomena because the modern dichotomy between atmospheric and seismological phenomena did not exist in the ancient world. According to Liba Chaia Taub, *Ancient Meteorology* (Sciences of Antiquity; London: Routledge, 2003), 2-3, Greeks and Romans understood earthquakes, storms, and comets as meteorological phenomena.

[26] Bauckham, *Climax*, 203-04.

[27] E.g., Bauckham, *Climax*, 202-03, notes the appearance of crashings, thunders, and lightnings in *Jub.* 2:2 and calls the three phenomena part of an apparent "stereotyped phrase."

[28] John Pairman Brown, *Sacred Institutions with Roman Counterparts* (vol. 2 of *Israel and Hellas*; BZAW 276; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000), 54-80.

[29] On Greco-Roman meteorology and the anger of the gods, see the summary in Agathe Thornton, *The Living Universe: Gods and Men in Virgil's Aeneid* (Mnemosyne bibliotecha classica Batava Supplementum 46; Leiden: Brill, 1976), 156-57. On Greco-Roman perceptions of lightning and thunder, see Eugene S. McCarthy, "Classical Weather Lore of Thunder and Lightning (Concluded)," *Classical Weekly* 25.25 (May 1932): 212-16. On Greco-Roman perceptions of earthquakes, see Eugene S. McCarthy, "Clouds, Rainbows, Weathergalls, Comets, and Earthquakes as Weather Prophets in Greek and Latin Writers," *Classical Weekly* 23.2 (October 1929): 13-15. On Greco-Roman perceptions of hail, see Eugene S. McCarthy, "Greek and Roman Weather Lore of Two Destructive Agents, Hail and Drought," *Classical Weekly* 28.1 (October 1934): 1-7, and ibid., 28.2 (October 1934): 212-16.

[30] Contra Beale, *Revelation*, 844-45, who understands Rev 16:17-21 as a description of the final judgment.

If the prodigies are harbingers of judgment yet to come, this draws attention to the response of humanity to the great hail of Rev 16:21b.

> And the people blasphemed God because of the plague of hail, because this plague was so incredibly great.

Though humanity understands the plague has a divine source, the race's ingrained hostility toward God dictates their response. This reflects concepts that we noted in the previous chapter, such as *Ps. Sol.* 17:25, where the threat of the Messianic Warrior causes the nations to flee his presence and the thoughts of their hearts convict the sinners; their actions reveal who they are. A similar theme appears in 2 Thess 1:5-10, where the actions of those who afflict the Christians is the evidence that the persecutors do not know God, that they are disobedient to the gospel of Jesus Christ.[31] In each case, the response to the presence of God, his messiah, or his people reveals the adversaries for what they are. In Rev 16:21, the people respond to the warning prodigy of the massive hail with blasphemy, exposing them as aligned with the beast.

Prodigies also appear in other places without a direct connection to the throne of God. In Rev 6:12-14, the Lamb opens the sixth seal and a number of prodigies follow.

> And I saw as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake (σεισμὸς μέγας)[32] and the sun was as black as hair sackcloth and the entire moon was like blood. The stars of heaven fell to the earth like the fig tree dropping its late fruit to the ground due to a shaking from a great wind. The heavens disappeared like a scroll being rolled up and all of the islands and mountains were moved from their places.

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[31] In 1 Thess 1:5-10, Divine Warrior's vengeance is *not* directly related to the affliction of the Christians. Rather the willingness of the Thessalonians' opponents to engage in such behavior demonstrates their rebellion and arrogance against God and Christ. The unbelievers deny the Lordship of Christ and his justice by afflicting his people (cf. Matt 10:34-36).

[32] Aune, *Revelation*, 2:413, states that this probably refers to an earthquake but could indicate the shaking of the heavens and earth (cf. Hag 2:6-7, 21-22).

The positioning of the prodigies as the sixth seal indicates that they are not part of the final judgment but are still a dramatic warning of its certain coming.[33] Once again, the list of prodigies is thick in its scriptural imagery, leaning heavily on Day of the Lord texts.[34] We also noted a number of similar features in early Jewish literature as well.[35] The Romans considered these kinds of prodigies *auspicia oblativa* or, later, as *signa oblativa*, unexpected or unsought prodigies that would require interpretation and expiation.[36] More specifically, such items were expressions of *divorum irae*, "unnatural occurrences thought to have been provoked by some flaw in ritual or other sleight to a deity . . . a violation of the *pax deorum*."[37] Here the prodigies invoke the coming of the Day of the Lord.

Revelation makes use of repetition on a variety of levels as different scriptural passages, images, and themes appear on multiple occasions throughout the book.[38] In

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[33] Aune, *Revelation*, 2:419. Contra Beale, 398-99, who only considers the imagery in light of the consummation of the Day of the Lord.

[34] The primary passages behind the imagery are Joel 2:31 (3:4 MT) and Isa 34:4. Beale, *Revelation*, 396, considers the passage to be built upon "stock-in-trade OT imagery for the dissolution of the cosmos" and lists a number of other passages with similar imagery such as Isa 13:10-13; 24:1-6, 19-23; Ezek 32:6-8; Joel 2:10; and Hab 3:6-11.

[35] Cf. *T. Mos.* 10:5

[36] For the similarity between these types of prodigies and early Jewish apocalyptic signs, see Klaus Berger, "Hellenistisch-heidnische Prodigien und die Vorzeichen in der jüdischen und christlichen Apokalyptik," *ANRW* 23.2:1455-59.

[37] Andrew Roy Dyck, *A Commentary on Cicero, de Legibus* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 307. For a discussion of Greek thought, as exemplified in Herodotus, concerning miracles in nature as divinely caused and as omens, see Thomas Harrison, *Divinity and History: The Religion of Herodotus* (Oxford Classical Monographs; Oxford: Clarendon, 2000), 92-101, 137-38.

[38] Diana Jill Kirby, "Repetition in the Book of Revelation" (Ph.D. diss., The Catholic University of America, 2009), 148-83, finds seven ways the book of Revelation uses repetition: 1) to highlight or draw attention, 2) to establish or fix something in the mind of the reader, 3) to emphasize the importance of something, 4) to create expectation, 5) to cause retrospection, 6) to unify disparate elements, and 7) to build patterns of associations or draw contrasts. Kirby draws her paradigm from Janice Capel Anderson, *Matthew's Narrative Web: Over and Over Again* (JSNTSup 91; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 44. As with many other aspects involved in the reading of Revelation, the use of repetition is often multivalent.

this regard, Rev 6:12-14 has two notable similarities to one of the throne theophany passages, Rev 16:17-21. In both passages the earthquake is great (6:12; 16:18; μέγας) and the islands and mountains move (6:14; 16:20). However, the earthquake in Rev 16:18 is more than great, it is οἷος οὐκ ἐγένετο ἀφ' οὗ ἄνθρωπος ἐγένετο ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. Meanwhile, in 6:14, all of the mountains and islands κινοῦνται, "are moved" while in 16:21, they φεύγουσιν, "flee." In each case, the passage closer to the end of the book, in Rev 16:17-21 intensifies the same types of prodigies, thus increasing the intensity of the warning of the ominous impending wrath of the Divine Warrior.[39]

A second intensification that happens from Rev 6:12-14 to Rev 16:17-21 is the human response to the prodigies. In Rev 6:15-17, all classes of people react with fear to the appearance of the prodigies.

> And the kings of the earth, the important people, the military commanders, the rich, the mighty, even all the slaves and free, hid themselves in caves and in the rocks of the mountains and they said to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of the one sitting upon the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the Great Day of his wrath has come and who is able to stand?"

The people's fear makes them *want* the mountains and rocks to fall on them so that they can hide from the wrath of the Divine Warrior and the Lamb. In 16:21, however, when the hail falls the people blaspheme in anger against the Divine Warrior.

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[39] In drawing my conclusions, I am following the basic structure of Revelation outlined by Bauckham, *Climax*, 1-22. Thus, I see the seventh seal including all of the seven trumpets and the seventh trumpet including all of the seven bowls. The various repetitions, then, are not so much instances of recapitulation but what Mark Seaborn Hall, "The Hook Interlocking Structure of Revelation: The Most Important Verses in the Book and How They May Unify its Structure," *NovT* 43 (2002): 296, calls reiteration ("The book does not recapitulate it recycles and reiterates."). However, Hall's proposal posits two distinct cycles of visions tied together by a "hook interlock" at 10:1–11:18, and the second cycle then composed of three distinct reiterations of the first cycle as different perspectives or "blow ups" of the sixth trumpet (idem, 295-96). I adopt Hall's terminology to indicate the relationship of each successive series to the seventh item of the previous series. In other words, all that follows the opening of the seventh seal until the arrival of the rider on the white horse (19:11) is a reiteration of the seventh seal. Likewise, all that follows the seventh trumpet is a reiteration of the seventh trumpet. The pouring of the seventh bowl, the judgment of Babylon, is the final event before the arrival of the rider of 19:11.

Though numerous other examples could be investigated, one further portent merits investigation as it relates to the activities of God as the Divine Warrior. In Rev 12:1, we find the first of three appearances of a sign in heaven.

> A great sign appeared (σημεῖον μέγα ὤφθη) in the heaven. A woman clothed with the sun, the moon beneath her feet and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.

Almost immediately, Rev 12:3 uses similar language in a way that ties two different signs together.

> Another sign appeared (ὤφθη ἄλλο σημεῖον) in heaven. Look! A great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns, and upon the seven heads, seven diadems.

A similar formula appears once more in Rev 15:1.

> And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous (ἄλλο σημεῖον ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ μέγα καὶ θαυμαστόν). Seven angels having seven last plagues for with them the wrath of God is finished.

These events are different from the previous examples. These are the only prodigies designated as σημεῖον. The sense of the σημεῖον in these examples appears to be more along the line of its use in the LXX, where σημεῖον generally translates אות.[40] In Hebrew Scripture, the sign indicated the certainty of God's involvement, whether through celestial manifestations (e.g., Gen 9:12-13, the sign of the rainbow) or miraculous occurrences (e.g., Exod 3:12, the promise that Israel will worship God "on this mountain"). In this sense, the σημεῖον is "something which is extraordinary and which establishes certainty as a result."[41] For the book of Revelation, the three signs depict

[40] Ford, *Revelation*, 195.

[41] Karl Heinrich Rengstroff, "σημεῖον," *TDNT* 7:220.

"great dramas depicting heavenly reality."[42] Thus, they are a glimpse of the heavenly drama working itself out on earth.[43]

In Rev 12, the two signs, the woman and the dragon, come together to indicate the certain defeat of the ancient enemy of God and the deceiver of humanity.[44] The dragon's hostility for the woman is clear. In 12:4 he sweeps one third of the stars away (note the woman's crown). After his defeat in heaven, he pursues the divinely protected woman (12:13-16), and then makes war against her children (12:17). The fulfillment, as it were, of this sign comes when the dragon, who is ἄλλο σημεῖον (12:3), is locked for eternity in the "lake of fire and sulfur" (20:10; εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρὸς καὶ θείου). The heavenly reality depicted in the sign is the certain end of the deception of humanity.

Meanwhile, the third sign, seven angels with seven trumpets, a "great and marvelous" sign (15:1), is a reprisal of the exodus. The connection to the exodus comes from the reference to the Song of Moses (15:3) and the plagues in the seven bowls (16:1-21).[45] The sign indicates the destruction of the "great city" (16:19).

The three signs depict the certainty of the divine protection of the woman, the total destruction of the great city, and the final banishment of the dragon. The signs give

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[42] Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation* (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 456.

[43] Aune, *Revelation*, 2:679.

[44] While Rev 12:9 specifically identifies the dragon as Satan, John never gives the identity of the woman. Aune, *Revelation*, 2:681, notes six varied interpretations for the woman in the history of interpretation. What is notable here is that the intended readers would have likely made the connection between Satan and the dragon without the specific reference. The only aids in identifying the women are the twelve stars of her crown (12:1) and the clear allusion to her child as the Messiah (12:5). I am inclined to view the woman as Jerusalem or, more likely, Israel, as a symbol of the people of God. Cf. Beale, *Revelation*, 629.

[45] Aune, *Revelation*, 2:863.

confidence to the believers and, in the narrative, terror to their opponents. We saw above that the people also responded to the plague of hail with anger, even in the aftermath of the destruction of the great city.

While all of the various prodigies and signs can have a destructive nature in that those on the earth suffer the effects of the prodigies, the sense of ominous warning stands over the various manifestations. They also serve to reveal the revelation of the nature of those opposed to God and his people through their response to the prodigies. For John's audience, the prodigies are part of a vision of assurance. A prophecy of coming prodigies is an assurance of an end to the current order. At the same time, such a prophecy warns that the present order remains hostile and will only increase its animosity as the end approaches.

5.1.2. *Divine Control of Events*

God as the Divine Warrior also exhibits control over events in a manner very different than a display of warnings and signs. The Divine Warrior works to ensure the outworking of his purpose and the certainty of the end he has appointed. One example of this appears in connection with the beast from the sea in Rev 13:5.

> And it [the beast] was given a mouth speaking proudly (στόμα λαλοῦν μεγάλα) and blasphemously. Authority was given to it for forty-two months.

The passage is a clear allusion to Dan 7:8 (LXX, Theodotian), where the fourth beast has στόμα λαλοῦν μεγάλα, and Dan 7:25, where the beast is given authority over "the holy ones of the Most High" for a time, times, and half a time" (LXX, Theodotian: ἕως καιροῦ καὶ καιρῶν καὶ ἥμισυ καιροῦ).[46] The allusion to Daniel also alerts to the presence of

[46] Aune, *Revelation*, 2:609.

divine passive; God is the one who gives the beast a mouth and authority. The limitation on the beast's authority is a clear indication God has set the limit on the beast's reign.[47] Thus, those caught in the midst of the beast's war on the saints (13:9-10)—which is actually part of the dragon's war on the saints (12:17)—have divine assurance that their sufferings are part of the divine purpose and are divinely delimited. Regardless of how powerful the beast appears, he cannot go beyond the limits of what God has decreed.

Another passage that depicts God's explicit intervention to bring about his purpose is Rev 17: 17. Here we find ten horns—ten kings who receive authority in conjunction with the beast of Rev 17 (17:12; cf. Dan 7:24)—and the lengths these kings are willing to go in their hostility toward God. This hostility, however, serves a divine purpose.

> For God has *put into their hearts* (ἔδωκεν εἰς τὰς καρδίας) to do his purpose (τὴν γνώμην αὐτοῦ), to be of one purpose (μίαν γνώμην) and to give their kingdom to the beast until the words of God are fulfilled (Rev 17:17; my emphasis).

Note first that the statement emphasizes that it is God who directly acts to get the ten kings submit to the beast, a rare example of God as the expressed subject. The horns' unified purpose is thus a product of divine intention.[48] Note here that Rev 17:17 explains the graphic picture in the preceding verse.

> The ten horns that you saw and the beast, they will hate the whore and they will make her desolate and naked. They will eat her flesh and consume her with fire (Rev. 17:16).

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[47] Beale, *Revelation*, 695, who also notes that there is a limitation put on those who would worship the beast in Rev 13:8. Aune, *Revelation*, 2:609, notes that the three different expressions for the same period of time, "time, times, and half a time," "forty-two months," and "three and one half years," all indicate a "divinely restricted period of time (often a limited period of eschatological tribulation)."

[48] According to W. C. van Unnik, "Μία Γνώμη, Apocalypse of John XVII 13, 17," in *Studies in John* (NovTSup 24; Leiden: Brill, 1970), 209-20, the phrase μία γνώμη is a technical term for political leaders coming together for the well being of the state.

The destruction of the whore Babylon comes at the hands of those who had once submitted to her, since she was enthroned upon them (17:3).[49] The beast and the horns hate her and, in hatred, they destroy her, eating her flesh and burning her completely. Here God wields his enemies—the dragon and his allies—as his weapon against another enemy, the whore. In the hands of the Divine Warrior, evil implodes upon itself, devouring itself on the way to its own destruction.

5.1.3. *The Shift of the Ages*

The final passage I discuss in regards to God as the Divine Warrior concerns the final battle before the shift of the ages. The event closes out Rev 20:1-3, the one thousand year binding and imprisonment of the dragon in the Abyss. In 20:1-3, dragon's binding and imprisonment is not punitive; it is preventive. The dragon cannot deceive the nations while he is imprisoned. Then, at the end of the thousand years, the dragon will be released for "a little while" (20:3; μικρὸν χρόνον). What takes place upon the release of the dragon is the subject of 20:7-11.

> When the thousand years are ended Satan will be released from his prison and he will go out to deceive the nations at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, in order to gather them for war. They are as numerous as the sands of the sea. They ascended over the breadth of the earth and they encircled the encampment of the holy ones (τῶν ἁγίων) and the beloved city. Then fire from the heavens came down and devoured them. The devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire where the beast and the false prophet were. They will be tortured day and night, for ever and ever.

The vision depicts the end of active opposition to God as well as the end of the deception of humanity. This final gathering takes places at the end of the messianic

[49] Aune, *Revelation* 3:934.

kingdom inaugurated after the defeat of the beast by the rider on the white horse.[50] It is Satan's final attempt to raise an army to overthrow God's people. After his release, the devil raises his army by deceiving the nations into gathering "from the four corners of the earth" and encircling the encampment of God's people. The scene closes with God's immediate and final deadly response and subsequent final punishment of Satan.[51]

Overall, the passage follows a familiar early Jewish motif drawn from Hebrew Scripture, the gathering of the nations for war against the Divine Warrior or his Messianic Warrior.[52] In fact, this is the second appearance of the motif in the book of Revelation as, in 19:19, the beast had gathered "the kings of the earth and their armies" (τοὺς βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς καὶ τὰ στρατεύματα αὐτῶν) to battle against the rider on the white horse and his armies. The Messianic Warrior then defeated those armies with the sword

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[50] Talbert, *Apocalypse*, 93-94, notes a number of Jewish parallels to a temporary messianic kingdom from the second century B.C.E. (*1 En.* 91:14, the ninth week of righteousness, though there is no indication of a messianic ruler in the text) to literature contemporaneous with Revelation (*4 Ezra* 7:28-44; *2 Bar.* 40:3) and on into the rabbinic period. Talbert concludes, "The most natural way to read the material in Revelation is to see the seventh vision (19:11–22:5) as appropriating the eschatological synthesis known from certain Jewish apocalypses in which a temporary messianic kingdom (Rev. 20:1-6) precedes the eternal kingdom of God (Rev 21:1–22:5). If so, this would explain the two end time battles (Rev 19:11-21 and 20:7-10)." While I agree that a temporary messianic kingdom makes the most sense in this context, the way John has structured it—the reprisal of the role of Satan to deceive the nations a second time—appears to be unique. Thus, John may be adapting traditional material in a new way to suit his purposes. See here Sverre Bøe, *Gog and Magog: Ezekiel 38–39 as Pre-Text for Revelation 19:17-21 and 20:7-10* (WUNT II/135; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 353-62, who discusses contemporary scholarship's attempt to fit Rev 20:7-10 into scriptural or early Jewish traditions and then concludes that the likeliest scenario is that "John's way of dealing with the traditional material is rather one of entering into the perspective of the prophets; the scriptures provided him with more than metaphors and terms . . . John uses the prophets for terms, themes, and structures, and he feels free to transform both terms, themes, and structures."

[51] Given the fluid nature of John's imagery, the issue of where the inhabitants of these nations come from since the rider on the white horse destroyed all opposition in 19:21 does not concern me, though it has drawn the attention of scholarship. Bøe, *Gog*, 305-06 summarizes the most common suggestions. Bøe, ibid., 34-45, also cautions, "one obviously should not press apocalyptic visions into a hermeneutical scheme as if they were dogmatic statements."

[52] Lars Hartman, *Prophecy Interpreted: The Formation of Some Jewish Apocalyptic Texts and of the Eschatological Discourse Mark 13 par.* (ConBNT 1; Lund, Sweden: Gleerup, 1966), 71-101, who calls this motif "the tumult and assault of the heathen." See Aune, *Revelation*, 3:1093-1100, for a discussion of various scriptural texts with common imagery or themes.

from his mouth (19:21). Both battles share imagery that also appears in *4 Ezra* 13:5-11, where "an innumerable multitude of people were gathered together from the four winds of heaven" (*4 Ezra* 13:5) to battle the Man from the Sea. Though the man "neither lifted his hand nor held a spear or any weapon of war" (*4 Ezra* 13:9), he slays his opponents with fire that comes from his lips. In Rev 19:21, a sword comes from the rider's mouth. In Rev 20:9, fire comes down from heaven.

While Rev 20:7-10 is similar to a number of texts that display common themes such as an assault by the nations upon Jerusalem and the fiery end of the eschatological opponent, the presence of the terms Gog and Magog to symbolize the hostile nations draws immediate attention to Ezek 38–39.[53] Other parallels with Ezek 38–39 make it certain that these chapters provide the backdrop for Rev 20:7-10.[54] YHWH's address to Gog in Ezek 38:7-9 demonstrates this.

> Be ready and keep ready, you and all the companies that are assembled around you, and hold yourselves in reserve for them. After many days you shall be mustered; in the latter years you shall go against a land restored from war, a land where people were gathered from many nations on the mountains of Israel, which

[53] Bøe, Gog, 300.

[54] Bøe, Gog, 342-43, lists thirteen different connections between Ezek 38–39 and Rev 19:7-10. Contra Riewerd Buitenwerf, "The Gog and Magog Tradition in Revelation 20:8," in *The Book of Ezekiel and Its Influence* (ed. Henk Jan de Jonge and Johannes Tromp; Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2007), 165-81, who notes that Ezek 38:2 identifies Gog as the prince of Magog, while Rev 20:8 appears to refer to two different national entities. The LXX does the same, as God tells Ezekiel to set his face ἐπὶ Γωγ καὶ τὴν γῆν τοῦ Μαγωγ. Buitenwerf notes the tradition of Gog and Magog as distinct in an eschatological context does not occur outside of Revelation 20:8 until the rabbinic period. However, both do appear as distinct entities in a non-eschatological context as early as the second century B.C.E. in 4Q253. Given the numerous other possible parallels for the imagery in Rev 20:7-10, Buitenwerf argues that John does not allude to Ezek 38–39 at all in Rev 20:17, even with the mention of Gog and Magog. Rather, Buitenwerf holds that John relies on oral tradition that we see reflected in 4Q253 for the imagery of Gog and Magog. On the other hand, Bøe, *Gog*, 314, concludes that, given the paucity of evidence, "[i]t is . . . hard to accept the claim that it had become customary to refer to Gog and Magog as a pair of names" though he cautions, "One cannot make the opposite clam and say that John invented the use of the two names as a pair, —we simply do not have a sufficient number of references to decide clearly." Whatever tradition may have been involved concerning John's use of Gog and Magog, it hardly seems likely that an authorial audience with the knowledge of Scripture implied by John's use of Scripture would not have noted John's heavy dependency on Ezekiel throughout Revelation and thus immediately connect the mention of Gog and Magog to Ezek 38–39.

> had long lain waste; its people were brought out from the nations and now are living in safety, all of them. You shall advance, coming on like a storm; you shall be like a cloud covering the land, you and all your troops, and many peoples with you.

YHWH tells Gog to keep his army ready so that after many days, when YHWH musters them, he can bring an innumerable army from many nations to advance upon Jerusalem. However, Gog is not an ally; Gog oversteps its set limits as so many other nations have (Ezek 38:10-13). Thus, Gog draws the wrath of the Divine Warrior.

> With pestilence and bloodshed I will enter into judgment with him; and I will pour down torrential rains and hailstones, fire and sulfur, upon him and his troops and the many peoples that are with him (Ezek 38:22).

Imagery from Ezek 39:6 adds further evidence that Rev 20:7-10 alludes to Ezek 38–39.

> I will send fire on Magog and on those who live securely in the coastlands; and they shall know that I am the LORD (Ezek 39:6).

Thus, in Rev 20, Ezek 38–39, a passage "only vaguely set 'in the latter days'" becomes the model for "the penultimate event in human history" as, after the defeat of the armies "the picture of national peace and tranquility is transformed into a portrait of universal peace."[55]

The passive voice in Rev 20:7 (λυθήσεται) implies that God has ordained the release of Satan, even as he set the limit on Satan's incarceration.[56] We noted in the previous chapter the binding and imprisonment of Satan as development in early Jewish literature that goes back at least to *1 En.* 10:12-13, where Shemihaza and the Watchers are bound and imprisoned until the day they are consumed by fire.

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[55] Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel* (2 vols.; NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997–1998), 2:492-93.

[56] Aune, *Revelation* 3:1093.

Satan's release gives him the opportunity to once again play the role of the deceiver in order to manipulate the nations. His goal in the deception is to get them to gather themselves for an attack on the people of God.[57] In Rev 20:8, the nations, symbolized as Gog and Magog, come from "the four corners of the earth" (τὰ ἐν ταῖς τέσσαρσιν γωνίαις τῆς γῆς), indicating the worldwide nature of the deception and its subsequent rebellion.[58]

After gathering, the nations "ascended over the breadth of the earth" (ἀνέβησαν ἐπὶ τὸ πλάτος τῆς γῆς). Commentators have struggled over the sense of πλάτος because the following phrase, "they encircled the encampment of the holy ones and the beloved city" (ἐκύκλευσαν τὴν παρεμβολὴν τῶν ἁγίων καὶ τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἠγαπημένην), appears to indicate a specific place. Thus, a number of commentators have considered τὸ πλάτος τῆς γῆς a plain or large, flat area sizable enough to assemble the massive army[59] or to refer to the distance the army had to travel.[60] More likely, however, it denotes the breadth or width over which the army has moved.[61] In other words, just as the army gathered themselves from the whole earth, they cover the whole earth. If this is so, ἀνέβησαν ἐπὶ τὸ πλάτος τῆς γῆς can shed some insight on the phrase ἐκύκλευσαν τὴν παρεμβολὴν τῶν

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[57] Mounce, *Revelation*, 361-62, "It is probable that the second infinitive clause in verse 8 builds upon the first (rather than being parallel), so that the verse says that Satan shall come forth to deceive the nations *for the purpose* of gathering them together for war" (Mounce's emphasis).

[58] Mounce, *Revelation*, 362, "This figure of speech is not intended to stress some ancient cosmology but to emphasize universality (cf. Isa 11:12; Ezek 7:2; Rev 7:1)."

[59] E.g., Bøe, *Gog*, 326-27.

[60] E.g., Aune, *Revelation*, 3:1097.

[61] Robert H. Gundry, "The New Jerusalem: People as a Place, Not a Place for People," *NovT* 29 (1987): 256-57.

ἁγίων καὶ τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἠγαπημένην. In the latter phrase, the καὶ is epexegetical; the encampment and the city are symbols of the same thing, the location of the people of God.[62] Since the army spreads throughout the earth, the location is not a spatial location but a symbolic one; the encampment, the city, is any place where the people of God are located throughout the τὸ πλάτος τῆς γῆς.[63] The armies of Gog and Magog have assembled against this encampment and they begin a siege against the people of God, intended as the first stage of the nations' assault.[64]

> There is no other stage.
>
> "Fire came down from heaven and consumed them" (κατέβη πῦρ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ κατέφαγεν αὐτούς; Rev 20:9c).[65]

As we have seen throughout this study, the consuming fire is a prominent weapon of the Divine Warrior, reaching back into ancient Near Eastern literature. I noted above the fiery judgment on Gog and his allies in Ezek 38-39. Revelation 20:7-10 also reflects the fiery imagery of Zeph 3:8.

> Therefore wait for me, says the LORD, for the day when I arise as a witness.
> For my decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms,
> to pour out upon them my indignation,
> all the heat of my anger;
> for in the fire of my passion all the earth shall be consumed.

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[62] Thomas Johann Bauer, *Das tausendjährige Messiasreich der Johannesoffenbarung: Eine literarkritische Studie zu Offb 19,11–21,8* (BZNW 148; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 172.

[63] Beale, *Revelation*, 1026.

[64] Bøe, *Gog*, 327, sees the verb "in a hostile, military connotation." Brian K. Blount, *Revelation: A Commentary* (NTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 370, thinks that the audience would hear a reflection of Rome's siege of Jerusalem.

[65] On the textual problems with the phrase ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, See Aune, *Revelation*, 3:1074, who notes the manuscript evidence and *lectio brevior potior est* favors this reading. He does allow that the longer reading, ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, or a variation of it, ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, "may be original," though he suspects these readings are expansions to conform to Rev 21:2. In any case, the sense is the same. God sent fire on those encircling the encampment of the holy ones.

This passage indicates a fiery end to the gathered nations as divine anger consumes the whole earth.

Revelation 20:9c, κατέβη πῦρ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ κατέφαγεν αὐτούς, closely parallels the LXX of 2 Kgs 1:10, where Elijah calls down fire from heaven during a hostile confrontation with King Ahaziah.[66]

> καὶ ἀπεκρίθη Ηλιου καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς τὸν πεντηκόνταρχον Καὶ εἰ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐγώ, καταβήσεται πῦρ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ καταφάγεταί σε καὶ τοὺς πεντήκοντά σου *καὶ κατέβη πῦρ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ κατέφαγεν αὐτὸν* καὶ τοὺς πεντήκοντα αὐτοῦ (2 Kgs 1:10; my emphasis, in order to show the similar wording in Rev 20:9; cf. 2 Kgs 1:12).
>
> And Elijah answered and said to the commander of the fifty, "And if I am a man of God, fire will come down from heaven and devour you and your fifty." *And fire came down from heaven and devoured him* and his fifty.

Another significant parallel is Dan 7:10. In Daniel's vision of the Ancient of Days, "a stream of fire issued and flowed out from his presence."

Further parallels appear in early Jewish literature. I noted above the example of *4 Ezra* 13:8-11, where the fiery proceeds from the mouth of the Man from the Sea consumes the enemies who had gathered against him. Fire from heaven appears elsewhere in the book of Revelation as well. It proceeds from the mouths of the two witnesses in Rev 11:5. In a very different sense, the second beast imitates divine prodigies in Rev 13:13 by making fire come down from heaven (καὶ πῦρ ποιῇ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβαίνειν). The beast can only manage a mere sign that pales beside the eschatological consuming fire of the Divine Warrior.

The difficulty is in understanding what the fire from heaven means. Is it simply a violent response by the Divine Warrior to the assault on God's people, a powerful

[66] Bøe, *Gog*, 333-34.

revenge poured out in the same manner that the nations had handed out to God's people? Several factors come into consideration. First, the primary point of Rev 20:7-10 is not the nations' continued rebellion, but the last opportunity for Satan to deceive.

> [T]he primary function of Revelation 20:1-10 is to argue that Satan no longer has any power. The role of the nations is a key element in that explanation. In Revelation 20:3 Satan is stripped of his power to deceive the nations. The purpose of his cameo appearance in 20:8-9 is simply to manifest his impotence. He marshals the nations, but it is to no avail. They cannot make inroads against the people of God.[67]

In the absence of Satan, there is no war. Only when he returns do the nations gather again to fight.

Second, while the fire consumes (κατέφαγεν) the nations, the imagery cannot be understood to indicate the absence of the nations. This is clear in the concluding vision. Through imagery adapted from Isa 60, when the New Jerusalem descends in Rev 21–22, the nations participate.[68] In Rev 21:24, the nations walk by the light from the glory of God and the lamp of the Lamb while the kings of the earth will bring their glory to the city. In Rev 21:26, "people will bring the honor and glory of the nations" (καὶ οἴσουσιν τὴν δόξαν καὶ τὴν τιμὴν τῶν ἐθνῶν) into the New Jerusalem. Finally, in Rev 22:2, the leaves of the tree of life are "for the healing of the nations" (εἰς θεραπείαν τῶν ἐθνῶν). Thus, the nations have a significant place in the new order, where they bask in the glory of God and the Lamb, they offer their own glory, and the tree of life gives them leaves of healing.[69]

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[67] Allan J. McNicol, *The Conversion of the Nations in Revelation* (Library of New Testament Studies 438; London: T. & T. Clark, 2011), 68.

[68] McNicol, *Conversion*, 75-80.

[69] McNicol, *Conversion*, 81-82.

Third, I noted in the previous chapter how a number of early Jewish texts had adapted the motif of the fire or sword that came from the Divine Warrior's mouth to indicate a forensic setting. In this regard, *4 Ezra* 13 is important once again. The fiery proceeds from the mouth of the Man from the Sea against the forces who had assembled against him (*4 Ezra* 13:8-11) are then interpreted for Ezra in a completely different fashion.

> Then he, my Son, will reprove the assembled nations for their ungodliness (this was symbolized by the storm), and will reproach them to their face with their evil thoughts and the torments with which they are to be tortured (which were symbolized by the flames), and will destroy them without effort by means of the law (which was symbolized by the fire) (*4 Ezra* 13:37-38).

Finally, fire is more than a punitive image. Fire can also have a purifying effect. In Hebrew Scripture, fire could indicate judgment, purification, or a combination of both.[70] The purgative aspect of fire appears in Isa 6:1-8, where the prophet receives purification when a seraph touches his lips with a live coal from the altar. Other passages use similar imagery that may indicate purification as well. In Ezek 10:2, the man clothed in linen is told to scatter coals taken from the cherubim over the city of Jerusalem, which could be an expression of purification.[71] A passage that adds purification to a punitive description of fire is Zeph 3:9-10. Here the fiery judgment that we noted above in Zeph 3:8 appears to have a purifying effect in Zeph 3:9-10.

> At that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech,
> that all of them may call on the name of the LORD
> and serve him with one accord.
> From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia

[70] Jonathan P. Burnside, *The Signs of Sin: Seriousness of Offence in Biblical Law* (JSOTSup 364; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2003), 124-25.

[71] Ka Leung Wong, *The Idea of Retribution in the Book of Ezekiel* (VTSup 87; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 175-78.

my suppliants, my scattered ones,
shall bring my offering.

Thus, despite Zeph 3:8 indicating that the earth would be consumed, the end result is the proper worship of YHWH, with the peoples calling on his name.

> In this positive section, [Zeph] 3:9f asserts that the utterly destructive judgment on the nations proclaimed in 3:8, is indeed not total, but a *judgment of purification*, in which the YHWH worshippers in the nations beyond the rivers of Ethiopia will bring offerings to him.[72]

An eschatological refining fire appears in Mal 3:3, a concept that may also lie behind Paul's statement in 1 Cor 3:13, "and fire will test what sort of work each has done" (ἑκάστου τὸ ἔργον ὁποῖόν ἐστιν τὸ πῦρ αὐτὸ δοκιμάσει).[73]

Given that the focus of Rev 20:7-10 is the eternal removal of the deceiver, that the nations have a clear role in the New Jerusalem, that we have seen the imagery of the Divine Warrior's fire can be forensic and purifying, it may be that the fire from heaven in Rev 20:9 purifies the nations at the end of the age. In other words, the nations are prepared for the New Jerusalem by the removal of their impurity and with the demise of the deceiver. With the dwelling place of God now with humanity, nations stained by the deception of Satan have no place. However, once purified, the nations enter into the new heaven and new earth.

In the end, even if the fire from heaven indicates the demise of the hostile armies, the imagery remains one of purification. The New Jerusalem is a place of transformation; nothing from the old order enters it without undergoing transformation.

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[72] James Nogalski, *Literary Precursors to the Book of the Twelve* (BZAW 217; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1993), 202 (original emphasis).

[73] Friedrich Lang, "πῦρ," *TDNT* 6:944.

The willingness to be deceived and march against the people of God is not part of the nature of the new order. Purification must come before entrance can be gained.

5.1.4. *Summary*

One of the ways Divine Warrior imagery portrays the activity of God as Divine Warrior is by revealing his intentions through prodigies. The various prodigies are familiar both from Hebrew Scripture and the larger Greco-Roman world. They point to the certainty of divine action as the course of history moves closer to the shift of the ages. The specific prodigies I investigated above showed various forms of repetition and intensification, all pointing to the imminent End of the Age. At the same time, the prodigies did not have a positive effect; they revealed the depravity in the hearts of God's enemies. As the prodigies intensified, so did the hostility of humanity toward God. Meanwhile, the three signs displayed events on earth from the divine perspective. Specific signs depict earthly events as a heavenly drama as that drama moves toward its a divinely intended conclusion.

God's direct control over events is shown in other ways as well. I noted the divine limit on the authority of the dragon, a clear echo of Dan 7–12. Regardless of the intensity and strength of the dragon's opposition to God and his people, the set limit indicates the power of God in relation to such things as the power of the dragon. Along the same lines, God displays direct control over evil by using it for his own purpose—its eradication. He makes sure the nations fulfill his purpose in the destruction of the whore. At the same time, the varying descriptions concerning the end of the whore point to the fluidity of Revelation's imagery, a factor to consider in interpreting the imagery.

Finally, I investigated the fire from heaven that devours the nations encircling the holy ones. I noted here the parallels to Ezek 38–39 that would immediately draw the reader to the scenario there. At the same time, a number of factors indicate that John may have adapted the imagery of the fire from heaven to reflect Zeph 3:8-10, where the fire of YHWH's wrath that devoured the whole earth turned out to be a purifying fire that led to the changing of the speech of the nations; they would now call upon YHWH.

It is therefore not clear that John's intended reader would hear a God of revenge who simply replaces one kind of power for another. God as the Divine Warrior of Revelation sends signs that warn, though John's readers might note humanity's increasing stubbornness even as the prodigies intensify as the end approaches. A prominent theme related to God is the set limit on the intensity of evil and on the forward march of history. The reader sees that even as things get worse, God still works his purpose. And the reader is assured that things will get worse. Finally, John's audience could see more than a violent God wiping out equally violent—if less powerful—foes. The nations come to the New Jerusalem, but all that had led to their previous rebellion is gone.

5.2. *Jesus Christ as Divine Messianic Warrior*

While imagery of God as the Divine Warrior is spread throughout the book of Revelation, imagery of Jesus Christ appears in clusters. In what follows, I only discuss imagery that relates to Jesus Christ as a Messianic Divine Warrior. Thus, I first discuss John's vision of the Son of Man in Rev 1 and the section that makes the heaviest use of this imagery, the letters to the churches in Rev 2–3. Second, I move to John's vision of the one who is worthy to open the scrolls in Rev 5, where John is told to look at the Lion

of Judah but he sees the slain Lamb, who then opens the seven seals. Third, I briefly look at the role of the Son of Man as a harvester in the midst of the seven angels of Rev 14. Finally, I investigate the most important image of Jesus Christ as the Messianic Divine Warrior, the rider on the white horse of Rev 19.

5.2.1. *One Like the Son of Man*

John's very first vision in the book of Revelation is a vision of Jesus Christ as the messianic Son of Man. In Rev 1:10, John hears "a great voice like a trumpet" (φωνὴν μεγάλην ὡς σάλπιγγος) commissioning him to write what he sees and to send it to seven churches in Asia (1:11).[74] When John turns to look, he sees "seven gold lampstands" (1:12).[75] In the midst of the lampstands, he sees "one like the Son of Man" (ὅμοιον υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου; 1:13). This description immediately draws a connection between Rev 1:13 and the oracle in Rev 1:7, both a part of the same image from Dan 7:13.[76] In other words, the one who is coming on the clouds is the one who now speaks to John.

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[74] See Aune, *Revelation* 1:70-71, on John's commission narrative.

[75] According to Klaus Gamber, *Das Geheimnis der sieben Sterne: Zur Symbolik der Apokalypse* (Beiheft zu den Studia patristica et liturgica 17; Regensburg: Pustet, 1987), 24-26, the "seven golden lampstands" (ἑπτὰ λυχνίας χρυσᾶς) are derived from the lampstand (מנורה) with seven lamps from Zechariah 4:2. Coupled with the biblical imagery that overwhelms Revelation 1:12-16, he suggests the λυχνίαι should be understood as menorah.

[76] Aune, *Revelation*, 1:90, states, "Somewhat surprisingly, there is nothing in the way that the appellation 'son of man' is used in Rev 1:13 or 14:14 to suggest any influence from or even an awareness of the extensive use of the title in the Gospels." While this is correct if ὅμοιον υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου is taken in isolation, the moment the connection is made between ἔρχεται μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν in 1:7 and ὅμοιον υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου in 1:13, it ties the Son of Man to the Parousia of Christ, which is clearly a thematic connection to the use of "Son of Man" in the Gospel tradition. Most commentators, however, do not discuss the double referral to Daniel 7:13 as a means of tying the oracle of Rev 1:7 to the vision of Rev 1:13. Further, given the way John handles his allusions, a difference in phrasing only suggests the absence of evidence, not the evidence of absence.

In Rev 1:13-16, John's description draws together a variety of scriptural images that provide an overwhelming sense of Christ as a figure of power and glory.[77]

> In the midst of the lampstands was one like the Son of Man clothed in a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. His head and hair were like white wool, like snow and his eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like fine bronze refined in a furnace. His voice was like the voice of many waters. In his right hand he had seven stars, out of his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword and his face shined like the sun in its power.

Detailed discussion of the imagery may be found elsewhere,[78] so I offer only a few observations. Most of the imagery comes from the book of Daniel, with Dan 10:4-5 being prominent.[79] Daniel 7 is important as well. The Son of Man's white head and hair conflates the Son of Man of Dan 7:13, a text with some messianic associations in early Judaism, with the Ancient of Days of Dan 7:9, a clear image of YHWH. The conflation of the images from Dan 7:9, 13 draws together the attributes of God and the Messiah into Jesus Christ.[80] This feature of Revelation depicts Jesus as a Messianic Divine Warrior, a messianic figure who not only fights as the divinely empowered Messianic Warrior, but who also carries in himself the attributes of deity. With the addition of imagery from Daniel 10:4-5, the picture of Jesus Christ in Rev 1:13-16 is a combination of imagery from God, the messiah, and angels. The Christ of Rev 1:13-16 exhibits the features of all

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[77] Osborne, *Revelation*, 89.

[78] E.g., Aune, *Revelation*, 1:90-99.

[79] Note the summary in Steve Moyise, *The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation* (JSNTSup 115; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995), 37-38. See also the extended discussion in Aune, *Revelation*, 90-99

[80] Blount, *Revelation*, 44: "John's intention is clear: he is indissolubly linking the identities of God and Christ. They, like their lordship, are one." Note, however, Aune, *Revelation*, 1:90-92, who finds a number of variant readings of the LXX of Dan 7 that conflate the son of man and the Ancient of Days. Aune, ibid., 91, suggests that this may indicate that the conflation "was not necessarily original with John."

supernatural entities, thus further emphasizing his exalted status and power.[81] It also explains John's reaction in 1:17: "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead," a direct contrast to John's reaction to angelic figures, whom he tries to worship but they refuse (19:10; 22:8-9).[82] The passage also contains a number of images that tie it to Greco-Roman depictions of deities. Notable here is the gold, which was a sign of deity,[83] and the fiery eyes, which could serve as a way to recognize deity,[84] while the seven stars could depict authority over the heavens.[85]

Another messianic image appears in Rev 1:16, where John describes the primary weapon of the Son of Man: "a sharp two-edged sword went out from his mouth" (ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ ῥομφαία δίστομος ὀξεῖα ἐκπορευομένη). I noted in the previous chapter

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[81] A number of recent studies deal with Revelation 1:13-16 as an example of "angelomorphic Christology, which Matthias Reinhard Hoffman, *The Destroyer and the Lamb: The Relationship between Lamb Christology and the Book of Revelation* (WUNT II/203; Tübingen, Mohr-Siebeck, 2005), 28, defines as "the branch of Christology which defines Christ by relating him to angels without implying either an angelic or an explicitly divine status. The status of Christ, may it be subordinate to God or on par with God, has to be derived from the context of the whole writing which contains an angelomorphic description of Christ." For Rev 1:13-16 in particular, see Hoffman, ibid., 212-46. Other recent studies include Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology: A Study in Early Judaism and in the Christology of the Apocalypse of John* (WUNT II/70; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 209-39, and Peter R. Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels: Angelology and the Christology of the Apocalypse of John* (SNTSMS 95; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 129-74.

[82] E.g., Darrell D. Hannah, *Michael and Christ: Michael Traditions and Angel Christology in Early Christianity* (WUNT II/109; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 151-54, who argues that a number of factors make a clear distinction between Christ and angelic figures such as John's consistent recasting of terminology, the fact that Christ receives the same worship as God (Rev 5:8-4) while angels refuse worship (19:10; 22:8-9), Christ's exalted place near the throne of God, and the use of divine titles for Christ (e.g., 22:13).

[83] A. S. Brown, "From the Golden Age to the Isles of the Blest," *Mnemosyne* 4/51 (1998): 392-94, who stresses that gold symbolism in relation to monarchy was rare but prevalent regarding the symbolism of deity.

[84] Deborah Hershkowitz, *The Madness of Epic: Reading Insanity from Homer to Statius* (Oxford Classical Monographs; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 92-93, who also notes a number of other ways the symbolism appears.

[85] Roger Beck, *Planetary Gods and Planetary Orders in the Mysteries of Mithras* (EPRO 109; Leiden: Brill, 1988), 1-11, who notes the general acceptance of seven as the number of planets, though the order of presentation varies.

the importance of Isa 11:5 in the description of the weaponry that proceeds from the mouth of the Messianic Warrior. This is a rare example of the weapon from the mouth as a sword and it appears again in both the letters and the visions.[86]

5.2.2. *The Son of Man Confronts the Church*

The letters Christ commands John to write to the seven churches in Asia are a mixture of imagery from Rev 1, images from Hebrew Scripture, Greco-Roman imagery, and reflections of some of the local features in the particular cities.[87] The letters are a product of the whole of Revelation; they were not separate correspondences that were later worked into John's vision, nor are they simply a literary device to highlight the overall aim of the work. The letters also appear to deal with issues the seven congregations faced that, as part of the whole, could have a wider, universal impact.[88]

The seven letters address seven churches that, chiastically, fit one of three patterns: churches that are compromised and in danger of losing their Christian identity (letter 1–Ephesus; 7–Laodicea); churches that are faithful and encouraged to continue (2–Smyrna; 6–Philadelphia), or churches that are faithful in some areas but compromising in others (3–Pergamum; 4–Thyatira; 5–Sardis).[89] Accordingly, Christ addresses each church, presenting himself, for the most part, from the different images connected to

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[86] Note, however, the interpretation of Isa 11:4 in 4Q161 8–10, 21, "al]l the peoples shall he judge with his sword." Cf. Heb 4:12, noted in the previous chapter. Cf. Jan Fekkes, *Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation: Visionary Antecedents and Their Development* (JSNTSup 93; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 117-22.

[87] Blount, *Revelation*, 47-48. For a brief overview of the imagery of the letters, primarily from the standpoint of local features, see Court, *Myth*, 20-33. The local character of the descriptions in the letters was highlighted by the still valuable work of W. M. Ramsey, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia and Their Place in the Plan of the Apocalypse* (New York: Armstrong & Son, 1904).

[88] Osborne, *Revelation*, 104-05.

[89] Beale, *Revelation*, 226.

Christ in Rev 1, especially the vision of the Son of Man in 1:13-16.[90] Rather than a detailed investigation of the letters, I offer a brief discussion of imagery related to Jesus Christ as the Messianic Divine Warrior.

Revelation 2:12-17 is the third letter, to the church in Pergamum. Christ describes himself as the Divine Messianic Warrior assuming a hostile position.

> And to the angel of the church of Pergamum write, "Thus says the one having the sharp, two-edged sword (Rev 2:12).

Though the church sits in hostile territory, "where Satan's throne is," it has remained faithful even in the face of martyrdom (Rev 2:13). Most see the throne of Satan as a symbol of Pergamum's attitude toward the Roman emperor cult. The emperor cult had its origins in Pergamum, when Augustus allowed the building of temples for the emperor in 29 B.C.E., and the situation in Pergamum may suggest that enthusiasm for the cult was becoming a test of political loyalty.[91] The reference to the throne of Satan and "the place where Satan dwells" (ὅπου ὁ σατανᾶς κατοικεῖ) would then express a clear understanding of the power behind the emperor cult; whoever the human emperor is, the true emperor of Rome is Satan.[92]

If this is the case, the Pergamum church is maintaining their faithfulness in the midst of persecution that is somehow related to the emperor cult. The ultimate expression of faithfulness in Pergamum comes from an otherwise unknown figure.

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[90] Beale, *Revelation*, 225-26.

[91] Colin J. Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting* (JSNTSup 11; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986), 84. Paul Petit, *Pax Romana* (trans. James Willis; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 103, discusses the fervor for the emperor cult in the region for the period from Augustus to Hadrian.

[92] E.g., Beale, *Revelation*, 246.

> And you did not deny my faith (τὴν πίστιν μου) even in the days of Antipas, my witness (ὁ μάρτυς μου), my faithful one (ὁ πιστός μου), who was killed among you, where Satan lives.

The martyrdom of Antipas may have some kind of official sanction behind it. Roman provincial governors did have the power of *ius gladii*, "the right of the sword," as a means to maintain order in the provinces.[93] If this is the case, the Messianic Warrior with his "sharp, two-edged sword" (τὴν ῥομφαίαν τὴν δίστομον τὴν ὀξεῖαν) stands directly opposite the one on Satan's throne. In either case, the imagery of the sword is juridical, a common theme for the weaponry that proceeds from the mouth of the Divine Warrior. The Roman governor may use the legal power of the *ius gladii* to punish unfaithfulness to the emperor cult. Yet standing before the Pergamum church is Jesus Christ, who wields his own legal authority with his sharp, two-edged sword.[94]

The criticism the Warrior levels against Pergamum is that they have "some who hold to the teaching of Balaam" (ὀλίγα ὅτι ἔχεις ἐκεῖ κρατοῦντας τὴν διδαχὴν Βαλαάμ; 2:14) and "thus you have some holding to the teaching of the Nicolaitans as well" (οὕτως ἔχεις καὶ σὺ κρατοῦντας τὴν διδαχὴν τῶν Νικολαϊτῶν ὁμοίως; 2:15). In 2:14-15, the teaching of Balaam and the teaching of the Nicolaitans is basically the same.[95] The Nicolaitans were also an issue in the letter to Ephesus in 2:6.

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[93] Peter Garnsey, "The Criminal Jurisdiction of Governors," *JRS* 58 (1968): 51-55.

[94] Beale, *Revelation*, 247.

[95] Aune, *Revelation* 1:188, "The οὕτως, 'so, thus, in this way,' coordinates the phrase that it introduces with the statement that immediately precedes in v 15, by way of interpretation or explanation. Thus, 'the teaching of Balaam' is that same as 'the teaching of the Nicolaitans.'" Blount, *Revelation*, 59, sees the passage as identifying the leader of the Nicolaitans with Balaam. On the Nicolaitans, see Aune, *Revelation*, 1:148-49.

Balaam, from Num 22–24, was hired by an enemy king, Balak, to curse Israel, but YHWH did not allow the curse. Balaam was, however, able to get Balak to lead Israel astray through sexual immorality that led to idolatry (Num 25:1-3; cf. Num 31:16; Micah 6:5). In the letter to Pergamum, Balaam and Balak deceive the church in order to get them "to eat food sacrificed to idols and practice immorality" (φαγεῖν εἰδωλόθυτα καὶ πορνεῦσαι).[96] It is this compromise that threatens the wrath of the one with the sharp sword.[97]

> Therefore, repent. If you do not I will quickly come to you and fight (πολεμήσω) them with the sword of my mouth (Rev 2:16).

This is the first direct expression of warfare in the book of Revelation and, with 2:12, draws directly on the imagery of the Son of Man of Rev 1:13-16. The threat is not against the whole church, but only against those who continue to hold to the teachings of the Nicolaitans.

It is also here that we gather our first hint that, in Revelation, divine warfare is not as it first seems. There is nearly unanimous agreement that "I will fight them with the sword of my mouth" (πολεμήσω μετ' αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ ῥομφαίᾳ τοῦ στόματός μου), is juridical language.[98] Nor do commentators think that, whatever the shape of the judgment, it

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[96] On εἰδωλόθυτος, see Aune, *Revelation*, 1:186.

[97] Beale, *Revelation* 250, draws attention to the Angel of the Lord threatening Balaam with a sword (Num 22:23, 31), further demonstrating the depth of John's imagery. Cf. Num 31:8: "they also killed Balaam son of Beor with the sword."

[98] Eg., Aune, *Revelation*, 1:189: "Since τοῦ στόματός is an epexegetical genitive, the metaphorical expression 'the sword, that is, my mouth' becomes evident. Here the sword is an implicit metaphor for the tongue, and so for the word or law pronounced by the risen Christ."

represents a threat of actual violence.[99] According to Osborne, the sense of the threat is, "The believers are being given a choice: go to war against the heretics or else God will do so for them."[100] This would not mean they should kill the "heretics." Rather, the heretics should repent or face expulsion.

The letter to the church of Thyatira (Rev 2:18-29), the longest of the letters, is similar to the letter to Pergamum, both in the situation and the resulting threat. The opening image also draws from the Son of Man image in 1:13-16, but adds a prominent feature not in 1:13-16.

> Thus says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire and feet like fine bronze.

The designation "son of God" here is unique in the book of Revelation, but does have a connection to part of the promise to the conquerors 2:26-27.

> And to the one who conquers and keeps my words until the end, I will give to that person authority over the nations, and that one will shepherd them with a rod of iron, shattering them like jars of clay.

Both the self-description of Christ and the promise to the conquerors allude to Ps 2:7-9 and thus emphasize the authority of the Messianic Warrior. In the letter to Thyatira, he not only wields this authority, he delegates it as well.

Like Pergamum, this church demonstrates fidelity through their actions, their "love, faith, service, and endurance" (*τὴν ἀγάπην καὶ τὴν πίστιν καὶ τὴν διακονίαν καὶ τὴν ὑπομονήν*; 2:19). But they also tolerate the same type of compromise that Pergamum does. This time, however, the problem is not the teachings of Balaam, but those of

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[99] Fekkes, *Isaiah*, 122: "All commentators are agreed that the sword which proceeds from Christ's mouth is symbolic of his verbal power and more specifically emphasizes the judicial authority which he wields as God's agent of judgment."

[100] Osborne, *Revelation*, 146. Cf. Beale, *Revelation*, 251.

another nemesis from Hebrew Scripture, Jezebel, whom Christ labels a false prophet (2:20). In 1 Kgs 18–21, Jezebel was the wife of King Ahab, who promoted the worship of Baal and killed the prophets of YHWH, meeting an inglorious end in 2 Kgs 9:30-37, when her corpse was trampled and eaten by dogs after being thrown out a window. At Thyatira, Jezebel's sin is the promotion of immorality and eating meat sacrificed to idols (Rev 2:20).

In seeking the purity of the church, the threat from the Divine Warrior is dire. Christ has given Jezebel three opportunities but she refuses to repent "of her immorality" (2:21). His patience has now ended.

> Look! I am throwing her on a sickbed and the ones who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, and I will kill her children. All the churches will know that I, even I, am the one who examines minds and hearts and I will give to each of you according to your works (Rev 2:22).

The fiery eyes of Christ in 2:18, coupled with his testing of the minds and hearts in 2:22 indicate the forensic nature of his eyes, an allusion to Jer 17:10.[101] The threat emphasizes that those in the church cannot hide their inner thoughts from Christ.

Meanwhile, Jezebel, her suitors, and her children face more than an omniscient messiah. Jezebel's immorality (πορνεία) should probably be understood in a spiritual sense, especially since the Jezebel of the 1 Kgs 18–21 is primarily known for promoting Baal worship and killing prophets.[102] The metaphorical nature of the imagery draws into focus Jezebel's sickness, her suitors' suffering, and her children's death.

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[101] Beale, *Revelation*, 264.

[102] Blount, *Revelation*, 63. Contra Osborne, *Revelation*, 156-57, who understands the situation in terms of the prevalence of trade guilds at Thyatira, which would expect members to participate in guild feasts that may have included elements of debauchery. On the influence of trade guilds in Thyatira, see Hemer, *Letters*, 106-28.

> This discomforting image is metaphorical. John is no more speaking about literal children than he is speaking about the literal, historical Jezebel. Her children are the "offspring" of her activities, which commend accommodation to the lordship of Rome; they emulate Jezebel's idolatrous ways, live them, and subsequently teach them to others. They will therefore be struck down as she herself will be struck down. They *must* be struck down, lest they continue leading God's people astray.[103]

Thus, Jezebel's suffering of sickness and her suitors' suffering of "great tribulation" (θλῖψιν μεγάλην) is of the same type: suffering as a punishment. In the book of Revelation, "great tribulation" is ahead for unbelievers as John's vision unfolds (cf. Rev 7:14). In the letter to Thyatira, Jesus indicates the same fate for Jezebel and her suitors.[104]

Christ's promise to share the authority of Ps 2:7-9 with the conquerors heightens the contrast between the faithful and their opponents in Rev 2:26-28. While the present experience contrasts the faithful and those who seek to destroy them, the assured outcome is the destruction of the oppressors. This assurance comes from the Messianic Divine Warrior bestowing his authority on those who remain faithful. However, a divine perspective on victory and authority in the book of Revelation will understand what it means to "smash" (συντρίβεται) the nations in a different way than an empire of the world would smash enemies.

Thus, the two most graphic depictions of the violence of Christ in the letters to the seven churches are not depictions of actual violence, but metaphorical or symbolic illustrations of divine justice. In each case, the imagery of divine warfare serves as a warning to those tempted to compromise to fit into the current order. In the letter to

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[103] Blount, *Revelation*, 64.

[104] Similarly, Beale, *Revelation*, 262, who places Jezebel and her followers in the great tribulation of the later of the visions.

Thyatira, the promise to the conquerors drew out the folly of compromise, as Christ bestows his messianic authority to the faithful. Even as the nations oppose the faithful in the present order, it is the nations that face smashing in the new order.

5.2.3. *The Lion/Lamb and the Seals*

One of the more prominent scenes in the book of Revelation is what Aune calls the *Investiture of the Lamb*, a scene reminiscent of the investiture of the one like the son of man in Dan 7:14.[105] The passage is well recognized for its prominent reversal of warfare imagery, as it inverts the idea of what it means to conquer.[106] It is therefore an important component of any discussion of Divine Warrior imagery in the book of Revelation.

After the seven letters to the seven churches, John has a vision of the heavenly throne room in Rev 4, part of which I discussed above. Following the hymns of the four living creatures (Rev 4:8) and the twenty four elders (4:11), John notices that the one on the throne holds in his right hand a scroll with writing on both sides and "sealed with seven seals" (5:1; κατεσφραγισμένον σφραγῖσιν ἑπτά). The imagery is both scriptural and Greco-Roman. The scroll written on both sides reflects the imagery of Ezek 2:9-10, where the prophet receives a scroll written on the front and back with "words of lamentation and mourning and woe." The form also fits the Roman provincial style "double-document" legal text, where a scroll had the same text copied on the outside and

[105] Aune, *Revelation*, 1:336-38.

[106] See here the brief summary of discussion in Loren L. Johns, *Lamb Christology and the Apocalypse of John: An Investigation into Its Origins and Rhetorical Force* (WUNT II/167; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 158-61.

inside.[107] A seven-sealed document fits the pattern of a Roman formal *testatio*, an attestation written in the third person and sealed by at least seven and as many as eleven witnesses.[108] In the case of Rev 5:1 the scroll has a unique function: it discloses the divine plan for the end of the age.[109] The total effect of the seven-sealed scroll is that it makes it impossible "for any unauthorized person [to gain] access to what has been sealed in such a manner, particularly when sealed by God or in the name of God."[110]

The efficacy of the sealing is the cause of consternation in the throne room, as a "strong angel" (ἄγγελον ἰσχυρὸν) asks in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" (Rev 5:2; τίς ἄξιος ἀνοῖξαι τὸ βιβλίον καὶ λῦσαι τὰς σφραγῖδας αὐτοῦ;). The answer is that "no one in heaven, on the earth, or under the earth" is worthy to open the seals (5:3), causing John to weep (5:4). One of the elders tells John that, indeed, there is one who is worthy.

> Look! The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has conquered in order to open the book and the seven seals (Rev 5:5).

The elder refers to the worthy one by way of two references to texts that we have seen were important messianic texts in the early Jewish period, Gen 49:9-10 and Isa

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[107] Elizabeth A. Meyer, *Legitimacy and Law in the Roman World:* Tabulae *in Roman Belief and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 187-202. Meyer discusses Rev 5:1 on pages 201-02.

[108] Meyer, *Legitimacy*, 132-33.

[109] Osborne, *Revelation*, 248-49. Johns, *Lamb*, 163, states that the scroll relates either "the realization of God's will in history or authority over the course of history." I would understand it to indicate both. For the bewildering number of proposals for understanding the scroll, what might be written on it, and the seals, see Aune, *Revelation*, 1:341-46.

[110] Aune, *Revelation*, 1:346.

11:1.[111] In Hebrew Scripture, the lion was readily understood as "the quintessential symbol of the warrior and the warrior's superior power," especially in the prophets (e.g, Isa 31:4, or as a symbol of royalty or even simply "danger or the power of sheer violence."[112] Thus it comes as no surprise that the elder announces that the messianic Lion, the Root of David, "has conquered" (ἐνίκησεν) in order to open the scroll. When John turns to see the Lion, however, he does not see a lion.

> Then I saw, between the throne and the four living creatures and the elders, a lamb standing as slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God who have been sent into all the earth (Rev 5:6).

Instead of a powerful lion, John sees "a lamb standing as slaughtered" (ἀρνίον ἑστηκὸς ὡς ἐσφαγμένον). The slaughtered lamb draws together the imagery of the paschal lamb of Exod 11–12 (cf. Exod 29; Num 28–29) and the suffering servant of Isa 53, who is like "a lamb that is led to the slaughter."[113] Both of these images reflect the general tradition of the New Testament as well.[114]

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[111] Bauckham, *Climax*, 214-15. Johns, *Lamb*, 165-66, cautions that while the evidence for Gen 49 as messianic is as early as the first century B.C.E. from Qumran (4Q252 6, 1-7), there is no evidence that the lion was a understood as a messianic figure. He finds no evidence for the lion as a messianic symbol before the first century C.E. (e.g., *4 Ezra* 11–12) and doubts that that the term is a messianic symbol in Rev 5:4 since the five other occurrences of λέων (4:7; 9:8, 17; 10:3; 13:2) are not messianic. However, the reference in 5:4 is not simply to a lion, it is to ὁ λέων ὁ ἐκ τῆς φυλῆς Ἰούδα. If, as Johns admits, Gen 49:9-10 was understood as messianic, it is hard to not see a reader make a connection between Rev 5 and Gen 49 as an explicit symbol of messianic prophecy. On this point see Gottfried Schimanowski, *Die himmlische Liturgie in der Apokalypse des Johannes: Die frühjüdischen Traditionen in Offenbarung 4–5 unter Einschluß der Hekhalotliteratur* (WUNT II/154; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 199.

[112] Johns, *Lamb*, 164-67.

[113] Osborne, *Revelation*, 255.

[114] Osborne, *Revelation*, 255-56.

Yet the lamb is much more than a slaughtered paschal lamb. For one, the lamb is "*standing* as slain" (ἑστηκὸς ὡς ἐσφαγμένον). In other words, the lamb, as slain, stands.[115] This may be "an oblique reference" to his resurrection.[116] Further, the lamb has seven horns and seven eyes. The imagery is one of absolute power and omniscience.[117] Horns symbolize power and authority in a number of scriptural and early Jewish writings, as they do elsewhere in Revelation.[118] The seven eyes likely derive from the seven lamps of Zech 4:2. In Zech 4:10, the lamps are "the eyes of the LORD, which range through the whole earth."[119]

The implication is clear. To this point, the book of Revelation has portrayed Christ as a messianic, divine figure of immense power. Power is evident in the seven-horned Lamb. Thus, though slain, the Lamb retains his power.[120] Yet when the time comes for him to wield that power, he wields it in a way that does not redefine power, but redefines *victory*. The Lamb, who is the Lion, who is the Son of Man who confronts the churches, displays his worthiness not by demonstrating power, but by demonstrating the power to conquer by dying.

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[115] Aune, *Revelation*, 1:353.

[116] Aune, *Revelation*, 1:352.

[117] James L. Resseguie, *Revelation Unsealed: A Narrative Critical Approach to John's Apocalypse* (Biblical Interpretation Series 32; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 58.

[118] Blount, *Revelation*, 112. Note especially Dan 8, *1 En.* 90:6-12; Rev 9:13; 12:3; 13:1, 11; 17:3, 7, 12, 16.

[119] Beale, *Revelation*, 355. In light of John's redefinition of victory, Zechariah 4:6 may be in the background as well: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the LORD of hosts."

[120] Blount, *Revelation*, 116-17.

5.2.4. *The Son of Man's Harvest*

One of the more difficult passages of Divine Warrior imagery in the book of Revelation is 14:14-16, the vision of the Son of Man harvesting the earth. The difficulties are numerous in Rev 14, though only a few directly impact the study of the Divine Warrior.[121] First, following Holtz, I understand Rev 14:6-20 to be a unit, primarily due to the presence of six angels distinctly identified as ἄλλον ἄγγελον, three on each side of "one like the Son of Man (ὅμοιον υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου).[122] Whether or not 14:6-20 is taken as a unit, two further issues remain: 1) the identity of the ὅμοιον υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου in 14:14 and 2) the nature of his harvest in 14:15-16. The understanding of these issues then impacts the understanding of the gathering of the grapes in 14:17-20.

In Rev 14:6-11, three angels appear "in mid-heaven" (ἐν μεσουρανήματι), one making an announcement of repentance (14:6-7) and two others announcing judgment. One of the two announces judgment on Babylon (14:8) and another on those who worship the beast or take its mark (14:9-11).[123] These angelic announcements are followed by a paranetic interlude describing the "endurance of the saints" (14:12; ἡ ὑπομονὴ τῶν ἁγίων). Next, an unidentified voice commands John to write a beatitude for those who, from now on, die in the Lord, a blessing affirmed by the Spirit (14:13). Following this, John sees another vision of the Son of Man.

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[121] Note here the extended study of Hoffmann, *Destroyer*, 30-104, who discusses all of the recent discussions on Rev 14:6-20.

[122] Traugott Holtz, *Die Christologie der Apokalypse des Johannes* (TUGAL 85; Berlin: Akademie, 1971), 129: "Gegen eine Ausscheidung spricht die offenbar bewusste Gliederung des Abschnittes 14,16-20 durch die mit ἄλλος gekennzeichneten Engel, die mit dem Menschensohn in der Mitte die Zahl Sieben ergeben." Against this, Aune, *Revelation*, 2:795, sees the 14:1-20 to consist of four distinct units "that represent a pastiche of themes and motifs drawn from elsewhere in Revelation."

[123] Bauckham, *Climax*, 286.

> Then I looked and I saw a white cloud and on the white cloud sat one like the Son of Man, who had upon his head a golden crown and in his hand a sharp sickle. Another angel came out from the Temple, calling in a great voice to the one sitting upon the cloud, "Send out your sickle and harvest, for the hour to harvest has now come." Then the one sitting upon the cloud cast his sickle upon the earth and the earth was harvested (Rev 14:14-16).

The imagery of the harvest derives from Joel 3:13 (4:13 MT), where YHWH, as judge of the nations (Joel 3:12 [4:12 MT]) commands both the harvest and the treading of the wine press. Here, however, John divides the judgment of Joel 3:13 into two distinct images: a harvest by the Son of Man seated upon the cloud (14:14-16) and the gathering and treading of the grapes by still "another angel" (14:17-20).

In Rev 14:14-16, the Son of Man is "sitting upon the cloud" (ἐπὶ τὴν νεφέλην καθήμενον). Though some commentators hold this figure to be an angel,[124] the connection to Dan 7:13, as well as Rev 1:7, 13, make it almost certain that the Son of Man figure must be Jesus Christ.[125] "Another angel" informs the Son of Man that the harvest is ready. The Son of Man casts his sickle to the earth and gathers his harvest. Bauckham notes that the single action of the harvest in 14:16 indicates that it is of a different character than the gathering of the grapes in 14:17-20, where "another angel" from the heavenly Temple harvests the grapes and then throws them into "the great winepress of the wrath of God" (τὴν ληνὸν τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τὸν μέγαν).[126] This suggests that the Son of Man's harvest is not a harvest of wrath, but of repentance. By splitting Joel 3:13 into two distinct gatherings, the Son of Man's harvest is like the

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[124] E.g., Aune, *Revelation*, 2:800-01.

[125] Hoffmann, *Destroyer*, 36-42. Cf. Scriba, *Theophanie*, 200-01, and Bauckham, *Climax*, 294-95.

[126] Bauckham, *Climax*, 293-94.

imagery of the sheep in Matt 25:31-46 who are taken into the kingdom for their favorable treatment of God's people.

On the other hand, the grapes thrown into the winepress face a different fate. The angel who harvests grapes gets his command to harvest from "another angel from the altar who has authority over fire (14:18; ἄλλος ἄγγελος ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου ὁ ἔχων ἐξουσίαν ἐπὶ τοῦ πυρός). This angel may be the angel of Rev 8:3-5, who took a censer filled with the fire from the altar containing the prayers of the saints and cast the fire to earth.[127] His authority over fire indicates the angel's role as "the divine agent for punishing the enemies of God."[128] As part of the hierarchy of angels, a number of early Jewish texts indicate angelic authority over various aspects of creation.[129] In the previous chapter, I discussed the angel Nathaniel in *L.A.B.* 38:3, an example of an angel with authority over fire who used that authority to punish Jael.

When the angel orders the angel with the sickle to harvest, the results are graphic.

> And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood went out from the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for a distance of one thousand six hundred stadia (Rev 14:20).

The imagery here is from Isa 63:1-6, a prominent text with Divine Warrior imagery that will appear again in Rev 19:11-16.[130] The winepress is the "winepress of the wrath of God," also imagery that appears again in 19:11-16. The connection to Rev 19 points to

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[127] Beale, *Revelation*, 775.

[128] Aune, *Revelation*, 2:846.

[129] Aune, *Revelation*, 2:846.

[130] Blount, *Revelation*, 281.

Christ as the one who tramples the press.[131] The graphic imagery here in Rev 14:20 is a common feature for imagery related to the final eschatological battle, making it likely John's audience would hear the passage as, at least, a veiled reference to that battle.[132] At the very least, in the aftermath of the eschatological battle, the flow of blood points to the incredible number of the enemies of the Lamb.

As it stands, the imagery of Rev 14:17-20 alludes to a gruesome eschatological battle where the wrath of God results in an incredible amount of blood. Since the imagery likely depicts the eschatological battle, other depictions of this battle in the book of Revelation may help with the understanding of the imagery. The most prominent depiction of the battle is also the most important for understanding Divine Warrior imagery in the book of Revelation, and the final passage where Jesus Christ appears as the Divine Warrior, Rev 19:11-21.

5.2.5. *The Rider on the White Horse*

In Rev 19:11-16, John sees another incredible image of Jesus Christ.

> And I saw heaven opened. Look! A white horse! And the one sitting on the horse is called "faithful and true." In righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire and on his head are many diadems. He has a name written that he alone knows. He is clothed in a garment dipped in blood and his name is called the Word of God. The armies of heaven have followed him on white horses, dressed in fine linen, white and pure. A sharp sword comes out from his mouth so that with it he can strike the nations. He will rule them with an iron rod and he tramples the winepress of the wine of the angry wrath of God Almighty. He has a name written on his clothing and on his thigh: King of kings and Lord of lords.

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[131] G. Bornkamm, "ληνός," *TDNT* 4:255, because of the parallel in 19:15, thinks that Christ is surreptitiously introduced in 14:17 as ἄλλος ἄγγελος. However, the passage does not indicate that the angel tramples the press, only that he loads it.

[132] Adela Yarbro Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation* (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2001), 37. G. Bornkamm, "ληνός," 4:255, calls the passage "an intentionally mysterious first sketch of events which will be more plainly and broadly described later."

Three items immediately stand out. First, the vision makes use of a number of images that we have already noted in other places to describe Jesus Christ. Thus, the rider is certainly Jesus Christ. Second, the passage is heavy in scriptural imagery, as we have seen in the other appearances of the imagery. Particularly notable are the messianic texts Isa 11 and Ps 2. Third, Greco-Roman imagery also stands in a number of places, sometimes overlapping with the scriptural imagery.[133] One of the more prominent Roman features that scholars often note is the parallel with Roman triumphal procession.[134] Finally, Thomas suggests that some of the imagery may reflect Parthian symbolism, especially the warrior as a cavalier and the title "King of kings and Lord of lords."[135]

There are two primary images that, for my purposes, require a closer examination. First, John notes explicitly the way this Messianic Warrior fights: "In righteousness he judges and makes war" (19:11; καὶ ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ κρίνει καὶ πολεμεῖ). Here the Warrior's juridical and martial roles are tied together by the means whereby he executes both: in righteousness. The passage alludes to Isa 11:4, a passage that ties together the ideal king's righteous judgment with his warfare to protect the people of God.[136] In the last chapter, we noted the Messianic Warrior of *Ps. Sol.* 17:23-25 fighting God's enemies

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[133] See the various suggestions in Aune, *Revelation*, 3:1052-63.

[134] See here the detailed discussion of David Andrew Thomas, *Revelation 19 in Historical and Mythological Context* (Studies in Biblical Literature 118; New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 74-86. The major difference is that the Roman *triumphator* was not mounted, but rode a chariot drawn by four white horses.

[135] Thomas, *Revelation 19*, 124-45.

[136] Aune, *Revelation*, 1:1053.

with righteousness and wisdom. Christ wages war as the victorious Messianic Divine Warrior with righteousness.

The second important image from the passage concerns the garment of the divine cavalier in Rev 19:13. There is a general consensus that the imagery for the rider's garments, "he is clothed in a garment dipped in blood" (καὶ περιβεβλημένος ἱμάτιον βεβαμμένον αἵματι), is drawn from Isa 63:1-3, especially given the imagery of the divine vintner in Rev 19:15.[137] The difficulty is in determining the nature of the blood in which the robe was dipped. The text itself is ambiguous, leading to three different proposals, which may not be exclusive of one another.[138] One suggestion is that the blood is actually Christ's blood.[139] Given that the victorious lion was actually a lamb standing as slain, this is indeed possible.[140] The second option is that the blood is the blood of those the Messianic Divine Warrior has slain in battle. In this regard, the blood is the blood trampled from the winepress of God's wrath (Rev 19:15; cf. 14:20).[141]

The final option for understanding the blood on Christ's robe is that it is the blood of the martyrs.[142] What makes this option particularly attractive is that it would subvert

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[137] Beale, *Revelation*, 957.

[138] Blount, *Revelation*, 352-53.

[139] Eugene M. Boring, *Revelation* (IBC; Louisville: John Knox, 1989), 196.

[140] Aune *Revelation*, 3:1057, suggests, "It was inevitable that this older image of God as the divine warrior with blood-soaked garments would be understood as a reference to the death of Christ by both the author and his readers when placed in a Christian context." Nevertheless, he also states, "The blood mentioned here is not primarily a metaphor for the atoning death of Christ."

[141] Beale, *Revelation*, 957, who finds the context of Isaiah 63 determinative. Cf. Mounce, *Revelation*, 345.

[142] G. B. Caird, *A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine* (BNTC; London: Black, 1966), 243-44: "The Rider bears on his garment the indelible traces of the death of his followers, just as he bears on his body the indelible marks of his own passion."

the idea of the Roman triumph, part of the imagery of the passage.[143] In the present age, authority is won by a show of strength; a triumph is gained at the cost of the blood of enemies. Yet Christ's victory is won by his death and God's people conquer through faithfulness even to death. In the book of Revelation, the dragon and his allies conquer through *killing*; Christ and his allies conquer through *dying*. Thus, as Christ arrives for his triumph, the only ones who have died to gain victory are his allies, the martyrs. The power of the Messianic Divine Warrior is such that he conquers in the exact opposite manner than the current order expects. The blood on his robe is the blood of his army, victorious because they let their blood be shed.

One further image is the repetition of the divine vintner's trampling from Rev 14:19-20 in 19:15. The repetition draws the two depictions together and suggests a relationship.[144] I have already argued above that this indicates that Christ tramples the grapes in the winepress. Thus, the expressions of violence in Rev 14 and 19 are both expressions of Christ's eschatological war. Whether or not this portrays a bloody beginning to the millennial kingdom or indicates something else can thus be considered in light of the depiction of the eschatological battle waged by the divine cavalier in Rev 19:17-21.

Finally, if the vision reflects a Roman triumph, it is notable that the triumph takes place *before* the actual battle in Rev 19:19-20. This may simply be a function of the nature of so much of the imagery. In other words, as Mounce suggests, the chronological

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[143] Thomas, *Revelation 19*, 151-54.

[144] G. Bornkamm, "ληνός," 255-57.

sequence should not be pressed too tightly.[145] Another option focuses on the imagery of the triumph. Matthews points out that outside of Rome, the Roman triumphs were offensive, so they tended to be celebrated at Rome.[146] The implication is that the triumph itself drew hostility. If the defeat of Babylon in Rev 17 precedes the final battle as it does in the narrative, the parading Divine Warrior is celebrating the defeat of Rome, something offensive to the nations (Rev 18:9-10). This would then be a piece of what draws the nations to the final eschatological battle in Rev 19:19.

This brings us to the eschatological battle. A prodigy precedes the battle in Rev 19:17-18, as an angel announces the "Great Supper of God" (τὸ δεῖπνον τὸ μέγα τοῦ θεοῦ). The invitees are "all the birds that fly in mid-heaven" (πᾶσιν τοῖς ὀρνέοις τοῖς πετομένοις ἐν μεσουρανήματι) and their supper is to eat of the flesh of the slain in the upcoming battle. The gruesome prodigy does not deter the beast and his allies.

> Then I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their captains come together to make war against the one sitting on the horse and his captains (Rev 19:19).

The prelude to war with its prodigy of doom leads directly into a depiction, not of the battle, but of the aftermath of the victory of the Divine Warrior.

> And the beast was seized, along with the false prophet who did signs for it by which he deceived the ones who took the mark of the beast and worshipped its image. Still alive, these two were thrown into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur (Rev 19:20).

There is no battle. The two beasts are thrown into their eternal punishment, one that draws on the imagery from the final imprisonment of the Watchers in passages such

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[145] Mounce, *Revelation*, 345: "The argument that the blood cannot be the blood of battle because the conflict has not yet been joined misunderstands the nature of apocalyptic writing. The blood-stained garments of the Messiah symbolize his victory in the coming conflict."

[146] Thomas, *Revelation 19*, 164.

as *1 En.* 8. As we have already seen, at the end of the Millennial Reign of Christ, the dragon will join them, and others will as well.

Meanwhile, the slain of the gathered armies provides the birds with their great supper.

> Those remaining were killed by the sword that went out from the mouth of the one sitting upon the horse. And all of the birds fed from their flesh (Rev 19:21).

The imagery is gruesome, but the demise of the kings is a result of the sword that proceeds from the mouth of the Divine Warrior alone. As we have seen, early Jewish imagery from *Ps. Sol.* 17 to *4 Ezra* 13 understands this weapon as an instrument of justice, not war. With this in mind, the gruesome nature of the imagery does not suggest a bloodthirsty Divine Warrior in the manner of Ugaritic Anat. Rather, the gruesome imagery suggests the degree of hostility to the Messianic Warrior. John presents so many as slain because so many oppose Christ. While the results of the judgment by the sword of his mouth become clear as the vision continues, John's imagery is primarily forensic imagery.

5.2.6. *Summary*

Not unexpectedly, the passages where Jesus Christ appears as the Messianic Divine Warrior are important for understanding the martial imagery throughout the book. John's opening vision in Rev 1:12-16 begins by presenting Jesus Christ as Son of Man from Dan 7:13, as well as ascribing to him the imagery of the Ancient of Days from Dan 7:9 and even angelic imagery from Dan 10:5-6. The combination presents a Messiah of incredible power and authority.

This same figure addresses the seven churches of Asia in Rev 2–3. It is in this connection that we first see a shift in the way violent imagery applies to Christ. The Divine Warrior threatens two churches for tolerating the kind of sin exemplified by wicked figures in the Hebrew Bible exploited at Israel's expense. The imagery of warfare and killing that accompanies these letters functions in the context of discipline and purity. The threat of war is not the charge to kill but to enforce repentance or separation. The threat warns of the dire need to maintain purity.

The vision of the Lion of Judah/the Lamb that stood as slain in Rev 5:1-5 is dramatic imagery that serves to reorient the audience's understanding of what it means to wield power. The Lamb's victory does not redefine power; it redefines victory. The Lamb's power is such that, by dying, he conquers. This becomes the paradigm for his followers as well.

The imagery of the Son of Man's harvest and the subsequent harvest and treading of the grapes in Rev 14:14-20 depicts two different harvests, but comparable imagery in Rev 19:11-21 aids in understanding the violence inherent in the trampling of the grapes.

The depiction of the Rider on the White Horse in Rev 19:11-16 is that of a messiah who judges and makes war with righteousness. He also provides a stark contrast to the Roman idea of triumph as he rides wearing a robe dipped in the blood of his own army, emblems of the manner in which the victorious Divine Warrior wins victory. The Divine Warrior does not wield power in the way human warriors do, nor does he conquer in the same manner. Despite the warning of the prodigies, an army gathered by the beast gathers to fight the Messianic Warrior. There is no battle. The beast and false prophet are thrown into the Abyss and the armies are slain by the sword from his mouth. This is a

forensic image, not a depiction of battle or its aftermath. One concept that the gruesome imagery does communicate is the depth of hostility to Christ.

John's audience would have a number of clues to hear more than Jesus Christ leading a gruesome battle of revenge at the close of the age. The image that stands of the entire book is the Lamb, standing as slain. This image becomes a filter through which to understand the violence of the book. In the book of Revelation, the Messianic Divine Warrior always conquers in a manner antithetical to the way the present order conquers. The text not only guides John's audience to this conclusion, it sets forth the same challenge to the audience. Roman power—or any other power in this order—exploits for victory; divine power sacrifices itself. The rider on the white horse is the Lamb standing as slain, even as the Lamb standing as slain is the Lion of Judah who conquered.

5.3. *The Allies of the Divine Warrior*

The two primary allies of the Divine Warrior are angels and humans who remain faithful in their testimony. Angels are quite active in the book of Revelation but not always in ways related to the conduct of divine battle. I focus on angels that do relate in some manner to divine warfare. Those who keep their testimony are the key human conquerors in the book of Revelation. There are a number of examples of such conquerors. Two of the more dramatic ones are the two witnesses of Rev 11:3-13.

5.3.1. *Angelic Allies*

Angels appear in the book of Revelation with more frequency than any other New Testament work. Resseguie notes seven different functions of angels, not all of which are pertinent to Divine Warrior imagery: 1) they "personify" the seven churches; 2) they

mediate divine judgment; 3) they mediate divine revelation; 4) they worship the Lamb and God; 5) they protect the servants of God; 6) they mediate the prayers of the saints to God; and 7) they bring destruction upon the earth.[147]

There are a number of episodes where angelic figures either mediate God's judgment or bring destruction to the earth. One example, in Rev 7:1-3, depicts four angels holding back destruction.

> After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth holding back the four winds of the earth so that no wind could blow against the earth, the sea, or any tree. Then I saw another angel rising from the dawning of the sun who had the seal of the living God. He called out with a great voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the earth and the sea saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees until we have marked the foreheads of the servants of our God."

The main issue here is the identity of these angels. A common suggestion is that they serve as the guardians of the four horseman of Rev 6:1-8.[148] The primary argument in favor of this identification is that the four horsemen reflect the imagery of the four chariots of Zech 6:1-7. In Zech 6:5, the chariots are explicitly identified as "the four winds of heaven." Further, the four winds are never subsequently released in Revelation while the horsemen are released at the opening of the first four seals. Thus, if the angels are holding back the four horsemen, the interlude of Rev 7:1-17 recounts events prior to those in Rev 6:1-8.

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[147] Resseguie, *Unsealed*, 153.

[148] E.g., Beale, *Revelation*, 406. I discuss the four horseman of Rev 6:1-8 below. Others, e.g., Ford, *Revelation*, 120, understand Rev 7:1-17 as an interlude between the sixth and seventh seals that allows for the sealing of God's people in the face of the impending trumpets and bowls.

The four angels have authority over the four winds, a symbolic representation of the cosmos of the ancient world.[149] I discussed wind as a weapon and attendant of the Divine Warrior, especially in connection with Ps 104:4, in chapter three. Daniel 7:2 provides another notable parallel, as the four winds stir up the four beasts from the sea. The destructive nature of the winds in the book of Revelation is evident in that the angels have been given power to destroy the earth, the sea, and trees (Rev 7:1). However, the angel that arises from the dawning of the sun commands them to wait (7:3). The passive voice (ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ἀδικῆσαι) implies the divine source of the angels' destructive power. That these angels serve as allies of the Divine Warrior is indicated by the fact that are holding back destruction, refraining from unleashing the power under their authority until they receive permission.

A similar instance of an angel restraining a hostile force appears in the final defeat of the dragon. In Rev 20:1-3, part of the aftermath of the eschatological battle of Jesus Christ and his army against the beast and the armies of his allies, an angel with a key and chain comes down from heaven and seals the dragon for a thousand years. The angel comes with a key to the Abyss, a tool that, in 9:1, "was given" to a "star that had fallen from heaven." The angel opens the Abyss and unleashes demonic forces upon those who dwell upon the earth (9:2-3).

The opening of the Abyss and subsequent release of hostile forces is similar to motif of the temporary imprisonment of the dragon is similar to the binding of Asael (*1 En.* 10:4-6) and Shemihaza (*1 En.* 10:12-13) that we noted in the previous chapter, where God sends angels to bind the adversaries until the final judgment and then both angels are

[149] On the prevalence of the motif of four winds in Jewish and Greco-Roman literature, see Aune, *Revelation*, 2:450-51.

thrown into a fiery abyss. The efficacy of the dragon's sealing in the Abyss is apparent in the work of the angel: "He bound him for a thousand years, he threw him into the Abyss, and he locked and sealed it over him."[150] The dragon cannot accuse the nations until his prison is unsealed and unlocked, and he is unbound.

Angels are also involved in the initiation or announcement of divine prodigies. We see this in Rev 8:3-5, where an angel with a censer fills the censer with the fire of the altar filled with the prayers of the saints. The angel then throws the contents to the earth, there is a responsive prodigy, apparently from the throne, and the scene then shifts to the seven trumpets. In Rev 8:5, the throwing of fire to earth indicates the purpose of the judgment. It is a divine response to the prayers of the saints (cf. Rev 6:9-11). I have already noted another example, the angel of Rev 14:18, who commanded the angel with the sickle to harvest the grapes. This angel is "the one having authority over fire" (ὁ ἔχων ἐξουσίαν ἐπὶ τοῦ πυρός). In both Rev 8 and 14, fire plays a role in the announcement of eschatological judgment.[151]

Elsewhere, in Rev 8–9, angels blow seven trumpets that call forth seven prodigies of plagues onto humanity. Some of the plagues that result from the trumpets adapt the Exodus plagues to an eschatological setting.[152] The first four trumpet plagues in particular suggest the influence of the Exodus plague tradition on the trumpet plagues.[153]

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[150] Contra Beale, *Revelation*, 985-86, who considers sealing to have "the general idea of 'authority over.'" However, the key is not simply that the dragon is bound and sealed but also *where* he has been bound and sealed.

[151] Blount, *Revelation*, 163.

[152] Aune, *Revelation*, 2:499-507, who charts the development and adaptation of the Exodus plague literature in Judaism. One notable development is the common tendency to reduce the ten plagues to seven.

[153] Hans-Peter Müller, "Die Plagen der Apokalypse, eine formgeschichtliche Untersuchung," *ZNW* 51 (1960): 268-72.

The casting of the fire from the altar of incense that directly precedes the trumpets indicates that the trumpet plagues have a similar purpose. In response to the cry of his people (Exod 3:7), the Divine Warrior unleashed plagues of increasing intensity in order to force the Egyptians to free the Israelites (Exod 7–11). Thus, the trumpet plagues in Rev 8–9 serve as prodigies warning those living on the earth of the impending wrath of God and the Lamb over the treatment of the saints.[154] As we have seen, the conclusion of the sixth trumpet hints that the purpose of the trumpets is to bring repentance, but to no avail.[155]

> But they did not repent of their murders, their sorceries, their immoralities, or their thieveries (Rev 9:21).

The bowl plagues of Rev 16 are similar in nature. With the bowls, the warnings conclude with the destruction of Babylon. Thus, a part of the greatest warning the human race receives is the destruction of its greatest city, which is followed by a plague of hail (16:17-20). As I noted above, these plagues did not provoke repentance and, this time, they did not even provoke fear. Instead, the victims turn to blasphemy (16:21).

In each of these last two examples, angels are involved in sending various prodigies that warn humanity of the coming wrath of the Divine Warrior. These activities are more symbolic and involved than a simple angelic pronouncement such as Rev 14:6-11, but they serve the same general function.

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[154] Pierre Prigent, *Commentary on the Apocalypse of St. John* (trans. Wendy Pradels; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 305.

[155] Jay Casey, "The Exodus Theme in the Book of Revelation against the Background of the New Testament" in *Exodus: A Lasting Paradigm* (ed. Bas van Iersel and Anton Weiler; *Concilium* 189; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1987), 36-37.

One of the more significant angelic allies of the Divine Warrior is Michael, whose significance stems in no small part from the fact that he is the only angelic ally mentioned by name. He appears only briefly, in Rev 12:7-9.

> And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels battled with the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought back but he was not strong enough and no place was found for them in heaven. The great dragon was thrown—the ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan—the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown to the earth and his angels where thrown with him.

Michael leads the battle against the dragon that results in the dragon being forced to earth. This sets the scene for the dragon's assault on the people of God that develops at the end of the chapter.

The battle between Michael and the dragon takes place in the aftermath of the appearance of the two signs in the heavens, the woman and the dragon, the dragon's attempt to devour the woman's child, and the divine protection afforded the woman and the child (Rev 12:1-6). Considerable source-critical work has been done on the passage, both within the larger context of Rev 12:1-10 and in the pericope of 12:7-10 as a traditional story in its own right.[156] I am not concerned with the source material John may or may not have adapted here though an audience's familiarity with a source would certainly impact how the audience perceives the new context. My concern is to place the war in heaven within the context of the narrative in Rev 12:1-17.

Most commentators consider Rev 12:1-17 to be a mythical portrayal of salvation history.[157] The woman of 12:1 is the personification of the people of God, indicated by her attire. The birth pangs of 12:2 are Israel's various sufferings as she moves closer to

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[156] See here, especially, Yarbro Collins, *Combat*, 57-85.

[157] E.g., Blount, *Revelation*, 233-35. What follows is the typical reconstruction.

the time of the appearing of the Messiah. The dragon in 12:3 is the ancient enemy of God.[158] He is immediately hostile to the woman, as his tail sweeps one third of the stars to earth—the woman's crown is made of twelve stars—and he waits to devour the woman's child in 12:4. In 12:5, the woman's child is Jesus Christ, as the reference to Ps 2:9 makes clear.[159] Before the dragon can devour the child, the child is snatched to the throne of God, a picture of Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension.[160] The woman is then taken to safety in the desert (ἔρημος) in 12:6, where she is kept for 1,260 days.[161]

The war in heaven in Rev 12:7-10 would appear to presuppose that the dragon followed the child into heaven, where the dragon still seeks to devour him.[162] Michael and his angels, whether as defenders of the divine realm or of the people of God (cf. Dan 12:1), battle the dragon and his angels, who are pushed back until "no place was found for them in heaven."[163] The dragon and his allies are cast down to earth and John hears a great voice in heaven praising the kingdom of God and the authority of his Messiah (Rev 12:9-12). The voice rejoices that dragon, the accuser (ὁ κατηγορῶν), who makes his

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[158] On the ubiquity of the dragon as a symbol for evil in the ancient world, see Ivan M. Benson, "Revelation 12 and the Dragon of Antiquity," *ResQ* 29 (1987): 97-102.

[159] On the stars as the people of God, see Beale, *Revelation*, 635. Another common view is that the stars are fallen angels, after the imagery in Dan 8:10. See here, e.g., Osborne, *Revelation*, 461.

[160] Aune, *Revelation*, 2:689: "In its present context this statement probably refers to the ascension of Jesus, and that is clearly how Christian interpreters have understood the passage."

[161] On the symbolism of ἔρημος in Hebrew Scripture and early Jewish and Christian literature, see Yarbro Collins, *Myth*, 120-22. See Peter von der Osten-Sacken, *Gott und Belial: Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Dualismus in den Texten aus Qumran* (SUNT 6; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969), 30-41, on the desert or wilderness as the place of the eschatological battle.

[162] Aune, *Revelation*, 2:676.

[163] This is the first of two appearances of a heavenly army (cf. Rev 19:14). In both cases, the army plays little role in the narrative.

accusations before God, has been defeated (12:10). But the voice does not ascribe the victory to Michael.

> And they [those accused by the dragon] have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. They did not love their lives in the face of death (Rev 12:11).

Michael's war, then, is the believer's war, a war initiated by the blood of Jesus. Michael's victory is the believer's victory. In this sense, John has adapted Michael's role in Dan 12:1-3 to believers in Christ who persevere in the midst of hostile surroundings.[164] The faithful believers defeat the dragon through the blood of the Lamb and their own faithfulness, even when faced with death.[165] Thus, the war in heaven is won on earth. The war is not won with the force of arms and power, but in the power of blood of the Messianic Divine Warrior and testimony of that blood by his followers, even as they face death.[166] War in heaven is won, as it were, at the foot of the cross. The final defeat of the dragon, however, has yet to come.

5.3.2. *Human Allies*

Two items deserve mention here. The first is the consistent call for the people of God to conquer, a concept ultimately tied to witness, μαρτυρία. Second, the two witnesses of Rev 11:3-13 make dramatic use of Divine Warrior imagery in the face of hostility from the beast and the world.

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[164] Hannah, *Michael*, 130.

[165] Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation* (New Testament Theology; Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993), 75: "The continuing and ultimate victory of God over evil which the rest of Revelation describes is no more than the working-out of the decisive victory of the Lamb on the Cross."

[166] Blount, *Revelation*, 239.

5.3.2.1. *Those Who Conquer*. One of the consistent themes of the book of Revelation is the challenge for believers to endure in the face of the world's hostility. Throughout the book of Revelation, the faithful and their testimony and the exalted status of those slain for that testimony retain high honor, including reigning with Christ in the Millennial Kingdom (Rev 20:4). One of the means of highlighting this importance is the use of martial language. Thus, the one who maintains his or her testimony is labeled, ὁ νικῶν, "the one who conquers." This sense of conquering runs throughout the book of Revelation. In the letters to the seven churches, the Messianic Divine Warrior makes specific promises to those who conquer. For example, the letter to the church of Smyrna closes with this promise:

> The one who conquers will not be harmed by the second death (Rev 2:11; Ὁ νικῶν οὐ μὴ ἀδικηθῇ ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου τοῦ δευτέρου).

The letter itself indicates what it means to conquer. In Rev 2:7, Christ identified himself as "the first and the last, who was dead but lives." The letter itself praised the church at Smyrna because of their richness despite their poverty, especially in light of hostility from "those who say they are Jews and are not" but are of the synagogue of Satan" (2:9). Then the Living One gives them an explicit indication of what it means for them to conquer and not be harmed by the second death.

> Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Watch! The devil is about to throw some of you in prison so that you might be tested and you will be afflicted for ten days. Be faithful to death and I will give you the crown of life (Rev 2:10).

Conquering, for the church of Smyrna—and any other Christians facing such a test—means remaining faithful even when faced with death.[167] The situation in Philadelphia is

[167] Blount, *Revelation*, 55.

similar, as they are to "hold to what you have" (κράτει ὃ ἔχεις) in the face of external opposition (3:11; c.f. 3:9).[168] Each of the seven churches receives a challenge that makes them conquerors and, conquering, they receive the promise. The other five churches face different issues than Smyrna and Philadelphia, all related to conquering aspects of compromise and sin from within the congregations.[169] For these churches, the challenge to conquer relates to overcoming the issues of sin.[170] But conquering compromise and sin then leaves them open to the hostility of the world. Thus, for these churches, when they conquer they make themselves vulnerable to the world's conquering.[171] In this, they become like Smyrna and Philadelphia.

Earlier, I noted how those accused by the dragon conquer the dragon by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. In Rev 15:2, those who conquered the beast, his image, and his name stand beside a sea of glass mixed with fire as they sing praises to God. These conquerors have conquered the way the Lamb of Rev 5:5 conquers as they give their lives to remain faithful.[172] Finally, in Rev 21:7, such conquering brings the ultimate reward.

> Those who conquer will inherit these things. I will be their God and they will be my children.

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[168] Philip L. Mayo, *"Those Who Call Themselves Jews": The Church and Judaism in the Apocalypse of John* (Princeton Monograph Series 60; Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2006), 67.

[169] Beale, *Revelation*, 269.

[170] Steven L. Homcy, "'To Him Who Overcomes': A Fresh Look at What 'Victory' Means for the Life of the Believer According to the Book of Revelation," *JETS* 38 (1995): 195.

[171] Beale, *Revelation*, 269.

[172] Beale, *Revelation*, 270.

This conquering is a maintaining of faithfulness, a maintaining of witness, even when the choice is between life and death. The ultimate reward is one far beyond what compromise would gain them.

In light of this type of conquering, the opening of the fifth seal seems out of place. When the Lamb opens the fifth seal in Rev 6:9, John sees the heavenly altar of incense and under the altar he sees "those slain for the word of God and for the testimony they had." He then hears the martyrs cry out to God.

> And they cried out in a great voice saying, "How long, Sovereign One, holy and true? Will you not judge and avenge our blood from those who dwell upon the earth?" (Rev 6:10).

The martyrs receive white robes and are told to wait a while longer, until the complete number of believers had been killed in the same way (6:11).

The cry for vengeance should be understood in light of the discussion in the previous chapter. Divine vengeance is the response of the Divine Warrior for injustice against his people. In that regard, YHWH's vengeance was tied to his roles as Israel's king, judge, and protective warrior.[173] The cry for vengeance is not the cry for revenge; it is the cry for reversal.[174] The establishment of justice, in the end, is the removal of what is not just. In that regard, the prayer of the martyrs is ultimately the prayer for the establishment of the new order. In that setting, the divine monarch's rule establishes

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[173] H. G. L. Peels, *The Vengeance of God: The Meaning of the Root NQM and the Function of NQM-Texts in the Context of Divine Revelation in the Old Testament* (OtSt 31; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 280.

[174] Contra Blount, *Revelation*, 135, who apparently understands John to express the idea that justice will come when the right judge wields a bigger stick. "God was caught up in a war of lethal cosmic force. Rome, the power representing Satan, had no compunction about acting with extreme violence. John apparently believed that, if cosmic and historical justice were to be served, God would need to respond in kind."

order, the divine judge ensures justice, and the Divine Warrior protects establishment of justice and order.

For the martyrs in Rev 6:10, this time is not yet. They are assured a set limit in their wait for justice.[175] That set limit consists not of a time period but a set number of martyrs.[176] In the meantime, the martyrs are dressed in white and "told to rest a while longer" (Rev 6:11; καὶ ἐρρέθη αὐτοῖς ἵνα ἀναπαύσονται ἔτι χρόνον μικρόν). The assurance is that justice is not forgotten, neither is it delayed.

5.3.2.2. *The Two Witnesses of Revelation 11.* Two of the more interesting allies of the Divine Warrior are the two witnesses of Rev 11. After being told by a voice from heaven that he "must prophecy again about many peoples, nations, languages, and kings" (Rev 10:11), John is then given a measuring rod and commanded to measure the Temple *except* for the outer court, as "it is given to the nations" (ἐδόθη τοῖς ἔθνεσιν) and they will trample "the holy city" (τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν) for forty-two months (11:1-2). The voice then tells John that "I will give to my two witnesses to prophecy"[177] for 1,260 days, the same amount of time that the nations trample the holy city (11:3).

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[175] Beale, *Revelation*, 394.

[176] On the prevalence of the idea of a predetermined number of the righteous in Judaism and early Christianity, see Aune, *Revelation*, 2:412.

[177] The identity of the two witnesses is much debated, with little consensus on whether the witnesses are individuals or a symbol for the church and, if they are individuals, whether they are historical figures or symbolic. For an overview of the various proposals, see Aune, *Revelation*, 2:599-603. Most commentators do agree that the two witnesses draw heavily on scriptural imagery from the lampstand and two olive trees of Zech 4:1-7, and the various motifs associated with Moses and Elijah. See here Antoninus King Wai Siew, *The War between the Two Beasts and the Two Witnesses: A Chiastic Reading of Revelation 11:1–14:5* (Library of New Testament Studies; London: T. & T. Clark, 2005), 249. Siew, ibid., 215-50, draws the symbolism of Zech 4, Moses, and Elijah into the larger context of Revelation and concludes the witnesses to be eschatological prophets (the two olive trees) *and* the church (the two lampstands). The elusive nature of the imagery, however, makes any conclusion difficult.

These witnesses will be given the kind of authority and power reminiscent of scriptural prophets (Rev 11:4-6). Then, at the end of their appointed period, the "beast from the Abyss" will make war on them and conquer them (11:7; ποιήσει μετ' αὐτῶν πόλεμον καὶ νικήσει αὐτοὺς καὶ ἀποκτενεῖ αὐτούς). While the witnesses' dead bodies lie in the street "of the great city, which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified," all of the inhabitants of the earth celebrate (11:8-9).[178] After three and a half days, God breathes life into them, terrifying the celebrants. The witnesses then hear a voice from heaven telling them to "Come up here!" and the witnesses ascend as the people watch, an event followed by an earthquake that destroys part of the city and kills 7,000 (11:12-13).

There are numerous examples of Divine Warrior imagery in the passage, from the witness' ability to send plagues as prodigies to their riding a cloud to the heaven and the subsequent devastating earthquake. One aspect of the witness' arsenal will suffice, however.

> And if anyone wants to harm them, fire goes out from their mouths and devours their enemies; if anyone wants to harm them, it is necessary to kill them (Rev 11:5).

Not only are the witnesses patterned after scriptural prophets, they also are armed with one of the primary weapons of the messianic warrior. The witnesses are divinely empowered to use this weapon with lethal force. There is some support in scholarship for taking witnesses as proclaiming a message of repentance as they spew fire.[179] More

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[178] The identity of the city is a point of considerable debate because in every other reference in Revelation, τῆς πόλεως τῆς μεγάλης refers to Babylon. In 11:8, however, the great city is also the city "where our Lord was crucified" (ὁ κύριος αὐτῶν ἐσταυρώθη), a phrase that instantly suggests Jerusalem (cf., Aune, *Revelation*, 620).

[179] E.g., Bauckham, *Climax*, 273-83.

likely, their activity reflects the harsh response to a threat.[180] The familiar motif of weaponry that proceeds from the mouth of the Messianic Warrior provides a clue to understanding the witnesses and their ministry. As we have already seen, the book of Revelation uses this motif as a weapon of judgment, not war. Further, in the previous chapter, I noted how this imagery often turned an enemy's intention back upon itself. In Rev 11:5, this is certainly evident. Those that seek to kill the two witnesses are themselves killed by the flame that shoots from the witness' mouths. This reflects the use of similar imagery that we saw in *Ps. of Sol.* 17:24-25.

> And arm him with strength (17:22) . . . to destroy lawless nations with the word of his mouth with his threat to make nations flee from his presence and to convict sinners with the word of their heart (*Ps. Sol.* 17:24-25).

Recall here my suggestion that the psalmist actually seeks for the Messianic Warrior to establish justice. Part of that prayer is the *self-condemnation* of the nations and the sinners. In Rev 11:5, the imagery functions in a similar way. The attempt to kill the witnesses brings the prophetic word of condemnation back upon the killers. They are exposed for what they are.

5.3.3. *Summary*

Examples of angels involved with aspects of divine warfare function in two different ways in the book of Revelation. First, the angels serve as the means to hold back the unleashing of destructive forces until the time God intends the forces to act. Two examples of this include the restraining of the four winds in Rev 7:1 and the

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[180] Akira Satake, *Die Gemeindeordnung in der Johannesapokalypse* (WMANT 21; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1966), 125: Die Behauptung, dass sie der Welt die Bekehrung predigen oder dass sie sich mit der Juden- (und Heiden-) mission beschäftigen, findet im Text keinen Anhalt. Satake's understanding of the passage as indicating the divine protection of the church has proven influential (ibid., 132). Cf. e.g., Blount, *Revelation*, 210.

imprisonment of the dragon in the Abyss in Rev 20:1-3. Second, I examined instances where angels mediated aspects of divine prodigies, such as Rev 8:3-5, the angel who cast the fire from the altar to earth, and the seven trumpeting angels of Rev 8–9. These angels deliver God's message of his impending wrath with more drama and impact than an angelic pronouncement.

Michael, the leader of the heavenly armies, conducts a war in heaven that ends with the dragon cast to the earth. The brief appearance of Michael in Rev 12:7-9 serves to present a divine perspective on human events. We see this in the pronouncement that follows Michael's victory, the voice from heaven exults in the defeat of the dragon (Rev 12:10-12); the voice does not attribute the victory to Michael but to those faithful Christians whom the dragon had been accusing. The faithful "conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony" (Rev 12:11).

Throughout the book of Revelation, a faithful testimony is the way the Christian gains victory. This is apparent in Christ's call to the seven churches to be conquerors, language that has become the language of perseverance. This is true for the churches whether the threat is external or internal. It is heightened in the visions, where believers conquer in the same way the Lamb conquered. Even the cry of the martyrs for vengeance for their blood becomes a patient wait for the establishment of divine justice. When the appointed number of martyrs is reached, the authority, justice, and protection of the Divine Warrior is the sole feature of the new order.

John's audience would readily recognize the active angelic realm, where angels restrained evil and announced God's intentions. The text would then lead the audience to understand the story of a well-known angel at war with the dragon is actually a heavenly

depiction of earthly events. Believers are encouraged that their perseverance deals a certain blow to the enemy in their own war with the dragon. With so much of the imagery of warfare tied to Christians who are faithful, the audience would see a call to faithfulness in their own lives, one that mimics the faithful in the seven churches and anticipates the faithful seen in the prophetic depiction of the believer's victory. The use of imagery elsewhere that appears again with the two witnesses drives home that the faithful testimony of believers is a sword that condemns the unbelievers by revealing their own hearts.

5.4. *The Enemies of the Divine Warrior*

We have already seen most of the enemies of the Divine Warrior, at least in a cursory fashion, in the preceding sections, where I discussed a number of the enemies, their battles, and their demise. Thus, in this section I examine these enemies in order to clarify some of their role as enemies and discuss aspects of their roles I did not cover in the preceding sections.

5.4.1. *Otherworldly Enemies*

In the end, all of the supernatural or personified enemies of the book of Revelation serve the purpose of God in some way. The most prominent enemy is the Dragon, Satan, along with his demonic army, whom we have already seen at war and we have also seen his demise. Other supernatural or personified enemies, such as the personified Death and Hades, never mount opposition to God, Jesus Christ, or the faithful. Rather, they serve as instruments of the divine purpose.

5.4.1.1. *Satan/the Dragon*. We have already noted a number of places where Satan plays a significant role as the enemy of God, the Lamb, and God's people. He first appears in the letters to the seven churches, where he symbolizes the source of the opposition to the churches. Satan is mentioned in four of the seven letters. I have already discussed the throne of Satan in the letter to Pergamum (2:13) as a reference to the prominence of the emperor cult in the city. Two of the other times Satan is mentioned indicate that opposition from those who call themselves Jews (τῶν λεγόντων Ἰουδαίους εἶναι) is really opposition from the "synagogue of Satan" (συναγωγὴ τοῦ σατανᾶ, Rev 2:9, Smyrna; c.f., 3:8, Philadelphia). While there is some debate concerning exactly what John identifies with the Semitic terms, the line of demarcation between what is Satan's and what is God's is the response to the gospel and faithfulness to its message.[181] Those slandering (βλασφημία) the church (2:9) demonstrate by their actions that they are of the synagogue of Satan, even if they claim to be God's people.[182] Those who deny the church's status before God are the same. Such a synagogue of Satan will learn that, when it comes to the church, indeed, "I [Jesus] have loved you" (ἐγὼ ἠγάπησά σε).[183] The final mention of Satan, in Rev 2:24, is part of the letter to Thyatira. John apparently mocks the teachings of Jezebel as "the deep things of Satan" (2:24; τὰ βαθέα τοῦ σατανᾶ), what "Jezebel" apparently thought were the deep things of God.[184] Thus, we see that each mention of Satan in the letters, the exalted Son of Man mocks those who

[181] Mayo, *Jews*, 61-62.

[182] Mayo, *Jews*, 66-67.

[183] Mayo, *Jews*, 67-71.

[184] Blount, *Revelation*, 64.

claim to be on the side of God as actually being on the side of the enemy, which is not really Rome, the Jews, or false teachers, but Satan.

Outside the letters to the churches, Satan next appears as the great red dragon, a "sign in heaven" in Rev 12:3-4, where he functions as the opponent of the "great sign in heavens" the woman (12:1).[185] The depiction of each sign mirrors the other.[186] The woman is dressed with the sun, has a crown of twelve stars, and is experiencing birth pangs (12:1-2); the dragon is red, has seven heads, ten horns, and seven diadems on its seven heads, and sweeps one third of the stars from the heavens (12:3-4). The two opposites come together as the dragon waits to devour the woman's child.

The hostility of the dragon to the people of God is clear in two specific actions of the dragon, his sweeping of one third of the stars from the sky and his desire to devour the woman's child. The stars of the woman's crown are a recognizable symbol of the twelve tribes of Israel.[187] The dragon, by sweeping away a third of the stars, assaults the people of God, likely an allusion to historical hostility toward the nation of Israel.[188] His desire to devour the child of the woman, the messiah, is clearly hostile and leads to the

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[185] Blount, *Revelation*, 228: "The woman represents the power of God to birth and build up the believing community; the dragon represents the power to destroy that community at any point from its inception onward."

[186] Siew, *War*, 130.

[187] Resseguie, *Unsealed*, 64, calls the number twelve a number of completeness "reserved exclusively for the people of God" in the book of Revelation.

[188] Beale, *Revelation*, 635-37, who sees the sweeping of the stars as an expansion of Dan 8:10, where the little horn ascended to heaven and "threw down to the earth some of the host and some of the stars, and trampled on them." Beale, ibid., 636, states, "Though Dan. 8:10 first had its application to Antiochus [IV], John now applies it in an escalated way to the devilish power behind Antiochus. As in Daniel, John's wording refers to persecution of God's people, which perhaps affects their angelic counterparts."

war in heaven (Rev 12:7-10), where the identity of the dragon, if not apparent before, is now explicit.

> The great dragon was thrown—the ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world, was thrown to the earth and his angels were thrown with him (Rev 12:9).

The reader is left with no doubt about the identity of the primary opponent of God, his Messiah, and his people. The dragon is ὁ ὄφις ὁ ἀρχαῖος, ὁ καλούμενος Διάβολος καὶ ὁ Σατανᾶς, ὁ πλανῶν τὴν οἰκουμένην ὅλην. Thus, he is every aspect of ancient hostility to God's people, from the δράκων, Leviathan, of Ps 73:13 LXX (74:13 ET) to the ancient ὄφις of Gen 3 (LXX). In the divine judgment of Isa 27:1 (LXX), the dragon and the serpent are parallel, making them one and the same. In *Ps. Sol.* 2:25, we saw the psalmist ascribe such characteristics to a human being, as the psalmist calls the Roman adversary of God's people, Pompey, a δράκων. The dragon is the accusing adversary, the διάβολος of Job 1 and Zech 3 (LXX). We noted the rise of a Satan-figure, called by various names, as the epitome of a divine adversary in some early Jewish writings. Satan is the primary title of the διάβολος in the New Testament.

Cast out of heaven after his war with Michael, the dragon renews his hostility towards the people of God. In response, the woman is given two wings to fly to the desert for "a time, times, and half a time" (καιρὸν καὶ καιροὺς καὶ ἥμισυ καιροῦ), away "from the face of the serpent" (12:14). The serpent unleashes a torrent of water from his mouth (ἔβαλεν . . . ἐκ τοῦ στόματος) in order to sweep her away (12:15).[189] The

[189] Note here that the deluge (ὕδωρ ὡς ποταμόν) comes from the serpent's mouth, a symbol of chaos. The weapon from the mouth of Jesus Christ is a sword, with the imagery as a whole indicating justice—the establishment of order. Siew, *War*, 147, n. 54, sees the episode as an allusion to Isa 8:7-8, where YHWH, out of anger sends the Assyrians as a flood: "therefore, the Lord is bringing up against it the mighty flood waters of the River, the king of Assyria and all his glory; it will rise above all its channels and

association of the serpent with water is an ancient association, as we have seen throughout this work.[190] It is to no avail; the earth protects the woman by opening and swallowing the water, an image that echoes the activity of the Red Sea in Exod 15:12, where the sea swallows Pharaoh (Rev 12:16).[191] In anger, the dragon turns in another direction, one that John's audience would almost certainly recognize as a reference to the followers of Christ.

> The dragon was angry with the woman and he went to fight the remainder of her children, those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus (Rev 12:17).

The battle, however, takes a different turn, as the dragon stands on the seashore Rev 12:18). The dragon will fight the woman's offspring through what arises out of the sea, an incredible beast (13:1).

The dragon then fades into the background until he is bound in the Abyss for a thousand years (20:1-3) and then released to deceive one last time (20:7-10). Following this battle, the devil's end is final. He is thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, the same fate as the beast and false prophet (20:10).

The end of the dragon indicates the end not only of the deception of the nations, but of the accusations before God against believers. Satan's destruction paves the way

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overflow all its banks; it will sweep on into Judah as a flood, and, pouring over, it will reach up to the neck; and its outspread wings will fill the breadth of your land, O Immanuel." This depends on understanding the flood to be sent against Remaliah (Israel; 8:6) and wings to be YHWH's protective wings over Judah, rather than as a symbol of the extent the Assyrians' flood. See here J. J. M. Roberts, "Isaiah and his Children," in *Biblical and Related Studies Presented to Samuel Iwry* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1985), 199. The flight of the woman to the desert where God feeds her recalls Elijah's flight to the desert where he is fed by birds sent from God (1 Kgs 17:1-7).

[190] Cf. Aune, *Revelation*, 2:706-07. Note, however, that in the LXX, the watery serpent is the δράκων, (e.g., Ps 73:13 LXX; 74:13 ET) while the ὄφις is the snake, as in Gen 3. The only exception here is Isa 27:1, where the δράκων and the ὄφις are parallel.

[191] Aune, *Revelation*, 2:707. Cf. Num 16:32-34.

for the new order, a place where deception and antagonistic accusation cannot exist. The serpent began with an act of deception in Gen 3 and his end comes after a final act of deception in Rev 20. His fate—to be cast away eternally from the nations—could be no other if the New Jerusalem is to include the healing of the nations (22:2).

5.4.1.2. *The Four Horseman.* Commentators are divided on their understanding of the four horseman of Rev 6:1-8. The primary issue is the fact that the first cavalier rides on a white horse, is given a crown and that "he went out conquering and in order to conquer" (6:2; ἐξῆλθεν νικῶν καὶ ἵνα νικήσῃ). These aspects are similar to the depiction of the Rider on the white horse in Rev 19:11-16, causing some to suggest that the rider of 6:2 is, at the very least, an ally of Christ if not Christ himself.[192]

More common, however, is the suggestion that the four horsemen are actually opponents of the Divine Warrior. This view is generally based upon the differences between the cavalier of 6:2 and the cavalier of 19:11-16.[193] Since Ramsey,[194] most recognize the Parthian background to the description of the first rider and consider this a further argument in favor of distinguishing the two riders.[195] Another reason for taking the four riders as enemies is the clear identification of the last, fourth rider. The fourth

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[192] E.g., Ford, *Revelation*, 103: "The four horsemen . . . are manifestations of Yahweh or angels reflecting his character or actions. John Paul Heil, "The Fifth Seal as the Key to the Book of Revelation," *Bib* 74 (1993): 223, states unequivocally that the rider of the white horse is "later identified as Christ."

[193] Blount, *Revelation*, 124.

[194] Ramsey, *Letters*, 58-60, who suggests the rider is the Parthian king. Specifically, the connections to the Parthian king are the fact that he rides the horse—as opposed to a Roman charioteer, he is armed with a bow, and the Parthians were generally perceived as a threat to stability, especially since they had defeated the Romans in battle.

[195] Note, however, Thomas, *Revelation 19*, 142-45, considers the Parthian imagery to be the primary influence for both depictions. The Rider of Rev 19:11-16 is the ideal king depicted with Parthian imagery while the rider of 6:2 is a pale imitation.

rider, Death, followed by Hades, must be an enemy since Death will be cast into the Lake of Fire and Sulfur (6:4; see below).[196]

That the four horseman have divine approval for their activities is clear by the fact that the Lamb opens the seals unleashing the riders and because the riders are given (ἐδόθη αὐτῷ) authority to carry out their activities, a likely example of the divine passive.[197] As to the depiction of the riders themselves, rather than imagery of a particular or imagined historical scenario, the four horsemen represent the awful result of the human exercise of power. They dramatically portray the results of authority based upon a human strategy such as the *Pax Romana*.[198]

The horses run in a progressive order, with each rider building on the carnage of the previous riders. The first rider asserts authority by conquering with violence (Rev 6:2). The second rider follows, as war is the path to conquering and authority (6:4). The third rider brings the breakdown of basic economic systems in the aftermath of war (6:5-6). This leads inevitably to death on a scale far greater than the casualties of battle, as Death and Hades unleash more of the same (6:7-8). The personified nature of Death and Hades, "one" of five enemies consigned to the Lake of Fire and Sulfur, not only depicts the inevitable outcome of war and its subsequent famine, but ties human violence and its aftermath to the demonic realm.[199]

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[196] Many who understand the first rider in a positive sense would nevertheless understand the latter three in a negative sense. Cf. Jens Herzer, "Der erste apokalyptische Reiter und der König der Könige: Eine beitrag zur Christologie der Johannesapokalypse," *NTS* 45 (1999): 230-49.

[197] Blount, *Revelation*, 124-25.

[198] Osborne, *Revelation*, 277, is similar.

[199] Resseguie, *Unsealed*, 146.

The horsemen are more than a depiction of human power. They indicate the heightened chaos as the Eschaton draws closer.[200] Thus, the four horsemen represent God, allowing humanity to assert its full expression of authority with devastating results. The four angels holding back the winds (Rev 7:1; see above) have let go. The Lamb has opened the seal that once restrained and humanity descends into apocalyptic chaos.[201]

5.4.1.3. *Death and Hades and Related Enemies.* Death and Hades appear in conjunction with one another four times in the book of Revelation. In Rev 1:18, the Son of Man asserts that he has the keys to Death and Hades. The image of the keys indicates the control of access, here reflecting the scriptural imagery of the gates of Sheol or death.[202] Greek depictions of Hades portray him carrying a key or a scepter, while Aiakos, son of Zeus, was sometimes described as the keeper of the keys to the gates of Hades [203] Jesus Christ, as holder of the keys of Death and Hades, portrays himself as the one released from the place where no one escapes and who now controls its access.[204]

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[200] George R. Beasley-Murray, *The Book of Revelation* (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 129-31.

[201] Cf. 2 Thess 2:1-12.

[202] E.g. Job 38:17; Pss 9:13 (9:14 MT); 107:18; Isa 38:10.

[203] Robin Hard, *The Routledge Handbook of Greek Mythology: Based on H. J. Rose's Handbook of Greek Mythology, Seventh Edition* (London: Routledge, 2004), 107-12.

[204] Richard Bauckham, *The Fate of the Dead: Studies on the Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (NovTSup 93; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 39.

In Rev 6:8, Death is the rider on the pallid (χλωρός)[205] horse, followed by Hades.

> And I saw, look! A rider on a pallid horse, and the one sitting on it was named Death, and Hades was following him. Authority was given them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with the sword, famine, death, and the beasts of the earth.

Death and Hades ride out at the opening of the fourth seal, the exalted imagery of their authority to inflict carnage over one fourth of the earth indicating the eschatological nature of the seals. Death's and Hades' authority over the earth results in the spreading of a familiar group of weapons from the Divine Warrior imagery of Ezek 14:21, namely, the sword, famine, wild animals, pestilence, an aspect of the Divine Warrior's arsenal I discussed in chapter three. In Rev 6:8 Death and Hades ride as the instruments of eschatological woe, the end result of human authority, now acting without restraint.

Death and Hades appear again at the White Throne judgment of Rev 20:11-15. In 20:12, Death and Hades give up their dead so that the dead can be judged. Their realm emptied, Death and Hades serve no further purpose.[206] As the opposite of divine order, there is only one solution, the permanent removal of one of the most significant of the divine enemies to the old order.[207] Thus, Death and Hades are thrown into the lake of fire (20:14). In narrative order, Death and Hades have followed the Beast, the False Prophet, and Satan into the lake of fire. Now, finally, "Death has been swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor 15:54). The finality is heightened with the terse statement of Rev 21:4: "Death is no more" (ὁ θάνατος οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι οὔτε).

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[205] Most commentators note the range of options here as green, pale green, or yellowish green. Cf. Aune, *Revelation*, 2:400. Given that the horse of death would likely look like death, "pallid" seems the better choice. Cf. *LSJ*, "χλωρός," 1995.

[206] J. Webb Mealy, *After the Thousand Years: Resurrection and Judgment in Revelation 20* (JSNTSup 70; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 172: "Death and Hades . . . now bereft of their jobs, come into final punishment."

[207] Resseguie, *Unsealed*, 190.

A number of commentators understand another ancient enemy of the Divine Warrior, the sea, to also be an enemy in the book of Revelation. We saw in chapter 3 how Hebrew Scripture adapts aspects of a hostile, personified sea from the broader ancient Near East. The sea as a hostile enemy is not as prominent in early Jewish literature. However, it does remain a hostile demonic force in Mark 4:35-41, where Jesus stills the chaotic sea in the manner of a Divine Warrior.[208]

In Revelation, the only clearly negative portrayal of the sea relates to the origin of the beast who rises from it (Rev 13:1), where the hostile sense arises from the allusion to Dan 7:2-3. Three other statements may allude to the motif of the hostile sea, though each can be explained otherwise. Some take Rev 4:6, "and before the throne it was as a sea of glass, like crystal (καὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου ὡς θάλασσα ὑαλίνη ὁμοία κρυστάλλῳ), to indicate that the sea is part of the old order and thus hostile to God, here forced into submission in the divine presence.[209] However, the living water in Rev 22:2 is "bright as crystal" (λαμπρὸν ὡς κρύσταλλον) and comes from before the throne, which may indicate that the glassy sea before the throne is made of the water of life. Also, Rev 4:6 alludes to the crystal dome of Ezek 1:22 and the bronze basin of Solomon's Temple in 1 Kgs 7:23-26.[210] Neither passage suggests any latent hostility regarding the sea.

A second possible allusion to a hostile sea is Rev 15:2, where those who conquered the beast—were martyred—stand beside something "like a sea of glass

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[208] E.g., Resseguie, *Unsealed*, 78-80.

[209] Caird, *Revelation*, 65. Blount, *Revelation*, 92: "To gain access to God, believers must cross over the chaos of the sea. That is, they must find a way to witness to the lordship of Christ by pushing past the torrential forces that demand celebration of Rome's lordship."

[210] Aune, *Revelation*, 1:296.

mingled with fire" (ὡς θάλασσαν ὑαλίνην μεμιγμένην πυρὶ). Beale sees this as a reference to the exodus because of rabbinic parallels that portray the Red Sea becoming like glass. He also notes the "river of fire" before the throne in Dan 7:10 and suggests that Rev 15:2 "is the place where the Lamb has judged the beast."[211] If Rev 22:2 does indicate that the glassy water before the throne is living water, it seems to be an odd pairing to combine living water with fiery judgment. The fire may be an aspect of purification related to the presence of the martyrs. Even should the fire indicate judgment, it does not then imply anything chaotic about the glassy sea.

The final possible allusion to the hostile sea is the terse statement in Rev 21:1, "there is no more sea" (ἡ θάλασσα οὐκ ἔστιν ἔτι), at the announcement of the arrival of the new heavens and the new earth. This may allude to the dismissal of the ancient foe of chaos,[212] but every other chaotic foe—the dragon, the beast, the false prophet, Death and Hades, and those who worshipped the beast—is cast into the lake of fire. The absence of the sea is not explained in Rev 21; it is simply stated as fact.

Some enemies of God that appear in Revelation, only appear as instruments of the divine purpose and never in conflict with God, his Christ, or his people. One example is Rev 9:1-12. After the blowing of the fifth trumpet, a "star that had fallen from heaven" (ἀστέρα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ πεπτωκότα εἰς τὴν γῆν) is given the key to the shaft of the Abyss (9:1). Commentators are virtually unanimous that the star is an angel.[213] The identity of the star, however, has proven to be more difficult to determine. The best options are that

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[211] Beale, *Revelation*, 789-90.

[212] Blount, *Revelation*, 377.

[213] E.g., Aune, *Revelation*, 2:525.

the star is the angel of judgment, either like or identical to the angel of Rev 20:1,[214] or a fallen angel.[215] Given the language of falling (πίπτω)—as opposed to coming down (καταβαίνω; cf., again, Rev 20:1)—and the prevalence of fallen angel imagery in early Judaism (cf. *1 En.* 88:1-3), I am inclined to the latter. The Abyss itself is the underworld abode of evil.[216] Exit from the Abyss can only come when it is unsealed, a clear indication that whatever the power of what rises from the Abyss, the power of the one who seals it is greater.[217]

The star opens the Abyss and smoke pours out as if from a furnace (Rev 9:2). Rising from the open shaft are horrendously grotesque locusts, highlighting the chaotic nature of evil and its perversion of good (9:7-11).[218] Despite their fearsome appearance and incredible power, their role is still extremely limited. They have five months. In those five months, the locusts can only attack humanity; nature is safe—as are those whom God sealed (7:3-8)—and they cannot kill (9:4-5). Still, for those suffering from the locusts' assault, that the locusts cannot kill is not necessarily something positive.

> In those days people will seek death and they will not find it; they will want to die but death will flee from them (Rev 9:6).

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[214] E.g., Aune, *Revelation*, 2:525.

[215] E.g., Blount, *Revelation*, 173. Beale, *Revelation*, 491, allows that the star could be an angel executing judgment but prefers to see it as "an angel representing sinful people, undergoing judgment along with those people."

[216] Resseguie, *Unsealed*, 88.

[217] Resseguie, *Unsealed*, 119.

[218] Resseguie, *Unsealed*, 120. A common understanding of the locusts is that the perception of the Parthians lies in the background. See here Aune, *Revelation*, 2:532-33. Osborne, *Revelation*, 371, calls it "quite possible" especially with regard to τρίχας ὡς τρίχας γυναικῶν (9:8), but such a proposal "ultimately cannot move beyond the realm of possibility." Beale, *Revelation*, 409-502, tries to flesh out the imagery from the plague of locusts in Joel 1–2.

This is the first "woe" (Rev 8:13; 9:12). It serves as a vivid warning of impending divine wrath toward those who suffer from the locusts' assault. But the fearsome assault, though orchestrated and implemented by God, is still a result of evil's assault upon itself. The Divine Warrior is such that his power manipulates and uses evil to bring about his purposes—here his purpose is a dramatic warning. The nature of evil is such that, released from its prison and told not to harm nature or the sealed of God, it turns on and devours its own.

Similarly, the sounding of the sixth trumpet in Rev 9:13-19, the second woe, recounts a similar vision, also spectacular, but much more lethal. The sixth trumpet blows and John hears a voice "from the horns of the altar" calling out to "release the four angels bound upon the waters in the great Euphrates" (9:14). The imagery has proven difficult for commentators to find parallels.[219] However, the binding of angels until an appointed time and angels of punishment who fight appear in early Jewish literature. There, bound angels are enemies, like Shemihazah in *1 En.* 10:12-13 and Azazel in *1 En.* 54:5-6 (cf. *1 En.* 10:4-6; Asael). The angels of punishment, meanwhile, will "hurl themselves toward the East" at the end of time (*1 En.* 56:1-8; cf. *1 En.* 66:1-2).

As commentators regularly note, the description of the 200,000,000 cavalry that accompany the angels in Rev 9:17-19 is similar to the description of the locusts in 9:7-

[219] Some commentators suggest that the reference to the Euphrates puts all of the scriptural prophecies concerning a northern enemy in the background of Rev 9:13-19. E.g., Caird, *Revelation*, 122: "All scriptural warnings about a foe from the north . . . find their echo in John's bloodcurdling vision." Cf. Beale, *Revelation*, 506; Osborn, *Revelation*, 379. The problem with this view is that it assumes John's readers would understand a scriptural orientation for the geography, since, for the province of Asia, the Euphrates was to the east. That a Roman orientation is in view is suggested by Rev 16:12, where the angel's bowl dries up the Euphrates so that the kings of the *east* can cross. More likely, the Euphrates designates the border between the *Pax Romana* and the Parthians. See here Blount, *Revelation*, 182. Resseguie, *Unsealed*, 84, suggests the Euphrates is a parody of the river of the water of life.

11.[220] The army's grotesque features and extraordinary number points to their demonic origin; they stand apart from and distort the created order.[221] Unlike the locusts, however, this army can kill. The army uses the fire, smoke, and sulfur from their mouths and their tails to kill one third of the inhabitants of earth.

The sixth trumpet increases the threat, as the Divine Warrior sends yet another prodigy. This time the hostile forces were kept bound until a very specific time (Rev 9:15; ἡτοιμασμένοι εἰς τὴν ὥραν καὶ ἡμέραν καὶ μῆνα καὶ ἐνιαυτόν). Nevertheless, the purpose is the same. The onslaught of the demonic army indicates the increasing wrath of God. The willingness of evil forces to attack the wicked on behalf of God is an important motif in the fifth and six trumpet scenes, one that we have already seen in Hebrew Scripture and early Jewish literature.

5.4.2. *Terrestrial Enemies*

In the book of Revelation, earthly enemies of the Divine Warrior also play an active role through their hostility to God, his Messiah, and his people. In some instances, these enemies attempt to mimic heavenly reality but ultimately fall far short of the power inherent in the Divine Warrior and his Messiah. The enemies of the Divine Warrior have no compunction about killing the people of God, nor do they head his warning prodigies. In the end, the earthly enemies express their hostility by gathering for war against the Lamb or the people of God, only to face utter defeat. In this section, I discuss the two beasts of Revelation, the depiction of Babylon, and, finally, the nations' continued—but futile—enmity with God.

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[220] E.g., Aune, *Revelation*, 2:497.

[221] Resseguie, *Unsealed*, 119-20.

5.4.2.1. *The Beast from the Sea and the Beast from the Land.* The beast from the sea becomes the main antagonist of the book of Revelation from the moment he rises out of the sea until he is cast into the lake of fire and sulfur following his "battle" with Jesus Christ in Rev 19. From the first mention of the beast, it is clear that he is an enemy of God.[222]

> When they [the two witnesses] finished their testimony, the beast rising from the Abyss wages war against them, conquers them, and kills them (Rev 11:7).

This beast does not appear again until the dragon goes off to wage war on the children of the woman (Rev 12:17). As the dragon stands on the seashore (12:18), John sees the beast rise from the sea.[223] With the depiction of the beast from the sea, the audience would instantly detect a connection to the dragon.

> And I saw a beast rising from the sea that had ten horns, seven heads, with ten diadems upon its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. The beast I saw was

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[222] While commentators generally agree that the beast rising from the Abyss is the same best who rises from the sea in Rev 13:1, the brief mention of the beast here causes some commentators to assume the figure of the beast is an interpolation in 11:7 in order to connect the story of the two witnesses to the story of the rise of the beast in Rev 13 and the destruction of the woman who rides the beast in Rev 17. See, e.g., Heinrich Kraft, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (HNT 16a; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1974), 157-58. On the other hand, Siew, *War*, 202-03, notes that the book of Revelation often briefly introduces a theme to later expound on it with more detail. He cites a number of examples in fn 57. A prominent example is the announcement of the fall of Babylon in Rev 14:8. Babylon or its fall is not mentioned again until 16:19, after which the city is the focus of the narrative for Rev 17–18. On the relationship between the Abyss and the sea, Caird, *Revelation*, notes that in the LXX regularly used ἄβυσσος for the primeval ocean and occasionally used it for the sea as a general term.

[223] The beast from the sea and the beast from the land (13:11; see below), both reflect an early Jewish echo of an ancient motif that predates scriptural tradition, Leviathan and Behemoth. However, the only items that tie John's beasts to that tradition are the abodes of the beasts, the sea and the land. According to K. William Whitney, *Two Strange Beasts: Leviathan and Behemoth in Second Temple and Early Rabbinic Judaism* (HSM 63; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 31-58, the portrayal of Leviathan and Behemoth in *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch*, and *1 En.* 60 is consistent enough to suggest a common tradition. He summarizes the tradition as 1) two primordial monsters; 2) God forcibly placing them into two separate abodes, Leviathan in the sea and Behemoth on land; 3) the preservation of the monsters as food in the eschaton. In the aftermath of the beasts' war with Jesus Christ in Rev 19:20-21, the two beasts are thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur while the armies of the nations become food at the grisly banquet. This may indicate an intentional reversal of the tradition Whitney has noted. Beale, *Revelation*, 682, argues that John uses the portrayal of Leviathan and Behemoth in Job 40–41.

also like a leopard, its feet were like a bear's feet, and its mouth like a lion's mouth.

Imagery from Dan 7:1-7 is immediately apparent, as the beast is an amalgamation of the four beasts that rise from the sea there. This beast combines all of the elements of the four beasts of Dan 7:1-7 into one monstrous beast.[224]

The beast becomes the apex of human authority, and his characterization closely mimics the portrayal of the Lamb.[225] Especially notable is that the Lamb "stood as slain" (Rev 5:6; ἑστηκὸς ὡς ἐσφαγμένον) and, for the beast, "one of its heads was as slain" (13:3; καὶ μίαν ἐκ τῶν κεφαλῶν αὐτοῦ ὡς ἐσφαγμένην εἰς θάνατον). The beast further mimics the Lamb in that its mortal wound (ἡ πληγὴ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ) was healed.[226]

The beast is proud and blasphemous, but only has authority for forty-two months, a clear description of the divine limits imposed on the beast (Rev 13:5). The beast uses his authority to blaspheme God and those in heaven (13:6), to battle and conquer the saints, and to rule "every tribe, people, language, and nation" (13:7). Here the beast fits the motif of an eschatological wicked ruler, which we have noted in previous chapters. The beast is also directly involved in the defeat of Babylon, as it turns to devour one of its own (17:3-18).

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[224] Resseguie, *Unsealed*, 123

[225] Resseguie, *Unsealed*, 123-24. Note especially the chart on page 124 where he summarizes the connections between Christ and the beast. Resseguie considers the beast a parody of the Lamb but the idea of parody seems too strong. The beast is the best that this order has to offer.

[226] Aune, *Revelation*, notes that αὐτοῦ in this clause refers to the beast, not to the head. The head wound threatened the life of the beast. Commentators regularly suggest that the description of the wound as a πληγή indicates that it has divine origin, a plague (e.g., Beale, *Revelation*, 687-88). However, πληγή routinely carries the sense of being struck (cf. Luke 10:30), which, according to Rev 13:14, is exactly what happened to the beast.

One further issue is the historical nature of beast. Attempts to identify the beast with historical figures are ubiquitous but ultimately doomed to failure. That John's audience would recognize features of the Roman Empire in the beast is certain.[227] What is less certain is that his audience would see the Roman Empire of their time as the specific referent. The reason for this is that the beast is not a cypher for Roman history; the beast is the opposite of the Lamb. The beast is the ultimate human expression of power and authority and, as such, John displays the beast in as a contrast to the Lamb. For instance, it is unlikely that the seven heads and ten horns reflect *historical* kings—though they do represent kings (cf. Rev 17:9-14). They are primarily a connection to the dragon, who also has seven heads and ten horns, thus identifying the origin of the beast's authority. This mirrors the relationship between God and Christ, a feature universally acknowledged. It is this symbolic opposition that frustrates attempts to identify individual emperors with the depictions of the heads and horns.[228] Even the fatal wound of the beast draws attention to the Lamb standing as slain and only secondarily to a myth of Nero *redivivus*, if at all.[229]

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[227] Siew, *War*, 253: "While the Roman empire of the first century C.E. might illuminate some features of Rev. 13, it is our contention that it is unsafe to read specific historical references from the text of Rev. 13 unless there is clear historical proof that this should be done. In fact, most features in Rev. 13 cannot be identified with what is known of Rome or imperial policy of the late first century C.E."

[228] Beasely-Murray, *Revelation*, 256: "the awkward fact is that no arrangement of the line of emperors yields a satisfactory solution to the problem which John unintentionally sets us." While I cannot speak to John's intentions, Beasley-Murray is only correct regarding them if John supposed that we *could* determine which rulers he had in mind.

[229] As I discussed briefly in the previous chapter, there is no clear evidence that the myth of Nero *redivivus* ever included the idea of resurrection. See here Jan Willem van Henten, "*Nero Redivivus* Demolished: The Coherence of the Nero Traditions in the *Sibylline Oracles*," *JSP* 21 (2000): 3-17, and Hans-Josef Klauck, "Do They Never Come Back? *Nero Redivivus* and the Apocalypse of John," *CBQ* 63 (2001): 683-98. It is perhaps notable that in Rev 17:8, the beast ascends from the Abyss, which is connected with the sea, while Nero would return from the east, the Parthians. If John is using a myth of Nero *redivivus*, he is subverting it in such a way that it increasingly loses its connection to the historical Nero as John associates the beast to the dragon and the demonic.

After the angel pours out the sixth bowl, the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet (the beast from the land; see below) expel "unclean spirits like frogs" (τρία ἀκάθαρτα ὡς βάτραχοι) from their mouths (Rev 16:13). The unclean spirits are demons and they go out to all the kings of the whole earth "to gather them for battle on the Great Day of God Almighty" (16:14; συναγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν πόλεμον τῆς ἡμέρας τῆς μεγάλης τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ παντοκράτορος). Here the dragon and the two beasts parody the weaponry of God. Whereas the weapon from the mouth is juridical and purifying, unclean demons go out from the mouth of the enemies, intent on deception.

In Rev 19:19, John sees the kings and their armies gathered for war. As we noted above, there is no battle. The beast was seized (ἐπιάσθη), along with the false prophet. The two of them are thrown alive into "the lake that burns with fire and sulfur" (19:20; εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρὸς τῆς καιομένης ἐν θείῳ). The beast and the false prophet are the first to be thrown in the lake, but we have seen that the dragon (20:10) and Death and Hades (20:14) will also be thrown there, as will "anyone not found in the book of life" (τις οὐχ εὑρέθη ἐν τῇ βίβλῳ τῆς ζωῆς γεγραμμένος; 20:14; cf. 21:8).

The fiery end of the Watchers after a time of imprisonment appears several time in *1 Enoch*.

> They will be led away to the fiery abyss, and to the torture, and to the prison where they will be confined forever (*1 En.* 10:13).

This theme also appears in Matt 25:41, where the accursed go "into the fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον τὸ ἡτοιμασμένον τῷ διαβόλῳ καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ). Though there is no clear Greco-Roman or Jewish tradition for the place

of final punishment as a lake, the eternal, fiery end of fallen angels and even humans is a prominent motif.[230]

One of the more difficult issues regarding the lake is the depiction of what takes place there. After the devil joins the beast and the false prophet in the lake, John describes the extent of their punishment.

> And they will be tortured (βασανισθήσονται) day and night forever and ever (Rev 20:10).

The language of eternal punishment is not really the type of imagery I have considered to this point, but it does play a prominent role in the aftermath of the eschatological battles of Rev 19–20. Such language is clearly more than the removal of the effects of chaos from the divine order; it mandates an unending punishment for the part of the purveyors of deception and disorder, for those who usurp God's intended created order. Even if there is a hyperbolic cast to the language, as is typical throughout Revelation, this is more than simply the removal of evil.[231] John's audience is left with no doubt that hostility to God, his Messiah, or his people, is a dreadfully serious offense. With the dragon, the beast, and their allies in eternal torment, there is no more deception, arrogance, and blasphemy in the name of earthly power. All those who trafficked in such now endure an eternal penalty.

The beast from the land is not central as an enemy in warfare, but still plays a role as an ally of the beast from the sea. The beast from the land may be an echo of the ancient behemoth, especially given that its counterpart is the beast from the sea (see

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[230] Aune, *Revelation*, 3:1066.

[231] Contra Blount, *Revelation*, 358, who suggests that the imagery presents "a severity that seems cruel and unusual even for the beast and its compatriots" and suggests that, ultimately, John's language is rhetorical, intended to keep believers faithful through a threat of eternal torture.

above).[232] Aune notes that only in Rev 13:11 is the second beast actually called a beast.[233] In Rev 16:13; 19:20; and 20:10, this figure is the "false prophet" (ψευδοπροφήτης). This designation comprises the second beast's primary role, as he prophecies deception in order to force the nations to worship the first beast and his image.

The false prophet serves as the counterpart of the two witnesses of Rev 11:3-10.[234] In this role a few issues stand out that are related to Divine Warrior imagery. First, after John sees the beast rise out of the earth, his first impression immediately hints at a major strategy of this new beast.

And he had two horns like a lamb but he spoke like a dragon (Rev 13:11). The mention of the horns like a lamb's immediately suggests the Lamb of Rev 5:5-6, while the beast's speech immediately suggests the dragon of Rev 12:3.[235] "The second beast appears to be like *the Lamb* but its nature takes after *the Dragon*.[236] The dragon never actually speaks in Revelation, but his actions are those of violence and deception. This beast, as he speaks like a dragon, speaks with violence and deception of the dragon. From the moment of the second beast's arrival, he acts with deceit by mimicking the Lamb.

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[232] Aune, *Revelation*, 2:755, states that the beast from the land is "clearly an allusion to Behemoth.

[233] Aune, *Revelation*, 2:755, though personal pronouns refer to the beast of 13:11 throughout the rest of Rev 13, each of which should be considered as further expressions of the beast as a beast.

[234] Resseguie, *Unsealed*, 127-29, who charts how the beast either reflects, directly opposes, or offers a parody of the two witnesses. Most scholars see the background of the beast in the priesthood of the emperor cult. E.g., Blount, *Revelation*, 257. Siew, *War*, 266-72, gives a detailed explanation of how little the beast matches what we do know of the cultic priesthood.

[235] Aune, *Revelation*, 2:757, notices the contrast but still understands the ἀρνίον in 13:11 as a ram "because lambs (in contrast to rams) do not have horns." Thus, at 5:6, ἀρνίον . . . ἔχων κέρατα ἑπτὰ, Aune, ibid., 1:353, is forced to suggest "a redactional description intended to introduce the interpretation found in 6c."

[236] Siew, *War*, 176 (original emphasis).

As part of the second beast's attempt to deceive the nations into worshipping the first beast, the false prophet tells the people to make an image (εἰκών) of the beast.

> And it was given to him to give breath in the image of the beast so that the image of the beast could also speak and make it so that those who did not worship the image of the beast would be killed (Rev 13:14).

The life of the image is a deception, and it is a deadly deception. The implication for the faithful is clear; the presence of such hostility will cause those who refuse to worship the image to lose their lives.[237] The beast then attempts to cause everyone to take a mark (χάραγμα), an imitation of the seal (σφραγίς) of Rev 7:3-8. The mark of Rev 13:14 is not a mark to show the beast's favor (13:17). Rather, the mark serves as an indicator of the heart of the wearer. In essence, the mark—unwittingly—is reversed as its presence indicates those who face divine wrath.[238] However, refusing the mark come with a price. In Rev 20:4, we discover for the first time that the penalty for not taking the mark was beheading.

Finally, beyond the sending out of the frog-like demons in Rev 16:13-14, the role or presence of the second beast is not explicitly mentioned in Rev 19:19 when the nations are gathered for war against the Rider. Nonetheless, the false prophet is captured along with the first beast and both are thrown into the lake of fire burning with sulfur. No longer will the nations be deceived into worshipping an expression of human power and authority.

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[237] The image thus echoes Dan 3. Cf. Osborne, *Revelation*, 516.

[238] In Rev 14:9-11, the angel announces wrath to those who take the mark. The pouring of the first bowl in Rev 16:2 targets those with the mark.

5.4.2.2. *Babylon.* In the book of Revelation, Babylon becomes a parody of the New Jerusalem.[239] While Babylon is the symbol of the human attempt at the ideal city, it nevertheless becomes a grotesque image of excess that even the beast comes to loathe. Scholarship largely understands Babylon as a symbol for Rome.[240] However, the portrayal of Babylon in Rev 17 is better understood to express that while Rome is Babylon, Babylon is more than Rome. Babylon is the eschatological city of oppression, idolatry, and greed, the end result of human culture without restraint.[241]

The first mention of Babylon is ominous. The second angel of Rev 14 makes one simple statement.

> Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the great! She has made all of the nations drink from the wine of her immoral passions (14:8).

After the announcement, Babylon does not appear again until the pouring of the seventh bowl in Rev 16:17-21. In Rev 16:17-21, Babylon's end is described in accompaniment with the imagery of the throne theophany. Lightning and thunders precede an incredible earthquake that splits the city in three and causes all of the cities of the nations to fall. John then sees a vision of the destruction of the city, where Babylon is portrayed as a whore drunk on the blood of the saints (Rev 17:1-6). The angel interprets the vision for John and he discovers that the beast and ten allied kings destroyed their own city, a city they have come to despise (17:7-18). After its demise, kings, merchants, and seafarers mourn the city's fall (18:1-20). A mighty angel then prophesies that the

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[239] See Resseguie, *Unsealed*, 73-78, for a comparison of the characterization of the two cities.

[240] Aune, *Revelation*, 2:829-31. Contra Ford, *Revelation*, 285-86, who understands Babylon as a symbol for Jerusalem.

[241] Ian K. Boxall, *The Revelation to Saint John* (BNTC; London: A. & C. Black, 2006), 243-44. Similarly, Resseguie, *Unsealed*, 138-40. Understanding Babylon as something more than a portrayal of Rome allows the symbolism to rise above historical metaphor.

force accompanying the certain, violent destruction of Babylon will be like a millstone crashing into the sea (18:21). The desolation of the city follows (18:22-23a), with Babylon's role in the book of Revelation made final through a succinct appraisal of her judgment.

> . . . because your merchants were the pride of the earth and because every nation was deceived by your sorcery. The blood of the prophets and of the saints was found in you and all those who have been slaughtered on the earth (Rev 18:23b-24).

In the end, Babylon's downfall was her arrogance, her deception, and her murderous rampage against the prophets and saints.[242]

5.4.2.3. *The Nations.* In the book of Revelation, the people of the world align themselves against God at any opportunity. By whatever term, whether as a collective group or as represented by their kings, the nations maintain hostility toward God, an animosity toward the Lamb, and hatred toward his people that plays a key role in the book of Revelation. One way we see this is in the seven letters, as the Son of Man accuses those oppressing or dividing the churches of having a connection to Satan. Similarly, the letters portray false teachers with legendary wicked figures such as Balaam and Jezebel.

In the visions, the scope of enmity grows wider than simple division or opposition in individual churches. As in the Hebrew Scriptures and early Jewish literature, the nations have set themselves against the Lamb and the people of God. In Rev 6:10, those under the altar cry out for God to avenge their blood "from those living on the earth" (ἐκ τῶν κατοικούντων ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς). The designation "those living on the earth" or a variation

[242] Blount, *Revelation*, 337-38.

appears often in Revelation, a clear designation of those outside of the community of faith.[243] The nations at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, gather after Satan, the deceiver, is released from the Abyss to deceive one last time in Rev 20:7-10. They come to fight against the holy ones and the beloved city but before the battle begins, fire from heaven comes to slay them.

The imagery of the nations gathering for eschatological war against the Lamb appears three different times. In Rev 16:14-16, the "kings of the whole earth" gather for war after the dragon, beast, and false prophet send out demonic spirits to deceive the kings. In Rev 17:12-14, an angel tells John that the ten horns of the beast are ten kings who have united in giving their authority to the beast. They "will battle the Lamb but the Lamb will conquer them" (*οὗτοι μετὰ τοῦ ἀρνίου πολεμήσουσιν καὶ τὸ ἀρνίον νικήσει αὐτούς*). Finally, in Rev 19:19, the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies all gather to battle against the Rider on the white horse and his armies. There is no battle and the kings and their armies become a feast for the birds of the air after the Rider slays them with the sword from his mouth (19:21).

The end for the peoples of the earth is grim. At the White Throne Judgment, any who do not have their name in the book are cast into the lake of fire (20:15). Earlier, the third angel of Rev 14:9-11 warned the people of the earth what this would mean.

> Those who worship the beast and its image and take a mark upon their forehead or upon their hand, they will also drink from the wine of the wrath of God, undiluted in the cup of his wrath. They will be tormented with fire and sulfur before the holy angels and the Lamb. The smoke of their torment will rise forever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, whoever takes the mark of his name.

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[243] Revelation 3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 12, 14; 14:12 17:2, 8. See here Aune, *Revelation*, 1:240, who says that it is always used in the sense of non-Christian persecutors of Christians." Note, however, Rev 14:12.

The fearsome imagery demonstrates how the book of Revelation understands the acceptance—the embrace—of the present order. When the New Jerusalem descends, nothing that distinguished the old order from the new order will remain. The book of Revelation describes this as more than absence of the things of the old order. As we have seen, it includes the eternal punishment of those enmeshed in the deception of the old order.

As is typical in the book of Revelation, the imagery provides a contrast to its divine opposite.[244] In the new creation, there is no more sea (Rev 21:1). In the New Jerusalem there is a "river with living water," with a tree of life on both sides of the river (22:1-2). The tree leaves are for the healing of the nations (22:1-4). The lake of fire has no living water and no tree of life; it is the second death (21:8). There is no healing in the lake of fire; there is only eternal torment. Whatever John and his audience actually thought of the eternal state, the overriding message is clear. Whatever the New Jerusalem is, the lake of fire is not; whatever is in the lake of fire cannot have any part in the New Jerusalem.

5.4.3. *Summary*

In this section, I investigated a number of supernatural and earthly enemies of God, the Lamb, and his people. The enemies of the Divine Warrior in the book of Revelation are varied, but they all share one key characteristic: all are restricted in their activities by the power of God. Whether they act with violent hostility against the Lamb and his people or they devour their own, the enemies of God act in accordance of the limits proscribed by God's permission, directive, and will.

[244] Resseguie, *Unsealed*, 89-90.

The most prominent enemy in the book of Revelation is the dragon, who is instantly recognized as the amalgamation of ancient foes and explicitly equated with Satan. In the letters to the churches, Satan is behind the activities of those who persecute the churches and those who seek to divide the churches from within. As the dragon, he displays a voracious hostility towards God's people, even seeking to devour the Messiah as he is born. The dragon's battle in heaven, however, is a divine drama depicting events on earth. The archangel Michael's defeat of the dragon is credited to those whom the dragon has been accusing before God. They conquer the dragon "through the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony" (Rev 12:11). After the battle between Christ and the beast, the dragon is bound and cast into the Abyss, unable to deceive the nations. Upon his release, his powers of deception are evident; he deceives the nations into gathering for one final assault against the people of God. The battle never takes place; flame from heaven destroys the armies. The devil is then cast into the lake of fire, ending his ability to deceive the nations. His eternal punishment indicates the seriousness with which God takes the dragon's activities against God's people.

I suggested that the four horsemen of Rev 6:1-8 should be understood as opponents of the Divine Warrior. These horsemen are the depiction of the exercise of human authority without restraint. Each cavalier is the result of the all of the previous ones. The authority to conquer brings war. Wars of conquest lead to economic chaos. Wars of conquest and the resulting economic conquest bring death on a massive scale through a variety of resulting plagues. These cavaliers depict eschatological chaos, as they act with the removal of all restraint. The eschatological woes become the full expression of human authority asserting itself on the earth.

There are other enemies of God in the book of Revelation who are not given the opportunity to oppose God directly; they simply act within the authority given to them. A personified Death and Hades are part of this list. Jesus Christ now has the key to Death's realm, making resurrection a new reality. Death and Hades act against humanity as one of the eschatological horsemen, where they ply their trade on a massive scale. However, there is no place for death in the New Jerusalem, so after giving up their dead, Death and Hades are thrown into the lake of fire. The ancient companion of death, the sea, also appears in the book of Revelation, though I argue that it is unclear that the sea is an opponent of God. Other enemies that play a role in the book of Revelation but do not exercise hostility toward God, the Lamb, or his people, include the locusts and the demonic cavalry that ascend from the Abyss. These enemies are divinely restrained but have no problem turning against other enemies of the Divine Warrior: the nations and peoples opposed to the Lamb and his people.

The beast from the sea is the most powerful terrestrial enemy of the Divine Warrior in the book of Revelation. The beast is immediately hostile to the people of God and is directly connected to the dragon. He is a ferocious combination of all four beasts of Dan 7:2-8 and he is the epitome of the wicked ruler, full of arrogance and blasphemy, with his violence directed against the people of God. His portrayal in the book of Revelation depicts him as the current age's counterpart to the Lamb, as the beast mimics the characterization of the Lamb. The beast, like the other expressions of evil around him, cannot restrain himself from attacking his own; in hatred, the beast devours Babylon. Along with the dragon and the false prophet, the beast deceives the nations into gathering for war against the exalted Christ. There is no battle, however, as the beast is

captured and, with the false prophet, thrown into the lake of fire. His eternal torture indicates the seriousness with which God takes his arrogance, his blasphemy, and his violence against God's people.

A second beast, who arises from the land, is the first beast's false prophet. This beast both deceives the nations and compels them to worship the beast from the sea and his image. This beast tries to imitate the Lamb as well, as he has horns like a lamb but speaks like a dragon, the speech of lies and violence. He compels humanity to take the mark of the first beast, a mark that reveals the hearts of humanity. Those who take the mark will share the beast's fate. This false prophet is involved in the deception of the nations that leads the nations to gather for war against Christ. In the aftermath of the battle that was no battle, the false prophet, along with the beast, is cast into the lake of fire for eternity.

Babylon, the eschatological city that epitomizes human oppression, idolatry, and greed, is the portrayed as a harlot drunk on the blood of the saints. Even those aligned with her, the beast and his horns, hate her and eventually turn on her and devour here. Babylon's downfall comes from her arrogance, her deceptiveness, and her murderous rampage against the people of God.

In the book of Revelation, the nations, the people dwelling on the earth, continue the motif of their opposition to the Divine Warrior that we have seen in Hebrew Scripture and early Judaism. The nations are directly involved in the killing of the people of God. They allow themselves to be deceived by the beast so that the kings of the earth gather their armies to fight against the Lamb, a gathering that John describes three different times. When the Lamb appears, however, the sword from the rider's mouth destroys the

nations and they become a feast for the birds in the aftermath of the "battle." Their deception does not end, however, until after the dragon is released from the Abyss and gathers them for war a final time. Fire from heaven then devours them. At the final judgment, those whose name is not in the book of life are thrown into the lake of fire along with the two beasts, the dragon, and Death and Hades, where they endure eternal punishment. Whatever is of the old order has no place in the new order; that which deceives or is deceived cannot be where the healing of the nations is. As for the lake of fire, I suggested that it is portrayed as the exact opposite of the New Jerusalem. What the New Jerusalem is, the lake of fire cannot be. Whatever is in the lake of fire cannot be in the New Jerusalem.

John's intended readers would find the enemies of Revelation fearful, numerous, and overwhelming. They would also see evil that often willingly turns and devours itself. These readers would also see all of the various enemies connected, in some manner, with Satan. The clear method of Satan is one of deception, something especially explicit in the contrast of the present order with the peaceful interim when the deceiver is bound and in the New Jerusalem, where deception has no place. The fate of the enemies of God is the same: eternal torment in the lake of fire, the opposite of the New Jerusalem.

5.5. *Conclusion*

In investigating the Divine Warrior, the Messianic Divine Warrior, their allies, and their enemies, the violent imagery takes on a different tone, depending on the instigator. The language of war and conquering, when it comes to the allies of the Divine Warrior, reflects the worthiness of the Lamb. The Lamb who conquered is the Lamb

who stands as slain. For the people of God in the book of Revelation, conquering is not killing; it is remaining faithful to their testimony, even if it meant their being killed.

It is important to recall that this is a redefinition of victory, not power. In the book of Revelation, the Lamb displays all of the power inherent in imagery associated with a Divine Messianic Warrior. The Lamb simply does not wield that power in the way that authority in the current age wields power. John provides a contrast of this with a glimpse of the unrestrained eschatological expression of human authority in the four horseman of Rev 6. The New Jerusalem, on the other hand, is lit by the glory of God and nourished by the water of life. It is a place without tears and death, where nothing of the deception and violence of the present age can enter.

The brutal imagery at the close of the Lamb's war against the beast and his allies makes direct use of the way Divine Warrior imagery had been adapted in early Judaism. The weapon that proceeds from the mouth of the Warrior is a weapon of justice. The expression of justice is the establishment of the authority, justice, and protection of God and the Lamb.

God's wrath against those who practice deceit and oppress God's people is evident throughout. Much of the book depicts divine prodigies of increasing intensity that warn of the impending wrath of God at the end of the age. While the prodigies do so in ways that are sometime violent, they work to manifest the true condition of the hearts that understand the divine origin of the prodigies yet blaspheme nonetheless. These prodigies communicate to John's audience in the same way that Greco-Roman prodigies did; they serve as a warning of divine disfavor.

Today's reader may find much that is troubling in the actions of God at the end of the age; he annihilates his last human opposition, he makes access to the New Jerusalem impossible for his enemies, and he tortures those enemies for eternity. Here today's readers have at least two broad options. First, they can choose to give full weight to the violent language, reading these actions as literal depictions of eschatological violence or reading them as symbolic of an outlook that embraces the idea of God as violent and merciless toward his enemies. In this case, God is no different than his enemies except that he wields greater power. Second, today's readers can choose to read the violent activity in light of the way the imagery of power and warfare are expressed elsewhere in the book and in line with the flexibility of Divine Warrior imagery in the ancient Near East, Hebrew Scripture, and early Judaism. If the primary paradigm of the book of Revelation is that of Jesus Christ, the Messianic Divine Warrior, conquering through dying, and if, in the book of Revelation, the people of God are to conquer through faithfulness even in the face of death, it does not seem unreasonable for today's reader to expect that the expression of God's power through violence should somehow be understood in a manner that reflects a different paradigm of victory. At the very least, then, the book of Revelation portrays the eternal state as the exact opposite of the present order. Above it all, John's visions invite readers ancient and modern to a new way to understand the divine perspective on power and its expression, one completely inimical to the way human power has been expressed throughout human history. All the while, John paints the New Order as the exact opposite of the present order. The victory that paves the way to the New Order is a victory that reflects the incredible power of the Divine Warrior, but it is a victory of a completely different order.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

6.1. *General Conclusion*

Did an ancient motif of Divine Warrior imagery impact the way John's intended reader might have understood the violent imagery of the book of Revelation? In order to answer this question, I have investigated how John's intended reader may have understood the imagery of God and Jesus Christ at war, their allies and their enemies in the book of Revelation. First, it was necessary to gain an understanding of what Divine Warrior imagery is. I defined Divine Warrior imagery as, simply, the way gods fight. From this basic definition I looked for common imagery and motifs in an attempt to understand what various depictions had in common in order to see if there was any consistency in what these images might communicate.

In chapter two I investigated the literature of the ancient Near East. Here I observed a number of recurring features in portrayals of the battles of the gods. Two of the most common were the battles of the gods at creation and depictions of various gods battling in order to ascend to their thrones. Another key component of the imagery of the gods at war was the supernatural nature of the Divine Warrior's weaponry. This supernatural weaponry was often expressed by associating the Divine Warrior with various aspects of the storm: the Warrior's roar is the thunder, the cloud the Warrior's chariot, and lightning the Warrior's weaponry. Many of these same features appear in depictions of divine involvement in human warfare as well. In these descriptions, the presence or absence of the Divine Warrior indicates whether the earthly king held divine

favor or enmity. Divine favor might even be shown to a particular monarch when the Divine Warrior grants the monarch the use of heavenly weapons. Though this imagery ranged throughout the ancient Near East, different cultures adapted various pieces into their own cultural or theological traditions. Entire myths might be rewritten or adapted to fit the needs of a new empire in the ancient Near East.

In this chapter I also discussed the Ugaritic Baal Epic, where various aspects of Divine Warrior imagery were borrowed or adapted into a new context, one geographically—if not temporally—proximate with ancient Israel. The god Baal, a storm god who carries a number of martial titles, fights with the violence of the storm and wields other incredible weapons of divine origin. Baal fights two primary foes, Yam, the personified Sea, and Mot, the personification of death. Though there is considerable uncertainty concerning the *sitz im Leben* of the Baal Epic, I argue that these battles serve as an etiology to explain Baal's place in the Ugaritic pantheon. The goddess Anat, a violent Divine Warrior, fights against human foes with overwhelming ferocity, possibly reflecting the concept of the *ḥrm*, the "ban," the total destruction of anything associated with an enemy. Anat's violence is also described in viticultural imagery as well, which I argue is evidence against the common seasonal interpretation of the Baal Epic. Anat also battles divine foes. She destroys Mot and describes herself as destroyer of other divine enemies.

In chapter three I moved on to the Hebrew Scriptures and the portrayal of YHWH as a Divine Warrior. First, I compared and contrasted YHWH as a Divine Warrior with the Divine Warriors of the broader ancient Near East. I also discussed the use of Divine Warrior imagery in a number of key contexts such as Holy War, signs of assurance and

victory, and YHWH's wrath against his own people for their covenant unfaithfulness. I then looked at YHWH's army and some prominent angelic beings, the hostile forces he uses as attendants and his use of the nations as a weapon against his unfaithful people. Enemies such as the sea and death were seen to serve as ways to illustrate YHWH's unmatched power and the motif of a wicked, deceitful arrogant and violent ruler who oversteps his divinely appointed boundaries appears in the book of Daniel. An important component of this chapter was my presentation of a number of passages that demonstrate the flexibility of Divine Warrior imagery. These examples show that Divine Warrior imagery could be used in a number of ways beyond mere depictions of the wars of YHWH.

Thus, while Divine Warrior imagery appears in the Hebrew Scriptures in ways familiar from the ancient Near East, it has been significantly adapted to fit into entirely new contexts. In the Hebrew Scriptures, Divine Warrior imagery displays an adaptability that makes it appropriate in any context that emphasizes the power of YHWH, even if that power is the power to destroy war, bring peace, and assert justice.

In chapter four I discussed Divine Warrior imagery in early Judaism. The authoritative nature of the Hebrew Scriptures leads to the use of Divine Warrior and related imagery largely based upon readings of the imagery in those scriptures. Thus, many of the same themes continue, such as the Divine Warrior's power and strength, his deliverance of his people through his direct involvement, and his empowering his people in Holy War. The divine army continues to play a role, as allies such as angels are prominent in a large number of texts from the period. There is also an increasing speculation concerning the ideal Davidic king, a messianic figure who either leads God's

people in the eschatological battle or defeats the eschatological foe on his own, as scriptural passages are interpreted in an increasingly eschatological light. Early Judaism also witnesses the beginning development of the idea of martyrdom as a means to fight in Holy War. Depictions of enemies show considerable development, including the prominence of a personified leader of the hostile powers. The wicked king becomes an important motif in the depiction of an earthly enemy of God's people. In a number of sources, this wicked tyrant may be the ruler of the final hostile kingdom before the shift of the ages, a kingdom sometimes likened to the Roman Empire.

In these discussions, I drew attention to a number of features of note. One especially important feature is the way early Jewish texts could creatively combine elements and imagery from a variety of scriptural passages in order to draw out features of the Divine or Messianic Warrior. Another common feature was the turning of evil back upon itself. This could be in a Deuteronomic sense or as an expression of the defeat of a hostile power. In a similar motif, the Divine Warrior often made use of his enemies for his own purpose. Finally, though the sense of dualism in this period was prominent, there is never a sense where any force of darkness even begins to approach the level of God's equal. God makes use of any enemy as he sees fit. This take place even to the point where the hostile forces actively—albeit unwittingly—participate in their own demise.

Chapter five is my discussion of the Divine Warrior imagery of the book of Revelation. God appears as the Divine Warrior, sending divine prodigies warning of his increasing wrath, ensuring his plan for history and redemption meets the endpoint he has established for it, and implementing divine justice at the turn of the ages. Meanwhile,

Jesus Christ as the Divine Warrior is the key for understanding the violent imagery in the book of Revelation, as he consistently redefines what victory means. He redefines war and victory as it relates to the seven churches. He conquers as the Lamb, standing as slain. His eschatological battle is one of asserting justice, as the sword from his mouth pronounces guilt. In the book of Revelation, Christ's power is never diminished. However, he asserts that power by dying.

In the book of Revelation, angels serve to restrain evil until its appointed time and they are part of the prodigies that God sends to warn humanity. Christ's followers conquer through faithfulness, in the face of hostility from within or the outside amongst the seven churches, despite the assault of the dragon, and in their refusal of the mark of the beast. Even in the face of death, their faithfulness is victory. In a complete contrast, the enemies of God and his messiah are deceitful and violent in their dealings. Their thirst for violence and their enmity with God leads to the death of the saints. In the end, much of the book of Revelation depicts the human attempt to conquer by killing. Even here, however, the dragon deceives the nations into assaults on Christ and the holy ones. In the end, all of the structures of human excess are destroyed, all aspects of the great city, Babylon. That marred by evil remaining at the shift of the ages is cast into the eternal lake of fire, a fate directly opposite that of those who enter the New Jerusalem.

The book of Revelation is a clear redefinition of victory, as it presents the divine means of wielding power. Thus, Divine Warrior imagery, as imagery of power, fits into the description of the activities of God, the Lamb, and his people. The Lamb is the paradigm for the proper use of power, which results in the New Jerusalem. The dragon and the beast wield power by forcing submission, through violence or deception. This

results in the lake of fire. Thus, while the imagery is indeed violent, even those troubling portions need to be considered in light of the paradigm established by the Lamb. Victory comes by dying; justice is the way of the new order.

Divine Warrior imagery, a product of the ancient Near East, mediated through Hebrew Scripture, and shaped by early Judaism and even Greco-Roman culture, does indeed provide today's reader with assistance in understanding the violence of the book of Revelation. This imagery informs specific features, such as the sword from the mouth of the Messiah. At the same time, its flexibility makes it perfectly suitable for John's redefinition of victory based upon the Lamb, standing as slain. The power of the Lamb, the victorious Divine Warrior, is such that he conquers when he dies; he has no need to kill.

6.2. *Avenues for Future Research*

My investigation of Divine Warrior imagery in the book of Revelation suggests a number of areas of further study. Here I focus on three primary avenues that arose in the course of my study. Probably the most prominent of these avenues is the application to other parts of the New Testament of my understanding of Divine Warrior imagery as primarily the imagery of power. While there are a number of studies concerning Divine Warrior imagery as it relates to various aspects of the New Testament, in most cases these studies start from a paradigmatic outlook concerning Divine Warrior imagery and then attempt to analyze an aspect of the New Testament in light of this paradigm.[1]

[1] See chapter one for a number of examples of the paradigmatic approach to Divine Warrior imagery. A recent example of this is an investigation of Ephesians in light of the paradigm of the Divine Warrior by Timothy G. Gombis, "The Triumph of God in Christ: Divine Warfare in the Argument of Ephesians" (Ph.D. diss.; University of St. Andrews, 2005). Gombis outlines his understanding of the paradigm of Divine Warrior imagery on pages 8-35. Gombis, ibid., 8, n. 3, summarizes the pattern to

Investigating passages from an understanding of Divine Warrior imagery as, primarily, a depiction of power could have an impact on a number of New Testament passages. One particularly fruitful example would be the use of Son of Man imagery in the Synoptic Gospels, especially as it appears alongside the imagery of the suffering servant. In such cases, the Son of Man sayings tie together the exaltation of the son of man figure of Dan 7 with the idea of suffering, a combination that has long vexed scholarship.[2]

Another area of further research concerns the continuing debate regarding the use of Hebrew Scripture in the book of Revelation. The issue is often one that polarizes scholarship between an understanding of John as generally faithful to the contextual background of the earlier texts and an understanding of John as basically ignoring the contextual background of the received materials.[3] One of the unique factors involved with Revelation is John's adoption of the prophetic mantle and the authority this implies to his intended readers. In turn, this raises the question of whether the intended readers would accept the authoritative claim of Revelation to allow it to treat other authoritative texts in a manner differently than other early Jewish and Christian documents.

As we have seen, however, John's use of Divine Warrior imagery in the book of Revelation shows consistency with earlier use of the imagery from Hebrew Scripture and

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include, "Conflict, victory, kingship, house-building and celebration." Here he explicitly notes the influence of Tremper Longman, III, and Daniel J. Reid, *God is a Warrior* (SOTBT; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 83-88.

[2] For a full discussion of scholarship on the Son of Man sayings in the Synoptic Gospels, see Delbert Burkett, *The Son of Man Debate: A History and Evaluation* (SNTSMS 107; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). For a shorter summary see Scot McKnight, *Jesus and His Death: Historiography, the Historical Jesus, and Atonement Theory* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2005), 171-75.

[3] See chapter one for an overview of the issues involved here. Also note the discussion of David A. deSilva, *Seeing Things John's Way: The Rhetoric of the Book of Revelation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 147-74. See also Jon Paulien, "Dreading the Whirlwind: Intertextuality and the Use of the Old Testament in Revelation," *AUSS* 39 (2001): 5-22.

early Judaism even as it shows clear evidence of adaptation. Nevertheless, this adaption is in line with the *way* Hebrew Scripture and early Judaism often adapts traditional or authoritative material. Thus, we are left with a particularly thorny problem that has only recently begun to be addressed with regard to the book of Revelation.

One final area of further study to which I want to draw further attention is that of omens, prodigies, and signs. I argued that, generally, the various judgments of the book of Revelation broadly fit the Greco-Roman concept of prodigies, as warnings of divine displeasure. Then, when it came to the three signs (σημεῖα) in heaven in Rev 12:1, 3, and 15:1, I argued that these better fit the concept of אות in the sense of "something which is extraordinary and which establishes certainty as a result."[4] However, the beast from the land also did, σημεῖα μεγάλα, "great signs" (Rev 13:13), as a way to mimic divine authority.[5] While the relationship of all three examples are often compared to Greco-Roman, scriptural, and early Jewish concepts of signs, prodigies and omens, the ambiguity in the sense of σημεῖον, as well as the clear contrast between the various prodigies and the three signs in heaven is rarely discussed.[6] Thus, further investigation into Greco-Roman signs and prodigies and their use in early Jewish literature can help clarify how the intended reader might understand the role of the various activities

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[4] Karl Heinrich Rengstroff, "σημεῖον," *TDNT* 7:220.

[5] Cf. Rev 19:20. In Rev 16:13-14, where John describes τρία ἀκάθαρτα ὡς βάτραχοι that come out of the mouths of the dragon and the two beasts as πνεύματα δαιμονίων ποιοῦντα σημεῖα.

[6] Note here the overlap in For a thorough discussion on the authorship of Revelation, see David E. Aune, *Revelation* (3 vols.; WBC 52A-C; Nashville: Nelson, 1999), 2:416-19, 679, and 758-61. However, Aune's only attempt to compare and contrast the various phenomena is the sole observation that the various plagues of Revelation, which he understands as corresponding to Greco-Roman prodigies, nevertheless "are never called σημεῖα, 'signs,' a term used of the miraculous deeds performed by the beat from the sea . . . or the lying spirits" (ibid., 2:419). Aune does not discuss the signs from heaven in relation to the other two phenomena.

associated with the seals, bowls, and trumpets, the distinct role of the signs in heaven, and the contrast that these prodigies and the signs have with the signs performed by the enemies of the Divine Warrior.[7]

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[7] The beginning point for any discussion of signs, prodigies, and omens is still Klaus Berger, "Hellenistisch-heidnische Prodigien und die Vorzeichen in der jüdischen und christlichen Apokalyptik," *ANRW* 23.2:1428-69. A further issue that is rarely discussed in connection with the issue of signs, prodigies, and omens in early Jewish and Christian literature is the observation of Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price, *Religions of Rome* (2 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1998, 1:252, that by the Augustan period, public prodigies—or at least their official reporting—had waned, largely limited to matters related to the birth and death of emperors, since "these random intrusions of divine displeasure must have appeared incongruous in a system where divine favour flowed through the emperor." This general trend may have impacted the Jewish/Christian understanding of signs, etc., as well. I briefly noted this issue in chapter four.

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