

Bennie H. Reynolds III

Between Symbolism and Realism

The Use of Symbolic and Non-Symbolic Language
in Ancient Jewish Apocalypses 333-63 B.C.E.

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Achaemenid Golden Winged Lion Roundel
Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago

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To Katrina

רבות בנות עשו חיל ואת עלית על-כלנה

Many women have done excellently, but you exceed them all.

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Preface

This book is a study of the poetics of ancient Jewish apocalypses. As I make final adjustments to the manuscript I am reminded, however, that the relevance of apocalypses and apocalypticism for the field of Religious Studies and the Humanities more generally is hardly limited to ancient history. A few months ago a former student (thanks Mark Lettney) alerted me to an evangelical Christian group based in Oakland, CA that was traveling across the United States to warn people that the judgment day would occur on May 21, 2011.¹ When I realized that the group planned to stop for several days in Jackson, MS I could not resist making contact and setting up an interview. On Monday, March 14th James Bowley (a colleague at Millsaps College) and I sat down to interview two of the group's leaders. While there are incalculable differences between Hellenistic Jews and 21st century American evangelicals, many of their beliefs and exegetical methods are not dissimilar. For example, their repeated emphasis on a fixed, periodized (i.e., dispensationalist), and imminently complete history of the world immediately stood out. Those responsible for texts such as Daniel 2, 7, the *Animal Apocalypse*, the *Apocalypse of Weeks* (as well as several *Sibylline Oracles* and *Testaments*) attempted to remain faithful to traditional practices and beliefs of Judaism by insisting that behind the thin veil of an apparent history in which chaos, suffering, marginalization, and persecution defined them, time functioned according to the perfect order established and guaranteed by YHWH. For a variety of reasons, sometimes self-constructed and sustained, modern American evangelicals also view themselves as marginalized and attempt to re-narrate time in order to see themselves fully enfranchised in God's time and space.

Even more interesting from the perspective of this study is the way Familyradio.com representatives use language to construct identity. In both our interview and their stock literature, they frequently used a set of special sobriquets to define themselves and others – often emphasizing difference and exploiting a kind of dualism. For example, their primary moniker for themselves is “true believers.” The expression is intriguing because it does not set them apart from non-believers (e.g., atheists, Buddhists, etc.) so

¹ For an exhaustive explanation for the prediction, see Harold Camping, *Time Has an End: A Biblical History of the World 11, 013 BC–AD 2011* (New York: Vantage Press, 2005).

much as it does from other Christians who are mistaken or disingenuous in their beliefs. The founder, owner, and primary bible teacher of the Familyradio.com, Harold Camping, left the Reform Church in 1988 over theological differences. Since then, he has taught his listeners that the “church age” ended in 1988 and that they should no longer have anything to do with any traditional Christian church since all churches are now under the dominion of Satan. This circumstance helps to underscore why the language they use to describe themselves helps specifically to set themselves apart from other Christians. It conforms to Harold Camping’s articulation of time (a set and limited number of ages) and provides some psychological tools to cope with estrangement from what has been for most of them a defining socio-cultural institution: church.

Other sobriquets used by familyradio.com listeners include “the unregenerate” (a term that can apply to any non-member but is most often used to describe Christians who are not “true-believers”), “the authority” (any organization of Christians with a hierarchy or eldership, i.e., this is their word for “church” and they are commanded not to be subject to “the authority”), “understanding” (a gift God imparts to the few who are able to interpret correctly the true meaning of scripture), and “watchmen” (a term borrowed from Ezek 33 to describe the particular familyradio.com listeners who tour the country in RV’s warning of the impending apocalypse). After the interview, we found in their online journal that they even had a sobriquet for us: those “with letters after their name.” The expression is one of derision, not respect. Indeed, they contrasted our “unlearned questions” with the insights of a truck driver they met on the same day. The truck driver was suspicious of churches, believed in the concepts of election and predestination, and, most importantly, agreed with their concept of “understanding” (exegesis): “Most people don’t realize that God has to open your eyes to understand what the Bible really teaches.”²

The types of sobriquets used by Familyradio.com representatives are similar to the kind of language used in some of the historical apocalypses analyzed in this study. For example, expressions like *הַמְשֻׁבְּלִים* “the wise,” and *עַם יֹדְעֵי אֱלֹהֵיוּ* “the people who know their [its] God” from the Book of Daniel, *קְרִיאֵי* [“the elect” from 4QPseudo-Daniel^{a-b} ar, and *הַמְצַדִּיקִים* “those who lead to righteousness” from the *Apocryphon of Jeremiah C* seem to serve precisely the same rhetorical purposes as familyradio.com’s “true believers.” Similarly, expressions like *מְרַשְׁעֵי בְרִית* “the violators of the covenant” from the Book of Daniel and *עַבְדֵי נֹאכַר* “servants of the foreigner” from the *Apocryphon of Jeremiah C* seem to serve rhetorical pur-

² This information was removed from http://www.familyradio.com/caravan/ms_letters.html on May 23rd, 2011. Indeed, an entirely re-vamped website was launched.

poses similar to familyradio.com's "the unregenerate." The sobriquets establish linguistic boundaries – often binary relationships – that help to define and even construct the contours of the group identity.

I begin this study of ancient texts with an interlude into the modern world not merely to illustrate the ongoing cultural and religious potency of apocalypticism, but to make a methodological point. Those of us who study ancient Jewish apocalypses can reap rewards from the anthropologists, psychologists, sociologists, religionists, and literary critics who delve into the worlds of the Millerites, John Nelson Darby, the Scofield Reference Bible, Hal Lindsey, Edgar Whisenant, the Branch Davidians, Menachem Mendel Schneerson, Marian Keech, Tim Lahaye and Jerry Jenkins, Aum Shinrikyo, John Hagee, Familyradio.com, the Christian Identity movement, Jonestown, the Solar Temple, etc. In sketching the theoretical framework of this study below, I draw on thinkers both ancient and modern in order to best contextualize the language of Jewish historical apocalypses. While the primary audience of this study is specialists in Second Temple Judaism and the Dead Sea Scrolls, I hope that it can be of use to the larger field of Religious Studies and other disciplines who examine apocalypticism. There are portions of this book that are technical and will be of limited use to non-specialists. But it is my hope that the robust theoretical framework constructed in the chapter one will place this study within much broader intellectual conversations and make it intelligible to those attempting to understand apocalypses and apocalypticism from a variety of vantage-points.

In this study I analyze the language of ancient Jewish historical apocalypses. I investigate how the *dramatis personae*, i.e., deities, angels/demons, and humans (both individuals and groups) are described in the Book of Daniel (2, 7, 8, 10–12) the *Animal Apocalypse* (1 En. 85–90), 4QFourKingdoms^{a-b}, the *Book of the Words of Noah* (1QapGen 5 29–18 ?), the *Apocryphon of Jeremiah C*, and 4QPseudo-Daniel^{a-b}. The primary methodologies for this study are linguistic- and motif-historical analysis and the theoretical framework is informed by a wide range of ancient and modern thinkers including Artemidorus of Daldis, Ferdinand de Saussure, Charles Peirce, Leo Oppenheim, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Umberto Eco, and Michael Barkun. The most basic contention of this study is that the data now available from the Dead Sea Scrolls significantly alter how one should conceive of the genre apocalypse in the Hellenistic Period. This basic contention is borne out by five primary conclusions. First, while some apocalypses employ symbolic language to describe the actors in their historical reviews, others use non-symbolic language. Some texts, especially from the Book of Daniel, are mixed cases. Second, among the apocalypses that use symbolic language, a limited and stable repertoire of symbols obtain

across the genre and bear witness to a series of conventional associations. Third, in light of the conventional associations present in symbolic language, as well as the specific descriptions of particular historical actors, it appears that symbolic language is not used to hide or obscure its referents, but to provide the reader with embedded interpretative tools. Fourth, while several apocalypses do not use symbolic ciphers to encode their historical actors, they often use cryptic sobriquets that may have functioned as a group-specific language. Fifth, the language of apocalypses appears to indicate that these texts were not the domain of only one social group or even one type of social group. Some texts presume large audiences and others presume more limited and ones. In other words, apocalypticism was not the exclusive domain of a small fringe group even if several small fringe groups appear to have internalized the ideology associated with the genre apocalypse.

Acknowledgments

This book began as a dissertation by the same title at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (2009). I have since changed or adjusted parts of every chapter, but the primary claims of the book remain the same. It is a great pleasure to acknowledge those who have helped me along the way. First, I thank the editors of the *Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplements* for accepting this book for publication and the editorial staff at Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, especially Jörg Persch and Christoph Spill for their help, patience, and skill.

I thank the University of North Carolina for a University Merit Assistantship as well as a University Dissertation Completion Fellowship. I am also grateful for a travel grant from the Graduate School that defrayed the cost of work done in Vienna, Austria as well as a travel grant from the Department of Religious Studies that allowed me to present some dissertation material at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in San Diego, California.

John Bullard first introduced me to the academic study of the Bible at Wofford College and he helped me to imagine it as fulfilling vocation. Despite the long hours and frequent wrong-turns and dead-ends in teaching and research, I wake up each morning to do a job that I truly love. Thank you, John. John encouraged me to pursue my interest in Israelite Wisdom literature by going to study at Duke Divinity School with James Crenshaw. I benefited greatly from him in seminars on Job and Qoheleth, but it was a course on “Intertestamental Literature” team-taught with Anatheia-Portier Young that formally introduced me to the fascinating world of literature from the late Second Temple Period. I note here that as I finished this manuscript, Thea published a book of her own on Jewish apocalypses: *Apocalypse Against Empire: Theologies of Resistance in Early Judaism* (Eerdmans, 2011). Unfortunately it was not possible to incorporate most of her work into this book, though I have been able to note its relevance on some points.

At the same time as my interest in the Second Temple Period was intensifying at Duke, Armin Lange arrived at UNC and took me on as his first American graduate student. His dual interests in the Hebrew Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls have surely coined my own research agenda and convinced me that the literature of the late Second Temple Period is not only

illuminating for the Hebrew Bible, but inseparable from it. He quickly put me to work on manuscript photographs (a significant departure from the beautifully printed pages of the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*) as well as the methods and theories required to analyze ancient texts critically. He has selflessly poured countless hours into my work and has been a uniquely generous *Doktorvater*. It is from him that I have learned best and most in the academy.

So it was at first disconcerting when he announced that he was leaving for a chair in Second Temple Judaism at the University of Vienna while I was preparing for doctoral exams. But his departure provided me with unforeseen opportunities. I had the pleasure of spending much time in the splendid city of Vienna during my last two and a half years of graduate school. I participated in graduate seminars at the University of Vienna and I am especially grateful to Bernhard Palme (Institut für Alte Geschichte) and James Alfred Loader (Institut für Evangelische Theologie) for their hospitality and insights. In Vienna I also benefited from two of Armin's European students, Matthias Weigold and Hanna Tervanotko. I am lucky to count them as my colleagues and friends.

My interests in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Second Temple Judaism have not been limited to texts. I have been fortunate to have Jodi Magness to force me to think not only beyond texts to material culture, but also beyond Syro-Palestine to the world of the Diaspora in Second Temple Times. Similarly, work with Eric Meyers on the archaeology of the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods in the Levant has helped to contextualize the history and culture that is latent in the texts analyzed in this study. He and Carol Meyers were always helpful to me in Armin's absence and included me in colloquia, etc., of the Hebrew Bible division at Duke. Other Duke faculty have helped me to acquire many of the skills used in this study: Septuagint with Melvin Peters, Aramaic and Syriac with Lucas von Rompay, Ugaritic, Arabic, and Ethiopic with Orval Wintermute, Akkadian with Neil Walls (visiting from Wake Forest Divinity School), and Hebrew with most every Hebrew Bible/Old Testament faculty member. Greg Goering (UVA) held a visiting position in Hebrew Bible at UNC for two years after Armin's departure. I was, by then, finished with coursework, but benefited from conversations with him about Second Temple Judaism.

Those who study the Hebrew Bible have for some time now looked to the East (Mesopotamia) in order to contextualize it. Several of my teachers have also helped me to look for context in the West (Mediterranean). Bart Ehrman and Zlatko Pleše helped me to venture into the worlds of New Testament, Early Christianity, and Greco-Roman religion. I was fortunate to work as a teaching assistant for Bart's Introduction to the New Testament and learn from a true master-teacher. Zlatko improved my Greek consider-

ably but also helped me to engage a world of philosophy and critical theory that has significantly expanded my intellectual horizons. Besides the intellectual debt I owe them, I also thank the five members of my committee (Armin Lange, Eric Meyers, Bart Ehrman, Jodi Magness, and Zlatko Pleše) for the time they devoted to the administrative work involved in minting a new Ph.D. I appreciate it even more now that I've had the opportunity to, e.g., administer doctoral examinations.

Fellow graduate students at UNC and Duke made the journey far more rewarding. Sean Burt and I worked most closely together. I have benefited greatly from him. I have also benefited from coursework and conversations with Erin Kuhns, Jared Anderson, Steve Werlin, Pam Reaves, Carrie Duncan, Ben White, Matt Grey, Chad Eggleston, and Amanda Mbuve.

After completing my Ph.D. I was honored to be hired by the Religious Studies department at UNC. I appreciate the way in which the faculty so generously transitioned me from the role of student to the role of colleague. I would like to thank the students I taught in two seminars on the Dead Sea Scrolls and Rewriting Scripture in Second Temple Judaism for helping me continue to think about some of the issues raised in this book.

In the last year an unforeseen opportunity for my family has moved us to Jackson, MS where I have been fortunate to join the faculty of Millsaps College. All of my colleagues in the Religious Studies department have offered both hospitality and invigorating intellectual exchanges. But I've been especially lucky to work with another Dead Sea Scrolls specialist, James Bowley. We've shared many ideas and beers this year and I'm a much better scholar because of it. I also want to thank my students from a seminar I offered this year at Millsaps: "The Messiah and the Apocalypse: Ancient and Modern Perspectives." We had great fun and I learned a lot from them as we read Daniel and *I Enoch* alongside modern texts like *Left Behind* and hashed out what apocalypse and apocalypticism mean.

I have profited from many scholars over the last few years. Moshe Bernstein, Hanan (ר"ב) and Esther Eshel, Loren Stuckenbruck, Klaus Koch, John Collins, Daniel Stökl ben Ezra, Maxine Grossman, Matthew Goff, Todd Hanneken, Molly Zahn, Eibert Tigchelaar, Dan Machiela, Hanne von Weissenberg, Moulie Vidas, Alex Jassen, Andy Teeter, and Michael Segal have at various times listened to my ideas and/or responded to my papers and publications by giving helpful feedback, criticism, or encouragement – sometimes saving me from embarrassing errors. I have found in the new generation of scrolls specialists not only a collection of intellects that constantly sharpen each other, but also a community (pun intended) of friends that looks forward to each new conference not only for professional interests, but for the time spent together.

Writing this book was a long and sometimes grueling process, but the support and good humor of my family has helped to insure that the work was never overwhelming. My interest in the Bible began at home at an early age and my mother, father, and sister have always taken a keen interest in what my work now does with those same stories. My two boys, Hilton and Huck, have never known a life apart from their father's work on this book. They have both spent far too many nights and weekends with their father barricaded in the library or glued to his computer screen. Boys, thank you for being patient with your father. As Prov 10:1 predicts, you have both brought me great gladness.

This book is dedicated to my wife Katrina. Such a small gesture hardly acknowledges her love and support for me. She has put up with my long hours of work and my frequent trips to the library (and Austria!) with genuine understanding and patience. She has not only tolerated my consuming work but encouraged me at every turn. She is a model mother to our sons and has achieved great professional success of her own. I truly found an *אשת חיל* at Wofford College. Her fierce devotion to our family is something to behold, each day giving substance to Shakespeare's definition of love in Sonnet 116: "It is an ever-fixed mark that looks on tempests and is never shaken, whose worth's unknown although his height be taken."

Abbreviations

Primary Sources

<i>1 En.</i>	<i>1 Enoch</i>
1QapGen	<i>Genesis Apocryphon</i>
1QM	<i>War Scroll (Milḥamah)</i>
1QpHab	<i>Pesher Habakkuk</i>
1QS	<i>Rule of the Community (Serek haYahad)</i>
4QMMT	<i>Some Works of the Torah (Miqsat Ma'aseh haTorah)</i>
4QPs-Dan ^{a-b} ar	4QPseudo-Daniel ^{a-b} ar
Bar	Baruch
CD	<i>Damascus Document (Cairo Genizah)</i>
Esd	Esdras
HB	Hebrew Bible
<i>Jub.</i>	<i>Jubilees</i>
LXX	Septuagint
Macc	Maccabees
MT	Masoretic Text
NT	New Testament
OG	Old Greek
<i>Sib. Or.</i>	<i>Sibylline Oracles</i>
Sir	Sirach
<i>T. 12 Patr.</i>	<i>Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs</i>
Tob	Tobit
Wis	Wisdom of Solomon

Secondary Sources

AAASH	Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae
AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	Anchor Bible Dictionary
AbrN	Abr-Nahrain

AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Spätjudentums und des Urchristentums
ALASPM	Abhandlungen zur Literatur Alt-Syrien-Palastinas und Mesopotamiens
AOTC	Abingdon Old Testament Commentary
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AOS	American Oriental Studies
ASORDS	American Schools of Oriental Research Dissertation Service
BA	Biblical Archaeologist
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovanensium
BBR	Bulletin for Biblical Research
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament
BO	Bibliotheca orientalis
BR	Biblical Research
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CBR	Currents in Biblical Research
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
CRINT	Compendia rerum iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
CSCO	Corpus scriptorium christianorum orientalium
DJD	Discoveries in the Judean Desert
DSD	Dead Sea Discoveries
DSSR	Dead Sea Scrolls Reader
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
GA	Gesammelte Aufsätze
HALOT	Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament
HdO	Handbuch der Orientalistik
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HR	History of Religions
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
IEJ	Israel Exploration Journal
ICC	International Critical Commentary
Imm	Immanuel
Int	Interpretation

IOQS	International Organization for Qumran Studies
JAJ	Journal of Ancient Judaism
JAJSup	Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplements
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JJS	Journal of Jewish Studies
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JPOS	Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society
JSHRZ	Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit
JSJ	Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplement Series
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha: Supplement Series
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JSS	Journal of Semitic Studies
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
NHMS	Nag Hammadi & Manichaean Studies
NLH	New Literary History
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTP	Old Testament Pseudepigrapha
OTS	Old Testament Studies
RB	Revue Biblique
RBL	Review of Biblical Literature
RevQ	Revue de Qumran
RHR	Revue de l'histoire des religions
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLEJL	Society of Biblical Literature Early Judaism and its Literature
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLRBS	Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study
SBLSCSS	Society of Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies
SBLWAW	Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
STDJ	Studies on the Texts from the Desert of Judah
SVTP	Studia in Veteris Testamenti pseudepigraphica

TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
TDOT	Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament
TLOT	Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum
UF	Ugarit Forschungen
VT	Vetus Testamentum
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplements
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

Chapter One

Introduction

Behold, the fourth beast – dreadful, terrible, and exceedingly mighty. It had great teeth of iron and was devouring and crushing and stomping the remainder at its feet. And it was different from each beast that was before it and it had ten horns. (Dan 7:7)

Daniel 7 describes the ancient kingdom of Greece as a terrifying beast.¹ It also describes individual Greek rulers as particular horns on the beast's head. Apocalypses such as Dan 8 and the *Animal Apocalypse* (1 En. 85–90) use the same type of symbolic language. In the research history below I attempt to show that this type of language has led most interpreters to describe symbolic language as a defining feature – a *sine qua non* – of ancient Jewish apocalypses. Recent work, however, has called into question whether or not symbolic language is a ubiquitous feature in the ex eventu prophecies of ancient Jewish apocalypses. While working to categorize the texts from the Qumran library by genre for DJD 39, Armin Lange and Ulrike-Mittmann-Richert noticed that some apocalypses describe historical or heavenly entities in a different manner than one finds in Dan 7.² They suggested that ancient Jewish apocalypses were not necessarily symbolic in character and called for further research on the language of apocalypses.³ Their concern with language can be seen in a comparison of descriptions of Greece in ancient Jewish apocalypses. For example, the writer of the *Apocryphon of Jeremiah C* represents Greece as ך (Yawan “Greece”).⁴ One

¹ Strictly speaking, the writer of Daniel depicts the kingdom of Macedonia, not Greece. It is unlikely, however, that the writer appreciated any such distinction in light of the angelic interpretation of the dream vision from Dan 8 (cf. 8:21) and the correlation of Alexander and the מלכות יון “Kingdom of Greece” in 11:2–3.

² Armin Lange and Ulrike Mittmann-Richert, “Annotated List of the Texts from the Judean Desert Classified by Genre and Content,” in *The Texts From the Judean Desert: Indices and An Introduction to the DJD Series* (ed. Emanuel Tov; vol. 39 of DJD; Oxford: Clarendon, 2002), 120–1.

³ Lange and Mittmann-Richert, “Annotated List of the Texts from the Judean Desert Classified by Genre and Content,” 121. Lange himself performed a preliminary investigation in which he compared descriptions from Dan, the *Animal Apocalypse*, and *Jub.* Armin Lange, “Dream Visions and Apocalyptic Milieus,” in *Enoch and Qumran Origins: New Light on a Forgotten Connection* (ed. Gabriele Boccaccini; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 27–34.

⁴ Devorah Dimant, “4QApocryphon of Jeremiah,” in *Qumran Cave 4 XXI* (ed. Devorah Dimant; vol. 30 of DJD; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 152–3.