

Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die
neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
und die Kunde der älteren Kirche

Herausgegeben von
Erich Gräßer

Band 59

Walter de Gruyter · Berlin · New York
1991

Gregory C. Jenks

The Origins and Early Development
of the Antichrist Myth

Walter de Gruyter · Berlin · New York

1991

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Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Jenks, Gregory C. (Gregory Charles), 1952—
The origins and early development of the Antichrist myth /
Gregory C. Jenks.
p. cm. — (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche ;
Beiheft 59)
Originally presented as the author's thesis (Ph. D.) —
University of Queensland, 1989.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-89925-707-0 (New York) — ISBN 3-11-012405-X
(Berlin)
1. Antichrist—History of doctrines—Early church, ca. 30-
600. I. Title. II. Series.
BS410.Z7 Heft 59
[BT985]
225.6 s—dc20
[236] 90-21517
CIP

Deutsche Bibliothek Cataloguing in Publication Data

Jenks, Gregory C.:
The origins and early development of the antichrist myth / Gregory
C. Jenks. — Berlin ; New York : de Gruyter, 1991
(Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
und die Kunde der älteren Kirche ; Bd. 59)
Zugl.: University of Queensland, Diss., 1989
ISBN 3-11-012405-X
NE: Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die
Kunde der älteren Kirche / Beihefte

ISSN: 0171-6441

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Printed in Germany

Printing: Werner Hildebrand, Berlin 65

Binding: Lüderitz & Bauer, Berlin 61

To
Beverley
Danelle and Adam

FOREWORD

This work was accepted by the Department of Studies in Religion of the University of Queensland as a Ph.D. dissertation in July 1989. It is published, in virtually the identical form as that in which it was submitted to and accepted by the University, as a contribution to the continuing investigation of early Christianity and of the Antichrist tradition in particular.

Dr Michael Lattke, Associate Professor in the Department of Studies in Religion, University of Queensland, has encouraged me throughout this project. It is due to his encouragement and practical support that this manuscript finds its way into publication so quickly. I also owe a considerable debt to the senior colleagues who examined the dissertation and encouraged me to seek its publication: Dr Paullen Allen, Professor Francis I. Andersen and Professor John J. Collins. I am deeply grateful, too, for the confidence which Professor Dr Erich Grässer has shown in accepting this study as part of the series **Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft**.

Adelaide, Australia
December 1989

Gregory C. Jenks

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ABSTRACT AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis represents the result of investigations into the origins and development of the Antichrist myth in early Christianity. Research into this question developed a broad character, requiring attention to a wide range of Jewish and Christian literature from the period ca 200 BCE to 300 CE. Where many doctoral studies involve detailed attention to a relatively small field, this topic has required a different approach. Instead of close attention to a single text or passage, or the views of one particular person, this research has involved the examination of numerous ancient texts from diverse backgrounds and attention to a large body of secondary literature. It is an attempt at a synthesis, and as such it builds on the detailed work of numerous other scholars who have invested their labours in the specific texts and issues. At the same time, this study does offer detailed proposals on specific matters of interpretation and, in particular, takes issue with the majority views on the origins and development of the Antichrist myth.

The discussion begins with a review of scholarship in the past century, noting especially the significant contributions of Wilhelm Bousset and Robert Henry Charles. Their researches late in the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the present century set the parameters of the debate for the next hundred years, and their views still command the field. While noting and responding critically to their positions, this study also takes account of dissident voices which have interpreted the evidence differently or pointed to the significance of new data not available at the beginning of the century. Given the inherent flaws of the "Bousset-Charles' consensus" (and the availability of additional textual evidence), this study attempts a comprehensive re-examination of the question on a scale which has not been attempted since Bousset's own work in 1895.

The present study divides naturally into three major divisions, with the last division accounting for nearly half the total work and itself having three significant divisions reflected in its three chapters. The first part begins with an examination of the earliest Christian literature that unequivocally describes the Antichrist figure: the literature from Irenaeus onwards. Literature from Irenaeus to Victorinus is examined, to establish a clear understanding of the

Christian Antichrist myth. While the Antichrist myth undoubtedly predated this literary evidence, it was only in this relatively late literature that the myth emerges clearly into view.

This well-established and widely disseminated myth clearly had precedents in the earlier literature and oral traditions of Christianity; and possibly in Jewish traditions as well. The question of origins is the central concern of the remainder of the present study. The next division examines hellenistic Jewish literature prior to the Common Era for ideas which may have contributed to the later Antichrist myth. As that examination proceeds, a constant question hangs over the study: Can one justify the common scholarly assertion that the Antichrist myth was a pre-Christian Jewish tradition? Bousset's confident answer in the affirmative is rebutted by the results presented in this study.

The final division of the present study examines Jewish and Christian literature in the period ca 40-180 CE, noting the developments which took place in early Christian eschatology and the continued survival of older Jewish traditions, sometimes almost cheek by jowl. It is argued that an Antichrist tradition first emerged in Christian literature of the last quarter of the first century CE, with Didache 16 being perhaps the first account which really deserves that honour.

The exact history of the Antichrist tradition between then and the time of Irenaeus is unclear, but the extant literature suggests a continuing fluidity in Christian circles. Older traditions of an "Endtyrant" figure continued in both Jewish and Christian circles, as did traditions of an eschatological False Prophet. At times these two major traditions merged with one another; with the Satan-Beliar myths; or with the "Nero redivivus" myth. This study argues that not every combination should be labelled as an example of the Antichrist myth: only those which occur in a messianic context and portray an evil human being pretending to the messianic office or opposing Jesus.

The nature of this research topic, with the necessity of ready access to the diverse ancient sources and the requirement to limit the length of the manuscript to around 400 pages, involved some difficult choices concerning the range of material to be included, and how that material might be presented. As with Bousset's classic study of the question last century, it seemed important to include a significant proportion of the extant source materials, so that the reader might have the opportunity to make an independent assessment of particular points of interpretation. Equally, it seemed essential that these sources should be available in their original or major extant language, where

possible. In the case of texts for which recent English translations are available these have been employed, rather than supplying fresh translations. For older sources, unless indicated otherwise, translations are my own.

An attempt has been made to keep the conflicting requirements of full citation of source material on the one hand, and of reasonable length on the other, in tension throughout this study. It was decided to include extensive citations of the sources, since many are not readily available and their collection in this volume will both assist the reader and provide a useful resource in its own right. (For example, neither the new English editions of the OT Pseudepigrapha, nor the German JSRZ series, provide original texts.)

The exception to this rule has been biblical material which has generally not been cited either in the original languages or in translation, as it is readily accessible to the reader. Similarly, apart from the Qumran materials, only Greek and Latin sources have been presented in their original (or extant) languages. No attempt has been made to present the extant form of texts in Coptic, Old Slavonic and other languages. A simplified form of cross referencing has been employed, and an index to citations of ancient sources has been provided, to assist the reader in locating citations scattered throughout the study. Hopefully, a sufficient number and diversity of sources has been cited, to allow the reader to follow the argument readily, and to consider points of detail independently.

To reduce the resulting length of the discussion, numerous summary tables have been employed throughout the study. These enable the major points of relevance to the question of the origins of the Antichrist myth to be succinctly presented, thus compensating somewhat for the relatively large proportion of pages dedicated to citation of the sources. The related discussion of the material is usually able to be abbreviated, when such tables are used. The tables are individually numbered and distributed throughout the text at appropriate places, as listed on pp. XXI-XXII.

The division of some ancient sources into books, chapters, verses/lines varies between some editions. To assist readers who may wish to consult the original sources at more length to do so, all citations include page references for the particular edition cited. These take the form of an abbreviated reference to the source, followed by the page number (including a volume number, if appropriate).

I am indebted to a large number of people who have assisted, encouraged or influenced me during the pursuit of this research project into the origins

and development of the Antichrist myth. I am glad to have an opportunity to acknowledge that debt at the beginning of this manuscript. Two individuals in particular deserve special expressions of gratitude.

As already mentioned, Dr Michael Lattke, Associate Professor in the Department of Studies in Religion, University of Queensland, has encouraged me throughout this project. Through his role as supervisor Dr Lattke has taught me a great deal about "Wissenschaft"; and done so as much by the example of his own careful scholarship as by his advice and guidance of my own efforts. In particular, he has patiently encouraged me to continue despite the delays in the project due to pastoral commitments associated with my work as a parish priest. In the final months of the research his model of supervision was sufficiently flexible to allow our relationship both to continue and flourish after I moved to the other side of the continent to take up a position in Adelaide. Without his support and careful supervision this task would not have been completed.

My wife, Beverley, has had a very different role in this project, but it has been a crucial role nonetheless. Over several years, Beverley has "lived with the Antichrist," and has been a source of encouragement for me to persist with this undertaking. At considerable cost to her own personal career, and at great cost to our family life with our children, Beverley has kept me at the task and enabled me to pursue it to this point. Such a debt can never be repaid, only acknowledged and appreciated.

In addition to these two individuals, whose influence has been so important for my work on this topic, I must acknowledge the support of library staff in Brisbane and in Adelaide who have made this task possible. Theological resources are thinly spread in Australian libraries, especially when one is working outside the major centres of Melbourne and Sydney, so the library staff are vital partners of the scholar. In the earlier stages of my research, I was greatly assisted by the library staff at St Francis' College in Brisbane, particularly the late Geoffrey Roscoe, College Librarian for many years. Since moving to Adelaide and taking up my research in a more intensive fashion my work has been possible only because of the library facilities available through Luther Seminary, Adelaide and the Flinders University of South Australia. In particular, the staff at the Flinders University Inter-Library Loans desk during 1987 and 1988 played a crucial role in making this research possible.

In late 1986, when it seemed that my research would have to be abandoned due to the pressure of parish commitments, I was invited to take a teaching

position at St Barnabas' Theological College, Adelaide. This appointment afforded me the opportunity to complete the research and prepare the dissertation for submission. My indebtedness to the Rev'd Dr John Gaden, Warden of St Barnabas' College -- as well as to the College community of staff, students and families -- is considerable. I am grateful for the time made available for my research, and for the interest and support shown by so many people in our new home in Adelaide.

In the final weeks of preparing the text for the presses, I have been greatly assisted by the technical expertise and willing advice of the staff at Walter de Gruyter & Co. In particular, I wish to acknowledge the role of Felicia Dörfert in guiding the work from dissertation to monograph.

Gregory C. Jenks

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ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations used throughout this study mostly are those set by the Society of Biblical Literature ["Guidelines for Contributors", *Member's Handbook* (1980) 83-97]. The abbreviations of S. Schwertner [TRE. *Abkürzungsverzeichnis* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1976)] have been followed where the SBL guidelines were silent, and where the TRE form did not presuppose a German spelling of a foreign title. Works listed in the bibliography are usually cited only by author and short title in the body of the discussion. In some specialised areas, such as the Qumran literature and the biblical apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, other guidelines have been followed. Those abbreviations used in this work are listed below.

I. Publications

- AA K. Tischendorf, *Apocalypses Apocryphae* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1966 [=Leipzig, 1866])
- AF Apostolic Fathers
- ANF Ante-Nicene Fathers
- AOT H.F.D. Sparkes (ed), *The Apocryphal Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984)
- APOT R.H. Charles (ed), *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (2 vols; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1913)
- AV K. Bihlmeyer (ed), *Die Apostolischen Väter* (SAKDQ, II.1; 3rd ed, revised by W. Schneemelcher; Tübingen, 1970)
- Bensly R.L. Bensly & M.R. James (ed), *The Fourth Book of Ezra* (T & S, III.2; Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1895 [=Nendeln: Kraus Reprint, 1967])
- CSEL *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*
- Driver G.R. Driver, *The Judaean Scrolls* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965)
- DSSE G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987³)

FC	Fathers of the Church
Fitzmyer	J.A. Fitzmyer, "The Contribution of Qumran Aramaic to the Study of the New Testament" <i>NTS</i> 20 (1974) 382-407
Flusser	"The Hubris of the Antichrist in a Fragment from Qumran" <i>Immanuel</i> 10 (1980) 31-37
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte
Goodspeed	E.J. Goodspeed, <i>Die ältesten Apologeten. Texte mit kurzen Einleitungen</i> (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1914 [= 1984])
JSHRZ	Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit
LCC	Library of Christian Classics
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LXX	A. Rahlfs (ed), <i>Septuaginta</i> (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1935)
NTA	E. Hennecke, W. Schneemelcher, & R. McL. Wilson (eds), <i>New Testament Apocrypha</i> (2 vols; London: SCM, 1965)
OTP	J.H. Charlesworth (ed), <i>Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> (2 vols; New York: Doubleday, 1983-85)
SC	Sources chrétiennes

II. Ancient Documents

Old Testament Pseudepigrapha

ApAb	Apocalypse of Abraham
AscIs	Ascension of Isaiah
AsMos	Assumption of Moses
2Bar	2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch
3Bar	3 (Greek Apocalypse of) Baruch
1En	1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch
4Ezra	4 Ezra
Jub	Jubilees
LadJac	Ladder of Jacob
LivPro	Lives of the Prophets
MartIs	Martyrdom of Isaiah
OdesSol	Odes of Solomon

PssSol	Psalms of Solomon
SibOr	Sibylline Oracles
THez	Testament of Hezekiah
T12P	Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs
TReu	Testament of Reuben
TSim	Testament of Simeon
TLevi	Testament of Levi
TJud	Testament of Judah
TIss	Testament of Issachar
TZeb	Testament of Zebulun
TDan	Testament of Dan
TNaph	Testament of Naphtali
TGad	Testament of Gad
TAsh	Testament of Asher
TJos	Testament of Joseph
TBenj	Testament of Benjamin
TMos	Testament of Moses (=AsMos)

Qumran

[The abbreviations for Qumran literature follow the scheme in J.A. Fitzmyer, *Dead Sea Scrolls: Major Publications and Tools for Study*. The most frequently used abbreviations are listed here.]

CD	Damascus Document
1Q14	Commentary on Micah
1QFlor	Florilegium
1QpHab	Commentary on Habakkuk
1QH	Hymn Scroll
1QM	Scroll of the War Rule
1QS	Community Rule
4Q246	Pseudo-Danielic text
4Q286	Blessings and Curses
4Q'Amram	Testament of 'Amram
4QTest	Testimonia
11QMelch	Melchizedek text

Josephus

Ant	Antiquitates Judaicae
Apion	Contra Apionem
Life	Vita Josephi
War	De bello Judaico

Early Christian Literature

ad Quir.	Tertullian, Ad Quirinum
anim.	Tertullian, De anima
antichr.	Hippolytus, Demonstratio de Christo et antichristo
apol.	Tertullian, Apologeticum
ApPet	Apocalypse of Peter
Barn	Epistle of Barnabas
Carmen	Commodianus, Carmen apologeticum
Catech.	Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures
Cels.	Origen, Contra Celsum
comm.Dan.	Hippolytus, Commentary on Daniel
comm. Ser.	
in Matt.	Origen, Commentariorum series in Matt
consum.	Pseudo-Hippolytus, De consummatione mundi
Did	Didache
dial.	Justin Martyr, Dialogus cum Trypho Judaeo
haer.	Irenaeus, Aduersus haereses
h.e.	Eusebius, Historia ecclesiastica
ieiun.	Tertullian, De ieiunio aduersus psychicos
Instr.	Commodianus, Instructions
Marc.	Tertullian, Aduersus Marcionem
Phil.	To the Philippians (whether Ignatius or Polycarp)
praescr.	Tertullian, De praescriptione hereticorum
Ps-Hipp.	Pseudo-Hippolytus
res. carn.	Tertullian, De resurrectione carnis
1RevJn	Apocalypse of the Holy John (= 'First Apoc. of John')
sent. episc.	Cyprian, Sententiae episcopae
un. eccl.	Cyprian, De unitate ecclesiae

III. General

bp	bishop	ls, lss	line(s)
ca	circa	LXX	Septuagint
ch, chs	chapter, chapters	Mem.	Memorial volume
comm.	commentary	MS(S)	manuscript(s)
diss.	dissertation	ns	new series
ed, eds	edition/editor(s)	NT	New Testament
ep, epp	epistle, epistles	OT	Old Testament
ET	English translation	p., pp.	page(s)
fl.	flourished ca	univ.	university
Fs	Festschrift	UP	University Press
hom.	homily	vs, vss	verse, verses

1. THE QUESTION OF THE ANTICHRIST MYTH

1.1 THE QUESTION OF THE ORIGINS AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE ANTICHRIST MYTH

Towards the end of the first century of the Common Era an otherwise unknown Christian writer addressed a pastoral letter to a Christian community whose precise location and character remain uncertain. In that letter, the writer stated:

Παιδιά, ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν, καὶ
καθὼς ἤκουσατε ὅτι ἀντί-
χριστος ἔρχεται, καὶ νῦν
ἀντίχριστοι πολλοὶ γεγόνασιν,
ὅθεν γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐσχάτη
ὥρα ἐστίν.

Children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that Antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come; therefore we know that it is the last hour.

[1 John 2:18]

1 John assumed a knowledge on the part of its recipients, whoever they were, of some previous instruction about the coming of an "Antichrist" and it drew on that knowledge for the sake of interpreting the immediate experience of the recipients. They had apparently recently experienced a split within their community (cf. §13.3.2). In its aftermath, the author of 1 John identified the opposing group with an evil eschatological figure known in Christian tradition as "the Antichrist".

Despite the appearance of the term in the Johannine epistles (see also 1 John 2:22; 4:3; 2 John 7), the form and extent of the primitive Christian tradition about an Antichrist figure remains something of a mystery.¹ The word appears in the Johannine epistles for the first time, and does not recur (except in a citation of those epistles by Polycarp) until the extended discussion of the Antichrist doctrine by Irenaeus a hundred or so years later (*haer.* V.25). Thus

1 LITERATURE: The major articles and monographs dealing with the Antichrist question are W. Bousset, "Antichrist" *ERE* I,578-81; ---, *Der Antichrist*; ---, *Religion des Judentums*, 254-56; A.E. Brooke, *Epistles*, 69-79; R.E. Brown, *Epistles*, 333-36; F.F. Bruce, "Excursus on Antichrist" *Thessalonians*, 179-88; R.H. Charles, *Revelation*, II,76-87; M. Dibelius,

both the origins of the idea prior to the Johannine epistles and its development through to the writings in the third century, which present it as a well developed tradition, require some consideration.

The question is important for both historical and contemporary reasons. Historically, the development of distinctive Christian beliefs and their expression in various forms often drew on older Jewish and hellenistic traditions. While the Christian form of these beliefs should be understood in its own right, this still requires an appreciation of the processes by which those ideas developed. This is true of early Christian eschatology in general, and of the Antichrist idea in particular.

However, more than a study of the past is involved in any enquiry into the origins and development of the Antichrist myth. Despite the assertion by Wilhelm Bousset that the nineteenth century had seen "interest in the [Antichrist] legend entirely disappear," so that it is now to be found "only

Thessalonicher, 37-44; C. Erbes, "Der Antichrist in den Schriften des Neuen Testaments" in *Theologische Arbeiten des rheinischen wissenschaftlichen Prediger-Vereins* ns 1 (1897) 1-59; J. Ernst, *Gegenspieler*, especially pp. 283-98; J. van Ess, "Antichrist" *Lexikon des Mittelalters* I,703-05; M. Friedländer, *Der Antichrist*; K. Grayston, *Epistles*, 76-82; S.S. Hartman, O. Böcher & G.A. Benrath, "Antichrist" *TRE* III,21-43; M.R. James, "Man of Sin and Antichrist" *HBD* III,226-28; G. Jenscke & E. Lohse, "Antichrist" *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, I,381-85; A. Jeremias, *Der Antichrist in Geschichte u. Gegenwart* (Religionswissenschaftlichen Darstellungen für die Gegenwart, 6; Leipzig: 1930); E. Lohmeyer, *Offenbarung*, 110-15; ---, "Antichrist" *RAC* I,451f; B. McGinn, "Antichrist" *EncRel* I,321-23; R. Mackintosh, "The Antichrist of 2 Thessalonians" *Expositor series* 7.2 (1906) 427-32; W.A. Meeks, *The Prophet King*, 47-55; G. Milligan, "The Biblical Doctrine of Antichrist" in *Thessalonians*, 158-65; W.-E. Peuckert, "Antichrist" *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens* I,479-502; H. Preisker, "Antichrist" *GGG*² I,375-78; B. Rigaux, *L'Antéchrist et l'opposition au royaume messianique dans l'Ancien et le Nouveau Testament* (Paris: Gabalda, 1932); ---, *Thessaloniciens*, 646-92; M. Rist, "Antichrist" *IDB* I,140-43; J.-M. Rosenstiehl, "Le portrait de l'Antichrist"; H.H. Rowley, *Relevance* 31-35; D.S. Russell, *Method and Message*, 276-80; H. Schlier, "Vom Antichrist" *Die Zeit der Kirche*, 16-29; R. Schnackenburg, "Exkursus vom Antichrist" *Johannesbriefe*, 145-49; R. Schütz, "Antichrist im NT" *GGG*³ I,431f; L. Sirard, "La parousie de l'Antéchrist, 2 Thess 2, 3-9" in *Studiorum Paulinorum*, II,89-100; W. Speyer, "Gottesfeind" *RAC* XI,996-1043; M.E. Stone, "Antichrist" *EncyJ* III,59-62; H.B. Swete, "Antichrist in the Province of Asia" *Apocalypse*, lxxviii-xciii; G. Vos, "The Man of Sin" in *Pauline Eschatology*, 94-135; A. Wang, H. Sauer, D. Breisemeister & R. Auty, "Antichrist in Literatur" *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, I,705-07; W.C. Weinrich, "Antichrist in the Early Church", 135-47; G. Wohlenberg, *Thessalonicherbrief*, 172-218; R. Yates, "The Antichrist", 42-50.

among the lower classes of the Christian community, among sects, eccentric individuals, and fanatics",² interest in and speculation about this more esoteric aspect of Christian doctrine remains lively.³ Any study which can elucidate the origins, development and earliest significance of the Antichrist myth is therefore potentially of some interest in the contemporary world, as well as having its own value as a piece of historical research.

1.2 RECENT RESEARCH INTO THE ORIGINS OF THE ANTICHRIST MYTH

While critical research into the Antichrist tradition can perhaps be said to have begun with Tomas Malvenda in 1604,⁴ the particular honour of having set the parameters of the modern debate surely belongs to Wilhelm Bousset. Bousset himself acknowledged his debt to such earlier works as the commentaries by Ribeira and Alcassar, and the studies by Bellarmine and Malvenda.⁵ Indeed, Bousset recognised the continuing value of Malvenda's study for his own researches into the patristic sources and for readers wanting to delve further into them than his own essay had done.⁶ However, despite the value of these earlier works, modern study of the Antichrist doctrine really begins in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, with the development of scientific biblical criticism aided by new textual sources which revealed the complex mythic traditions of the ancient Near East and their many parallels with biblical materials.

1.2.1 H. Gunkel

Before considering the contribution of Bousset to this field, special mention must be made of Hermann Gunkel, whose classic studies on ancient oriental

2 W. Bousset, "Antichrist" in ERE 1,581.

3 For a recent example of this popular interest in the Antichrist idea, see G.E. Vandeman, *The Rise and Fall of Antichrist in the Prophecies of Revelation* (Boise: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1986).

4 *De Antichristo libri undecim* (Rome, 1604)

5 W. Bousset, *Der Antichrist*, 83.

6 W. Bousset, *Der Antichrist*, 57.

mythology established the point that these traditions were preserved in both the Old and New Testaments.⁷ Once again, Bousset freely acknowledged his debt to Gunkel's pioneering work, even when he found himself compelled to differ from some of Gunkel's conclusions.

From his study of ancient mythic traditions, Gunkel developed a vast synthesis whose details have not survived the intervening years,⁹ but whose influence on subsequent studies has been powerful. Gunkel stimulated others to undertake research in this field, most notably Bousset. In particular, Gunkel recognised that apocalyptic writers did not create their material *ex nihilo*, but used older traditions.¹⁰

Bousset identified three lasting achievements from Gunkel's work on Revelation,¹¹ and his judgment on their permanent value seems to have been validated with the passage of time. The first of these achievements was to recognise and establish the potency of old mythic traditions. This is now generally accepted, but had not been prior to Gunkel. Another significant achievement by Gunkel was his reaction against frequent recourse to source and textual criticism in the study of ancient texts. Gunkel showed that the extant documents should be understood against the wider background of ancient mythic traditions. Gunkel also argued against the tendency to interpret Revelation by reference to contemporary historical events in the first century. Gunkel preferred to look within the book itself, and its own world, for its meaning.

Gunkel's work clearly had its limitations, and these were not always noted by Bousset. Gunkel's sense of the potency and persistence of old mythic traditions led him to posit an esoteric oral tradition.¹² As will be seen, Bousset followed this idea with some considerable enthusiasm. However, this is an aspect of Bousset's work with which the present study takes issue. Bousset did note that Gunkel "often neglected" the study of literature most closely related to Jewish and Christian circles contemporary with the Book of Reve-

7 *Schöpfung und Chaos*.

8 W. Bousset, *Der Antichrist*, 2f.

9 For instance, both W. Bousset [*Der Antichrist*, 7; and *Offenbarung*, 118f] and R.H. Charles [*Revelation*, II,76] criticised Gunkel's conclusions on the mythic aspects in Revelation within a short time of his work being published.

10 *Schöpfung und Chaos*, 252-54.

11 W. Bousset, *Der Antichrist*, 5f.

12 *Schöpfung und Chaos*, 265, 292.

lation. Bousset set himself the task of studying those "writings nearest to hand" in the apocrypha and pseudepigrapha,¹³ but has himself been criticised for neglecting rabbinic material in favour of literature on the fringes of Jewish and Christian communal life.¹⁴

1.2.2 W. Bousset

As mentioned, Wilhelm Bousset is without doubt the most important modern authority on the origins and development of the Antichrist myth.¹⁵ From the influential collection of texts edited by R.H. Charles to its more recent replacements, students of the OT pseudepigrapha in general have tended to take Bousset's views as the conclusive statement of the situation, with little need to do more than add an occasional note mentioning subsequent studies.¹⁶

Bousset's work on the Antichrist tradition was first published in 1895 and, remarkably for its time, translated into English within a year.¹⁷ He responded positively to criticism by R.H. Charles over his use of the material concerning the Belial and Nero traditions, and his adapted views were expressed in the second edition of *Die Religion des Judentums* in 1906,¹⁸ and his 1908 article "Antichrist" in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* which represents an excellent summary of his views.¹⁹

Bousset described the problem of the origin of the Antichrist idea in his original study. He observed the common Jewish (?) apocalyptic traditions in

13 W. Bousset, *Der Antichrist*, 9.

14 See the discussion in E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 33ff.

15 Cf. R.H. Charles, *Revelation*, II,76; J. Ernst, *Gegenspieler*, 284; W.A. Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 49; G. Milligan, "Biblical Doctrine", 158f; and G. Vos, "Man of Sin", 97 for positive assessments (over several decades) of Bousset's contribution in this field.

16 Charles' views on the importance of Bousset's achievement are stated in his *Revelation*, II,76. More recently O.S. Wintermute ["Apocalypse of Elijah" *OTP* I,744-53] repeatedly cites Bousset as the standard authority, with never a hint that other points of view have been expressed, or that Bousset's work has been criticised by later studies.

17 *Der Antichrist*. Both the original German study and its English translation have recently been reprinted.

18 This work has also remained in print as a standard work for NT studies, being revised in 1925 and reprinted in 1966.

19 *ERE* I,578-81.

Revelation 11, 2 Thessalonians 2 and Mark 13, and believed that they represented Christian evidence for a Jewish belief in an evil eschatological figure. This Jewish tradition, he believed, could be noted in fragmentary form in these (and other) disparate works.²⁰ Bousset thus argued for the view that "the Antichrist legend is a later anthropomorphic transformation of the Dragon myth, and further that this myth has made itself felt in its traditional form far beyond the time of the New Testament."²¹

While Bousset professed that he was far from claiming "any finality" [Vollständigkeit] for his researches,²² and recognised the "all but irresistible" temptation to indulge in free-ranging speculation,²³ he set about the task of tracing the ultimate origin of the Jewish Antichrist legend and produced a masterpiece which has dominated research into the topic ever since. In brief, he believed that the Antichrist tradition ultimately went back to the dragon figure in ancient creation myths.

Bousset proposed that the Jewish form of this myth had focused on an evil figure known as "Beliar", and he posited a Jewish apocalyptic tradition which he described as the "Beliar Apocalypse".²⁴ In his view this was essentially an apolitical myth, which the author of Revelation drew into service as an anti-Roman polemic by combining it with an early form of the Nero myth. Bousset believed the older version had survived in its apolitical form in oral tradition, thus accounting for the positive attitude towards Rome in the eschatology of the early Fathers such as Irenaeus and Hippolytus, who are our earliest explicit witnesses to a Christian Antichrist myth.²⁵

The significance of Bousset's research is widely recognised. A number of lasting results have been identified by J. Ernst.²⁶ First, Bousset's observation that in the NT the idea of an eschatological opponent usually involves a single figure. Secondly, the recognition that the NT data reveals at least two distinct versions of this "Antichrist legend": one form with an apolitical character and an emphasis on religious deception; the other form an tyrannical endtime ruler.

20 W. Bousset, *Der Antichrist*, 11ff.

21 The ET is from *Antichrist Legend*, 13.

22 W. Bousset, *Der Antichrist*, 1.

23 W. Bousset, *Der Antichrist*, 10.

24 W. Bousset, *Der Antichrist*, 60f, 99-101.

25 W. Bousset, *Der Antichrist*, 15-17

26 J. Ernst, *Gegenspieler*, 285f.

Thirdly, that traditional mythic elements (which had their own long histories) had been used in the Jewish and Christian eschatological opponent traditions. Bousset also recognised that historical events, such as the crisis in Judaea ca 167 BCE, and contemporary personages, such as Herod and Caligula, had exercised a powerful influence over the development of the Antichrist legend. Finally, he also realised that the *Nero redivivus* myth, especially in its Jewish form as a variant of the Satan-Beliar myth, was significant for an understanding of the development of the Antichrist idea.

While Bousset's work has dominated the field ever since, there have been numerous criticisms of various aspects. Perhaps the most fundamental criticisms relate to the sources used by Bousset, and the method he employed. On the first matter, Ernst comments

The presuppositions, from which Bousset began, are very precarious. His authorities stem predominantly from the post NT era. When he develops from these grounds the old elements which constitute 'the stability of the eschatological literature' and then makes use of them as evidence for the availability of his secret tradition, the procedure is extremely questionable.²⁷

Bousset himself admitted that his sources spanned a period of more than a thousand years,²⁸ but justified their use on the grounds that Gunkel had established the point that apocalyptic traditions were actually very stable despite their transmission over space and time. On this base Bousset erected a theory of "stupendous proportions",²⁹ but Vos has challenged the idea that apocalyptic traditions were as stable as Bousset requires, pointing to the "series of transformations" which Bousset's own theory postulates.³⁰

As can be observed in Table T1, there was a major weakness in Bousset's data base. Leaving aside the texts which are dated fifth century or later (and there were many of those drawn upon by Bousset) even the remaining sources are of uneven value, both in terms of chronological spread and their worth as evidence for the various elements of the Antichrist myth.

27 *Gegenspieler*, 285 (my translation).

28 W. Bousset, *Der Antichrist*, 3.

29 G. Vos, "Man of Sin", 99.

30 "Man of Sin", 98.

Table T1 ::: Sources

	Daniel	SibOr III	T12P	TMos	SibOr II	Synoptics	2 Thess 2	Revelation	SibOr III-V	4 Ezra	3 Baruch
Signs and Warnings											
Natural disorders										x	
Hatred in families										x	
Civil strife and war										x	x
Collapse of Rome							x			x	
Jewish Origins of the Antichrist											
A Jewish figure							x	x			
Belial myth		x	x								
Man of Lawlessness							x				
Satan							x				
Tribe of Dan			x								
Dragon								x	x	x	
Signs and wonders		x						x	x	x	
Monstrous figure											
False messiah							x				
Seated in temple						x	x				
Defeat of 3 kings	x								x		
Rebuilds temple											
Assistants								x			
Ruler of the World											
Universal rule							x	x		x	
Drought and famine											
Mark of Antichrist								x			
Two witnesses					x			x			
Faithful flee						x					
Persecution											
Reign 3½ years											
The Final Acts											
Jews converted								x			
Days shortened						x					
Final crisis											
Antichrist destroyed		x					x				
Role of Michael	x			x				x			
Parousia of Jesus									x		
World dissolved					x						
Judgment day						x					

Used by W. Bousset

SibOr VIII	THEz	ApPeter	Irenaeus	Tertullian	Hippolytus	Commodian	Victorinus	1RevJn	Lactantius	Ps-Hipp	Ps-Ephrem	Ephrem	Cyril of Jer	Jerome	Indian sources
x	x		x	x	x				x	x	x				x
	x					x	x		x						
			x		x			x			x	x			
x	x		x		x				x	x	x	x	x		
	x	x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	
			x		x				x		x	x	x		
		x			x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x		x
	x														
							x	x	x		x	x			
									x	x					
	x								x						
x	x	x						x	x			x	x		
		x			x			x	x	x		x			

Of the hellenistic Jewish texts written before the Common Era (ie, those examined in the second part of the present study), Bousset made no use of 1 Enoch, Jubilees, MartIs, PssSol, TMos, or LivPro; nor, of course, any of the sectarian texts from Qumran. Even Daniel was virtually ignored. There was some minimal use of SibOr II and III, and of the T12P (which he dated early), but Bousset's argument clearly rests on late texts rather than on the earliest evidence available.

For the period ca 30-180 CE (ie, sources considered in our third section) Bousset used the synoptic gospels, 2 Thessalonians, Revelation, SibOr III and V, 4 Ezra, THEz, and ApPet fairly extensively, and made occasional reference to the Johannine epistles, 3 Baruch, SibOr VIII and Didache. However, he made no use of Barnabas, ApAb, 2 Baruch, Polycarp or Justin Martyr. Of the data available from the third century he drew upon Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Victorinus and IRevJn, but ignored Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian and ApEl.

His real data base, as Table T1 reveals, was the even later material of the fourth century and beyond, especially Pseudo-Hippolytus, Lactantius, Pseudo-Ephraem, Ephraem, Cyril of Jerusalem and Jerome. The evidence of these later witnesses can be adequately explained from data in the earlier texts known from the second and third century, but Bousset used their individual variations on the Antichrist theme as evidence for an esoteric oral tradition independent of the second and third century literature.

If the date and range of texts used by Bousset as sources raise major concerns,³¹ there are also questions over the manner in which he used them. In particular, the last point mentioned has attracted valid criticism. Bousset assumed that references to the Antichrist, and especially detailed elaborations of the Antichrist myth, were to be explained by independent recourse to a secret Antichrist tradition transmitted orally. This aspect of Bousset's research has been criticised by scholars from Milligan to Yarbro Collins,³² with the latter noting that "it is not methodologically sound to adopt what should be an hypothesis in each individual case as a general axiom."³³

31 Cf. G. Milligan ["Biblical Doctrine", 173] for an early critique of Bousset on this point, and E.P. Sanders [Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, 33ff] for a more recent criticism.

32 G. Milligan, "Biblical Doctrine", 159; G. Vos, "Man of Sin", 100; J. Ernst, *Gegenspieler*, 285; A. Yarbro Collins, *Combat Myth*, 166f.

33 A. Yarbro Collins, *Combat Myth*, 167.

In order to establish his idea that the Antichrist myth had been spread via a vast network of oral tradition, Bousset resorted to methods which have seemed to some people to have been examples of "extreme arbitrariness", involving "constant unwarranted combination and equation of names and features lying not only decades but ages apart, and a persistent effort to supply the lacking intermediate links from unevidenced hidden strands of popular belief".³⁴ While Vos does not mention Bousset's interpretation of SibOr III.63, it illustrates this aspect of Bousset's method. Bousset comments on the line ἐκ δὲ Σεβαστηῶν ἦξει Βελζάρ μετόπισθεν.

It therefore appears that the Sibyl expects Antichrist to spring from the dynasty of the Roman Caesars. ... Hence we have here already a political application of the Antichrist legend.³⁵

This is surely going too far. This text is from an anti-Roman political oracle of hellenistic origins, which used the Beliar figure as a device to attack the Roman emperor. It can hardly be identified as an "Antichrist" passage, let alone evidence that the Antichrist myth has already progressed from its postulated apolitical form and is now "already" being drawn into service as an anti-Roman device. There was neither Messiah nor Antichrist in this oracle, and Bousset's use of Antichrist terminology illustrates yet another weakness of his study. As Yarbrow Collins has pointed out,³⁶ Bousset used "Antichrist" indiscriminately, even in non-messianic contexts, of any and all figures opposed to God or God's people. By not distinguishing between the particular idea of an Antichrist, and the whole range of opponent figures in Jewish and Christian theology, Bousset developed a usage which was "often confusing and sometimes misleading".

W.A. Meeks has identified a major weakness of another kind in Bousset's work, namely his failure to recognise the presence and influence of the Jewish idea of the Prophet and the False Prophet.³⁷ While Meeks' study was directed towards understanding the idea of the Prophet in early Jewish thought, his

34 G. Vos, "Man of Sin", 98.

35 W. Bousset, *Der Antichrist*, 60 [ET from *Antichrist Legend*, 96].

36 A. Yarbrow Collins, *Combat Myth*, 166.

37 W.A. Meeks, *Prophet-King*.

work has significant implications for the origins and development of the Antichrist myth. Meeks criticised Bousset for failing to recognise that the characterisation of an eschatological evil figure as a "false prophet", whose major concerns were to "lead astray" by means of "signs and wonders", was a well-established Jewish idea.

Meeks pointed out that "nothing in the mythical background described by Bousset" adequately accounts for the NT evidence about the Antichrist and its close cognates,³⁸ but that the link (which he proposed) between Deut 13:2-6; 18:18-22 and the later Jewish False Prophet tradition "accords with everything that is known about the most varied circles of Judaism in the Greco-Roman period".³⁹

Bousset, of course, was aware that the religious concept of a False Prophet played its part in the Antichrist myth and related writings. Indeed, Bousset pondered the meaning of the "double form" of the Antichrist figures: "on the one hand the old and simple Antichrist saga, on the other its political adaption to Nero redivivus".⁴⁰ Bousset noted the considerable conceptual leap involved in moving from one to another,⁴¹ but did not draw the conclusions that he was dealing with two independent strands of tradition which would both eventually contribute to the later Antichrist idea.

Instead, Bousset read the Antichrist idea back into the earlier texts and then was left with this puzzling phenomenon of a dipartite Antichrist figure, appearing now as a deceptive religious figure from within the community, while at another time clearly as an external godless tyrant. It seems better -- if two recensions of the Antichrist myth tradition have to be postulated (in addition to such other traditions as Satan, Beliar, etc) -- to recognise the existence of separate but converging traditions. That will be the approach adopted in this study.

Bousset's work raises a major methodological question, to which a different answer is proposed by this study than that which he gave. It is clear that explicit reference to the Antichrist tradition only occurs in passages which employ the specific term. However, various elements familiar from their use in the Antichrist myth can be readily observed in a wider body of literature, including many earlier texts.

38 Prophet-King, 50.

39 Prophet-King, 50.

40 W. Bousset, *Der Antichrist*, 52 [ET from *Antichrist Legend*, 84].

41 *Der Antichrist*, 93.

A methodological issue of considerable magnitude, then, concerns the question as to whether such earlier texts may be understood as early examples of the Antichrist myth which happen not to use the word, or which antedate the development of the precise term, but still represent the Antichrist myth? Bousset clearly opted for a positive answer to such questions.⁴²

I do not do so.

I will undertake my study on the contrary assumption. The presence of such elements in literature which is earlier than the explicit Antichrist writings, which does not use the actual word, and in cases when the presence of those elements can be adequately accounted for without recourse to an early stage of the Antichrist myth, will not be taken as evidence for the Antichrist myth being present.

This study, then, will consider a wider collection of early Jewish and Christian literature than Bousset did, and will work from a different assumption as to how that data is to be evaluated. The result will be a reconstruction of the origins and earliest development of the Antichrist myth which differs significantly from that proposed by Bousset. Despite that difference, the breadth of Bousset's scholarship and the profound influence of his classic study are readily acknowledged.

1.2.3 M. Friedländer

Very few descriptions of the Antichrist myth mention the work of Moriz Friedländer, a contemporary of Bousset who made a "second and widely different attempt to supply the Antichrist concept with an extra-biblical origin".⁴³ As a Jewish scholar, Friedländer was much more familiar with the Jewish material than Bousset, and this enabled him to gather a great deal of valuable evidence from the OT, Midrash and Talmud for Jewish ideas related to the Antichrist myth. He presented his views on the origins of the Antichrist idea in 1901,⁴⁴ making considerable use of the Beliar traditions.

42 Cf. W. Bousset, *Der Antichrist*, 76. For contrary views on this issue see F.F. Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 179, and A. Yarbro Collins, *Combat Myth*, 169f.

43 G. Vos, "Man of Sin", 103.

44 M. Friedländer, *Der Antichrist*.

While Friedländer's work deserved greater recognition as at least a warning shot across the bows of the "good ship Bousset", and still has value as a collection of relevant Jewish material, his impact on scholarly opinion was reduced by his association of his research on the Antichrist myth with his views on the "Minim" as a Jewish Gnostic sect.⁴⁵ His lasting achievement was to demonstrate that there were Jewish traditions capable of explaining much of the subsequent history of the Antichrist myth without the need of recourse to literary evidence, and hypothetical oral traditions, at a distance of some centuries from the NT period. He has, however, been largely ignored.

1.2.4 R.H. Charles

The name of Robert Henry Charles looms large over the history of most aspects of research into hellenistic Jewish literature around the turn of the century. He also played an important role in the history of recent research into the Antichrist myth. Charles basically accepted the general direction of Bousset's research, adding his own prestige to that of Bousset's own scholarship and, particularly by means of his own commentary on the book of Revelation, helping to disseminate Bousset's views among a wider circle of scholars than might otherwise have adopted them. Charles has been described as the "only scholar since Bousset who has significantly furthered the discussion of the Antichrist tradition".⁴⁶

Charles welcomed the advances made by Bousset's study and responded to them with extended notes in his studies on the Ascensions and Revelation.⁴⁷ He believed that Bousset's initial study had not taken full account of the part played by the Beliar and Nero traditions, and set himself the task of trying to identify the separate origins and the fusing of the Antichrist, Beliar and Nero myths.⁴⁸ Although Charles spoke of three independent traditions, in many respects his basic theory revolved around the Beliar myth. He argued that

45 Even in *Der Antichrist*, Friedländer spent more time discussing the "Minim" than the Antichrist myth! For an introduction to the points at issue in that discussion, see R.M. Grant, "Social Setting"; R.T. Herford, "Minim"; J. Jocz, *Jewish People*; R. Kimelman, "'Birkat Ha-Minim'"; Schürer-Vermes, *History*, II,462f.

46 A. Yarbro Collins, *Combat Myth*, 166.

47 R.H. Charles, *Ascension of Isaiah*, li-lxxiii; and *Revelation* II,76-87.

48 *Revelation*, II,76.

there were separate origins for the three strands of tradition: the figure of Beliar developing into a satanic personality in the second century BCE; the Antichrist figure developing (in triple form with individual; collective religious; and collective secular versions) in the period 167 BCE to 100 CE; and the Nero myth developing after the death of Nero in 68 CE. Charles then saw the Beliar and individual Antichrist traditions being "fused" prior to 50 CE, while the fusion of the collective forms of the Antichrist myth with the Nero myth was dated "not before Domitian". Charles argued that the fusion of all three strands in a "Beliar-Nero-Antichrist" occurred after 88 CE.

This was something of an improvement on Bousset's position, but it still shared some of the weaknesses of Bousset's work. As with any attempt to develop an overall synthesis from the complex data of Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature, Charles' work tended to simplify the variegated apocalyptic traditions and force some of the evidence into theoretical frameworks for which they were ill-suited. As will be seen, the diverse forms of the eschatological opponents in the literature simply do not lend themselves to such a neat scheme. As with Bousset, Charles' dependence on the idea of a secret tradition is a real weakness. Ernst notes that the majority of recent investigators would dispute such a methodology.⁴⁹ Yarbrow Collins included Charles in her strictures of Bousset cited earlier, since he shared the same terminological confusion and made too much of his strict distinction among the three strands.⁵⁰

Nonetheless, Charles did bring about an important advance over Bousset's work -- especially by closer attention to Jewish and Christian pseudepigrapha in the period 200 BCE to 100 CE. He was able to highlight the independent existence within Jewish and Christian circles of traditions about Satan/Beliar, an individual Endtyrant, collective opposing powers and Nero *redivivus*. He achieved this without recourse to distant literary evidence as Bousset had done. Charles correctly observed that THEz marks a fusion of older ideas into a mythic pattern which might properly be called an Antichrist myth (cf. §13.2), and he noted the influence of the Nero myth in Revelation and SibOr. It is unfortunate that Charles did not draw the conclusion that these independent traditions were just that: independent ways in which Jews and Christians conceptualised their experiences and their aspirations.

49 J. Ernst, *Gegenspieler*, 292.

50 A. Yarbrow Collins, *Combat Myth*, 166.

In trying to build on the foundations laid by Bousset, Charles stayed too close to the architect's floor plan and did not move on to observe the alternative models available. However, he did contribute to the establishment of what might be called the "Bousset-Charles' consensus" in modern scholarship concerning the origins and development of the Antichrist myth.

1.2.5 The Bousset-Charles' Consensus

In the intervening years between the work of Bousset and Charles on the one hand, and the present study, there has been a relatively stable consensus. While there has been the occasional academic pebble dropped into the pond by studies such as that of W.A. Meeks, its ripples have rarely been noticed by the crowd enjoying the still beauty of the pond. The consensus position, which accepted the broad lines of Bousset's hypothesis as modified by Charles, was reflected in the commentaries and other studies published subsequently. Amongst the older commentaries might be mentioned Swete (1907²), Milligan (1908), Wohlenberg (1909), Brooke (1912), Dibelius (1925) and Lohmeyer (1953); while the newer commentaries include those by Rigaux (1956), Caird (1966), Schnackenburg (1970), Kraft (1974), Beasley-Murray (1978), Bruce (1982) and Brown (1982).

Similarly, the articles in dictionaries, encyclopaedias and other works have reflected this general consensus. Works by James, Jeremias, Lohmeyer, Peuckert, Priester, Rigaux and Rowley from before the second world war, and by Böcher, van Ess, Hartmann, Jenscke, McGinn, Rist, Russell, Schlier, Schürer-Vermes, Schütz and Stone since the war, reveal little significant change over several decades. As the most recent general reference work, it is interesting to note that Schürer-Vermes still follows Bousset's interpretation of SibOr III.63, and accepts the idea of a "Jewish expectation of the emergence of an Antichrist figure" citing Bousset's *Der Antichrist* as the classic authority.⁵¹

To the extent that there has been any movement in scholars' opinions on the origins and development of the Antichrist myth, this has not been due to

51 Schürer-Vermes, *History*, III.1,640f.

any radical questioning of Bousset and Charles so much as to a gradual recognition that some of the points made by W.A. Meeks and others have to be incorporated into the consensus. This is reflected in the way in which more recent commentators such as Bruce and Brown acknowledge Bousset's work but also give weight to the False Prophet tradition.⁵²

This increasing interest in the Jewish traditions which may have contributed to the Christian idea of an Antichrist has doubtless been due in part to the remarkable discoveries of new texts. The Dead Sea Scroll phenomenon has been the most dramatic example and probably, for this topic, the most relevant of these discoveries. As will be seen at §7.2, the Qumran texts have not provided any dramatic new evidence for a "Jewish Antichrist myth", but they have supplied invaluable information about hellenistic Jewish thought on related topics.

At first sight, the numerous references to Belial at Qumran might be thought to support Bousset's view that there was a Jewish "Belial Apocalypse" but in fact they can quickly be recognised as variant forms of the Satan myth (cf. §7.2.2). Several passages in the Qumran literature have attracted the attention of people interested in the origins of the Antichrist myth (cf. §9.4.3). Even if these passages are understood as referring to eschatological opponents of God (and that is not clear), they cannot really be labelled "Antichrist passages". Those who hastened to attach the Antichrist label were operating from within the ruling consensus, and attempting to fit the new data of the Qumran texts into the existing scholarly framework. When examined in their own light, free of anachronistic paradigms, these passages fall into their proper place among the varied ways in which hellenistic Jews thought of evil.

1.2.6 W.A. Meeks

Wayne Meeks' work on the eschatological Prophet and False Prophet traditions has already been mentioned.⁵³ It seems to have been an important study into Jewish eschatological traditions whose impact on this area has been gradual and effective. It marks something of a move away from the direction set so

⁵² Although neither F.F. Bruce nor R.E. Brown cite Meeks' work they both mention the importance of the False Prophet tradition. Cf. F.F. Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 183f and R.E. Brown, *Epistles*, 333ff.

⁵³ W.A. Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 47-55.

powerfully by Bousset and Charles, in that it looks primarily to influences within the Jewish tradition, rather than to more general mythic traditions, to account for the NT passages which refer to an eschatological opponent.

In pursuing his study of the eschatological Prophet, Meeks noted the existence of traditions concerned with a False Prophet. This second figure had been the topic of considerable concern, speculation and even legislation in Jewish circles late in the first century CE.⁵⁴ The NT passages which indicate some association with this Jewish tradition about a False Prophet happen to be the same passages as are most commonly mentioned in connection with the Antichrist tradition: Matt 24:11 and parallels; Rev 13:11-18; 19:20-20:10; 2 Thessalonians 2; and the Johannine epistles.

Meeks noted the common elements which were consistent across these passages, especially the idea of a religious leader, clearly designated as a "False Prophet"; who "deceives" and "leads astray the elect" by means of "signs and wonders"; and also their thoroughly Jewish origins.⁵⁵ While Meeks' work seems to have passed largely unnoticed, the conclusions it proposed have made a significant impact on studies into the history of the Antichrist myth.

1.2.7 J. Ernst

In the opening paragraph of his monograph, Joseph Ernst notes that his research was originally planned as a study of the history of the figure of the Antichrist, but that the task grew too large!⁵⁶ Later his work was therefore narrowed to focus on the eschatological opponent figures in the writings of the NT, with some brief discussion of the sources of those NT ideas. His work is the most complete study of recent years. Although it was published over twenty years ago it provides a useful study of the NT evidence, a succinct discussion of the major sources, and a critical review of the Bousset and Charles *Antichristsynthesen* — as well as his own summary of the question.

Ernst's study was published in the same year as that by Meeks, so they were presumably based on independent research. Given their differing focus and their simultaneous publication, it is interesting to note that they each

 54 Prophet-King, 47.

55 Prophet-King, 48f.

56 J. Ernst, *Gegenspieler*, x.

move towards a position which recognises the value of the Jewish and Christian literature examined in the present study. They serve as independent witnesses to a silent move away from the Bousset-Charles' consensus towards a stance which looks primarily to Jewish sources. Such a move was both aided and demanded by the new literary evidence available since Bousset and Charles, especially the insights into post-biblical Judaism afforded by the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Ernst summarises the state of the question, in the mid 1960s, as follows.⁵⁷ The NT evidence itself is recognised as diverse and variegated. There was no single NT concept of an eschatological opponent, according to Ernst, but rather several figures of which the Antichrist was simply one. Each of these NT figures had a diverse "family tree", and at times their foliage overlaps causing some confusion to would-be naturalists.

Ernst identified several groupings of sources, with varying degrees of proximity to the NT data. At farthest distance there were the remotely related ideas of opposing powers in the ancient cosmological and eschatological myths, as well as OT ideas of powers opposed to Yahweh. More closely related were OT and hellenistic Jewish ideas concerning the Satan-Devil-Beliar figure. In the category of "very direct" sources Ernst placed Daniel (for both the "godless tyrant" idea and the four kingdom schema), the Jewish False Prophet tradition, and ideas of Endtyrants in the Jewish pseudepigrapha.

Within the NT Ernst saw a variety of forms developing in response to these differing sources and specific circumstances. For instance, in 2 Thessalonians Ernst noted a combination of the False Prophet idea and that of the Endtyrant while in Revelation he observed merely a juxtapositioning of several different traditional figures (as well as the Nero figure) without any attempt at uniformity. He recognised a role for the traditional Satan figure in most of these passages, the exception being the synoptic gospels. He believed that the Nero myth came to play an important part, and that a process of schematising and elaboration commenced with the early Fathers.

Ernst's basic approach, then, was to minimise the influence of ancient mythic traditions and to credit the second century writers with a more important role in shaping the Antichrist tradition than Bousset had allowed. He marks, when read together with Meeks, a subtle but distinct change in direction from the consensus of the previous fifty or so years.

⁵⁷ J. Ernst, *Gegenspieler*, 293-98.

1.2.8 A. Yarbro Collins

Adela Yarbro Collins has not written a monograph or other study directly on the topic of the Antichrist, but her doctoral dissertation on the combat myth pattern in Revelation has profound implications for this topic.⁵⁸ Her comments on matters of terminology and methodology in the work of Bousset and Charles have already been noted, and her related recommendation that the term, "Antichrist", should be abandoned unless the context clearly indicates an opponent/pretender of a Messiah figure is one that sits very happily with the present study.⁵⁹ However, her major importance for research into the origins of the Antichrist myth lies in her work on the combat myth pattern.

Yarbro Collins has clarified the form of the combat myth pattern, demonstrated its presence in the Book of Revelation, and established that several hellenistic versions of the combat myth were in current use in NT times in the hellenised Mediterranean world.⁶⁰ Her work on Revelation is especially significant for understanding the relevant passages in that work, but it has ramifications for the wider question. It is no longer necessary to adopt all the proposals of Gunkel and Bousset concerning the transmission of mythic elements over several centuries. Mythic elements in passages related to the Antichrist myth can be studied in the context of living mythic traditions familiar to writer and reader in the NT era.

The significance of Yarbro Collins' work for the origin of the Antichrist has not yet filtered through into the standard reference works, but doubtless will come to be appreciated as time progresses. The pursuit of the present study, especially in connection with the interpretation of Revelation, has certainly been helped by insights derived from her work.

1.2.9 K. Grayston

In a provocative brief note tucked away in his commentary on the Johannine epistles, Kenneth Grayston has proffered some suggestions about the origin of

58 A. Yarbro Collins, *Combat Myth*.

59 *Combat Myth*, 166f.

60 Cf. the discussion at §11.3.3.

the Antichrist myth which deserve our consideration.⁶¹ Grayston recognises that "it is customary to say that the Johannine antichrist is simply one variant of a long-established, wide-spread expectation",⁶² but he also notes that prior to Irenaeus there is no evidence that anyone tried to use the NT data to present a comprehensive account of this supposedly wide-spread and ancient idea. Grayston suggests that the need to explain the "delay" in the parousia and to fill in the intermediate time with some worthwhile theological justification, may account for Irenaeus' interest in this doctrine.

At an earlier time, it was expectation of an imminent parousia that had been the organising principle of Christian apocalyptic. But when Christ's return was delayed, interest moved to the Antichrist and things associated with him.⁶³

While conceding that the ancient dragon myth has left traces in the OT and the Jewish pseudepigrapha (as well as the NT), and that there had been Jewish traditions about opponents of God (in both the sense of external threats to the people of God as well as religious conflict within the community), Grayston argues that speculation about an opponent of the Messiah "was a purely Christian development" whose "beginnings" are found in such passages as Mark 13, 2 Thessalonians 2 and Revelation 13 and 17.⁶⁴

If Grayston is right in these suggestions (and they do seem to have some cogency), then much of the past work has proceeded on incorrect assumptions. Instead of seeing the NT evidence as relatively late in the process of the Antichrist myth being formed, he suggests that the NT material represents an early stage of the myth's emergence and that its cultivation was due to specific needs of the church. Since the present study was essentially completed before Grayston's work was read, it is interesting to note how well his suggestions fit with the conclusions reached quite independently here.

61 K. Grayston, *Epistles*, 76-82.

62 *Epistles*, 79f.

63 *Epistles*, 79f.

64 *Epistles*, 80f.

1.2.10 W.C. Weinrich

One final contemporary study should be mentioned before this review of recent research is concluded. William Weinrich's article in 1985 is the most recent significant work on the topic and, once again, has adopted an approach which is consistent with much of the present study.⁶⁵ While Weinrich has not published any other work on this topic, his article reflects the kind of movement within the general consensus which has been described over the last few pages.

Weinrich is one of the few writers to recognise that the prefix in "Antichrist" does not necessarily, or even primarily, imply an opponent of the Messiah. He notes, instead, that the etymology of the word as well as its use, would suggest a figure who pretends to be the Messiah and imitates the real Messiah in order to trick people into according himself messianic status.⁶⁶ Weinrich states that he is unable to find any evidence for such a belief outside Christian works.

Weinrich notes the usual sources proposed for the Antichrist idea, but pronounces himself dissatisfied with them all. He opts for an explanation that gives more weight to Jewish tradition, stating that despite Gunkel, Bousset and Charles "it seems to me more plausible to see Antichrist, like many other elements of Old Testament eschatology [sic], as given in the nature of Israel as the chosen people of God."⁶⁷ While, once again, there is no indication that Weinrich has read Meeks, he posits the Jewish idea of the False Prophet, often working signs and wonders as a "kind of false counterpoint to the true prophet", as at least one of the sources for the Antichrist idea.⁶⁸

Weinrich's article includes some further points which have been developed independently in the course of this study. For instance, he notes that both the beasts in Revelation 13 have elements which parody Jesus as the Messiah, and thus both beasts have some claim to be considered as Antichrist figures.⁶⁹ He also observes that the early church used the Antichrist myth primarily as a weapon against heretics and schismatics, rather than as a tool against the external threat of empire or Judaism.⁷⁰ In expressing these views as he does,

65 W.C. Weinrich, "Antichrist", 135-47.

66 "Antichrist", 142.

67 "Antichrist", 138f.

68 "Antichrist", 142.

69 "Antichrist", 142.

70 "Antichrist", 136f.

Weinrich illustrates further the steady drift in current studies away from the Bousset-Charles' consensus towards a view which gives more attention to the importance of Jewish apocalyptic traditions and the interpretation of the OT scriptures by hellenistic Jews and Christians.

In summing up this brief survey of recent research into the origins and development of the Antichrist myth, a number of points might be made. There has been a general acceptance of the points made by Gunkel, Bousset and Charles concerning the presence of mythic elements in Antichrist literature, even though there is less emphasis more recently on the transmission of such material over lengthy periods. Yarbrow Collins' work, in particular, has helped to narrow the gap between the relevant texts and the traditional mythic materials.

There is a greater interest in seeking explanations for the ideas within Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature in the biblical and extra-biblical traditions of hellenistic Judaism and the experiences of the early church. This has been particularly aided by the insights into Jewish sectarian life which have been made possible through the Dead Sea Scrolls. One of the major Jewish traditions addressed in such enquiries is that of the False Prophet, and there may be profitable work awaiting attention in the study of Jewish sources from 200 BCE to 200 CE.

Possibly related to this interest in the Jewish origins of the Antichrist myth, is the continued survival of the idea that there was a "Jewish idea" of an Antichrist even if the word was a later development. This may simply be the lingering ghost of Bousset's dead hypothesis of a Jewish Antichrist legend, but it is so firmly entrenched in the secondary reference literature that it will take some time yet to exorcise.

There is a growing recognition that internal Christian priorities had a great deal to do with the development of the Antichrist myth. A study of the literary evidence from a sociological perspective is probably now overdue, and might yield some interesting insights into the origins and development of the myth. Scholars such as Grayston have made some initial suggestions, as have A. Yarbrow Collins and E. Schüssler Fiorenza in some of their work on Revelation.

Finally, there seems to be a new consensus emerging in the more recent studies. This consensus concerns the appropriate terminology. It appears to be quite generally recognised that "Antichrist" is too specific a term for some of the forms in which the Jewish and Christian communities expressed their ideas about human and non-human opponents of God. While no convenient alternative has yet been found, the more recent works try to find a general expression

such as "eschatological adversary". Even that expression is not quite suitable, since not all of these evil eschatological figures were conceived as "adversary" or "opponent" figures. In the present study, different terms will be used, depending on the specific context. At times "Endtyrant" will be an adequate expression, but in some contexts alternatives will be required. Some lack of neatness in the terminology seems preferable to a system that obscures some of the detail in the data.

1.3 THE PRESENT STUDY

Anyone setting about the task of tracing the origins and development of the Antichrist myth soon becomes aware of the magnitude of the task. Even Wilhelm Bousset, with his vast scholarly powers, confessed to this problem.

I was fain to set limit to my work in order not to breakdown altogether in the attempt to elucidate the apocalyptic text.⁷¹

Since Bousset's time the problem has only worsened. Both the primary sources and the secondary literature have increased greatly. This makes the fresh study of the question necessary and interesting, but adds to its complexity. The large number of doctoral dissertations consulted in the course of this research testifies to the quantity and quality of serious research into early Jewish and Christian traditions of relevance to the origins of the Antichrist myth. It is to be expected that our understanding of this period and its literature will continue to improve.

While it is clearly impossible to provide a completely satisfying account of the origins and development of the Antichrist myth at the present time, some considerable progress can be made in that direction. This study will endeavour to draw on the steadily growing knowledge of early Jewish and Christian literature to restate what can be said about the origins and development of the Antichrist myth. It is possible to be so impressed by the multitude and

71 W. Bousset, *Der Antichrist*, 2 [ET from *Antichrist Legend*, 4]. Cf. the sentiments of J. Ernst [*Gegenspieler*, x] cited earlier.

magnitude of the trees that one fails to notice the wonderful forest. This study attempts to step back a pace or two so that the forest can be surveyed with a fresh appreciation of its significance thanks to new insights about the individual trees within it.⁷²

The present study proceeds along different lines than Bousset's study and ultimately draws quite different conclusions. Bousset relied mainly on sources from the fourth century CE and later, extrapolating from them a hypothetical earlier "Antichrist legend" which he attempted to date back into the second century BCE. This study will proceed from a different starting point. The writings of the third century CE which clearly speak of the Antichrist myth are taken, as a whole, to serve as the basis for a paradigm of the Antichrist myth in its earliest explicit forms. This paradigm then serves as a model while earlier Jewish and Christian writings are studied to see what connection, if any, there may have been between these older texts usually described as Antichrist passages and the third century form of the myth.

To the extent that I succeed in providing adequate explanations of those earlier texts and of the development of the third century Antichrist literature, without recourse to the hypothesis of an esoteric oral tradition about an Antichrist figure, Bousset's massive enterprise will be judged to have failed. If, as I believe, the Antichrist myth developed as a result of the convergence of older traditions under the influence of specific historical and sociological circumstances within the early Christian church, then Bousset's arguments for a Jewish form of the Antichrist myth will be eliminated.

Such a conclusion would not represent the radical departure that it may at first seem to be. It is more the inevitable result of the gradual change in emphasis over the past few decades as Jewish and Christian pseudepigrapha have come to be better understood. Given the resources and the sources now available, the kind of theory proposed by Bousset is untenable. The previous consensus has been gradually breaking up for some years. This study may help to hasten that process to some extent.

72 J.H. Charlesworth [NTAP, 40] makes a plea for just such synthetic studies in the field of the apocalyptic literature and the pseudepigrapha generally. He notes that "the study of apocalyptic thought has tended to be insular, myopic and narrow" and states "There is a great need to complete the excellent analytical studies with a synthesis."

The procedure to be followed in this study is fairly straightforward. In the first part of the discussion, the writings of the third century which deal with the Antichrist myth are examined so that an idea may be gained as to the forms taken by the myth at that time. The following part of the study examines "hellenistic Jewish literature" between ca 200 BCE and 50 CE;⁷³ noting many elements that were also to be seen in the later Antichrist literature, but observing that they function in other contexts in this literature, and need not imply any pre-Christian Antichrist tradition. In the final section Jewish and Christian literature between ca 50 CE and 175 CE is examined. There it is observed that various strands of traditions developed. Some of the older traditions continued independently of the Antichrist myth, while others were drawn into the service of that myth -- often being transformed in the process. Some conclusions which might be drawn from the data examined in this study are presented at §14.

I am conscious of following minority viewpoints in several instances. The reasons are set out in each case at the relevant point of the study, but it might be worth noting them here. I have opted to use T12P as evidence for a Christian adaption of older Jewish traditions in the second century CE rather than as evidence for a rather earlier stage of the Jewish traditions which are still preserved within that collection (cf. §12.8). I have opted for an early date for Revelation, placing its composition in 68/69 CE rather than in the mid-90s (cf. §11.3.2); and I have continued to uphold the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians as a Pauline epistle dated ca 52 CE, rather than seeing it as deutero-pauline (cf. §11.2.1).

In each case, I believe there are valid reasons for the choices made. However, even if one or all of these decisions were disallowed, the essential thrust of my argument would remain intact. For instance, even if 2 Thessalonians is not Pauline, 2 Thessalonians 2 must still be seen as preserving a very early Christian eschatological tract exhibiting close affinities with the traditions in the synoptic gospels.

73 "Hellenistic Judaism" is used throughout this study as a chronological label only, and does not imply any conclusions about the character of Jewish beliefs and practices. It is a convenient way to label Jewish works from the hellenistic era, a period understood here to include the early Roman empire.

1. THE ANTICHRIST MYTH IN THE THIRD CENTURY CE

2. INTRODUCTION: THE WITNESSES AND THE PERIOD

The first literature concerning the Antichrist myth which will be examined in this study comes from the period ca 180-300 CE which, for convenience, may be referred to as "the third century" although it overlaps slightly into the second and fourth centuries of the Common Era. The reason for beginning at this somewhat late period is the nature of the literary evidence for the Antichrist myth. Prior to Irenaeus, the evidence for the Antichrist myth is problematical, but from ca 180 onwards there is no doubt that such a figure is being written about. The literature from Irenaeus to Victorinus is thus a useful benchmark to establish before setting about the task of identifying the origins of the Antichrist myth and reconstructing its development.

As mentioned earlier, the earliest explicit references to an Antichrist figure occur in the Johannine epistles (1 John 2:18ff; 4:1ff; 2 John 7). These passages will be closely examined at §13.3. On the basis of these Johannine passages it appears reasonable to expect that there was a Christian tradition about an Antichrist figure from the NT period onwards, if not from even earlier times. The present study is aimed in part at the clarification of that possibility. However, since the actual word does not appear in any literature prior to 1 and 2 John -- nor re-appear for almost another hundred years until the writings of Irenaeus¹ -- the present study must commence with Irenaeus and the writers which followed him to obtain a definite picture of the Antichrist tradition in the earliest extant literature. With that more definitive portrayal of the Antichrist figure clarified, earlier writings can be considered to determine their relevance for the origins and early development of the myth.

1 The one exception to this statement is a citation of 2 John 7 by Polycarp in Phil. 7:1 (cf. §13.5). However, Polycarp did little more than repeat the contents of the Johannine verse.

It is not likely that Irenaeus and the writers of the third century were introducing novelties. On the contrary, they assumed that their readers had at least heard of the Antichrist figure, and they attempted to elucidate an inherently difficult subject. For example, Origen mentioned the objections of Celsus to the "doctrine about the figure called Antichrist",² a reference which certainly implies a much older and widely-held idea. The idea was so well established as part of the Christian tradition that even an outsider like Celsus knew of it. It may be assumed that Irenaeus and the other writers to be examined in this Section are simply the earliest explicit witnesses to this Christian doctrine, not that they invented the myth.

2.1 THE WITNESSES

In the period to be examined first there are several important witnesses to the Antichrist myth. The most significant are Irenaeus, Hippolytus and Origen. These three prolific writers included in their works accounts of the Antichrist myth, revealing extensive agreement despite their separation by time and geography. The Apocalypse of Elijah also serves as an important witness to the forms in which the Antichrist myth was circulating in the third century. In addition to these major witnesses, there is the evidence derived from a wider group of contemporary writings which were not directly concerned with the Antichrist myth but had occasion to refer to it in passing, or to use it in the

2 Origen wrote:

Ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ τὰ περὶ τοῦ
καλουμένου ἀντιχρίστου
παράρριπτει ὁ Κέλσος, οὔτε
τὰ ἐν τῷ Δαυιδ οὔτε τὰ
παρὰ τῷ Παύλῳ ἀναγνους
περὶ αὐτοῦ εἰρημένα οὔτε
τὰ ἐν τοῖς εὐαγγελίοις ὑπὸ
τοῦ σωτῆρος προφητευθέντα
περὶ τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ,
ὀλίγα καὶ περὶ τούτου
λεκτέον.

[Cels. VI.45 (GCS, II,115f)]

But, since Celsus also rejects the belief in the figure known as the Antichrist, having read neither what is said of him in Daniel nor by Paul, nor what has been prophesied by the Saviour in the gospels concerning his coming, we must say a few things about this matter also.

service of other purposes. These lesser witnesses include Tertullian, Cyprian, the record of the seventh Council of Carthage in 258 CE, the Pseudo-Clementine writings, the Apocalypse of John, the poems of Commodian and the Commentary on Revelation by Victorinus of Pettau.

2.1.1 Irenaeus

Irenaeus [ca 130-200 CE] is the earliest of the writers to be studied in this section.³ He was the most important theologian of the second century and exercised a profound influence on the Church of his day and in succeeding years. Despite that, very little is known of his life, and only two of his extensive writings have survived -- and then only in Latin translations. Irenaeus was born and educated in the East, probably at Smyrna since he was well acquainted with Polycarp.⁴ His ministry took Irenaeus to Gaul where he was consecrated bishop of Lyons ca 178. His major work was an anti-heretical

3 LITERATURE: B. Altaner, *Patrology*, 150-158; H. von Campenhausen, *Greek Fathers*, 16-24; W. Eltester, "Irenäus", *RGG*³ III,891f; W.H.C. Frend, *Rise* 244-50; G. Krüger, *History*; J. Lawson, *Biblical Theology*, 3-20; ODCC, 713f; J. Quasten, *Patrology*, I,287-313; A. Rousseau, et al (eds), *Irénée de Lyon* (SC, 152-153); G. Wingren, *Man and the Incarnation*.

4 Irenaeus described his acquaintance with Polycarp in a letter to a Roman presbyter, Florinus, which is cited in Eusebius:

μᾶλλον γὰρ τὰ τότε
 διαμνημονεύω τῶν ἔναγχος
 γινομένων (αἱ γὰρ ἐκ
 παίδων μαθήσεις συναύξ-
 ουσαι τῇ ψυχῇ, ἐνοῦνται
 αὐτῇ), ὥστε με δύνασθαι
 εἰπεῖν καὶ τὸν τόπον ἐν ᾧ
 καθεζόμενος διελέγετο ὁ
 μακάριος Πολύκαρπος, καὶ
 τὰς προόδους αὐτοῦ καὶ
 τὰς εἰσόδους καὶ τὸν
 χαρακτήρα τοῦ βίου καὶ τὴν
 τοῦ σώματος ἰδέαν καὶ τὰς
 διαλέξεις ἃς ἐποιεῖτο πρὸς
 τὸ πλῆθος, καὶ τὴν μετὰ
 Ἰωάννου συναναστροφὴν ὡς
 ἀπήγγελλεν καὶ τὴν μετὰ
 τῶν λοιπῶν τῶν ἑορακῶτων
 τὸν κύριον.

For I remember the events of that time better than recent events (for what we learn as children matures with the mind and is bonded to it), so that I can speak both of the very place where the blessed Polycarp sat discoursing, and his comings and goings, the character of his life, his physical appearance, the discourses he made to the people, and how he told of his contact with John and the others who had seen the Lord.

[h.e. V.20.5-7 (LCL, II,496)]

treatise, "The Detection and Overthrow of the Pretended but False Gnosis", traditionally cited as *Adversus Haereses*. This work has survived only in Latin translation with a few Greek fragments.⁵ The fifth book of the treatise dealt with eschatology, and included a section on the Antichrist myth.

2.1.2 Quintus Septimus Florens Tertullianus

Tertullian [ca 155-225 CE] was a brilliant rhetorician, possessing an able mind, and he was skilled in Roman law. He was converted to the Christian faith ca 193.⁶ He was a passionate and prolific writer, a powerful controversialist and an apologist for the Christian religion. Some of his writings betray his ascetical tendencies, an attitude common at that time in the church (cf. Origen below). While Tertullian did not suffer martyrdom himself, he was directly engaged in the struggle between church and empire during his lifetime. As one of the first theologians to write in Latin, and one who did it so well, Tertullian left a permanent mark on theology in the West. His impact would doubtless have been even greater had he not joined the Montanist sect ca 207. While none of his extant works were directly concerned with the Antichrist myth, his writings contain numerous references to the myth.

2.1.3 Hippolytus Romanus

Hippolytus [ca 170-235 CE] was a controversial figure from Rome.⁷ He was certainly a presbyter, and was described as such in the West -- although not without some uncertainty concerning the congregation in his charge.⁸ In the

5 W.W. Harvey's edition, with an English translation, has been a standard edition for many years. The SC edition by A. Rousseau, L. Doutrelau and C. Mercier provides a more recent edition of the Latin text, along with a French translation. Another ET is available in ANF I,315-578.

6 LITERATURE: Eusebius, h.e., II.2 and II.4; B. Altaner, *Patrology*, 166-82; H. von Campenhausen, *Latin Fathers*, 4-35; W.H.C. Frend, *Rise*, 348-51; H. Karpp, "Tertullian" RGG³ VI,700f; G. Krüger, *History*, 254-80; NIDCC, 960f; ODCC, 1352f; J. Quasten, *Patrology*, II,246-51.

7 LITERATURE: Eusebius, h.e., VI.22; B. Altaner, *Patrology*, 183-90; J.J.I. von Döllinger, *Hippolytus and Callistus*; W.H.C. Frend, *Rise*, 340-46; G. Kretschmar, "Hippolyt" RGG³ III,362; G. Krüger, *History*, 221-44; NIDCC, 472; ODCC, 652f; J. Quasten, *Patrology*, II,163-65.

8 Cf. Eusebius, h.e., VI.20.2.

East, the tradition that he was a bishop survived, being included in the ascriptions of his works. The probable historical situation is that Hippolytus headed a group within the Roman church which was disenchanted with the lax policies of Callistus (died ca 222) and his successors. Hippolytus was elected as a rival bishop, but the expression "anti-pope" is probably a little anachronistic in this regard. His use of Greek, and his schismatic tendencies, may be responsible for his memory fading so rapidly in the West.

He would seem to have been a significant person within the Christian community at Rome, representing a more rigorous line with regard to discipline. He was foremost in the attack on the heretical views of Sabellius concerning the Trinity, and produced a vast literary output on mainly practical topics such as liturgy, church order, anti-heretical themes and -- of special interest to this study -- the only patristic book written directly on the subject of the Antichrist figure, his "Treatise on Christ and Antichrist" [*De Antichristo*].

Hippolytus also wrote several biblical commentaries, including a study on the book of Daniel.⁹ This work -- one of the earliest surviving examples of a biblical commentary by a Christian author -- seems to have been written some time after his treatise on the Antichrist. In his commentary, Hippolytus refers back to his earlier and more extensive discussion rather than repeat his views in full.¹⁰ The text of his commentary is only fully extant in an Old Slavonic version, but numerous Greek fragments provide the basis for a restored text edited by M. Lefevre.¹¹

His commentary on Daniel does not add anything to our knowledge of the Antichrist myth as it was known to and used by Hippolytus.¹² However, the commentary does constitute a significant enlargement of our witnesses to Hippolytus' understanding and use of the Antichrist myth, his heavy use of Daniel as a source of biblical support for his teaching, and his allegorical and typological exegetical processes and it will therefore be referred to, although not often cited, in the ensuing discussion.

9 Cf. J. Quasten, *Patrology* II, 171-74 for a brief introduction.

10 Cf. *comm. Dan.* IV, 8.1; 13.1; 24.7

11 G. Bardy & M. Lefevre (eds), *Hippolyte. Commentaire sur Daniel*. The text tradition is outlined on pages 64-66.

12 Much of the interest in the commentary is directed towards its value as a surviving example of early Christian use of the OT, or its reference to December 25 as the birthdate of Jesus (IV, 23).

As was mentioned earlier, it has been suggested that Hippolytus was a disciple of Irenaeus. The Byzantine patriarch, Photius (ca 810-895), refers to a "small book" against heresies written by Hippolytus in which he claimed to have summarised lectures given by Irenaeus.¹³ Unfortunately, that work is now lost and it cannot be established that Hippolytus actually was a disciple of Irenaeus. Certainly his views on the Antichrist myth were very similar to those of Irenaeus, and Hippolytus' *haer.* displays many similarities to the work by Irenaeus. Hippolytus was exiled to Sardinia, along with the catholic bishop of Rome, Pontianus (bp 230-235), with whom he was apparently reconciled not long before their deaths.

2.1.4 Origenes Adamantius

Origen [ca 185-253 CE] was born in Alexandria and raised in a Christian family during the persecutions under Septimus Severus.¹³ A person of severe ascetical tendencies and creative theological thought, his life was marked by controversy and hardship.¹⁵ He survived the persecution in 202 but fled Alexandria in 215, eventually settling in Caesarea, where he founded a famous catechetical school¹⁶ He died after having been tortured in the Decian persecution.¹⁷ He was a prolific writer, especially in the area of biblical studies. However his indebtedness to Platonic theology and his speculative theological views resulted in his opinions falling into disrepute, culminating in his rejection as a heretic by a Council at Alexandria in 400.¹⁸ Origen's lengthy defence of Christianity, *Contra Celsum* ["Against Celsus"], against the pagan critic, Celsus (fl. 178) included a defence of the idea of an Antichrist.

13 Cf. ODCC, 652; J. Quasten, *Patrology*, II,164. The text of Photius [Cod. 121] is given in J.P. Migne, PG, ci-civ.

14 LITERATURE: Eusebius, h.e., VI.1-4; B. Altaner, *Patrology*, 223-35; H. von Campenhausen, *Greek Fathers*, 37-56; H. Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought*, 66-94, 148-54; W.H.C. Frend, *Rise*, 373-83; F.H. Kettler, "Origenes" RGG³ IV,1692-1701; G. Krüger, *History*, 173-205; NIDCC, 733f; ODCC, 1008-10; J. Quasten, *Patrology*, II,37-42.

15 Cf. the accounts in Eusebius, h.e. VI.1-3 & 8.

16 h.e., VI.30

17 h.e., VI.39.5

18 ODCC, 1009.

2.1.5 Thascius Caecilius Cyprianus

Cyprian of Carthage [ca 200-258 CE] was a convert to Christian faith.¹⁹ Like Tertullian he had also followed a career in rhetoric before his conversion ca 246. A mere two years later he was elected bishop of Carthage -- only to be caught up soon afterwards in the Decian persecution. Cyprian went into hiding during the persecution and presided over his Church by letter. In the aftermath of the persecution, Cyprian was engaged in controversies over the re-admission of lapsed Christians and over the validity of baptisms performed by heretics or schismatics.

His main opponent in these disputes was Stephen of Rome (bp 254-257). The Seventh Council of Carthage was convened and chaired by Cyprian in 258 to deal with these issues. In the account of the Council's decisions there is much use of the "Antichrist" epithet. Cyprian was beheaded later in 258 in the Valerian persecution.

2.1.6 The Apocalypse of Elijah

This apocalypse was a Christian work, probably composed in Egypt during the second half of the third century.²⁰ While it possibly had a Jewish "Grundschrift" whose own origins went back to the first century CE, its present form, with its dependence on NT books and its clear interest in the figure of the Antichrist, certainly puts it well into the third century. While it has at times been dated to the fourth century or even later, this now seems unlikely as the oldest Coptic MS dates from the fourth century. This work is

19 LITERATURE: B. Altaner, *Patrology*, 193-205; H. von Campenhausen, *Latin Fathers*, 36-60; W.H.C. Frend, *Rise*, 351-66; H. Karpp, "Cyprian" RGG³ II,1892f; G. Krüger, *History*, 280-304; P. Hinchcliff, *Cyprian of Carthage*; ODCC, 376f; J. Quasten, *Patrology*, II,340-43.

20 LITERATURE: R. Bauckham, "The Martyrdom of Enoch and Elijah", 447-58; W. Bousset, *Religion des Judentums*, 46; J.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 95-98; A.-M. Denis, *Introduction*, 163-69; K.H. Kuhn, "Apocalypse of Elijah" AOT, 753-73; A. Pietersma & S.T. Comstock (eds), *Apocalypse of Elijah*; W. Schrage, "Die Elia-Apokalypse" JSRZ V.3,193-288; Schürer-Vermes, *History*, III.1,799-803; M.E. Stone, "Elijah, Apocalypse of" *EncyJud* 6,643; M.E. Stone & J. Strugnell, *Books of Elijah*; O.S. Wintermute, "Apocalypse of Elijah" OTP, I,721-53.

unique amongst those examined in the first part of this study on two counts: it has survived only in Coptic (with a single Greek fragment recently discovered);²¹ and it never uses the word "Antichrist", choosing to designate this figure as "the son of lawlessness". Despite the absence of the actual word, it will be seen that there is no doubt that ApEl is a text from the Antichrist tradition, and that it illuminates otherwise unrecognised aspects of the Antichrist myth in the third century.

2.1.7 Commodianus

Commodian [fl 240 CE] was a Christian Latin poet who lived in the middle of the third century.²² Very little is known about him. Even his date has been challenged. Originally a pagan, and perhaps a Jewish convert before becoming a Christian, Commodian has been characterised as a person of little culture but considerable familiarity with the Scriptures and with some ancient Christian writers.²³ His writings are typical of a hardening attitude towards the empire (which is hardly surprising in view of the spate of persecutions), and they supply valuable evidence for the continued use of the "Nero redivivus" myth at this late period so long after Nero's demise.

2.1.8 Victorinus of Pettau

Victorinus [died ca 304 CE] was a bishop who was martyred during the Diocletian persecutions at the start of the fourth century.²⁴ His commentary on the Apocalypse has survived and it provides valuable insight into the importance of that NT book in any attempt to understand the Antichrist myth in this time. Victorinus' comments on the character and activities of the Antichrist figure, and his attitude towards the empire, reveal the continued development of the myth through to the end of the third century.

21 Photographs and translations of this fragment are included in the edition by A. Pietersma and S.T. Comstock.

22 LITERATURE: B. Altaner, *Patrology*, 485-87; G. Krüger, *History*, 317-20; OCD, 276; ODCC, 319f; J. Quasten, *Patrology*, IV,259-65.

23 J. Quasten, *Patrology*, IV,261.

24 LITERATURE: B. Altaner, *Patrology*, 205; G. Krüger, *History*, 347-49; NIDCC, 1017; ODCC, 1438; J. Quasten, *Patrology*, II,411-13.

2.1.9 The Apocalypse of John

This work, also known as the "Apocalypse of the Holy John the Theologian" and the "First Apocalypse of John", is a document of uncertain date.²⁵ It has been variously dated between the third and the fifth centuries. The work represents some interesting developments within the Antichrist myth, and may at times provide important evidence for the history of the myth. It will be drawn into service occasionally in the ensuing study when it may be used to illustrate a development in the early Antichrist literature. However, its date and provenance remain so obscure that these reservations must be kept in mind.

2.1.10 The Pseudo-Clementine Literature

The original Pseudo-Clementine literature seems to have had its origin in Syria in the first half of the third century, and to have been subjected to various periods of elaboration and interpolation in the ensuing century or so.²⁶ It does, however, have some potential as evidence for the history of the Antichrist myth. Only one passage will be drawn into service in this study (cf. §4.2 below), with its value lying mainly in its testimony to the survival of the False Prophet idea into the third and fourth centuries.

25 LITERATURE: W. Bousset, *Der Antichrist*, 26; J.H. Charlesworth, *NTAP*, 238-40; A. von Harnack, *Geschichte*, I,785; J. Quasten, *Patrology*, I,150; W. Schneemelcher, "Apocalypses of John" *NTA*, II,753; K. von Tischendorf, *Apocalypses*, 70-94.

26 LITERATURE: J.H. Charlesworth, *NTAP*, 188-96; O. Cullmann, "Die neuentdeckten Qumrantexte", 35-51; A. von Harnack, *Geschichte*, II,2,518-40; J. Irscher, "Pseudo-Clementines" *NTA*, II,532-70; F.S. Jones, "Pseudo-Clementines; History of Research"; J. Quasten, *Patrology*, I,59-63; B. Rehm, *Pseudo-Klementinen*; G. Salmon, "Clementine Literature", 576-78.

2.2 THE PERIOD

The period in which these people wrote was a difficult one for the Christian church. Great gains had been made by the Christian religion, but problems still abounded. The church had spread its faith from one end of the empire to the other (and beyond) and was reaching into the highest levels of society (with rumours of Christian sympathisers even in the Imperial family), yet Christianity was still an illegal religion and subject to periodic persecution. There were particularly severe outbursts of oppression under Septimus Severus ca 202; in 215 under Caracalla; in 235-238 under Maximinus Thrax; in 250-251 under Decius; in 257-260 under Valerian; and again in 303-304 under Diocletian. These persecutions and the significant martyrs of relevance to this study are listed in Table T2.

The writers themselves were not exempt from these troubles, as Table 2 demonstrates. Of all the witnesses surveyed in this Section, only Irenaeus and Tertullian died of natural causes -- and even then their lives were not unmarked by persecution. Irenaeus succeeded to the see of Lyons following the martyrdom of the aged Pothinus in 177, apparently only escaping death himself because he had been sent on a mission to Rome just before the persecution broke out. There is a late tradition that Irenaeus was martyred at Lyons during the persecution under Septimus Severus in 202 but this has no support in the writings of Tertullian, Hippolytus or Eusebius and must therefore be discounted. Hippolytus died in exile on Sardinia under Maximinus Thrax in 235. Cyprian was beheaded at Carthage in the Valerian persecution in 248, while Origen had died a few years earlier, his health broken by torture during the Decian persecution.

These persecutions were potentially of considerable significance for the widespread emergence of literature on the Antichrist figure in the third century. It was in this period that the Antichrist myth clearly became a major theme of Christian literature. Furthermore, the forms which the Antichrist tradition was to take in later times (including the popular versions of the myth still current among contemporary millennialist and dispensationalist preachers) were to be largely determined by the ways in which the third century writers expressed it. The persecutions were probably critical factors in both the timing and the form of this influential eruption of literary discussion of the Antichrist figure. The persecutions of the third century CE may have been as important for the definitive portrayal of the myth in this period, as the Maccabean crisis had been for the more general idea of an Endtyrant figure in Jewish

apocalyptic traditions. It is interesting to note that Eusebius described this period as one when there was "much talk" about the Antichrist figure.

Ἐν τούτῳ καὶ Ἰούδας,
συγγραφέων ἕτερος, εἰς τὰς
παρὰ τῷ Δαυιδῷ ἑβδομήκοντα
ἑβδομάδας ἐγγράφως διαλεχ-
θεῖς, ἐπὶ τὸ δέκατον τῆς
Σευήρου βασιλείας ἴστησιν τὴν
χρονογραφίαν· ὅς καὶ τὴν
θρυλουμένην τοῦ ἀντιχρίστου
παρουσίαν ἤδη τότε πλησίαζειν
ᾤετο· οὕτω σφοδρῶς ἢ τοῦ
καθ' ἡμῶν τότε διωγμοῦ
κίνησις τὰς τῶν πολλῶν
ἀνατεταράχει διανοίας.

[h.e., VI.7 (LCL II,28)]

Also at this time [ca 202 CE], Judas, another writer, composed a work on the seventy weeks in Daniel, stopping his chronology at the tenth year of the reign of Severus. He also thought the coming of Antichrist, which was much talked about, was imminent. So strongly did the agitation caused by the persecution of our people at this time disturb the minds of many.

Eusebius' comment is from a later period than that under review in Section One, and the writing by Judas is no longer extant, but this passage serves as a reminder that the material about to be examined was in part the product of, and in part a response to, a crisis as serious for the early church as the edicts of Antiochus IV had been for Jews in Palestine more than three hundred and fifty years earlier. Without the crisis occasioned by the various imperial actions against Christians in the third century, the Antichrist myth may not have been developed and promoted to the extent that will be seen in the following discussion. This is so even if, as will also be seen, the myth was not usually turned into a vehicle for anti-Roman propaganda in its early stages.

2.3 THE METHOD

As the very earliest examples of extended and direct discussion of the Antichrist myth, and the only such discussions from this period, the two works by Irenaeus and Hippolytus, along with ApEl, will be taken as the primary witnesses for the ensuing discussion in the first section of this study. As will be seen, almost every element of the Antichrist myth as it was known in the third century may be found in these three writings. The precise distribution of elements can be observed in Table T4. The evidence from these primary

witnesses will be supplemented by citations of relevant passages from other writings of the period, especially Tertullian and Origen.

The discussion which follows will be based directly on the original sources, as the overall picture of the Antichrist myth in the third century is put together piece by piece. For the sake of order, and to allow points of similarity or difference to emerge clearly, the various elements of the myth will be grouped into major categories in the chapters of part one. The first chapter will note the use made of the Scriptures; the second will draw together the accounts which attempted to describe the character of the Antichrist figure; while the third will present the material relating to the activities or "career" of the Antichrist figure, including the varying attitudes towards the Roman empire which are expressed in this literature. It will then be possible to draw some general conclusions concerning the Antichrist myth in the third century literature.

No single third century document exhibits all the elements found within the Antichrist myth at that time (cf. Table T4). The point of the following discussion is not so much to establish what a specific writer of the third century believed about the Antichrist figure, but rather to draw in the main outlines of the Antichrist myth at that time. This will then serve as a useful preparation for the task of examining earlier Jewish and Christian literature to see what they contribute towards an understanding of the origins and development of the Antichrist myth in the early church.

Table T2
Imperial Persecutions, ca 200-304 CE²⁷

Date	Emperors	Martyrs
202-206	Septimus Severus	Leonides (father of Origen), and possibly Irenaeus (a dubious tradition).
215	Caracalla	Clement of Alexandria martyred, and Origen forced to flee Alexandria.
235-238	Maximinus Thrax	Hippolytus & Pontianus die in exile
250-251	Decius	Bishops of Rome, Antioch & Jerusalem martyred; Dionysius of Alexandria and Cyprian of Carthage in hiding; Origen tortured at Caesarea. This was the most severe of the persecutions due to its systematic enforcement and the introduction of the "libellus" or certificate of worship at a pagan shrine. (The many lapses among Christians were to create problems of discipline for the Church after the end of the persecutions.)
257-260	Valerian	Cyprian martyred. Assembly for worship forbidden. Clergy and bishops selected for execution.
303-304	Diocletian	Victorinus of Pettau martyred.

27 For detailed discussion of the issues involved in these matters, and extensive bibliographies, see J. Daniélou & H. Marrou, *The Christian Centuries*, I, 137-238; and W.H.C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*. See also W.H.C. Frend, *Rise*, 271-472; ODCC, 1065ff; and P.R. Coleman-Norton, *Roman State & Christian Church*.

3. USE OF SCRIPTURE TO ELUCIDATE THE MYTH

At the very beginning of this study of the Antichrist myth in the third century it is appropriate to consider the biblical material which the writers themselves regarded as the authoritative sources for their teaching about the Antichrist figure. The desire to ground their teaching on older prophetic traditions was important within both the general setting of these writers and for their particular intra-church contexts. In a time of sporadic persecution the need to find ancient prophecies which could provide a theoretical framework for interpreting the crisis was great. As noted at §2.2, the beginning of the third century saw a renewed interest in apocalyptic matters.

3.1 THE BOOK OF DANIEL

The prophecies of Daniel were particularly drawn upon for their perceived relevance to the writers' situation. Given the internal church setting which occasioned much of this literature on the Antichrist (cf. §4.2), recourse to authoritative biblical material to bolster the writers' arguments was of some importance. This can be clearly seen in the following passage from Hippolytus.

δίκαιόν ἐστιν ἡμᾶς
ἐφαισαμένους αὐτῶν τῶν θείων
γραφῶν ἐπιδείξει δι' αὐτῶν,
τίς καὶ ποταπῆ ἢ τοῦ
ἀντιχρίστου παρουσία, ποίῳ δὲ
καιρῷ καὶ χρόνῳ ὁ ἄνομος
ἀποκαλυφθήσεται, πόθεν δε καὶ
ἐκ ποίας φυλῆς, καὶ τί το
τούτου ὄνομα τὸ διὰ τοῦ
ἀριθμοῦ ἐν τῇ γραφῇ
μνησόμενον, πῶς δὲ πλάνην
μὲν τῷ λαῷ ἐγγεννήσει,
ἐπσυναξίας αὐτοὺς ἐκ τῶν
περάτων τῆς γῆς, θλίψιν δὲ
καὶ διωγμον ἐπι τοὺς ἁγίους
ἐπεγερεῖ, καὶ πῶς ἑαυτον
δοξάσει ὡς θεόν, τίς δὲ ἡ
τούτου συντέλεια.

It is right that we take the divine Scriptures themselves in hand, and show from the nature, and manner, of the Antichrist's coming; at what season and at what time the lawless one will be revealed; from where, and from what tribe; and what his name is, which is indicated by the number in the Scripture; and how he shall work deception among the people, gathering them from the ends of the earth; and shall stir up tribulation and persecution against the saints; and how he shall glorify himself as God; and what his end shall be.

[antichr., 5 (GCS, I,7)]

The Book of Daniel exercised a profound influence on the shape of subsequent Jewish and Christian apocalyptic traditions, specifically by its focus on an evil Endtyrant.¹ As already noted when the reference to Judas' discourse of Daniel was cited from Eusebius at the end of §2, there was a renewed interest in the interpretation of Daniel in the third century. No doubt this was partly due to the similar experiences of persecution, but it was also due to the particular formulations of traditions in Daniel (cf. §8.2), which were especially susceptible to reinterpretation in successive periods.

Hippolytus' own work demonstrates convincingly the importance of Daniel for the tradents of the Antichrist myth. Not only did he draw heavily on the visions of Daniel for his treatise on the Antichrist (as will be seen in many of the passages cited in this study), but he wrote a commentary on Daniel in which the Antichrist interpretation dominates. For Hippolytus, Daniel was a key prophetic writing whose purpose was to instruct the later reader in the events that were to follow. His explicit comment on Daniel's own understanding of his role is interesting.

Τούτων γὰρ οὕτως εἰρημένων
 ἑτέραν πάλιν ὄπτασίαν
 διηγείται ἡμῖν ὁ προφήτης·
 οὐδὲν γὰρ ἕτερον ἐμερίμνησεν
 ὁ μακάριος Δανιήλ, εἰ μὴ ἵνα
 τὰ πάντα ἀκριβῶς ἐκδιδαχθῆις
 τὰ μέλλοντα καὶ ἡμᾶς πάλιν
 αὐτὸς διδάσκων φανῆ.

After having spoken to us of this, the prophet relates a further vision. For the blessed Daniel had no other concern except to be instructed accurately in the future things and to prove himself to be an instructor to us in them.

[comm.Dan. IV,36.1 (SC, 334)]

The dreams recorded in Daniel 2 (the statue made of four metals) and 7 (the four beasts) were very important for the third century explanations of the Antichrist myth, particularly the question of the relationship of the dreaded "kingdom of the Antichrist" to the Roman empire. The significance of these passages in Daniel, and of the later visions of chs 10-12, was no doubt reinforced by their influence on Revelation as well as their bearing on early Christian apocalyptic traditions, such as those found in the synoptic gospels and 2 Thessalonians.

1 For the influence of Daniel in later literature, see G.K. Beale, *Use of Daniel*; M. Casey, *Son of Man*; J.G. Gammie, "Journey through Danielic spaces", 144-56; and L.L. Hartman, *Prophecy Interpreted*.

There are many elements of the later Antichrist myth which can be recognised as due to the influence of the references to Antiochus IV in the Book of Daniel (cf. Table T6) The description of the fourth and final beast; the role of the "little horn"; the period of three and half years for the evil one's rule; his character as a boastful and arrogant tyrant attempting to change the times and the Law; and his defeat of three other kings; are all found in the third century Antichrist literature.

As with 2 Thessalonians, however, it must be remembered that the passages in Daniel were not originally descriptions of the Antichrist, but rather allusions to a tyrant who was oppressing the people of God: in Daniel's case, a very real contemporary socio-political experience. If the early Christians found it appropriate to employ these older descriptions to express their belief in an Antichrist figure, that in no way alters the original meaning of the biblical passages.

3.2 2 THESSALONIANS 2

The important passage in 2 Thessalonians 2 was a key element in the various accounts of the Antichrist myth. It was repeatedly referred to in the writings of Irenaeus and the third century writers. Irenaeus, Hippolytus and Origen each cite the passage at length: Irenaeus in *haer.* V.25.1; Hippolytus in *antichr.* 63; and Origen twice in *Cels.* II.50 and VI.46. Its influence on ApEI can be seen in the fact that ApEI uses "son of lawlessness" as its name for the Antichrist figure (1:10; 3:1,5,13,18; 4:2,15,20,28,31; 5:6,10,32), and alludes to 2 Thessalonians in 2:40f. In addition, the Thessalonian passage is mentioned by Tertullian (*anim.* LVII, *res. carn.* XXIV and *Marc.* V.16) and by Cyprian (*ep.* 54.13 and *ad Quir.* 33).

There are obvious reasons why this passage would be so valued by these writers as they sought to expound their doctrine of the Antichrist. Several elements of the later Antichrist myth are indeed found in these verses. They include the titles "man of lawlessness" and "son of perdition"; his self-exaltation as an object of human worship and the claims of divine honours; his session in the temple; and the false signs and wonders which accompany his appearance. Despite the absence of the word "Antichrist", here was a remarkable collection of statements about an individual evil figure, and the early Christians apparently soon put the passage into service as support for the doctrine of the Antichrist.

In fact, as will be seen when this passage is examined in more detail at §11.2, it is clear that 2 Thessalonians 2 neither taught nor alluded to a tradition about an Antichrist figure. Rather, its allusion to the more general idea of an evil figure, an Endtyrant modelled on the historical figure of Antiochus IV and influenced by the portrayal of Antiochus in Daniel, was given a new and more precise meaning once the Antichrist myth developed more fully.

3.3 THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Although the actual word, "Antichrist", never occurs in Revelation, that book's apocalyptic character and special interest in the eschatological opponents of God and his people naturally made it an indispensable source of ideas concerning the Antichrist figure. As will be seen at §11.3, Revelation probably marks the point when the various elements of the apocalyptic Endtyrant traditions were moulded into the peculiarly Christian idea of an Antichrist under the pressure of the intense apocalyptic expectations ca 68/69 CE. Revelation has many of the elements of the later Antichrist myth, in a format and in a sociological setting which are similar to the form and setting of the myth in the third century (cf. Table T12).

Frequent recourse was made to Revelation for material to complete the descriptions of the Antichrist, especially in the works of Irenaeus and Hippolytus with their more systematic accounts of the myth. In *haer.* V.28.1 Irenaeus examined Revelation 13, discussing the beast from the sea, the false prophet, the spurious miracles of the beast, the mark of the beast, and the mysterious number, 666. Hippolytus made even more extensive use of Revelation. He cited Revelation 17-18 in full through chs 36-42 of *antichr.*, and there are lengthy citations in chs 47 (Rev 11:3-6, the two witnesses), 48 (Rev 13:11-18, the beast), and 60 (Rev 12:1-6, the dragon's pursuit of the woman with child). Irenaeus' words are indicative of their attitude to Revelation.

Manifestius adhuc etiam de novissimo tempore et de his qui sunt in eo decem regibus in quos dividetur quod nunc regnat imperium significavit Johannes, Domini discipulus, in Apocalypsi, edisserens quae fuerint decem cornua

In a still clearer light has John, in the Apocalypse, indicated to the Lord's disciples what shall happen in the last times, and concerning the ten kings who shall then arise, among whom the empire which now rules shall be partitioned. He teaches

quae a Daniele visa sunt.
[haer. V.26.1 (SC, II,324)]

us what the ten horns shall be which
were seen by Daniel.
[ANF, I, 554]

Tertullian expressed a similar attitude, including a specific reference to the significance of the Apocalypse for the Antichrist myth.

Etiam in apocalypsi ordo temporum
sternitur, quem martyr quoque
sub animae altari ultionem et
iudicium flagitantes sustinere,
didicerunt, ut prius et orbis de
pateris angelorum plagas suas ebibat,
et prostituta illa ciuitas a decem
regibus dignos exitus referat, et
bestia antichristus cum suo
pseudopropheta certamen
ecclesiae inferat.
[res. carn. XXV (CSEL, 47,61)]

In the Revelation of John, again, the order of these times is spread out to view, which "the souls of the martyrs" are taught to wait for beneath the altar, whilst they earnestly pray to be avenged and judged (taught, I say, to wait) in order that the world may first drink to the dregs the plagues that await it out of the vials of the angels, and that the city of fornication may receive from the ten kings its deserved doom, and that the beast Antichrist with his false prophet may wage war on the Church of God.
[ANF, III,563]

The contribution of Revelation to the development of the Antichrist myth will be a major interest of this present study when the earliest stages of the myth's development are being considered at §11.3. For the time being it is sufficient to note that these third century writers based many of their ideas concerning the Antichrist on their interpretation of the Apocalypse.

3.4 OTHER BIBLICAL PASSAGES

The more extensive discussions of the Antichrist myth written by Irenaeus and Hippolytus were able to draw upon a wider selection of OT passages to illustrate and substantiate their accounts of the myth. At times this recourse to the OT seems somewhat strained in view of the complete absence of the word, "Antichrist" (or even a Jewish equivalent to that concept), and the fact that the passages' original meanings were quite different from the use made of them. For example, both Irenaeus (haer. V.30.2) and Hippolytus (antichr. 15) refer to Jer 8:16, which mentions raiders coming from Dan, in support of their contention that the Antichrist would appear from the tribe of Dan.

From Dan the snorting of his horses is heard;
at the sound of his stallions' neighing
the whole earth quakes;

and they came and they devoured the land and all in it,
the city and those who live in it. [Jer 8:16]

It is quite clear that this passage contains nothing of relevance to the Antichrist myth, nor to a descendant of the tribe of Dan being an evil character. It simply refers to an attack on Israel that will come from the north, where the territory of Dan was traditionally located. The interpretation now placed on this verse depends on the prior conclusion that another OT passage in Isa 14:16 (which refers to an evil tyrant who made the earth tremble) is actually a reference to the Antichrist (and not the king of Babylon), and also that any other OT passages which mention the whole countryside shaking also refer to the Antichrist's appearance. While a modern exegete would eschew such methods, at least it is possible to identify the interpretative processes involved in these writings and understand what they were trying to do with the biblical material.

Of the two major writers on the Antichrist myth, Hippolytus was able to cite the prophets more extensively. In both *antichr.* and *comm.Dan.* he employed various passages from Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos and Malachi. Table T3 (opposite) indicates the passages where these prophetic texts were brought into play by Hippolytus.

There were other passages of the Scriptures which were cited in these accounts of the Antichrist myth, but the major examples have now been outlined in this chapter. Many of these passages will be examined in more detail in the course of the second and third sections, along with the non-canonical literature which was just as influential, if not more so. The only major biblical materials not mentioned in this chapter have been the synoptic gospels -- and the Johannine epistles. While this material was largely ignored by many of our third century writers,¹ it was important in the development of the Antichrist myth and will be examined in detail at §11.1 and §13.3.

1 Hippolytus made considerable use of Matthew 24 in *comm.Dan.*, but he virtually ignored this synoptic material in his treatise on the Antichrist. The relevant passages in *comm.Dan.* are as follows:

Matthew 24	<i>comm.Dan.</i> , IV	Matthew 24	<i>comm.Dan.</i> , IV
3	5.6; 16.1	22	52.2
12	6.4	29f	52.3
14	6.4; 17.9	32f	17.6
15-22	17.3f	42	16.3
21	50.3	46-51	16.4

Table T3
Citations of Prophetic Literature in Hippolytus

Passage	antichr.	comm.Dan. IV
Isa 1:7-8	30	
10:12-17	16	
11:14	51	
14:4-21	17 & 53	12.7 & 56.7
18:1-2	58	
23:4-5	52	
26:10		55.4
29:11		33.5
47:1-15	18 & 53	
49:9		33.4
61:1f		32.4
Jer 4:11 (LXX)		49.6
8:16	15	
17:11	54	
25:11		28.2
25:12		30.6
Ezek 28:2-10	18 & 53	12.6
Amos 5:18-20		21.5
Mal 4:5-6	46	

For the present it is sufficient to note the extent to which the writers to be considered in section one were consciously dependent upon biblical traditions for the materials with which they expounded the Antichrist myth. Whether or not they were actually handling a much older mythic tradition, with roots in the ancient past, they perceived themselves to be promulgating a set of beliefs about the endtime taught by the writings of both the Old and New Testaments.

J. Ernst has suggested that the OT traditions about the "foe from the North" (Jer 1:15; 4:13; 5:15; 6:22; Isa 5:27f; 8:8f; 17:4f; Ezek 1:4; Joel 2:20), and of Gog and Magog in particular (Ezekiel 38-39), were important sources for the NT idea of opponents of God.² It is true that these traditions from the

2 J. Ernst, *Gegenspieler*, 198-210.

OT, like the description of the ungodly man in Psalm 10, would seem to the modern scholar to be better sources for the Endtyrant and Antichrist traditions, than the OT passages actually cited by the early Christian writers. However, it must be noted that the third century literature did not use these passages. Even the description of Antiochus IV as the "king of the north" (Dan 11:40) did not suffice to draw these OT passages into the service of the Antichrist myth.

4. SKETCHES OF THE ANTICHRIST FIGURE

4.1 THE ANTICHRIST FIGURE AND THE SATAN FIGURE

Even a cursory reading of the sources from this period reveals speculation concerning the relationship of the Antichrist figure to that other great figure of Christian mythology, Satan.¹ It seems that these writers were not able to speak of the Antichrist tradition without some reference to the older Satan tradition, which provided the overall theological and mythic setting for the specific idea of the Antichrist figure. It is not always clear just how that relationship was understood, but it is clear that the two figures were closely related. Accounts of the Antichrist myth frequently entailed reference to the Satan myth, and the two figures were seen as opponents of God and Christ respectively.

The review of earlier literature in the second and third sections of this study will indicate some of the developments of the Satan/Belial tradition which occurred in hellenistic Jewish thought, and reveal how that trajectory continued on in Jewish and Christian writing well into the second century CE (cf. especially §7).² The Christian writers of the third century basically seem to have maintained the NT emphasis on the Satan figure as the great opponent of the work of Christ. They regarded Satan's efforts as now being focused upon his opposition to the church. The trials of the church as a whole, and of the individual Christian, were ascribed to satanic influence, and it is within that framework that third century ideas about the relationship of the Satan figure to the Antichrist myth are to be understood.

1 W. Bousset [*Der Antichrist*, 88ff] explored the complexities of this relationship in early literature on the Antichrist, beginning his discussion as follows: "The preliminaries bring us to the specially important subject of THE DEVIL AND THE ANTICHRIST. On the mutual relations of these two personalities the greatest discordance prevails in traditional lore. Yet it is of the greatest interest to investigate these discrepancies and conflicting fancies. For this very chaos of clashing views enables us to get behind the beginnings of our eschatological tradition, and thus follow them up to their essential form." [ET from *Antichrist Legend*, 138f.]

2 See note 25 at §7.2 for literature on the Satan tradition.

4.1.1 Satan and the Antichrist

As was the case with the Antichrist myth, there were few discussions of the Satan myth in its own right in the literature of the third century, but there were many incidental references to it as a commonly-held doctrine. Even Origen, who defended the Christian belief in Satan,³ did not give a detailed account of the origin and nature of the Satan figure. Nevertheless, from the numerous patristic references a vast list of titles can be compiled.⁴ On the whole, however, it is correct to say that the Fathers were not interested in speculation about the Satan figure as such, but rather used it for apologetic and paranetical purposes. That is, they used the Satan myth in much the same way as they used the Antichrist myth. The two figures were thought to be related in that the Antichrist was seen as serving the purposes of Satan and as being supported by the power of the latter. While the myth of Satan always

3 Cels., VI.42-44.

4 Cf. the large range of perjorative expressions in Ignatius, Phil.. Although the letter is pseudonymous, it attests to the richness of the Satan myth in the late second century CE. It is significant that so many of the expressions reflect the older Jewish traditions to be examined below.

ὁ γὰρ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου
τούτου χαίρει, ὅταν τις
ἀρνήται τὸν σταυρόν.

For the ruler of this world rejoices
when a person denies the cross.

[Phil. 3:9 (J.B. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 775)]

ποικίλος γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ τῆς
κακίας στρατηγός,

For the leader of wickedness
assumes diverse forms,

[Phil. 4:8 (*Apostolic Fathers*, 776)]

σὺ ὁ Βελίαρ, ὁ δράκων, ὁ
ἀποστάτης, ὁ σκολιὸς ὄφης, ὁ
τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀποστάς, ὁ τοῦ
Χριστοῦ χωρισθείας, ὁ τοῦ
ἁγίου πνεύματος ἀλλοτριω-
θείας, ὁ τοῦ χοροῦ τῶν
ἀγγέλων ἐξωσθείας, ὁ τῶν
νόμων τοῦ Θεοῦ ὑβριστής, ὁ
τῶν νομίμων ἐχθρός ... δούλος
δραπέτης, δούλος μαστιγίας,
ἀφηνιᾶς τοῦ καλοῦ δεσπότης;
[Phil. 11:6f (*Apostolic Fathers*, 783f)]

You, Beliar, dragon, apostate,
crooked serpent, rebel against God,
outcast from Christ, alien from the
Holy Spirit, exile from the company
of angels, insolent breaker of the
divine laws, enemy of right, ...
Fugitive slave, recalcitrant slave,
would you rebel against the good
Master?

remained separate from and more extensive than that of the Antichrist, the latter was seen as Satan's greatest accomplishment, his final trump card, to be revealed at the end of time.

In the case of Irenaeus, the relationship between Antichrist and Satan was expressed in terms of his doctrine of recapitulation. Just as Christ gathered up all humankind in himself for justification, so the Antichrist figure was understood as a person who would recapitulate in his human existence all the sin and apostasy of earthly and heavenly history. While not usually seen as an actual incarnation of Satan, the Antichrist would be a focal point for satanic influence in the world.

Ille enim omnem suscipiens diaboli virtutem veniet non quasi rex justus nec quasi in subjectione Dei legitimus, sed impius et injustus et sine lege, quasi apostata et iniquus et homicida, quasi latro, diabolicam apostasiam in se recapitulans, et idola quidem deponens ad suadendum quod ipse sit Deus, se autem extollens unum idolum, habens in semetipso reliquorum idolorum varium errorem, ut hi qui per multas abominationes adorant diabolum, hi per hoc unum idolum serviant ipsi. [haer. V.25.1 (SC, II,308f)]

For he, being endued with all the power of the devil, shall come not as a righteous king, nor as a legitimate king, in subjection to God, but as an impious, unjust and lawless one; as an apostate, iniquitous and murderous; as robber concentrating in himself satanic apostasy, and setting aside idols to persuade [men] that he himself is God, raising up himself as the only idol, having in himself the multifarious errors of the other idols. This he does in order that they who do [now] worship the devil by means of many abominations, may serve himself by this one idol, [ANF, I,553]

This understanding may also be seen in haer. V.28.2.

illo enim veniente et sua sententia apostasiam recapitulante in semetipsum et sua voluntate et arbitrio operante quaecumque operabitur et in templo Dei sedente, ut sicut Christum adorent illum qui seducuntur ab illo [haer. V.28.2 (SC, II,350)]

For when he is come, and of his own accord concentrates in his own person the apostasy, and accomplishes whatever he shall do according to his own will and choice, sitting also in the temple of God, so that his dupes may adore him as the Christ; [ANF, I,557]

This viewpoint was developed in some detail by Irenaeus in haer. V.29.2 when he outlined (using some rather quaint exegesis) the way in which the Antichrist would embody the totality of wickedness of all human history.

Et propter hoc in bestia veniente recapitulatio fit universae iniquitatis omnis doli, ut in ea confluens et conclusa omnis virtus

And there is therefore in this beast, when he comes, a recapitulation made of all sorts of iniquity and of every deceit, in order that all apostate

apostatica in caminum mittatur ignis. Congruenter autem et nomen ejus habebit numerum sexcentos sexaginta sex, recapitulans in semetipso omnem quae fuit ante diluvium malitiae commixtionem quae facta est ex angelica apostasia -- Noe enim fuit annorum sexcentorum, et diluvium advenit terrae, delens inresurrectionem terrae propter nequissimam generationem, quae fuit temporibus Noe -- recapitulans autem et omnem qui fuit a diluvio errorem commentatorem idolorum, et prophetarum interfectionem et succensionem justorum --, illa enim quae fuit a Nabuchodonosor instituta imago altitudinem quidem habuit cubitorum sexaginta, latitudinem autem cubitorum sex, propter quam et Ananias et Azarias et Misael non adorantes eam in caminum missi sunt ignis, per id quod eis evenit prophetantes eam quae in finem futura est justorum succensio: universa enim imago illa praefiguratio fuit hujus adventus ab omnibus omnino hominibus ipsum solum decernens adorari. Sexcenti itaque anni Noe sub quo fuit diluvium propter apostasiam et numerus cubitorum imaginis propter quam justus in caminum ignis missi sunt numerum nominis significat illius in quem recapitulatur sex millium annorum omnis apostasia. [haer. V.29.2 (SC, II,366ff)]

power -- flowing into and being shut up in him -- may be sent to the furnace of fire. Fittingly, therefore, shall his name possess the number six hundred & sixty-six, since he sums up in his own person all the commixture of wickedness which took place previous to the deluge due to the apostasy of the angels. For Noah was six hundred years old when the deluge came upon the earth, sweeping away the rebellious world, for the sake of that most infamous generation which lived in the times of Noah. And [Antichrist] also sums up every error of devised idols since the flood, together with the slaying of the prophets and the cutting off of the just. For that image which was set up by Nebuchadnezzar had indeed a height of sixty cubits, while the breadth was six cubits; on account of which Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, when they did not worship it, were cast into a furnace of fire, pointing out prophetically, by what happened to them, the wrath against the righteous which shall arise towards the end. For that image, taken as a whole, was a prefiguring of this man's coming, decreeing that he should undoubtedly himself alone be worshipped by all men. Thus, then, the six hundred years of Noah, in whose time the deluge occurred because of the apostasy, and the sixty cubits of the image for which these just men were sent into the fiery furnace, do indicate the number of that man in whom is concentrated the whole apostasy of six thousand years. [ANF, I,558]

Hippolytus treated this relationship between Antichrist and Satan in a different way. Unlike Irenaeus, there were no specific chapters where the relationship was explained. Instead, the topic was handled with passing references in other contexts. One such place was the discussion of the Antichrist's appearance from the tribe of Dan. The explanation in *antichr.* 14 indicates clearly that Hippolytus identified the Antichrist with the serpent in Genesis 3. Some texts have made the link more obvious, and read ἀντίχριστος in place of ὁ ἄπ' ἀρχῆς κλένος.

ὡσπερ γὰρ ἐκ τῆς Ἰούδα
φυλῆς ὁ Χριστὸς γεγέννηται,
οὕτως καὶ ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Δὰν
φυλῆς ὁ ἀντίχριστος γεννη-
θήσεται. ὅτι δὲ οὕτως ἔχει, τί
φησὶν Ἰακωβ· "γεννηθήτω Δὰν
ὄφις ἐφ' ὁδοῦ καθήμενος,
δάκνων πτέρναν ἵππου." ὄφεις
οὖν τίς ἄρα ἢ ὁ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς
πλάνος, ὁ ἐν τῇ γενέσει
εἰρημένος, ὁ πλανήσας τὴν
Εὐὰν καὶ πτερνίσας τὸν
Ἄδαμ;

[antichr. 14:5-8 (GCS, I,11)]

The various titles given to the Antichrist in antichr. 15 also point to Hippolytus' view on the relationship between Antichrist and Satan. Among the titles given were "tyrant," "son of the devil," and "adversary of God" (cf. the similar titles in comm.Dan. IV,49.1). Also, the use of the Lucifer myth from Isaiah 14 in antichr. 17 points to the connection between Satan and Antichrist in the thought of Hippolytus.

Origen's defence of the Christian belief in the Antichrist in Cels. VI.45 rested upon a philosophical argument in which the incarnation of God's goodness in Jesus was paralleled by an embodiment of evil in the Antichrist. Jesus, as "Son of God", was contrasted with the Antichrist, "son of the evil daemon...Satan".

τί οὖν ὅτοπον δύο, ἓν' οὕτως
ὀνομάσω, ἀκρότητας, τὴν μὲν
τοῦ καλοῦ τὴν δὲ τοῦ ἐναν-
τίου, ἐν ἀνθρώποις γίνεσθαι,
ὥστε τὴν μὲν τοῦ καλοῦ
ἀκρότητα εἶναι ἐν τῷ κατὰ
τὸν Ἰησοῦν νοουμένῳ
ἀνθρώπῳ, ἀφ' οὗ ἡ τοσαύτη
ἔρρευσεν τῷ γένει τῶν ἀνθρ-
ώπων ἐπιστροφή καὶ θεραπεία
καὶ βελτίωσις, τὴν δὲ τοῦ
ἐναντίου ἐν τῷ κατὰ τὸν
ὀνομαζόμενον ἀντίχριστον; ...
ἐχρῆν δὲ τὸν μὲν ἕτερον τῶν
ἄκρων καὶ βέλτιστον υἱὸν
ἀναγορεύεσθαι τοῦ θεοῦ διὰ

For just as Christ is born of the
tribe of Judah, so Antichrist shall
be born of the tribe of Dan. That
this is so, is established in the
words of Jacob: "Let Dan be a ser-
pent, lying upon the way, biting the
horse's heel." Who, then, is the
serpent but he who was a deceiver
from the beginning, who is men-
tioned in Genesis, the deceiver of
Eve and usurper of Adam?

Why, then, is it absurd that there
should be amongst mankind, if I
might express it so, two extrem-
ities: the one of goodness, the
other of its opposite; so that the
extremity of goodness is in the
humanity of Jesus (for from him
flowed the bountiful conversion,
healing and improvement of the
human race), but the opposite
extreme is in the one called Anti-
christ? ... It was right, then, that
one of the extremes, the best,
should be called Son of God due to
of his superiority, and that the one
diametrically opposed to him should
be called the son of the evil
daemon, and Satan, and the devil.

τὴν ὑπεροχὴν, τὸν δὲ τούτῳ
κατὰ διάμετρον ἐναντίον υἱὸν
τοῦ πονηροῦ δαίμονος καὶ
Σατανᾶ καὶ διαβόλου.
[Cels. VI.45 (GCS, II,116)]

This argument by Origen was as close as these third century writers came to an explanation of the relationship between the Antichrist and Satan in terms of incarnation. Clearly, a very close relationship between these two figures was envisaged, even though they stopped short of equating the two.

The close relationship between Antichrist and Satan may also be observed in ApEI. In ApEI 2:3 the title "king of iniquity" is applied to the Antichrist figure. This was a title used of the Beliar/Satan figure in MartIs 2:1bff. In ApEI 5:10 the wicked who have been deceived by the Antichrist lament their folly. These wicked ones identify the Antichrist with the devil,

The sinners will groan upon the earth saying, "What have you done to us, O son of lawlessness, saying, I am the Christ, when you are the devil?" [ApEI 5:10 (OTP, I,750f)]

Similarly, the account of the destruction of the son of lawlessness later in ch 5, used ideas that were elsewhere applied to Satan. The Antichrist and his followers are to be cast into the bottom of the abyss which will be closed over their heads (ApEI 5:35; cf. Rev 20:2f,10).

1RevJn provides an interesting but exceptional example of Satan being given a secondary place in regard to the Antichrist. While it is not advisable to build too much on one isolated passage, this example does indicate the variety of speculation on this matter.

καὶ τότε ἐξέλθη πᾶν πνεῦμα
πονηρόν, τὰ ἐν τῇ γῆ, τὰ ἐν
τῇ ἀβύσσῳ, ὅπου ἐάν εἰσιν ἐπὶ
προσώπου πάσης τῆς γῆς ἀπὸ
ἀνατολῶν ἡλίου μέχρι δυσμῶν,
καὶ κολληθήσονται πρὸς τὸν
ὑπηρτούμενον παρὰ τοῦ
διαβόλου ἥτοι τὸν ἀντίχριστον,
καὶ ἀρθήσονται ἐπὶ τῶν
νεφελῶν.

[1RevJn 13 (AA, 81)]

And then shall come forth every
evil spirit in the earth and in the
abyss, wherever they are on the
face of all the earth from the
rising of the sun to the setting, and
they shall be united to him that is
served by the devil, namely, Anti-
christ, and they shall be lifted up
upon the clouds.

This passage portrayed the Antichrist as a dualistic opponent of God himself, rather than an instrument of Satan. Compared to Origen's presentation the tables have been turned, with Satan here depicted as a mere courtier of the more important Antichrist who will appear (from the heavens?) and take his followers to be with him, just as Christ is depicted as doing in 1 Thessalonians 4.

The same close relationship between the two figures can be observed in the writings of Victorinus. In this case the Antichrist appears as a being with a vital connection to the devil; at one time his means of revenge upon the church, at another the Antichrist is understood as one of the seven heads of the red dragon.

breue tempus 'tres annos et sex menses' significat, quibus totis uiribus saeuiturus diabolus sub Antichristo aduersus ecclesiam. [comm. XX.3 (CSEL, 49,143)]

The little season signifies three years and six months, in which with all his power the devil will avenge himself under Antichrist against the Church. [ANF, VII,358f]

Septem capita septem reges Romanos, ex quibus et Antichristus est, in priori dicemus....Draco russeus stans et expectans, ut cum peperisset filium, deuoraret eum: diabolus est, angelus refuga scilicet [comm. XII.3f (CSEL, 49,107ff)]

His seven heads [ie, the red dragon] were the seven kings of the Romans, of whom also is Antichrist ... the red dragon standing and desiring to devour her child when she had brought him forth, is the devil, -- to wit, the traitor angel. [ANF, VII,355]

4.1.2 The Deceiver

One of the most important titles for the Antichrist, and a title with many contacts to the Satan myth, was "the Deceiver". It was a title with a long history of use in connection with the Antichrist myth, being found in the Johannine epistles (cf. 2 John 7). Further, this title and related terms occur throughout the literature examined in this study (cf. Hippolytus comm.Dan. IV,7.1; 16.1; 21.3). It also had the potential for significant contacts with the Satan myth, as seen in the passage from Hippolytus, antichr. 14 cited above.

The ancient roots of this motif will be observed in subsequent parts of this study. It was used of religious deception, but was also a more general idea used of an evil tyrant (cf. the various citations from SibOr). The distribution of the idea across the literature can be observed in Tables T4, T7 and T32. In later Antichrist literature, the title "Deceiver" was integral to the concept of

the Antichrist. It provided a brief, one word summary of his expected role in the last things. This ancient title should perhaps also be related to the phrase "the deceiver of the whole world" in Rev 12:9. This was a title used interchangeably in later writers for either Satan or the Antichrist, and as such indicates the close link between these two figures in the mythology of the early church.

Apart from being one of the oldest elements of the myth, this title has the potential for continual development of the myth by the simple process of supplementing the details of the Antichrist myth with additional "deceptions": imitations of Christ's actions and attributes. This process may lie behind a unique passage in antichr. 6 where Hippolytus included almost every element of the myth in a summary of the way that the Antichrist would imitate Christ.

Τοῦ μὲν οὖν κυρίου καὶ
σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ
τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ διὰ τὸ
βασιλικὸν καὶ ἔνδοξον ὡς
λέοντος προκεκηρυγμένον, τὸν
αὐτὸν τρόπον καὶ τὸν ἀντί-
χριστον ὁμοίωςλέοντα προαν-
ηγόρευσαν αἱ γραφαὶ διὰ τὸ
τυραννικὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ βίαιον.
κατὰ πάντα γὰρ ἕξομοιοῦσθαι
βούλεται ὁ πλάνος τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ
θεοῦ. λέων μὲν ὁ Χριστός,
καὶ λέων μὲν ὁ ἀντίχριστος.
βασιλεὺς ὁ Χριστός, καὶ
βασιλεὺς ἐπίγειος ὁ
ἀντίχριστος. ἐδείχθη ὁ σωτὴρ
ὡς ἀρνίον, καὶ αὐτὸς ὁμοίως
φανήσεται ὡς ἀρνίον, ἔνδοθεν
λύκος ὢν. ἐμπερίτομος ἦλθεν ὁ
σωτὴρ εἰς τὸν κόσμον, καὶ
αὐτὸς ὁμοίως ἐλεύσεται.
ἀπέστειλεν ὁ κύριος τοὺς
ἀποστόλους εἰς πάντα τὰ
ἔθνη, καὶ αὐτὸς ὁμοίως πέμψει
ψευδαποστόλους. συνήγαγε
τὰ διεσκορπισμένα πρόβατα ὁ
σωτὴρ, καὶ αὐτὸς ὁμοίως
ἐπισυνάξει τὸν διεσκορ-
πισμένον λαὸν τῶν Ἰουδαίων.
ἔδωκεν ὁ κύριος σφραγίδα τοῖς
εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεύουσιν, καὶ
αὐτὸς δώσει ὁμοίως. ἐν

Now, as the royalty and glory of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was prophesied under the figure of a lion, in the same way have the Scriptures spoken of Antichrist as a lion, because of his tyranny and violence. For the deceiver seeks to liken himself in all things to the Son of God. Christ is a lion, so Antichrist is also a lion; Christ is a king, so Antichrist is also an earthly king. The Saviour was manifested as a lamb; so he, too, similarly, will appear as a lamb, although inwardly he is a wolf. The Saviour came into the world in the circumcision, and he will come in the same manner. The Lord sent apostles among all the nations, and he will likewise send false apostles. The Saviour gathered together the scattered sheep, and he will similarly bring together the scattered people of the Jews. The Lord gave a seal to those who believed in him, and he will give one in like manner. The Saviour appeared in the form of a man, and he too will come in the form of a man. The Saviour raised up and showed his holy flesh as a temple, and he will raise the temple of stone in Jerusalem. And his deceptive arts we shall demonstrate in the following.

σχήματι ἀνθρώπου ἐφάνη ὁ
κύριος, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν σχήματι
ἀνθρώπου ἐλεύσεται. ἀνέστ-
ησεν ὁ σωτὴρ καὶ ἀπέδειξε
τὴν ἁγίαν σάρκα αὐτοῦ ὡς
ναόν, καὶ αὐτὸς ἀναστήσει
τὸν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις λίθινον
ναόν. καὶ ταῦτα μὲν τὰ
πλάνα αὐτοῦ τεχνάσματα ἐν
τοῖς ἐξῆς δηλώσομεν, νυνὶ δὲ
πρὸς τὸ προκείμενον
τραπῶμεν.

[antichr. 6 (GCS, 1,7f)]

Origen also referred to Antichrist imitating Christ (cf. *Comm. Ser. in Matt.* 27). Another occurrence of the deceit theme is to be found in IRevJn 8, cited below. To these later references should be added the synoptic references to deceivers, eg Matt 24:23ff. The motif of deceit, and of deceivers, is further attested in ApEI, where 1:13f reads.

Hear, O wise men of the land, concerning the deceivers who will multiply in the last times so that they will set down for themselves doctrines which do not belong to God, setting aside the Law of God ... Now these are not ever correctly established in the firm faith. Therefore, don't let these people lead you astray. [ApEI 1:13f (OTP, 1,737f)]

While this is probably more closely related to the idea of false teachers multiplying in the last days, it illustrates the use of deceivers as a motif. Numerous other passages in ApEI reflect the idea of Antichrist as a deceiver, and these will be examined under "§4.1.3 Signs and Wonders".

4.1.3 Signs and Wonders

An essential element in the deceit perpetrated by the Antichrist, according to these writers, would be the performance of false miracles to deceive people into accepting him as the Christ. This was one of the details of the Antichrist myth where the relationship between Antichrist and Satan was most obvious. Several of the writers devoted attention to the problem of these miracles. The reality of the miracles was not always directly challenged, but they were ascribed to magic (by definition, bad) and to the working of evil spirits. Tertullian was certainly aware of this tradition.

edocti quod ipse satanas transfig-
 uretur in angelum lucis, nedum in
 hominem lucis, etiam deum se adseu-
 eraturus in fine signaque portento-
 siora editurus ad euertendos, si
 fieri possit, electos.
 [anim. LVII (CSEL, 20,393)]

We know that "Satan himself is
 transformed into an angel of light"
 -- much more into a man of light --
 and that at the last he will "show him-
 self to be even God", and will exhibit
 "great signs and wonders, insomuch
 that, if it were possible, he shall
 deceive even the elect."
 [ANF, III,234]

The omission of any reference to these miracles in the previous passage from antichr. 6 is strange, since Hippolytus was certainly familiar with the idea, having cited Rev 13:13-14 in ch 48. However, while Hippolytus was content to pass over these false miracles without comment, Irenaeus and Origen were not. They both argued that the miracles were false wonders, spuriously achieved with the assistance of Satan and his demons. Irenaeus cited the relevant passage from Revelation 13 and then continued,

hoc ne quis eum divina virtute
 putet signa facere, sed magica
 operatione. Et non est mirandum si,
 daemioniis et apostaticis spirit-
 ibus ministrantibus ei, per eos
 faciat signa, in quibus seducat
 habitantes super terram.
 [haer. V.28.2 (SC, II,356)]

Let no-one imagine that he performs
 these wonders by divine power, but
 by the working of magic. And we
 must not be surprised if, since the
 demons and apostate spirits are at
 his service, he through their means
 performs wonders, by which he leads
 the inhabitants of earth astray.
 [ANF, I,557]

In a similar vein, Origen twice addressed himself to the problem posed for ancient Christians by these expected miracles of the Antichrist.

ὡς γὰρ οὐχ ὁμοία δύναμις ἡ
 τῶν ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ ἐπασιδῶν τῇ
 ἐν τῷ Μωϋσεῖ παραδόξῳ
 χάριτι, ἀλλὰ τὸ τέλος διή-
 λεγχε τὰ μὲν τῶν Αἰγυπτίων
 ὄντα μαγανείας τὰ δὲ τοῦ
 Μωϋσέως θεῖα· οὕτως τὰ μὲν
 τῶν ἀντιχρίστων καὶ τῶν
 προσποιουμένων δυνάμεις ὡς
 μαθητῶν Ἰησοῦ σημεῖα καὶ
 τέρατα λέγεται εἶναι
 "ψεύδους," ἐν πάσῃ ἀπάτῃ
 ἀδικίας τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις
 ἰσχύοντα,
 [Cels. II.50 (GCS, I,173)]

For just as the power of the
 Egyptian spells was not like the
 virtue bestowed upon Moses (but
 the wonders of the Egyptians were
 shown in the end to have been
 magical tricks, while the miracles
 of Moses were divine), so the
 wonders of the antichrists, and
 those who pretend to do miracles
 like the signs and wonders of Jesus'
 disciples, are said to be 'lying',
 prevailing 'by all the deceit of
 unrighteousness among them that
 are perishing'...

The link between the deceit of the Antichrist and his false miracles was clearly drawn in Cels. VI.45.

εἴτ' ἔπει τότε μάλιστα τὸ
 φαῦλον ἐν τῇ χύσει τῆς
 κακίας καὶ τῇ ἀκρότητι αὐτῆς
 εἶναι χαρακτηρίζεται, ὅτε
 ὑποκρίνεται τὸ κρεῖττον, διὰ
 τοῦτο περὶ τὸν χείρονα
 γίνεται ἐκ συνεργίας τῆς τοῦ
 πατρὸς αὐτοῦ διαβόλου σημεῖα
 καὶ τέρατα καὶ δυνάμεις
 ψεύδους. ὑπὲρ γὰρ τὰς εἰς
 τοὺς γόητας γινομένης ἀπὸ
 δαιμόνων συνεργίας πρὸς τὰ
 φαυλότατα τῶν ἀνθρώπων
 ἀπατώντων γίνεται συνεργία
 ἀπ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ διαβόλου ἐπὶ
 ἀπάτη τοῦ γένους τῶν
 ἀνθρώπων.

[Cels. VI.45 (GCS, II,116)]

Furthermore, since the highpoint of the flood of evil is characterised by pretence of excellence, so through the co-operation of his father, the devil, shall this evil one perform signs and wonders and false miracles. For the assistance given by daemons to sorcerers, who deceive men for the most wicked purposes, is surpassed by the assistance which the devil himself gives in order to deceive the human race.

In this attention to the spurious nature of the Antichrist's miracles, Irenaeus and Origen were consciously developing ideas from 2 Thess 2:9-10. A similar interest may be noted in ApEI 3 where the theme is developed at some length, and in a manner not unlike Hippolytus, *antichr.* 6. The one miraculous sign that the Antichrist was not expected to be able to perform was the raising of the dead (cf. ApEI 3:13).

But the son of lawlessness will begin to stand again in the holy places.

He will say to the sun, "Fall," and it will fall.

He will say, "Shine," and it will do it.

He will say, "Darken," and it will do it.

He will say to the moon, "Become bloody", and it will do it.

He will go forth with them from the sky.

He will walk upon the sea and the rivers as upon dry land.

He will cause the lame to walk.

He will cause the deaf to hear.

He will cause the dumb to speak.

He will cause the blind to see.

The lepers he will cleanse.

The ill he will heal.

The demons he will cast out.

He will multiply his signs and his wonders in the presence of everyone. He will do the works which Christ did, except for

raising the dead alone. In this you will know that he is the son of lawlessness, because he is unable to give life.
[ApEl 3:5-13 (OTP, I,745)]

As will become apparent as the examination of early literature proceeds, the use of spurious or misleading signs and wonders by deceptive evil characters was an element found quite generally in hellenistic Jewish writings and in early Christian works. This was a common characteristic of false prophets and other evil entities, and in no way a peculiarity of the Antichrist figure. However, it clearly had a potential which the tradents of the Antichrist myth were not averse to exploiting for their own purposes.

4.2 FALSE TEACHERS AND HERETICS

The problems associated with false doctrines and heresy in the early church were frequently interpreted as the result of satanic activity or the opposition of the Antichrist. This was an element of the Antichrist myth in the third century which was associated partly with the understanding of the character of the Antichrist and partly with the belief that certain troubles would beset the people of God prior to the advent of the Antichrist. While the attention given to false teachers and heretics by the third century writers could be discussed in the next chapter, for example under §5.4, it is also appropriate to discuss it at this point. This particular element of the myth had many contacts with the matters raised in §4.1, especially the idea of deception to be practised by the Antichrist in an attempt to gain disciples from among "the elect".

It is worth noting that this element of the myth was found particularly in the polemical works of Tertullian and Cyprian, rather than in the earlier treatments of the myth by Irenaeus and Hippolytus. It is apparent that this aspect of the myth was of interest to religious leaders engaged with internal church problems. The writers who made the most use of this element of the Antichrist tradition were engaged in a polemic with internal foes. There was something about the association of false teachers with the Antichrist myth which made the myth relevant to the needs of people like Tertullian at that time. While the problems may have been largely caused by questions of faith and discipline which resulted from the persecutions, the debate in which the Antichrist myth was employed was largely with fellow Christians not the church's external enemies. Tertullian mainly employed the Antichrist myth in

his writings concerning the struggle with Marcion and the Montanist controversy. Cyprian drew upon it largely with regard to the debates concerning the re-admission of lapsed Christians and the validity of baptism administered by heretics.

Tertullian described heretics as antichrists, and heresy as the work of the Antichrist, many times. The following examples will suffice to demonstrate his use of the myth in this connection.

Miramur de ecclesiis eius si a quibusdam deseruntur cum ea nos ostendunt christianos quae patimur ad exemplum ipsius Christi? Ex nobis, inquit, prodierunt sed non fuerunt ex nobis; si fuissent ex nobis permansissent utique nobiscum. Quin potius memores simus tam dominicarum pronuntiationum quam apostolicarum litterarum, quae nobis et futuras haereses praenuntiauerunt et fugiendas praefinierunt et, sicut esse illas non expauescimus, ita es posse id propter quod effugiendae sunt non miremur. Instruit Dominus multos esse venturos sub pellibus ouium rapaces lupos. Quenam istae pelles ouium nisi nominis christiani extrinsecus superficies? Qui lupi rapaces nisi sensus et spiritus subdoli, ad infestandum gregem Christi intrinsecus delitescunt? Qui pseudo-prophetae sunt nisi falsi praedicatorum? Qui pseudoapostoli nisi adulteri euangelizatores? Qui antichristi, interim et semper, nisi Christi rebelles? Hoc erunt haereses, non minus nouarum doctrinarum peruersitate ecclesiam lacessentes, quam tunc antichristus persecutionum atrocitate persequetur nisi quod persecutio et martyras facit, haeresis apostatas tantum. [praescr. III.12-IV.5 (SC, 46; 91ff)]

Are we surprised at seeing his churches forsaken by some men, although the things which we suffer after the example of Christ himself show us to be Christians? "They went out from us," says [St John], "but they were not of us. If they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us." But let us rather be mindful of the sayings of the Lord, and of the letters of the apostles; for they have told us beforehand that there shall be heresies, and have given us, in anticipation, warnings to avoid them ... The Lord teaches us that many "ravening wolves shall come in sheep's clothing." Now what are these sheep's clothing, but the external surface of the Christian profession? Who are these ravening wolves but those deceitful senses and spirits which are lurking within to waste the flock of Christ? Who are the false prophets but deceptive predictors of the future? Who are the false apostles but the preachers of a spurious gospel? Who are the Antichrists, both now and for evermore, but the men who rebel against Christ? Heresies at the present time will no less rend the church by their perversion of doctrine than will Antichrist persecute them at that day by the cruelty of his attacks, except that persecution makes even martyrs, [but] heresy only apostates. [ANF, III,244f]

In his treatise against Marcion, Tertullian described that person as the Antichrist.

Desinat nunc haereticus a Iudaeo, aspis, quod aiunt, a uipera, mutuari uenenum, euomat iam hinc proprii

Our heretic must now cease to borrow poison from the Jew - "the asp", as the adage runs, "from the viper" - and

ingenii uirus, phantasma uindicans Christum. nisi quod et in ista sententia alios habebit auctores, praecoquos et abortiuos quodammodo Marcionitas, quos apostolus Iohannes antichristos pronuntiauit, negantes Christum in carne uenisse ... quo magis antichristus Marcion sibi eam rapuit praesumptionem, aptior scilicet ad renuendam corporalem substantiam Christi
[Marc. III.8 (CSEL, 47,388)]

henceforth vomit forth the virulence of his own disposition, as when he alleges Christ to be a phantom. Except indeed, that this opinion of his will be sure to have others to maintain it in his precocious and somewhat abortive Marcionites, whom the Apostle John designated as antichrists, when they denied that Christ was come in the flesh ... Now, the more firmly the antichrist Marcion had seized this assumption, the more prepared was he, of course, to reject the bodily substance of Christ
[ANF, III,327]

Tertullian defended the Montanists from criticism in *ieiun.* XI. His defence illustrates the use of "Antichrist" as a label for false teachers.

spiritus diaboli est, dicis, o psychice. et quomodo dei nostri officia indicit nec alii offerenda quam deo nostro? aut contende diabolum cum deo facere nostro aut satanas paracletus habeatur. sed hominem antichristum adfirmas; hoc enim uocantur haeretici nomine penes Iohannem. et quomodo, quisquis ille est, in Christo nostro haec erga dominum nostrum officia disposuit, cum et antichristi erga deum, aduersum nostrum processerint Christum? quo itaque putas laterum confirmatum apud nos spiritum?
[*ieiun.* XI (CSEL, 20,289f)]

"It is the spirit of the devil," you you say, O Psychic. And how is it that he enjoins duties which belong to our God, and enjoins them to be offered to none other than our God? Either contend that the devil works with our God, or else let the Paraclete be held to be Satan. But you affirm it is a "human Antichrist": for by this name heretics are called in John. And how is it that, whoever he is, he has in [the name of] our Christ directed these duties toward our Lord; whereas withal antichrists have ever gone forth professedly teaching towards God, but in opposition to our Christ? On which side, then, do you think the Spirit is confirmed as existing among us?
[ANF, IV,110]

The significance of the Antichrist myth for the debates concerning the status of those persons baptised by heretics and schismatics can be seen in the epistles of Cyprian, and in the account of the seventh Council of Carthage. In a letter to Januarius and other Numidian bishops, Cyprian set out the issues clearly. He argued that the church could not approve the baptisms performed by such people while denying their legitimacy in other respects.

Ceterum probare est haeticorum et schismaticorum baptisma consentire in id quod illi baptizauerint neque enim potest pars illic inanis esse et pars

But it is to approve the baptism of heretics and schismatics, to admit that they have truly baptised. For therein a part cannot be void, and part be

praeualere ... quid enim potest ratum et firmum esse apud Dominum quod illi faciunt quos Dominus hostes et aduersarios suos dicit in euangelio suo ponens: qui non est mecum aduersus me; me est: et qui non mecum colligit, spargit, et beatus quoque apostolus Johannes mandata Domini et praecepta custodiens epistula sua posuerit: audistis quia antichristus uenit. nunc autem antichristi multi facti sunt. ... unde nos quoque colligere et considerare debemus an qui aduersarii sunt Domini et appellati sunt antichristi possint dare gratiam Christi.
[ep. 70.3 (CSEL, 3.2; 769f)]

valid. ... For what can be ratified and established by God which is done by them whom the Lord calls His enemies and adversaries? setting in His Gospel "He that is not with me is against and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth." And the blessed Apostle John also, in keeping the commandments and precepts of the Lord, has laid it down in his epistle, and said, "Ye have heard that antichrist shall come: and even now there are many antichrists; ..." Whence we also ought to gather and consider whether they who are the Lord's adversaries, and are called antichrists, can give the grace of Christ. [ANF, V,376]

There are several further examples, which will not be cited in full here. See also epp. 72.15 [for another general treatment of this question]; 74.26 [for the account of Stephen's attack on Cyprian himself as a "pseudo-Christum, pseudo-apostolum, et dolosum operarium"]; and 75.1 [for a reference to Novatian]. Similarly, in un. eccl. IX, Cyprian applies the words of 1 John 2:19 to heretics.

In the account of the Seventh Council of Carthage, there were several points when the Antichrist myth was utilised when referring to heretics. Caecilius of Bilta, Secundinus of Cadius, Saturninus of Victoriana, Saturninus of Avitini, and Cyprian himself, all made use of the antichrist label in their references to heretics and schismatics. The comments of Caecilius and Cyprian, respectively the first and last of the Council's eighty seven rulings, will suffice to illustrate the tenor of the Council's discussions, and how the Antichrist myth was employed.

Caecilius a Biltha dixit:
Ego unum baptismum in ecclesia sola scio et extra ecclesiam nullum. hic erit unum, ubi spes uera est et fides certa. sic enim scriptum est: una fides, una spes, unum baptisma, non apud haereticos, ubi spes nulla est et fides falsa, ubi omnia per mendacium geruntur, ubi exorcizat daemionicus sacramentum interrogat, cuius os et uerba cancerem mittunt, fidem dat infidelis, ueniam delictorum tribuit sceleratus, et in nomine Christi tinguit antichristus, benedicit a Deo maledictus, uitam pollicetur mortuus, pacem dat impacificus, Deum inuocat

Caecilius of Bilta said: I know only one baptism in the Church and none out of the Church. This one will be here, where there is the true hope, and the certain faith. For thus is it written: "One faith, one hope, one baptism;" not among heretics, where there is no hope, and the faith is false, where all things are carried on by lying; where a demoniac exorcises; where one whose mouth and words send forth a cancer puts the sacramental interrogation; the faithless gives faith; the wicked bestows pardons of sins; and Antichrist baptises in the name of Christ; he who is

blasphemus,
[sent. episc. 1 (CSEL, 3.1; 436)]

cursed of God blesses; he who is dead promises life; he who is unpeaceful gives the peace; the blasphemer calls upon God. [ANF, V,565]

Cyprianus a Cartagine dixit:
Meam sententiam plenissime exprimit
epistula quae ad Iubaianum collegam
nostrum scripta est, haereticos
secundum euangelicam et apostolicam
contestationem aduersarios Christi et
antichristos appellatos, quando ad
ecclesiam uenerint, unico ecclesiae
baptismo baptizandos esse, ut possint
fieri de aduersariis amici, de anti-
christis christiani.
[sent. episc. 87 (CSEL, 3.1; 461)]

Cyprian of Carthage said: The letter
which was written to our colleague
Jubaianus very fully expresses my
opinion, that, according to evangel-
ical and apostolic testimony, heretics
who are called adversaries of Christ
and Antichrists, when they come to
the Church, must be baptised with
the one baptism of the Church, that
they may be made of adversaries,
friends, and of Antichrists, Christians
[ANF, V,572]

As was noted above, ApEl 1:13f also reveals an awareness of this element of the Antichrist tradition. In addition, a link between false teaching and the Antichrist seems also to be implied by a passage in the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies.

οὕτως δὴ, ὡς ὁ ἀληθὴς ἡμῖν
προφήτης εἶρηκεν, πρῶτον
ψευδὲς δεῖ ἐλθεῖν εὐαγγέλιον
ὑπὸ πλάνου τινὸς καὶ εἶθ'
οὕτως μετὰ καθαίρεσιν τοῦ
ἀγίου τόπου εὐαγγέλιον
ἀληθὲς κρύφα διαπεμφθῆναι εἰς
ἐπανόρθωσιν τῶν ἐσομένων
αἰρέσεων· καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα
πρὸς τῷ τέλει πάλιν πρῶτον
ἀντίχριστον ἐλθεῖν δεῖ καὶ
τότε τὸν ὄντως Χριστὸν ἡμῶν
Ἰησοῦν ἀναφανῆναι.
[Hom. β 17.4f (GCS, I,42)]

So, then, as the true prophet has
told us, a false gospel must first
come from a certain deceiver; and
then in the same manner, after the
removal of the holy place, the true
gospel must be secretly sent abroad
for the correction of the heresies
that shall then be. And after this,
towards the end, Antichrist must
first return, and then our Jesus
must be revealed to be truly the
Christ.

4.3 THE UNPARALLELED EVIL OF THE ANTICHRIST

The writers of the third century expected the period of the Antichrist's ascendancy to be marked by an unprecedented outburst of evil. This would include an extensive persecution of Christians. As expressed in Irenaeus' doctrine of recapitulation, all the past evils of history were to be concentrated in the actions of the Antichrist. This can be seen in the passages

from haer. V.25.1; 28.2; and 29.2 cited earlier, and is also seen in another passage where he cited Daniel.

et post eos surget alius qui superabit malis omnes qui ante eum fuerunt, et reges tres deminorabit, et verba adversus altissimum Deum loquetur, et sanctos altissimi Dei conteret, et cogitabit demutare tempora et legem [haer. V.25.3 (SC, II,316)]

and after them shall rise another, who shall surpass in evil deeds all who were before him, and shall overthrow three kings; and he shall speak words against the most high God, and wear out the saints of the most high God, and shall purpose to change times and laws [ANF, 1,553f]

Hippolytus also addressed himself to a description of the evils to be perpetrated by the Antichrist, devoting chs 56-64 of his treatise to this matter. For Hippolytus, the aspect of greatest interest concerned the Antichrist's persecution of the faithful. He developed this theme partly with reference to the parable of the unjust magistrate (Luke 18:2-5) whom he identified with the Antichrist, described in this case under the significant title, "son of the devil and vessel of Satan" (antichr. 57.1)]. At the beginning of ch 56 Hippolytus moved to the consideration of these persecutions.

οὗτος οὖν ἐπισυνάξας πρὸς ἑαυτὸν τὸν πάντοτε ἀπειθῆ θεῷ λαὸν γεγεννημένον, ἄρχεται παρακαλούμενος ὑπ' αὐτῶν διώκειν τοὺς ἁγίους. [antichr. 56.1 (GCS, I,37)]

Having gathered to himself people who do not obey God from everywhere throughout the world, he comes at their call to persecute the holy ones.

This interest in the Antichrist as the supreme persecutor of the church is also to be observed in Hippolytus' comments part way through ch 58.

ὁς φυσιωθεὶς ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἄρχεται βίβλους κατὰ τῶν ἁγίων ἐκπέμπειν τοῦ πάντας πανταχοῦ ἀναιρεῖσθαι, τοὺς μὴ θέλοντας αὐτὸν σεβάξαι καὶ προσκυνεῖν ὡς θεόν.

And being puffed up with pride by the [Jews' loyalty], he shall begin to despatch papers against the holy ones, commanding that they all be destroyed in all places because of their refusal to reverence and worship him as a god.

[antichr. 58.4 (GCS, I,39)]

This was followed in antichr. 59 by a poetic description of the church as a ship traversing a stormy sea under the control of her skilled pilot, Christ. A lengthy citation of Rev 12:1-6 constitutes the whole of ch 60, being followed

by an explanation in ch 61. Towards the end of that explanation Hippolytus relates the traditional three and half years to this great persecution.

αὐταί εἰσιν αἱ ἑξήκοντα ἡμέραι, τὸ ἥμισυ τῆς ἑβδομάδος, ὡς κρατήσῃ ὁ τύραννος διώκων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν φεύγουσιν ἀπὸ πόλεως εἰς πόλιν καὶ ἐν ἔρημῷ κρυβομένην καὶ ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσιν.

This is the "one thousand two hundred and three score days" ("the half of the week") during which the tyrant is to reign and persecute the church, which flees "from city to city," and hides in the wilderness and among the mountains,

[antichr. 61.9 (GCS, I,42)]

In the two following chapters Hippolytus cited additional biblical material which spoke of persecution. The dominical instruction to flee Jerusalem when the disciples see the abomination of the desolation being set up in the temple (Matt 24:15-22) is quoted in full, being capped by a citation of Dan 11:31 and 12:11f to complete ch 62. Ch 63 comprises a full quotation of 2 Thess 2:1-12, climaxing with the text from Isa 26:10.

The theme of persecution has a prominent place in Hippolytus *comm.Dan.*, while false teachers play a reduced role -- perhaps a reflection of difficulties encountered by the church between the composition of his two studies. There are references to persecution by Antichrist in *comm.Dan.* IV,5.3; 12.5; 14.1; 24.8 and 50.1-3. A portion of the description in IV,50.3 will be cited here.

τότε γὰρ ἔσται θλίψις μεγάλη, ὃς οὐ γέγονεν τοιαύτη ἀπο καταβολῆς κόσμου, ἄλλων ἀλλαγῆ κατα πᾶσαν πόλιν καὶ χώραν εἰς τὸ ἀναιρεῖν τοὺς πιστοὺς πεμπομένων, καὶ τῶν μὲν Ἰουδαίων ἐπὶ τῇ τούτων ἀπωλείᾳ εὐφραινομένων, καὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν ἐπαιρομένων καὶ τῶν ἀπίστων αὐτοῖς συναιρομένων, τῶν δὲ ἀγίων ἀπο δύσεως εἰς ἀνατολὴν πορευομένων, καὶ ἐτέρων ἀπο ἀνατολῶν εἰς μεσημβρίαν διωκομένων, ἄλλων δὲ ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσιν καὶ ἐν τοῖς σπηλαίοις κρυπτομένων, παταχοῦ αὐτοὺς τοῦ βδελύγματος πολεμοῦντος

For then "shall be a great tribulation, such as has not been since the foundation of the world", when people will be sent in every direction, to each city and region, to exterminate the faithful. Then the Jews rejoicing at their destruction, and the gentiles celebrating and the faithless settling accounts with them, shall the saints from the west travel to the east, and those from the east shall be pursued to the middle, while others hide themselves in the mountains and in caves, and the abomination shall war against them everywhere: by sea and by dry land exterminating them by order and by every manner destroying them from the world. It will not be possible for them any longer "to sell" their own property nor "to buy" from

και δια θαλάσσης και δια
 ξηρας τούτους δια του προσ-
 τάγματος ἀναιροῦντος και
 κατα πάντα τρόπον ἐκ του
 κόσμου ἐκθλίβοντος, μη δυνα-
 μένων αὐτῶν μήτε "πωλῆσαι"
 το τῶν ἰδίων μήτε "ἀγοράσαι"
 παρα τῶν ἀλλοτρίων, χωρις
 ἐαν μή τις "το ὄνομα του
 θηρίου" ἐν χειρι περιφέρη, η
 το τούτου "χάραγμα" ἐπι τῷ
 μετώπῳ βαστάζη.

[comm.Dan. IV,50.3 (SC, 366)]

strangers, unless they bare in their
 hand "the name of the beast", or
 carry this one's "mark" upon the
 forehead.

From these excerpts it is clear that both Irenaeus and Hippolytus anticipated that the period of the Antichrist's ascendancy would be a "highwater mark" in the history of evil in the world, and that this would be at least partly expressed in particularly severe persecution of the church. This expectation was based to a large extent on the traditional apocalyptic teachings (cf. Matt 23:32-36 and the discussion at §9.2), but the ever-present shadow of actual persecutions by the Roman authorities could hardly have failed to leave its mark on their interest in the topic.

4.4 THE SINFUL PRIDE OF THE ANTICHRIST

Hippolytus described the pride of the Antichrist figure in terms of Isa 10:12-17, and with the aid of the "Lucifer" passage in Isaiah 14. His treatment of this element of the Antichrist myth extends over three chapters, of which only brief excerpts will be cited here.

εἶπε γὰρ· τῇ ἰσχύϊ ποιήσω και
 τῇ σοφίᾳ τῆς συνέσεως ἀφελῶ
 ὄρια ἐθνῶν, και τὴν ἰσχυν
 αὐτῶν προνομεύσω· και σείσω
 πόλεις κατοικουμένας, και τὴν
 οἰκουμένην ὅλην καταλήψομαι
 τῇ χειρὶ μου ὡς νοσιάν, και
 ὡς καταλελειμμένα ὡὰ
 ἀροῦμαι· και οὐκ ἔστιν ὅστις
 διαφεύξεταί με ἢ ἀντείπη μοι.

[antichr. 16.2 (GCS, I,12)]

For he said, "By my strength I shall
 do it, and by the wisdom of my
 understanding I shall remove the
 bounds of the peoples, and rob them
 of their strength: and I shall make
 the inhabited cities tremble, and
 gather the whole world in my hand
 like a nest, and I shall lift it up
 like eggs that are left. And there is
 no one that shall escape or oppose
 me."

πῶς ἔπεσεν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὁ
 ἑωσφόρος ὁ πρῶτῃ ἀνατέλλων;
 συνετρίβη εἰς τὴν γῆν ὁ
 ἀποστέλλων πρὸς πάντα τὰ
 ἔθνη. σὺ δὲ εἶπας τῇ διανοίᾳ
 σου· εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν
 ἀναβήσομαι, ἐπάνω τῶν
 ἄστρον τοῦ οὐρανοῦ θήσω τὸν
 θρόνον μου, καθίσω ἐν ὄρει
 ὑψηλῷ ἐπὶ τὰ ὄρη ὑψηλὰ τὰ
 πρὸς βορρᾶν, ἀναβήσομαι
 ἐπάνω τῶν νεφελῶν, ἔσομαι
 ὅμοιος τῷ ὑψίστῳ.

[antichr. 17.6f (GCS, I,13)]

Ἐζεκιήλ δὲ ὁμοίως λέγει περὶ
 αὐτοῦ οὕτως· ἴαδε λέγει
 κύριος ὁ θεός· ἀνθ' ὧν ὑψώθη
 ἡ καρδία σου, καὶ εἶπας· θεός
 εἰμι ἐγώ, κατοικίαν θεοῦ
 κατώκηκα ἐν καρδίᾳ θαλάσσης,
 σὺ δὲ ἄνθρωπος καὶ οὐ θεός,
 ἔδωκας τὴν καρδίαν σου ὡς
 καρδίαν θεοῦ, μὴ σοφώτερος εἶ
 τοῦ Δανιήλ; σοφοὶ οὐκ
 ἐπαίδευσάν σε τῇ ἐπιστήμῃ
 αὐτῶν· μὴ τῇ σοφίᾳ σου ἢ
 φρονήσει σου ἐποίησας σεαυτῷ
 δύναμιν καὶ χρυσίον καὶ
 ἀργύριον ἐν τοῖς θησαυροῖς
 σου; ἢ ἐν τῇ πολλῇ ἐπιστήμῃ
 σου καὶ ἐμπορίᾳ σου
 ἐπλήθυνας δύναμιν σου; ὑψώθη
 ἡ καρδία σου ἐν τῇ δυνάμει
 σου."

[antichr. 18.1-4 (GCS, I,14)]

ApEl 4:7ff also developed this idea of the pride of the Antichrist, drawing on the symbolism of the ancient combat myth traditions. In the context of a description of the denunciation of the Antichrist by Enoch and Elijah, it has the following section.

Are you indeed not ashamed?
 When you attach yourself to the saints,
 because you are always estranged.
 You have been hostile to those who belong to heaven.
 You have acted against those belonging to the earth.
 You have been hostile to the thrones.

How did you fall from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning? He who sends off to all the nations is cast down to the ground. And you said to yourself, "I shall ascend into heaven, I shall set set my throne above the stars of heaven. I shall sit down upon the great mountains of the North; I shall ascend above the clouds; I shall be like the Most High.

Ezekiel also speaks of him in the same manner: "Thus says the Lord God, 'Because your heart is exalted, and you have said, I am God, I sit in the seat of God, in the heart of the sea; (and) yet you are a human being and not a god, although you have set your heart like the heart of a god. Are you not wiser than Daniel? Have the wise not instructed you with their wisdom? With your wisdom or with your understanding have you obtained power, and gold and silver in your treasures? By your great wisdom and traffic have you increased your power? Your heart is exalted with your power."

You have acted against the angels.
 You are always a stranger.
 You have fallen from heaven like the morning stars.
 You were changed, and your tribe became dark for you.
 But you are not ashamed, when you stand firmly against God.
 You are a devil. [ApEI 4:8-12 (OTP, 1,747f)]

The only other writer to refer explicitly to the hybris of the Antichrist was Cyprian. In his letter to Cornelius, Cyprian exhorted him not to be over-awed by haughty claims and hollow boasts, as these were marks of Antichrist rather than of Christ.

exaltatio et inflatio et adrogans
 ac superba iactatio non de Christi
 magisterio, qui humilitatem docet,
 sed de antichristi spiritu nascitur,
 cui exprobrat per prophetam Dominus
 et dicit: tu autem dixisti in animo
 tuo: in caelum ascendam, super
 stellas Dei ponam sedem meam,
 [ep. 59.3 (CSEL, 3.2; 669)]

Exaltation, and puffing up, and arrogant and haughty boastfulness, spring not from the teachings of Christ who teaches humility, but from the spirit of Antichrist, whom the Lord rebukes by his prophet, saying, "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will place my throne above the stars of God..." [ANF, V,339]

Although these writers did not realise it, it is probable that this element of the Antichrist myth drew upon ancient mythological traditions of the combat myth. This mythological tradition seems to be attested in various parts of the biblical tradition, not least being such passages as Isa 47:10-11, Daniel 7-12, 2 Thess 2:3ff and Revelation 13ff which were familiar to the writers. As will be seen, this was a common mythic pattern employed in apocalyptic writings, as well as still being current in various forms in the contemporary hellenistic world. It seems to have made its way into the Antichrist myth through these sources. The pride of the Antichrist figure was an aspect of the myth which was closely related to the next aspect, his claim to divine honours.

4.5 THE ANTICHRIST'S CLAIM TO DIVINE HONOURS

This aspect of the myth was one of the essential components of the patristic Antichrist scenario. Being another of the elements of the ancient combat myth tradition, this ingredient of the myth drew on diverse sources. The third century writers could draw upon Revelation, 2 Thessalonians, the synoptic apocalypses and, beyond them, the visions of Daniel occasioned by the crisis in Judaea during the reign of Antiochus IV. However, there were also other

sources, including the ancient religious traditions of the eastern Mediterranean world and the contemporary experience of the growing emperor cult.

This combination of influences produced a powerful element of the Antichrist myth. It ostensibly drew its vocabulary and symbolism from the biblical tradition, but really exercised such a powerful impact because of the socio-religious setting of early Christianity.

The Antichrist's claim of divine honours was understood by these writers as the ultimate fulfilment of "the abomination of desolation" referred to in Daniel 7:25; 8:11ff; 9:27; 11:31 and in Mark 13:14 (cf. Matt 24:15; Luke 21:20). It would be the pinnacle of Antichrist's rebellion and evil work; and the final act of rebellion before the parousia (taking a lead from 2 Thess 2:1-4). Irenaeus referred to this crisis several times. In *haer.* V.25.1 Irenaeus cited the passage from 2 Thessalonians, and then continued,

Manifeste igitur Apostolus ostendit apostasium ejus et quoniam extollatur super omne quod dicitur Deus vel quod colitur, hoc est super omne idolum -- hi enim sunt qui dicuntur quidem ab hominibus, non sunt autem dii --, et quoniam ipse se tyrannico more conabitur ostendere Deum. [*haer.* V.25.1 (SC, II,310)]

The apostle therefore clearly points out his apostasy, and that he is lifted up above all that is called God or worshipped - that is, above every idol - for these are indeed so called by men, but are not gods; and that he will endeavour in a tyrannical manner to set himself forth as God. [ANF, I,553]

Irenaeus returned to this point later in the same chapter.

transferet regnum in eam, et in templo Dei sedebit, seducens eos qui adorant eum quasi ipse sit Christus. [*haer.* V.25.4 (SC, II,320)]

he shall remove his kingdom to that city, and shall sit in the temple of God, leading astray those who worship him, as if he were Christ. [ANF, I,554]

In chapter 28, Irenaeus mentioned the session in the temple once more.

illo enim veniente et sua sententia apostasiam recapitulante in semetipsum et sua voluntate et arbitrio operante quaecumque operabitur et in templo Dei sedente, ut sicut Christum adorent illum qui seducentur ab illo [*haer.* V.28.2 (SC, II,350)]

For when he comes, and of his own accord concentrates in his own person the apostasy, and accomplishes whatever he shall do according to his own will and choice, sitting also in the temple of God, so that his dupes may adore him as the Christ [ANF, I,557]

The passages from Hippolytus which were cited in §4.4 are relevant to this point as well, for the pride of the Antichrist was to consist largely in his

attempt to usurp the place and dignity of God (cf. comm. Dan. IV, 12.5; 49.1; 55.1). This idea was developed at more length in antichr. 53.

τούτων οὕτως ἐσομένων,
ἀγαπητέ, καὶ τῶν τριῶν
κεράτων ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἐκκοπίντων,
μετὰ ταῦτα ἄρξεται ὡς θεὸν
ἑαυτὸν ἐπιδεικνύναι, ὡς
προεῖπεν Ἐζεκιήλ· ἄνθ' ὧν
ὑψώθη ἡ καρδία σου, καὶ
εἶπας· θεὸς εἰμι ἐγώ." καὶ
Ἡσαΐας ὁμοίως· "σὺ δὲ εἶπας
τῇ καρδίᾳ σου· εἰς τὸν
οὐρανὸν ἀναβήσομαι, ἐπάνω
τῶν ἀστρῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ θήσω
τὸν θρόνον μου. ἔσομαι
ὅμοιος τῷ ὑψίστῳ· νυνὶ δὲ εἰς
ἄδην καταβήσῃ καὶ εἰς τὰ
θεμέλια τῆς γῆς." ὡσαύτως δὲ
καὶ Ἐζεκιήλ· "μὴ λέγων ἐρεῖς
τοῖς ἀναιρουσί σε ὅτι θεὸς
εἰμι ἐγώ, σὺ δὲ εἶ ἄνθρωπος
καὶ οὐ θεός."

[antichr. 53 (GCS, 1,35)]

These things, then, beloved, shall be in the future; and when the three horns are cut off, he will begin to show himself as God, as Ezekiel has said in advance: "Because your heart has been exalted, and you have said, 'I am a god.'" And similarly Isaiah says: "For you have said in your heart, 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of heaven: I will be like the Most High.' Yet now you shall be brought down to Hades, to the foundations of the earth." In the same way Ezekiel says: "Will you still say to those who kill you, 'I am a god?' But you are a man, and not a god."

Origen also referred to this important aspect of the Antichrist myth. In Cels. VI.46 he cited the passage from 2 Thessalonians 2 in full and then repeated the references to the session in the temple, pointing out that Daniel also spoke of it.

ὅπερ δὲ παρὰ τῷ Παύλῳ
λέλεκται ἐν τῇ ἐξεθέμην αὐτοῦ
λέξει, φασκούση· ὥστε αὐτὸν
εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ
καθίσει, ἀποδεικνύντα ἑαυτὸν
ὅτι ἐστὶ θεός," τοῦτο καὶ ἐν
τῷ Δαυιδ τούτου εἴρηται τὸν
τρόπον· καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ ἱερὸν
βδέλυγμα τῶν ἐρημώσεων, καὶ
ἕως συντελείας καιροῦ
συντέλεια δοθήσεται ἐπὶ τὴν
ἐρήμωσιν."

[Cels. VI.46 (GCS, 118)]

And the event of which Paul has spoken, in his words that I have quoted, which say, 'so that he is seated in the temple of God, making a show of himself as a god', is also mentioned by Daniel in this way, 'and at the temple a desolating sacrilege, and at the final time an end shall be given to the desolation.'

The session in the temple was the most common form for expressing this idea of the Antichrist claiming divine honours (cf. also ApEl 2:41; 4:1,7). It was expected to be the most radical expression of the evil character of the Antichrist, since he asserted his divine claims against "everything called divine". In this final blasphemous step, the Antichrist would clearly reveal his satanic pedigree and come nearest to accomplishing his ostensible purpose of usurping the proper reign of God within creation and history. It was, in other words, the climax of the rebellion by the lesser deity in the ancient combat myth tradition (cf. Table T12).

4.6 THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

The ease with which the Antichrist was expected to attain his purposes, and his anticipated power to perform miracles, could cast doubt upon the sovereignty of God. Several of these writers from the third century were aware of this danger, and they asserted that all these events would be within the scope allowed to Antichrist by God in accordance with God's own purposes. Their views on this matter seem to have been influenced by 2 Thess 2:11-12 which was cited in full, without comment, by Hippolytus in *antichr.* 63.

Irenaeus referred to the Thessalonian passage, while at the same time making it clear that God's sovereignty would not excuse the evil actions of the Antichrist, who would still exercise free will.

Et propter hoc Apostolus ait: Pro eo quod dilectionem Dei non receperunt ut salvi fierent, et ideo mittit eis Deus operationem erroris, ut credant mendacio, ut judicentur omnes qui non crediderunt veritati, sed consenserunt iniquitati, illo enim veniente et sua sententia apostasiam recapitulante in semetipsum et sua voluntate et arbitrio operante quaecumque operabitur et in templo Dei sedente, ut sicut Christum adorent illum qui seducentur ab illo, quapropter et juste in stagnum projicietur ignis, Deo autem secundum suam providentiam praesciente omnia et apto tempore eum qui talis futurus erat immittente ut credant falso, ut judicentur omnes qui non

And for this reason the Apostle says: "Because they received not the love of God, that they might be saved, therefore God shall also send them the operation of error that they may believe a lie, that they may all be judged who have not believed the truth but consented to unrighteousness." For when he is come, and of his own accord concentrates in his own person the apostasy, and accomplishes whatever he shall do according to his own will and choice, sitting also in the temple of God, so that his dupes may adore him as the Christ; wherefore also shall he deservedly "be cast into the lake of fire;" (this will happen according to divine appointment), God by his prescience foresee-

crediderunt veritati, sed
consenserunt iniquitati.
[haer. V.28.2 (SC, II,348f)]

[ANF, I,557]

Tertullian was also aware of this problem. In his critique of Marcion's views of the Antichrist (which Tertullian regarded as inconsistent with Marcion's own view of the God of the OT), Tertullian employed the passage from 2 Thessalonians 2 and emphasised the sovereignty of God in the appearance of the Antichrist.

Quis autem est homo delicti, filius perditionis, quem reuelari prius oportet ante domini aduentum, extollens se super omne quod deus dicitur et omnem religionem, consessurus in templo dei et deum se iactaturus? secundum nos quidem antichristus, ut docent uetere ac nouae prophetiae, ut Johannes apostolus, qui iam antichristos dicit processisse in mundum, praecursores antichristi spiritus, negantes Christum in carne uenisse et soluentes Iesum, scilicet in deo creatore; secundum uero Marcionem nescio, ne Christus sit creatoris nondum enim uenit apud illum. quisquis est autem ex duobus, quaero, cur ueniat in omni uirtute et signis et ostentis mendacii. propterea, inquit, quod dilectionem ueritatis non susceperint, ut salui essent; et propter hoc erit eis in instinctum fallaciae, ut credant mendacio, ut iudicentur omnes, qui non crediderunt ueritati, sed consenserunt iniquitati. igitur si antichristus et secundum creatorem, deus erit creator, qui eum mittit ad impingendos eos in errorem, qui non crediderunt ueritati, ut salui fierent [Marc. V.16 (CSEL, 47,630)]

ing all this, and at the proper time sending such a man, "that they may believe a lie, that they may all be judged who did not believe the truth, but consented to unrighteousness."

Well, but who is "the man of sin, the son of perdition," who must first be revealed before the Lord comes; who "opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped; who is to sit in the temple of God and boast himself as being God?" According indeed to our view, he is Antichrist; as is taught us in both the ancient and the new prophecies, and especially by the Apostle John, who says that "already many false prophets are gone out into the world," the fore-runners of Antichrist, who deny that Christ is come in the flesh, and do not acknowledge Jesus meaning in God the Creator. According however, to Marcion's view, it is really hard to know whether he might not be [after all] the Creator's Christ; because according to him He is not yet come. But whichever of the two it is, I want to know why he comes "in all power, and with lying signs and wonders?" "Because," he says, "they received not the love of truth, that they might be saved; for which cause God shall send them an instinct of delusion [to believe a lie], that they might all be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." If therefore he be Antichrist, and comes according to the Creator's purpose, it must be God the Creator who sends him to fasten in their error those who did not believe the truth, that they might be saved. [ANF, III,463f]

Cyprian also taught that the coming of the Antichrist, and the deception which the Antichrist was presently working through false teachers, were signs of divine judgment. In his letter to Cornelius he drew upon both 2 Thess 2:1ff and Isa 24:10.

denique hinc illis percussa mens et hebes animus et sensus alienus est: ira est Dei non intellegere delicta, ne sequatur paenitentia, sicut scriptum est: et dedit illis Deus spiritum transpunctionis, ne reuertantur scilicet et curentur et deprecationibus ac satisfactionibus iustus post peccata sanentur. Paulus apostolus in epistula sua ponit et dicit: dilectum ueritatis non habuerunt ut salui fierent: ac propterea mittet illis Deus operationem erroris, ut credant mendacio, ut iudicentur omnes qui non crediderunt ueritati, sed sibi placent in iniustitia.

[ep. 54.13 (CSEL, 3.2; 681)]

Finally, their mind is smitten by these things and their spirit is dull, and their sense of right estranged: it is God's wrath that they do not perceive their sins lest repentance should follow, as it is written, "And God gave them the spirit of torpor," that is, that they may not return and be healed and be made whole after their sins by just prayers and satisfactions. Paul the apostle in his epistle lays it down, and says, "They received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion; that they should believe a lie; that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." [ANF, V,343]

Origen also addressed himself directly to this problem. His comments were brief and to the point. He simply quotes Paul's words:

ἐκτιθέμενος δὲ καὶ τὴν αἰτίαν τοῦ ἐπιτρέπεσθαι τὸν ἄνομον ἐπιδημεῖν τῷ βιωῶ φησὶν· ἄνθ' ὧν τὴν ἀγάπην τῆς ἀληθείας οὐκ ἐδέξαντο εἰς τὸ σωθῆναι αὐτοῖς. καὶ διὰ τοῦτο πέμπει αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς ἐνέργειαν πλάνης εἰς τὸ πιστεῦσαι αὐτοὺς τῷ ψεύδει, ἵνα κριθῶσιν ἅπαντες οἱ μὴ πιστεύσαντες τῇ ἀληθείᾳ ἀλλ' εὐδοκῆσαντες ἐν τῇ ἀδικίᾳ.
[Cels. II.50 (GCS, I,172f)]

And he presents the reason that the lawless one is allowed to live, saying, "Because they did not receive the love of the truth for salvation. And due to this, God sends them a working of error, so that they might believe the Lie, in order that all might be judged who believed not the truth, but delighted in unrighteousness."

A similar point was made by Victorinus when commenting upon Rev 17:16. He described the return of Nero as an act of God designed to punish the Jews, that is, as an act of divine sovereignty.

hunc ergo suscitatum deus mittere regem dignum dignis et Christum, qualem meruerunt Iudei. et quoniam aliud nomen afferturus est, aliam

Him therefore, when raised up, God will send as a worthy king, but worthy in such a way as the Jews merited. And since he is to have an-

etiam uitam institurus, ut sic eum
tamquam Christum excipiant Iudei.
[comm. XVII.16 (CSEL, 49,121)]

other name, He shall also appoint
another name, so that the Jews may
receive him as if he were the Christ.
[ANF, VII,358]

This stress upon the total control which God will exercise over the appearance and actions of the Antichrist may also be seen in Victorinus' comments on Rev 11:7.

sed non sua uirtute nec patris sui
suscitatur sed dei iussu. quare ergo
Paulus eisdem dicit:
[comm. XI.7 (CSEL, 49,103)]

but he is not raised up by his own
power, nor by that of his father, but
by command of God, of which thing
Paul says... [ANF, VII,354]

In reviewing the material gathered in this chapter it is apparent that the Antichrist myth was closely related with the older and more extensive Satan myth. Both myths were elements of the early church's speculation about the origin and nature of evil, the relationship of that evil to their belief in God, and their general views concerning the culmination of human history in a future cosmic climax. That a particularly close relationship between these two figures was postulated is quite clear. However, they were never completely merged into one figure, and the Antichrist never supplanted Satan as the principal symbol of evil in Christian theology.

It may not be pressing the data too far to suggest that while Satan remained the mythological source of all evil, the Antichrist figure developed into the immediate human embodiment of evil as a direct counterpart to faith in Jesus as the Christ figure. While the ultimate enemy was Satan, the human form in which his actions and purposes were to be incarnated, and therefore experienced by the faithful, would be as the Antichrist. It is not going beyond the evidence to suggest that for some Christians, at least, Antichrist was understood in this period as the embodiment of Satan and his evil purposes in a manner analogous to the embodiment of God's saving purposes in Jesus Christ.

Naturally, in view of the church's basic monotheism, both the Satan and the Antichrist figures were necessarily seen as subservient to God and, by extension, to Christ. In fact, these writers would have shared the NT belief that the decisive defeat of both these figures had been accomplished "once for all" on the cross, and that they were now unwittingly fulfilling God's own purposes as instruments of judgment on unbelievers and heretics. When Satan and the Antichrist had fulfilled their divinely ordained roles, their end would be speedy and certain. In the meantime it was believed that their influence could be seen in the appearance of false teachers and heretics.

It is somewhat surprising that the persecution of the church in this period was not also ascribed to their influence, since that would have seemed a logical interpretation on the basis of the beliefs already noted. However, that did not happen. The contemporary persecutions, while understood as being due to satanic influence in the empire, were not associated with the Antichrist myth — although it was agreed that when he attained his temporary ascendancy the Antichrist would unleash persecutions of unparalleled ferocity. That is a matter to be considered in more detail in the next chapter. For now it is sufficient to note the clear consensus in third century literature that the Antichrist would be an evil character, acting as the embodiment of Satan's designs.

5. THE ACTIVITY OF THE ANTICHRIST FIGURE

Having considered the evidence concerning the character of the Antichrist figure, it is now appropriate to examine what the third century writers had to say about the actions of the Antichrist. The origins, actions and fate of the Antichrist are obviously related to some of the elements of the myth already considered in the previous chapter: especially the Antichrist's relationship with Satan, his deceit of the nations through his false miracles, and his claim of divine honours. The earlier comments should be borne in mind during the subsequent discussion.

5.1 THE ORIGINS OF THE ANTICHRIST

There was some confusion in the third century literature over the origins of the Antichrist figure. The concentration upon the evil actions of the Antichrist figure, his association with Satan and his immediate impact through the activities of false teachers, heretics and schismatics meant that less attention was paid to the question of his origins. There was some variety of opinions among the commentators. On the one hand, there was a tradition that the Antichrist would originate from the Jewish tribe of Dan. The Antichrist would therefore be a Jew, although this consequence was not emphasised in the third century writings. On the other hand, the Antichrist was sometimes seen as a revived Nero, a non-Jewish Roman ruler. At times both expectations were combined, as in the case of Commodian who referred to two Antichrist figures: one a revived Nero and the other a Jewish figure "from the East" (cf. the extracts from Commodian's poems below).

In two cases, there were attempts to describe the physical appearance of the Antichrist. Both Irenaeus and Hippolytus referred to the origins of the Antichrist from the tribe of Dan. Irenaeus mentions this point in *haer.* V.30.2, where it was said to be one of the essential characteristics to be noted when identifying the Antichrist. The relationship of Dan to the Antichrist was understood as the reason for the absence of that tribe from the list of the redeemed in Rev 7:5-7.

Hieremias autem non solum subitaneum ejus adventum, sed et tribum ex qua veniet manifestavit dicens: Ex Dan audiemus vocem velocitatis equorum ejus; a voce hinnitus decursionis equorum ejus commovebitur tota terra; et veniet, et manducabit terram, et plentitudinem ejus, et civitatem, et qui habitant in ea. Et propter hoc non annumeratur tribus haec in Apocalypsi cum his quae salvantur. [haer. V.30.2 (SC, II,378)]

And Jeremiah does not merely point out his sudden coming, but he even indicates which tribe from which he shall come, where he says, "We shall hear the voice of his swift horses from Dan; the whole earth shall be moved by the neighing of his galloping horses: he shall also come and devour the earth, and the fullness thereof, the city also, and they that dwell therein." This, too, is the reason that this tribe is not reckoned in the Apocalypse along with those which are saved. [ANF, I,559]

As was noted above, Hippolytus also cited Jer 8:16. However, he developed the idea of Antichrist's connection with the tribe of Dan in considerably more detail than Irenaeus had done. Hippolytus drew upon other OT passages to support his case (Gen 3:1; 49:16-17; Deut 33:22), and also made recourse to an otherwise unknown prophet.

φησὶ γὰρ Μωσῆς οὕτως·
 "σκύμνος λέοντος Δὰν καὶ
 ἐκπηθήσεται ἐκ Βασάν." ἀλλ'
 ἵνα μὴ σφαλῆ τις, νομίσας
 περὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰρήσθαι τὸ
 ῥήτον τοῦτο, ἐπιστησάτω τὸν
 νοῦν. "Δὰν," φησι, "σκύμνος
 λέοντος" τὴν φυλὴν ὀνομάσας,
 τὴν τοῦ Δὰν, ἐσαφήνισε τὸ
 προκείμενον, ἐξ ἧς μέλλει ὁ
 ἀντίχριστος γεννᾶσθαι. ὥσπερ
 γὰρ ἐκ τῆς Ἰούδα φυλῆς ὁ
 Χριστὸς γεγέννηται, οὕτως καὶ
 ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Δὰν φυλῆς ὁ
 ἀντίχριστος γεννηθήσεται. ὅτι
 δὲ οὕτως ἔχει, τί φησιν
 Ἰακώβ· "γενθήτω Δὰν ὄφεις
 ἐφ' ὄδοῦ καθήμενος, δάκνων
 πτέρναν ἵππου." ὄφεις οὖν τίς
 ἄρα ἢ ὁ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς πλάνος, ὁ
 ἐν τῇ γενέσει εἰρημένος, ὁ
 πλανήσας τὴν Εὐάν καὶ περ-
 νίσας τὸν Ἀδάμ; ἀλλ' ἐπειδη
 διὰ πλειόνων μαρτυριῶν δεῖ
 ἀποδείξαι τὰ προκείμενα, οὐκ
 ἀτονήσωμεν. ὅτι μὲν γὰρ
 οὕτως ἐκ τῆς φυλῆς Δὰν
 μέλλει γεννᾶσθαι καὶ ἀνίστασ-
 θαι τύραννος, βασιλεὺς, κριτῆς

For Moses speaks as follows: "Dan is a lion's whelp, and he shall leap from Bashan." But in order that no-one may err by thinking that this saying is said of the Christ, let him attend carefully to the matter. "Dan," he says, "is a lion's whelp;" naming the tribe as Dan, he declared clearly the tribe from which Antichrist shall be born. For just as Christ is born of the tribe of Judah, so Antichrist shall be born of the tribe of Dan. That this is so, is established in the words of Jacob: "Let Dan be a serpent, lying upon the way, biting the horse's heel." Who, then, is the serpent but he who was a deceiver from the beginning, who is mentioned in Genesis, the deceiver of Eve and usurper of Adam? But since this assertion must be demonstrated with complete testimony, we shall not shrink from the task. That it is really from the tribe of Dan, then, that this tyrant and king, dread judge, son of the devil, is destined to be born and arise, the prophet witnesses when he says, "Dan shall judge his people, as he is also one tribe in Israel." But some-one may say that this refers to Samson, who was born of the tribe of Dan, and judged the people twenty years.

δεινός, υἱὸς τοῦ διαβόλου
 φησὶν ὁ προφήτης "Δὰν κρινεῖ
 τὸν ἑαυτοῦ λαόν, ὡσεὶ καὶ
 μίαν φυλὴν ἐν Ἰσραήλ." ἀλλ'
 ἔρει τις· τοῦτο ἐπὶ τὸν
 Σαμψῶν εἴρηται, ὅς ἐκ τῆς
 φυλῆς τοῦ Δὰν γεννηθεὶς
 ἔκρινε τὸν λαὸν εἴκοσιν ἔτη.
 τὸ μὲν ἐπὶ τοῦ Σαμψῶν
 μερικῶς γεγένηται, τὸ δὲ καθ'
 ὅλου πληρωθήσεται ἐπὶ τὸν
 ἀντίχριστον. λέγει γὰρ καὶ
 Ἰερεμίας οὕτως· "σπουδὴν ἐκ
 Δὰν ἀκουσόμεθα ὀξύτητος
 ἵππων αὐτοῦ, ἀπὸ φωνῆς
 χρεμετισμοῦ ἵππασίας ἵππων
 αὐτοῦ ἐσείσθη πᾶσα ἡ γῆ."
 λέγει δὲ καὶ ἕτερος προφήτης·
 "συνάξει πᾶσαν δύναμιν αὐτοῦ
 ἀπὸ ἡλίου ἀνατολῶν μέχρι
 ἡλίου δυσμῶν· οὓς κεκλήκει καὶ
 οὓς οὐ κεκλήκει πορεύσονται
 μετ' αὐτοῦ· λευκανεῖ τὴν
 θάλασσαν ἀπὸ τῶν ἰστίων τῶν
 πλοίων αὐτοῦ καὶ μελανεῖ το
 πεδίον ἀπὸ τῶν θυρεῶν καὶ
 τῶν ὀπλῶν καὶ πᾶς ὅς ἂν
 συναντήσῃ αὐτῷ ἐν πολέμῳ,
 ἐν μαχαίρα πεσεῖται."

[antichr. 14.2-15.5 (GCS I,11f)]

While the prophecy had its partial fulfilment in Samson, it will be completely fulfilled in the Antichrist. For Jeremiah also says thus: "From Dan we will hear the sound of the speed of his horses: at the sound of the neighing of his horses, the whole land trembled." And another prophet says: "He shall gather together all his might, from the rising of the sun even to the setting of the sun. Those he calls, and those he does not call, shall go with him. He shall make the sea white with the sails of his ships, and the plain black with the shields of his armaments. And whoever shall oppose him in war shall fall by the sword."

It is possible that the "unknown prophet", cited by Hippolytus in support of his views on the tribe of Dan, was ApEl. W. Bousset postulated a "Little Daniel" as the "other prophet" in Hippolytus.¹ On the other hand, M.E. Stone and J. Strugnell suggest that Hippolytus cited ApEl.²

The belief that the Antichrist would emerge from the tribe of Dan may lie behind an obscure reference in ApEl 4:11b ["You were changed, and your tribe became dark for you."], which could be related to the tradition that Dan was especially associated with Satan and under a curse (cf. LivPro 3:16ff and TDan 5:6f).

1 Der Antichrist, 52.

2 Elijah, 84f.

ApEl is also significant as one of only two writings from this period which described the physical appearance of the Antichrist figure. This is an aspect of the Antichrist tradition which has no parallel in the early Jewish literature that describes the Endtyrant figure.

For behold I will tell you his signs so that you might know him. He is a ... of a skinny-legged young lad, having a tuft of gray hair at the front of his bald head. His eyebrows will reach to his ears. There is a leprous bare spot on the front of his hands. He will transform himself in the presence of those who see him. He will become a young child. He will become old. He will transform himself in every sign. But the signs of his head will not be able to change. Therein you shall know that he is the son of lawlessness. [ApEl 3:14-18 (OTP, 1,745f)]

This description in ApEl may be compared with that in IRevJn, which supplies the only other account of Antichrist's physical appearance in this early literature.

Καὶ πάλιν εἶπον· κύριε, ἀπὸ τότε τί μέλλεις ποιεῖν; καὶ ἤκουσα φωνῆς λεγούσης μοι· ἄκουσον, δίκαιε Ἰωάννη· τότε φανήσεται ὁ ἀρνητῆς καὶ ἐξορισμένος ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ, ὁ λεγόμενος ἀντίχριστος. καὶ πάλιν εἶπον· κύριε, ἀποκάλυψόν μοι ποταπὸς ἐστίν. καὶ ἤκουσα φωνῆς λεγούσης μοι· τὸ εἶδος τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ ζοφῶδες, αἱ τρίχες τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ ὀξεῖαι ὡς βέλη, οἱ ὄφρυες αὐτοῦ ὡσεὶ ἀγροῦ, ὁ ὀφθαλμὸς αὐτοῦ ὁ δεξιὸς ὡς ὁ ἀστήρ ὁ πρῶτ' ἀνατέλλων, καὶ ὁ ἕτερος ὡς λέοντος, τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ ὡς πῆχυν μίαν, οἱ ὀδόντες αὐτοῦ σπιθαμιαῖοι, οἱ δάκτυλοι αὐτοῦ ὡς δρέπανα, τὸ ἴχνος τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ σπιθαμῶν δύο, καὶ εἰς τὸ μέτωπον αὐτοῦ γραφὴ ἀντίχριστος. ἕως τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὑψωθήσεται καὶ ἕως τοῦ ἅδου καταβήσεται, ποιῶν ψευδοφαντασίας.
[IRevJn 6 (AA, 73ff)]

And again I said, "Lord, what will you do after that?" And I heard a voice saying to me, "Hear, righteous John. Then shall appear the Denier and the one set apart in darkness, who is called Antichrist." And again I said, "Lord, reveal to me his form." And I heard a voice saying to me, "The appearance of his face is dusky; the hairs of his head are sharp as darts; his eyebrows like a wild beast's; his right eye like the star which rises in the morning, and the other like a lion's; his mouth about one cubit; his teeth a span long; his fingers like scythes; the print of his feet of two spans; and on his face an inscription, 'Antichrist'. He shall be exalted even to heaven, and cast down even to Hades, making false displays."

W. Bousset noted various texts in which the Antichrist is described as a monster, all descriptions closely related to those seen here, although somewhat later in date.³ M.E. Stone and J. Strugnell provide the text of twelve passages that describe the physical appearance of the Antichrist.⁴

The obscurity which remained in the third century speculation about the origin of the Antichrist figure, suggests that the focus of their interest in the myth lay elsewhere. There was more interest in the evil character of the Antichrist, his links with the Jewish nation (see §5.3 below), and his tyrannical actions. Consequently, these elements in the myth were more developed as will be seen in the material examined in the remainder of this chapter.

5.2 THE MILITARY CONQUESTS OF THE ANTICHRIST

Following his appearance on the world scene, it was anticipated that the Antichrist would take control of the political order by means of a series of swift and decisive military conquests. Three opposing kings were to be overcome, a detail clearly derived from the description of Antiochus IV in Daniel 7. The writers in this period understood the "little horn" of Daniel to be the Antichrist, and they interpreted the subjection of the three big horns by the little horn as three military conquests of the Antichrist.

For Irenaeus, these conquests were to be the second of three inevitable signs by which the advent of the Antichrist would be recognised by the faithful. (The other signs were to be, first, the division of the Roman empire into ten kingdoms capable of being subdued by the Antichrist; and secondly, the name of the Antichrist having a numerical value of 666.) The importance of these conquests was in part due to the way in which they would fulfill prophecies of both OT and NT scripture, as can be seen in the following citation.

Sed, scientes firmiter numerum qui a Scriptura annuntiatus est, hoc est, sexcentorum sexaginta sex, sustineant primum quidem divisionem regni in decem; post deinde, illis regnantibus, et incipientibus corrigere sua negotia et augere suum regnum, qui de impro-

But knowing the sure number declared by Scripture, that is, six hundred and sixty six, let them await, in the first place, the division of the kingdom into ten; then in the next place, when these kings are reigning, and are beginning to set their affairs in

3 *Der Antichrist*, 101f. See also J.-M. Rosenstiehl, ["Portrait de l'antichrist", I,45-63] for a more recent collection of these traditions.

4 *Elijah*, 27-39.

viso advenerit regnum sibi vindicans et terreat praedictos habens nomen continens praedictum numerum, hunc vere cognoscere esse abominationem desolationis. Hoc et Apostolus ait: Cum dixerint, Pax et munitio, tunc subitaneus illis superveniet interitus. [haer. V.30.2 (SC, II,376f)]

order, and to advance their kingdom, (let them learn) to acknowledge that he who shall come claiming the kingdom for himself, and shall terrify those men of whom we have been speaking, having a name containing the aforesaid number, is truly the abomination of desolation. This, too, the apostle affirms: "When they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction shall come upon them." [ANF, I,559]

These conquests also figure in Hippolytus' version of the Antichrist myth (cf. *antichr.* 52.1f and *comm.Dan.* IV,12.4). He described the Antichrist's conquests, naming the three kingdoms involved as Egypt, Ethiopia and Libya.

οὗτος οὖν τοῖς τότε καιροῖς
 ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἀναδειχθεὶς καὶ
 κρατήσας ἐν παρατάξει
 πολέμου τῶν τριῶν κεράτων
 τῶν ἐκ τῶν δέκα κεράτων καὶ
 ἐκριζώσας αὐτά, ἅπερ ἐστὶν
 Αἰγύπτου καὶ Λιβύων καὶ
 Αἰθιοπῶν, λαβὼν τὰ σκῦλα καὶ
 τὰ λάφυρα, ὑποταγέντων αὐτῷ
 καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἐπὶ τὰ κεράτων
 τῶν περιλειπομένων, ἄρχεται
 ὑψοῦσθαι τῇ καρδίᾳ καὶ
 ἐπαίρεσθαι κατὰ τοῦ θεοῦ, ὡς
 πάσης τῆς οἰκουμένης κρατῶν.
 [*antichr.* 52.1f (GCS, I,35)]

This one, then, when he has been exposed by them and has subdued in battle three horns out of the ten horns, and has rooted these out, namely, Egypt and Libya and Ethiopia, taking their spoils and trappings, and has brought the remaining horns which suffer into subjection, he will begin to be lifted up in heart, and to exalt himself against God as master of the whole world.

Writing considerably later than Irenaeus or Hippolytus, Victorinus also alluded to these conquests, although his treatment was not as detailed as theirs had been. Commenting upon Rev 17:12 he said,

haec 'cornua decem' et 'decem diademata' Daniel ostendit: 'et tria eradicari de prioribus,' hoc est, tres duces primarios ab Antichristo interfici. ceteros septem dare illi et honorem et consilium et potestatem [comm. XVII.12 (CSEL, 49,121)]

And Daniel sets forth the ten horns and the ten diadems. And that these are eradicated from the former ones -- that is, that three of the principal rulers are killed by Antichrist; that the other seven give him honour and wisdom and power [ANF, VII,358]

A little earlier, when commenting upon Rev 11:4, Victorinus referred to the two witnesses standing before the "lord of all the earth". He applied the title "Lord of all the earth" (Zech 4:14) to the Antichrist, although it should be noted that the statement, "that is, in the presence of the Antichrist", which occurs in ANF does not occur in either Latin recension of the text. This is similar to the expression, "prince/ruler of this world". Its use by Victorinus assumes that the conquests of the Antichrist have been achieved, and that he exercises universal authority.

qui in conspectu domini terrae
stant hos ergo oportet inter-
fici ab Antichristo.
[comm. XI.4 (CSEL, 49,101)]

Also, in another sense, standing in
the presence of the lord of all the
earth, [that is, in the presence of the
Antichrist.] Therefore they must be
slain by Antichrist. [ANF, VII,354]

5.3 THE ANTICHRIST'S TREATMENT OF THE JEWS

Not only would the Antichrist appear from the tribe of Dan, according to Irenaeus and Hippolytus, but he was also expected to cultivate a special relationship with the Jewish people. This is one element of the myth which has not survived in modern millennialist circles, where the Antichrist is usually seen as a European figure (thus displaying their western *Sitz im Leben*?) and often identified as the Pope or his associate (in the teaching of the more extreme Protestant sects). Such modern versions of the Antichrist myth frequently postulate a final mass conversion of the Jewish people to Christianity and suggest that this will be followed by their own experience of persecution by the (non-Jewish) Antichrist.

However, if the idea of a special relationship between the Antichrist and the Jews is not to be found these days, it was common enough in the early church. This belief persisted beyond the third century into the works of such writers as Cyril of Jerusalem and Pseudo-Hippolytus. Cyril mentions the Jews' relationship with Antichrist in *Catech.* XV.11-12. The much later comments of Ps-Hipp. (consumm. 23.1 and 24.2) reveal the way that this idea continued to have currency amongst Christians and to develop.

However, it is interesting to note that, despite his postulated Danite descent, the Antichrist was not usually depicted as a Jew himself. He was more commonly considered to be a gentile friend and ally of the Jewish people. An exception to this may be found in Victorinus, where the Antichrist's special

relationship with the Jewish people was understood to include his Jewish character.

ait enim Danihel: desideria mulierum non cognoscet -- cum prius fuerit inpurissimus -- et nullum deum patrum suorum cognoscet. non enim seducere poterit populum circumcisionis, nisi legis sit uindictor.
[comm. XIII.3 (CSEL, 49,121)]

Says Daniel: "He shall not know the lust of women, although before he was most impure, and he shall know no God of his fathers: for he will not be able to seduce the people of the circumcision, unless he is a judge of the law." [ANF, VII,358]

It may be that the confusion over the relationship of the Antichrist to the Jewish people reflects both the estrangement of Christians and Jews at this period, and also Christian reactions to the Jewish role in encouraging Roman persecution of the church. The more usual understanding of this relationship between Antichrist and Jewish people (where the Antichrist misleads the Jews into according him messianic and eventually divine status) can be seen in Irenaeus. He used the gospel parable of the unjust judge (Luke 18:1-8) to describe the apostasy of the Jews who ally themselves with the Antichrist in order to seek redress for the wrongs they had suffered at the hands of Rome.

Et Dominus autem hoc idem non credentibus sibi dicebat: Ego veni in nomine Patris mei, et non recipitis me: cum alius venerit in nomine suo, illum recipietis; alium dicens Antichristum, quoniam est alienus a Deo. Et ipse est iniquus iudex, qui a Domino dictus est, qui Deum non timebat neque hominem reverebatur, ad quem fugit vidua oblita Dei, hoc est terrena Hierusalem, ad ulciscendum de inimico. Quod et faciet in tempore regni sui: transferet regnum in eam, et in templo Dei sedebit, seducens eos qui adorant eum quasi ipse sit Christus. Quapropter ait Daniel iterum: Et sanctum desolabitur: et datum est in sacrificium peccatum et projecta est in terra iustitia, et fecit, et prospere cessit. Et Gabriel angelus exsolvens ejus visiones de hoc ipso dicebat: Et in novissimo regni ipsorum exsurget rex improbus facie valde et intellegens quaestiones, et valida virtus ejus et admirabilis, et corrumpet et diriget et faciet, et exterminabit fortes et populum sanctum; et jugum torquis ejus diri-

The Lord also spoke as follows to those who did not believe in him: "I have come in my Father's name, and ye have not received me: when another shall come in his own name him ye will receive," calling Antichrist "the other" because he is alienated from the Lord. This is also the unjust judge, whom the Lord mentioned as one "who feared not God, neither regarded man," to whom the widow fled in her forgetfulness of God -- that is, the earthly Jerusalem -- to be avenged of her adversary. Which also he shall do in the time of his kingdom: he shall remove his kingdom to that [city], and shall sit in the temple of God, leading astray those who worship him, as if he were Christ. To this purpose Daniel says again: "And he shall desolate the holy place; and sin has been given for a sacrifice and righteousness been cast away in the earth, and he has been active, and gone on prosperously." And the angel Gabriel, when explaining his vision states with regard to this person: "And towards the end of their kingdom a king of

getur; dolus in manu ejus, et in corde suo exaltabitur et dolo disperdet multos et ad perditionem multorum stabit et quomodo ova manu conteret. Deinde et tempus tyrannidis ejus significans, in quo tempore fugabuntur sancti qui purum sacrificium offerunt Deo: Et in dimidio hebdomadis, ait, tolletur sacrificium et libatio, et in templum abominatio desolationis et usque ad consummationem temporis consummatio dabitur super desolationem; dimidium autem hebdomadis tres sunt anni et menses sex. [haer. V.25.4 (SC, II,318ff)]

a most fierce countenance shall arise one understanding [dark] questions, and exceedingly powerful, full of wonder; and he shall corrupt, direct, influence, and put strong men down, the holy people likewise; and his yoke shall be directed as a wreath [round their neck]; deceit shall be in his hand and he shall be lifted up in his heart: he shall also ruin many by deceit, and lead many to perdition, bruising them in his hand like eggs." And then he points out the time that his tyranny shall last, during which the saints shall be put to flight, they who offer a pure sacrifice unto God: "And in the midst of a week," he says, "the sacrifice and the libation shall be taken away, and the abomination of the desolation [shall be brought] into the temple: even unto the consummation of the time shall the desolation be complete." Now three years and six months constitute the half week. [ANF, I,554]

Hippolytus also developed this idea of a special relationship between the Antichrist and the Jewish people. In antichr. 6 (cited earlier) he referred to the Antichrist coming "in the circumcision" as Christ had done, and to the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem by the Antichrist. The revival of the Jewish nation under the auspices of the Antichrist was also described in greater detail in ch 25.

μετὰ γὰρ τοῦτο τί περιλείπεται, ἀγαπητέ, ἀλλ' ἢ τὰ ἴχνη τῶν ποδῶν τῆς εἰκόνης, ἐν οἷς "μέρος μὲν τι ἐστὶ σιδηροῦν, μέρος δέ τι ὀστράκινον, ἀναμειγμένον εἰς ἄλληλα." μυστικῶς ἐδήλωσε διὰ τῶν δακτύλων τῶν ποδῶν τοὺς δέκα βασιλεῖς τοὺς ἐξ αὐτῆς ἐγειρομένους, ἅπερ λέγει Δαυὶδ "προσενόουν τῷ θηρίῳ καὶ ἰδοὺ δέκα κέρατα ὀπίσω αὐτοῦ, ἐν οἷς ἀναβήσεται ἕτερον μικρὸν ὡς παραφυάδιον, καὶ τρία τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ ἐκριζώσῃ," ὅπερ δέδεικται οὐχ ἕτερος ἀλλ' ἢ ὁ ἀντίχριστος

For after this, what remains, beloved, but the toes of the feet of the image, in which "part is iron and part clay, mixed together?" Mystically, by the toes of the feet, he meant the ten kings who are to arise from among it; as Daniel says, "I considered the beast, and behold, there were ten horns behind it, among which shall rise another, an offshoot, and shall pluck up by the roots the three before it." And under this was signified none other than the Antichrist who arises, and who shall himself raise the Jewish kingdom.

ὁ ἐγειρόμενος, ὃς καὶ αὐτὸς
τὴν Ἰουδαίων βασιλείαν
ἀναστήσει.
[antichr. 25.4f (GCS, I,17f)]

An even more extensive treatment of this idea may be found in antichr. 54-55. There Hippolytus described the favours shown the Jews by the Antichrist as enticements. He would seek to induce them to accept him as the Christ and to worship him as God. The following sample will illustrate his argument.

οὗτος γὰρ προσκαλέσεται
πάντα τὸν λαὸν πρὸς ἑαυτὸν
ἐκ πάσης χώρας τῆς διασ-
ποράς, ἰδιοποιούμενος αὐτούς
ὡς ἴδια τέκνα, ἐπαγγελ-
όμενος αὐτοῖς ἀποκαταστήσειν
τὴν χώραν καὶ ἀναστήσειν
αὐτῶν τὴν βασιλείαν καὶ τὸν
ναόν, ἵνα ὑπ' αὐτῶν ὡς θεὸς
προσκυνηθῇ.
[antichr. 54.2 (GCS, I,36)]

For he will call together all the people to himself, from every region of the dispersion, making them his own, as if his own children, promising to restore their region and raise up their kingdom and temple, in order that he may be worshipped by them as God.

5.4 THE DOMINION OF THE ANTICHRIST

It was widely agreed by the third century writers that the Antichrist's reign would last three and a half years after his defeat of the three opposing kings. This view was based on the three and a half year period which is spoken of in Daniel (cf. 7:25e; 8:14; 9:27b; 12:7,11,12) and was taken up by later apocalyptic traditions (cf. Rev 12:14). This time period may be found in several passages from the third century writers, beginning with Irenaeus himself. After describing the unsurpassed evil of the Antichrist, Irenaeus went on to say:

et dabitur in manu ejus usque ad
tempus temporum et dimidium tempus;
hoc est triennium et sex menses, in
quibus veniens regnabit super
terram.
[haer. V.25.3 (SC, II,316)]

and [everything] shall be given into
his hand until a time of times and a
half time, that is, for three years
and six months, during which time,
when he comes, he shall reign over
the earth. [ANF, I,554]

Irenaeus repeated this time scale later in his discussion when he said,

Cum autem devastaverit Antichristus
hic omnia in hoc mundo, regnaverit
annis tribus et mensibus sex et

But when this Antichrist shall have
devastated all things in this world,
he will reign for three years and six

sederit in templo Hierosolymis, tunc
veniet Dominus de caelis in nubibus in
gloriam Patris
[haer. V.30.4 (SC, II,386)]

months, and sit in the temple at
Jerusalem; and then the Lord will
come from heaven in the clouds in
the glory of the Father
[ANF, I,560]

Likewise, Hippolytus frequently referred to the three and a half year period of the Antichrist's reign (cf. antichr. 61; comm.Dan. IV,14.2; 50.2; 55.1; 57.6-8).

αὐταί εἰσιν αἱ ἑξήκοντα ἡμέραι,
διακόσσαι ἐξήκοντα ἡμέραι,
"το ἡμισυ τῆς ἐβδομάδος," ἅς
κρατήσῃ ὁ τύραννος διώκων
τὴν ἐκκλησίαν.
[antichr. 61.9 (GCS, I,42)]

These are "the one thousand two hundred and three score days" ("the half of the week") during which the tyrant is to reign and persecute the Church.

ApE1 2:52 mentions the same time period, while 4:1 goes on to date the appearance of the son of lawlessness in the "fourth year" of his precursor. A similar time period was mentioned in IRevJn, although in this case the period was said to be three years, with a further reduction to a mere three seconds because of God's sovereign love.

Καὶ πάλιν εἶπον· κύριε, καὶ
πόσα ἔτη μέλλει ποιεῖν οὗτος
ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς; καὶ ἤκουσα
φωνῆς λεγούσης μοι· δίκαιε
Ἰωάννη· τρία ἔτη ἔσονται οἱ
καιροὶ ἐκεῖνοι, καὶ ποιήσω τὰ
τρία ἔτη ὡς τρεῖς μῆνας, καὶ
τοὺς τρεῖς μῆνας ὡς τρεῖς
ἐβδομάδας, καὶ τὰς τρεῖς
ἐβδομάδας ὡς τρεῖς ἡμέρας,
καὶ τὰς τρεῖς ἡμέρας ὡς τρεῖς
ῥάσας, καὶ τὰς τρεῖς ῥάσας ὡς
τρεῖς στιγμάς, καθὼς εἶπεν ὁ
προφήτης Δαυὶδ· τὸν θρόνον
αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν γῆν κατέρ-
ραξας, ἐσμίκρυνας τὰς ἡμέρας
τοῦ χρόνου αὐτοῦ, κατέχεας
αὐτῷ αἰσχύνην.
[IRevJn 8 (AA, 75f)]

And again I said, "Lord, and how many years will this one act upon the earth?" And I heard a voice saying to me, "Righteous John. Three years shall those times be; and I will make the three years like three months, and the three months like three weeks, and the three weeks like three days, and the three days like three hours, and the three hours like three seconds; as the prophet David said, 'his throne you have broken down to the ground; you have shortened the days of his time; you have poured shame upon him.'"

As an indication of how widespread this element of the Antichrist myth was by this time, it may be noted that Victorinus also referred to the three

and a half years of the Antichrist's reign in his commentary on the Apocalypse. Speaking of the ministry of the two witnesses, he wrote,

<p>est ergo illorum praedicatio triennium et menses sex et regnum Antichristi alterum tantum. [comm. XI.2 (CSEL, 49,99)]</p>	<p>Therefore their preaching is for three years and six months, and the kingdom of the Antichrist as much again. [ANF, VII,354]</p>
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When explaining the "little season" during which Satan would be loosed after the millennium, Victorinus stated,

<p>breue tempus tres annos et sex menses significat, quibus totis uiribus saeuiturus diabolos sub Antichristo aduersus ecclesiam. [comm. XX.3 (CSEL, 49,143)]</p>	<p>The little season signifies three years and six months, in which with all his power the devil will avenge himself under Antichrist against the Church. [ANF, VII,358f]</p>
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During the period of his reign the Antichrist was expected to unleash cruel persecutions against the church (as mentioned in the preceding quotation), rebuild the temple in Jerusalem and make his claim for divine honours. A further element of the myth, found in the later stages of this period and in the writings of subsequent years, concerns the "mark" of the Antichrist. This detail of the myth was based upon Rev 13:16f, but was not mentioned by Irenaeus although it is found in Hippolytus, comm.Dan. IV,50.3). Its sporadic appearance during the third century may indicate that the myth was still developing in this period and had not yet reached its final form. This in turn suggests that its pre-Irenaeus form may not have included all the details found in his writings; a conclusion which will be borne out by the examination of these earlier texts towards the end of this study. Victorinus commented as follows about the mark of the Antichrist.

<p>faciet etiam hinc ipse, ut accipiant serui et liberi notam in frontibus aut in manibus dextris -- numerum nominis eius --, ne quis emat uel uendat. [comm. XIII.16f (CSEL, 49,129)]</p>	<p>Moreover, he himself shall contrive that his servants and children should receive as a mark on their foreheads or on their right hands, the number of his name, lest anyone should buy or sell them. [ANF, VII,357]</p>
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5.5 THE NAME OF THE ANTICHRIST

One of the most intriguing questions concerning the Antichrist, for both ancient and modern writers, has been the identity of the Antichrist. The speculation has concerned the interpretation of Rev 13:18, which indicated

that the name of the beast from the sea was a human name and lay concealed in the cryptic number, 666. This belief has already occurred in some of the citations used earlier, and several other instances will now be cited.

Both Irenaeus and Hippolytus devoted considerable attention to this detail of the myth, and it constituted one of the few points over which Hippolytus differed from Irenaeus. Irenaeus' explanation of the number as a symbol of the sum of human evil over six thousand years has already been noted. Before addressing the question of the identity of the Antichrist, Irenaeus criticised those who claim that the number should be six hundred and sixteen -- as some ancient texts of Revelation read. His comments about the alternative reading serve the useful purpose of indicating beyond doubt that there was a tradition about the Antichrist which was older than Irenaeus' time, and which contained some variety of opinion about such specific details. Irenaeus, however, considered this alternative reading to be an error of too great a magnitude to be allowed to pass unrebuked, since it not only involved an alteration to the text of the Bible but would also mislead the faithful into seeking Antichrist under a name whose letters totalled 616 instead of 666.

Et primum quidem damnum est excidere a veritate et quod non sit quasi arbitrari; post deinde apponenti vel auferenti de Scriptura poenam non modicam fore, in quam incidere necesse est eum qui sit talis. Subsequetur autem et aliud non quodlibet periculum eos qui falso praesumunt scire nomen ejus: si enim aliud quidem hi putant, aliud autem ille habens adveniet, facile seducentur ab eo, quasi necdum adsit ille quem cavere convenit. Oportet itaque tales discere, et ad verum recurrere nominis numerum, ut non in pseudoprophetarum loco deputentur.

[haer. V.30.1f (SC, II,374f)]

Now, in the first place, it is a loss to wander from the truth, and to imagine that as being the case which is not; then again, as there shall be no light punishment [inflicted] upon him who either adds or subtracts anything from the Scripture, under that such a person must necessarily fall. Moreover, another danger, by no means trifling, shall overtake those who falsely presume that they know the name of Antichrist. For if these mean assume one [number], when this [Antichrist] shall come having another, they will be easily led away by him, as supposing him not to be the expected one, who must be guarded against. These men, therefore, ought to learn [what really is the state of the case], and go back to the true number of the name, that they be not reckoned among false prophets. [ANF, I,559]

Despite his confidence that the Antichrist will be able to be identified, using the number 666, Irenaeus was unable to provide his readers with the precise name. He was undaunted by this, and in fact made a virtue of the necessity, stating that to have the name pronounced by the Holy Spirit (when

John was inspired with his vision) would be to suggest a longevity which in fact the Antichrist was not to enjoy! It was enough -- according to Irenaeus -- to know the secret number, so that when he appears he may be recognised.

Certius ergo et sine periculo est sustinere adimpletionem prophetiae quam suspicari et divinare nomina quaelibet, quando multa nomina inveniri possunt habentia praedictum numerum, et nihilominus quidem erit haec eadem quaestio: si enim multa sunt quaeveniuntur nomina habentia numerum hunc, quod ex ipsis portabit qui veniet quaeretur. Quoniam autem non propter inopiam nominum habentium numerum nominis ejus dicimus haec, sed propter timorem erga Deum et zelum veritatis: EYANTHAS enim nomen habet numerum de quo quaeritur, sed nihil de eo affirmamus. Sed et LATEINOS nomen habet sexcentorum sexaginta sex numerum, et valde verisimile est, quoniam novissimum regnum hoc habet vocabulum: Latini enim sunt qui nunc regnant; sed non in hoc nos gloriabimur. Sed et TEITAN, prima syllaba per duas Graecas vocales 'e' et 'i' scripta, omnium nominum quae apud nos inveniantur magis fide dignum est. Etenim praedictum numerum habet in se, et literarum est sex, singulis syllabis ex ternis litteris constantibus, et vetus et semotum: neque enim eorum regnum qui secundum nos sunt aliquis vocatus est Titan, neque eorum quae publice adorantur idolorum apud Graecos et barbaros habet vocabulum hoc; et divinum putatur apud multos esse hoc nomen, ut etiam sol Titan vocetur ab his qui nunc tenent; et ostentationem quandam continet ultionis et vindictam inferentis, quod ille simulat se male tractatos vindicare; et alias autem et antiquum, et fide dignum, et regale, magis autem et tyrannicum nomen. Cum igitur tantam suasionem habeat hoc nomen Titan, tantan habeat verisimilitudinem, ut ex multis colligamus ne forte Titan vocetur qui veniet, nos tamen non periclitabimur in eo nec asseveranter pronuntiabimus hoc eum nomen habiturum, scientes quoniam, si oporteret

It is therefore more certain and less hazardous, to await the fulfillment of the prophecy than to be making surmises and casting about for any names that may present themselves, inasmuch as many names can be found possessing the number mentioned; and the same question will, after all, remain unsolved. For if there are many names found possessing this number it will be asked which among them shall the coming man bear. It is not through want of names containing the number of that name that I say this, but on account of the fear of God, and zeal for the truth: for the name EYANTHAS contains the required number, but I make no allegation regarding it. Then also LATEINOS has the number six hundred and sixty-six; and it is a very probable [solution], this being the name of the last kingdom [of the four seen by Daniel]. For the Latins are they who at present bear rule: I will not, however, make any boast over this [coincidence]. TEITAN too, [the first syllable being written with the two Greek vowels ε and ι], among all the names which are found among us, is rather worthy of credit. For it has in itself the predicted number, and is composed of six letters each syllable containing three letters and [the word itself] is ancient and removed from ordinary use; for among our kings we find none bearing this name Titan, nor have any of the idols which are worshipped in public by the Greeks and barbarians this appellation. Among many persons, too, this name is accounted divine, so that even the sun is termed "Titan" by those who do now possess [the rule]. This word, too, contains a certain outward appearance of vengeance and of one afflicting merited punishment because he pretends that he vindicates the oppressed. And besides this, it is an ancient name, one worthy of credit, of royal dignity, and still further, a

manifeste praesenti tempore praeconari nomen ejus, per ipsum utique dictum fuisset qui et apocalypsim viderat: neque enim ante multum temporis visum est, sed pene sub nostro saeculo, ad finem Domitiani imperii. Nunc autem numerum nominis ostendit, ut caveamus illum venientem, scientes qui est; nomen autem ejus tacuit, quoniam dignum non est praeconari a sancto Spiritu. [haer. V.30.3f (SC, II,378ff)]

name belonging to a tyrant. Inasmuch then as this name "Titan" has so much to recommend it, there is a strong degree of probability that, from among the many [names suggested], we infer, that perchance he who is to come shall be called "Titan". We will not, however, incur the risk of pronouncing positively as to the name of Antichrist; for if it were necessary that his name should be distinctly revealed in this present time, it would have been announced by him who beheld the apocalyptic vision. For that was no very long time since, but almost in our own day, towards the end of Domitian's reign. But he indicates the number of the name now, that when this man comes we may avoid him, being aware who he is: the name, however, is suppressed because it is not worthy of being proclaimed by the Holy Spirit. [ANF, I,559f]

Like Irenaeus, Hippolytus was cautious in his handling of this question. He conceded that only a conjectural account may be given, and that there were many names which meet the mathematical criteria. However, because of his views on the relationship of the Antichrist to the Roman empire, Hippolytus preferred the name, Latinus.

περὶ μὲν οὖν τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν ἡμῖν τοσούτον τὸ ἀκριβὲς ἐξελπεῖν, ὡς ἐνενόησε καὶ ἐδιδάχθη περὶ αὐτοῦ ὁ μακάριος Ἰωάννης, ὅσον μόνον ὑπονοήσαι· ἀναφανέντος γὰρ αὐτοῦ δείξει ὁ καιρὸς τὸ ζητούμενον. πλὴν ὅσον νοοῦμεν ἀμβύλλοντες λέγωμεν. πολλὰ γὰρ εὐρίσκομεν ὀνόματα τούτῳ τῷ ἀριθμῷ ἰσόψηφα περιεχόμενα, οἷον ὡς φέρε εἶπεῖν τὸ Τειτάν ἐστιν, ἀρχαῖον καὶ ἔνδοξον ὄνομα, ἢ τὸ Εὐάνθας· καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸ τῇ αὐτῇ ψήφῳ ἐμπεριέχεται, καὶ ἕτερα πλείονα εὐρεθῆναι δυνάμενα. ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ προέφθημεν λέγοντες, ὅτι ἐθεραπεύθη ἡ πληγὴ τοῦ

Concerning this name, it is not in our power to explain it exactly, as the blessed John understood it and was instructed about it, but only to give a conjectural account of it; for when he appears, the season will show us what we seek to know. Yet we can hazard a guess. For we find many names with this numerical value, such as, for example, the name, "Titan," an ancient and notable name; or "Evanthas," for it too makes up the same number; and many others which might be found. But, as we have already said, the wound of the first beast was healed, and he will make the image speak, that is to say, he will be powerful; and it is manifest to all that those who at present hold the power are Latins. If, then, we take the name as the name of a single man, it becomes "Latinus." While it is not necessarily to be announced, we

θηρίου τοῦ πρώτου καὶ ποιήσει
λαλεῖν τὴν εἰκόνα, τουτέστιν
ἴσχυσε, φανερόν δὲ πᾶσιν
ἐστὶν ὅτι οἱ κρατοῦντες ἔτι
νῦν εἰσι λατεῖνοι, εἰς ἑνὸς
οὖν ἀνθρώπου ὄνομα
μεταγόμενον γίνεται λατ-
εῖνος, ὥστε οὔτε προκηρύσσειν
δεῖ, ὡς ὄντως τοῦτον ὄν, οὔτε
πάλιν ἀγνοεῖν ὅτι μὴ ἄλλως
δύναται λέγεσθαι.

[antichr. 50.5-8 (GCS, I,33f)]

should not ignore the fact that he
might not be designated differently.

Victorinus also tried to solve the riddle of the meaning of the mysterious number when commenting upon Rev 13:18. While he discussed various options, Victorinus was no more able to solve the riddle than were Irenaeus and Hippolytus.

et numerus eius, sicut ex litteris grecis computum habet, sic in comp-luribus inueniuntur. interpretatur enim 'Teitan', quem gentiles Solem Phoebumque appellant, computaturque grece sic: T tau trecenti, E e quinque, I iota decem, T tau trecenti, A alfa unum, N ni quinquaginta, qui simil ducti fiunt sexcenti sexaginta sex. quantum enim attinet ad litteras grecas, hunc numerum nomenque explent. quod nomen si uelis in latinum conuertere, intellegitur per antiphrasin 'DICLVX', quae litterae hoc modo computantur: D quippe quingenti figurat, I unum, C centum, L quinquaginta, V quinque, X decem, quod computatis litteris faciunt similiter sexcenti sexaginta sex. id enim quod grece sonat Teitan, si latine uelis intellegere, dicitur Diclux, quo nomine per antiphrasin expresso intellegimus Antichristum, qui cum a luce superna priuatus est atque abscisus, transfiguratur tamen se in angelum lucis, audens sese dicere lucem.

Item inuenimus in quodam codice greco ita: ANTEMOC, quibus computatis litteris inuenies numerum ut supra: ...

Item aliud eius nomen gothice, id est GENSERIKOS, quod sibi licebit, ut

As they have reckoned it from the Greek characters, they thus find it among many to be τετραν, for τετραν has this number, which the Gentiles call Sol and Phoebus; and it is reckoned in Greek thus: τ three hundred ε five, ι ten, three hundred, α one, υ fifty, which taken together become six hundred and sixty-six: for as belongs to the Greek letters they fill up this number and name; which name if you wish to turn into Latin, is understood by the antiphrase, DICLUX, which letters are reckoned in this manner: since D figures five hundred, I one, C a hundred, L fifty, V five, X ten, which by the reckoning up of the letters makes similarly six hundred and sixty-six, that is what in the Greek gives τετραν, to, wit, what in Latin is called DICLUX; by which name, expressed by antiphrases, we understand Antichrist, who, although he be cut off the supernal light and deprived thereof, yet transforms himself into an angel of light, daring to call himself light.

Moreover we find in a certain Greek codex, αντεμος, which letters being reckoned up, you will find to give the number as above: ...

Moreover, there is another name in Gothic of him, which will be evident

seducat gentes. quod eodem modo
grecis litteris computabis: ...
[comm. XIII.18 (CSEL, 49,125ff)]

of itself, that is γενοσήρικος, which
in the same way will reckon in Greek
letters: ... [ANF, VII,356]

It would seem that, in their eagerness to solve the riddle of this cryptic number, the writers were prepared to cast about for almost any name in any language which could be interpreted numerically to yield the desired total. The inclusion of a Gothic name by Victorinus suggests a tradition in the church that saw the incursions by the Goths as having some relevance to their eschatological hopes. The poems of Commodian, which will be examined below, also mentioned the Goths.

5.6 THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ANTICHRIST AND HIS DOMAIN

One of the steps leading up to the destruction of the Antichrist was to be the appearance of two final witnesses who would denounce his wickedness before being overpowered and slain. Hippolytus identified them as Enoch and Elijah (antichr. 43; comm.Dan. IV,35.3; 50.1f), even though they were not named in Revelation 11. Their mission would be to preach against the Antichrist during his reign, and their words would be accompanied by signs and miracles. These two figures were not mentioned by Irenaeus, but Hippolytus, ApEl and IRevJn each referred to them.

ἀναγκαίως δεῖ τοὺς
προδρόμους αὐτοῦ πρώτους
φανερωθῆναι, καθὼς διὰ
Μαλαχία τοῦ ἀγγέλου φησὶν·
ἴπέμψω ὑμῖν Ἡλίαν τὸν
Θεοσβίτην πρὶν ἢ ἔλθειν τὴν
ἡμέραν κυρίου ... οὗτοι
συμπαραγενόμενοι κηρύξουσι
τὴν μέλλουσαν ἔσσεσθαι ἀπ'
οὐρανῶν Χριστοῦ ἐπιφάνειαν οἱ
καὶ ποιήσουσι σημεῖα καὶ
τέρατα εἰς τὸ κἂν οὕτω
δυσωπῆσαι καὶ ἐπιστρέψαι
τοὺς ἀνθρώπους εἰς μετάνοιαν
διὰ τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσαν αὐτῶν
ἀνομίαν τε καὶ ἀσέβειαν.

[antichr. 46.3f (GCS, I,29f)]

It is necessary that his forerunners appear first, as he says by Malachi the messenger, "I will send to you Elijah the Tishbite before the day of the Lord, ..." These shall come and proclaim the manifestation of Christ that is to be from heaven; and they shall perform signs and wonders, in order that men may be put to shame and turned to repentance from their unparalleled lawlessness and impiety.

καὶ τότε ἀποστελῶ Ἐνωχ καὶ
 Ἡλίαν πρὸς ἔλεγχου αὐτοῦ,
 καὶ ἀποδείξωσιν αὐτὸν
 ψεύστην καὶ πλάνον, καὶ
 ἀνελεῖ αὐτοὺς ἐπὶ τὸ θυσια-
 στηριον, καθὼς εἶπεν ὁ
 προφήτης τότε ἀνοίσωσιν ἐπὶ
 τὸ θυσιαστήριόν σου μόσχους.
 [1RevJn 8 (AA, 76)]

And then I shall send Enoch and
 Elijah to convict him, and they
 shall show him to be a liar and a
 deceiver; and he shall kill them on
 the altar, just as the prophet says,
 "Then shall they offer calves upon
 your altar."

The earlier part of the denunciation of the son of lawlessness by Enoch and Elijah in ApEI (ApEI 4:8-12), was cited above and will not be repeated here. However, vss 13-19 read as follows:

The shameless one will hear and be angry, and he will fight with them in the market place of the great city. And he will spend seven days fighting with them. And they will spend three and one half days in the market place dead, while all the people see them. But on the fourth day they will rise up and they will scold him saying, "O shameless one, O son of lawlessness. Are you indeed not ashamed of yourself since you are leading astray the people of God for whom you did not suffer? Do you not know that we live in the Lord?" As the words were spoken, they prevailed over him, saying, "Furthermore, we will lay down the flesh for the spirit, and we will kill you since you are unable to speak on that day because we are always strong in the Lord. But you are always hostile to God." The shameless one will hear, and he will be angry and fight with them. And the whole city will surround them. On that day they will shout up to heaven as they shine while all the people and all the world see them.
 [ApEI 4:13-19 (OTP, I,748)]

Victorinus also developed this detail of the myth in his commentary. He came up with the suggestion that the two witnesses would be Elijah and Jeremiah.

Multi putant cum Helia esse
 Heliseum aut Moysen, sed utrique
 mortui sunt. Hieremiae autem mors
 non inuenitur. perque omnia ueteres
 nostri tradiderunt esse illum
 Hieremiam
 [comm. XI.5 (CSEL, 49,99)]

Many think that there is Elisha or
 Moses with Elijah; but both of these
 died; while the death of Elijah is not
 heard of, with whom all our ancients
 have believed that it was Jeremiah.
 [ANF, VII,354]

It is not at all clear how Jeremiah was chosen for this final prophetic role, nor what sources Victorinus relied upon when he spoke of "all our ancients". None of the extant sources mention Jeremiah in this context. On the other hand, it is a valuable comment in that it demonstrates again the variety which still existed in the versions of the Antichrist myth near the end of the third

century. As a further example of variation within the tradition, it may be noted that ApEI surrounded the account of Enoch and Elijah denouncing the Antichrist with two other similar stories: in 4:1-6 Antichrist is confronted by a virgin named Tabitha, while "sixty righteous men who are prepared for this hour" confront him in 4:30-33. The account of the martyrdom of the sixty righteous elders may well be from the Jewish *Vorlage*, but the accounts of the martyrdom of Tabitha, and of the martyrdom of Elijah and Enoch, are clearly Christian additions to the work.

With the execution of the two witnesses accomplished, and the three and a half year period expiring, the kingdom of the Antichrist was expected to be terminated by divine intervention. There was, however, some variation in the description of this judgment. For instance, Irenaeus gave a very brief and simple account of the Antichrist's end.

tunc veniet Dominus de caelis in
nubibus in gloria Patris, illum
quidem et obaudientes ei in stagnum
ignis mittens
[haer. V.30.4 (SC, II,386)]

and then the Lord will come from
heaven in the clouds, in the glory of
the Father, sending this man and those
who follow him into the lake of fire
[ANF, I,560]

Hippolytus stressed the sudden nature of the Antichrist's destruction, and its certainty, by citing numerous biblical passages concerning the parousia and judgment (cf. antichr. chs 61-65). In comm.Dan. IV,24.8 he related the commencement of persecution by Antichrist to the advent of the Lord.

ὡν καιρῶν συμπληρουμένων καὶ
τῶν δέκα κεράτων ἐπ' ἐσχάτων
ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἐγειρομένων, ἀνα-
φανήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς ὁ
ἀντίχριστος, περὶ οὗ
ἔμπροσθεν λόγον ἐποιησάμεθα.
Τούτου πολεουόντος καὶ
διώκοντος τοὺς ἁγίους, τότε
δεῖ προσδοκᾶν ἀπ' οὐρανῶν
τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν τοῦ κυρίου.
[comm.Dan. IV,24.7f (SC, 310)]

When the times are fulfilled and
the ten horns from the last (beast)
spring from it, shall Antichrist
appear amongst them, as we have
previously spoken. When he makes
war on the saints and persecutes
(them), then it is necessary to
await from heaven the advent of
the Lord.

In comm.Dan. IV,56.6, Hippolytus described the casting into hell -- along with the Antichrist -- of those who were associated with Antichrist. His account is quite reserved when compared with subsequent elaborations on this theme.

καὶ οὗτοι εἰς ὀνειδισμόν καὶ
αἰσχύνην αἰώνιον," οἱ τῷ
ἀντιχρίστῳ συναιρόμενοι καὶ
σὺν αὐτῷ εἰς τὴν αἰώνιον
κόλασιν βαλλόμενοι.

[comm.Dan. IV,56.6 (SC, 376)]

And "those to shame and eternal reproach," are those attached to the Antichrist, and with him being cast into eternal punishment.

ApE1 devoted its final chapter to details surrounding the demise of the son of lawlessness. The account is developed with considerable elaboration, possibly a sign that it should be dated somewhat late in the third century. The overall treatment may be outlined as follows.

- 5:1 Rejection of Antichrist by his former followers;
- 5:2-6 Removal of the righteous from the earth;
- 5:7-14a Natural disasters unleashed on the earth;
- 5:14b-19 Lament of the Antichrist;
- 5:20-21 Pursuit of the righteous into heaven;
- 5:22-24 Cosmic fire of a true judgment;
- 5:25-29 Word of the coming judgment spoken by nature itself;
- 5:30-31 Day of judgment;
- 5:32-35 Defeat and execution of Antichrist;
- 5:36-39 Millennial bliss.

Of these passages, only 5:14b-21 and 32-35 will be cited in full here. The first passage represents the Antichrist as repenting of his evil, and seeking to undo the harm by rehabilitating the saints. The second passage describes his destruction at the hands of Enoch and Elijah.

Then on that day, the shameless one will weep, saying, "Woe to me because my time has passed by for me while I was saying that my time would not pass by for me. My years became months and my days have passed away as dust passes away. Now therefore I will perish together with you. Now therefore run forth to the desert. Seize the robbers and kill them. Bring up the saints. For because of them the earth yields fruit. For because of them the sun shines upon the earth. For because of them the dew will come upon the earth." The sinners will weep saying, "You made us hostile to God. If you are able, rise up and pursue them." Then he will take his fiery wings and fly out after the saints. He will fight with them again. The angels will hear and come down. They will fight with him a battle of many swords.

[ApE1 5:14b-21 (OTP, I,751f)]

After these things, Elijah and Enoch will come down. They will lay down the flesh of the world, and they will receive their spiritual flesh. They will pursue the son of lawlessness and kill him since he is not able to speak. On that day, he will dissolve in their presence like ice which was dissolved by a fire. He will

perish like a serpent which has no breath in it. They will say to him, "Your time has passed by for you. Now therefore you and those who believe in you will perish." They will be cast into the bottom of the abyss and it will be closed for them. [ApE1 5:32-35 (OTP, 1,752f)]

It would seem that there was increasing interest in describing the fate of the Antichrist as the myth developed its hold on the Christian imagination during the third century. The following passage from IRevJn reveals the trend towards more dramatic accounts of the doom of this terrible figure.

καὶ τότε θεωρήσει αὐτὸ ὁ τῆς ἀδικίας ἐργάτης μετὰ τῶν ὑπηρετῶν αὐτοῦ καὶ βρύξει μεγάλα, καὶ πάντα τὰ ἀκάθαρτα πνεύματα εἰς φυγὴν τραπήσονται. καὶ τότε ἀοράτῳ δυνάμει κρατούμενοι, μὴ ἔχοντες πόθεν φυγεῖν, βρύξουσιν κατ' αὐτοῦ τοὺς ὀδόντας αὐτῶν λέγοντες αὐτῷ· ποῦ ἔστιν ἡ δύναμις σου; πῶς ἡμᾶς ἐπλάνησας; καὶ ἐξεφύγομεν καὶ ἐξεπέσαμεν ἐκ τῆς δόξης ἧς εἶχομεν παρὰ τοῦ ἐρχομένου κρῖναι ἡμᾶς καὶ πᾶσαν φύσιν ἀνθρωπίνην. οὐαὶ ἡμῖν, ὅτι ἐν τῷ σκότει τῷ ἐξωτέρῳ ἐξορίζει ἡμᾶς.

[IRevJn 16 (AA, 83f)]

And then the worker of iniquity with his servants shall see it [the manifestation of the sign of the Son of Man], and gnash his teeth exceedingly, and all the unclean spirits shall be turned to flight. And then, seized by an invisible power, having no means of flight, they shall gnash their teeth against him, saying, "Where is your power? How have you led us astray? We have fled away, and have fallen from the glory which we had beside him who is coming to judge us, and the whole human race. Woe to us! because he banishes us into outer darkness."

This pattern of increasingly dramatic accounts of the destruction of the Antichrist is seen in the work of Commodian. Commodian suggested that the people who were powerful in the kingdom of the Antichrist would not be sent to Hell immediately, but will be kept alive for the duration of the millennium to serve the saints prior to their final condemnation at the Day of Judgment -- a case of "sweet revenge"?

Hoc placuit Christo resurgere mortuos imo Cum suis corporibus, et quod ignis ussit in aeuo, Sex milibus annis conpletis mundo finito. Vertitur interea caelum tenore mutato; Conburuntur enim impii tunc igne diuino, Ira Dei summi ardet creatura

This has pleased Christ, that the dead should rise again, yea with their bodies; and those, too, whom in this world the fire has burned, when six thousand years are completed, and the world has come to an end. The heaven in the meantime is changed

gemendo. Dignitosi tamen et generati
 nati praeclaro Nobilesque uiri sub
 Antichristo deuicto Ex praecepto
 Dei rursus uiuentes in aeuo, Mille
 quidem annis ut seruiant sanctis et
 Alto Sub iugo seruii, ut portent
 uictualia collo, Vt iterum autem
 iudicentur regno finito.
 [Instr. II.39 (CSEL, 15,111)]

with an altered course, for then the
 wicked are burnt up with divine fire.
 The creature with groaning burns with
 the anger of the highest God. Those
 who are more worthy, and who are
 begotten of an illustrious stem, and
 the men of nobility under the con-
 quered Antichrist, according to God's
 command living again in the world for
 a thousand years, indeed, that they
 may serve the saints, and the High
 One, under a servile yoke, that they
 may bear their victuals on their neck.
 Moreover, that they may be judged
 again when the reign is finished.
 [ANF, IV,218]

The anti-patrician tone, which can be observed in this poem of Commodian, was also seen in the apologetical poem *Carmen apologeticum*, which will be considered in the next chapter. There was an evident delight in the disasters which were going to befall the Senatorial classes of Rome as punishment for their persecutions of the Christians.

Victorinus also described the end of the kingdom of the Antichrist in his commentary. With regard to Rev 7:2 he wrote:

Mitti etiam de caelo orationes
 ecclesiae ab angelo et suscipi
 illas et contra iram effundi et
 scotomari regnum Antichristi per
 angelos sanctos in euangelio
 legimus; ait enim: orate, ne
 incidatis in temptationem. erit
 enim angustia magna, qualis non
 fuit ab origine mundi, et nisi
 adbreuiasset dominus dies illos,
 non esset salua omnis caro. hos
 ergo archangelos magnos septem ad
 percutiendum regnum Antichristi
 mittet
 [comm. VIII.1 (CSEL, 49,83)]

Moreover, we read in the Gospel that
 the prayers of the Church are sent
 from heaven by an angel, and that
 they are received against wrath, and
 that the kingdom of the Antichrist is
 cast out and extinguished by holy
 angels; for He says: "Pray that ye
 enter not into temptation: for there
 shall be a great affliction, such as has
 not been from the beginning of the
 world; and except the Lord had short-
 ened those days, no flesh should be
 saved." Therefore He shall send these
 seven great archangels to smite the
 kingdom of Antichrist. [ANF, VII,352]

In his extended comments upon Revelation 14-17, Victorinus anticipated and described the judgment of the kingdom of the Antichrist in fuller detail. He was one of the few to direct much of his attention to this aspect of the myth, but then he is also the latest of the witnesses considered in this part of our study.

5.7 AMBIVALENCE TOWARDS THE ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE ANTICHRIST LITERATURE OF THE THIRD CENTURY

It would not be possible to outline the third century evidence for the Antichrist myth without considering Christian attitudes towards the Roman empire. This task has been left until now because of its importance and complexity; it is best undertaken only after the other general features of the Antichrist myth in this period have been outlined.

The Roman empire constituted the fundamental political, social and economic realities for the *Sitz im Leben* of the church at that time. It was inevitable, therefore, that questions should be raised concerning a possible relationship between the Roman empire and the expected kingdom of the Antichrist. Given the severe persecution of Christians by the Roman empire, many Christians must have wondered whether the emperor was either the Antichrist or one of the Antichrist's agents.

The persecutions naturally fuelled hostility towards the empire. Even within the NT canon a dramatic difference in tone can be observed between the comments of Paul in a passage such as Romans 13 and the portrayal of Rome in the Book of Revelation. On the other hand, the steady expansion of Christianity demanded that the church clarify its position concerning the empire, which seemed so determined to eradicate it. The nature of the empire, and the presence of Christians in its higher echelons, meant that the Roman empire had to be integrated into the Christian vision of reality.

It has already been noted that there was a developing hostility towards the Roman empire, and towards the governing classes in particular. This tendency can be observed in many passages from the literature dealing with the Antichrist myth, especially those written later in our period. Even in the earlier writers there is a degree of ambivalence.

An important element of Christian thinking about the Roman empire and the kingdom of the Antichrist was supplied by the references to the four kingdoms in Dan 2:40-42 and 7:7-8,23-26. These passages were reinterpreted and brought up to date so that they took account of the Roman empire. This was a way of retaining the contemporary relevance of the Daniel passages, despite the failure of its predictions about the Seleucids. This development could proceed in either of two directions. Rome could be understood as one of the intermediate kingdoms (whose presence delayed the advent of the Antichrist); or Rome could be understood as the terrible fourth (and final)

kingdom. During the period under review, the trend was towards an increasingly negative interpretation.

Irenaeus, the earliest of these writers, did not explicitly state that the Roman empire was the fourth beast, but his comments on the rise of the Antichrist from among the ten kingdoms which were to succeed the Roman empire made his views clear. Irenaeus believed that the Roman empire would be partitioned prior to the advent of the Antichrist. As can be seen from *haer.* V.30.2 (cited earlier) and the following citations from V.25.2 and 26.1, Irenaeus believed that this division of the empire would be the first of the three signs that would herald the arrival of the Antichrist.

Daniel autem novissimi regni finem respiciens, hoc est novissimos decem reges in quos dividitur regnum illorum super quos filius perditionis veniet, cornua dicit decem nasci bestiae, et alterum cornu pusillum nasci in medio ipsorum, et tria cornua de prioribus eradicari a facie ejus.
[*haer.* V.25.3 (SC, II,314)]

Manifestius adhuc etiam de novissimo tempore et de his qui sunt in eo decem regibus in quos dividetur quod nunc regnat imperium significavit Johannes, Domini discipulus, in Apocalypsi, edisserens quae fuerint decem cornua quae a Daniele visa sunt, dicens sic dictum esse sibi: Et decem cornua quae vidisti decem reges sunt qui regnum nondum acceperunt, sed potestatem quasi reges una hora accipient cum bestia. Hi unam sententiam habent, et virtutem et potestatem suam bestiae dant. Hi cum agno pugnabunt et agnus vincet eos, quoniam Dominus Dominorum est et Rex Regnum. Manifestum est itaque quoniam ex his tres interficiet ille qui venturus est, et reliqui subicientur ei, et ipse octavus in eis; et vastabunt Babylonem et comburent eam igni, et dabunt regnum suum bestiae et effugabunt Ecclesiam.
[*haer.* V.26.1 (SC, II,324f)]

Daniel, too, looking forward to the end of the last kingdom, ie the ten last kings amongst whom the kingdom of those men shall be partitioned and upon whom the son of perdition shall come, declares that ten horns shall spring from the beast and that another little horn shall arise in the midst of them, and that three of the former shall be rooted up before his face.
[ANF, I,553]

In a still clearer light has John, in the Apocalypse, indicated to the Lord's disciples what shall happen in the last times, and concerning the ten kings who then arise, among whom the empire which now rules shall be partitioned. He teaches what the ten horns shall be, which were seen by Daniel, telling us that thus it had been said to him: "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, who have received no kingdom as yet, but shall receive power as if kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and give their strength and power to the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, because he is the Lord of Lords and King of kings." It is manifest, therefore, that of these, he who is to come shall slay three and subject the remainder to his power, and that he shall be himself the eighth among them. And they shall lay Babylon waste, and burn her with fire, and shall give their kingdom to the beast, and put the Church to flight.
[ANF, I,554f]

A similar view can be seen in Hippolytus' writings, although in his case the identification of the Roman empire with the fourth beast of Daniel was quite explicit. Hippolytus devoted the main part of his treatise on the Antichrist to the exegesis of these Daniel passages and the presentation of his views on the place of the Roman empire in the divine purposes. His concern throughout *antichr.* 19-49 seems to have been to identify the empire with the fourth beast which in turn he carefully distinguishes from the kingdom of the Antichrist, which he understood as another world power that would succeed the Roman empire.

ἔπειτα, φησίν, "θηρίον τέταρτον φοβερόν καὶ ἔκθαμβον· οἱ ὀδόντες αὐτοῦ σιδηροὶ καὶ οἱ ὄνυχες αὐτοῦ χαλκοῖ." τίνες οὗτοι ἀλλ' ἢ οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι· ὅπερ ἔστιν ὁ σίδηρος, ἡ νῦν ἐνεστῶσα βασιλεία. "αἱ κνήμαι γὰρ αὐτῆς," φησίν, "σιδηραῖ."
[*antichr.* 25.1-3 (GCS, I,17)]

Then he says, "A fourth beast, dreadful and terrible; it had iron teeth and claws of brass." Who are these but the Romans, the very one indicated by the iron, the kingdom that is now established, "for the legs of that statue," he says, "were of iron."

κνήμαι σιδηραῖ, θηρίον ἔκθαμβον καὶ φοβερόν, Ῥωμαῖοι οἱ νῦν κρατοῦντες
[*antichr.* 28.1 (GCS, I,19)]

(the) legs of iron, and the beast dreadful and terrible, (were) the Romans, who rule at present

Similar concerns are clearly evident in Hippolytus' commentary on Daniel. There, Antichrist is expected to appear from amongst the future ten kingdoms which would emerge as successor states to the Roman empire (*comm.Dan.* IV,5). Rome itself was expected, by Hippolytus, to rule for a period of 500 years after the birth of Christ, in order to complete the 6,000 years of human history between creation and the consummation — Jesus having been born, on Hippolytus' calculations (cf. *comm.Dan.* IV,23), in the year 5,500 after creation!

Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ οἱ μὲν Πέρσαι διεκράτησαν βασιλεύοντες ἕτη διακόσια τριάκοντα, καὶ μετὰ τούτους οἱ Ἕλληνες ἄτε δὴ ἐνδοξότεροι ὑπάρχοντες ἕτη τριακόσια, ἐξ ἀνάγκης δεῖ τὸ τέταρτον θηρίον ὡς ἰσχυρὸν καὶ μείζον πάντων τῶν

For since the Persians held power ruling 230 years, and after them the Greeks, being even more glorious, ruled 300 years, it is necessary that the fourth beast — who is strong and greater than all who preceded it — will reign 500 years. When the times are fulfilled and the ten horns have sprung from the last beast, Antichrist will appear in

ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ γενομένων
 βασιλευσάτω ἔτη πεντακόσια, ὧν
 καιρῶν συμπληρουμένων και
 τῶν δέκα κεράτων ἐπ' ἐσχάτων
 ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἐγειρουμένων,
 ἀναφανήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς ὁ
 ἀντίχριστος, περι οὗ
 ἔμπροσθεν λόγον ἐποιησάμεθα.
 [comm.Dan. IV,24.7 (SC, 310)]

the midst of them, as we have
 previously spoken.

Having secured a place for the Roman empire within the biblical prophecies, the question still remained: What was the relationship of this empire to the kingdom of the Antichrist? That was a question which could be answered in various ways, and different answers were given. In some quarters, the empire was still seen in a favourable light. Some took a more hostile view, while others again apparently remained neutral, being content simply to separate the two kingdoms from one another. Some witnesses, such as Origen and ApEl, have no comment at all to make on the Roman empire.

Tertullian, on the other hand, provides an example of those who took a positive view of the Roman empire. He understood the empire to be the "restraining power" (2 Thess 2:6) which prevented the Antichrist from establishing his kingdom.

iam enim arcanum iniquitatis
 agitur; tantum qui nunc tenet,
 donec de medio fiat. quis. nisi
 Romanus status, cuius abscessio in
 decem reges dispersa antichristi
 superducet?
 [res. carn. XXIV (CSEL, 47,60)]

"for the mystery of iniquity doth
 already work; only he who now hinders
 must hinder until he is taken out of
 the way." What obstacle is there but
 the Roman state, the falling away of
 which, by being scattered into ten
 kingdoms, shall introduce Antichrist
 upon [its own ruins]?
 [ANF, III,563]

Est et alia maior necessitas
 nobis orandi pro imperatoribus,
 etiam pro omni statu imperii
 rebusque Romanis, qui vim maximam
 universo orbi imminentem ipsamque
 clausulam saeculi acerbitates
 horrendas comminantem Romani
 imperii commeatu scimus retardari.
 [apol. XXXII (CSEL, 69,81)]

There is also another and greater necessity for our offering prayer in behalf of the emperors, nay, for the complete stability of the empire, and for Roman interests in general. For we know that a mighty shock impending over the whole earth -- in fact the very end of all things, threatening dreadful woes -- is only retarded by the continued existence of the Roman Empire.
 [ANF, III,42f]

While Tertullian interpreted 2 Thessalonians 2 in a manner that was clearly favourable to Rome, others were not so inclined. Even so, Tertullian did not

portray Rome as a godly force. The city itself could still be described as "the city of fornication" which was to receive its "deserved doom" from the ten kings, as in *res.carn.* XXV, which reads in part: "et prostituta illa ciuitas a decem regibus dignos exitus referat" (CSEL, 47,61). The other extreme from the view taken by Tertullian can be seen in the writings of Commodian and Victorinus. In his *Instructions* Commodian employed the *Nero redivivus* myth, describing the Antichrist as a Latin conqueror.

XLI. DE ANTECHRISTI TEMPORE

Dixit Esaias:
 Hic homo, qui commouet orbem
 Et reges totidem, sub quo fiet terra
 deserta.
 Audite, quoniam propheta de illo
 praedixit;
 Nil ego composite dixi, sed de lege
 legendo.
 Tum scilicet mundus finitur, cum
 ille parebit
 Et tres imperantes ipse devicerit
 orbe.
 Cum fuerit autem Nero de inferno
 levatus,
 Helias veniet prius signare dilectos,
 Res qui a sub fine regit et artatio
 tota.
 In septem annis tremebit unquidue
 terra:
 Sed medium tempus Helias, medium
 Nero tenebit.
 Tunc Babylon meretrix erit incine-
 facta favilla;
 Inde ad Hierusalem perget, victorque
 Latinus
 Tunc dicet: Ego sum Christus, quem
 semper oratis,
 Et quidem conlaudat illum primitivi
 decepti
 [Instr. XLI (CSEL, 15,53f)]

Isaiah said:

This is the man who moveth the world and so many kings, and under whom the land shall become desert. Hear ye how the prophet foretold concerning him. I have said nothing elaborately, but negligently. Then, doubtless the world shall be finished when he shall appear. He himself shall divide the globe into three ruling powers, when, moreover, Nero shall be raised from Hell, Elias shall first come to seal the beloved ones; at which things the region of Africa and the northern nation, the whole earth on all sides, for seven years shall tremble. But Elias shall occupy the half of the time, Nero shall occupy half. Then the whore of Babylon being reduced to ashes, its embers shall thence advance to Jerusalem; and the Latin conqueror shall then say, I am Christ whom ye always pray to; and indeed the original ones who were deceived combine to praise. [ANF, IV,210f]

There was no hint in this passage that the Roman empire might fulfil the role of a restrainer of the Antichrist. Rather, Rome was seen as the ancient whore, the apocalyptic Babylon, whose fate was to experience destruction as part of the rise of the Antichrist, who was himself depicted as a Nero figure. Commodian's other surviving work, *Carmen apologeticum*, maintained this bitter attitude towards the Roman empire (including the use of the *Nero redivivus* myth). The harsh attitude towards Rome was no doubt a result of the very severe persecutions of that period. Commodian's apologetical poem was

directed against both Jews and Gentiles, and its conclusion provided a more detailed description of the actions of the Antichrist. This final section commenced with a reference to the completion of the six thousandth year of human history (a detail noted in some of the earlier writers) and the appearance of a mysterious anonymous figure (possibly from the dead).

Sex milibus annis provenient ista
repletis,
Quo tempore nos ipsos spero iam in
litore portus.
Tunc homo resurget solis in agone
reductus
Et gaudet in Deo reminiscens, quid
fuit ante;
Qui, sicut audivit fragilis in
pristina carne, ...
[Carmen Iss 791-95 (CSEL, 15,166)]

Six thousand years having been fulfilled these things appeared,
At which time we ourselves, I hope,
now on the harbour seashore.
Then a man will arise brought back
in agone of the sun,
And he will rejoice in God, recalling
what he was before,
Who, just as he heard, frail in his
original flesh, ...

This first passage, by itself, would not mean very much, but it takes on more significance in the light of the subsequent lines. In these lines, Commodian envisaged the capture of Rome by the Goths and their punishment of the city, and its senators, for persecuting the Christians. The negative attitude to Rome was quite marked in this section of the poem.

Ecce iam ianuam pulsat et cingitur
ense,
Qui cito traiciet Gothis inrumpentibus
amne.
Rex Apollyon erit cum ipsis, nomine
dirus,
Qui persecutionem dissipet sanctorum
in armis.
Pergit ad Roman cum multa milia
gentis
Decretoque Dei captivat ex parte
subactos.
Multi senatorum tunc enim
captivi deflebunt
Et Deum caelorum blasphemant a
barbaro victi.

Hi tamen gentiles pascunt
Christianos ubique,
Quos magis ut fratres requirunt
gaudio pleni.
Nam luxuriosos et idola vana
colentes persecuntur
Enim et senatum sub iugo
mittunt.

Behold, now the gate shakes and he
is girt with a sword,
Who quickly will pass over, the
Goths having broken across the river.
King Apollyon will be with them,
name of dread,
Who in arms will spread abroad the
persecution of the saints.
He presses on to Rome with many
thousands of people
And by divine permission he captures
some of the defeated.
But then many of the senators taken
prisoner will be weeping
And conquered by the savage they
will blaspheme the God of
heaven
Yet these kinsmen will feed the
Christians everywhere
Who ask for it more like brothers,
full of joy.
For they persecute the well-to-do and
those who worship vain idols,
And they send the senate under the
yoke.

Haec mala percipiunt, qui sunt
 persecuti dilectos:
 Mensibus in quinque trucidantur
 isto sub hoste.
 [Carmen Iss 809-22 (CSEL, 15,167f)]

They perceive these evils, who have
 persecuted the beloved ones,
 In five months they are butchered
 under the same enemy.

This reference to the punishment of the Roman empire by the Goths was followed by the first explicit reference to the revival of Nero. In this significant section, Commodian mentioned the co-operation of the Jews with Nero, and then the appearance of another Antichrist figure. The second figure would be described more fully as the poem proceeds but at this stage was said to appear in the east.

Exurgit interea sub ipso tempore
 Cyrus,
 Qui terreat hostes et liberet inde
 senatum.
 Ex infero redit, qui fuerat regno
 praeceptus
 Et diu servatus cum pristino
 corpore notus.
 Dicimus hunc autem Neronem esse
 vetustum,
 Qui Petrum et Paulum prius punivit
 in urbe.
 Ipse redit iterum sub ipso
 saeculi fine
 Ex locis apocryphis, qui fuit
 reservatus in ista.
 Hunc ipse senatus invisum esse
 mirantur;
 Qui cum apparverit, quasi deum
 esse putabunt.
 Sed priusquam ille veniat,
 prophetabit Helias
 Tempore partito, medio hebdomadis
 axe.
 Completo spatio succedit ille
 nefandus,
 Quem et Iudaei simul tunc cum
 Romanis adorant.
 Quamquam erit alius, quem
 expectant ab orient,
 In nostra caede tamen saevient
 cum rege Nerone.
 [Carmen Iss 823-38 (CSEL, 15,168f)]

Meanwhile after that time Cyrus
 shall arise,
 Who will frighten the enemies and
 free the senate from them.
 He comes back from the dead who
 had commanded the kingdom
 And he served for a long time, known
 with his original body.
 But we say that this is the same old
 Nero,
 Who formerly punished Peter and Paul
 in the city.
 He himself comes back again after
 the end of the age,
 From the secret places, in which he
 has been hidden.
 The senate itself wonders that he is
 unseen;
 When he shall appear they will think
 him almost a god;
 But before that happens Elijah will
 prophesy
 In time divided, in the middle of the
 week.
 When this interval is fulfilled the
 accursed one follows,
 Whom also the Jews adore the same as
 the Romans.
 Although there will be another whom
 they look for from the east,
 Nevertheless in our slaughter they
 will rage with Nero the king.

This section of the poem was followed by an account of the ministry of Elijah in the middle of the great eschatological week, culminating in his execution by Nero. In perpetrating his designs, Nero was expected to destroy a tenth of the city before turning on the Jews themselves. Commodian then

proceeded to draw a distinction between this Neronic figure who destroys the city of Rome and the other figure who destroys the entire world.

Inde tamen pergīt victor in terra
Iudaea,
Quem ipsi Iudaei spectarant vincere
Romam.
Multa signa facit, ut illa credere
possint,
Ad seducendos eos quoniam est
missus iniquus;
Quem tamen e caelo increpat vox
reddita Summi.
De Persida homo immortalē esse se
dicit.
Nobis Nero factus Antichristus,
ille Iudaeis;
Isti duo semper prophetae sunt in
ultima fine.
Vrbis perditio Nero est, hic terrae
totius;
De quo pauca tamen suggero, quae
legi secreta.
[Carmen Iss 927-36 (CSEL, 15,175)]

Yet from thence he proceeds a
conqueror in the Jewish land,
He whom the Jews themselves behold
conquer Rome.
He makes many signs so that they
might be able to believe,
In order to lead them astray, since he
had been sent inadequate;
Whom yet an echoing voice resounds
from highest heaven.
A man from Persia says that he is
immortal.
For us Nero is made Antichrist, for
the Jews this other.
These two are always prophets at the
very end.
Nero is the destruction of our city,
this other of the whole world.
Yet I mention a few things about him,
secrets that I have gathered.

In this description Commodian relegated Nero to the role of a fearsome prototype of the real Antichrist whom he expected to appear from the east and win the loyalty of the Jews. This second figure was the one Commodian expected to lead the world in its final great revolt against God, culminating in the parousia of Jesus Christ and the day of judgment. It does not seem possible to integrate these ideas with those of Irenaeus and Hippolytus. Rather, they highlight the divergence that developed in some aspects of the myth in the course of the third century — in this case by the middle of the century. Possibly the double figures were related in some way to the dual beast figures in Rev 13:1-10, 11-18, or to the survival of the old Jewish tradition of an eschatological False Prophet.

This trend was also found in the writing of Victorinus towards the end of the third century. Victorinus expressed a very critical attitude towards the Roman empire, one which verged at times on undisguised hatred and contempt. Like Commodian, Victorinus employed the Nero myth as in his comments on Revelation 7.

sunt igitur scriptae in tubis et
fialis aut plagarum orbi missarum
clades aut ipsius Antichristi
insania ... aut ruina magnaē

Therefore in the trumpets and phials is
signified either the desolation of the
plagues that are sent upon the earth,
or the madness of Antichrist himself,

Babylonis, id est ciuitatis Romanae.
[comm. VIII.2 (CSEL, 49,87)]

... or the great overthrow of Babylon,
that is, the Roman state.
[ANF, VII,352]

This early expression of a negative attitude towards the Roman empire was confirmed by later parts of his commentary. The beast from the abyss was regarded by Victorinus as nothing less than the empire itself.

de abisso autem eum ascensurum
multa testimonia nobis in hoc
capitulo contrahenda sunt. ait enim
Ezechiel: ecce Assur cypressus in
monte Libano. Assur: deprimens;
cypresso excelsus ramosus: id est
populus multas; in monte Libanos:
regnum regnorum, id est Romanorum.
[comm. XI.4 (CSEL, 49,101)]

But that he shall ascend from the
abyss is proved by many testimonies;
for he says in the thirty-first chapter
Behold, Assur was a cypress in Mount
Lebanon. Assur, deeply rooted, was a
lofty and branching cypress — that is,
a numerous people — in Mount Leba-
non, in the kingdom of the kingdoms,
that is, of the Romans. [ANF, VII,354]

Septem capita septem reges
Romanos, ex quibus et Antichristus,
est in priore dicemus.
[comm. XII.3 (CSEL, 49,111)]

His seven heads were the seven kings
of the Romans, of whom also is Anti-
christ, as we have said above.
[ANF, VII,355]

Unum autem de capitibus occisum
in mortem et plaga mortis eius
curata est: Neronem dicit. constat
enim, dum insequeretur eum equit-
atus missus a senatu, ipsum sibi
gulam succidisse. hunc ergo
suscitatum deus mittere regem
dignum dignis et Christum, qualem
meruerunt Iudei.
[comm. XVII.16 (CSEL, 49,121)]

Now that one of the heads was, as it
were, slain to death, and that the
stroke of his death was directed, he
speaks of Nero. For it is plain that
when the cavalry sent by the senate
was pursuing him, he himself cut his
throat. Him therefore, when raised up
God will send as a worthy king, but
worthy in such a way as the Jews
merited. [ANF, VII,358]

Unlike these two later writers, Hippolytus seems to have been at pains to separate the Roman empire from the kingdom of the Antichrist. He never mentioned any arguments in favour of their connection (not even to refute them), and the care with which he separates the two suggests that Hippolytus may have been engaged in a polemic against people who held a critical view of the Roman empire. One of Hippolytus' main concerns in his treatise on the Antichrist seems to have been to separate the two powers, and by so doing to postpone the time of the Antichrist until after the demise of the Roman empire. Hippolytus began his account as follows.

Ἰδωμεν λεπτομερές, τί λέγει
Δανιήλ ἐν τοῖς ὁράμασιν.
οὗτος γὰρ διαστέλλων τὰς

Let us observe in detail what
Daniel says in the visions. For in
distinguishing the kingdoms that
shall be after these things, he

μετὰ ταῦτα ἐσομένας βασι-
λείας ἔδειξεν ἐν ἐσχάτοις
καιροῖς καὶ τὴν τοῦ ἀντι-
χρίστου παρουσίαν καὶ τὴν
τοῦ παντὸς κόσμου συν-
τέλειαν.

[antichr. 19.1f (GCS, I,14)]

showed both the coming of the Antichrist in the last times, and the consummation of the world.

This careful beginning was followed by the citation of the relevant verses from Daniel, with Hippolytus identifying the various parts of the image and the different beasts with particular world powers, culminating in the fourth beast and the iron legs, as seen earlier. After stating that these are symbols of the Roman empire, Hippolytus postulated a further kingdom, subsequent to the Roman empire, which he identified as the kingdom of the Antichrist.

μετὰ γὰρ τοῦτο τί περι-
λείπεται, ἀγαπητέ, ἀλλ' ἢ τὰ
ἴχνη τῶν ποδῶν τῆς εἰκόνας,
ἐν οἷς μέρος μὲν τι ἐστὶ
σιδηροῦν, μέρος δέ τι
ὀστράκινον, ἀναμεμιγμένον εἰς
ἄλληλα.* μυστικῶς ἐδήλωσε διὰ
τῶν δακτύλων τῶν ποδῶν τοὺς
δέκα βασιλεῖς τοὺς ἐξ αὐτῆς
ἐγειρομένους, ὅπερ λέγει
Δανιὴλ "προσενόουν τῷ θηρίῳ
καὶ ἰδοὺ δέκα κέρατα ὀπίσω
αὐτοῦ, ἐν οἷς ἀναβήσεται
ἕτερον μικρὸν ὡς παραφυάδιον,
καὶ τρία τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ
ἐκριζώσει," ὅπερ δέδεικται οὐχ
ἕτερος ἀλλ' ἢ ὁ ἀντίχριστος
ὁ ἐγειρόμενος, ὅς καὶ αὐτὸς
τὴν Ἰουδαίων βασιλείαν
ἀναστήσει.

[antichr. 25.4f (GCS, I,17f)]

For after this, what remains, beloved, but the toes of the feet of the image, in which "part is iron and part is clay, mixed together?" Mystically, by the toes of the feet, he meant the ten kings who are to arise from among it; as Daniel says, "I considered the beast, and behold, there were ten horns behind it, among which shall rise another, an offshoot, and shall pluck up by the roots the three before it." And under this was signified none other than the Antichrist who arises, and who shall himself raise the Jewish kingdom.

The Roman empire was identified here as the world power that was symbolised by the legs of iron and the fourth beast. In contrast, the kingdom of the Antichrist was understood as a subsequent world power, symbolised by the ten toes (in the case of Daniel 2) or the little horn (in the case of Daniel 7). This concern was evident in Hippolytus' exegesis of the visions, as he sought to ensure that his readers did not confuse the kingdom of the Antichrist with the Roman empire. Arguing from the mixture of the iron and the clay in the toes and the location of the little horn upon the head of the beast,

Hippolytus suggested that the kingdom of the Antichrist would indeed exhibit some similarities to the Roman empire. However, it was a point of some significance to Hippolytus that the clay was mingled with the original iron, and that the original horns were uprooted from their place; that is, there would also be important differences between these two powers. Hippolytus' careful distinctions can be seen in his treatise.

τούτων οὖν ἐσομένων καὶ τῶν
δέκα δακτύλων τῆς εἰκόνος
δημοκρατίας χωρησάντων, καὶ
τῶν δέκα κεράτων τοῦ θηρίου
εἰς δέκα βασιλεῖς μερισθέντων,
ἴδωμεν σαφέστερον τὰ προ-
κείμενα, καὶ κατανοήσωμεν
αὐτὰ ὀφθαλμοφανῶς. κεφαλὴ
τῆς εἰκόνος χρυσή, ἡ λέαινα,
Βαβυλώνιοι ἦσαν ὧμοι καὶ
βραχίονες ἀργυροῖ, ἡ ἄρκος,
Πέρσαι καὶ Μήδοι· κοιλία καὶ
μηροὶ χαλκοῖ, ἡ πάρδαλις οἱ
ἀπὸ Ἀλεξάνδρου κρατήσαντες·
Ἕλληνες· κνήμαι σιδηραῖ,
θηρίον ἐκθαμβὸν καὶ φοβερόν,
Ῥωμαῖοι οἱ νῦν κρατοῦντες·
ἴχνη ποδῶν ὄστρακον καὶ
σίδηρος, τὰ δέκα κέρατα, τὰ
μέλλοντα ἔσεσθαι· κέρας
ἕτερον μικρὸν ἀναφυόμενον, ὃ
ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀντίχριστος.

[antichr. 27.1-28.1 (GCS, I,19)]

This kingdom of the Antichrist would indeed, it was thought, present itself as a revival and continuation of the Roman empire, but the faithful were not to be deceived. Hippolytus' exegesis of the beast with the fatal wound in Rev 13:12 provided him with the opportunity to develop his theme further.

τὸ δὲ καὶ τὴν ἐξουσίαν τοῦ
πρώτου θηρίου πᾶσαν ἐποίει
καὶ ποιεῖ τὴν γῆν καὶ τοὺς ἐν
αὐτῇ κατοικοῦντας, ἵνα προσ-
κυνήσωσι τὸ θηρίον τὸ
πρῶτον, οὗ ἑθεραπεύθη ἡ
πληγὴ ἢ θανάτου αὐτοῦ·
τοῦτο σημαίνει, ὅτι κατὰ τὸν

Since these things, then, are in the future, and the ten toes of the image are ten democratic cities, and the ten horns of the fourth beast are distributed over ten kingdoms, we should look more exactly at the matters, and consider them in the light of observation. The golden head of the image, and the lioness, were the Babylonians; and also the silver shoulders and arms, the she-bear, the Persians and Medes; the stomach and thighs of brass, and the leopard, the Greeks ruling from Alexander; the legs of iron, and the beast dreadful and terrible, the Romans, who rule at present; the toes of the feet (clay and iron) and the ten horns, the powers that shall be; the other little horn that grows up among them, the Antichrist amongst them.

And the phrase, "he exercised all the power of the first beast, and caused the earth and its inhabitants to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed," signifies that, according to the law of Augustus, by whom the empire of Rome was established, he too will rule and govern, sanctifying every-

Αυγούστου νόμου, ἀφ' οὗ καὶ ἡ βασιλεία Ῥωμαίων συνέστη, οὕτω καὶ αὐτὸς κελεύσει καὶ διατάξει, κυρῶν ἅπαντα, διὰ τούτου δόξαν ἑαυτῷ πλείονα περιποιούμενος. τοῦτο γάρ ἐστι τὸ θηρίον τὸ τέταρτον, οὗ ἐπλήγη ἡ κεφαλὴ καὶ πάλιν ἐθεραπεύθη διὰ τὸ καταλυθῆναι αὐτὴν καὶ ἀτιμασθῆναι καὶ εἰς δέκα διαδήματα ἀναλυθῆναι, ὥστε πανούργος ὢν ὡς περιθεραπεύσειν αὐτὴν καὶ ἀνανεώσειν.

[antichr. 49.4f (GCS, 1,31f)]

In this instance, it can be seen that Hippolytus was prepared to interpret Daniel 7 in such a way that all four kingdoms follow on after Rome, rather than Rome being simply the fourth beast. This may simply be a piece of loose writing, as elsewhere he pursued his line quite consistently, but it does demonstrate yet again the fluid delineation of some details of the Antichrist myth at this stage. It also illustrates Bousset's point that the Fathers often chose to ignore the obvious meaning of biblical passages which were anti-Roman in intent. Hippolytus clearly exegetes the two beasts of Revelation 13 in such a way that while the beast from the sea (Rev 13:1-10) is interpreted as Rome (and identified with the fourth beast of Daniel 7), the beast from the land is no longer the imperial cult but the post-Roman kingdom of the Antichrist.

Where Victorinus applied the appellation "Babylon" to the Roman empire, Hippolytus reserved the condemnations of Isa 47:1-15 and Revelation 17-18 for the expected kingdom of Antichrist. Through antichr. chs 29-42, Hippolytus cited these biblical passages -- at length -- as pronouncements of God's judgment on the kingdom of the Antichrist which would succeed the Roman empire.

Not content simply to separate the two powers, Hippolytus made it clear that the appearance of the kingdom of the Antichrist would not be until the very last period in human history, "the final week".

δεῖ δὲ ἡμᾶς καὶ τὸν χρόνον ἐξακριβαζομένους ἐκθέσθαι, ἐν οἷς καιροῖς ταῦτα συμβήσεται

thing, and taking greater glory to himself. For this is the fourth beast, whose head was wounded and healed again, in its being broken up and dishonoured, and partitioned into ten crowns; and then he shall with knavish skill heal it, as it were, and restore it.

It is also necessary for us to inquire exactly the time and set forth the period at which these things shall come to pass, and how

καὶ ὡς τὸ κέρας τὸ μικρὸν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀναφυήσεται. τῶν γὰρ κνημῶν τῶν σιδηρῶν τῶν νῦν ἐπικρατουσῶν ἐπὶ τὰ ἴχνη τῶν ποδῶν καὶ τοὺς δακτύλους, χωρησάντων κατὰ τὴν τῆς εἰκόνης φανέρωσιν καὶ τὴν τοῦ θηρίου τοῦ φοβεροῦ δείξιν, καθὼς σεσήμανται ἐν τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν, οἷς σίδηρος καὶ τὸ ὄστρακον εἰς ταὐτὸ ἀναμίγνυται; δείξει δὲ ἡμῖν Δαυὶδ τὰ προκείμενα. λέγει γὰρ· "καὶ διαθήσει διαθήκην πολλοῖς ἑβδομάς μία. καὶ ἔσται ἐν τῷ ἡμισυ τῆς ἑβδομάδος, ἀρθήσεται μου θυσία καὶ στονδῆ." μίαν μὲν οὖν ἑβδομάδα εἰπὼν, τὴν ἐσχάτην τὴν ἐπὶ τῷ τέρματι τοῦ σύμπαντος κόσμου ἐσομένην ἐπ' ἐσχάτων ἐσήμανεν.

[antichr. 43.2-7 (GCS, 1,27)]

τούτων οὖν ἐσομένων, ἀγαπητέ, καὶ τῆς μιᾶς ἑβδομάδος εἰς δύο μερισθείσης καὶ τοῦ "βδελύγματος τῆς ἐρημώσεως" τότε ἀναφανέντος, καὶ τῶν δύο προφητῶν καὶ προδρόμων τοῦ κυρίου τὸν ἴδιον δρόμον τελειωσάντων καὶ τοῦ σύμπαντος κόσμου εἰς συντέλειαν λοιπὸν ἐρχομένου, τί περιλείπεται ἀλλ' ἢ ἡ ἐπιφάνεια τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ;

[antichr. 64.1 (GCS, 1,44)]

the little horn shall spring up in their midst. For when the legs of iron which now rule have issued in the feet and toes, according to the similitude of the image of the terrible beast, as has been shown above, then how shall the seasons be when the iron and the clay shall be mingled together? Daniel will set forth matter to us. For he says, "And one week will make a covenant with many, and it shall be that in the midst of the week my sacrifice and oblation shall cease." Thus, by one week, he meant the last week which is to be at the end of the world.

When these things, then, have happened, beloved, and the week being divided into two parts, and the "desolating sacrilege" being manifested, and the two prophets and forerunners of the Lord having completed their course, and the whole world finally approaching the consummation — what remains but the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, from heaven?

In the course of his treatise, Hippolytus not only exonerated the Roman empire from any association with the kingdom of the Antichrist — he also postponed the advent of the Antichrist until a quite distant period in the final stages of human history. So far as his attitude towards the Roman empire was concerned, Hippolytus was closer to the view of Tertullian than those of

Commodian and Victorinus, although he never referred to the empire in such positive terms as did Tertullian.

These Christian writers displayed considerable diversity in their attitudes towards the Roman empire, and in the answers they provided to questions concerning a link between it and the kingdom of the Antichrist. There was a discernible trend towards an increasingly negative attitude towards the Roman empire, despite the care with which Hippolytus had sought to keep the two as separate concepts.

The bitterness towards the empire which pervaded the writings from the second half of the third century was surely to be attributed to the impact of the more systematic and effective persecutions in that period. Not only were they effective, and caused great hardship for the Christians, but they were the occasion for bitter disputes within the church over the re-admission of lapsed Christians, and for the rise of schismatic and heretical groups.

However, it is significant that -- despite this increasingly negative attitude towards the Roman empire; the apparent glee with which its impending doom was recounted, and the debt of the Antichrist myth to the figures of Antiochus IV and Nero -- the empire as such was never simply equated with the kingdom of the Antichrist, nor was the emperor ever identified with the Antichrist. While the experience of persecution may have coloured the descriptions of the Antichrist as a terrible, murderous tyrant who would unleash severe persecutions upon the church, it is just as likely that these features may simply drew on older traditional descriptions of the Endtyrant. In any event, even if the persecutions helped to shape the idea of the Antichrist, or give it new urgency, the myth itself gives very little sign of this. The Antichrist remained a spiritual enemy whose advent still lay in the future and his kingdom, despite its many similarities to the Roman empire, was of an entirely different order.

5.8 SUMMARY: THE ANTICHRIST MYTH IN CHRISTIAN LITERATURE OF THE THIRD CENTURY

It is now possible to provide a brief summary of the Antichrist myth as it was understood in the third century CE (cf. Table T4). Not every element of the complete myth is to be found in each of the extant writings which refers to it. But then for the most part they were not works on the subject of the Antichrist as such, but rather writings addressed to other concerns with

incidental references to the Antichrist myth. The myth is mostly treated as a belief with which the writers assumed their readers to have been familiar.

It is apparent that OT passages in Isaiah and Daniel in particular, especially as used in 2 Thessalonians and Revelation, exercised an important influence upon the form of the Antichrist myth at this time. The passage in Dan 7:23-26 could almost be described as a thumbnail sketch of the myth, in the mind of these writers.

Surprisingly, the experience of the early church — particularly its persecution by the Roman authorities — appears to have exerted little direct influence on the forms taken by the developing Antichrist myth. It may have heightened apocalyptic tensions and hopes; but has left little direct influence on the myth (apart from the continued use of symbols fashioned in earlier ("pre-Antichrist") stages. One area where this influence may be present was the speculation concerning the special relationship between the Antichrist and the Jews. This may be a consequence of the hostility between Christians and Jews at the time, and seems to become a stronger feature as time passes. Some early Christians evidently came to the opinion, in the context of inter-faith rivalry, that the Jews were willingly or otherwise aiding the designs of Satan and his Antichrist.

Another point of influence upon the myth concerns the crises which the church faced over the rise of false teachers and questions concerning the lapsed. As has been seen, the struggle with the heretics, the debates over the validity of baptisms performed by schismatics, and the arguments over the re-admission of the lapsed, were occasions when the Antichrist myth was employed for purposes of internal church polemics. However, this really represented a secondary use of the myth, interpreting present opponents and current problems in the light of the general expectation of the Antichrist proper, who was expected to appear at the end of time.

This was no new phenomenon. The visions of Daniel involved the use of the *Chaoskampf* myth to interpret current historical events, while the first appearance of the term "Antichrist" (in the Johannine epistles at the end of the first century) also involved the application of a mythic tradition to the task of interpreting contemporary problems.

Although the attitude towards the Roman empire was clearly becoming more negative, the third century writers did not identify either the Antichrist or his kingdom with Rome. The *Nero redivivus* myth is known from this period, but it was not a widely attested detail in the Antichrist literature. Even when

Table T4
Third Century Witnesses to the Antichrist Myth

	Irenaeus	Tertullian	Hippolytus	Origen	Cyprian	ApEI	Commodian	Victorinus	1RevJn
Use of Biblical Sources									
Daniel	x	x	x	x		x		x	
Other OT passages	x		x		x	x		x	
Synoptic gospels	x		x			x		x	
2 Thessalonians	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	
Revelation	x	x	x			x		x	
1, 2 John		x			x	x			
Character									
Satan link	x	x	x	x		x		x	x
Nero legend							x	x	
Deceit	x	x	x	x		x	x		x
Signs & wonders	x	x	x	x		x	x		
False teaching		x			x	x			
Apostasy		x							
Persecution	x		x				x		
Highpoint of evil	x		x	x					
Hybris		x	x		x	x			
Divine claims	x	x	x	x					
God's sovereignty	x	x	x	x	x			x	
Activity									
Physical form						x			x
Tribe of Dan	x		x			?			
666 & name	x		x					x	
Defeat 3 kings	x		x					x	
Universal power			x						
Mark of Antichrist								x	
3½ year reign	x		x			x	x	x	x
Befriend Jews	x		x				x		x
Rebuild temple			x						
Session in temple	x	x	x				x		
Two witnesses			x			x	x	x	x
Cosmic disorder						x	x		
Destruction	x		x			x		x	x
Separated from empire	x	x	x						
Related to empire		x					x	x	

it was used, its precise significance for the Antichrist myth is unclear. It seems to have been an independent motif drawn into occasional service. Nowhere was the emperor directly identified as the Antichrist; not even as an

ally or agent of the Antichrist. While the persecutions may have helped to colour the picture of the future Antichrist, the myth does not seem to have led to the identification of Rome with the Antichrist.

Rather, the Antichrist was understood as a satanic counterpart to Christ. Pretender and opponent, Antichrist would be a false messiah, a son of the devil, and an agent of judgment. The precise nature of the Antichrist's relationship to Satan was not defined in any satisfactory way, but the certainty of that relationship was firmly established in the tradition. The false miracles and spurious wonders, performed by magic and with the assistance of the demonic hosts, would enable the Antichrist to undertake his satanic mission with the full resources of evil at his disposal. A central motif in all this was the title, "the Deceiver." To aid him in this deception, the Antichrist would imitate Christ as completely as possible. This very old element, which was to be found in the Johannine epistles and perhaps goes back to OT traditions about true and false prophets, may have provided the inner dynamic which allowed the myth to develop easily by the simple process of adding new degrees and forms of deceit with subsequent retelling of the myth.

The signs of the Antichrist's advent were not seen in the present persecution of the church by the Roman empire, but rather in the activities of false teachers and by divisions within the church. (This was an aspect of the tradition which betrays the myth's inherent "internal" nature, and shows that it was largely concerned with internal problems, not external politics.) Other portents included the partitioning of the Roman empire into two or ten parts; the rise of the little horn (possibly in the form of external enemies of Rome, such as the Goths); the revival of a united form of the empire under its new, evil ruler; and his favourable treatment of the Jews. The Antichrist would finally be recognised beyond any doubt by his bearing a name with the numerical value of 666 (although these writers confessed their inability to be more specific about precisely which name that might be) and, in the view of some of these witnesses, by his monstrous personal form.

At his first appearance, the Antichrist was expected to portray himself as a pious, sober and just "saviour" of the world -- a typical portrayal of an ancient ruler. Within this context he would especially assist the Jewish people to restore their national and religious life. These first favourable appearances, however, were expected to give way quickly to a revelation of his real character as an aggressive, cruel and despotic tyrant -- a person so evil that Irenaeus described him as the recapitulation of all the evil of six thousand years of human history. He was expected then to claim divine honours for

himself, acting as the ultimate "idol" through whom Satan would attract human worship, and to seat himself in the temple. The powers of nature were expected to co-operate with the Antichrist, aiding him in his attacks on the church. All who submitted to him would be marked with the symbol of his name, while any others would be excluded from the normal converse of everyday life and hunted down. The Antichrist's reign would be marked by unspeakable horrors as satanic influence reached its apex in human history.

However, this apparent high-water mark of evil was to serve unwittingly the eternal purposes of God. The writers were sensitive to the implicit denial of God's sovereignty involved in the rise of the Antichrist. Taking their lead from 2 Thessalonians 2, they stressed that God would allow and control these events for the sake of achieving his own inscrutable purposes. Those who refused to believe the truth would be allowed to believe the ultimate untruth, the great lie, and condemn themselves in doing so. Within God's purposes, the Antichrist would only be allowed to reign for forty two months. During these three and a half years, a mysterious pair of eschatological prophets ("the witnesses") would appear and condemn the Antichrist, only to suffer martyrdom -- as would numerous other Christians. Even that period was sometimes thought likely to be miraculously shortened "for the sake of the elect".

This "half week" would occur at the very end of human history, as the six thousand years were fulfilled, before being brought to a sudden and dramatic end by the parousia of Jesus prior to the establishment of the long-awaited millennium. The descriptions of this final punishment seem to have become more vivid and dramatic as the third century unfolded. This may reflect a growing sense of estrangement from the empire, and a more intense desire for revenge on the part of Christians. Surprisingly, in the descriptions of the Antichrist myth itself almost no attention is given to the millennial bliss expected after his demise.

II. ANTECEDENT TRADITIONS TO THE ANTICHRIST MYTH

6. INTRODUCTION: THE SEARCH FOR ORIGINS

In the preceding discussion the literary evidence for an Antichrist myth in the second and third centuries CE was examined. It was demonstrated that there was indeed a widely-disseminated myth with which Christians at that time were familiar. Several Christian authors wrote accounts of that tradition or made reference to it in their writings, and even a pagan critic such as Celsus was aware of it. While the existence and use of the Antichrist myth has been demonstrated, this earlier examination did not address the important question of the origins of the myth.

It was noted that these writers often appealed to biblical passages in support of their views, even though these passages themselves never mention the word "antichrist" and originally had quite different meanings. In the remainder of this study the biblical and extra-biblical literature will be examined for clues concerning the origins and development of the myth. It must be recognised that these writings are fragmentary in many cases (at least insofar as they refer to evil figures or other characters relevant to the development of the Antichrist myth), and that they never use the actual word except in the Johannine epistles.

Wilhelm Bousset suggested that there was a well developed oral tradition concerning the Antichrist within apocalyptic eschatology and that this surfaces in fragmentary ways throughout the literature of several centuries.¹ In fact, he argued that this oral tradition had a far greater influence upon the interpretation of the biblical eschatological passages than the written texts themselves, citing as an example the way that the early Fathers interpreted the Revelation of John in a fashion that ignored its anti-Roman theology.² Such a persistent interpretation, contrary to the plain sense of the canonical book, does suggest that Bousset may have been correct in his suggestion. The ensuing study will endeavour to determine the extent to which this was so.

1 Der Antichrist, 4f, 8.

2 Der Antichrist, 16.

Such an endeavour will involve much more than a study of Christian literature in the NT and the first two centuries CE. It will be necessary to delve much deeper back into the Judaeo-Christian tradition and study literature from the last centuries before the Common Era. Literature from quite an extensive period of time, almost four hundred years, will be under review. In general terms, this middle section of the study will examine the extant literature from the beginning of the second century BCE until to the destruction of the temple in 70 CE (while the final section will consider literature between that date and Irenaeus). The later part of the second temple period was a crucial time for the development of the Antichrist myth, and it also happens to be a period which was exceptionally significant for both Judaism and Christianity.

During this period Judaism experienced several crises and challenges: the crisis over hellenisation in the second century BCE; the development of sectarian groups and numerous parties within Judaism; the proliferation of apocalyptic and other apocryphal writings; the sharp and definitive stages of the Samaritan schism; the advent of Roman domination; and the beginnings of the Christian church. All told it was a period of great importance for Jewish self-definition and survival.

In the time since Bousset, Charles and Gunkel at the turn of the century there have been great advances in the sources available for this period, and consequently in interpretation. Yet this remains a period of many grey areas, where final certainty is impossible. Scholarship is dependent upon the chance survival of so many texts that conclusions must always remain tentative since subsequent discoveries of texts may revolutionise the understanding of an era. A further cause for caution is to be observed in the difficulties which are encountered in establishing a firm chronology for the latter half of the period under review. W.H.C. Frend summarises the problem as follows,

....study of the whole range of Jewish apocrypha and pseudepigrapha and of the New Testament and sub- apostolic literature has been obstructed by the lack of a firm chronological framework in which to put these works ... It has been a case of every historian and every commentator for himself.³

3 W.H.C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, xi. For detailed discussion of the points involved in historical reconstructions in this period, see Schürer-Vermes, *History*. See also the works listed in §8.1 at note 1.

This comment serves as a warning against too hasty or too firm conclusions in this sort of enquiry. The present study is dependent upon texts whose exact place in history cannot always be determined, and this complicates the task of tracing the history of the Antichrist myth. Table T5, below, attempts to set out the general chronological framework within which the examination will be pursued. Some of the details are open to debate, and certain aspects of these debates will be canvassed in the course of the study itself, but the presentation of these dates in a Table does provide a basis for the material about to be considered.

As has been mentioned, the principal problem in tracing the origins of the Antichrist myth concerns the almost total absence of the word "Antichrist". The word itself first occurs in the Johannine Epistles, which will be examined in the final part of our study. On the other hand, many of the elements which recur in the later examples of the Antichrist myth are to be found in various combinations in the earlier literature even though the actual word itself is missing. Sometimes the arrangement and form of these elements is quite like that in the Antichrist literature. This suggests that the search for antecedents to the myth may not be pointless, and that the earlier forms of the myth, or at least its component elements, may be discerned in passages which do not use the actual word.

Bousset suggested that, for many years titles such as "Belial" were used for a figure who in other respects was identical to the Antichrist, but that in the developing Christian tradition this later title displaced the older names.⁴ This has an element of plausibility about it and warrants careful examination. For example, this would add a new level of meaning to the question that was posed in 2 Cor 6:15, "What accord has Christ with Belial?"⁵ The examination of opponents of God in hellenistic Jewish thought which follows will address just that issue. To what extent had the traditions about evil spiritual powers in hellenistic Jewish writings developed into a "pre-Christian Antichrist tradition"?

This will be followed by a consideration of the impact which Antiochus IV Epiphanes had on Jewish apocalyptic thought. It will be seen that his actions,

4 *Der Antichrist*, 99-101.

5 For discussion of this passage see: H.D. Betz, "2 Cor 6:14-7:1", 88-108; N.A. Dahl, "A Fragment and Its Context", *Studies in Paul*, 62-69; J.A. Fitzmyer, "Qumran and the Interpolated Paragraph in 2 Cor. 6, 14 - 7, 1", 271-80; V.P. Furnish, *II Corinthians*. See also §11.2, especially note 73.

Table T5

Significant Events and Literature, ca 200 BCE to 70 CE

Date	Important Events & Rulers	Jewish & Christian Literature
pre-200 BCE		I Enoch 1-32, 72-82
198	Antiochus III Seleucid control of Palestine	
170-164	Antiochus IV Crisis over extent and speed of hellenisation in Judaea	Jubilees Daniel I Enoch 83-90
167+	Maccabaeen revolt	
163+ 135+	Maccabaeen rulers Hasmonaeen dynasty	Martyrdom of Isaiah Sibylline Oracles III Earliest Qumran MSS
ca 100		I Enoch 91-104
63	Pompey the Great extends direct Roman control over Syria and Palestine	Psalms of Solomon Testament of Moses Lives of the Prophets
37-4	Herod the Great confirmed as ruler of Jewish areas in Palestine	I Enoch 37-71 Sibylline Oracles I-II
30 CE	Tiberius Crucifixion of Jesus Hellenistic mission Christianity	Later Qumran MSS Pauline Epistles
64	Nero Death of Paul	
66+ 68	Jewish revolt in Judaea Death of Nero	
68-69	Galba, Otho, Vitellius and Vespasian: "Year of the Four Emperors" and appearance of the first Neronian pretender	Revelation (early date)
70	Capture of Jerusalem	Mark's Gospel

and the Jewish responses to them, created a dynamic new form of ancient mythic symbols that was to have ramifications for Jewish and Christian theology long after his death in 164 BCE. Finally, for this middle part of our study, we shall review other elements of the hellenistic Jewish literature which foreshadow or parallel, to varying degrees, aspects of the later Antichrist descriptions (cf. Table T7). By the end of that examination it will be clear that the descriptions reviewed in the first section were not produced *de novo*, but were a creative blending of much older traditions of quite diverse origins.

7. DEMONIC POWERS IN EARLY JEWISH WRITINGS

Hellenistic Judaism inherited, adopted and developed a rich variety of ways in which to describe the reality of evil in human experience.¹ The primary source was the rich religious traditions of the Canaanites, of which ancient Israel was an integral part.² These traditions had been largely reshaped and adapted for use within the Yahweh cult of pre-exilic Israel and Judah, but their continued use within the OT and their survival within the contemporary Jewish and hellenistic religious thought kept them as live options for Israel's visionaries even at this late stage.³ The wider milieu of the hellenistic world, with its blending of religious and philosophical traditions from diverse origins, gave the informed person of the time a varied menu from which to select morsels that suited the taste or the needs of the moment.

The literature under review includes descriptions of a wide variety of demonic powers. To make their consideration more manageable the discussion has been divided into two parts. The first (§7.1) will consider the demonic powers as presented in literature other than the texts produced by the Qumran community, while the second (§7.2) will consider the ways in which the so-called Dead Sea Scrolls described the hostile demonic powers.

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- 1 Cf. J.J. Collins, "Cosmos and Salvation", 121-42; M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*; H. Koester, *Introduction* 1,228-80; R.A. Kraft & G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *Early Judaism*; D.S. Russell, *Method and Message*, 235-62; S. Safrai & M. Stern, *Jewish People* II,561-630, 793-970; Schürer-Vermes, *History*, II & III; M.E. Stone, *Scriptures, Sects & Visions*; ---, *Jewish Writings*.
 - 2 See W. Beyerlin, *Textbuch*; A. Caquot, *Ugaritic Religion*; P.C. Craigie, "Ugarit, Canaan and Israel", 145-67; F.M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*; G.R. Driver, *Canaanite Myths and Legends*; T.H. Gaster, *Thespis*; C.H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Literature*; J. Gray, *Legacy of Canaan*; H. Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos*; J. O'Brien & W. Major, *In the Beginning*; M.P. O'Connor, "Ugarit and the Bible", 205-18; H. Ringgren, "Israel's Place among the Religions of the Ancient Near East", 1-8; ---, *Israelite Religion*; ---, *Religions of the Ancient Near East*.
 - 3 J.J. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*; F.M. Cross, "Divine Warrior in Israel's Early Cult", 11-30; T.H. Gaster, *Myth, Legend and Custom*; ---, "Myth, Mythology" *IDB* 3,481-87; P.D. Hanson, *Dawn of Apocalyptic*; ---, "Zechariah 9", 37-59; P.D. Miller, *Divine Warrior*; C. Rowland, *Open Heaven* (especially Part Two, "The Content of the Heavenly Mysteries", pp. 73-189).

7.1 NON-QUMRAN LITERATURE

The descriptions of demonic figures in several different texts from this period of hellenistic Judaism will be examined first. These will include early portions of 1 Enoch, Jubilees, MartIs, SibOr I-II, and LivPro. The evidence presented by T12P will not be drawn on at this stage as it is being treated as a later Christian work, built on a Jewish *Vorlage* which can no longer be confidently separated from its final Christian form. There is no doubt that T12P preserves older traditions from the period under consideration in this chapter, but its evidence will not be taken into account until §12.8.

7.1.1 The Documents

(a) 1 Enoch is one of the most important works in the OT pseudepigrapha.⁴ It is a composite document reflecting the work of various writers over a considerable period of time and is now fully extant only in its Ethiopic version. 1 Enoch is essentially a Palestinian work, which was almost certainly originally composed in Aramaic (a conclusion made more probable by the number of Aramaic fragments found at Qumran). Its older sections may be dated to the pre-Maccabaeen period, while the whole collection illustrates the speculative pursuits of Jewish wisdom traditions in hellenistic times; including speculation on a variety of demonic figures.⁵

4 LITERATURE: M. Black, *Apocalypsis Henochi Graece*; ---, *Book of Enoch*; R.H. Charles, *Book of Enoch*; ---, "Book of Enoch" APOT II,163-281; ---, *Ethiopic Version of the Book of Enoch*; J.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 98-103; ---, "SNTS Pseudepigrapha Seminars at Tübingen and Paris", 315-23; J.J. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 33-67; A.-M. Denis, *Introduction*, 15-30; E. Isaac, "1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch" OTP I,5-89; M.A. Knibb, "1 Enoch" AOT 169-319; ---, *Ethiopic Book of Enoch*; J.T. Milik and M. Black, *Book of Enoch*; G.W.E. Nickelsburg, "Apocalyptic and Myth in 1 Enoch 6-11", 383-405; ---, *Jewish Literature*, 46-55, 90-94, 150-60; ---, "Bible Rewritten and Expanded" in M.E. Stone (ed), *Jewish Writings*, 89-97; ---, "Enoch in Recent Research", 210-17; S.B. Reid, "Rising Elite", 147-56; M. Rist, "Enoch, Book of" IDB 2,103-05; E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 346-62; M.E. Stone, *Scriptures, Sects and Visions*; S. Uhlig, "Das äthiopische Henochbuch" JSRZ V.6,461-771; J.C. Vanderkam, *Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition*; P.G.R. de Villiers (ed), *Studies in 1 Enoch*.

5 Cf. E. Isaac, "1 Enoch" OTP I,6f.

(b) **The Book of Jubilees** is an important witness to the attitudes of a significant body of Jewish opinion in the second century BCE.⁶ While its precise origins have not been convincingly demonstrated by anyone, it is apparent that the book comes from the kind of circles which were responsible for such materials as Daniel 10-12 and some of the earlier parts of I Enoch. Jubilees differs from Daniel and I Enoch in that it is not a directly eschatological work. While Jubilees shares many of the views seen in Daniel and I Enoch, and includes Enochian traditions at some points (eg the Watchers, Jub 5:1-12), its real interests lie elsewhere.

Written in Hebrew and translated into at least Greek, Latin, Syriac and Ethiopic versions, Jubilees purports to be the record of revelation given to Moses during his forty day sojourn up Mt Sinai (Exod 24:12-18). Secret traditions which were previously revealed to some of the Patriarchs are now revealed to Moses and he is commanded to record them. This record is the book of Jubilees, not the Pentateuch, although the latter is regarded as sacred and authoritative. The book takes the form of a midrash on Gen 1:1 to Exod 15:22, and exhibits some freedom in changing the tradition to suit its own theological purposes.

It is not possible to date the work precisely, but it seems clear that it was written sometime in the second century BCE. Jubilees was clearly valued at Qumran. Several fragmentary MSS of the work have been found there, and it is referred to by name (CD XVI.2-4). This provides a *terminus ad quem* of approximately 100 BCE. Despite the possible reference to the desecration of the temple in 23:16ff, most scholars suggest a date before the crisis reached its peak. The muted criticism of hellenising ways elsewhere in Jubilees shows

6 LITERATURE: K. Berger, "Das Buch der Jubiläen" JSRZ II.3,272-564; R.H. Charles, "Book of Jubilees", APOT II,1-82; ---, *Ethiopic Version of the Hebrew Book of Jubilees*; J.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 143-47; A.-M. Denis, *Introduction*, 150-62; Y.M. Grintz, "Jubilees, Book of" *EncyJud* X,324-26; G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 73-80; ---, "Bible Rewritten and Expanded" in M.E. Stone (ed), *Jewish Writings*, 97-104; C. Rabin, "Jubilees" AOT 1-139; H. Rösner, *Das Buch der Jubiläen*; L. Rost, "Jubiläenbuch" RGG³ III,960; E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 362-87; S. Tedeschi, "Jubilees, Book of" IDB 2,1002f; E. Vogt, "Jubiläenbuch" LThK 5,1148f; O.S. Wintermute, "Jubilees" OTP II,35-142.

that not all conservative Jews reacted as strongly to the hellenistic reforms as the author of Daniel or the supporters of the Maccabees. Goldstein suggests that it was written "between autumn 169, and spring 167 BCE, almost in the immediate aftermath of Jason's reforms."⁷

(c) **The Martyrdom of Isaiah** is now extant only as the first five chapters of another work, the *Ascension of Isaiah*.⁸ The larger work is partly extant in Greek, Slavonic, Coptic and Latin, but has survived in complete form in the Ethiopic versions. *MartIs* is a much older Jewish work incorporated in the *Christian AscensIs*, and was most probably originally composed in Hebrew -- judging by some of the Hebraisms which survive in the Ethiopic and other versions. *MartIs* seems to have been composed in Palestine during the last two centuries before the common era. Two dates are suggested by the internal evidence. A time around the Maccabean revolt is possible as the *MartIs* has many similarities to the martyr passages in 1 Macc 2:6,27f and 2 Macc 5:27. On the other hand, a somewhat later date in the early part of the first century BCE is suggested by the work's many points of contact with the Essene writings from Qumran,⁹ even though no trace of *MartIs* has been found

7 J.A. Goldstein, "Jewish Acceptance and Rejection of Hellenism", II,80.

8 LITERATURE: J.M.T. Barton, "Ascension of Isaiah" AOT, 775-812; F.C. Burkitt, *Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, 45-48, 72-74; A. Caquot, "Bref commentaire", 65-93; R.H. Charles, *Ascension of Isaiah*; ---, "Martyrdom of Isaiah" APOT II,155-62; J.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 125-30; G. Dellling, *Bibliographie*, 166; A.-M. Denis, *Introduction*, 170-76; J. Fleming & H. Duensing, "The Ascension of Isaiah" NTA II,642-63; D. Flusser, "Apocryphal Book", 34-47; ---, "Isaiah, Ascension of" *EncyJud IX*,71; E. Hamerschaimb, "Das Martyrium Jesajas" JSHRZ II.1,15-34; M.A. Knibb, "Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah" OTP II,143-76; E. Littmann, "Isaiah, Ascension of" JE VI,642f; R. Meyer, "Himmelfahrt und Martyrium des Jesaja" RGG³ III,336; G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 142-45; ---, "Martyrdom of Isaiah" in M.E. Stone (ed), *Jewish Writings*, 52-56; E. von Nordheim, *Lehre*, 208-19; M. Rist, "Isaiah, Ascension of" IDB 2,744-46; Schürer-Vermes, *History II*,141-46 & III.1,335-41; M.E. Stone, "Isaiah, Martyrdom of" *EncyJud IX*,71f; E. Turdeanu, *Apocryphes slaves et roumains*, 145-72.

9 D. Flusser ["Isaiah, Ascension of" *EncyJud IX*,71] discusses these contacts with Qumran. The contacts include angelic dualism; the idea of opposing spirits resident in human beings; a critical attitude towards the cult in Jerusalem; the withdrawal of the righteous ones to the wilderness; and the parallel between the prophet Isaiah (and his friends), the evil king and the false prophet in *MartIs*, and the Teacher of Righteousness (and his community), the Wicked Priest, and the False Oracle in the Qumran texts.

among the Dead Sea Scrolls. Nickelsburg concludes the work can only be attributed to a group within the wider orbit of Essene theology and self-understanding.¹⁰

The original Jewish work which constitutes the *MartIs* is found in 1:1-2a, 1:7-3:12 and 5:1-14 of *AscensIs*. It deals with the circumstances surrounding Isaiah's legendary death at the hands of Manasseh. Isaiah's death is not described in the Bible, but it became the subject of various Jewish traditions -- some of which have remained extant.¹¹ *MartIs* uses the literary fiction of Isaiah's martyrdom as a means to interpret the experience of its apocalyptically minded readers, and in so doing makes use of the Satan-Beliar traditions.

(d) The Sibylline Oracles represent material from hellenistic, Jewish and Christian sources over a period of 700 years.¹² As a result, the various Books which comprise the collection express differing political and religious views. Oracles attributed to a Sibyl were well-attested phenomena in the ancient world -- invariably written in epic Greek hexameters. The most characteristic feature of all the Sibyllina was the prediction of woes and disasters. While there were occasional promises that the future may hold some hope, the majority were oracles of doom addressed to specific nations or cities. Very little of the pagan Sibyllina have survived. The Sibyl herself was always depicted as a woman -- usually very aged -- speaking inspired messages under the compulsion of inspiration. If there was ever an historical entity behind the Sibyl, all traces of her had been lost in classical times. By the time of *SibOr*, the Sibyl was a convenient pagan device used by Jews (and later Christians) to publicise their views.

 10 G.W.E. Nickelsburg, "Martyrdom of Isaiah" in M.E. Stone (ed), *Jewish Writings*, 55.

11 Cf. J.M.T. Barton, "Ascension", *AOT*, 775.

12 LITERATURE: J.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 184-88; J.J. Collins, *Sibylline Oracles*; ---, "Sibylline Oracles" *OTP* 1,317-472; ---, "Sibylline Oracles" in M.E. Stone (ed), *Jewish Writings*, 357-81; A.-M. Denis, *Introduction*, 14-22; J. Geffcken, *Die Oracula Sibyllina*; ---, *Komposition und Entstehungszeit der Oracula Sibyllina* (TU 8.1; Leipzig: 1902)(n.a.); F.C. Grant, "Sibyllinen" *RGG*³ VI,14f; A. Kurfess, "Christian Sibyllines" *NTA* II,703-45; ---, "Oracula Sibyllina I-II", 151-65; H. Lanchester, "Sibylline Oracles" *APOT* II,368-406.

The extant collection known as the Sibylline Oracles is a combination of pagan, Jewish and Christian sources from the late fourth century BCE to the fourth or fifth century CE (with subsequent additions continuing for centuries, some as late as the Middle Ages). The standard collection, if it may be so called, comprises twelve books numbered as I to XIV due to the vagaries of the manuscript tradition. They are extant in Greek, which was almost certainly their original language. Books III, IV, V and XI are basically Jewish in their final form with little or no signs of Christian influence. In Books I-II (a single work divided over two "Books") and much of VIII, the Jewish sub-stratum can be readily separated from the Christian redaction. This is a valuable advance for the purposes of this study, as the passages of relevance to the Antichrist myth are normally in the earlier Jewish strata. Books VI, VII and XII-XIV are essentially Christian productions (but have very little of relevance for the purposes of the present study) and may be left aside.

SibOr I and II really comprise a single document artificially separated into two books by the MSS tradition. The material is based on a typical Sibylline sequence of 10 generations, but this has been partly lost through the Christian redaction. Collins identifies the following portions as Jewish or Christian in origin:¹³ definitely Jewish (I.1-323; II.6-33; II.154-76), probably Jewish (II.187-89; II.193-237; II.252-310; II.313-47), Christian material (I.324-400; II.1-5; II.45-55; II.177-83; II.190-251; II.238-51; II.264; II.311f).

The Jewish elements are the only parts of Books I-II to be considered at this point. They originated in Asia Minor — probably in Phrygia, judging by the references to that area in I.196-198, 261f — shortly after the battle of Actium in 31 BCE. Rome is the only power left by the tenth generation, and there is no mention of either the destruction of Jerusalem or of the Nero legend. The Jewish material can therefore be dated somewhere between 30 BCE and the early part of the first century of the common era.

(e) *The Lives of the Prophets* is a Jewish work in the form of a catalogue of brief biographical and geographical notes on twenty-three prophets of the Hebrew Bible.¹⁴ The prophets are treated at varying lengths (Joel, a mere sentence; Daniel, 22 verses) in a survey which includes the literary prophets,

13 J.J. Collins, "Sybilline Oracles" in M.E. Stone (ed), *Jewish Writings*, 376f.

14 LITERATURE: J.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 175-77; G. Delling, *Bibliographie*, 172; D.R.A. Hare, "Lives of the Prophets" *OTP* II, 379-99; J. Michl, "Prophetarum Vitae" *LThK* 8, 794; D. Satran, "Lives of the Prophets" in M.E. Stone (ed), *Jewish Writings*, 56-60; Schürer-Vermees, *History*,

Daniel and seven non-literary prophets: Nathan, Ahijah, the anonymous man of God in 1 Kings 13, Azariah, Elijah, Elisha and Zechariah son of Jehoida. At times the work is a summary of information gleaned from the OT, or even the fruit of fanciful interpretation of OT passages; but at other times LivPro provides a rich treasury of Jewish legend.

There has been no real study of the book's origins or its intended audience, although M.E. Stone has recently made LivPro a focus for his research and there may be substantial studies published on the document over the next few years.¹⁵ The interest which LivPro exhibits in details relating to the turn of the era suggests a date around that time. While the work is only extant in Christian recensions, and there are no references to it in other Jewish literature, it seems that LivPro was written in the Herodian period.¹⁶ There may have been a Hebrew Grundschrift but this is far from certain, given the current state of study of LivPro. There is little evidence of Christian influence in the book despite its popularity amongst Christians.

(f) **Psalms of Solomon** The PssSol are a collection of eighteen psalms written in the style of the biblical psalter.¹⁷ The PssSol are now extant in Greek and Syriac versions, but were originally composed in Hebrew — probably in Jerusalem ca 40 BCE. They reflect the dramatic events in Jewish history around the time of Roman control being established under Pompey. They are clearly Palestinian and date from just before the turn of the era, but it is impossible to be more precise.

III.2,783-86; M.E. Stone, "Prophets, Lives of" *EncyJud* XIII,1149f; C.C. Torrey, *Lives of the Prophets*.

15 See J.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 177.

16 Cf. D.R.A. Hare, "Lives", *OTP* II,381.

17 **LITERATURE:** H. Braun, "Salomo-Psalmen" *RGZ* V,1342f; S.P. Brock, "Psalms of Solomon" *AOT* 649-82; J.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 195-97; A.-M. Denis, *Introduction*, 60-69; G.B. Gray, "Psalms of Solomon" *APOT* II,625-52; R.R. Hann, *Manuscript History*; S. Holm-Nielsen, "Die Psalmen Salomos" *JSHRZ* IV.2,49-112; G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 203-12; J. O'Dell, "Religious Background", 241-57; J. Rendel Harris, *Odes and Psalms* (Cambridge, 1911); J. Rendel Harris & A. Mingana, *Odes and Psalms* (Manchester, 1916-1920); H.E. Ryle & M.R. James, *Psalms of Solomon*; E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 387-409; J. Schüpphaus, *Die Psalmen Salomos*; Schürer-Vermes, *History* III.1,192-97; J.L. Trafton, *Syriac Version*.

7.1.2 The Demonic Powers

While there are dozens of names which occur in these documents for demonic powers, they can conveniently be considered under three or four more significant ones.¹⁸ The old traditions about the Watchers include a large number of figures for which there is very little provided other than their name and their place in the angelic hosts. As will be seen, Belial was the most common name for the leader of the evil angelic powers, but along with it several other names must be considered. Finally, and of lesser importance, those few places where the Satan figure is mentioned will be noted.

(a) **The Watchers** 1 Enoch commences with speculations concerning the fall of the angelic powers (cf. Gen 6:1-4), and demonstrates vividly the way those old traditions were elaborated in hellenistic Judaism.¹⁹ There are several passages from the older material of 1 Enoch which should be noted at this point. Although 1 Enoch 1-5 is a later addition to provide an introduction to the overall work, chs 6-36 contain many older traditions from pre-Maccabean times. While their present form is late, the actual material, with its traditions about the fallen angels, is quite early.

In 1 Enoch 6-11, fragments of the older Book of Noah describe the fall of the angels who lusted after human women. The leading "Watchers" are named, with the two most significant ones being Semyaz and Azaz'el. Semyaz appears as the dominant angel at the beginning but later Azaz'el seems to be more important.²⁰ It may be significant that Azaz'el is told his fate in terms that were later to be used of the Satan figure in the NT: he is to be bound in chains and cast into a dark pit covered with stones and kept there until Judgment Day (1 Enoch 10:4f; cf. Rev 20:1-3).

18 In addition to particular works cited below, the following literature will be found relevant: G.A. Barton, "Demons and Spirits (Hebrew)" *ERE* IV,594-601; ---, "Names of the Angels and Demons", 156-67; L. Blau, "Sammael" *JE* X,665f; W. Bousset & H. Gressmann, *Religion des Judentums*; T.H. Gaster, "Demon, Demonology" *IDB* 1,815-24; J.B. Long, "Demons" *EncRel* IV,282-88 (with a helpful literature listing); D.S. Russell, *Method & Message*, ch 9; and P. Volz, *Eschatologie*.

19 These traditions are also seen in Sir 16:7; CD II.14-3.13; 4Q 180f and in various rabbinic Midrashim. See J.J. Collins, "Apocalyptic Technique", 91-111; D.S. Russell, *Method & Message*, 249-54.

20 On these figures, see S.R. Driver, "Azazel" *HDB* I,207f. The literary history of these traditions is discussed in P.D. Hanson, "Rebellion in Heaven", 195-233; C. Molenberg, "Shemihazah and Asael", 136-46; G.W.E. Nickelsburg, "Apocalyptic and Myth in 1 Enoch 6-11", 383-405.

In 1 Enoch 12-16, Azaz'el again emerges as the leader and representative of the fallen angels. Enoch intercedes on behalf of Azaz'el but is told not to do so since judgment upon Azaz'el and his minions is inevitable. The details of that punishment are not spelt out as fully as previously, but Azaz'el is told that he will remain imprisoned within the earth for all eternity (14:5). The children born of the illicit union of the Watchers and the women are condemned to become evil spirits which will wreak havoc on the earth.

1 Enoch 83-90 comprises the fourth book, the Dream Visions of Enoch, and includes within it the "Animal Apocalypse" (chs 85ff) with its symbolic representation of the people of Israel and their antagonists. The fall of the Watchers is retold, including a reference to the binding and casting out of the first of the fallen stars (88:1), presumably either Semyaz or Azaz'el. In the Similitudes of Enoch (chs 37-71), there is a continued use of this tradition of the watchers, with Azaz'el and Semyaz continuing as the more significant figures (cf. 55:4; 69:1ff).

The Book of Jubilees also made use of this tradition concerning the Watchers, as mentioned earlier (cf. Jub 5:1-10). However, unlike 1 Enoch, Jubilees did not name any of the individual angelic figures. Nonetheless, it provides a fairly detailed version of the myth.

(b) **Belial** By far the most important of the titles used for an evil angelic figure in hellenistic Judaism was "Belial," usually rendered in later Greek literature as, "Beliar."²¹ This was by far the most important title for demonic powers in the literature presently being considered. It was also a major title in the Qumran literature (as will be seen) and the traditions preserved in T12P. Belial is mentioned in Jub 1:20 [variant "Belchor"]; 15:33 [in the phrase "sons of Beliar", meaning "miscreants"];²² in MartIs 1:8f [twice], 2:1b-5a; SibOr II.167-169; LivPro 4:6, 4:19f, 17:2. Significantly, Belial was not a title used in the Enoch traditions.

21 O. Böcher, "βελλιαρ" EWNT I,508f; W. Bousset, *Der Antichrist*, 99-101; R.H. Charles, *Revelation*, II,76-87; J. Ernst, *Gegenspieler*, 267-80; K. Galling, "Belial" RGG³ I,1025f; W. Förster, "βελλιαρ" TDNT I,607; Koehler-Baumgartner, HALAT I,128; K. Koehler, "Belial - in Rabbinical and Apocryphal Literature" JE II,658f; V. Maag, "Be'lija'al im AT", 287-99; P. von der Osten-Sacken, *Gott und Belial*; B. Otzen, "בליעל" TDOT II,131-36; D.W. Thomas, "בליעל in the Old Testament", 11-19; P. Volz, *Eschatologie*, 282-86. Cf. literature cited at §6, note 5 and at §7.2.2, note 6.

22 Cf. C. Rabin, "Jubilees" AOT, 56.

The importance of this title is not simply related to the number of times it occurs, but rather in the way it serves as a key name tying together titles and phrases whose connection might otherwise pass unobserved. This is illustrated very well in *MartIs 2:1bff.*

Sammael dwelt in Manasseh and clung closely to him. And Manasseh abandoned the service of the LORD of his father, and he served Satan, and his angels, and his powers. And he turned his father's house, which had been in the presence of Hezekiah, away [from] the words of wisdom and the service of the LORD. Manasseh turned them away so that they served Beliar; for angel of iniquity who rules this world is Beliar, whose name is Matanbukus. And he rejoiced over Jerusalem because of Manasseh, [and he strengthened him] in causing apostasy, and in the iniquity which was disseminated in Jerusalem. And sorcery and magic, augury and divination, fornication and adultery, and the persecution of the righteous increased. [*MartIs 2:1b-5a (OTP, II,157)*]

In this passage the names Sammael, Beliar, Satan and Matanbukus²³ are all inter-related, along with the angels of Satan and the description "angel of iniquity who rules this world".²⁴ They are used in a way which indicates clearly that *MartIs* understood Beliar to be more or less the equivalent figure to the Satan figure in the NT. This passage also indicates the kind of direct involvement in the lives of human beings and the affairs of nations attributed to these demonic figures.

(c) **Mastema** Jubilees demonstrates an awareness of the Beliar title in 1:20 and 15:33, but it has its own preferred title for the leader of the hosts of evil angels, "Mastema". The figure of "prince Mastema" occurs several times in Jubilees. He is portrayed as the chief of the evil spirits and as one who has been given authority over those human beings who are destined for destruction.

23 On the analogy of מַתַּנִּיָּה [Mattaniah, "gift of YHWH"] in 2 Kings 24:17, this name may mean "gift of weeping". Cf. also F.C. Burkitt, *Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, 74 and D. Flusser, "Apocryphal Book", 33.

24 See A.F. Segal ["Ruler of This World", 245-68] for an incisive discussion of this concept.

In the first of the passages in which this figure appears he is also called Satan. This passage will be cited at some length because of its value for understanding the figure of Mastema in Jubilees.

And in the third week of this jubilee the unclean demons began to lead the children of Noah's sons astray and to mislead them and destroy them. And Noah's sons came to their father Noah and told him about the demons that were misleading and blinding and killing his grandsons. And he prayed before the Lord his God . . . And the Lord our God ordered us to bind them all. And Mastema, the chief of the spirits, came and said, O Lord, creator, let some of them remain before me, and let them listen to what I say and do everything I tell them; for if there are not some left me, I shall not be able to exercise over men the authority I want; for these are destined for corruption and to be led astray before my judgement, for great is the wickedness of men. And he said, Let a tenth of them remain before him, and let nine tenths go down to the place of punishment. . . . And we did as he told us: all the malevolent and evil ones we imprisoned in the place of punishment and a tenth we left as agents of punishment under Satan on the earth. [Jub 10:1-11 (AOT, 41f)]

This passage indicates the way that the author understood the array of hostile powers ranged against God's people. The powers are all non-human entities, comprising a host of unclean demons under the authority of Mastema/Satan for the purpose of executing God's judgment on the wicked. These evil powers, notably Mastema, exceed their allotted role and seek to oppose God's purposes by attacking his own people. This idea is expressed in several passages throughout the book.

In Jub 11:4-5 Mastema is blamed for seducing men to worship idols and "do all kinds of wrong and sin"; in 11:9ff he sends ravens to eat the seed sown by Abram's family until the young patriarch drives them away and teaches the others how to bury the seed beneath the soil. In a scene highly reminiscent of the book of Job, Jub 17:15-18:13 retells the story of Abraham offering Isaac with the novel twist that the idea comes from Mastema in an attempt to prove that Abraham was not really loyal to God. Mastema is put to shame by Abraham's willingness to accede to the Lord's demand for his son's life. In 19:28, the blessing of Jacob by Abraham, the aged patriarch promises Jacob and his descendants freedom from the power of the "spirits of Mastema". Mastema figures several times in the exodus traditions of Jubilees: in 48:2 it is Mastema who attacks Moses during the night on his way back to Egypt; in 48:9-19 Mastema assists the Egyptian sorcerers, encourages Pharaoh to pursue the fleeing slaves and had to be kept chained by God for several days prior to the passover so that he could not harass the Israelites or interfere with their

salvation. In 49:2 the death of the first-born in Egypt is attributed to the powers of Mastema being let loose.

It is apparent from these passages that the author of Jubilees believed that Israel was opposed by a powerful demonic host led by Mastema/Satan/Beliar. This array of evil powers was limited in its ability to afflict Israel by God's own power exercised on Israel's behalf. The evil powers seem to have been understood as agents of God, intended to serve his sovereign purposes as agents of punishment on the wicked. However, there does not appear to be anything that approximates to the later idea of an Antichrist figure. Rather, Jubilees simply presents traditional Jewish demonology.

(d) **Satan** "Satan" occurs only occasionally in this literature: Jub 10:11; 23:29; 50:5; MartIs 2:2; 1 Enoch 41:9; 53:1ff; 54:1ff. As was evident in the passages from Jubilees and MartIs cited just above, Satan was one of the titles, but not the preferred name, for the leader of the evil angels.²⁵ It seems to have been more a role description than a proper name in this period, as is also seen in the following passages from Jubilees.

And they will live out all their days in peace and joy, and there will be no Satan nor any evil agent to corrupt them [lit. "nor any evil corrupter"]. [Jub 2:29 (AOT, 17)]

And the jubilees shall pass by till Israel is cleansed from all guilt . . . and there shall no longer be any adversary [lit. "a satan"] or any evil power [lit. "any evil one"] to afflict them. [Jub 50:5 (AOT, 138)]

This impression is confirmed by the later references to the Satan figure in the Similitudes of Enoch, which indicate a degree of consistency in the form of the Satan figure over a period of 150 or more years.

25 On the Satan figure in Jewish tradition see J. Ernst, *Gegenspieler*, 269-78; W. Förster, "διάβολος" ' TDNT II,72-81; O. Böcher, " διάβολος " EWNT I,714-16; ---, " σατανᾶς " EWNT III,558-60; N. Forsyth, *Old Enemy*; D.S. Russell, *Method & Message*, 254-57; K. Schäferdiek, " σατανᾶς " TDNT I,161-65; W. Speyer, "Gottesfeind", 1023-043. See also the literature on Belial at note 21, above.

Then I looked and turned to another face of the earth and saw there a valley, deep and burning with fire. And they were bringing kings and potentates and were throwing them into this deep valley. And my eyes saw there their chains while they were making them into iron fetters of immense weight. And I asked the angel of peace, who was going with me, saying, "For whom are these imprisonment chains being prepared?" And he said unto me, "These are being prepared for the armies of Azaz'el, in order that they may take them and cast them into the abyss of complete condemnation, and as the Lord of the Spirits has commanded it, they shall cover their jaws with rocky stones. Then Michael, Gabriel, and Phanuel themselves shall seize them on that great day of judgement and cast them into the furnace of fire that is burning that day, so that the Lord of Spirits may take vengeance on them on account of their oppressive deeds which they performed as messengers of Satan, leading astray those who dwell upon the earth. [1 Enoch 54:1-6 (OTP, 1,38)]

7.2 QUMRAN

The ancient texts discovered in caves by the Dead Sea during the late 1940s and early 1950s have had a profound impact on many aspects of biblical studies and related disciplines.¹ As a distinctive and significant corpus of literature, from the collection of a particular religious establishment, the evidence afforded by the Qumran literature is really quite unique and for this reason it is considered separately from other material relating to demonology in hellenistic Judaism.

Despite the relative length of the discussion on such ideas at Qumran, this discussion can barely mark out the parameters of a topic which both requires and deserves much fuller examination than can be undertaken here, *en passant*, as part of this study of the origins of the Antichrist myth. The ensuing treatment of material from Qumran is deliberately and consciously limited to those elements which seem necessary in order to sketch in the tradition-historical origins of the later Antichrist myth.

1 LITERATURE: K. Beyer, *Texte*; H. Braun, *Qumran und das NT*; C. Burchard, *Bibliographie*; J.J. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 115-41; P.R. Davies, *Behind the Essenes*; M. Delcor (ed), *Qumran*; D. Dimant, "Qumran Sectarial Literature" in M.E. Stone (ed), *Jewish Writings*, 483-550; A. Dupont-Sommer, *Essene Writings*; J.A. Fitzmyer, *Dead Sea Scrolls*; K.E. Grözinger, *Qumran*; B. Jongeling, *Classified Bibliography*; C. Koester, "Qumran Bibliography", 110-20; K.G. Kuhn, *Konkordanz*; ---, "Nachträge", 163-234; E. Lohse, *Texte*; J. Murphy-O'Connor, "The Judean Desert" in R.A. Kraft & G.W.E. Nickelsburg (eds), *Early Judaism*, 119-56; E. von Nordheim, *Lehre*, 115-18; Schürer-Vermes, *History III.1*, 380-469; G. Vermes, *Dead Sea Scrolls in English*; ---, *Qumran in Perspective*.

This is not, and cannot be, an attempt to describe and analyse the field of demonology at Qumran; nor will the question of the relationship between such demonic powers and their human agents/allies be explored in any detail — although it will be noted that there is some confusion in that area. What will be sought from this examination, is a grasp of the ways in which the kind of hellenistic Jews represented by the Qumran sect expressed their ideas concerning evil powers (demonic and human) opposed to God and God's people. This will provide a body of fresh data not available to studies, such as those by Bousset, undertaken prior to 1945. It may therefore provide a helpful body of extra material against which to test some of the conclusions which have been drawn concerning the presence of an "Antichrist" tradition in pre-Christian Jewish circles.

The members of the Essene-like community at Qumran understood their sect's history in terms of a spiritual struggle with cosmic dimensions. They have bequeathed a rich treasury of descriptive titles for the angelic and demonic powers in whose existence they believed, and whose activities they considered to affect and involve them directly. A strong dualistic outlook was a marked feature of the theology of the Qumran community.

The development and expression of this dualism can be more readily observed at Qumran than elsewhere amongst hellenistic Jews, thanks to the range of literature which has survived amongst the Dead Sea Scrolls. The degree to which these dualistic ideas developed may be partly explained by the particular historical circumstances of the sect. It is perhaps analogous to their more developed exclusiveness, their separatist sectarian lifestyle and their peculiar use of the Old Testament.²

In their thought, the human race was divided into two quite distinct groups of people: two "lots". This was not simply a Jew/Gentile dichotomy, but rather a more fundamental division in which non-sect members were assigned to the "lot of Belial" (eg. 1QS II.4f) and described as "the sons of darkness, the army of Belial" (eg. 1QM I.1). As part of this dualism, the present age was seen as "the dominion of Belial" (eg. 1QS II.19).

2 P.R. Davies ["Eschatology at Qumran", 39-55] argues that dualism was not a major element in early stages of theological development at Qumran, but that it developed and "encroached on other ideas. For an older, extensive, study of dualism at Qumran see P. von der Osten-Sacken, *Gott und Belial*.

This thorough-going dualism, which extended across the division between heaven and earth, was expounded most fully in the treatise on the two spirits in IQS III.13-IV.26.³ This dualism is clearly stated at IQS III.20f.

All the children of righteousness are ruled by the Prince of Light and walk in the ways of light, but all the children of falsehood are ruled by the Angel of Darkness and walk in the ways of darkness.

20. ביד שר שוריים ממשלת כול בני צדק
בדרכי אור יתהלכו וביד מלאך
21. חושך כול ממשלת בני עול ובדרכי
חושך יתהלכו

[DSSE, 75f]⁴

[IQS III.20f (Lohse, 10)]

Consistent with this dualistic outlook, the sect understood itself to be faced by an array of hostile powers: powers both human and other-worldly. At times it is difficult to determine whether the opponents described are human or otherwise, but this would have mattered little to the sectarians as they saw both sets of opponents as parts of the same evil coalition. As will be noted below, in some cases formulations originally directed at demonic powers seem to have been applied to evil human figures without much care to see that the new application was thoroughly executed.

In practice, very little attention was paid to speculation about the origins and character of the general body of evil powers. Instead, use was made of a number of names for the leader of the demonic powers: the Angel of Darkness, Belial, Melchiresha' and the Prince of the Dominion of Ungodliness, etc. These titles all seem to be synonyms for the familiar Satan figure, but their very variety attests to the heightened interest in these matters at Qumran.

7.2.1 The Angel of Darkness מלאך חושך

Opposed to the leader of the good angels, known as the Prince of Light(s) and probably to be identified as the Archangel Michael (cf. IQM XVII.5ff and 11QMelch II.11ff cited below), was the leader of the hostile powers, the "Angel of Darkness". The "Angel of Darkness", also known as the "Spirit of

3 J.H. Charlesworth ["Critical Comparison", 389-418] discusses the dualistic theology of this passage and compares it with the Johannine literature.

4 All ET of Qumran texts are from G. Vermes, *Dead Sea Scrolls in English*. An * indicates a change has been made to Vermes' ET, most commonly to replace "Satan" with "Belial" as a closer rendition of the original texts.

Darkness," was probably none other than the traditional Satan figure. The title seems to refer to a significant evil power within the cosmos; a figure whose origins are attributed to God's decision in the Community Rule.

He has created man to govern the world, and has appointed for him two spirits in which to walk until the time of His visitation: the spirits of truth and falsehood. Those born of truth spring from a fountain of light, but those born of falsehood spring from a source of darkness. All the children of righteousness are ruled by the Prince of Light and walk in the light, but all the children of falsehood are ruled by the Angel of Darkness and walk in the ways of darkness.

[DSSE, 75f]

והוא ברא אנוש לממשלת 18. הבל
וישם לו שתי רוחות להתהלך במ ע
מועד פקודונו הנה 19. האמת והעול
במעיו אור תולמת האמת וממקור חושך
תולדות האור 20. ביד שר אורים
ממשלת כול בני צדק בדרכי אור
יתהלכו וביד מלאך 21. חושך כול
ממשלו בני עול ודרכי חושך יתהלכי

[1QS III.17-21 (Lohse, 10)]

The Testament of Amram (4Q'Amramb) portrays the struggle between these two opposing heavenly powers at the time of a person's death. This rather fragmentary text describes the these "Watchers", their mastery over humankind, the three names of the evil Watcher, and his evil character.

(I saw Watchers) in my vision, a dream vision, and behold two (of them) argued about me and said ... and they were engaged in a great quarrel concerning me. I asked them: 'You, what are you ... thus ... [about me?]' They answered and [said to me: 'We have been made m]asters and rule over all the sons of men.' And they said to me: "Which of us do you [choose ...]?" I raised my eyes and saw one of them. His looks were frightening [like those of a viper, and his [ga]rm[en]ts were multi-coloured and he was extremely dark ... And afterwards I looked and behold ... by his appearance and his face was like that of an adder, and he was covered with ... together, and his eyes ... this [Watcher]: 'Who is he?' He said to me: 'This Wa[tcher] ...[and his three names are Belial, Prince of Darkness] and Melchiresha'. And I said: 'My Lord, what ...?' [And he said to me] ... [and all his paths are dark]ness, and all his work is darkness, and he is ... in darkness ... you see.

Fragment 1

(חזית עירין) 10. בחזוי די חלמא
והא תרין דאנין עלי ואמריין)
(11. ואחדין עלי תגר רב
ושאלה אנון אנהון מן די כדן
משלטיין ... עלי וענו ואמרולי
אנחנא) 12. (משנת) לטיין ושליטיין
על כול בני אדם ואמרו לי במן מנבא
אנת(ה בחר לאשונרטה נטלת עיני וחזית)
13. (וחד) מנהון חזוה דח(י)ל
(כפ)תן (ומ)ל(ב)ושה צבינין וחשיך
(vacat)
14. (ואחרנא חזיה) והא()ל()
בחזוה אנפיוה העכין ו(מכסה ב)
15. (לחדה וכול עינוהי)ל()

Fragment 2

1'. (מ)שלט עליך ()
2'. (וענית ואמרת לה עירא) דן
מן הוא ואמר לי בדן ע(ירא)
3'. (ואנון תלתה שמהתה בליעל ושר
חשוכא) ומלכי רשע ואמרת מראי מא
ש(ולטן)
4'. (וכול ארחה חש)יכה וכל
עבדה ח(ש)יך ובחשוכא הוא ()
5'. (אנה)ה חזה והוא משלט

And he rules over all darkness and I (משלט על כול) על כול חשוכא ואנה
 [rule over all light] ... (נהורא) (DSSE, 262f)*

[4Q 'Amram^b (Kobelski, 26ff)]

The words translated "and his three names are Belial, Prince of Darkness" do not survive in the text. P. Kobelski proposes to restore the missing text so that it reads as translated here.⁵ He does so even though he recognises that the second title might also originally have been "Angel Mastemah" (cf. IQM XIII.11; CD XVI.5) or simply "Mastemah" (cf. IQM XIII.4); "Angel of Perdition" (cf. 4Q286); "Spirit of Abaddon" (cf. 4Q286); "Angel of Darkness" (cf. IQS III.20f); or even "Prince of Wickedness" (cf. "Prince of the Dominion of Wickedness" in IQM XVII.5). Kobelski prefers "Prince of Darkness" as its opposite, "Prince of Lights," is a common title for the leader of the good angels, Michael.

The previous passage from 4Q'Amram^b included the titles, "Adder" and "Viper". This colourful title for the evil spirit has a parallel in one of the texts from the Hymn Scroll.

And they, the conceivers of the Asp shall be prey to terrible anguish; the wombs of the Pit shall be prey to all the works of horror. ... [Hell and Abaddon] shall open [and all] the flying arrows of the Pit shall send out their voice to the Abyss. And the gates [of Hell] shall open [on all] the works of the Asp; and the doors of the Pit shall close on the conceivers of wickedness; and the everlasting bars shall be bolted on all the spirits of the Asp. [DSSE, 172]*

12. ... והרית אפעה לחבל נמרץ
 ומשברי שחת לכול מעשי פלצות
 16. ... ובהתרגשם יפתחו ש(או)ל
 (ואכדון כו)ל חצי שחת 17. עם
 מצעדם לתהום ישמיעו קולם ויפתחו
 שערי (שאול לכול) מעשי אפעה
 18. ויסגרו דלתי שחת בעד הרית
 עול ובריחי עולם בעד כול רוחי
 אפעה

[IQH III.12,16-18 (Lohse, 120)]

7.2.2 Belial בליעל

By far the more common name for the enemy of the sons of light was, "Belial".⁶ References to this figure are to be found throughout the various texts, as the ensuing citations will demonstrate. Belial seems to have been the

5 Melchizedek and Melchiresa', 33.

6 Cf. the earlier discussion concerning on Belial. See also H.W. Huppenbauer, "Belial in den Qumrantexten"; H. Kosmala, "Three Nets of Belial", 91-113; and H. Ringgren, Faith of Qumran, 74f, 91f.

generic name for the Satan figure in the Qumran literature, and it appears in a variety of combinations (as has already been seen in citations made for other titles). The opening column of the War Scroll demonstrates the way in which Belial often appears, without explanation or comment, as the familiar leader of the evil forces.

I For the M[aster. The Rule of] War on the unleashing of the attack of the sons of light against the company of the sons of darkness, the army of Belial.
[DSSE, 105]*

that his fury may destroy and cut off the horn [of Belial]. This shall be a time of salvation for the people of God, an age of dominion for all the members of His company, and of everlasting destruction for all the company of Belial.
[DSSE, 105]*

On the day of their battle against the Kittim [they shall set out for] carnage. In three lots shall the sons of light brace themselves in battle to strike down iniquity, and in three lots shall Belial's host gird itself to thrust back the company [of God. And when the hearts of the detach]ments foot-soldiers faint, then shall the might of God fortify [the hearts of the sons of light]. And with the seventh lot, the mighty hand of God shall bring down [the army of Belial, and all] the angels of his kingdom, and all the members [of his company in everlasting destruction]
[DSSE, 105f]*

I
1. (וזה ספר סרן) המלחמה ראשית
משלות יד בני אור להחל בגורל
בני חושך בחיל בליעל
[1QM I.1 (Lohse, 180)]

4. ... ואפו להשמיד ולהכרית אה
קרן 5. (בליעל והי) אה עת ישועה
לעם אל וקץ ממשל לכול אנשי גורלו
וכלת עולמן לכול גורל בליעל
[1QM I.4b-5 (Lohse, 180)]

12. ... וכיום מלחמתם בכתיים
13. יצ (או לנח) שיר במלחמה שלושה
גורלות יחזקו בני אור לנגוף רשעה
ושלושה יתאזרו חיל בליעל למשוב
גורל 14. (אור ודג) לי הבנים יהי
להמס לבב וגבורת אל מאמ(צת) ל(בב
בני אור ו) בגורל השביעי יד אל
הגדולה מכנעת 15. (בליעל וכו) ל
מלאכי ממשלתו ולכול אנשי)
[1QM I.12-15 (Lohse, 180)]

While there are numerous other references to Belial in the War Scroll, as will be noted in due course, they represent evidence from a later period in the history of the Qumran sect. Before citing the remaining passages in 1QM which relate to Belial, it will be helpful to consider similar passages from other Qumran texts which probably predate 1QM.

The following instances from the Damascus Rule (CD), demonstrate the use of Belial in the earliest stages of the sect's history -- if not their prehistory. They occur less frequently than in 1QM, which may suggest that the use of

Belial as a particular and characteristic name for the evil spirit developed within the Qumran tradition over a period of time.

During all those years Belial shall be unleashed against Israel, as He spoke by the hand of Isaiah, son of Amoz, saying, Terror and the pit and the snare are upon you, O inhabitants of the land (Isa. xxxiv, 17). Interpreted, these are the three nets of Belial with which Levi son of Jacob said that he catches Israel by setting them up as three kinds of righteousness. The first is fornication, the second is riches, and the third is profanation of the Temple. Whoever escapes the first is caught in the second, and whoever saves himself from the second is caught in the third (Isa. xxiv, 18).

[DSSE, 86]*

12. ... ובכל השנים האלה יהיה
13. בליעל משולח בישראל כאשר דבר
אל ביד ישעיה הנביא בן 14. אמוץ
לאמר פחת ופחת ופח עליך יושב הארץ
15. פשרו שלושת מצודות בליעל
אשר אמר עליהם לוי בן יעקב 16.
אשר הוא תפש בהם בישראל ויתנם
פניהם לשלושת מיני 17. הצדק
הראשונה היא הזנות השנית השלישית
18. טמא המקדש העולה מזה יתפש
בזה והניצל מזה יתפש 19. בזה

[CD IV.12-19 (Lohse, 72f)]

For in ancient times, Moses and Aaron arose by the hand of the Prince of lights and Belial in his cunning raised up Jannes and his brother when Israel was first delivered.

[DSSE, 87]*

17. ... כי מלפנים עמר 18. משה
ואהרן ביד שר האורים ויקס בליעל
את יחנה ואת 19. אחיהו במזמתו
בהושע בהושע ישראל את הראשונה

[CD V.17-19 (Lohse, 76)]

At the time of the former Visitation they were saved, whereas the apostates VIII were given up to the sword; and so it shall be for all the members of His Covenant who do not hold steadfastly to these. They shall be visited for destruction by the hand of Belial. That shall be the day when God will visit.

[DSSE, 89]*

אלה מלטו בקץ הפקודה הראשון
VIII 1. והנסוגים הסגירו לחרב
וכן משפט כל באי בריתו אשר 2.
לא יחזיקו באלה לפוקדם לכלה ביד
בליעל הוא היום אשר יפקד אל

[CD VII.21-VIII.2 (Lohse, 80)]

Every man who preaches apostasy under the dominion of the spirits of Belial shall be judged according to the law relating to those possessed by a ghost or familiar spirit.

[DSSE, 96]*

2. ... כל איש אשר ימשלו בו
רווחת בליעל 3. לדבר טרה כמשפט
האוב והידעוני ישפט

[CD XII.2f (Lohse, 90)]

But the others were delivered up to the avenging sword of the Covenant. And so it shall be for all who enter His Covenant but do not hold fast to these precepts when He visits them for destruction by the hand of Belial.

[DSSE, 88]*

13. והנשארים הסגרו לחרב נוקם ברית
וכן משפט לכל באי 14. בריתו אשר לא
יחזיקו באלה החקים לפקדם לכלה ביד
בליעל

[CD (MS B) XIX.13f (Lohse, 102)]

Like the Damascus Rule, the Community Rule (IQS) makes only limited use of Belial as a name for the Angel of Darkness. There are, however, a couple of passages where Belial is used, and which make it clear that this title was known to the sect from early in its history even if it only became more prominent towards the later period.

All those who embrace the Community Rule shall enter into the Covenant before God to obey all His commandments so that they may not abandon Him during the dominion of Belial because of fear or terror or affliction. On entering the Covenant, the Priests and Levites shall bless the God of salvation and all His faithfulness, and all those entering the Covenant shall say after them, 'Amen, Amen!' Then the Priests shall recite the favours of God manifested in His mighty deeds and shall declare all His merciful grace to Israel, and the Levites shall recite the iniquities of the children of Israel, all their guilty rebellions and sins during the dominion of Belial.

[DSSE, 62]*

And the Levites shall curse all the men of the lot of Belial, saying, 'Be cursed because of all your guilty wickedness! May He deliver you up for torture at the hands of the vengeful Avengers! May He visit you with destruction by the hand of all the Wreakers of Revenge! Be cursed without mercy because of the darkness of your deeds! Be damned in the shadowy place of everlasting fire! May God not heed you when you call on Him, nor pardon you by blotting out your sin! May He raise His angry face towards you for vengeance! May there be no "Peace" for you in the mouth of those who hold fast to the Fathers!' And after the blessing and the cursing, all those entering the Covenant shall say, 'Amen, Amen!' Thus shall they do, year by year, for as long as the dominion of Belial endures.

[DSSE, 63]*

Similarly, there are a few passages in the Hymn Scroll (IQH) which use Belial as a name for the evil power in charge of the world, and acting as

16. וכול הבאים בסרך היחד יעבורו
בבריו לפני אל לעשות 17. ככול
אשר צוה ולוא לשוב מאחרו מכול פחד
ואימה ומצרף 18. (נה) יי (ס)
בממשלת בליעל ובעוברים בברית יהיו
הכובנים 19. והלויים מברכים את
אל ישועות ואה כול מעשי אמונו וכול
20. העוברים בברית אומרים אחריהם
אמר אמן 21. והכוהמים מספרים את
צדקות אל במעשי גבורתו
22. ומשמיעים כול חסדי רחמים על
ישראל והלויים מספרים 23. את
עוונות בני ישראל וכול פשעי אשמתם
וחטאונם בממשלת 24. בליעל

[IQS I.16-24 (Lohse, 4f)]

והלויים מקללים את כול אנשי
5. גורל בליעל וענו ואמרו אתה
ככול מעשי רשע אשמחה יהנכה
6. אל זעוה ביד כול נוקמי נקם
ויפקוד אחריכה כלה-ביד כול משלמי
7. גמולים ארור אתה לאין רחמים
כחושך מעשיכה וזעום אוה 8. באפלה
אש עולמים לוא יחונכה אל בקוראכה
ולוא יסלח לכפר עוונך 9. ישא
פני לנקמתכה ולוא יהיה לכה שלום
בפי אוחזי אכות 10. וכול
העוברים בברית אומרים אחר המברכים
והמקללים אמן אמן ...
19. ככה יעשו שנה בשנה כול יומי
ממשלת בליעל

[IQS II.4-10,19 (Lohse, 6f)]

leader of the forces of wicked humanity. As will be clear from the following citations, these texts in IQH are quite consistent with the general Qumran in their use of Belial.

To the interpreters of error I have been an opponent, [but a man of peace] to all those who see truth. To all those who seek smooth things I have been a spirit of zeal; like the sound of the roaring of many waters so have [all] the deceivers thundered against me; [all] their thoughts were [sch]emes of Belial.

[DSSE, 169]*

Violent men have sought after my life because I have clung to Thy Covenant. For they, an assembly of deceit and a horde of Belial, know not that my stand is sustained by Thee, and that in Thy mercy Thou wilt save my soul since my steps proceed from Thee.

[DSSE, 170]*

For I have stood in the realm of wickedness and my lot was with the damned; the soul of the poor one was carried away in the midst of great tribulation. Miseries of torment dogged my steps while all the snares of the Pit were opened and the lures of wickedness were set up and the nets of the damned (were spread) on the waters; while all the arrows of the Pit flew out without cease, and striking, left no hope; while the rope beat down in judgement and a destiny of wrath (fell) upon the abandoned and a venting of fury upon the cunning. It was a time of the wrath of all Belial and the bonds of death tightened without any escape.

The torrents of Belial shall reach to all sides of the world. In all their channels a consuming fire shall destroy every tree, green and barren, on their banks; unto the end of their courses it shall scourge with flames of fire, and shall consume the foundations of the earth and the expanse of dry land. The bases of the mountains shall blaze and the roots of the rocks shall turn to torrents of pitch; it shall devour as far as the great Abyss.

ואהיה איש ריב למליצי תעות (ובעל)
15. (של) ום לכול חוזי נכווח
ואהיה לרוח קנאה כל דורשי חל(קות)
16. (וכל) אנשי רמיה עלי יהמו
וקול המון מים רבים ומזמות
בליעל (כול) 17. (מח) שבוהם

[IQH II.14-17 (Lohse, 116)]

21. ... (כיא) עריצים בקשו נפשי
בתומכי 22. בבריתה
והמה סוד שוא ועדת בליעל
לא ידעו כיא מאתכה מעמדי
23. ובחסדיכה תושיע נפשי
כיא מאתכה מצעדי

[IQH II.21-23 (Lohse, 118)]

... כיא התיצבתי בגבול רשעה
25. ועם חלכאים בגורל ותגור נפש
אביון עם מהומות רסה והוות מדהבה
עם מצעדי 26. בהפתח-כל פחי שחת
ויפרשו כול מצודות רשעה ומכמת
הלכאים על פני מים 27. בהתעופף
כול חצי שחת לאין השב ויפרו לאין
תקוה בנפול קו על משפט וגורל אף
28. על געזבים ומתן חמה על געלמים
וקץ חרון לכול בליעל וחבלי מות
אפפו לאין פלט
29. וילכו נחלי בליעל עד כול אגפי
רום כאש אוכלת בכול שנאביהם להתם
כול עץ לח 30. ויבש מפלגיהם
וחשוט בשביבי להוב עד אפט כול

The torrents of Belial shall break into Abaddon, and the deeps of the Abyss shall groan amid the roar of heaving mud. The land shall cry out because of the calamity fallen upon the world, and all its deeps shall howl. And all those upon it shall rave and shall perish amidst the great misfortune. For God shall sound His mighty voice, and His holy abode shall thunder with the truth of His glory. The heavenly hosts shall cry out and world's foundations shall stagger and sway. The war of the heavenly warriors shall scourge the earth; and it shall not end before the appointed destruction which shall be for ever and ever without compare.

[DSSE, 173f]*

And they, teachers of lies and seers of falsehood, have schemed against me a scheme of Belial, to exchange the Law engraved on my heart by Thee for the smooth things (which they speak) to Thy people. ... But Thou, O God, dost despise all Belial's designs; it is Thy purpose that shall be done and the design of Thy heart that shall be established for ever. As for them, they dissemble, they plan schemes of Belial. They seek Thee with a double heart and are not confirmed in Thy truth.

[DSSE, 175]*

The Testament of Amram, from which a passage describing the struggle between the dualistic powers over the human person was previously cited, also provides an explicit identification of Belial with the Angel of Darkness and the figure known as Melchiresha'. While "Belial" and "Prince of Darkness" both are missing from the text, Kobelski confidently restores them. It is quite clear from the second and third fragments of 4Q'Amram^b that Belial was understood at Qumran to be the demonic ruler of the mundane world, that is, a Satan figure.

Other examples from 4QFlor and 4QTest serve to make this identification quite certain. In the citations which follow, this is clearly the way in which Belial is understood.

And concerning His words to David, And I [will give] you [rest] from all your enemies (2 Sam. vii, 11), this means that He will give them rest from all

שותיהם באושי חמר תאוכל 31.
31. וברקוע יבשה יסודי הרים לשרפה
ושורשי חלמיש לנחי זפה ותאוכל עד
תהום 32. רבה

ויבקעו לאבדון נחלי בליעל ויהמו
מחשבי תהום בהמון גורשי רפש
וארץ 33. תצרח על ההווה הנהיה בונבל
וכולמחשביה ירועו ויתהוללו כול אשר
עליה 34. ויתמוגגו בהווה ג(דר)לה
כיא ירעם אל בהמון כוחו ויהם קודשו
באמת 35. כבודו וצבא השמים יתנו
בקולם (ו)יתמוגגו וירעדו אושי עולם
ומלחמה גבורי 36. שמים תשוט בתבל
ולא השוב עד כלה ונחרצה לעד ואפס
כמה

[1QH III.24-36 (Lohse, 122)]

והמה מליצי 10. כזב וחוזי רמיה
זממו עלי בליעל להמיר תורתכה אשר
שננתה בלבכי בחלקות 11. לעמכה

... (12)
... כי אתה אל תנאץ כל
מחשבה 13. בליעל ועצהכה היא תקום
ומחשבת לבכה תכון לנצח והמה
בעלמים זמון בליעל 14. יחשובו
וידרשוכה בלב ולב ולא נכונו
באמתכה

[1QH IV.9-14 (Lohse, 124f)]

the children of Belial who cause them to stumble so that they may be destroyed [by their errors,] just as they came with a plan of [Be]lial to cause the [sons] of light to stumble and to devise against them a wicked plot, that [they might become subject] to Belial in their [wicked] straying. [DSSE, 293]*

Cursed be the man who rebuilds this city! May he lay its foundation on his first-born, and set its gate upon his youngest son (Josh. vi, 26). Behold, an accursed man, a man of Belial, has risen to become a fowler's net to his people, and a cause of destruction to all his neighbours. And [his brother] arose [and ruled], both being instruments of violence. They have rebuilt [Jerusalem and have set up] a wall and towers to make of it a stronghold of ungodliness ... in Israel, and a horror in Ephraim and in Judah ... They have committed an abomination in the land, and a great blasphemy among the children [of Israel. They have shed blood] like water upon the ramparts of the daughter of Zion and within the precincts of Jerusalem. [DSSE, 296]*

Qumran text 4Q286, "Blessings and Curses", adds further significant evidence for the way that the Belial figure served as the basic identity for the Satan figure at Qumran. This relatively brief text has clear parallels to IQM XIII (see below) and IQS II (cited earlier). It includes such traditional Jewish epithets for Satan as "the Wicked One", "Angel of Perdition" and "Spirit of Destruction". Evidence such as this passages presents, makes it quite plain that Belial was understood at Qumran as a Satan figure, and not as an anti-Messiah or Endtyrant.

Afterwards [they] shall damn Belial and all his guilty lot. They shall answer and say, Cursed be [Be]lial in his hostile design, and damned in his guilty dominion. Cursed be all the spirits of his [lo]t in their wicked design, and damned in their thoughts of unclean impurity. For they are the lot of darkness and their visitation is for eternal destruction. Amen. Amen. Cursed be

... ואשר אמר לדויד ו(הנחיתו)תי לכה
מכול אויביכה אשר יניח להמה מכ(ול)
8. בני בליעל המכשילים אותמה
לכלותמה(ה)מה כאשר באו במחשבת
(ב)ל(י)על להכשיל ב(ני) 9, או(ר)
ולחשוב עלי המה מחשבות און למ(סר)
ג)פשו לבליעל במשגת א(ונ)מה
[4QFlor I.7-9 (Lohse, 256)]

22. ויאמר ארור האיש אשר יבנה את
העיר הזות בככורו 23. ייסדנה
ובצבגירו יצב דלתיה ואנה איש ארור
אחד בליעל 24. עומד להיות פ(ח)
י)קום לעמו ומחתה לכול שכניו
ועמד 25. () ימק(לה)יות
שניהמה כלי חמס ושבו ובמו את
26. () ויצ)בו לה חומה
ומגדלים לעשות לעוז רשע
27. () בישראל
ושערוריה באפרים וביהודה
28. () וע)שו חנופה בארץ ונצה
גדולה בבני 29. () ע)ם כמים
על חל בת ציון ובחוק 30. ירושלם
[4QTest 22-30 (Lohse, 250f)]

(vacat) ואחר יועמ(ו) את
בליעל 2. ואת כול גורל אשמתו
וענו ואמרו ארון (ב)ליעל ב(מ)חשבה
משטבה משטמתו 3. וזעום הוא במשרת
אשמתו וארורים כול ר(ו)חי ג(ו)ר(ו)לו
במחשבת רשעמה 4. וזעומים המה
במחשבות נדת (ט)מאתמה כיא (המה
גור)ל חושך ופקודתמה 5. לשחת
עולמים אמן אמן (vacat) ארור
הרש(ע) בכול קצי) ממשלותיו וזעומים
6. כול בני בלי(על) בכול עונות

the Wicke[d One in all ...] of his dominions, and may all the sons of Belial be damned in all the works of their service until their annihilation [for ever, Amen, amen.] And [they shall continue to say: Be cursed, Angel of Perdition and Spir[it of Dest]ruction, in all the thoughts of your g[uilt]y inclination [and all your abomina]ble [plots] and [your] wicked design, [and] may you be [da]mned ... Amen, am[en]. [DSSE, 160]*

11QMelch also has some references to Belial. In these lines, Belial is the oppressor of the just who are rescued by Melchizedek.

As for that which he s[aid, How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Selah (Psalms lxxxii, 2), its interpretation concerns Belial and the spirits of his lot [who] rebelled by turning away from the precepts of God by turning to ... And Melchizedek will avenge the judgments of God ... he will drag [them from the hand of] Belial and from the hand of the sp[irit]s of his [lot]. And all the 'gods [of Justice]' will come to his aid [to] attend to the de[struction] of Belial. And the height is ... all the sons of God ... this ... This is the day of [Peace/Salvation] concerning which [God] spoke [through Isa]iah the prophet, who said, [How] beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who proclaims peace, who brings good news, who proclaims salvation; it is concerning him that it is written ... [To comfort all who mourn, to grant to those who mourn in Zion] (Isa. lxi, 2-3) To comfort [those who mourn: its interpretation], to make them understand all the ages of t[ime] ... In truth ... will turn away from Belial ... by the judgement[s] of God, as it is written concerning him, [who says to Zion:] your ELOHIM reigns. Zion is ..., those who uphold the Covenant, who turn from walking [in] the way of the people. And your ELOHIM is [Melchizedek, who will save them from] the hand of Belial. [DSSE, 301]*

מעמדמה עד תוממה (לעד אמן אמן
7 vac(ac) ו(הוסיפו
ואמרו ארור אתה מלאך השחת ורו(ח
(האב) דון בכו(ל) מחשבות יצר
8: א(שמחכה ובכול מזמות תוע)בה
ועצת רשע(תכה וז)עום אתה במ(מש)ל(ה)
9. (עולתכם ובמשרת רשעתכה ואשמתכה
עם כול ג(לולי שאו)ל וע(ם חרפות
שח)ת 10. (ועם כל) מות כלה ל(איך
שרית ולאיןסלי)חות באף עברת (אל
לכו)ל (עדי עולמי)ם אמן א(מן)
[4Q286 10 ii 1-10 (Kobelski, 43)]

11. ... ואשר א(מר עד מתי ת)שפוטו
עוול ופני רשעים תש(או ס)לה
12. פשרו על בליעל ועל רוחי גורל
אשר()
בסו(רמ)ה מחוקי אל ל(הרשיע)
13. ומלכי צדק יקום נק(מ)ת משפטי
אל(ל ויעזור לכול אור מיד)
בליעל ומיד כול (רוחי גורל)ו
14. ובעזרו כול אלי (מרומים ה)ואה
א()
כול בני אל והפ()
15. (הזואת הראה יום ה)ישועה
אשר אמר (אל עליו ביד ישע)יה
הנביא אשר אמר (מה) נאוו 16. על
הרים רגלי מבשר(מ) שמיע שלום
מב(שר טוב משמיע ישוע)ה אומר
לציון (מלך) אלוהיך 17. פשרו
ההר(י)ם (דברי) הנביאי(ם) המה
א(שר) נב(או) לכול (אבילי ציון)
18. והמבשר הו(אה מ)שיח ברו(ח)
אשר אמר דנ(יאל עליו משיח נגיד
שבויעים שבעה ומבשר) 19. טוב
משמי(ע ישועה) הואה הכ(תו)ב עליו
אשר (אמר)
20. לנח(ם) א(בילי ציון)
ל(ה)שכילמה בכל קצי הע(ולם)
21. (באמת ל)
() ה ()
22. () ה ()
טרה מבליעל ות() מלכי
צדק ()
23. () במשפט(י)
אל כאשר כתוב יליו (אומר לצי)ון
מלך אלוהיך צ(י)ון ה(יאה) 24.
(יחד) מקימ(י) הברית הסרים
מלכת (בד)רך העם ואל(ו)היך הואה
25. (מלכי צדק אשר יצי)ל(מה)
(מ)יד בליעל
[11QMelch II.11-25 (Kobelski, 8f)]

As mentioned earlier, further instances of "Belial" occur throughout the War Scroll. It can be seen from these examples that Belial had a particular prominence in Qumran speculations concerning the eschatological battle between God and his arch-opponent. While there is no hint here of Belial as an Endtyrant, such ideas would have provided Jews and, subsequently, Christians with a rich lode of imagery to draw upon when identifying any particular person — historical or mythical — as the Endtyrant.

On the standard of the Thousand they shall write, The Wrath of God is kindled against Belial and against the Men of his Company leaving no Remnant.

[DSSE, 108]*

1. ... ועל אות הא(ל)ף יכתובו
אף אל בעברה על 2. בליעל ובכול
אנשי גורלו לאין שארית

[1QM IV.1f (Lohse, 188)]

By the hand of Thine anointed, who discerned Thy testimonies, Thou hast revealed to us the [times] of the battles of Thy hands that Thou mayest glorify Thyself in our enemies by levelling the hordes of Belial.

[DSSE, 116]*

7. ... וביד משיחיה 8. חוזי
תעודות הגדתה לנו ק(צי) מלחמות
ידיכה להכבד באויבינו להפיל גדודי
בליעל

[1QM XI.7f (Lohse, 204f)]

1QM XIII provides a particularly rich description of Belial, not unlike that seen earlier in 4Q286. As the following excerpts indicate, Belial was understood as created by God for the purposes of divine judgment and wrath, and was destined for the Pit.

XIII (The High Priest) shall come, and his brethren the Priests and Levites, and all the elders of the army shall be with him; and standing, they shall bless the God of Israel and all His works of truth, and shall execrate Belial there and all the spirits of his company. Speaking, they shall say: ...

Cursed be Belial for his plan of hatred, and may he be execrated for his wicked rule! Cursed be all spirits of his company for their ungodly purpose and may they be execrated for all their service of uncleanness! Truly they are the Company of Darkness, but the Company of God is one of [eternal] Light.

... And the Prince of Light Thou hast appointed from ancient times to come to our support; [all the sons of righteousness are in his hand], and all the

XIII

1. ואחיו ה(כו)הנים והלויים
וכול זקני הסרך עמו וברכו על
עומדם אח אל ישראל ואח כול מעשי
אמתו וזעמו 2. שם את (בלי)על
ואח כול רוחי גורלו וענו ואמרו
... 4. וא(רו)ר בליעל במחשבה
משפטמה וזעום הואה במשרת אשמתו
וארורים כול רוחי גורלו במחשבה
5. רשעים וזעומים המה בכול
עבודת גדת טמאתם כיא המה גורל
חושך וגורל אל לאור 6. (עולמ)ים

spirits of truth are under his dominion. But Belial, the Angel of Malevolence, Thou hast created for the Pit; his [rule] is in Darkness and his purpose is to bring about wickedness and iniquity. All the spirits of his company, the Angels of Destruction, walk according to the precepts of Darkness; towards them is their [inclination]. [DSSE, 118f]*

[Blessed be] Thy name, O God of mercies, who hast kept the Covenant with our fathers. In all our generations Thou hast bestowed Thy wonderful favours on the remnant [of Thy people] under the dominion of Belial. During all the mysteries of his Malevolence he has not made [us] stray from Thy Covenant; Thou hast driven his spirits [of destruction] far from [us], Thou hast preserved the soul of Thy redeemed [when the men] of his dominion [acted wickedly]. [DSSE, 120]*

All those [who are ready] for battle shall march out and shall pitch their camp before the king of the Kittim and before all the host of Belial gathered about him for the Day [of Revenge] by the Sword of God. [DSSE, 121]*

Be strong and fear not; [for they tend] towards chaos and confusion, and they lean on that which is not and [shall not be. To the God] of Israel belongs all that is and shall be; [He will annihilate Belial] in all future times of eternity. This is the day appointed by Him for the defeat and overthrow of the Prince of the kingdom of wickedness, and He will send eternal assistance to the company of His redeemed by the might of the princely Angel of the kingdom of Michael. With everlasting light He will enlighten with joy [the children] of Israel; peace and blessing shall be with the company of God. He will raise up the kingdom of Michael in the midst of the gods, and the realm of Israel in the midst of all flesh. [DSSE, 122]*

[In the seventh lot], when the great hand of God is raised in an everlast-

... 10. ... ושר מאור מאז
פקדתה לעוזרנו ובג(ורלו כול
בני צד)ק וכול רוחי אמת בממשלהו
ואתה 11. עשיתה בליעל לשחת מלאך
משטמה ובחוש(ך ממשל)תו ובעצתו
להרשיע ולהאשים וכול רוחי
12. גורלו מלאכי חבל בחוקי חושך
יתהלכו ואליו (תשו)קתמה יחד

[IQM XIII.1f,4-6,10-12 (Lohse, 206f)]

8. ... ברוך) שמכה אל החסדים
השומר ברית לאבותינו ועם 9. כול
דורותינו הפלחה חסדיכה לשאר(ית עמכה)
בממשלה בליעל ובכול רזי שטמתו לוא
הדיחונ(ו) 10. מכריתכה ורוחי
(חכ)לו גערתה מ(מנו ובהתרשע אנ)שי
ממשלתו שמרתה נפש פדותכה
[IQM XIV.8-10 (Lohse, 212)]

2. ... וכול ע(תודי) המלחמה ילכו
וחנו נגד מלך הכתיים ונגד כול חיל
3. בליעל הנועדים עמו ליום (נקם)
בחרב אל
[IQM XV.2f (Lohse, 214)]

4. ואתה התחזקו ואל תיראום (כיא)
המה לתהו ולבהו תשוקתם ומשענתם כלוא
ה(ניתה) לוא() 5. ישראל כול
הווה ונהיה ו()ל בכול נהיי
עולמים היום מועדו להכניע ולהשפיל
שר ממשלת 6. רשעה וישלח עזר עולמים
לגורל (פ)דווחו בגבורת מלאך האדיר
למשרת מיכאל באור עולמים 7. להאיר
בשמחה ב(רית י)שראל שלום וברכה
לגורל אל להרים באלים משרת מיכאל
וממשלת 8. ישראל בכול בשר
[IQM XVII.4-8 (Lohse, 218)]

ing blow against Belial and all the hosts of his kingdom, and when Assyria is pursued [amidst the shouts of Angels] and the clamour of the Holy Ones, the sons of Japheth shall fall to rise no more. The Kittim shall be crushed without [remnant, and no man shall be saved from among them. At that time, on the day] when the hand of the God of Israel is raised against all the multitude of Belial. [DSSE, 123]*

XVIII

1. () ובה(נ)שא יד אל הגדולה על בליעל ועל כול (ח)ל ממשלתו במגפת עולמים 2. () וחרועת קדושים ברדף אשור ונפל בני יפת לאין קום וכתיים יכתו לאין 3. (שארית ופליטה והיתה) משאת יד אל ישראל על כול המון בליעל [IQM XVIII.1-3 (Lohse, 220)]

Although we have seen nothing to suggest that Belial occurs in a messianic context in the Qumran literature, G.R. Driver has argued that Belial was understood at Qumran as an "anti-Messiah figure".⁷ This proposal is related to Driver's interpretation of IQH VI.29-35; a passage -- interestingly -- where "Belial" does not even occur. His suggestion concerning the significance of Belial as an Antichrist-type figure at Qumran will be simply noted at this stage, and addressed more deliberately when IQH VI.29ff is examined as possible evidence for an Endtyrant tradition at Qumran (§9.4.3).

7.2.3 Melchiresha' מלכי רשע

It has been noted already that the Testament of Amram, as restored and translated by Kobelski, indicates that one of the distinctive names used for Belial was, "Melchiresha'" ("king of evil" or "evil king"). Several of the Qumran texts indicate a belief in an opposing pair of angelic powers (cf. IQS III.13-IV.26), and some texts identify these powers as Melchizedek and Melchiresha' (cf. 11QMelch, 4Q'Amram, 4Q280 and 4Q286). All but 4Q280 have already been cited, so it will suffice to provide the text of that passage at this point.

[May God set him apart] for evil from the midst of the Sons of Light because he has turned away from following Him. And they shall continue saying: Be cursed, Melchiresha', in all the thoughts of your guilty inclination. May] God [deliver you up] for torture at the hands of the vengeful Avengers. May God not heed [when] you call on Him. [May He raise His angry face] towards you. May there be no (greet-

1. () וכדילהו אל) לרעה מתוך בניהא(ור בהסוגו מאחרי אל וענו) 2. (ואמרו אר)ור אתה מלכי רשע בכול מח(שבות יצר אשמחכה יתנכה)

7 Judaeen Scrolls, 487f.

ing of) 'Peace' for you in the mouth of all those who hold fast to the Father[s. May you be cursed] with no remnant, and damned without escape. Cursed be those who practi[se their wicked designs] and [es]tablish in their hearts your (evil) devices, plotting against the Covenant of God ..., seers of [His] truth. [Who]ever refuses to enter [His Covenant, walking in the stubbornness of his heart] ...
[DSSE, 161]

3. אל לזעוה ביד נוקמי נקם לוא יחונכה אל (ב)קוראכה (ישא פני אפרו)
4. לכה לזעמה ולוא יהיה לכה שלום בפי אוחזי אבו (ת ארור אתה)
5. לאין שרית וזעום אתה לאין פליטה וארורים עוש(י מחשבות רשעתכה)
6. ו(מ)קימי מזמתכה בלבבמה לזום על ברית אל (ולמאוס את התורה ואת)
7. (דבר)י כול חוזי אמ(תו וכ)ול המואט לבוא (בברית אל ללכת בשרירות)
[4Q280 (Kobelski, 37f)]

The primary study on this tradition has been the monograph by Paul Kobelski, cited earlier. Kobelski has shown that Melchiresha' was understood in these texts as the leader of the evil spirits and the antagonist of Melchizedek. While Melchizedek, as an alias for Michael, was the heavenly redeemer of Israel, this pairing of Melchiresha' and Melchizedek should not be understood as an Antichrist/Christ pattern. Melchiresha', "the king of evil" (and, in later Greek texts, the "angel of wickedness") is simply a further instance of the many different ways in which the Devil figure could be depicted.

The ways in which this title was employed as a designation for Belial, in texts quite lacking in messianic connotations, makes it most unlikely that any Antichrist concepts are connected with this title. The dualistic pattern of Melchizedek and Melchiresha' doubtless had the potential to develop into Christ/Antichrist forms once Jesus as a Messiah figure in Christian thought displaced Michael as the heavenly redeemer (cf. Revelation 12), but this does not justify any conclusions which might interpret Melchiresha' as an Antichrist figure.

7.2.4 The Prince of the Dominion of Ungodliness שר ממשלת רשעה

A less common, but still quite clear, title was, "prince of the dominion of ungodliness," which is found in IQM XVII.5-6 (cited earlier). This was clearly an extension of the idea of Belial as the Angel/Prince/Spirit of Darkness. In fact, "Belial" occurs in the preceding line of the text, in apposition to this title.

"Prince of the dominion of ungodliness" seems to be something of an alternative for Melchiresha', since this figure is the opposite number to Michael, the princely ruler of the good other-worldly powers. This title, of

course, also has obvious parallels in the NT expression "ruler of this world" (John 12:31; 2 Cor 4:4), where Satan is clearly intended.

Strangely, "Satan" never occurs as a proper title in the Qumran literature published so far. In 4Q504 IV.12 there is a single occurrence of the noun in the general sense of an adversary or opponent of the pious; but it does not seem to have been a reference to Satan.

7.2.5 Mastemah משטמה

It was noted, during the earlier examination of demonic powers in the Book of Jubilees, that a figure known as "Mastema(h)" seemed to be the preferred way of describing the Satan figure. In places in the Qumran literature, this idea has left its mark on the descriptions of Belial. At times "Mastemah" seems to be simply a qualifier of some other noun (eg. IQS III.23 -- בממשלת משטמהו); other times almost a proper noun, a synonym for Belial as in CD XVI.4f.

And on the day that a man swears to return to the Law of Moses, the Angel of Persecution shall cease to follow him provided that he fulfils his word. [DSSE, 92]

4. ... ובליום אשר יקים האיש על נפשו לשוב 5. אל תורה משה יסור מלאך המשטמה מאחריו אם יקים את דבריו

[CD XVI.4f (Lohse, 98)]

This is not a different figure from Belial or the Angel/Prince/King of Wickedness/Darkness. This specific title for the leader of the evil angelic powers doubtless reflects the wider hellenistic Jewish tradition of an angel, under the name of Mastema(h), who was especially experienced as an agent of divine anger and wrath. To this extent, like the predilection for Belial, the evidence drawn from the Qumran literature maintains its links with the broader context of hellenistic Judaism as well as having its particular characteristics.

It is clear from this survey of references to demonic powers in the Qumran literature, that Belial emerges as the key title for the forces of evil. Belial is essentially the evil other-worldly powers who leads the forces of evil both in heaven and on earth. God was believed to have placed all human beings at least partly under his authority and influence, although people could still chose to give their loyalty to God, through the Angel/Prince of Lights, Michael.

As one of the two ruling spirits over humankind, Belial's presence and activity were identified in every experience of evil and suffering. Any and every wicked person, and all coalitions of persons opposed to the Qumran sect,

could be identified as the "company of Belial". Indeed, Belial becomes to key symbol for evil in any form: spiritual or temporal, mundane or cosmic.

Such information about the use of the Belial idea at Qumran offers a significant broadening of our knowledge of the Belial tradition in hellenistic Jewish circles. Bousset and Charles had each suggested that the Belial myth had developed so far along the lines of a demonic Endtyrant — as indeed it had in some instances found in much later texts — that earlier occurrences of Belial could be linked with an oral form of a pre-Christian Jewish Antichrist myth.

The evidence concerning Belial, Melchiresha' and other demonic powers described in the Qumran literature tends to refute such positions concerning the development and significance of the Belial myth. It is quite clear from the Qumran material that the primary significance of Belial in many Jewish circles around the turn of the eras was that of a Satan figure — so much so that "Belial" displaces "Satan" entirely in the Qumran texts.

8. ANTIOCHUS IV IN JEWISH TRADITION

8.1 THE CRISIS AND THE TYRANT

The discussion in the previous chapter concerned the symbolic figures whose existence and activities within the spiritual world were thought, by Jewish writers in the hellenistic period, to account for the human experience of evil. Despite the luxuriant growth of speculation about angelic and demonic powers, hellenistic Jews had very down-to-earth concerns as well. Their experience of suffering and evil included corrupt and tyrannical rulers, with the supreme example being the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 BCE). The events triggered during that ten year period were of great significance for the Jewish people at that time, and for the subsequent course of Jewish apocalyptic traditions.

The details of the crisis in Judaea, commonly described as the Maccabean Revolt, need not be discussed at length here. It will suffice to outline the broad sweep of events since the details can be found elsewhere,¹ and most of the significant elements will come up for discussion later in the chapter.

Matters came to a head very shortly after the beginning of Antiochus' reign in 175 BCE. The High Priest at the time, Onias III, was deposed in favour of his brother, Jason, who had offered the new king substantial remuneration if he could replace Onias. Jason also wished to introduce deliberate hellenistic

1 Particular points may be followed up by consulting the standard historical works, of which the following will be found to be especially useful. E. Bickerman, *The God of the Maccabees*; J. Efron, *Studies on the Hasmonean Period* (SJLAMT, 39; Leiden: Brill, 1987); S. Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian*; J.A. Goldstein, "Jewish Acceptance and Rejection of Hellenism", II,64-87; ---, *1 Maccabees*, 104-79; M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*; H. Jagersma, *History of Israel from Alexander the Great to Bar Kochba*; H. Koester, *Introduction I*, 205-80; S. Safrai & M. Stern (eds), *Jewish People*; P. Schäfer, "Hellenistic and Maccabean Periods" in J.H. Hayes & J.M. Miller (eds), *Israelite and Judaeon History*, 539-604; Schürer-Vermes, *History*, I,146-56 & III.1,246f; M.E. Stone, *Scriptures, Sects and Visions*.

reforms, transforming Jerusalem into a typical hellenistic city state. Antiochus, anxious to promote unity and cohesion within his vast domain, was more than ready to accept the offer and Jason attained the office of High Priest.

Jason's reforms were not intrinsically anti-Jewish, despite their obvious bias towards a hellenistic city state, and they did not attract any criticism in the protest literature of the period. This is significant when assessing the crisis: the protests which did occur were not against hellenisation, even when it was as radical as Jason's actions. Rather, the protests were directed at the later attempts by Antiochus to eradicate Judaism.

Jason's move against his brother, Onias III, put the progressive hellenists in the ascendancy but also opened the way for further intrigue which was to end in such a level of civil strife that Antiochus intervened with military force and eventually banned Judaism altogether from the province. After just three years as High Priest, Jason was replaced by a certain Menelaus who gained the office, despite not being of correct descent, by offering Antiochus a larger payment than Jason. A bitter power struggle ensued between the two hellenistic factions. After (mistaken) news of Antiochus' failure in a campaign against Egypt the forces supporting Jason attacked Jerusalem with the intent of disposing of Menelaus and reinstating Jason. They did not succeed in either aim, and only managed to draw Antiochus' wrath upon themselves and the city. He attacked Jerusalem in 169 and looted the temple, a purely political act in a way, but one which naturally alienated the bulk of the people who previously had remained neutral. Now that their traditional religion was under direct attack they reacted to Antiochus' brutal policies.

In 168, after a further campaign against Egypt had been halted by Roman intervention and a humiliating retreat, Antiochus seems to have determined to consolidate the southern flank of his empire and he applied even greater pressure on the Jews of Judaea. The city was declared to be a *katoikia*, a city populated by veterans, mercenaries and other Syrians loyal to the king. The "laws of the fathers" were annulled, and a determined effort made to suppress Jewish practices. The temple was converted to pagan use, and those Jews still living in Judaea were compelled to submit to the new cult. The city walls were demolished, while the Akra fortress was strengthened.

While the majority of Jewish people do not seem to have been unduly concerned about Jason's hellenising policies, they now united in opposition to the Seleucid regime, an opposition expressed in the military struggles of the Maccabaeen revolt and in literature such as Daniel 7-12. Drawing on ancient Israelite tribal league traditions of the Holy War, as well as more general

ancient Near Eastern traditions, they described the conflict in terms of the ancient combat myths. They cast Antiochus in the role of the eternal cosmic usurper, the chaos monster of the *Urzeit* whose activities were a sign that the *Endzeit* with its renewed golden age was imminent. Evidence for this will be seen in the following discussion. Once cast in that role, the figure of Antiochus IV seems to have become the archetypal Endtyrant for many subsequent Jewish and Christian apocalypticists.

8.2 DANIEL

The earliest reference to this idea of the Antichrist in the apocalyptic writings is in the Book of Daniel, where he is identified with Antiochus Epiphanes.
[D.S. Russell, *Method and Message*, 277]

These words of D.S. Russell highlight the significance of the treatment of Antiochus Epiphanes in Daniel for an understanding of the origins of the Antichrist myth. If Russell is correct, then Daniel presents the first example of the Antichrist myth. Even if he is incorrect, as will be shown, his comments are an apt reminder that, from Irenaeus to modern fundamentalist preachers, it has been widely assumed that Daniel's descriptions of Antiochus IV are directly applicable to a future Antichrist figure. Indeed, there are connections between the descriptions of Antiochus in Daniel and the later texts which describe the Antichrist figure, but they are more subtle than such simple constructions.

While there is still debate over some details of the composition and interpretation of Daniel, there is no doubt that the present form of the book is a consistent whole and dates from the period 169-164 BCE.¹ Its focus is clearly on the events surrounding the actions of Antiochus IV, for which it seeks to provide a theological interpretation.

1 LITERATURE. A. Bentzen, *Daniel*; M. Casey, *Son of Man*; R.H. Charles, *Commentary*; J.J. Collins, *Apocalyptic Vision*; F. Dexinger, *Daniel*; J. Ernst, *Gegenspieler*, 182-97; D. Ford, *Abomination of the Desolation*; S.B. Frost, "Daniel" *IDB* 1,761-68; J.J. Gammie, "Classification, Stages of Growth and Changing Intentions", 191-204; H.L. Ginsberg, *Studies*; ---, "Composition", 246-75; R. Hammer, *Daniel*; L.F. Hartman & A.A. di Lella, *Daniel*; A. Jeffrey, "Daniel" *IB* 6,341-549; K. Koch, *Daniel*; A. Lacocque, *Daniel*; J.A. Montgomery, *Daniel*; O. Plöger, *Daniel*; N.W. Porteous, *Daniel*; H.H. Rowley, "Unity", 233-73; Schürer-Vermes, *History*, III.1,245-50.

The work itself has a quite simple structure. The six stories of chs 1-6 are each essentially self-contained, while the four vision narratives in chs 7-12 are closely related in their focus on the crisis, and each one depends on an earlier vision for its initial ideas. This straightforward structure is complicated by differences of language and internal structure that suggest a complicated process of formation, but there is no reason to doubt the work's overall integrity in its final form.

While each of the episodes included in the court tales of chs 1-6 can be seen as relevant to the needs of a Jewish audience ca 166, they do not directly address the issues of that crisis. They are older stories capable of being read with the crisis in mind. That may, in fact, have been part of the process by which the author began his visionary task whose fruit is now seen in chs 7-12. However, even if that was the case, it was in chs 7-12 that the author developed his theological interpretation of the crisis and the tyrant, and it is to those chapters that attention is now directed.

There are four vision accounts in these six chapters:

(a) **Daniel 7** This chapter clearly has a close relationship to the vision in ch 2, and to the other chapters in the Hebrew section of the book (Dan 2:4b-7:28).³ It builds on the earlier four kingdom schema of ch 2,4 and it creates a four-

- 2 See J.J. Collins, "Apocalyptic Genre and Mythic Allusions in Daniel", 83-100; ---, *Apocalyptic Vision*, 22-65; ---, "Court-Tales in Daniel", 218-34; ---, "Daniel and his social world", 131-43; P.R. Davies, "Daniel Chapter Two", 392-401; ---, "Eschatology in the Book of Daniel", 33-53; J. Goldingay, "The Stories in Daniel", 99-116; W. Lee Humphreys, "Life Style for the Diaspora", 211-33; H.-P. Müller, "Märchen, Legende und Enderwartung", 338-50; H.H. Rowley, "Unity", 274-80.
- 3 Most of the works cited at note 5 deal with the close links between chs 2-6 and ch 7. In particular see M. Casey, *Son of Man*, 7ff; J.J. Collins, *Apocalyptic Vision*, 11ff; A. Lacocque, *Daniel*, 122ff; A. Lenglet, "La structure littéraire", 169-90; H.H. Rowley, "Unity", 262ff.
- 4 For the widespread background to this motif see the classic studies by W. Baumgartner ["Zu den vier Reichen", 17-22] and J.W. Swain ["Four Monarchies", 1-21]. Cf. J.J. Collins, *Apocalyptic Vision*, 37-42; D. Flusser, "Four Empires", 148-75; G. Hasel, "Four World Empires", 17-30; M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism I*, 181-83; K. Koch, *Daniel*, 182-84; M. Noth, "Understanding of History", 196-200. For the biblical background to the replacement of the Assyria/Babylon sequence with Babylon/Medes see Isa 13:17; 21:2 and Jer 51:11,28.

fold variation⁵ of the sea-monster form of the combat myth.⁶ At least in its final form, chapter 7 identifies Antiochus IV as a specific manifestation of that chaotic anti-God figure of ancient mythology under the guise of the little horn (Dan 7:8,20-27).

(b) **Daniel 8** Chapter 8 builds upon the little horn idea that turned out to be the major focus of chapter 7, but utilizes the myth of the revolt by the day star rather than the sea-monster myth. The basic pattern of the combat myth is the same in these two forms, but the motifs used vary.⁷

(c) **Daniel 9** Daniel 9 takes the form of a lengthy prayer by Daniel, set in the framework of a narrative describing Daniel's spiritual exercises as he sought to understand the prophecy of Jeremiah (cf. Jer 25:12; 29:10) and was rewarded by an angelic visitor, who reveals the correct interpretation of the "seventy years" between the prophetic oracle and the final salvation of God's people. There is no overt use of ancient mythology here, other than the idea that earthly events were recorded on heavenly tablets and therefore cannot be mistaken, only incorrectly understood.⁸

(d) **Daniel 10-12** These chapters comprise an extended vision narrative with 10:1-11:1 serving as an introduction, 11:2-12:4 being the body of the revelation (cast as a survey of past history), and 12:5:13 being the epilogue. Two forms of mythological thought can be observed in these chapters. In the first place, the

5 The use of "four" as a symbolic number was an older feature of general biblical and apocalyptic usage. Cf. the 4 horns and the 4 smiths in Zech 1:18-21; the 4 winds in Zech 2:6; and the 4 chariots in Zech 6:1-8.

6 On the combat myth pattern in Daniel see J.J. Collins, *Apocalyptic Vision*, 95-122. A more extensive examination of the combat myth is provided in A. Yarbro Collins, *Combat Myth*, 57-100. In an Appendix (pp. 245-70) Yarbro Collins gives details of those forms of the combat myth known to have been in use in the first centuries BCE and CE. This material indicates that Jewish and Christian writers would have been familiar with at least some current versions of the myth, and were thus able to use it as a powerful symbolic system for their own visionary writings. See also the discussion of Revelation 12ff.

7 Cf. J.J. Collins, *Apocalyptic Vision*, 106f.

8 Cf. Dan 10:21, where the angel states: "I will tell you what is inscribed in the Book of Truth", and 12:1, where those "written in the Book" will be saved at the End. See J.J. Collins, *Apocalyptic Vision*, 78-82.

framework in the prologue and epilogue expresses the idea of that there is a parallelism between events in heaven and on earth, by depicting the battles on earth between the elect and their persecutors as part of a cosmic struggle that also involves the angelic forces of good and evil. Secondly, the description of Antiochus IV in 11:21-45, which is clearly the main focus of the supposed historical survey, includes elements drawn from the day star myth.⁹

There is a significant number of common concerns in these four vision accounts. They each have elements found in the later Antichrist myth. These major features of the descriptions of Antiochus in Daniel, arranged so as to highlight the many parallels with elements of the later Antichrist myth, can be seen in Table T6.

Table T6
Elements of the Later Antichrist Myth Paralleled in Daniel 7-12

Element	ch 7	ch 8	ch 9	chs 10-12
Combat myth:				
Sea-monster	1-8a			
Day star	8b,24-29	10f		11:36
Heavenly wars				10:13f 10:20-11:1 12:1
Individual tyrant	8b		26b	11:20-45
Sudden appearance	8, 24			11:21b
Lawlessness		23a		
Unparalleled evil	25c	24		11:21a
Sinful pride		10, 23f		11:36
Divine claims	11a	10f		11:36f
Blasphemy	8, 25a	10f		11:36
Temple desecrated		11f, 25	27c	11:31
Conquests	8, 24	9		11:22-30
Persecution	21, 25b	24		11:33
Deceit		25		11:23, 32a
Reign 3½ years	25e	14	27b	12:7, 11, 12
Divine sovereignty	25d	13f, 19	27d	11:29, 36
Sudden end	26	25e		11:44f
Divine intervention	9-14, 26f	25e	27d	12:1-4
Land of Israel	2ff		24-27	11:41, 45

9 On the treatment of Antiochus in Daniel, see the important study by J.C.H. Lebram, "Der König Antiochus", 737-72.

From this Table it can be seen that the passages in Daniel which seek to describe and interpret Antiochus IV, share many common elements while also exhibiting some variation in the ways in which they are expressed. There is absolutely no room for any doubt that Antiochus IV is in the mind of the writer in all four passages, even though there is some slight development in ideas from one passage to the next. This may be due to the passages being composed at slight intervals between late 168 and mid-164. The variations in the calculation of the precise duration of the eschatological half week (cf. Dan 7:25e; 8:14; 9:27b; 12:7,11,12) suggest just such a process.

It can also be observed that there are many aspects of this theological interpretation of the crisis and the tyrant which recur as elements in the later Antichrist myth. While not every element of the later Antichrist tradition is to be observed in Daniel, it is fair to observe that almost every aspect used of Antiochus IV would later be picked up in the Antichrist myth. The single exception to that is the one item not susceptible of transfer to a later time, namely the identification of the chaos monster with the specific individual, Antiochus Epiphanes. Before the significance of these parallels to the Antichrist myth is considered, it is appropriate to comment further on the use of mythic traditions in Daniel's descriptions of Antiochus.

The presence of mythic allusions, and their formative influence on the accounts in Daniel 7-12, is clear in several ways. There is the specific pattern of the combat myth which is found in chs 7, 8, 10-12 in both the sea-monster and the day star forms. As well as the overall pattern, numerous elements of the combat myth traditions are present.¹⁰ In addition to the specific patterns of the combat myth, there is the acceptance of the ancient mythopoeic view of the universe which saw the events of history as one part of a cosmic process which had its (more significant) parallel in events in heaven.

10 It is not possible to consider all these elements in this study, but they are discussed in the commentaries and monographs. They include, to cite just a few examples from Daniel 7: the sea, the 4 winds, the 4 beasts, the Ancient of Days, the holy ones of the Most High, and the one like a son of man. In addition to those works already cited, see especially: G.R. Beasley-Murray, "Interpretation of Daniel 7", 44-58; C.H.W. Brekelmans, "Saints of the Most High and their Kingdom", 305-29; J.J. Collins, "Mythology of the Holy War in Daniel", 596-612; ---, "Son of Man and the Saints of the Most High", 50-66; C. Colpe, "Neue Untersuchungen zur Menschensohn-Problem", 353-72; A.J. Ferch, "Daniel 7 and Ugarit", 75-86; K. Koch, *Daniel*, 234-39; M. Noth, "Holy Ones of the Most High", 215-28; V.S. Pothyress, "Holy Ones of the Most High in Daniel VII", 208-13; M.S. Smith, "'Son of Man' in Ugaritic", 59-60.

In all these ways, mythic elements are an integral part of the way in which Daniel views the events of the time and seeks to interpret them theologically. Ancient mythic symbols are brought to bear on contemporary historical events and personages. This sheds light on the events and persons. Such a mythological interpretation allows the writer to convey his theological assessment of Antiochus (he is likened to the anti-god monsters of the combat myths) and to assert the inevitability of Antiochus' defeat by God.

This historicising of the older mythic traditions by applying them to contemporary opponents can also be seen in the first extant texts that use the word "Antichrist." In the Johannine epistles the opponents of the writer are denigrated as "many antichrists" (1 John 2:18), or even "the Antichrist" (2 John 7). Older mythic traditions are used of specific contemporary human opponents, as was also done in Revelation 12ff. The use of older mythic traditions (both in the general manner of that use and in the specific elements which were used) is thus a further significant parallel between Daniel and the later Antichrist literature.

How, then, does the treatment of Antiochus IV in Daniel relate to the later Antichrist myth? Is D.S. Russell correct in his statement cited at the start of this sub-section, or is the relationship less direct?

On one level the relationship is quite simple. Since Daniel came to have canonical status and to exercise a powerful influence over subsequent apocalyptic literature,¹¹ it was hardly surprising that Christian tradition drew upon it for the Antichrist myth. The high degree of correlation between the descriptions of Antiochus and those of the Antichrist figure can be largely accounted for simply on this basis. However, that does not mean that the Antichrist figure is to be seen in Daniel.¹² The connection is of unidirectional character, and not reciprocal.

11 Cf. G.K. Beale [Use of Daniel], M. Casey [Son of Man], D. Ford [Abomination of Desolation] and L.F. Hartman [Prophecy Interpreted] for detailed discussions of such influence.

12 L.F. Hartman & A.A. di Lella [Daniel, 303] comment on 11:36-39: "[these verses], despite occasional obscurities, refer certainly to the biography of Antiochus, and so say nothing at all of a future Antichrist, as many of the older commentators used to believe. The Antichrist interpretation of these verses is exegetically witless and religiously worthless."

There are, however, further reasons to preclude any interpretation of Daniel which identifies the Antichrist myth in that work. The Antichrist myth may well be a specifically Christian version of older *Chaoskampf* myths as Bousset suggested over a hundred years ago. As such it has many parallels in content, form and function, to the descriptions of Antiochus IV in Daniel. However, the Antichrist myth is still essentially a CHRISTian myth, presupposing a christology with a Christ figure for whom the Endtyrant is either an opponent or a pretender (or both). This is clearly not the case in Daniel. There Antiochus is neither a messianic pretender nor an opponent of any messianic figures — unless in the very broadest sense of Israel being seen as a messianic people. It therefore seems quite inappropriate to speak of the Antichrist tradition being represented in Daniel.

8.3 THE ANIMAL APOCALYPSE [1 Enoch 85-90]

The Animal Apocalypse in 1 Enoch 85-90 dates to the Maccabaeen period, within a couple of years of Antiochus' death in late 164 BCE.¹ It was therefore written after the crisis had passed its peak and there were prospects for a favourable outcome for the Jewish cause. By this stage it had become apparent that Daniel's fears over Antiochus were unjustified: the tyrant was dead and the temple already back in Jewish hands. As a result the treatment of Antiochus' actions is markedly more restrained than that in Daniel.

The section which describes the Maccabaeen period is ch 90: vss 2-4 describe the predicament of the Jewish people under Seleucid rule; vss 6-8 the emergence of a pious movement; vs 8 the death of Onias III; vs 9 the military actions of Judas Maccabee; vss 9-12 the attacks of Antiochus and Apollonius on Jerusalem; vss 13-14 the angelic help given to Judas (at Beth Zur? cf. 2 Macc 11:6-12).

1 LITERATURE: In addition to general literature on 1 Enoch (cf. §7.1.1), see J.J. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 53-56; G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 90-99; M.E. Stone, *Jewish Writings*, 404 & 439. Nickelsburg [*Jewish Literature*, 99] cites G. Reese ["Die Geschichte Israels in der Auffassung des frühen Judentums" (Dissertation: Heidelberg, 1967) 21-68] as an important study of this apocalypse.

Nickelsburg notes that the author does not mention the decrees of Antiochus IV or the desecration of the temple, and speculates as to whether this reflected the writer's opinion of the second temple as having been polluted since its rebuilding (cf. 1 Enoch 89:73).² The approach taken by the Animal Apocalypse is more akin to that seen in the TMos 4:8, than that observed in Daniel 7-12.

8.4 JUBILEES

While it is likely that Jubilees was written prior to the crisis in 168,¹ there is a slightly later addition in 23:16-32 which betrays an awareness of the crisis (or at least its beginnings, since the desecration of the temple is not clearly described). The initial section, which describes the religious crisis within Israel that precipitated the Maccabean crisis in the mind of the writer, reads as follows.

And in that generation the sons will convict their fathers and their elders of sin and unrighteousness, and because of the words that they utter and the great evils that they perpetrate, and because they forsake the covenant which the Lord made between them and him, that they should keep and observe all his commandments and his rules and all his laws, "without going astray either to the right hand or the left. For all have done evil, and every mouth utters iniquity, and everything they do is unclean and an abomination, and all their ways are pollution, uncleanness and corruption. ... for they will forget commandment, and covenant, and feasts, and new moons, and sabbaths, and jubilees, and all customary observances. And some among them will take their stand with bows and swords and other weapons of war to restore their kinsmen to the accustomed path; but they will not return until much blood has been shed on the earth on either side. And those who have escaped will not return from their wickedness to the path of righteousness; but they will attempt to enrich themselves by dishonest means and filch all they can from their neighbours, and they will call themselves by the great name, but not in truth and not in righteousness, and they will defile the holy of holies with their uncleanness and the corruption of their pollution. [Jub 23:16-17, 19b-21 (AOT, 75f)]

2 Jewish Literature, 93f.

1 LITERATURE: On Jubilees see above, §7.1.1. On Jub 23:16-32 see J.J. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 67; G.W.E. Nickelsburg, "Bible Rewritten and Expanded" in M.E. Stone (ed), *Jewish Writings*, 102f; ---, *Jewish Literature*, 76-79.

After this description of the hellenising crisis from the inside, the writer moves to the military and political crisis brought about by Antiochus' actions against the province and the city (23:22-25). This section is remarkably general in its comments, with no specific identification of the person whom God would raise up to punish Israel for its sins. As was the case in the Animal Apocalypse, in Jubilees 23 it would seem that the author is interpreting the crisis from within a theological framework: in this case, the pattern sin/punishment/repentance/redemption such as is found in the Deuteronomic History. It also has been proposed that this historical apocalypse in ch 23 was written before Antiochus' decrees.² Whether that is the case or not, clearly the figure of Antiochus IV has not left much of a mark on Jubilees, even though it deals with that period of history.

8.5 I MACCABEES

While the focus of 1 Maccabees is the achievements of Judas Maccabee and his brothers,¹ the book commences with a detailed description of the crisis which led to the revolt (1:10-64). This fairly sober account was written about two generations after the events with the aid of reliable written sources. The description of these events can be outlined as follows: vss 10-15, hellenistic reforms instituted; 16-19, Antiochus' Egyptian campaign; 20-24, looting of temple treasures by Antiochus; 25-28, poetic fragment; 29-35, capture of city by Apollonius; 36-40, poetic fragment; 41-53, the king's edict; 54-61, enforcement of the ban of Judaism; and 62-64, the response of the faithful to the edict.

It is of interest that 1 Maccabees provides a relatively objective account of these events. The author interprets the events with a perspective informed by his faith (and his position within the Hasmonaean court!), and does not share the violent reaction to Antiochus seen in Daniel, nor the more pietist reaction

2 J.A. Goldstein, *1 Maccabees*, 39; and G.W.E. Nickelsburg, "Jubilees" in M.E. Stone (ed), *Jewish Writings*, 103.

1 LITERATURE: H.W. Attridge, "1 Maccabees" in M.E. Stone (ed), *Jewish Writings*, 171-76; —, "Maccabean Histories" in R.A. Kraft & G.W.E. Nickelsburg (eds), *Early Judaism*, 316-23; J.A. Goldstein, *1 Maccabees*; G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 114-18; K.-D. Schunk, "1. Makkabäerbuch" *JSHRZ* I.4,288-372; Schürer-Vermes. *History* III.1,180-85.

seen in the Animal Apocalypse or Jubilees. There is no sign of the ancient combat myth patterns being employed here to interpret the crisis. Antiochus is said to act arrogantly, and to have over-stepped his God-given role as the rod of punishment on a sinful Jewish nation, but that is a far cry from the arrogant little horn of Daniel 7 and 8. Such a difference in his approach is to be expected, given the lapse of time and the situation at the time of composition (very early in first century BCE).

8.6 2 MACCABEES

The Book of 2 Maccabees is an abridgement of a much larger, but now lost, work (2:19ff).¹ It cannot be dated precisely, but must have been prior to 63 BCE since Rome is not treated as a hostile power. The crisis under Antiochus IV is described in some detail, and with considerable feeling and colour, in chs 4-9. The looting of the temple treasures after the revolt by Jason is described in 5:11-20, and the ban on Judaism is described with dramatic stories in chs 6-7. The book's portrayal of Antiochus is most fierce when describing his intention to destroy Jerusalem and make it a cemetery (9:4ff). There may be a touch of the day star myth in the descriptions of Antiochus' pride which is humbled by God, who afflicts him with a fatal disease (cf. Isa 14:4ff; Ezek 28:2ff), but this is not made explicit.

8.7 THE TESTAMENT OF MOSES

The Testament of Moses, also known as the Assumption of Moses¹, is a brief document about whose identity there is still considerable confusion and uncertainty. It seems probable that there were originally two separate works

1 LITERATURE: H.W. Attridge, "2 Maccabees" in M.E. Stone (ed), *Jewish Writings*, 176-83; ---, "Maccabean Histories"; J.A. Goldstein, *2 Maccabees*; C. Habicht, "2. Makkabäerbuch" *JSHRZ* I.3,167-286; G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 118-22; Schürer-Vermes, *History*, III.1,531-37.

1b LITERATURE: E. Brandenburger, "Himmelfahrt Moses" *JSHRZ* V.2,55-84; R.H. Charles, *Assumption of Moses*; ---, "Assumption of Moses" *APOT* II,407-24; J.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 160-66; J.J. Collins, "Testament of Moses" in M.E. Stone (ed), *Jewish Writings*, 344-49; ---, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 102-06; G. Dellings, *Bibliographie*, 164f; A.-M.

under these titles but that they were eventually circulated together, with the title of the later Assumption of Moses being used for the composite work. This composite text is no longer extant although there are occasional citations of specific verses in the Fathers, as well as the famous citation in Jude 9. The text which has survived seems to be the Testament of Moses, but even that text breaks off abruptly at the end without any way of determining how much may be missing. Of the extant text about one third to a half is missing, making the task of editors and translators very difficult.

The problems of the text itself are equalled by the difficulty in establishing the writing's date and provenance. Three widely divergent dates are suggested: a date in the second century CE (so Hölscher and Zeitlin), the first couple of decades CE (so Charles and the majority of scholars), and the Maccabaeian period (proposed by J. Licht and promulgated with some success by G.W.E. Nickelsburg). The proposed date close to the Bar Kochba revolt has not convinced many scholars, with the main debate being over the remaining two alternatives. Either theory is faced with problems from the present form of the writing and have recourse to theories of displacement and interpolations to substantiate their views. On the balance of evidence at the moment, the proposal to date the work some time after Herod's death seems most sound, with the proviso that the traditions used then may have had a complex pre-history.²

The work was probably composed in Palestine by a Jew who took a quietist attitude towards the issues of Jewish nationalism. The attitudes expressed in the book are close to those of the Qumran sect, but there are no reasons to identify the sect with the composition of the writing -- and no copies of it have been found at Qumran. The Testament purports to be Moses' farewell discourse to Joshua and provides an historical survey of the history of Israel

Denis, Introduction, 128-41; J.A. Goldstein, *1 Maccabees*, 39f; J. Licht, "Taxo, or the Apocalyptic Doctrine of Vengeance", 95-103; R. Meyer, "Himmelfahrt Moses" RGG³ III,337; W. Michaelis et al, "Moses, Assumption of" EncyJud XII, 411f; G.W.E. Nickelsburg (ed), *Studies on the Testament of Moses: Seminar Papers* (SCS, 4; Cambridge, Mass.: SBL, 1973);---, *Jewish Literature*, 80-83; E. von Nordheim, *Lehre*, 194-207; J. Priest, "Testament of Moses", OTP I,919-34; M. Rist, "Moses, Assumption of" IDB 3,450f; J.P.M. Sweet, "Assumption of Moses" AOT 601-16; D.H. Wallace, "Semitic Origin of the Assumption of Moses", 321-28.

2 So J. Priest ["Testament of Moses", OTP I,921] and J.J. Collins ["Testament of Moses" in M.E. Stone (ed), *Jewish Writings*, 347]. J.A. Goldstein [*1 Maccabees*, 40] and G.W.E. Nickelsburg [*Jewish Literature*, 82] both date TMos to the period between the desecration of the temple and the beginning of military activity by Judas Maccabee.

down to Herodian times: ch 1, introduction; ch 2, from conquest to Rehoboam; ch 3, the exile; ch 4, the return; ch 5, apostasy; ch 6, punishment for apostasy; ch 7, apostasy; ch 8, punishment for apostasy; ch 9, an example of faithfulness in Taxo the Levite; ch 10, eschatological hymn; chs 11-12, dialogue about divine protection.

Chs 8-9 are widely identified as describing the events relating to the crisis and giving a model of passive resistance by martyrdom. Ch 9 describes a pact between a certain Taxo and his seven sons, undertaking to remain true to their faith. Ch 8 describes the situation in Judaea ca 166 quite well, even if the work dates somewhat later. It reads:

Et altera venit in eos ultio et ira,
 quae talis non fuit in illis a saeculo
 usque ad illud tempus, in quo susci-
 tabit illis regem regum terrae et
 potentatem a potentia magna, qui
 confitentes circumcisionem in cruce
 suspendet, Nam celantes torquebit et
 tradidit duci vinctos in custodiam. Et
 uxores eorum deis donabuntur in
 gentibus, et filii eorum pueri
 secabuntur a medicis inducere
 acrosbistiam illis. Nam illi in eis
 punientur in tormentis et igne et
 ferro, et cogentur palam baiulare
 idola eorum inquinata, quomodo
 sunt pariter cogentur intrare in
 abditum locum eorum, et cogentur
 stimulis blasphemare verbum
 contumeliose, novissime post haec
 leges et quod haberent supra
 altarium suum.

[TMos 8:1-5 (R.H. Charles,
 AssMos, 80-82)]

And there shall come upon them a
 retribution and wrath, such as has not
 befallen them from the beginning until
 that time, when he will stir up against
 them the king of the kings of the
 earth, a man who rules with great
 power, who will crucify those who
 confess their circumcision. And those
 who deny it he will torture and put in
 chains and imprison. And their wives
 will be given to the gods among the
 Gentiles, and their young sons will be
 operated on by doctors to look as
 though they had not been circumcised.
 And others among them will suffer
 punishment by torture and fire and
 sword; and they will be forced to
 carry round their idols publicly,
 polluting things, just like the shrines
 that house them. And in the same way
 they will be forced by those who tor-
 ture them to enter their inmost sanctu-
 ary and forced with goads to blas-
 pheme and insult the Name, and, as if
 that were not enough, the laws as well
 by having a pig upon the altar.
 [AOT, 611f]

If TMos dates from 166 BCE as Goldstein and Nickelsburg argue, then it shows the horror felt by traditionalist Jews at the events unfolding in Jerusalem and throughout the province. In that case, TMos adds to the information available concerning the impact of the crisis on Jewish consciousness at the time. On the other hand, if TMos dates from around the turn of the era (which is more likely), then it demonstrates how the account of the crisis had become a continuing motif in Jewish thought. Even 150 years

later, in that scenario, the events could still symbolise the horror of apostasy and persecution under a godless tyrant.

8.8 SIBYLLINE ORACLES

In SibOr III.388-400 there is a brief oracle originally aimed at Alexander the Great, but later touched up by a Jewish hand using ideas drawn from Dan 7:7f.¹ It serves to illustrate the continued power of the imagery fashioned when Daniel identified Antiochus IV with the chaos monster.

ἦξει καί ποτ' ἄπιστος ἐξ
 'Ασίδος ὄλβιον οὐδας
 ἀνὴρ πορφυρέην λώπην
 ἐπειμένος ὤμοις
 ἄγριος ἀλλοδίκης φλογόεις·
 ἦγειρε γὰρ αὐτοῦ
 πρόσθε κεραυνὸς φῶτα· κακὸν
 δ' 'Ασίν ζυγὸν ἕξει
 πᾶσα, πολὺν δὲ χθῶν πίεται
 φόνον ὀμβρηθεῖσα.
 ἀλλὰ καὶ ὡς πανάιστον
 ἄπαντ' 'Αίδης θεραπεύσει·
 ὧν δὴ περ γενεὴν αὐτὸς
 θέλει ἐξαπολέσσαι,
 ἐκ τῶν δὴ γενεῆς κείνου
 γένος ἐξαπολείται·
 ῥίζαν ἴαν γε διδούς ἦν καὶ
 κόψει βροτολογὸς
 ἐκ δέκα δὴ κεράτων, παρὰ δὴ
 φυτὸν ἄλλο φυτεύσει,
 κόψει πορφυρέης γενεῆς
 γενετῆρα μαχητῆν
 καὐτὸς ὑφ' οὐρανῶν ὧν ἐς
 ὁμόφρονα αἴσιον ἄρρης
 φθεῖται·
 καὶ τότε δὴ παραφύομενον
 κέρας ἄρξει.

[SibOr III.388-400 (GCS, 68f)]

Also at a certain time there will
 come to the prosperous land of
 Asia
 a faithless man clad with a purple
 cloak on his shoulders,
 savage, stranger to justice, fiery.
 For a thunderbolt beforehand
 raised him up, a man. But all Asia
 will bear an evil yoke, and the
 earth, deluged, will imbibe much
 gore.
 But even so Hades will attend him
 in everything though he knows it
 not.
 Those whose race he wished to
 destroy,
 by them will his own race be des-
 troyed.
 Yet leaving one root, which the
 destroyer will also cut off
 from ten horns, he will sprout
 another shoot on the side.
 He will smite a warrior and
 begetter of a royal race
 and he himself will perish at the
 hands of his descendants in a
 conspiracy of war,
 and then the horn growing on the
 side will reign.

[OTP, I,370f]

1 J.J. Collins, "Sybilline Oracles" OTP 1,359; —, "Sybilline Oracles" in M.E. Stone (ed), *Jewish Writings*, 365-71; and G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 162-64.

The previous citation serves both to indicate the continued influence of the imagery fashioned by the author of Daniel, and the way in which it was susceptible to reinterpretation in new situations. This particular oracle seems to have begun as a non-Jewish political statement, to have been adapted by a Jewish hand to conform to the language of Daniel, and perhaps finally to have been recycled yet again as an anti-Roman oracle. In this process, the particular features of Antiochus IV and the crisis in the second century are but one part of the history of the oracle's development.

While Antiochus IV, and the events at whose centre he was active, played a less significant role in the last citation, it is clear from the literature examined in this chapter that both the crisis and the way in which Daniel portrayed Antiochus (which doubtless itself drew on traditional imagery), were to leave their impact on Jewish apocalyptic thought. In the next chapter of this study, other elements of Jewish apocalyptic thought which were to have parallels in the later Antichrist myth will be examined, but none of them are as significant as the crisis which surrounded the hellenisation attempt in Jerusalem ca 170 BCE and the Jewish perception of Antiochus IV which that crisis fashioned.

9. ASPECTS OF HELLENISTIC JEWISH WRITINGS WITH PARALLELS TO THE LATER ANTICHRIST LITERATURE

So far in this middle section of our study a number of important aspects of hellenistic Jewish literature which seemed relevant to the topic have been examined. There remain, however, a large number of other passages which provide parallels to one or more of the remaining aspects of the later Antichrist myth. These are summarised conveniently in Table T7 at the beginning of the final section, but can now be considered in some detail.

9.1 FALSE TEACHERS AND HERETICS

At §4.2 it was observed that the appearance of false teachers and heretics was not only a significant element in the Antichrist myth itself, but also an important sociological factor in the development and use of the myth. The concern over false teachers, and the sense of being a community opposed to others with false beliefs, was a marked aspect of the community at Qumran. During this period the concern over false teachers is almost exclusively attested in the Qumran literature. The only possible exception, in the Jewish literature under consideration, is the Apocalypse of Weeks (1 Enoch 91:12-14; 93:1-10), where there may be an allusion to false teaching. W.A. Meeks has suggested that while this peculiar interest in false teachers at Qumran "probably took its starting point from a specific historical incident within the community's experience, [it] also made use of a tradition which already combined mythical elements with the Deuteronomic Law of the false-prophet".¹

In their struggle with their contemporary political and religious opponents, the Qumran sectarians developed an impressive array of derogatory titles for their opponents. The precise interpretation of these polemical allusions to historical persons remains unclear, but the sect's concern over the issue of correct and false teaching is crystal clear. One of the fundamental elements of this attack on their opponents was the charge of being false teachers.

¹ W.A. Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 51.

The primary opponent of the sect's leader — most probably a Jerusalem high priest during the Hasmonaean period — is pilloried through the use of a range of titles. Several of them characterise him as a false teacher (note the epithet, "the Liar"), as the ensuing citations demonstrate.

[For the wicked encompasses] the righteous. (i,4c).

[The wicked is the Wicked Priest, and the righteous] is the Teacher of Righteousness.

[DSSE, 283]

12. ... (כיא רשע מכתיר) את הצדיק

13. (פשרו הרשע הוא הכוהן הרשע

והצדיק) הוא מורה הצדק

[1QpHab I.12f (Lohse, 228)]

From the day of the gathering in of the Teacher of the Community until the end of the men of war who deserted to the Liar there shall pass about forty years (Deut. ii,14). And during that age the wrath of God shall be kindled against Israel.

[DSSE, 90f]

... ומיום 14. האסף יורה היחיד עד

תם כל אנשי המלחמה אשר שבו 15. (ע)ם

איש הכזב כשנים ארבעים ובקץ ההוא

יחרה 16. אף אל בישראל

[CD (MS B) II.13-16 (Lohse, 104)]

[Behold the nations and see, marvel and be astonished; for I accomplish a deed in your days, but you will not believe it when] II told (i,5)

[Interpreted, this concerns] those who were unfaithful together with the Liar, in that they [did] not [listen to the word received by] the Teacher of Righteousness from the mouth of God. And it concerns the unfaithful of the New [Covenant] in that they have not believed in the Covenant of God [and have profaned] His holy Name. And like wise this saying is to be interpreted [as concerning those who] will be unfaithful at the end of days. They, the mean of violence and the breakers of the Covenant, will not believe when they hear all that [is to happen to] the final generation from the Priest [in whose heart] God set [understanding] that he might interpret all the words of His servants the Prophets, through whom He foretold all that would happen to His people and [His land].

[DSSE, 283f]

16.) ראו

בגוים והביטור) 17. (והתמהו

תמהו כיא פעל פועל בימיכם

לוא תאמיני כיא

II

יסופר (פשר הדבר על) הכוגדים

עם איש 2. הכזב כי לו (א) שמעו

אל דברי (מורה הצדק) (ה) מפיא

3. אל ועל הכוג(דים כברית)

החדשה (כי) א (לו) א 4. האמינו

בבריא אל (ויחללו) את ש(ם)

ק) ודשו 5. וכן פשר הדבר (על

כול הבר) גדים לאחרית 6.

הימים המה ערי(צים כבר) ית

אשר לוא יאמינו 7. בשומעם

את כול הב(אות על) הדור

האחרון מפי 8. הכוהן אשר

נתן אל ב(תוך העד)ה לפשור

(א)ת כול 9. דברי עבדיו

הנביאים (אשר ב) ידם ספר אל

את 10. כול הבאות על עמו

ו(ארצו

[1QpHab I.16-II.10 (Lohse, 228f)]

The description in the last two passages is especially close to the usage in the Johannine epistles, which use the Antichrist epithet for the false teachers who are opposing the writer. The expression "the Liar", which occurs in I John 2:22, is a particular link; but there are other more general connections, such as the clear setting in the last days and the suggestion that one particular person has been especially endowed by God to be a reliable teacher of the tradition. The remaining citations illustrate other titles connected with the theme of false teachers.

This was the time of which it is written, **Like a stubborn heifer, thus was Israel stubborn** (Hos. iv,16), when the Scoffer arose who shed over Israel the water of lies. He caused them to wander in a pathless wilderness, laying low the everlasting heights, abolishing the ways of righteousness and removing the boundary with which the forefathers had marked out their inheritance, that he might call down on them the curses of His Covenant and deliver them up to the avenging sword of the Covenant. For they sought smooth things and preferred illusions (Isa. xxx,10) and they watched for breaks (Isa. xxx,13) and chose the fair neck; and they justified the wicked and condemned the just, and they transgressed the Covenant and violated the Precept. They banded together against the life of the righteous (Ps. xciv,21) and loathed all who walked in perfection; they pursued them with the sword and exulted in the strife of the people. And the anger of God was kindled against II their congregation so that He ravaged all their multitude; and their deeds were defilement before Him.

[DSSE, 83]

Woe to him who builds a city with blood and founds a town upon falsehood! Behold, is it not from the Lord of Hosts that the peoples shall labour for fire and the nations shall strive for naught? (ii,12-13)

Interpreted, this concerns the Spouter of Lies who led many astray that he might build his city of vanity with blood and raise a congregation on deceit, causing many thereby to per-

13. ... היא היה אשר היה כחוב עליה כפרה סורירה 14. כן סרר ישראל בעמוד איש הלצון אשר הטיף לישראל 15. מימי כזב ויהעם בתוהו לא דרך להשח גבהות עולם ולסור 16. מנתיבות צדך ולסיע גבול ראשמים שנחלתם למען 17. הדבק בהם את אלוה בריחו להסגירם לחרב נקמת ינקם 18. בריח בעבור אשר דרשו בחלקות ויבחרו במהתלות ויצפו 19. לפרצות ויבחרו בטוב הצואר ויצדיקו רשע וירשיעו צדיק 20. ויעבירו בריח ויפירו חוק ויגודו על נפש צדיק ובכל הולכי 21. תמים תעבה נפשם וירדפום לחרב ויסיסו לריב עם ויחר אף II 1. אל בעדתם להשם את כל המונה ומעשיהם לנדה לפניו

[CD I.13-II.1 (Lohse, 66f)]

5. ... הוי 6. בונה עיר בדמים ויכונן קריה בעולה הלוא 7. הנה מעם יהוה צבאות יגעו עמים בדי אש 8. ולאומים בדי ריק ייעפו 9. פשר הדבר על מטיף הכזב אשר

form a service of vanity for the sake of its glory, and to be pregnant with works of deceit, that their labour might be for nothing and that they might be punished with fire who vilified and outraged the elect of God.

[DSSE, 288]

[All this is] for the transgression [of Jacob and for the sins of the House of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob?] Is it not [Samaria? And what is the high place of Judah? Is it not Jerusalem? I will make of Samaria a ruin in the fields, and of Jerusalem a plantation of vines] (i,5-6).

Interpreted, this concerns the Spouter of Lies [who led the] Simple lastray].

[DSSE, 278]

התעה רבים 10. לבנות עיר שור
בדמים ולקים עדה בשקר 11. בעבור
כבודה לוגיע רבים בעבודה שור
ולהרותם 12. ב(מע)שי שקר להיות
עמלם לדיק בעבור יבואו 13. למשפט
אש אשר גדפו ויחרפו בחירי אל

[1QpHab X.5-13 (Lohse, 240)]

1. בפשע 2. (יעקב כול זאת
ובחטאות בית ישראל מה פשע יעקב הלא
3. (שומרון ומה במות הלא יר)וש(לם
ושמתי שומרון) 4. (לעי השדה למטעי
כרם) פשרו על מטיף הכזב 5. (אשר
הואה יתעה את ה)פתאים

[1Q14, Comm. on Micah (DJD I,78)]

The exact meaning of these passages with their vivid epithets, and the possible historical events and personages which may lie behind them, have been matters of considerable interest to scholars of hellenistic Judaism and early Christianity. However, these issues will not detain us at this point. Such questions are peripheral to the present study, and must be left aside for now.

What is of interest, irrespective of the particular circumstances, is the existence of such a set of perjorative descriptions. It suggests that, when circumstances required, Jewish writers in the late second temple period could draw on (or readily create from traditional sources?) a diverse array of descriptions for false teachers and heretics. The fact that only the Qumran literature reveals such a concern, underlines the importance of internal sectarian problems in this development; a situation paralleled by the role of internal church problems in fostering the Antichrist myth.

9.2 LAWLESSNESS AND THE CLIMAX OF EVIL

The idea that evil would reach a climax just prior to the end of time, and that the time of the Antichrist's advent would be marked by an increase in lawlessness and unparalleled evils was noted in the third century literature. This was not a new theme. It had been current in apocalyptic literature for many years. It is hinted at in Dan 7:25c and 8:23f, and stated more clearly in 1 Enoch 93:8-10 and TMos 8. The PssSol give numerous instances of the theme (1:8; 2:3,12; 4:12,23; 12:1; 14:6; 15:8; 16:8; 17:11,18,24), and it is described at

length in 1 Enoch 91:5ff and SibOr II.254-68, of which only the former will be cited here.

For I know that the state of violence will intensify upon the earth; a great plague shall be executed upon the earth; all forms of oppression will be carried out; and everything shall be uprooted; and every arrow shall fly fast. Oppression shall recur once more and be carried out upon the earth; every form of oppression, injustice, and iniquity shall infect the world twofold. When sin, oppression, blasphemy, and injustice increase, crime, iniquity and uncleanness shall be committed and shall increase likewise. [1 Enoch 91:5-7 (OTP, I,72)]

9.3 THE DECEIT MOTIF

The various titles used for the enemies of the Qumran sect drew on categories such as deceit, falsehood, and flattery. This was noted when the motif of false teaching was considered above. Such themes as deceit, being led astray, flattery were also noted when analysing the Antichrist myth in literature from the third century CE. The idea of deceit, or even of a deceiver, is attested in some of the literature under review (Dan 8:15; 11:23,32a; 1 Enoch 94:6; 96:7; 99:12; PssSol 4:8,10,11,22,23; 12:1). It was also a common concept at Qumran, as a catch-all title for evil activity. The Hymn Scroll is particularly rich in such phrases, as the representative samples which follow indicate.

Teachers of lies [have smoothed] Thy people with words, and [false prophets] have led them astray; ...

And they, teachers of lies and seers of falsehood, have schemed against me a scheme of Belial, to exchange the Law engraved on my heart by Thee for the smooth things (which they speak) to Thy people. ...

As for them, they dissemble, they plan scheme of Belial. They seek Thee with a double heart and are not confirmed in Thy truth. A root bearing poisoned and bitter fruit is in their designs; they walk in stubbornness of heart and seek Thee among idols, and they set before them the stumbling-block of their sin. They come to inquire of Thee from the mouth of lying prophets deceived by error who speak [with strange] lips to Thy people, and an

6. ... והמה עמכה (יתער)
7. (כיא דב)רים החליקו למו ומליצי רמיה (התער)ם
9. ... והמה מליצי 10. כזב וחוזי רמיה זממו עלי בליעל להמיר תורחכם אשר שננתה בלבבי בחלקות 11. לעמכם
13. ... והמה נעלמיסזמות בליעל
14. יחשובו ויירשובה בלב ולב ולא נכונו באמתכה שורש פורה רוש ולענה במחשבותם 15. ועם שרירות לבם יתורו ויירשוכה בגלולים ומכשול עוונם שמו לנגד פנהם ויבאו
16. לדורשכה מפי נביאי כזב מפותי תעות והם (ב)ל(וע)ג שפה ולשון אחרת

alien tongue, that they may cunningly
turn all their works to folly.

[DSSE, 174f]*

To the interpreters of error I have
been an opponent, [but a man of peace]
to all those who see truth. To all
those who seek smooth things I have
been a spirit of zeal; like the sound of
the roaring of many waters so have
[all] the deceivers thundered against
me; [all] their thoughts were [schemes
of Belial.

[DSSE, 169]*

ידברו לעמך 17. להולל ברמיה כול
מעשיהם

[1QH IV.6f,9-11,13-17 (Lohse, 124f)]

ואהיה איש ריב למליצי תעוה (ובעל)
15. (של) ום לכול חוזי נכוחות
ואהיה לרוח קנאה כל דורשי חל(קות)
16. (וכול) אנשי רמיה עלי יהמו
וקול המון מים רבים ומזמות
בליעל (כול) 17. (מח)שכותם

[1QH II.14-17 (Lohse, 116)]

The idea of deceit is also found in SibOr II.165-69. In these lines, which are part of section providing the signs of the end, the Sybillist expressed the idea of deceivers who will come "in place of prophets." They will be able to perform "many signs" through the activity of Beliar. This may be compared with §4.1 where the satanic links of the Antichrist figure are related to deception and the performance of false signs and wonders. These lines read as follows.

ἢ δὲ συναίρεσις ἐγγύς, ὅταν
τινὲς ἀντὶ προφητῶν
ψευδαπάται πελάσωσιν ἐπὶ
χθονὶ φημίζοντες·
καὶ Βελίαρ θ' ἤξει καὶ σήματα
πολλὰ ποιήσει
ἀνθρώποις. τότε δὴ ὁσίων
ἀκαταστασί' ἀνδρῶν
ἐκλεκτῶν πιστῶν τε.

[SibOr II.165-69 (GCS, 35)]

The gathering together is near
when some deceivers,
in place of prophets, approach,
speaking on earth.
Beliar also will come and will do
many signs
for men. Then indeed there will be
confusion of holy
chosen and faithful men.
[OTP, I,349]

This is an important citation. In the first place, it provides the earliest evidence for the use of ἀντί as a preposition attached to a prophet, teacher or christ-figure. The basic concept implicit in this description, centred on the phrase, ἀντὶ προφητῶν, is very close to the idea of "many antichrists" in 1 John 2:18; although in this case it is not in a messianic context. It demonstrates that the Jewish apocalyptic tradition inherited by the early church included the idea that many deceivers would come in the place of the true prophet(s) just before the last days. Secondly, this citation is important as the sole reference, in this literature, to the signs and wonders theme which was to be so prominent in later apocalyptic passages.

9.4 THE ENDTYRANT FIGURE

One of the most characteristic aspects of the later Antichrist myth was the use of older traditions concerning an eschatological tyrant, the Endtyrant, to complete their description of the person and activities of the Antichrist. When the literature from the period ca 70-180 CE is examined in the final part of this study, it will be recognised that this Endtyrant tradition had older roots in Jewish apocalyptic literature. Presumably these roots lay in writings such as the texts presently under discussion. It is now appropriate to consider what evidence these pre-Christian Jewish sources provide for a Jewish tradition of an Endtyrant.

An examination of the Endtyrant tradition involves at least four different, but closely related ideas. These are: the belief in an individual Endtyrant; the idea of his conquests; the idea that the righteous are given into his dominion by God; and references to the duration of his ascendancy. These ideas will be considered briefly in their literary contexts in Daniel, *Martls*, certain texts from Qumran, and in *TMos*.

9.4.1 Daniel 7-12

The most important passages from this period for possible references to an eschatological tyrant are the three apocalyptic visions in Daniel 7, 8 and 10-12. These have already been examined at §8.2, where it was noted that Antiochus IV was characterised as an embodiment of the chaotic anti-God figure of the sea-monster or the self-aggrandizing figure of the day star. There can be no doubt that Daniel 7-12 either knew or developed the Endtyrant figure. In fact, Daniel is the only writing from this period in which the evidence for an Endtyrant figure is unambiguous. The other passages to be discussed here possibly use the Endtyrant tradition, but in each case there are reasons to withhold a definite decision. Given that the apocalyptic visions in Daniel are the only hellenistic Jewish texts to refer clearly to such a tradition, it is not surprising to find that Daniel 7-12 is also the only place where there is mention of the conquests of the Endtyrant (Dan 7:8,24; 8:9; 11:22-30), his power over the righteous (implicit in the same passages), and the idea that his ascendancy would only last three and half years (Dan 7:25e; 8:14; 9:27b; 11:7,11f).

9.4.2 Martyrdom of Isaiah

There is a passage in *MartIs* which describes the Judaeen king, Manasseh, in a fashion that suggests that he is serving as a model for someone like Antiochus IV. This passage, *MartIs* 2:1b-5a, was printed above when the Beliar figure was discussed at §7.1. Manasseh is said to have been indwelt by Sammael, to have served Satan, to have led his people into apostasy, and to have persecuted the faithful. His reign was characterised as a time when evil increased. *MartIs* 2:4b-5a reads,

...Μανασσῆ, καὶ κατεδυνάμου
αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ ἀποστάσει καὶ
τῇ ἀνομίᾳ, ὡς ἐσπάρη ἐν
Ἱερου Ἱερουσαλήμ. Καὶ
ἐπλήθυνεν ἡ φαρμακεία καὶ ἡ
μαγεία καὶ ἡ παντεία καὶ οἱ
κληδονισμοὶ καὶ ἡ πορνεία καὶ
ὁ διωγμὸς τῶν δικαίων ἐν
χερσὶ Μανασσῆ.

[*MartIs* 2:4b-5a (Amherst, 4)]

[And Sammael/Beliar rejoiced over Jerusalem because of]

Manasseh, [and he strengthened him] in causing apostasy, and in the iniquity which was disseminated in Jerusalem. And sorcery, and magic, augury and divination, fornication and adultery, and the persecution of the righteous increased through Manasseh.

[OTP, II,158]

It is possible that this passage could mean that the figure of Manasseh was being used as an Endtyrant, but it is not very probable. If *MartIs* is dated to the period of the crisis ca 168 BCE then it may be a critique of Jason or Menelaus, using the figure of Manasseh as a prototype of an evil ruler. If it is a later work, it may be characterising one of the Hasmonaeen rulers or high priests as a latter day Manasseh. While it is possible that this passage used the idea of an eschatological Endtyrant, this cannot be held as certain. It is more likely that the passage simply used a description of Manasseh as a particularly wicked king as a way of criticising a contemporary ruler.

9.4.3 Qumran

The Qumran literature provides a number of passages which, from time to time, have been said to refer to the Antichrist. This kind of claim is typical of studies by scholars who have remained within the Bousset-Charles consensus,

and see the Antichrist idea as essentially a Jewish tradition. Such studies tend to treat any kind of opponent figure or evil tyrant in Jewish literature as "Antichrist figures". The instances to be considered here will illustrate the loose methodology behind such arguments.

(a) 4QTest One passage where there may be a reference to Endtyrant figures is in 4QTest. Dupont-Sommer claims there is a reference to not just one Antichrist, but to three Antichrists!¹ The text in question reads.

Cursed be the man who rebuilds this city! May he lay its foundation on his first-born, and set its gate upon his youngest son (Josh. vi, 26). Behold, an accursed man, a man of Belial, has risen to become a fowl-er's net to his people, and a cause of destruction to all his neighbours. And [his brother] arose [and ruled], both being instruments of violence. They have re-built [Jerusalem and have set up] a wall and towers to make of it a stronghold of ungodliness ... in Israel, and a horror in Ephraim and in Judah ... They have committed an abomination in the land, and a great blasphemy among the children [of Israel. They have shed blood] like water upon the ramparts of the daughter of Zion and within the precincts of Jerusalem.
[DSSE, 296]*

22. ויאמר ארור האיש אשר יבנה את
העיר הזאת בבכורו 23. ייסדנה
ובצבגירו יצב דלתיה ואנה איש ארור
אחד בליעל 24. עומד להיות פ(ח)
(י) קום לעמו ומחמה לכול שכניו
ועמד 25. () ימק (לה) יות
שניהמה כלי חמס ושכו ובמו את
26. () ויצ) יכו לה חומה
ומגדלים לעשות לעוז רשע
27. () כישראל
ושערוריה באפרים וביהודה
28. () (וע) שו חנופה בארץ ונצה
גדולה בבני 29. () (ע) ס כמים
על חל בת ציון ובחוק 30. ירושלם

[4QTest 22-30 (Lohse, 250f)]

Dupont-Sommer argues that the Teacher of Righteousness was seen, by at least some of the community's members, as the Messiah, and that these lines "have ... a very precise relevance and are directed to specific historical persons, contemporaries and adversaries of the Teacher of Righteousness and

1 A. Dupont-Sommer, *Essene Writings*, 317f.

his sect."² He later identifies these persons as Alexander Jannaeus (104-78 BCE), and his two sons Hyrcanus II and Aristobolus II who contended for the throne after the death of their mother, Alexandra (78-67 BCE) and whose rivalry led to such atrocities that the citizens appealed to the Roman general Pompey to intervene, thus ending the Hasmonaean dynasty.³

While this may be a realistic setting for such a text (although Lübke's article would suggest a much earlier date) since it at least takes the content of the document seriously, it does not justify Dupont-Sommer's use of the title "Antichrist", let alone his discovery of three Antichrists in one text. It seems more probable that this text is another example of the denigration of the human opponent(s) of the sect, such as seen in the references to the Wicked Priest (cf. §9.1). There does not seem to be anything in this passage suggesting that an eschatological Endtyrant figure is present, let alone a formal Antichrist figure.⁴

(b) IQH VI.29-35 G.R. Driver has drawn attention to a Qumran passage which he believes links the "anti-Messiah" idea with the "Neronic myth".⁵ While he recognises that the Hymn uses neither "Messiah" nor "anti-Messiah", Driver argues that IQH VI.29-35 refers to the siege of Jerusalem 68-70 CE, and that it reflects the belief that a Nero redivivus figure would raise up "an army recruited from the grave".⁶ As it happens, apart from the historical problems involved in such a late dating, the text involves significant problems requiring careful handling. Along with the citation of the Aramaic text, the translations by both Driver and Vermes are provided for comparison.

2 A. Dupont-Sommer, *Essene Writings*, 317f. Cf. also J.M. Allegro, "Further Messianic References", 182-87; J. Lübke, "Reinterpretation", 187-97; W.A. Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 51; D. Dimant, "Qumran Sectarian Literature" in M.E. Stone, *Jewish Writings*, 518. D. Dimant also cites A.S. van der Woude [*Die messianischen Vorstellungen der Gemeinde von Qumran* (Assen: van Gorcum, 1957)] which was not able to be obtained for this study.

3 *Essene Writings*, 355ff.

4 Cf. J. Lübke, "Reinterpretation", 187f and 195f.

5 Cf. G.R. Driver, *Judean Scrolls*, 486-91.

6 *Judean Scrolls*, 490.

- .29 ואז תחיש חרב אל בקץ משפט
וכול בני א(מ)תו יעוררו ל(החם בני)
- .30 רשעה וכול אשמה לא יהיו עוד
וידרוך גבור קשונו ויפתח מצור ()
- .31 למרחב אין קץ ושערי עולם להוציא כלי מלחמות
ויעצו(מ)ו מקצה עד (קצה)
- .32 (ואין פ)לט ליצר
אשמה לכלה ירמוסו ואין ש(אריח
(ו)תקוה ברוב ()
- .33 ולכול גבורי מלחמות אין מנוס
כי לאל עליון ה()ר()
- .34 ושוכבי עפר הרימו חרן
והולעה מהים נשאו נס לח() כרתו()
- .35 במלחמות דדיט
ומעביר שוט שוטף בל יבוא במבצר ()
- [1QH VI.29-35 (Lohse, 136)]

Then God's sword will hasten
at the time of judgement,
and all His Sons of Truth will
rouse themselves to [over-
throw] wickedness, and the
Sons of Guilt will live no more;
And the Warrior will be stringing
his bow and will raise the siege
and [bring] infinite relief to
[the besieged]; and [His pur-
poses will be] to send forth
weapons of war through the
everlasting gates,
and they will prevail from end to
[end of the world ...
so that there will be no]
for men with guilty impulses;
and they will trample them to
destruction, so that none will
survive.
[There shall be no] hope
in a multitude [of warriors ...]
and no place to which armed
warriors may flee; for the
[victory] shall be to God
Most High
and they who sleep in the dust
of the earth will have raised
a standard
and dead men's worms
will have hoisted an ensign to
war against the Sons of
Truth; but they will be] cut off
... in battled provoked by
presumptuous men,
and one transporting a torrential
flood shall come to no safe
haven.
[1QH VI.29-35 (Driver, 490)]

And then at the time of Judgement
the sword of God shall hasten,
and all the sons of His truth shall
awake to [overthrow] wickedness;
all the sons of iniquity shall be
no more.
The Hero shall bend his bow;
the fortress shall open on to endless
space
and the everlasting gates shall send
out weapons of war.
They shall be mighty
from end to end [of the earth
and there shall be no escape]
for the guilty [in their battle];
they shall be utterly trampled down
without any [remnant].
There shall be no] hope
in the greatness [of their might],
no refuge for the mighty warriors
for [the battle shall be] to the Most
High God
Hoist a banner,
O you who lie in the dust!
O bodies gnawed by worms,
raise up an ensign for [the [wage
destruction of wickedness];
[The sinful shall] be destroyed
in the battles against the
ungodly.
The scourging flood when it advan-
ces shall not invade the strong-
hold.
[1QH VI.29-35 (DSSE, 171f)]

These are clearly very different proposals for this fragmentary text.⁷ The restoration of the significant lacunae will be vital in establishing the actual wording of the text, and then the resulting text has to be interpreted. The key lines -- at least so far as Driver's proposal are concerned -- must be lines 34f, which refer to those who sleep in the grave raising an ensign. Is this a reference to a military force of dead spirits (whether led by a Nero-Belial figure or otherwise) who will take part in the great battle between the sons of Light and the sons of Darkness (on whose side they might fight is not exactly clear from the text, due to the textual difficulties)? Or is it rather, as most scholars have concluded,⁸ a reference to resurrection of pious individuals?

It seems that Driver has allowed his enthusiasm for finding a reference to the Nero figure to influence the choices made when restoring the various lacunae. When read without that particular perspective, there does not seem to be anything in this passage that should be understood as describing an Endtyrant, let alone an anti-Messiah modelled on Belial as Driver proposes.⁹

(c) Q246 One further passage from the Qumran literature needs to be considered in this connection, the fragmentary text known as the Pseudo-Danielic writing (variously numbered as 4QpsDan Aa, Dand 209, and 4Q246). This fragment was acquired in 1958 but details were not released until late 1972.¹⁰ Once again, two very different views on this fragment have been proposed. J.A. Fitzmyer published a preliminary edition with comments in 1974,¹¹ while D. Flusser published a further study in 1980.¹²

7 Dupont-Sommer is even more cautious in his translation of this passage, declining to give any translation for lines 34b-36 due to "grave lacunae".⁷ On the whole, his treatment of this passage is closer to that by Vermes. Cf. A. Dupont-Sommer, *Essene Writings*, 221.

8 Cf. M. Mansoor, *Thanksgiving Hymns*, 147.

9 G.R. Driver, *Judean Scrolls*, 489-91.

10 A brief account of both the fragment and its publication is given in J.A. Fitzmyer, "Qumran Aramaic", 391f. This was reprinted, with some additional comments by Fitzmyer, in *Wandering Aramean*, 85-113.

11 J.A. Fitzmyer, "Qumran Aramaic", 391-94.

12 D. Flusser, "Hubris", 31-37.

In his later treatment, Flusser argued that the fragment depicts "eschatological evils and the shortlived rule of a wicked kingdom; ... [including] the figure of a man whom all will serve, and who will be hailed as a son of God."¹³ He believes that "we cannot avoid the conclusion that this person is the Antichrist."¹⁴ The original text reads as follows, with reconstructions and translations by Fitzmyer, Flusser and Vermes.

- .7 () רב להוה על ארעא
 .8 (ברך מלכא כלא שלם י) עבדון וכלא ישמשון
 .9 (לה והוא בר אל ר) בא יתקרא ובשמה יתכנה
 .1 ברה די אל יתאמר ובר עליון יקרונה כזיקיא
 .2 די חזותא כן מלכותהן תהוה שני (ן) ימלכון על
 .3 ארעא וכלא ידשון עם לעם ידוש ומדינה למד (ינ) ה
 .4 (vacat) עד יקום עם אל וכלא ינוח מן חרב

[4Q246 (Fitzmyer, 393)]

[But your son] shall be great upon the earth, [O King! All (men) shall] make [peace], and all shall serve [him]. He shall be called son of] the [G]reat [God], and by his name shall he be named. He shall be hailed (as) the Son of God, and they shall call him Son of the Most High. As comets (flash) to the sight, so shall be their kingdom. (For some) year[s] they shall rule upon the earth and shall trample everything (under foot); people shall trample upon people, city upon ci[t]y — until there arises the people of God, and everyone rests from the sword. [4Q246 (Fitzmyer, 393)]

... he shall be great on earth ... [all] will worship and all will serve [him] ... great ... he shall be called and by his name he shall be designated. He shall be named son of God and they shall call him son of the Most High. Like a shooting star of a vision, so shall be their kingdom. They shall reign for some years on the earth and trample everything. One nation shall trample on another nation and one province on another province — until the people of God shall arise and all will desist from the sword. [4Q246 (Flusser, 32)]

He shall be called son of God, and they shall designate him son of the Most High. Like the appearance of comets, shall, be their kingdom. For (brief) years they shall reign over the earth and shall trample on all; one people shall trample on another and one province on another until the people of God shall rise and all shall rest from the sword. [4Q246 (DSSE, 275)]

13 D. Flusser, "Hubris", 35.

14 Ibid.

The apocalyptic character of this text is quite clear,¹⁵ but the overall reconstructions are quite different. The more significant issues concern the earlier portions of the passage. There, Fitzmyer and Flusser differ quite markedly. However, even if Flusser's version be assumed, for the purposes of argument, it does not follow that the fragment can then be taken as a reference to a Jewish Antichrist tradition.

The most that Flusser's reconstruction requires is that 4Q246 would then most probably be understood as a fragmentary reference to an Endtyrant. The context of this fragment is, of course, unknown but it does not appear to have a messianic context and so any idea of an Antichrist figure is quite out of the question. Rather, as Flusser himself notes,¹⁶ this description would be very similar to the description of the man of lawlessness in 2 Thessalonians 2. It will be noted at §11.2 that Paul was probably using an older Christian apocalyptic tradition, which itself would have drawn on Jewish sources, so there is no reason to rule out such an interpretation of 4Q246 on those grounds. It should, however, be noted that Flusser's reconstruction seems to have been influenced by the Thessalonian account. His textual choices when "restoring" the lacunae seem to be remarkably like the phrases in 2 Thessalonians, whereas Fitzmyer's earlier work illustrates a more neutral approach.

Given the fragmentary character of 4Q246, a final decision on the original reading may never be possible. It is, however, clear that this text does not reflect a Jewish tradition about the hubris of the Antichrist. It is better understood, even on Flusser's proposals, as an Endtyrant passage. It may be, on Fitzmyer's proposals, simply an apocalyptic text applying the traditional royal title, "son of God", to an heir to the Davidic throne.¹⁷

9.4.4 Testament of Moses

Finally, it is possible that TMos 8 also provides evidence for one form of the Jewish Endtyrant traditions. While the passage is unable to be related to any specific historical events, that in itself may suggest it has been composed as

15 G. Vermes [Dead Sea Scrolls in English, 275] notes the text's affinities with Daniel 7-12.

16 D. Flusser, "Hubris", 33.

17 J.A. Fitzmyer, "Qumran Aramaic", 393.

an abstract portrait. Certainly, the "king of the kings of the earth" is an eschatological tyrant by most measures. Since the full text was cited at §8.7, only the initial verse will be repeated here.

Et altera venit in eos ultio et
ira, quae talis non fuit in illis a
saeculo usque ad illud tempus, in
quo suscitabit illis regem regum
terrae et potentatem a potentia
magna, qui confitentes circum-
cisionem in cruce suspendet
[TMos 8:1
(R.H. Charles, *AssMos*, 80)]

And there shall come upon them a
retribution and wrath, such as has
not befallen them from the beginning
until that time, when he will stir up
against them the king of the kings of
the earth, a man who rules with
great power, who will crucify those
who confess their circumcision
[AOT, 611f]

It is possible that this passage refers to the idea of an Endtyrant, but it provides very little detail about such a tradition. It does, however, contain the idea of a tyrant raised up by God from among the nations, a tyrant who would have universal dominion and persecute the faithful Jews. Even so, such an idea falls far short of an Antichrist figure.

On the basis of the passages examined, it seems that while Daniel 7-12 was clearly familiar with the tradition of an Endtyrant, it was not an important theme in other apocalyptic writings of this period. There are some passages (especially 4QTest, 4Q246 and TMos 8) where it is possible that the idea of an Endtyrant is present, but even there it is not beyond question. This lack of interest in the Endtyrant idea further reinforces the view that hellenistic Jewish literature was not familiar with an Antichrist figure such as occurs in the later Antichrist literature of early Christianity.

9.5 THE JEWISH PEOPLE

Once again, there are several aspects to this theme. The later Antichrist literature included several points at which the activities of the Antichrist would involve the Jewish people: there was a tradition of his descent from the tribe of Dan; his pretence to be an ally and patron to the Jewish nation, rebuilding the temple and presiding over a revival of the nation's fortunes; and, of course, the session in the temple when Antichrist would usurp the place of God and claim divine honours. There are parallels to some of these aspects in the literature presently under review.

As Jewish writings, the documents all express the conviction that God's cosmic purposes had as their pivotal focus the relationship with the Jewish people and the destiny of the land of Israel. Many of the texts presume that

the eschatological crisis will centre on, and be resolved by divine intervention at, Jerusalem. This is seen most clearly in the Daniel passages. In Dan 7:2ff the beasts emerge from the great sea (the Mediterranean) onto the land of Palestine, and it is on that land that divine judgment comes on them. This is left as an implicit idea in ch 7, but is explicit in the jubilee schema of Dan 9:24-27. It is even more clear in Dan 11:41-45, where it is prophesied that Antiochus would meet his end in the "glorious land", "between the sea and the glorious mountain".

There is no pre-Pauline parallel to the idea of a session in the temple, but the desecration of the temple, the "desolating sacrilege", has left its impact on Daniel. Dan 8:11f,25; 9:27c; 11:31 each refer to this event which, strangely, has left no other trace in the literature of hellenistic Judaism until the eschatological discourse of Jesus in the synoptic gospels. The only possible exception to this is Jub 23:21, which may refer to this event but is still vague enough to be read as a general reference to polluting the temple.

There is, finally, just a single mention of the idea that the tribe of Dan was under judgment for past sin, and would be an agent of evil in the future. In LivPro 3:17-20 it is said that Dan was condemned by Ezekiel because of its wickedness, including the persecution of those who kept the Law, and that Ezekiel was murdered by a Danite. The historical value of these verses may be minimal, but they represent an interesting (and often unnoticed) testimony to the anti-Dan tradition.

Οὗτος ἔκρινεν ἐν Βαβυλῶνι
τὴν φυλὴν Δάν καὶ τοῦ Γάδ,
ὅτι ἠσέβουν εἰς τὸν κύριον
διώκοντες τοὺς τὸν νόμον
φυλάσσοντας, ... καὶ
προεῖρηκεν, ὅτι δι' αὐτοὺς οὐκ
ἐπιστρέψει ὁ λαὸς εἰς τὴν
γῆν αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ' ἐν Μηδίᾳ
ἔσονται ἕως συντελείας
πλάνης αὐτῶν. καὶ ἐξ αὐτῶν
ἦν ὁ ἀνελὼν αὐτόν·
ἀντέκειντο γὰρ αὐτῷ πάσας
τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ζωῆς αὐτοῦ.

[LivPro 3:17-20 (Torrey, 24)]

He pronounced judgment in Babylon on the tribe of Dan and on that of Gad, because they were committing sacrilege against the LORD by persecuting those who were keeping the Law. . . . he foretold that on their account the people would not return to its land but would be in Media until the consummation of their error. And the one who killed him was one of them. For they opposed him all the days of his life. [OTP, II,389]

9.6 PERSECUTION OF THE ELECT

The idea that the faithful elect were persecuted by the wicked was hardly a novel idea for either the later tradents of the Antichrist myth, or for the Jewish apocalypticists of this era. It had a long tradition in the experience of the religion of Israel, and was part of the living context which these writings sought to interpret theologically. It is a little surprising, then, to note how little emphasis is given to this theme in the literature of this time. It is mentioned in Dan 7:21,25b; 8:24; and 11:33; and, by inference, in the tales of Daniel 1-6 which describe a pious Jew's behaviour under persecution and harassment. There is a brief mention of this idea in Jub 23:22ff, which will be cited here since it is also relevant to the ensuing discussion.

And the deeds of that generation will bring on them a mighty retribution from the Lord; and he will abandon them to the sword and to judgement and to captivity, and to be plundered and devoured. And he will stir up against them the sinners of the Gentiles, who have neither mercy nor compassion and will show favour to none, neither to old nor young, nor to anyone.
[Jub 23:22f (AOT, 76)]

The idea of the elect being persecuted was, however, a more important theme at Qumran where the community saw itself to be under attack because of its loyalty to God and the instruction of the Teacher of Righteousness. This can be seen in several of the passages cited above, especially IQH IV.9-17.

9.7 DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY

One of the ideas shared by these writings and the later Antichrist literature, as with all apocalyptic writings, was the belief that the hostile powers were still subject to the sovereignty of God and that, far from being challenges to his authority, they were in fact unwitting instruments of his purposes. This idea is seen in Jub 23:22f, above, and in Dan 7:25d; 8:13f,19; 9:27d; and 11:29,36. It may also be seen in I Enoch 54:1-6, cited above.

This idea was very important to the Qumran sect and is clearly expressed in several of the texts cited earlier when the texts relating to Belial were considered. The belief that Belial was created by God to serve his own purposes is expressed in a number of other passages. In particular, the treatise on the two spirits (IQS III.13-IV.26) is based on the presupposition of divine

sovereignty. In CD II.13 the waywardness of evil people is attributed to God's own decision and deliberate action.

But those whom He hated He led
astray.
[DSSE, 84]

ואם אשר שונא הנהיג

[CD II.13 (Lohse, 68)]

9.8 THE DESTRUCTION OF THE HOSTILE POWERS

Once these evil persons and powers had served their part in fulfilling God's larger purposes, the Jewish writers believed that they would themselves fall under God's judgment. This belief is expressed in Jub 23:30; Dan 7:26f; 8:25e; 9:27d; 11:44-12:4; 1 Enoch 54:1-6; 93:1-10 & 91:12-17; such Qumran texts as the War Scroll; and PssSol 2:22ff. This latter passage will be cited here, as it is also pertinent to the following discussion of attitudes towards the Roman empire.

Καὶ ἐγὼ εἶδον καὶ ἐδεήθην
τοῦ προσώπου κυρίου καὶ
εἶπον Ἰκάνωσον, κύριε, τοῦ
βαρύνεσθαι χεῖρά σου ἐπὶ
Ἱερουσαλημ ἐν ἐπαγωγῇ
ἐθνῶν· ὅτι ἐνέπαιξαν καὶ οὐκ
ἐφείσαντο ἐν ὀργῇ καὶ θυμῷ
μετὰ μηνίσεως· καὶ συντελεσ-
θήσονται, ἐὰν μὴ σύ, κύριε,
ἐπιτιμήσης αὐτοῖς ἐν ὀργῇ
σου. ὅτι οὐκ ἐν ζήλει
ἐποίησαν, ἀλλ' ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ
ψυχῆς ἐκχέαι τὴν ὀργὴν
αὐτῶν εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐν ἀρπάγ-
ματι. μὴ χρονίσης, ὁ θεός,
τοῦ ἀποδοῦναι αὐτοῖς εἰς
κεφαλᾶς, τοῦ εἰπεῖν τὴν
ὑπερηφανίαν τοῦ δράκοντος
ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ. Καὶ οὐκ ἐχρόνισα
ἕως ἔδειξέν μοι ὁ θεὸς τὴν
ὑβρίν αὐτοῦ, ἐκκεκεντημένον
ἐπὶ τῶν ὀρέων Αἰγύπτου ὑπὲρ
ἐλάχιστον ἐξουδενωμένον ἐπὶ
γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης· τὸ σῶμα
αὐτοῦ διαφερόμενον ἐπὶ
κυμάτων ἐν ὑβρῆι πολλῇ, καὶ
οὐκ ἦν ὁ θάπτων, ὅτι

And I saw and implored in the
Lord's presence and said, "Let it be
enough, Lord, to make your hand
heavy on Jerusalem by bringing
Gentiles upon her." For they
ridiculed her and did not refrain in
anger and vicious rage, and they
will be finished unless you, Lord,
censure them in your anger. For
they have not done it in zeal, but
in emotional passion, to pour out
their anger against us in plunder.
Do not delay, O God, to repay to
them on their heads; to declare
dishonourable the arrogance of the
dragon. And I did not wait long
until God showed me his insolence
pierced on the mountains of Egypt,
more despised than the smallest
thing on earth and sea. His body
was carried about on the waves in
much shame, and there was no one
to bury him, for God despised him
with contempt. He did not consider
that he was a man, for the latter
did not consider this. He said, "I
shall be lord of land and sea"; and
he did not understand that it is God
who is great, powerful in his
strength. [OTP, II,653]

ἐξουθένωσεν αὐτὸν ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ.
 Οὐκ ἐλογίσατο ὅτι ἄνθρωπός
 ἐστίν, καὶ τὸ ὕστερον οὐκ
 ἐλογίσατο. εἶπεν Ἐγὼ κύριος
 γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης ἔσομαι· καὶ
 οὐκ ἐπέγνω ὅτι ὁ θεὸς μέγας,
 κραταιὸς ἐν ἰσχύϊ αὐτοῦ τῇ
 μεγάλῃ.

[PssSol 2:22-29 (LXX)]

9.9 AMBIVALENCE TOWARDS THE ROMAN EMPIRE

9.9.1 Qumran

Naturally, an attitude towards the Roman empire could hardly be a feature of the literature from the earlier stages of the period under review. It is, however, a feature of the later literature, including some of the Qumran texts. Because the sect flourished in the early Roman period it had to fit the power of Rome into its worldview, just as the later Antichrist tradition could not ignore the question of where Rome fitted into the divine purposes.

The sect's attitude towards the Roman empire seems to have changed with the passage of time. Initially the Romans were seen as instruments of God's judgment on the priestly rulers of Jerusalem, but later writings indicate a shift of emphasis. The sect seems to have been caught up in the rising Jewish nationalism which led to the Jewish revolt in 66 CE, and as this happened they came to view Rome as the main human component of the sons of darkness. In the War Scroll Rome is seen as an ally of Belial and the hosts of darkness.

This change of emphasis is seen in the following examples. The first three passages illustrate the earlier attitude towards Rome.

Their wine is the venom of serpents, the cruel poison (or head) of asps (Deut. xxxii,33). The serpents are the kings of the peoples and their wine is their ways; and the head of asps is the chief of the kings of Greece who came to wreak vengeance upon them. But all these things the builders of the wall and those who daub it with plaster (Ezek. xiii,19) have not understood because a follower of the wind, one who raised storms and rained down lies, had preached to them (Mic. ii,11),

9. ... עליהם חמת תנינים יינם
 10. וראש פוונים אכזר הווננים הם
 מלכי העמים ויינם הוא 11. דרכיהם
 וראש הפוונים הוא ראש מלכי יון הבא
 לעשוה 12. בהם נקמה ובכל אלה לא
 הבינו בוני החוץ וטחי ההפל כי

against all of whose assembly the
anger of God was kindled.
[DSSE, 89]

13. שוקל רוח ומטיף כזב הטיף להם
אשר חרה אף אל בכל עדתו
[CD VIII.9-13 (Lohse, 82)]

For behold, I rouse the Chaldeans, that
[bitter and hasty] nation (i,6a)
Interpreted, this concerns the Kittim
[who are] quick and valiant in war,
causing many to perish. [All the world
shall fall] under the dominion of the
Kittim, and the [wicked ...] they shall
not believe in the laws of [God ...]
[DSSE, 284]

10. ... כ)יא הננה מקים את
11. הכשדאים הגוי המ(ר והנמה)ר
12. פשרו על הכתיאים א(שר המה)
קלים וגבורים 13. במלחמה לאבד
ד(ב)ים (והיתה הארץ) בממשלת
14. הכתיאים ירשו(ו ארצות רבו)ח
ולוא יאמינו 15. בחוקי (אל)
[1QpHab II.10-15 (Lohse, 230)]

They laugh at every fortress; they pile
up earth and take it (i,10b)
Interpreted, this concerns the
commanders of the Kittim who despise
the fortresses of the peoples and laugh
at them in derision. To capture them,
they encircle them with a mighty host,
and out of fear and terror they deliver
themselves into their hands. They
destroy them because of the sins of
their inhabitants.
[DSSE, 285]

4. לכול מבצר ישחק ויצבור עפר
וילכדהו 5. פשרו על מושלי
הכתיאים אשר יבזו על 6. מבצרי
העמים ובלעג ישחקו עליהם
7. ובעם רב יקיפום לתפושם ובאמה
ופחד 8. ינתנו בידם והרסום
בעוון היושבים
[1QpHab IV.4-8 (Lohse, 232)]

A more negative attitude may be seen in the following passages from the War Scroll. This change presumably reflects the growth of anti-Roman sentiments amongst a large percentage of the Jewish population in Palestine prior to the revolt in 66 CE.

This shall be a time for salvation for
the people of God, an age of dominion
for all the members of His company,
and of everlasting destruction for all
the company of Belial. The confusion
of the sons of Japheth shall be [great]
and Assyria shall fall unsuccoured. The
dominion of the Kittim shall come to
an end and iniquity shall be vanquished,
leaving no remnant; [for the sons]
of darkness there shall be no escape.
[DSSE, 105]*

5. (...) והי)אה עת ישועה לעם אל
וקץ ממשל לכול אנשי גורלו וכלה
עולמים לכול גורל בליעל והיתה
מהומה 6. ג(דולה ב)בני יפת
ונפל אשור ואין עוזר לו וסרה
ממשלה כתיים להכני(ע) רשעה לאין
שאריה ופלטה לוא תהיה 7. (לכול
בנ)י חושך
[1QM I.5-7 (Lohse, 180)]

By the hand of Thine anointed, who
discerned Thy testimonies, Thou hast
revealed to us the [times] of the
battles of Thy hands that Thou mayest
glorify Thyself in our enemies by
levelling the hordes of Belial, the

seven nations of vanity, by the hand of Thy poor by whom Thou hast redeemed [by Thy might] and the fulness of Thy marvellous power. ... From ancient times Thou hast fore[told the hour] when the might of Thy hand (would be raised) against the Kittim, saying, Assyria shall fall by the sword of no man, the sword of no mere man shall devour him (Isa. xxxi,8). ... For Thou wilt fight with them from heaven [DSSE, 116f]*

7. ... וביד משיחיה 8. חוזי
תעודוה הגדחה לנו ק(צי) מלחמוה
ידיכה להכבד באויבינו להפיל גדודי
בליעל שבעת 9. גוי הבל ביד אביוני
פדוחכה (בכור) ח ...
11. ... ומאז השמ(עתנו מו) עד גבורה
ידיכה בכחיים לאמור ונפל אשור בחרב
לוא איש וחרב 12. לוא אדם תואכלנו
() 17. ...
() כיא תלחם במן השמ(ים)

[1QM XI.7-9,11f,17 (Lohse, 204f)]

9.9.2 Psalms of Solomon and the Sibylline Oracles

As was mentioned at the end of §9.8, PssSol 2:22ff also expressed a negative attitude towards Rome, even identifying it with the ancient dragon whom God had defeated at the time of creation. This increasingly negative trend in hellenistic Jewish literature can be further traced in the SibOr. There are two passages which reveal the Sibyllist's attitude to Rome. Being of an early date, the passages have a fairly vague conception of Rome, but it is already being envisaged as the final human kingdom and one to be subject to divine judgment. The first passage (III.156-61) is a list of kingdoms which places Rome as the final power.

καὶ τότε Τιτάνεσσι θεὸς
κακὸν ἐγγυάλιξεν.
καὶ πᾶσαι γενεαὶ Τιτάνων ἤδὲ
Κρόνιοι
κάτθανον. αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
χρόνου περιτελλομένοιο
Αἰγύπτου βασίλειον ἐγείρατο,
εἶτα τὸ Περσῶν
Μήδων Αἰθιοπῶν τε καὶ
Ἀσσυρίης Βαβυλῶνος,
εἶτα Μακεδονίων, πάλιν
Αἰγύπτου, τότε Ῥώμης.
[SibOr III.156-61 (GCS, 56f)]

Then God inflicted evil upon the
Titans
and all the descendants of Titans
and of Cronos
died. But then as time pursued its
cyclical course
the kingdom of Egypt arose, then
that of the Persians,
Medes, and Ethiopians, and Assyrian
Babylon,
then that of the Macedonians, of
Egypt again, then of Rome.
[OTP, I,365]

The other passage in III.175-95 reveals a critical attitude towards the Roman empire and, strangely, looks for a Ptolemaic victory over Rome which will in turn usher in God's kingdom.

αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ' ἄλλης βασι-
 λίδος ἔσσεται ἀρχή
 λευκή καὶ πολύκρανος ἀφ'
 ἑσπερίοιο θαλάσσης,
 ἢ πολλῆς γαίης ἄρξει,
 πολλοὺς δὲ σαλεύσει,
 καὶ πᾶσιν βασιλευσι φόβον
 μετόπισθε ποιήσει,
 πολλὸν δ' αὖ χρυσόν τε καὶ
 ἄργυρον ἐξαλαπάξει
 ἐκ πόλεων πολλῶν· πάλι δ'
 ἔσσεται ἐν χθονὶ δίη
 χρυσίον, αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα καὶ
 ἄργυρος ἠδέ τε κόσμος.
 καὶ θλίψουσι βροτούς. μέγα δ'
 ἔσσεται ἀνδράσι κείνοις
 πτώμ', ὁπότεν ἄρξωνθ' ὑπερη-
 φανίης ἀδίκιοιο.

αὐτίκα δ' ἐν τούτοις ἀσεβείας
 ἔσσειτ' ἀνάγκη,
 ἄρσην δ' ἄρσειν πλησιάσει
 στήσουσί τε παῖδας
 αἰσχροῖς ἐν τεγγέεσσι καὶ
 ἔσσεται ἡμασι κείνοις
 θλίψις ἐν ἀνθρώποις μεγάλη
 καὶ πάντα ταραξεί,

πάντα δὲ συγκόψει καὶ πάντα
 κακῶν ἀναπλήσει
 αἰσχροβίῳ φιλοχρημοσύνη,
 κακοκερδέϊ πλούτῳ,
 ἐν πολλαῖς χώρησι, Μακεδονίῃ
 δὲ μάλιστα.
 μῖσος δ' ἐξεγερεῖ καὶ πᾶς
 δόλος ἔσσεται αὐτοῖς.
 (ἄχρι πρὸς ἑβδομάτην βασι-
 λίδα ἧς βασιλεύσει
 Αἰγύπτου βασιλεύς, ὃς
 ἀφ' Ἑλλήνων γένος
 ἔσται.)

καὶ τότε ἔθνος μέγαλοιο θεοῦ
 πάλι καρτερόν ἔσται,
 οἱ πάντεσσι βροτοῖσι βίου
 καθοδηγοὶ ἔσονται.

[SibOr III.175-95 (GCS, 57f)]

But then will be the beginning of
 another kingdom,
 White and many-headed from the
 western sea.
 It will rule over much land, and will
 shake many,
 and it will thereafter cause fear to
 all kings.
 It will destroy much gold and silver

from many cities. But there will
 again be gold
 on the wondrous earth, and then
 silver also and ornament.

They will also oppress mortals. But
 those men
 will have a great fall when they
 launch a course of unjust
 haughtiness.

Immediately compulsion to impiety
 will come upon these men.

Males will have intercourse with
 male and they will set up boys
 in houses of ill-fame and in those
 days

there will be great affliction among
 men and it will throw everything
 into confusion.

It will cut up everything and fill
 everything with evils
 with disgraceful love of gain,
 ill-gotten wealth,
 in many places, but especially in
 Macedonia.

It will stir up hatred. Every kind of
 deceit will be found among them
 until the seventh reign,
 when a king of Egypt, who will be
 of the Greeks by race, will rule.

And then the people of the great
 God will again be strong
 who will be guides in life for all
 mortals.

[OTP, I,366]

This anti-Roman feeling was to be developed more fiercely in Book V, and also in the other portions of Book III to be examined at §12.1. The motive for the anti-Roman spirit at this point was the favourable attitude to the Ptolemies, but in the wake of the destruction of Jerusalem it would become much more virulent and take its motivation from that "offence". The possible connection between these expressions of anti-Roman feeling and the later Antichrist myth is concentrated on the way that SibOr both expressed and, perhaps, nurtured hostility to Rome on the part of both Jews and Christians.

The oracles against the nations in III.350-488 contain four different oracles all of which are essentially political propaganda with no ethical teaching. According to J.J. Collins, they were probably all pagan oracles, some dating back to the time of Alexander, taken over by the Egyptian Jews associated with Onias and used against Rome.¹ The only oracle from this sub-collection to be examined is the first in III.350-80, a piece which seems to have been composed just prior to the battle of Actium in 31 BCE and which looks to Cleopatra to despoil Rome. It expresses an increasingly hostile attitude towards Rome, especially in lines 350-55.

ὀππόσα δασμοφόρου Ἀσίας
 ὑπεδέξατο Ῥώμη,
 χρήματά κεν τρῖς τόσσα
 δεδέξεται ἔμπαλιν Ἀσίς
 ἐκ Ῥώμης, ὅλοῃν δ' ἀποτίσ-
 εται ὕβριν ἐς αὐτήν.
 ὅσοι δ' ἐξ Ἀσίας Ἰταλῶν
 δόμον ἀμφεπόλευσαν,
 εἰκοσάκις τοσσοῦτοι ἐν Ἀσίδι
 θητεύσουσιν
 Ἰταλοὶ ἐν πενίῃ ἀνὰ μυρία δ'
 ὀφλήσουσιν.
 [SibOr III.350-55 (GCS, 66)]

However much wealth Rome
 received from tribute-bearing
 Asia,
 Asia will receive three times that
 much again
 from Rome and will repay her
 deadly arrogance to her.
 Whatever number from Asia served
 the house of Italians,
 twenty times that number of
 Italians will be serfs
 in Asia, in poverty, and they will
 be liable to pay ten
 thousandfold.
 [OTP, I,370]

The final section of Book III to be examined here comes from the opening lines of the book, III.1-96. This section consists of an introduction in lines 1-45 which treat of religious and philosophical themes, and then there are three separate oracles: 46-62, 63-74 and 75-96. The middle oracle of these three concerns the coming of Beliar and will be discussed at §12.1 as it seems that it must be dated ca 80 CE.

1. J.J. Collins, "Sibylline Oracles" OTP I,357ff.

The first oracle, from which a final sample passage will be cited, dates to just after the battle of Actium (at which Rome defeated Cleopatra and Mark Antony). This oracle sees Rome's ascendancy as a final human kingdom before the eschatological kingdom is revealed, it looks for divine judgment to fall on Rome and seems to regard the second triumvirate as bound to hasten Rome's end.

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ Ῥώμη καὶ Αἴγυπ
 τοῦ βασιλεύσει
 εἰσέτι δηθύνουσα, τότε δὴ
 βασιλεία μεγίστη
 ἀθανάτου βασιλῆος ἐπ' ἀνθρώ-
 ποις φανείται.
 ἦξει δ' ἀγνὸς ἄναξ πάσης
 γῆς σκῆπτρα κρατήσων
 εἰς αἰῶνας ἅπαντας ἐπειγο-
 μένοιο χρόνοιο.
 καὶ τότε Λατίνων ἀπαραί-
 τητος χόλος ἀνδρῶν
 τρεῖς Ῥώμην οἰκτρῆ μοίρῃ
 καταδηλήσονται.

[SibOr III.46-52 (GCS, 49)]

The theme of hostility towards Rome would develop in succeeding portions of SibOr, especially after the time of Nero, with the introduction of an entirely new element so far as the literature reviewed to this point is concerned: a clearly defined eschatological adversary who is a human being endowed with terrible powers to wreak vengeance on the final human kingdom and who will finally be subdued only by direct divine intervention. The Nero legend has already been noted in several of the patristic passages which dealt with the Antichrist myth, and its presence will be observed in several of the documents which remain to be examined.

But when Rome will also rule over
 Egypt
 guiding it towards a single goal,
 then indeed the most great
 kingdom
 of the immortal king will become
 manifest over men.
 For a holy prince will come to gain
 sway over the sceptres of the
 earth
 forever, as time passes on.
 Then also implacable wrath will fall
 upon Latin men.
 Three will destroy Rome with
 niteous fate.
 [OTP, I,363]

III. THE EMERGING ANTICHRIST MYTH

10. INTRODUCTION: CONVERGING STRANDS IN JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN LITERATURE PRIOR TO 175 CE

In the preceding discussion the evidence from pre-Christian Jewish literature of the hellenistic era was surveyed and discussed. From that examination it emerged that there were many aspects of the later Antichrist myth which were paralleled by features in Jewish apocalyptic literature between ca 200 BCE and the turn of the era. There was no evidence of a Jewish concept of an Antichrist figure in that literature, but there was ample demonstration of the diversity of ways in which hellenistic Jewish writers were able to speculate on their experience of suffering and evil. These included ideas about the opposing heavenly powers of Michael/Melchizedek/Angel of Light against the evil figures of Satan(Belial)/Melchiresha'/Angel of Darkness, as well as the use of ancient combat myth traditions to provide a theological interpretation of specific events and individuals. The results of that survey are set out in a convenient summary form at Table T7.

From that Table, it will be observed that there were numerous aspects of the later Antichrist myth which had parallels in hellenistic Jewish literature. These were distributed unevenly across the extant literature, with some having more general attestation than others. Such items as the concern over false teachers, or the signs and wonders theme, were not widely attested. Others, such as lawlessness, persecution and divine sovereignty, were found in almost every work. Significantly, no single document included all these elements, nor was any particular theme found throughout all the literature. Instead of a uniform set of beliefs, one finds a varying arrangement of beliefs and concerns throughout this literature.

There is no evidence for an Antichrist myth tradition in hellenistic Jewish thought in these documents. Indeed, even messianic ideas seem to have played only a minor role in apocalyptic literature at this time. This may account, in part, for the absence of an Antichrist myth. Without a clear idea of a messiah to oppose or usurp, there was little scope for an anti-messiah.

Table T7

Aspects of the Later Antichrist Myth in Hellenistic Jewish Literature

	Combat myth used	Endyrant figure	False teachers	Lawlessness & evil	Deceit, Deceiver(s)	Signs and wonders	Military conquests & 3½ year ascendancy Jewish people/land	Persecution	Divine sovereignty	Destruction of the hostile powers Roman empire	Satan figure	Belial figure	Mastema figure	Other hostile figures	The Watchers
1En 6-36															x
Jubilees				x			x	x		x	x	x			x
Dan 7	x	x		x		x	x	x	x	x					x
Dan 8	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x					x
Dan 9		x				x	x		x	x					x
Dan 10-12	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x					x
AnApoc								x	x	x					x
ApWks			x	x				x	x	x					x
MartIs		?									x	x			x
SibOr III	x									x					
CD			x				x		x	x					
IQH			x	x	x		x	x			x	x			x
IQS			x	x			x	x	x		x	x	x		x
IQpHab			x				x			x					
IQM			x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x
4Q'Amram															x
4QTest		?					x								
4Q246		?													
4Q286											x	x	x		x
11QMelch												x			x
PssSol	x			x					x	x	x				
TMos		?													
LivPro	x						x								
SimEn									x	x	x				x
SibOr II	?				x	x					x	x			

In this final section of our study the nature of the enquiry and its methodology will change somewhat. This section takes the study up to the period when the first signs of the later Antichrist myth can be discerned: a stage of an emergent Antichrist myth. The discussion will therefore be divided into three major parts, spread over the chapters which form the final part of our study.

Chapter 11 will examine in some detail the literature for which a reasonable case can be made that they preserve traditions of an Endtyrant which date prior to the destruction of the temple in 70 CE. This will involve a study of the eschatological discourse tradition in the synoptic gospels, Paul's teaching on the advent of the man of lawlessness in 2 Thessalonians 2, and the depiction of the beast from the sea in Revelation. The dates of each of these works are matters of continuing dispute, as will be noted when each is examined, but a reasonable case can be presented to support the proposition that they preserve primitive Christian eschatological traditions from before the crisis occasioned by the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE. This is not to deny that the gospels, quite possibly Revelation, and perhaps even 2 Thessalonians, in their present form are from the last quarter of the first century CE. In this literature it will be observed that the figure of an Endtyrant emerges with increasing clarity, largely under the pressure of the historical crises ca 40 and 66-73 CE, and this process culminated in the development of an Antichrist figure in early Christian thought.

In chapter 12 a number of different works will be examined, mostly of Jewish origins but some with at least Christian redaction. These have been chosen for consideration because they provide insight into the continued use and development of the Endtyrant tradition. It will be argued that in these writings there is no sign of an Antichrist figure, but rather evidence that the Belial figure continued to serve as a major symbol of evil for Jewish and Christian writers, in some cases being combined with the emerging Nero legend as a composite Nero-Belial figure. Contrary to Bousset and Charles, it will be argued that this was not an intermediate stage in the development of the Antichrist figure, but rather a parallel and alternative development.

Finally, we shall consider those writings which can be styled "Earliest Antichrist Traditions". This includes the Johannine epistles where the word occurs for the first time in extant literature, and also several other works which do not use the term but seem to indicate an awareness of the myth and to employ it in their own work. We thus conclude by bringing the discussion back to the point where it began: the writings of Irenaeus at the end of the

Table T8
Significant Events and Literature ca 70 CE to 180 CE.

Date	Important Events & Roman Rulers	Jewish & Christian Literature
68/69 CE	Death of Nero and transition to Vespasian	Revelation
70	Capture of Jerusalem	Mark
72	Jewish unrest in Egypt: closure of Leontopolis temple	
74	Jewish unrest in Cyrene	
79	Titus	
80	Second Neronic pretender appears in Parthia	SibOr IV-V
81	Domitian	Matthew and Luke
88	Final Neronic pretender in East almost persuades the Parthians to declare war on Rome	
93-96	Domitian acts against Jewish (and Christian?) sympathisers in Rome. Trouble in Asia where a strong Christian community is persecuted	
96	Nerva	
98	Trajan	Barnabas Didache Thez
100		Johannine Epistles 4 Ezra ApAb
110		2 Baruch Odes of Solomon
113	Pliny the Younger in Bithynia Revival of Asian persecutions	
115-117	Jewish revolt in Cyrene, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Cyprus and Mesopotamia	3 Baruch

Table T8
Significant Events and Literature ca 70 CE to 180 CE. (Cont'd)

Date	Important Events & Roman Rulers	Jewish & Christian Literature
116?	Death of Ignatius	
117	Hadrian	
120s		T12P
123-125	Minucius Fundanus advised by Hadrian to prosecute the Christians	
130		Polycarp, Phil.
132-135	Jewish revolt: Jews are banned from Palestine and Jerusalem is renamed "Aelia Capitolina"	
138	Antoninus Pious	
140s	Marcion in Rome	ApPet? LadJac? Shepherd of Hermes
155	Death of Polycarp Quartodeciman dispute	
160s	Montanists	Justin, Dial.
161	Marcus Aurelius	
161-165	Parthian Wars	
165	Death of Justin Martyr	
166	Plagues due to diseases brought back from Parthian Wars	
170	Aristides?	Muratorian Canon SibOr, VIII
177	Athenagoras. Persecutions at Lyons and throughout Rhone Valley	
178	Irenaeus made bishop of Lyons	

second century CE when there is clear and unequivocal reference to the early Christian tradition of the Antichrist myth.

The literature to be surveyed in these three chapters emerged in a period of considerable turmoil for both Jewish and Christian faiths. This was supremely the time when they had to define their own self-understanding, and also reformulate their stance towards each other and towards the Roman empire. The forms which these two major religious traditions were to take in the future centuries down to the present period, were largely decided by the options adopted and foreclosed in the 150 years under consideration in this section.

In particular, it seems probable that the historical circumstances of the period under review contributed significantly to the development of the eschatology of both the Jewish and the Christian traditions. For this reason, the probable historical setting needs to be kept in mind.¹ Table T8 summarises the major events and proposes approximate dates for the literature.

¹ For detailed discussions, and extensive literature, on these matters see: R.A. Kraft & G.W.E. Nickelsburg (eds), *Early Judaism*; S. Safrai & M. Stern (eds), *Jewish People*, I-II; Schürer-Vermes, *History*.

11. THE ENDTYRANT TRADITIONS PRIOR TO 70 CE

11.1 THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

The three synoptic gospels each contain a version of a discourse by Jesus on eschatological themes, set in the context of the final period of his ministry (Mark 13:1-37; Matt 24:1-51; Luke 21:1-36). Some idea of the clear relationship between these three passages, and of their similarities with the later Antichrist myth, can be seen in the following Table which lists their main ideas and themes, using categories drawn from the earlier examination of the third century Antichrist literature.

Table T9
The Synoptic Eschatological Discourse Tradition

Idea/Theme	Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
Stones of temple	1-2	1-2	5-6
Disciples' question	3	4	7
Warning of deceit	4	5	8a
Many will come	5	6	8b
Wars and rumours	6-8	7-8	9-11
Persecution	9	9	12-13
Falling away	10-14	—	—
Rely on God	—	11-13	14-19
Desolating sacrilege	15-22	14-20	20-24
False christs	23-28	21-23	—
Celestial signs	29	24-25	25-26
Coming of Son of Man	30	26	27
Gathering of elect	31	27	28?
Fig tree parable	32-35	28-31	29-33
No set date	36	32	—
Watch!	42	33,35	36a
Parables on End	37-51	34	—

While there are no explicit references to an Antichrist figure in this so-called "Synoptic Apocalypse, it clearly came to have some kind of relationship to the later Antichrist myth as it was cited in some of the second and third century literature. Although its influence on the later Antichrist literature was not as great as might have been expected, several points of possible relevance will need to be examined.

It is quite clear that these passages share a close literary relationship.¹ It has been widely recognised that some kind of a common source (the 'Little Apocalypse') lies behind the three accounts. The view that an older Jewish apocalyptic 'fly sheet' lay behind the final form of Mark 13 was first proposed by T. Colani in 1864.² More recent studies have shown that a non-Christian *Vorlage* is most unlikely.³ Rather, a considerable amount of the content and its general structure can be traced back to a pre-Pauline stage of the tradition.⁴

- 1 LITERATURE: G.R. Beasley-Murray, *Commentary on Mark Thirteen*; ---, *Jesus and the Future*; ---, *Jesus and the Kingdom of God*, 322-37; ---, "Second Thoughts on the Composition of Mark 13", 414-20; E. Brandenburger, *Markus 13 und die Apokalyptik*; C.B. Cousar, "Eschatology and Mark's Theologia Crucis", 321-25; C.E.B. Cranfield, *St Mark*; ---, "St Mark 13", 189-96 & 284-303; C.H. Dodd, "Fall of Jerusalem", 47-54; J.D.G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity*, 328-31; J. Ernst, *Gegenspieler*, 3-23; D. Ford, *Abomination of Desolation*, 1-58; L. Gaston, *No Stone on Another*; K. Grayston, "Study of Mark XIII", 371-87; E. Haenchen, *Der Weg Jesu*; F. Hahn, "Die Rede von der Parousie", 240-66; L. Hartman, *Prophecy Interpreted*, 145-252; E. Lohmeyer, *Evangelium des Markus*; W. Marxsen, *Evangelist Markus*; F. Neiryneck, "Marc 13", 369-401; R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium*; ---, "Markus 13", 355-68; ---, *Naherwartungen*; V. Taylor, *St Mark*; D. Wenham, *Rediscovery of Jesus' Eschatological Discourse*.
- 2 *Jésus-Christ et les croyances messianiques de son temps* (Strasbourg: Treuttel et Wurtz, 1864). The most recent attempt to recover such an apocalyptic *Flugblatt* was the study by R. Pesch, *Naherwartungen*. Cf. also D. Wenham [*Rediscovery*, 360-64] for a reconstruction of a (Christian) pre-synoptic tradition.
- 3 Cf. E. Brandenburger, *Markus 13*, especially pp. 35-42.
- 4 L. Hartman [*Prophecy Interpreted*, 205] argues that there was an established midrash on Daniel in Christian tradition from early times, and that this was regarded as a "saying of the Lord" prior to 50 CE. His general approach, which sees a degree of authenticity previously denied to the discourse, is basically consistent with the conclusions drawn by such different scholars as Beale, Beasley-Murray, Brandenburger, Lambrecht, Pesch and Wenham. This positive evaluation is related to the view that the synoptic gospels and 2 Thess 2:1-17 can be studied together as independent witness to an early Christian eschatological tradition [cf. B. Rigaux, *Thessaloniciens*, 98-101].

11.1.1 Eschatological Traditions in the Synoptic Gospels

It is clear that the eschatological discourse passages express apocalyptic ideas of possible relevance to the question of the origins and development of the Antichrist myth. In particular, the following possible points require some consideration: the use of the deceit motif, including the false christs and false prophets with their recourse to signs and wonders to deceive; the idea of a final falling away; and the idea of an eschatological crisis, indebted to Daniel for its description, leading to the parousia of the Son of Man.

(a) **The Deceit Motif** One of the ideas which occurs in this eschatological discourse is the idea of deceit. This is particularly found in the sections which deal with the problem of false messianic figures (cf. Mark 13:5-6,22). This motif, as used in this discourse, does not seem to be directly related to any already established idea of an Antichrist figure. It seems, rather, to be connected with the general use of the deceit motif in Jewish and Christian literature at this time when speaking of opponents of God and of his purposes (cf. §9.3). This usage can readily be recognised as a standard element in many Jewish apocalyptic works. In later writings which deal explicitly with the Antichrist myth, these Synoptic passages are brought into service as dominical references to the coming of the Antichrist, but such an interpretation does not appear to be native to the texts in their original settings within the three gospels.

(b) **False Christs and False Prophets** Of special significance, for the purposes of this study, are the phrases "false christs" and "false prophets." These ideas occur in two forms: there are the references to others coming in the name of Christ and claiming to be the Messiah (Mark 13:6; Matt 24:5; Luke 21:8b), and there is the use of these specific terms (Mark 13:21f; Matt 24:23f). This feature of the eschatological discourse tradition is of special interest as the terminology seems to be particularly close to the actual phrase "Antichrist". However, it is probably more accurate to see such expressions as being in keeping with the OT tradition of "lying spirits" and "false prophets".⁵

5 C.H. Gibling [Threat to Faith, 66-70] argued that the OT tradition of a prophet as a man of God (and, by deduction, a false prophet as an opponent of a holy person) lay behind the "Man of Lawlessness" in 2 Thess 2:3. Cf. W.A. Meeks, Prophet-King, 47-55.

The idea of false messianic pretenders was hardly a novel notion in first century Judaism. Jewish and Christian writers in the first century CE could readily call to mind recent experiences to flesh out such a theological concept. Thus there seems to be no reason, on that account, to interpret these words as references to an Antichrist figure.

However, they are significant in two respects. First, the terminology is quite close to that used in 1 and 2 John. The term, ψευδόχριστου, is not much different from ἀντίχριστου on a semantics level. The closeness of the terminology is at least potentially significant. Secondly, the idea implicit in these verses is worth noting since it suggests a messianic pretender, rather than an opponent of the Messiah. The failure to notice this important distinction has been a cause of some confusion in past studies of the origins of the Antichrist myth. Many of the older texts held up as examples of the earliest stages of the myth are in fact examples of what Ernst calls *Gegenspieler*, "opponents" of God. Here at least there seems to be the idea of messianic pretenders claiming to be the Christ figure, even if they are not yet being understood as "antichrists".

While it is probably better to see the references to false messiahs as lying within the Jewish tradition of the False Prophet, rather than as early examples of the Antichrist figure, it is equally true that later writers understood these phrases as descriptions of the future Antichrist by Jesus. It is likely that there was a steady development, within early Christian apocalyptic eschatology, of ideas concerning the ways in which evil was expressed and how Christians encountered it in their experience. Both the synoptic eschatological discourses and the passage in 2 Thessalonians seem to be closely related examples of such Christian thought.

(c) **Division and Apostasy near the End** Matthew's version of the final discourse is often seen as preserving an older form of the eschatological discourse tradition.⁶ It alone includes a reference to the idea that many of the

6 The idea that Matthew preserves an older form of the tradition was recognised by W. Bousset [*Der Antichrist*, 14]. J.B. Orchard ["Thessalonians and the Synoptic Gospels", 19-42] argued for many links between 2 Thessalonians and the Matthew 24, as did L. Hartman [*Prophecy Interpreted*, 203]. D. Wenham ["Paul and the Synoptic Apocalypse", 345-75] has argued for this view, while elsewhere he uses Matthean passages to assist in establishing the pre-synoptic form of the tradition [cf. *Rediscovery*, 101-34 & 175-218].

faithful would apostasise as the parousia approached (Matt 24:10-14). As was noted earlier, the ideas of schism and apostasy were prominent themes in third century examples of the Antichrist myth, as well as being a significant concern in the Qumran literature.

However, there is no reason to understand the presence of this idea in Matthew as evidence for the existence of the Antichrist myth at such an early stage. This disclaimer is contrary to the view taken by Bousset, who claims that these references to divisions and hatred are essential traits of the Antichrist myth. He saw them as "so intimately associated ... with the Antichrist tradition that even in quite remote authorities it affords the very first indication of the influence of the legend."⁷

This seems to be too extreme a position to be justified. It is better to recognise that this is simply a characteristic element of the traditional description of the eschatological woes, and does not imply any influence by the Antichrist myth. It is therefore safer to conclude that, while the present form of Matthew 24 probably does not antedate the Didache and the Johannine epistles by any great period, it still fails to show any of the awareness of the myth which may be identified in those two sources.

(d) **Signs and Wonders** The belief that the false teachers and false prophets of the last days would delude or deceive their listeners by the use of spurious signs and fake miracles is expressed in both the Markan and Matthean versions of this discourse (Mark 13:22; Matt 24:24). Since this element was virtually unattested in the hellenistic Jewish literature reviewed earlier, these verses represent an important stage in the history of that idea. Interestingly, in these texts, the miracles are not described as spurious, as they frequently would be in later accounts (and already were in 2 Thess 2:9)

It seems most appropriate to understand the reference to such "signs and wonders" as being part of the general biblical belief that both good and evil spiritual powers could produce miraculous effects within the physical world. The so-called "false signs" feature in later descriptions of the Antichrist myth, but the presence of such ideas in earlier writings does not indicate the existence or influence of an Antichrist myth.

7 **Der Antichrist, 76f** [ET from *Antichrist Legend*, 122.]

(e) **The Desolating Sacrilege** One of the features which these passages share with later writing on the Antichrist myth (but also with other apocalyptic writings unrelated to that myth) is the recourse made to Dan 7:25; 8:9-14; 11:31. The references to the "desolating sacrilege" in Mark 13:14f and Matt 24:15f, and the idea's radical historicisation in Luke 21:20, testify to the role which Daniel came to play in the continuing development of hellenistic Jewish eschatology. Subsequent crises, and especially the foreshadowed final crisis, were understood on the basis of the paradigm established by the author of Daniel in the early second century BCE. Naturally, later writers on the Antichrist theme also used this Daniel tradition (or at least its, by then, thoroughly re-worked popular interpretation) in the service of their accounts.

While, recourse to the Daniel traditions does not imply, in itself, any form of the Antichrist myth, it has been common, since the time of the early Fathers, to see within these passages references to the belief in an Antichrist. Taylor lists Klostermann, Lohmeyer, McNeile, Streeter and Branscomb amongst those adopting this interpretation, which he saw as substantially correct. Taylor argued that the mysterious terms used, and parallel features shared with 2 Thess 2:3-10, suggest that a manifestation of Antichrist in expected historical events was contemplated.⁸

The major reason for this consistent interpretation of Mark 13:14 as a reference to the Antichrist is the use of the masculine participle ἐστηκότα, allied as it is to the neuter phrase τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως ["desolating sacrilege"]. While this has been readily recognised as a *constructio ad sensum*⁹, the traditional interpretation persists in the commentaries.¹⁰ Although he quibbles with Lohmeyer over the precise form of the event(s), Marxsen still sees a reference to the Antichrist in this verse.¹¹

Such an interpretation of the eschatological discourse, hallowed though it is by the impressive tradition of scholars who have supported it, seems to miss the point of the text by imposing a later tradition upon the earlier text. As with most treatments of the Antichrist myth, the mistaken line of research mapped out by Bousset has led scholars into identifying the presence of the myth in much earlier documents than the actual evidence allows. Ernst seems to follow a more accurate line of interpretation when he denies that the figure

8 St Mark, 511. Cf. also E. Brandenburger, "Exkurs: Zur Antichrist-Deutung in Mk 13" in *Markus 13*, 83-87.

9 See G.F. Maclear, *St Mark*, 224; and R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium*, II, 291.

10 Cf. E. Lohmeyer [*Markus*, 276] and W. Marxsen, [*Markus*, 123].

11 W. Marxsen, *Markus*, 126.

of a personal *Gegenspieler*, similar to that in 2 Thessalonians 2, can be found in these verses. Rather, Ernst understands them as "merely the traditional form of the outburst of opposition to God and Christian church prior to the final triumph of God."¹² Towards the end of his discussion of Mark 13, Ernst clearly rebuts Bousset's interpretation of 13:14 when he asserts that "the conjecture [*Vermutung*] that an Antichrist apocalypse stands behind Mark 13:14-20 is purely hypothetical."¹³

It may well be that the use of the masculine participle in vs 14 may indicate that the evangelist believed that this desolating sacrilege would involve the personal presence of an evil human being in the most holy place of Judaism. However, there is nothing in these verses to require the conclusion that this (possible) reference to a sacrilegious person was an early reference to the Antichrist figure. Beasley-Murray's most recent consideration of this issue leads him to conclude,

Most commonly it has been believed to signify the Antichrist, for the participle is masculine, denoting "one who creates desolation", and this interpretation links up with Paul's description of the man of lawlessness in 2 Thessalonians 2:3ff. Mark himself, however, would not have held this view since he speaks of false messiahs and false prophets in addition to the abomination, even setting them after the description of the abomination (vv 21-22).¹⁴

(f) **The Eschatological Crisis** Common to most Jewish and Christian eschatological schemes of the time was the belief that there would be a crisis which would mark a dramatic turning in the history of God's dealings with his creation. This idea was expressed in various forms, and Jesus' preaching on the imminence of "the Kingdom" (cf. Mark 1:15) is but one example of this. Naturally enough, the discourse which is presented in slightly varying forms by the three synoptic gospels also includes the idea that history is working towards the critical point — that is almost the *raison d'être* of the passage.

12 J. Ernst, *Gegenspieler*, 3.

13 *Ibid.*, 9. Ernst is taking issue with the viewpoint of Bousset [expressed at numerous points in his *Antichrist Legend* (cf. pp. 84, 107 and 141f)] that the expression is a clear reference to the Antichrist tradition and evidence for what he calls an "apocalypse of the Antichrist".

14 G.R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Kingdom of God*, 329.

The three versions of the discourse are themselves good examples of the way this idea was preserved and presented within the early Christian communities. As with every other detail of this discourse which find parallels in the later Antichrist traditions; this is simply a characteristic of Jewish and Christian thought of the time. It does not indicate that an Antichrist myth lay behind the passage.

11.1.2 The Synoptic Eschatological Tradition and the Antichrist Myth

It is clear that the eschatological discourse tradition in the synoptic gospels is an early Christian apocalyptic work, whose origins may go back to an early midrash on Daniel.¹⁵ It is an important witness to the form of such early Christian doctrinal development, and may have included an expectation of an extraordinary Endtyrant modelled on the figure of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. However, the nearest that the eschatological discourse comes to the idea of an Antichrist myth is the concept of spurious messianic pretenders, "false christs," who seek to deceive the elect by claiming to be Jesus, or by claiming to be some alternative Christ. Even so, it is not clear that these thoughts were anything more than implicit in the terminology, as there was no attempt to develop them further.

It therefore seems that the eschatological discourse tradition in the synoptic gospels represents, in slightly varying forms, the pattern which some early Christian eschatological instruction took. It shows that ideas later to be found in the Antichrist myth were latent in the tradition, but not yet developed. In short, the discourse does not provide any evidence for the existence or use of the Antichrist myth in either the pre-gospel stage of its transmission, or in the time of the gospels' redaction.

As mentioned above, one line of investigation remains to be pursued. This concerns the possible relationships between these passages in the synoptic gospels and 2 Thess 2:1-17. It is possible that the two sets of passages are related in some way,¹⁶ and also that their warnings about false christs and the

15 L. Hartman, *Prophecy Interpreted*, 145-77.

16 This possibility has been the subject of several recent studies. The discussion is reviewed under §11.2 below. J. Ernst [*Gegenspieler*, 23] provides a table of Greek phrases shared by these two NT passages.

man of sin may have been part of the tradition the Johannine writer had in mind, when he says that the readers had been told previously about the coming of the Antichrist (1 John 2:18). Even if that should turn out to be the case, it would not establish the view that the earlier passages did in fact have the Antichrist figure in mind. It would simply mean that these passages formed part of a body of teaching which the author identified as teaching about that figure which he, for the first time, labelled as "Antichrist".

11.2 2 THESSALONIANS

At the beginning of this examination of the origins and development of the Antichrist myth, it was noted that the early Fathers drew 2 Thess 2:1-12 into service to underpin several aspects of their Antichrist traditions. Following the lead given by those early Christian interpreters, there has been a long history of biblical commentators seeing a reference to the Antichrist figure in this passage.¹

1 LITERATURE: Some recent studies of 1 Thessalonians are listed, since consideration of 2 Thessalonians requires attention to 1 Thessalonians as well.

For details of earlier studies and an account of the research history on these epistles, see the commentaries of J.E. Frame (pp. 59-65) and B. Rigaux (pp. 195-280).

For general studies, see: J.A. Bailey, "The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians" IB 11,245-339; F.W. Beare, "Second Thessalonians" IDB 4,265-69; E. Best, *Thessalonians*; F.F. Bruce, *Thessalonians*; M. Dibelius, *Thessalonicher*; E. von Dobschütz, *Thessalonicher-Briefe*; J.E. Frame, *Thessalonians*; G. Friedrich, "Der zweite Brief"; T. Holtz, *Thessalonicher*; J.C. Hurd, "Thessalonians, Second Letter to the" IDB Sup 900f; R. Jewett, *Correspondence*; L.T. Johnson, *Writings*, 260-71; H. Koester, *Introduction*, II,241-46; W.G. Kümmel, *Introduction*, 185-90; I.H. Marshall, *Thessalonians*; A.L. Moore, *Thessalonians*; L.L. Morris, *Thessalonians*; W. Neil, *Epistles*; B. Reicke, "Thessalonicherbriefe" RGG³ VI,851-53; B. Rigaux, "Thessalonicherbriefe" LThK 10,105ff; —, *Thessaloniciens*; W. Trilling, *Thessalonicher*; —, *Untersuchungen*; G. Wohlenberg, *Thessalonicherbrief*.

This is a viewpoint which still has its adherents among some biblical scholars,² although Gundry takes a more cautious view, stating that while the man of lawlessness began as an anti-God figure, "because of Paul's Christianizing the Jewish tradition, [he] goes well on his way towards becoming the Antichrist of 1 John 2:18."³

The possibility raised by Gundry underlines the potential significance of this passage from 2 Thessalonians for the present enquiry. The passage is just the kind of statement one might expect in the transition phase, when older Jewish apocalyptic ideas are being adapted within Christian eschatological speculation under the pressure of a unique focus of messianic beliefs on Jesus of Nazareth. Gundry is not alone in his assessment. For instance, Koester speaks of a "juxtapositioning" of the villain of 2 Thessalonians and Jesus which develops a kind of "anti-christology" not seen in any earlier literature.⁴

11.2.1 Authenticity

In order to evaluate the significance of 2 Thess 2:1-12, it is necessary to consider briefly the issues relating to the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians. While there have been questions concerning the authorship of 2 Thessalonians since Schmidt's important study in 1801, the majority of scholars have upheld

2 F.F. Bruce [*Thessalonians*, 179] and L.L. Morris [*Thessalonians*, 220] speak of the Antichrist in 2 Thessalonians 2. On the other hand, C.H. Giblin [*Threat to Faith*] studiously avoids using "Antichrist" at all, except when citing other people. Cf. W. Trilling, [*Thessalonicher*, 70] on the anachronistic nature of "Antichrist" in 2 Thessalonians 2. Most scholars recognise that, as will be seen in the ensuing examination, it is impossible to speak of an Antichrist figure as such in these verses even if Paul's "man of lawlessness" is an important piece of evidence for a reconstruction of the origin of the myth (cf. E. Best, *Thessalonians*, 289; H. Koester, *Introduction* II,245; C.L. Mearns, "Early Eschatological Development: Thessalonians", 156).

3 R.H. Gundry, "Hellenization of Dominical Tradition", 172.

4 H. Koester, *Introduction*, II,245. E. Best [*Thessalonians*, 288f] and C.L. Mearns ["Early Eschatological Development: Thessalonians", 156] also comment on the importance of this passage for the developing Antichrist myth.

the authenticity of the epistle.⁵ Overall, that is probably still the case, but Wolfgang Trilling achieved a major change in academic opinion with the publication of his monograph in 1972 and his commentary in 1980.⁶

There are four main clusters of issues involved in any consideration of the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians: the remarkably close literary relationship to 1 Thessalonians; the unique teaching on the parousia in 2 Thessalonians 2 (especially with its unparalleled references to the "man of lawlessness" and the "restraint/restrainer") and the relationship of that teaching to the eschatological teaching in the first epistle; the lack of personal warmth, including comments on Paul's own situation and plans; and a number of miscellaneous issues, such as the references to forged Pauline letters in 2 Thess 2:2 and 3:16.

Despite Trilling's careful sifting of the material and his powerful presentation of the case against authenticity, the criticisms of his position by Marshall,⁷ and the independent views of Best, Jewett and Mearns seem to be convincing. Pauline authorship will be assumed for the purposes of this examination. On the assumption that they are genuine, both Thessalonian epistles would have been written early in the year 50 CE, with just weeks separating them. It is, however, important to bear in mind J.T. Townsend's warning that the presumption of Pauline authorship can no longer be taken for granted,⁸ so the interpretation of the passage will be undertaken with an

5 Cf. W. Wrede's influential study ["Die Echtheit des 2 Thessalonicherbriefs" (TU, 24,2; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1903)]. The major recent discussions are W. Trilling [Untersuchungen, 1-45] and B. Rigaux, [Thessaloniens, 112-52]. See also: J.W. Bailey, "Who wrote II Thessalonians?", 131-45; E. Best, *Thessalonians*, 22-29, 51-59; H. Braun, "Zur nachpaulinischen Herkunft des zweiten Thessalonicherbriefes", 152-56; F.F. Bruce, *Thessalonians*, xxviii-xliv; P. Day, "Practical Purpose of Second Thessalonians", 203-06; J. Ernst, *Gegenspieler*, 63-69; J.E. Frame, *Thessalonians*, 39-54; C.H. Giblin, *Threat to Faith*, 34f; R. Gregson, "Solution to the Problem", 76-80; R. Jewett, *Correspondence*, 3-18; H. Koester, *Introduction*, II, 242-46; W.G. Kümmel, *Introduction*, 264-69; I.H. Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 25-45; D. Schmidt, "Authenticity of 2 Thessalonians", 289-96; E. Thompson, "Sequence of the Two Epistles", 306-07; R.W. Thurston, "Relationship between the Thessalonian Epistles", 52-56; W. Trilling, *Thessalonicher*, 22-26; P. Vielhauer, *Literatur*, 95-100; D. Wenham, "Paul and the Synoptic Apocalypse"; J.C. West, "Order of 1 and 2 Thessalonians", 66-74.

6 This shift is acknowledged by Jewett [*Correspondence*, 3] even though he goes on to defend Pauline authorship.

7 Marshall's commentary is the only major work to address Trilling's specific presentation of the case against Pauline authorship, although the forthcoming volume in the ICC series by Donfried will no doubt canvass these issues thoroughly.

8 J.T. Townsend, "II Thessalonians 2:3-12", 233-46.

awareness that the literary context of the passage may be later than the apparently early apocalyptic traditions in the passage itself.

The significance of this decision on authenticity, for the present study, is simply that it implies a definite dating for the epistle. If authenticity were to prove untenable, the relevant material in ch 2 would quite likely still be accorded an early date on account of its non-Pauline character and many contacts with the older eschatological traditions preserved in the synoptic gospels and Revelation.

11.2.2 The Occasion of 2 Thessalonians

A credible "occasion" is important for the correct interpretation of any Pauline letter, and this is especially so for 2 Thessalonians in view of the questions raised concerning its authenticity. There are several factors which are relevant to a determination of the occasion of 2 Thessalonians, and these can only be mentioned here. They include the history and character of the Pauline mission;⁹ the particular socio-political situation in the city of Thessalonica;¹⁰ the unique religious traditions of the local Cabiric cult at Thessalonica;¹¹ insights into the likely interaction between Paul and the recipients of his letters derived from recent studies of millenarianism in the ancient world, through church history and in the modern world;¹² conclusions

9 One can no longer simply use the accounts in Acts to reconstruct Paul's journeys and theology. For the Pauline mission, as it impinges on the study of the Thessalonian letters, E. Best, *Thessalonians*, 1-6; F.F. Bruce, "St Paul in Macedonia, 2", 328-45; —, *Thessalonians*, xix-xxviii; R. Jewett, *Correspondence*, 47-60; T.W. Manson, "St Paul in Greece", 438-47; I.H. Marshall, *Thessalonians 2-6*, 16-20; W.A. Meeks, *First Urban Christians*; L.L. Morris, *Thessalonians 15-19*; W. Trilling, *Thessalonicherbrief*, 26-27.

10 For accounts of ancient Thessalonica, and literature, see: K.P. Donfried, "Thessalonica" *HBD* 1065f; W. Elliger, *Paulus in Griechenland*, 78-116; J. Finegan, "Thessalonica" *IDB* 4,629; H. Koester, *Introduction*, II,108-14; W.G. Kümmel, *Introduction*, 256-60; R. Jewett, *Correspondence*, 111-25; M.F. Unger, "Historical Research", 38-44.

11 On the Cabiric cult see: K.P. Donfried, "Cults of Thessalonica", 336-56; R. Jewett, *Correspondence*, 126-32; B.N. Kaye, "Eschatology and Ethics", 47-57; M.F. Unger, "Historical Research".

12 Insights into the *Sitz im Leben* of the Thessalonians may be had by drawing on studies into ancient, medieval and modern millenarian sects. See: D.E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*; B. Holmberg, *Paul and Power*; S.R. Isenberg, "Millenarism in Greco-Roman Palestine", 26-46; R. Jewett, *Correspondence*, 159-78 & 203-06; C.L. Mearns, "Early Eschatological Development: Thessalonians"; W.A. Meeks, "Social Functions of Apocalyptic

drawn from attention to the rhetoric of the Thessalonian letters;¹³ and, as the final stage, careful exegesis of specific passages.

In the most recent study of this matter, Jewett outlines the various models used in the past to understand the circumstances within the Thessalonian congregation. He examines the evidence for, and the weaknesses of, the traditional views that the Thessalonian church was either a revivalist congregation,¹⁴ an otherwise "normal" church with some over-literal views on realised eschatology,¹⁵ or a quite healthy church with only minimal confusions being sorted out by the apostle with no great controversy entailed.¹⁶ The more recent model of exaggerated enthusiasm, which Jewett himself had earlier proposed,¹⁷ is then examined and found wanting by Jewett,¹⁸ as are the theories of gnostic influence at Thessalonica.¹⁹ The divine man movement of the Hellenistic world is considered, and likewise found wanting by Jewett,²⁰ before he proposes his current view that the problems at Thessalonica were related to millenarian radicalism.²¹

Jewett identifies several distinctive elements in the social and religious setting of the Thessalonian church which would predispose the congregation to millenarian radicalism:²² a Gentile majority in the membership, drawn largely from the lower classes of Thessalonian society; fewer wealthy patron figures in

Language"; —, *First Urban Christians*; A.L. Moore, *Parousia in the NT*; E. Schüssler Fiorenza, "Phenomenon", 295-316; S. Sharot, *Messianism, Mysticism and Magic*; G. Shepperson, "Comparative Study of Millenarian Movements", 44-52; Y. Talmon, "Millenarian Movements", 159-200; —, "Pursuit of the Millennium", 125-48; S.L. Thrupp, "Conference Report" in *Millennial Dreams*, 11-27.

13 A knowledge of rhetorical conventions in Hellenistic times can also be drawn into service for the understanding of the interaction between Paul and the Thessalonian congregation. For examples of such an exercise, and some discussion of the issues involved, see: J.J. Gunther, *St Paul's Opponents*; F.W. Hughes, *Early Christian Rhetoric*; R. Jewett, *Correspondence*, 61-87 & 225f; B.N. Kaye, "Eschatology and Ethics"; H. Koester, *Introduction*, II, 112-13; C.L. Mearns, "Early Eschatological Development: Thessalonians"; W. Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics*.

14 *Correspondence*, 136-38.

15 *Correspondence*, 138-40.

16 *Correspondence*, 140-42.

17 Cf. R. Jewett, "Enthusiastic Radicalism and the Thessalonian Congregation" *SBLSemPap* (1972) I, 181-232.

18 *Correspondence*, 142-47.

19 *Correspondence*, 147-49.

20 *Correspondence*, 149-57.

21 *Correspondence*, 161-78.

22 The possibility of using millenarian models for comparative studies is discussed by G. Shepperson, "Comparative Study of Millenarian Movements", 44-52. Cf. R. Jewett, *Correspondence*, 161-65.

the congregation than some other Pauline churches to act as a break on radical millenarian ideas; and a membership who were alienated economically and politically from the power structures of their society.²³ He notes,

When one takes into account the background of the Cabiric cult in Thessalonica, with the frustrated expectation that he would return as the benefactor of the poor, one is struck by the degree to which Paul's proclamation of the apocalyptic Christ conformed to the role identified by Pereira de Queiros as characteristic of millenarian movements.²⁴

The millennial beliefs which Jewett suggests were characteristic of the church at Thessalonica included the following: the apocalyptic character of Paul's gospel (a kind of ancient cargo cult when perceived through the cognitive filters of the Thessalonian religious and social milieu); ideas connected with the traditional Cabiric cult; Paul's role as a millennial prophet announcing the imminent arrival of the messiah; and a radical sense that they were experiencing immediately the conditions of the kingdom, of the endtime.²⁵ These beliefs were related to a number of problematical practices with which Paul had to deal in his letters to the Thessalonians: a challenge to the sexual ethic of the Judaeo-Christian tradition; abandonment of their regular employments in order to enjoy their new status as sons of God; ecstatic behaviour; and conflict over leadership within the group.²⁶ These practices are all typical of millenarian sects of any age,²⁷ and it will be necessary to consider them again when interpreting the passage in 2 Thessalonians 2.

On the basis of this identification of the problems in the Thessalonian church as being related to millenarian radicalism, Jewett suggests the following provenance for the Thessalonian letters. The combination of early

23 R. Jewett, *Correspondence*, discusses the social and economic circumstances (118-23), the political situation (123-25) and the religious climate (126-32).

24 *Correspondence*, 169. The work by M.I. Pereira de Queiros mentioned in the passage cited is "Messianic Myths and Movements" *Diogenes* 90 (1975) 78-99.

25 R. Jewett, *Correspondence*, 168-71.

26 *Correspondence*, 172-78.

27 Y. Talmon, "Millenarian Movements", 166-72.

Pauline apocalyptic preaching and local Cabiric-connected traditions resulted in an extreme case of millenarian radicalism in the Thessalonian church. The faith of the Christians there was later threatened with collapse because of the clash between their radical millenarian expectations and the reality of their actual circumstances: persecution, the death of some of their members, and questions about the leadership of Paul. 1 Thessalonians was sent by Paul to address these issues, but was (mis)understood by the more extreme members (identified with the *ataktoi*), who then claimed Pauline support for their views and unsettled the balance of the congregation even more. 2 Thessalonians was promptly despatched to correct the misunderstanding and to dampen the wild ideas and practices which were threatening to get out of control. In particular, the coming of the *parousia* is unequivocally delayed to the other side of certain recognisable events (2:1-17) and the trouble-makers were commanded to resume their normal social responsibilities or face excommunication (3:1-15).²⁸

11.2.3 Exegesis of 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17

The interpretation of these verses has always been a controversial matter for biblical scholars,²⁹ and Giblin noted the "almost universal discontent" over the range of interpretations available to scholars.³⁰ While the identity of the "man of lawlessness" had been a major concern for scholarship, more recently the main issue under consideration has been the correct interpretation of the "restraint/restrainer" in vs 5-7. The text of 2:1-17 is relatively straightforward. There are only four significant variants,³¹ and none of these affects the interpretation of the passage to any great extent.³²

28 R. Jewett, *Correspondence*, 181-92.

29 J. Ernst [*Gegenspieler*, 69-79] provides a succinct summary of the history of exegesis for this passage.

30 C.H. Giblin, *Threat to Faith*, 13f. Earlier, on p. 10, Giblin commented: "The *Sitz im Leben* of this problem remains obscure. But what follows Paul's negative warning (2 Th 2,2-3) and precedes his thanksgiving (2,13-15), positive admonition (2,15), and prayer (2,16-17) is even more obscure."

31 For discussion of the variants see J.E. Frame, *Thessalonians*, 55-58; C.H. Giblin, *Threat to Faith*, 50-58; B.M. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 635-37.

32 Giblin [*Threat to Faith*, 36] provides a helpful schematic presentation of this entire passage.

The precise extent and structure of the eschatological passage has been the subject of some disagreement. Giblin has argued cogently that the entire seventeen verses of chapter 2 should be taken as a unit,³³ and this can be clearly seen in his schematically arranged Greek text. Few other commentators have followed Giblin's proposal,³⁴ although the more recent studies have often treated a larger section than vs 1-12 as the base unit.³⁵

The literary form of 2 Thessalonians 2 is more difficult to categorise. It is clearly a piece of doctrinal teaching, and it may draw on older oral traditions of the Christian apocalyptic speculation, but it defies neat categorisation.³⁶ It is marked by a sense of urgency and this, together with the incomplete compound sentence that ends with vs 4, has resulted in a piece of writing that is at points difficult to interpret.³⁷

The general sense of the passage is clear enough, but the details are more obscure. Paul anticipated a final outburst of satanic activity prior to the parousia of Jesus, and he used this belief to dampen the millenarian fervour of his Thessalonian converts. The details of the final upsurge of evil were not what Paul was really interested in communicating in this brief letter, as they had apparently been communicated orally when he was with the Thessalonians (cf. vs 5). He was more intent on applying a teaching with which they were familiar, than in supplying an "on the record" description of that teaching. Since his oral instruction has not survived in any other form either, the modern interpreter is at a loss to know just how to understand some of his allusions.

33 **Threat to Faith**, 41-49. His schematic arrangement of the text highlights the internal structures which Giblin identifies within the passage. Note especially the clear inclusion created by the parallel wording in vs 2b and vs 15b.

34 I.H. Marshall [*Thessalonians*, 184] explicitly rules out any link between vs 1-12 and 13-17; as does B.N. Kaye ["*Eschatology and Ethics*", 53].

35 W. Trilling [*Thessalonicherbrief*, 69f] treats vs 1-12,13-14 as a unit. J.A. Bailey ["*Thessalonians*"] treats vs 1-16; while G.S. Holland ["*Let No One Deceive You*"] and L. Hartman, [*Prophecy Interpreted*, 195-205] treat the whole seventeen verses as a unit. R. Jewett, [*Correspondence*, 222-25] provides tables which indicate the various divisions employed by different scholars. The textual divisions suggested by the UBS 3rd edition of the Greek NT are potentially misleading as they presuppose that vs 13-17 belong to another section of the text.

36 W. Trilling [*Thessalonicherbrief*, 72f] describes it as a *Mahnrede*, ie, an "Admonition Saying".

37 For example, note the diverse interpretations of the significance of the masculine and neuter forms of *κατέχων*. Is the variation of deliberate significance, or not?

(a) **The apostasy [vs 3]** On the interpretation of vs 3 there is almost unanimity amongst the various scholars.³⁸ It is widely accepted that what Paul had in mind was a general rebellion against the authority of God at the last days. This is not thought to have been the same as the expected "falling away of the elect" (seen in 1 Tim 4:1), nor the expectation that the elect would be in danger of being deceived by false christs (cf. Mark 13:22). Rather, it was related to the established Jewish tradition of an eschatological rebellion.³⁹ The commentators mostly agree with Frame's comment that the sense intended here was the expected "definitive religious revolt on earth" against the authority of God.⁴⁰

(b) **The man of lawlessness [vs 3]** Closely related to this apostasy -- as its leader, if not its initiator -- is the figure described by Paul under the rubrics ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας, ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀκλείας, ὁ ἀντικείμενος καὶ ὑπερασόμενος and ὁ ἄνομος. This figure is the focal point for the present study's interest in the Thessalonian letters. Here is what seems to be a reference to a specific individual figure, an Endtyrant. This figure was conceived as an opponent of God [and of Christ?] and, as described here, displays many of the characteristics of the Antichrist figure known from the writings of the third century CE (cf. especially ApEI). Even if it were not already known that this passage was highly regarded as a source for their Antichrist tradition, some sort of connection probably would have been postulated.

There are numerous points of apparent parallelism, if not contact, between 2 Thess 2:1-12 and the later Antichrist myth. These are listed in Table T10, and will be considered briefly in the following discussion.

38 Cf. E. Best, *Thessalonians*, 281-82; F.F. Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 166f; J. Ernst, *Gegenspieler*, 27-30; J.E. Frame, *Thessalonians*, 250-52; R.H. Gundry, "Hellenization", 171; I.H. Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 186-89; L.L. Morris, *Thessalonians*, 218f; H. Schlier, "ἀποστασία", *TDNT* I, 512-14; W. Trilling, *Thessalonicherbrief*, 81-83.

39 1QpHab II.1-10; 1 Enoch 90:22-27; 91:7; 93:9; Jubilees 23:14-16; 4 Ezra 5:1-2.

40 *Thessalonians*, 251. E. Best [*Thessalonians*, 282] still with some hesitation, concludes that the reference is to an apostasy by the Jewish people since the Gentiles cannot apostasise and there is no NT idea of the church itself becoming apostate in the last days, only of some falling away.

Table T10
The Endtyrant Tradition in 2 Thessalonians 2

Element	Verses
Wicked human endtime ruler	3
Obscure name (indicating character rather than identity)	3
Appears on the world scene unannounced	3
Opposes himself to all divine powers	4
Usurps God's place in the temple	4
Claims divine honours	4
Assisted by satanic powers	9
Seeks to deceive people	10f
False signs and spurious miracles	9
Sudden demise at parousia of Jesus	8
Unwittingly serves God's sovereign purposes	11f
Possibly associated with the Roman empire	6f
Internal church troubles linked with endtyrant's influence	7

The figure referred to in 2 Thessalonians 2 does have many parallels to the later Antichrist figure. However, these parallels are at least partly due to the fact that the later tradition drew on 2 Thessalonians to build its portrait of the Antichrist. The task then, is not to establish close resemblances or even a literary relationship between this passage and the Antichrist passages in the early Fathers. Rather, the task is to enquire whether 2 Thessalonians 2, read on its own terms and in the light of earlier and contemporary texts, provides any new evidence for the possible existence, use or development of the Antichrist myth in the first century CE.

The significance of this human individual whose identity is concealed behind obscure names,⁴¹ is the first of the above parallels to be considered.

41 The phrase ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας ["man of lawlessness"] is variously translated, to bring out the sense of one who refuses to submit to God's law and thus is a rebel against the divine authority. Suggestions include: "wickedness in human form" [D.E.H. Whiteley, *Theology*, 236]; "Anomos" [J.E. Frame, *Thessalonians*, 249]; "villain" [J.T. Townsend, "II Thessalonians"]; "Rebel" [C.H. Giblin, *Threat to Faith*]; "rebellious person" [I.H. Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 189]; *Gegenspieler* [J. Ernst, *Gegenspieler*, 35].

The obscure names used to refer to this evil figure are really descriptive titles, rather than names. They reveal the character of this evil actor, and show him to be one engaged in a cosmic struggle with God, with God's Messiah and with the people of God.⁴² The ominous titles, then, denote a figure in whom the apostasy previously mentioned will be focused and concentrated. "Lawless One" [ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας], besides having a direct parallel in ApEl (cf. §3), suggests failure to submit to God. "Doomed One" [ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας] stresses his destiny,⁴³ "Opponent" [ὁ ἀντικείμενος] indicates his character as the adversary of God; and, with "Boastful" [ὑπεραυσόμενος], suggests a creature determined to raise himself up to the place of honour properly reserved for God.

The question of the human or otherworldly character of the rebellious figure is still unresolved. Many scholars see the figure as a human being⁴⁴ — and it would need to be such to be identified in any way with the later Antichrist figure. However others see him as a Belial-type figure,⁴⁵ or qualify the figure's humanity in some other way.⁴⁶ Given the fact that Paul seems to attribute the figure with a "parousia" (vs 9) and a "revelation" (vss 3, 8), it seems that the basic humanity of the figure may have been compromised. On the other hand, this may have simply been some unavoidable ambiguity. It may be that Paul did not intend to suggest either a present existence in some otherworldly sphere nor a supernatural advent. The same confusion existed in the later passages which dealt explicitly with the Antichrist figure.

42 J.T. Townsend, "II Thessalonians 2:3-12", 237.

43 The Semitic background to this expression is suggested by its form (which appears to be derived from a construct state) and other instances of its use: cf. Isa 57:4 (LXX); 1QS IX.16,22; CD VI.15; XIII.14. The ideas relating to the doom of the Rebel are not addressed in the text until vs 8 (E. Best, *Thessalonians*, 284). The phrase ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας ["son of destruction"] in John 17:12 should be noted, as an early Christian parallel.

44 Cf. E. Best, *Thessalonians*, 284; J.E. Frame, *Thessalonians*, 253; I.H. Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 189; W. Trilling, *Thessalonicherbrief*, 84; G. Vos, *Pauline Eschatology*, 112-14. D.E.H. Whiteley [*Theology*, 237] comments: "for St Paul he was not an 'abstract principle of evil', but a concrete, though indeterminate, human being."

45 Various attempts have been made to link the phrase ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας with "Belial", but these have now been shown to be misplaced. See: E. Best, *Thessalonians*, 283; W. Bousset, *Der Antichrist*, 86-88, 99-101; F.F. Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 167; R.H. Charles, *Ascension of Isaiah*, lxviff; E. Nestle, "2 Th 2.3", 472f; B. Otzen, "בליעל" TDOT II,131-36; B. Rigaux, *Thessaloniens*, 656-657; J.T. Townsend, "II Thessalonians", 237.

46 L.L. Morris [*Thessalonians*, 229] argues that this is "no ordinary person" being mentioned; while I.H. Marshall [*Thessalonians*, 190] speaks of the Rebel as "pre-existent" — which rather changes his humanity!

The expressions employed, and any historical allusions that lay behind them, were presumably well known to Paul's readers -- although, given the largely Gentile nature of the congregation at Thessalonica, that itself presupposes a thorough catechesis in the developing eschatology of the primitive church. It is not clear what historical allusions may have been drawn into this Endtyrant figure, but Jewish tradition had several recent contenders for a place (Antiochus IV, Pompey, Caligula) as well as the older figures in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. Gundry sums up the possibilities aptly:

It appears, then, that he models the man of lawlessness after Antiochus Epiphanes, amalgamates him with the ruler of Tyre, and Christianizes this already hybrid figure by giving him the characteristics of the false Christs and false prophets predicted in the dominical tradition underlying the Olivet Discourse.⁴⁷

This figure certainly has some parallels to the false prophets in the synoptic gospels. Ernst suggests that while vs 3-4 describe the figure as a typical adversary of God, vs 9-10 portray him in the mould of a false prophet.⁴⁸ Giblin went further than Ernst is apparently prepared to go, and interpreted the villain of 2 Thessalonians 2 as the final False Prophet.⁴⁹ Best criticised Giblin's view, mainly for its rather forced reading of ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας as a linguistic and logical opposite of ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ θεοῦ, a common OT epithet for a prophet.⁵⁰ While that item in Giblin's argument may be questioned, it seems there are good grounds to see in this passage the idea that the eschatological opponent will be a false prophet rather than a military figure or a rogue king.

47 R.H. Gundry, "Hellenization", 172. However, note the absence of any trace of royal characteristics, which suggests that military and political adversaries have played a lesser role in Paul's thought than might otherwise be imagined. ApAb 29:3-13 may preserve a related Jewish tradition of a man of lawlessness (cf. §12.4).

48 J. Ernst, *Gegenspieler*, 41-44.

49 C.H. Giblin, *Threat to Faith*, 66-70.

50 *Thessalonians*, 283f. W.A. Meeks [*Prophet-King*, 47-55] supports the idea that these verses are dealing with the False Prophet tradition.

The unannounced appearance of the Rebel on the world scene requires brief comment. Paul's language suggests a revealing of the evil figure, as a kind of anti-type to the revealing of the Christ figure on "his day". No details of this manifestation are given -- Paul's interests lay elsewhere -- but the idea is implicit in the text. Bruce speaks of the false christ having his solemn parousia as a parody of the parousia of Jesus.⁵¹ Best also sees a parallel to the revelation of Jesus,⁵² but rejects the further interpretation seen, for instance, in Frame,⁵³ that the lawless one was reserved in some extra-terrestrial location pending his appearance.

The hybris of the Rebel, who opposes and exalts himself over all that people revere as sacred, is the next element of the description of the figure to which Paul alludes. The phrase, ὁ ἀντικείμενος, appearing with the article and without the dative to follow it, suggests that the term is being intended as a title, with the sense of "adversary, opponent". Such an expression would usually indicate that the Satan figure was being described, but that cannot be the case here as the Rebel is subsequently differentiated from Satan, even though he is closely allied to that figure.

The OT background is clearly important here, with the taunts against the kings of Babylon (Isaiah 14) and Tyre (Ezekiel 28) combining with the descriptions of the blasphemous horn in Daniel 11. Paul is not citing any of these passages directly, but they provide an insight into the kind of tradition from which his language is drawn.⁵⁴

51 F.F. Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 167 and 173.

52 E. Best, *Thessalonians*, 284.

53 J.E. Frame, *Thessalonians*, 252.

54 See the discussion, below, on the use of the OT in this passage. Note, also, the point made by M. Casey [*Son of Man*, 154] that the absence of close verbal affinities to Daniel means that Paul definitely did NOT have these passages specifically in mind. In view of the absence of royal traits from his description of the Rebel, Paul would seem to have been drawing on earlier Christian apocalyptic traditions rather than drawing directly on these OT passages.

The session in the temple also draws on OT background material, but in this case it is likely that Paul is drawing on the primitive, if not dominical, apocalyptic tradition that also finds expression in the eschatological discourses of the synoptic gospels.⁵⁵ This element is very closely related to the hybris of the Rebel, and is best understood as the highpoint of his self-exaltation. The Rebel even goes so far as to usurp God's place and expresses that by his posture: sitting as one ready to receive obeisance. The relationship between this "event" and the "desolating sacrilege" of Mark 13:14 is unclear, but there may well be some connection. In any case, Paul's language is such as to suit his personal figure for the Rebel, rather than the more impersonal language of Mark and Matthew. There has also been some discussion as to whether Paul meant the physical temple in Jerusalem standing during his lifetime, "temple" as a symbol for the heavenly abode of God, or the church as a "spiritual temple".⁵⁶ This is a different issue from the question as to whether the reference to the temple must require a date prior to 70 CE, as Trilling has demonstrated.⁵⁷ On balance, it seems that this is best understood as a reference to the Rebel making a claim to divine honours by establishing himself in the Jerusalem temple. Paul, of course, was not to know that the temple would be destroyed within twenty years of his letter. In any case, the temple's destruction did not prevent Christians from speculating about a rebuilt temple for the Rebel's use,⁵⁸ so there seems little reason to look for interpretations other than the most natural sense of the words.

Best questions who could make such a claim for divine honours other than Satan, and points out that the Rebel is explicitly differentiated from Satan in this passage.⁵⁹ He correctly recognises that the problem is insoluble, since the confusion lies in Paul's apocalyptic scenario and the limitations of his exposition of it in this passage. What he does not note, however, is the way in

55 See the discussion below on possible contacts between Paul's ideas and the primitive apocalyptic traditions preserved in the synoptic gospels. See also C.H. Dodd, "Fall of Jerusalem", 47-54; and, D. Ford, *Abomination of Desolation*.

56 See E. Best, *Thessalonians*, 286f; J. Ernst, *Gegenspieler*, 38-40; C.H. Giblin, *Threat to Faith*, 76-80; R.H. Gundry, "Hellenization", 171; I.H. Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 191; L.L. Morris, *Thessalonians*, 223; J.T. Townsend, "II Thessalonians", 235-37; W. Trilling, *Thessalonicherbrief*, 86.

57 *Thessalonicherbrief*, 86, note 324.

58 See the use made of this element in the Fathers, §4.5.

59 E. Best, *Thessalonians*, 287f.

which these divine claims highlight the point that Paul's Rebel is not an "Antichrist" but an opponent of God.⁶⁰

The advent of the Rebel will be accompanied by the activity of Satan according to vs 9, and this underlines the close relationship between the Rebel and his supernatural patron. As Best notes, "behind the Rebel there is thus a greater source of evil",⁶¹ even though Paul does not bother to explore the ultimate destiny of the "greater evil" which lies behind and operates through the Rebel. This verse makes it clear that Paul's Rebel is not to be identified as the leader of the hosts of wicked angels (as Belial, Mastema, etc, were in earlier literature already studied). Instead, he must be seen as a human figure serving as the ultimate expression of human wickedness and, thereby, also being one through whom all the working of satanic powers could flow.

This satanic-empowered Rebel will seek to deceive people. The idea of deception occurs in two different forms in 2 Thessalonians 2. In vs 3 Paul was concerned about his readers being deceived (the Greek suggests "badly deceived"⁶²) by others with false or confused ideas about the day of the Lord. In vss 10-11 he referred to the active attempt by the Rebel to mislead people so that they fail to believe the truth that would lead them to salvation, and thus rightly fall under divine judgment.

Deceit has been identified as an element in many of the apocalyptic passages examined in this study, and was also a major element in the passages in the Johannine epistles that first speak of the Antichrist. Its occurrence in this passage is consistent not only with the other literature studied, but also with later passages such as 1 Tim 4:1f, which is not related to the development of the Antichrist myth at all.

60 It is true that the early Fathers maintained this same confusion, as they spoke of the Antichrist seated in the temple making claims for divine honours. In their case, the confusion arose from their inability to distinguish the traditions in 2 Thessalonians 2 from the later Antichrist myth. They accepted Paul's description as apostolic teaching on the Antichrist figure, and did not notice that Paul's figure actually opposes God rather than Jesus. On the conceptual shifts involved in Paul's theological statements about Jesus, see L.J. Kreitzer, *Jesus and God*, 112-29.

61 *Thessalonians*, 304.

62 Cf. L.L. Morris, *Thessalonians*, 218.

Shows of power, signs and fake wonders (vs 9) will be employed by the Rebel to deceive his victims. Giblin is probably correct when he associates this activity with the portrayal of the Rebel as the False Prophet, since false miracles and signs of power would characterise a person wanting to engage in what Giblin designates as "anti-apostolic and anti-prophetic activity".⁶³ Best seems to miss the point of these miracles when he argues against seeing a parallel between the miracles of Jesus and those of the Rebel, preferring instead to see the miracles of the Rebel as parallel activities to the miracles performed by the Christian church.⁶⁴ It appears better to understand these miracles as deceptive actions intended to validate the false prophetic status of the Rebel, and as forming a natural parallel to Jesus' vindication of his own proclamation by his miraculous deeds.

This eschatological Rebel will meet a sudden and dramatic end no sooner than having appeared, it would seem. While vs 8 is probably not intended to indicate any temporal aspects of the Rebel's "career", the way in which he is so quickly despatched by the parousia of Christ suggests that Paul wants to express the idea that the Rebel will be defeated very rapidly. This may reflect the idea, seen in the synoptic gospels, that the time will be shortened for the sake of the elect (cf. Mark 13:20). The imagery employed here is drawn from the older 'holy war' traditions of the OT which had long since been caught up within the traditions of apocalyptic thought.⁶⁵ The Rebel would be effortlessly and rapidly disposed of by the Lord Jesus, acting on behalf of the elect.

The Rebel will serve as an unwitting instrument of divine sovereignty according to vss 10-12. The whole tenor of Paul's teaching in this passage has been that God is in control,⁶⁶ and this is made explicit at the end of the apocalyptic scenario. The Rebel will actually serve God's purposes and be the instrument by which wrath comes on the condemned.

63 *Threat to Faith*, 102-08.

64 *Thessalonians*, 306.

65 See E. Best, *Thessalonians*, 302f; F.F. Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 172f; C.H. Giblin, *Threat to Faith*, 89-109; W. Trilling, *Thessalonicherbrief*, 102f; R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 258-67.

66 Whatever the precise meaning of vss 5-7 (see the next point discussed), the present activity of lawlessness and its connection to the eventual outbreak of wickedness presupposes a degree of divine control over events.

It is possible that the activity of the Rebel is related to the fortunes of the Roman empire. There is no more hotly contested issue at the present time, in the field of research into the Thessalonian letters, than the interpretation of vs 5-7.⁶⁷ There are three main possibilities for the meaning of Paul's words about the restraining/seizing power/person, and the present operation of the mystery of lawlessness. 1) Paul may have meant God restraining the outbreak of evil, directly or indirectly, until the "right time". 2) He may have meant that the power of evil was already at work, but had not yet reached its zenith since the Rebel had not appeared. 3) As has been the traditional majority view, Paul may have seen the Roman empire, and especially Claudius, as holding in check the wicked powers of the cosmos. There are numerous variations on these three options, and a number of others in addition, but it is not possible to explore all the options in this discussion.⁶⁸

While it is clear that Paul was mistaken, so far as long term events are concerned, about the Roman empire as the restrainer of the Rebel, the traditional view has many defenders still and Paul can be shown, in a sense, to have been correct in his view of Claudius' significance (if this was his view!).⁶⁹ Mearns comments,

The spirit of Antichrist which had ranged openly then [in the actions of Caligula] was dormant only for a brief time and would blaze forth as soon as the Restrainer was out of the way. That did happen in the second half of Nero's rule as Claudius' successor, A.D. 54-68. Paul . . . would have lived to see his charismatic and prophetic foresight being bitterly fulfilled.⁷⁰

67 This debate is peripheral to the interests of the present study, but may be pursued in the following literature: R.D. Aus, "God's Plan and God's Power", 537-53; E. Best, *Thessalonians*, 290-301; M. Barnouin, "Les problemes de traduction", 482-98; O. Betz, "Der Katechon", 276-91; J. Coppens, "Derniers obstacles", 345-48; J. Ernst, *Gegenspieler*, 48-57; J.E. Frame, *Thessalonians*, 259-62; C.H. Giblin, *Threat to Faith*, 153-242; H. Hanse, "κατέχω" TDNT II, 829f; E.E. Lofstrom, "Lawlessness and the Restrainer", 379f; R. Mackintosh, "Antichrist of 2 Thessalonians", 427-32; I.H. Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 196-99; G. Milligan, *Thessalonians*, 155-57; J. Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*; L. Sirard, "La parousie de l'Antéchrist", 89-100; E. Stauffer, *Christ and the Caesars*; A. Strobel, *Untersuchungen*; J.T. Townsend, "II Thessalonians"; W. Trilling, *Thessalonicherbrief*, 89-105; G. Vos, *Eschatology*, 129-34.

68 For a convenient summary and evaluation see E. Best, [*Thessalonians*, 295-301] and I.H. Marshall [*Thessalonians*, 196-99].

69 For recent defences of this view see F.F. Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 170-72, 187f; and C.L. Mearns, "Early Eschatological Development: *Thessalonians*", 154-56.

70 "Early Eschatological Development: *Thessalonians*", 156.

If the traditional interpretation is correct, then the attitude towards the Roman authorities which is implicit is rather similar to the way in which the later Antichrist writings speak of the empire. Even if Paul did not intend this meaning, it is probably worth noting that this quickly became the accepted interpretation of his words and may have helped shaped this aspect of the later myth.

The Thessalonian church also faced particular immediate internal issues, and this is a further point which the eschatological material in 2 Thessalonians shared with the later Antichrist passages of the third century. It was noted in Section One that crises over authority and false teaching were often the occasions for instruction about the Antichrist figure, and that the Antichrist myth was usually employed for internal Christian disputes. In a similar fashion, Paul's eschatological teaching in 2 Thessalonians was occasioned by a crisis over authority and the challenge of false teaching at Thessalonica.

In this case, the problems and difficulties faced by the Thessalonian church probably included external pressure as well as the false teaching about eschatology and ethics, and the challenge to Paul's apostolic authority. The setting is thus comparable to that of the eschatological discourse in the synoptic gospels and of the Johannine epistles. Jewett proposes eight specific issues or problems which were present in the Thessalonian church situation: persecution; confusion over proper response to death of some Christians; an extremely literal realised eschatology in which everything promised in Christ is already in their possession so that there is no need to prepare for a future parousia at which the Christian hope would be fulfilled; conflict over ecstatic manifestations; questions about Paul's leadership; a group of disorderly members (the *ataktoi*); challenges to traditional biblical sexual ethics; and incipient dualistic or gnostic ideas.⁷¹

Even if this diagnosis by Jewett is only partly correct, it means that Paul was dealing with a congregation facing several difficult issues. The eschatological teaching in 2 Thessalonians must then be understood within that setting. This would provide a realistic way to understand the "mystery of lawlessness" which was already operative in their experience. Paul was giving

71 R. Jewett, *Correspondence*, 93-108. C.L. Mearns made several of the same points in his earlier article, "Early Eschatological Development: Thessalonians", 137-57; while E. Best recognised some of these conditions in his commentary, *Thessalonians*, 135.

a theological interpretation to a number of recognisable contemporary problems and relating them to the earlier instruction he had given about the powers of evil and the reality of redemption. This is not unlike the situation in the Johannine epistles, but in Paul's case the human opponents are not identified with the eschatological Endtyrant as the secessionists were in 1 John. In fact, the whole thrust of Paul's argument worked in the opposite direction to that of the author of 1 John. Where the Johannine epistles stressed the imminence of the last hour (cf. 1 John 2:18), Paul was at pains to stress that the last day is not yet upon his readers; and cannot be until after the appearance of the great eschatological opponent of God, the Rebel.

11.2.4 The Literary Relations of 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17

The full significance of 2 Thessalonians 2 for the later Antichrist myth cannot be understood without some consideration of the literary relationships between this passage and various others. An awareness of the probable connections between this passage and other relevant writings -- or, in some cases, the absence of such connections -- assists in grasping the importance of Paul's apocalyptic instruction in 2 Thessalonians. There seem to be three lines of literary relationships to be considered: possible links to the later Antichrist tradition; the relationship between the ideas in 2 Thessalonians 2 and those in other Pauline writings; and the question of what relationship there may have been with the eschatological discourse traditions in the synoptic gospels.

The first of these has already been commented upon at the beginning of the discussion of the man of lawlessness. The position argued in this study holds that 2 Thess 2:1-17 was not an early example of the Antichrist tradition, but that the obvious relationship which exists between it and the later accounts of the Antichrist myth is due to later writers exploiting the Thessalonian passage to bolster their own doctrine of an Antichrist figure.

The question as to how this material in 2 Thessalonians can be reconciled with other Pauline epistles requires a brief mention. There are two passages which might be examined profitably in this connection: 2 Cor 6:14-7:1 and 10:1-12:21. These two passages would warrant examination in any broader consideration of Paul's thought, since 2 Cor 6:14ff employs the Belial myth and 2 Cor 10-12 uses the categories of false apostles and deceivers in the context of a crisis over authority and correct teaching within the church at Corinth. It is not possible to pursue these considerations in this study, but it is worth

noting that neither passage in 2 Corinthians seems to relate to the ideas expressed in 2 Thessalonians 2.

Of course, 2 Cor 6:14ff is generally identified as an interpolation, and would thus be of no value in establishing Paul's thought.⁷² However, Paul's evident ability to address the problems of opponents in 2 Corinthians 10-12 without having recourse to such eschatological ideas as Endtyrants, deception, schism and apostasy, the day of the Lord, and other elements later associated with the Antichrist myth, serves to underline the uniqueness of his teaching in 2 Thessalonians 2.⁷³

Given the fact that the ideas in 2 Thessalonians were unparalleled in Paul's extant letters to other churches, the apparent similarities and points of contact with the synoptic gospels are all the more significant. As was mentioned at §11.1, there have been suggestions that a common apocalyptic tradition lies behind both Paul's instructions in 1 and 2 Thessalonians and the synoptic eschatological discourses.⁷⁴ E. Best agreed that there could be no doubt that there is some relation between 2 Thessalonians 2 and Mark 13. Best described Mark 13 as "a combination of traditional Jewish apocalyptic ideas and prophetic or apocalyptic sayings of Jesus which have been worked over in the early Church."⁷⁵

72 Cf. C.K. Barrett, *Second Corinthians*; H.D. Betz, "2 Cor 6:14-7:1: An Anti-Pauline Fragment?", 88-108; H. Braun, *Qumran und das NT*, I, 201-03; N.A. Dahl, "A Fragment and Its Context", 62-69; J.A. Fitzmyer, "Qumran and the Interpolated Paragraph", 271-80; V.P. Furnish, *II Corinthians*; D. Patte, "Structural Exegesis", 23-49.

73 C.K. Barrett, *Second Corinthians*; Furnish, *II Corinthians*; D. Georgi, *Opponents of Paul*; J.J. Gunther, *St Paul's Opponents*; B. Holmberg, *Paul and Power*; D. Kee, "Who were the 'superlative apostles'", 65-76; W. Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics*; A.B. Spencer, "The Wise Fool (and the foolish wise)", 349-60; F. Watson, "2 Cor. X-XIII and Paul's Painful Letter", 324-46.

74 W. Bousset [*Der Antichrist*, 13-15] saw a connection between these passages. For more recent discussions, see J.P. Brown, "Synoptic Parallels in the Epistles", 27-48; C.H. Dodd, *Apostolic Preaching*, 36-41; C.H. Giblin, *Threat to Faith*, 72-75; R.H. Gundry, "Hellenization", 169-73; L. Hartman, *Prophecy Interpreted*, 178-205; C.L. Mearns, "Early Eschatological Development: Thessalonians", 153; I.H. Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 184-205; J.B. Orchard, "Thessalonians and the Synoptic Gospels", 19-42; B. Rigaux, *Thessaloniens*, 95-105; J.T. Townsend, "II Thessalonians", 233-35; G.H. Waterman, "Sources of Paul's Teaching," 105-13; D. Wenham, "Paul and the Synoptic Apocalypse," 345-75.

75 *Thessalonians*, 289. Cf. C.L. Mearns, "Early Eschatological Development: Thessalonians," 153; "What Paul is appealing to here is the same tradition that we see in Mark, in the Eschatological Discourse."

Various factors have resulted in a growing recognition of the relationship between Paul's eschatological instructions in both 1 and 2 Thessalonians and the eschatological discourse in the synoptic gospels. These include the lack of Pauline parallels to the key ideas; several unusual stylistic features in 2 Thessalonians 2 which are probably best understood as semitisms;⁷⁶ and many significant parallels (involving concepts, vocabulary and sequence).⁷⁷

On the basis of the evidence considered, it seems reasonable to conclude that the apocalyptic teaching in 2 Thessalonians 2 was a Pauline passage designed to recall certain elements of his earlier instruction on the parousia. This teaching was closely related to an early Christian *paradosis* which is also seen in the eschatological discourses in the three synoptic gospels. As was the case in those gospels, Paul felt free to adapt the tradition to serve his own ends — in this case the dampening down of excessive apocalyptic fervour brought about by the particular combination of factors operating in the church at Thessalonica. He therefore broke away from the traditional instruction at the end of vs 4 so that he could address the proposition that the day of the Lord had already come with an excursus on the prior appearance of the eschatological opponent of God.

Such a passage as is found in 2 Thessalonians 2, and such a general Christian eschatological tradition as seems to lie behind both the Thessalonian letters and the synoptic eschatological discourses, would eventually get caught up in the distinctive "Christianising" of the traditional Jewish Endtyrant idea, transforming it into the form of the later Antichrist myth. However, at the stage(s) represented by both Paul's letters and the synoptic gospels this development does not seem to have occurred. The emphasis was still on the eschatological opponent as the great adversary of God and his people. The Rebel was not yet an opponent of Christ nor, at least in 2 Thessalonians and probably not in the synoptics either, a messianic pretender. However, by the end of the first century CE the development of these ideas had progressed further in some Christian quarters, and it is possible to see in such works as the Johannine epistles, Didache, and ApPet early evidence of the emerging Antichrist myth.

76 Cf. J.T. Townsend, "II Thessalonians", 233-35; D. Wenham, "Paul and the Synoptic Apocalypse", 354f.

77 Cf. G.R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Kingdom of God*, 412; J. Ernst, *Gegenspieler*, 23; R.H. Gundry, "Hellenization", 169-72; L. Hartman, *Prophecy Interpreted*, 197-205; J.B. Orchard, "Thessalonians", 31-42. See especially D. Wenham, "Paul and the Synoptic Apocalypse", 347-62.

11.3 THE BOOK OF REVELATION

The evidence found within the Apocalypse of John will be of great importance for the purposes of this research into the origins and development of the Antichrist myth. If, as has often been supposed from at least the time of Irenaeus, the Antichrist myth is to be found within this work, then that fact would be of great significance in any reconstruction of the history, form and function of the myth. If it is possible to uphold the traditional view that the author had such a figure in mind as he wrote, that would be a significant achievement in pinning down the history of this tradition. If it were to be established that John knew nothing of such ideas, and merely spoke in terms susceptible of later (re)interpretation as references to the Antichrist figure, that too would be a significant insight. The evidence potentially to be drawn from the Apocalypse will be vital since the Book of Revelation, more than any other NT writing, might be thought likely to have known and used the Antichrist myth, were such a myth in existence at the time.¹

11.3.1 Significance of the Apocalypse for this Study

There are several reasons why the Apocalypse might be expected to have used the Antichrist myth were it known to the author. In the first instance, the

1 LITERATURE:

(a) Commentaries: G.R. Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*; I.T. Beckwith, *Apocalypse of John*; J. Behm, *Offenbarung des Johannes*; W. Bousset, *Offenbarung Johannis*; J.W. Bowman, *First Christian Drama*; G.B. Caird, *Revelation of Saint John the Divine*; P. Carrington, *Meaning of Revelation*; R.H. Charles, *Revelation*; A.M. Farrer, *Revelation of St John the Divine*; J.M. Ford, *Revelation*; M. Kiddle, *Revelation of St John*; H. Kraft, *Offenbarung des Johannes*; G.E. Ladd, *Revelation of John*; E. Lohmeyer, *Offenbarung des Johannes*; L.L. Morris, *Revelation*; R.H. Mounce, *Revelation*; M. Rist, "Revelation of St John the Divine" *IB* 12,347-613; J.P.M. Sweet, *Revelation*; H.B. Swete, *Apocalypse*.

(b) Other Literature: O. Böcher, *Johannesapokalypse*; J.W. Bowman, "Book of Revelation" in *IDB* 4,58-71; R.H. Charles, *Lectures on the Apocalypse*; ---, *Studies in the Apocalypse*; J.H. Charlesworth, "Apocalypse of John" *NTAP*, 19-53; J.J. Collins (ed), *Apocalyptic Symbolism and Social Reality*, 4-45; J.M. Court, *Myth and History*; J. Ernst, *Gegenspieler*, 80-167; A. Feuillet, *L'Apocalypse*; W.G. Kümmel, *Introduction*, 455-74; E. Renan, *Anti-Christ*; E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *Justice and Judgment*; ---, "Revelation, Book of" *IDB Sup*, 744-46; A. Strobel, "Apokalypse des Johannes" *TRE* III,174-89; U. Vanni, "L'Apocalypse johannique", 21-46; A. Yarbro Collins, *Crisis & Catharsis*.

Apocalypse expresses explicit hostility towards the Roman empire. Such a hostile attitude towards Rome would suggest that the author of the Apocalypse would have been glad of any opportunity to denigrate Rome. The Antichrist myth would clearly have provided such an opportunity. While opposition to the empire was not intrinsic to the myth, the myth certainly was amenable to such use.

Further, there is the fact that the Apocalypse provides the most deliberate and extensive use of apocalyptic traditions to be found within the NT,² and it drew on many of the OT passages which were utilised by the proponents of the Antichrist myth tradition. It would be a remarkable matter were such a work to be produced by a person familiar with the Antichrist tradition without any recourse to that tradition. Yet it does seem that the Apocalypse fails to point to an earlier Antichrist myth.

There is a further connection between the concerns of the Apocalypse and those of the proponents of the Antichrist myth. Both traditions were very concerned over internal church problems relating to false teachers. The letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2-3 indicate the concern of the writer over false teachers. Such concerns have already emerged in the literature examined previously. They had a high priority in those circles known to have used the Antichrist myth.

A further connection between the Apocalypse and the Antichrist tradition involves the awareness of, and the use of, the Nero redivivus myth. This popular misconception has left its mark on both the Belial tradition and the Antichrist myth, and its influence is also to be seen in Rev 13:1-10 and 17:7-14. This indicates that the author of the Apocalypse shared some traditions with those later Christian circles most concerned with the development of the Antichrist myth. It does not seem unreasonable to expect that the Antichrist myth might have left some mark on the Apocalypse if it were known to him.

2 On the relationship between Revelation and apocalyptic, see: D.E. Aune, "Apocalypse and the Problem of Genre", 65-96; ---, *Cultic Setting of Realized Eschatology in Early Christianity*; J.J. Collins (ed), *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre*; ---, *Apocalyptic Symbolism*, 4-45; ---, "Pseudonymity, Historical Reviews and Genre", 329-43; D. Hellholm (ed), *Apocalypticism*; ---, "Apocalyptic Genre and the Apocalypse of John", 13-64; B.W. Jones, "Apocalypse as Apocalyptic", 325-27; J. Kallas, "The Apocalypse; an apocalyptic book?", 69-80; J. Lambrecht (ed), *L'Apocalypse johannique*; ---, "Revelation and Apocalyptic in the NT", 391-97; E. Schüssler Fiorenza, "Phenomenon of Early Christian Apocalyptic", 295-316.

The beast from the sea, along with its two colleagues, seems to form an evil trio opposed to God, to his messiah, and to the people of God. Yet even here the usual identification of the second beast with the Antichrist figure can be questioned. As will be seen when Rev 13:1-10 is examined, on one level the author does not seem to have conceived of it as an Antichrist figure: the beast neither opposes Christ nor represents itself as a Christ figure. It seems reasonable to assume that, had the author known of the Antichrist tradition, he would have deliberately developed his second beast into an opponent of and usurper of the Christ, rather than being merely the human figurehead of Satan's opposition to God.

The use made of the Apocalypse by later writers from Irenaeus onwards, in which the Antichrist interpretation was consistently read into the text is also significant. These writers recognised the value which the material in Revelation had for their elucidation of the Antichrist myth. The way in which the traditions of the Apocalypse approached those of the Antichrist myth was evident to them, and they assumed that the author intended to speak of the Antichrist figure as they knew it. They were correct in their observation, but mistaken in their assumption. Yet their observation further underlines the significance of the silence of the Apocalypse on the subject of the Antichrist. The concerns and concepts of the Apocalypse are so close to those of the Antichrist myth that the failure to develop them along the lines seen in the myth indicates either the late development of the myth or, as seems more likely, the myth's development within a restricted portion of the early church in the last years of the first century. Some clarity concerning the precise role of Revelation in that development will be sought in the ensuing discussion.

11.3.2 Composition, Setting and Structure

While it would be impossible to cover in detail all the considerations which bear on such questions as the authorship, date and purpose of Revelation, these matters cannot be left untouched either.³ The successful execution of

3 Cf. O. Böcher, *Die Johannesapokalypse*; W. Bousset, *Offenbarung*, 49-119; J. Ernst, *Gegenspieler*, 104-67; A. Feuillet, *L'Apocalypse*; L.J. Johnson, *Writings*, 512-29; H. Kraft, "Offenbarung des Johannes", 81-98; W.G. Kümmel, *Introduction*, 455-74; E. Lohmeyer, "Offenbarung des Johannes, 1920-1934"; E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *Justice and Judgment*, 1-32; U. Vanni, "L'Apocalypse johannique".

this research project into the origins and development of the Antichrist myth requires that the material in the Apocalypse be interpreted accurately, and that can only happen when these other matters are taken into account. Some informed positions need to be adopted and stated, so that the interpretation of the evidence in Revelation can proceed on recognised premises rather than on unspoken presuppositions. As it happens, most of the "introductory" questions which pertain to the Book of Revelation are currently matters of debate. There are majority opinions on matters such as date, authorship, occasion; but no consensus. The positions adopted in this discussion may be briefly set out as follows.

(a) **Authorship** There have been quite an array of historical characters proposed as the author of Revelation.⁴ These have included John the Baptist,⁵ John the apostle,⁶ John Mark,⁷ and the presbyter of that name said to have lived at Ephesus.⁸ Attempts to identify the author as any known individual are now being largely abandoned as a fruitless exercise, with attention turning instead to the analysis of the book, in an effort to establish the kind of person who may have composed it, and the possible role the writer may have had within the churches in the province of Asia.⁹

No attempt will be made to identify the author with any specific individual, but it will be assumed that the author was an early Christian prophet of the kind proposed by Yarbrow Collins: an itinerant Christian prophet familiar with the churches in the province of Asia.¹⁰ This person was probably Jewish by birth and had lived for some considerable time (if not from childhood) in Palestine. He was trilingual, having Greek, Hebrew and Galilean Aramaic language skills. Despite the writer's deeply Jewish sympathies,¹¹ this person was definitely not a "judaizer", and readily accepted the kind of open

4 Eusebius [h.e., III.39.6] discussed the matter of authorship, noting the confusion which existed over the identity of this "John". Cf. O. Böcher, *Johannesapokalypse*, 29-35; W. Bousset, *Offenbarung*, 34-49; W.G. Kümmel, *Introduction*, 469-72; A. Yarbrow Collins, *Crisis & Catharsis*, 25-53.

5 J.M. Ford, *Revelation*, 3.

6 Irenaeus, *haer.*, V.30.3

7 J.N. Sanders, "St John", 77.

8 J.J. Gunther, "The Elder John", 3-20.

9 D.E. Aune, "Social Matrix", 16-32; M.E. Boring, "Apocalypse as Christian Prophecy", 43-62; M.D. Goulder, "Annual Cycle of Prophecies", 342-67; D. Hill, "Prophecy and Prophets", 401-18; E. Schüssler Fiorenza, "Apokalypsis and Propheiteia", 105-28.

10 *Crisis & Catharsis*, 46ff. Cf. J.H. Charlesworth, *NTAP*, 20.

11 Cf. M.D. Goulder, "The Apocalypse", 354f.

policy towards non-Jewish Christians that Acts 15 attributes to the Council of Jerusalem. While deeply influenced by the written and oral traditions of the classical prophets of ancient Israel, the writer also drew on both Jewish apocalyptic traditions and non-Jewish mythic traditions.¹² This person, who may conveniently still be referred to as "John", also shared the virulent anti-Roman feeling seen in such literature as the Sibylline Oracles.

(b) **Occasion** It will be assumed that pressure on the early Christians, from provincial authorities wishing to enforce the observance of the imperial cult as a test of loyalty and citizenship, provided the occasion for the writing of the book.¹³ This consensus assumption has recently been challenged by A.J. Beagley,¹⁴ who has argued that Revelation arises primarily out of a setting of Jewish and Christian rivalry.

While acknowledging that most of the recent commentaries "have sought to understand the Book of Revelation against the background of the supposed violent persecution of Christians by Rome",¹⁵ Beagley has attempted to demonstrate that the major focus of the book was on the Jewish people as the "Church's enemies".¹⁶ However, Beagley fails to establish a Jewish (or, anti-Jewish) focus in chs 12f, which are the main passages within Revelation of relevance to the origins of the Antichrist myth. In fact, Beagley concedes that "the conflict with Rome" is central to these chapters.

12 A. Yarbro Collins [*Combat Myth*, 58] notes that "nearly every major ethnic tradition [in the first century CE] had one or more versions of its own" of the widespread combat myth tradition. In an appendix (pp. 245-261) she provides details of such myths in Asia Minor and Greece.

13 For discussion of the imperial cult, and its relevance for Revelation, see L. Cerfaux, "Conflit entre Dieu et le souverain divinisé" in *Sacral Kingship*, 459-70; M.P. Charlesworth, "Deus Noster Caesar", 113-15; ---, "Observations on the Ruler Cult", 5-44; D. Fishwick [*The Imperial Cult in the Latin West. Studies in the Ruler Cult of the Western Provinces of the Roman Empire* (Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain, 108; Leiden: Brill, 1987); S.J. Scherrer, "Signs and Wonders in the Imperial Cult", 599-610; E. Schüssler Fiorenza, "Followers of the Lamb", 123-46; E. Stauffer, *Christ and Caesar*; H.B. Swete, *Apocalypse*, lxxxvi-xci; L. Thompson, "Sociological Analysis", 147-74; A. Yarbro Collins, "Apocalyptic Response to a Social Crisis", 4-12; ---, "Revelation 18: Taunt-Song or Dirge?", 185-204; ---, "Vilification and Self-Definition", 308-20.

14 A.J. Beagley, 'Sitz im Leben'.

15 'Sitz im Leben', 1. See especially ch 2, where the relationship of the Christian community to Jewish and Roman authorities is examined.

16 'Sitz im Leben', 80.

In respect of the particular chapters of direct interest to the present study, Beagley's case does not seem to be convincing. Given the significance of these chapters within the total book, the ensuing discussion will remain within the consensus that Revelation was written in response to a situation where some Christians in Asia were being pressured to renounce their Christian faith and submit to the ruler cult. As the subsequent comments will suggest, it is quite possible that Jewish authorities may have taken an active role in such persecution. This may account for the anti-Jewish notes within the book which Beagley has so perceptively highlighted.

(c) **Date** On the question of date, there are two main options, with the arguments for each being well set out in the secondary literature.¹⁷ While it is not impossible that the book could have been written as early as the reign of Caligula, the most usual date early date for Revelation is 68/69 CE. A later date, which is still the majority view amongst NT scholars, places the composition of the book ca 95 CE, late in the reign of Domitian.

The choice between these two options involves decisions on a range of matters, but the most important consideration seems to concern the *Sitz im Leben* of the Apocalypse. The consensus favouring the later date rests largely on the view that pressure on Christians to observe the imperial cult during the reign of Domitian provided the book's occasion.¹⁸ However, there is no historical evidence for any persecution of Christians during Domitian's reign, a fact which has long been seen as a major weakness in attempts to date Revelation ca 95 CE.¹⁹

17 In addition to the discussions of the date of the Apocalypse in the commentaries, see: L.W. Barnard, "Clement of Rome", 251-60; A.A. Bell, "Date of John's Apocalypse", 93-102; O. Böcher, *Johannesapokalypse*, 36-41; A. Helmbold, "Note on the Authorship of the Apocalypse", 77-79; W.G. Kümmel, *Introduction*, 466-69; B. Newman, "Fallacy of the Domitian Hypothesis", 133-39; J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the NT*, 221-53; C. Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 410-13; A. Strobel, "Abfassung und Geschichtstheologie der Apokalypse", 433-45; A. Yarbro Collins, "Dating the Apocalypse of John", 33-45; ---, *Crisis & Catharsis*, ch 2.

18 Cf. G.B. Caird, *Revelation*, 6; R.H. Charles, *Revelation*, I, xci-xcvii; W.G. Kümmel, *Introduction*, 466-69; A. Yarbro Collins, *Crisis & Catharsis*, 76f.

19 The case against a Domitian date can be seen in A.A. Bell, "Date", 93-102; A. Helmbold, "Note", 77-79; B. Newman, "Fallacy", 133-39; J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the NT*, 238-42; C. Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 403-13. J.H. Charlesworth [NTAP, 26f] states that "we must admit that the evidence for Domitianic persecution is ambiguous".

C. Rowland has recently drawn attention to evidence that anti-Jewish sentiments during the Jewish War of 66-73 CE were at times expressed in terms of pressure to observe the imperial cult.²⁰ Rowland discusses the pressure placed upon Jews, their gentile sympathisers and Christians during the war. He points out the various factors which converge in Asia during this period: anti-Jewish feeling during the war in Palestine; a population with a long-established tradition of loyalty to Rome, expressed through the imperial cult; and suspicion of Jewish and Christian inroads.²¹ The ingredients were present for exactly the kind of climate assumed in Revelation.²²

Later in his discussion, Rowland concludes that "the historical circumstances presented by the Jewish War and the apparent break-up of the empire" (in the events of 68/69 CE) would seem to "offer the most appropriate time" for the book to have been written.²³ His suggestion of a date shortly after the death of Nero, but prior to the capture of Jerusalem, will be adopted in this study.²⁴

(d) Purpose Consistent with the insights contributed by Rowland, but actually drawing on the position enunciated by Yarbrow Collins, the purpose of the book is understood differently from many past studies. It has often been assumed that Revelation was written in response to a situation of intense persecution

20 C. Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 411f.

21 Acts 19:23f may present a realistic description of such tensions.

22 Rowland argues that the use of the imperial cult as a loyalty test was more likely to have been true of Asia, than any other part of the empire, since it was especially in that province that "the imperial cult was so firmly rooted and linked with the indigenous religious practices through the *commune Asiae*" [*Open Heaven*, 412].

23 C. Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 413.

24 Such a view takes seriously the internal evidence of Revelation, at the expense of Irenaeus' credibility as an external witness to its date. It is also possible to argue [cf. J.N. Sanders, "St John", 77] that passages such as Rev 11:1ff; chs 12-14; and 17:9ff, were composed ca 70 CE, but re-used by a later writer, working in the period of Domitian. One of the ways of testing such an hypothesis as that presented by Rowland, is to assess how well the subsequent interpretation of the book, as well as its relationships with other writings, can be established on such a presupposition. It will be observed in the ensuing discussion, that an early date allows Revelation to be more readily accommodated within a history of the Antichrist myth in the first century CE. This result may be an indication that the early date for Revelation is to be preferred.

of Christians by Rome. Yarbro Collins has shown convincingly that this is not the case, and that the book is better understood as helping to arouse Christian awareness of the threat posed by the exclusive claims for loyalty made by the empire, and as reinforcing the Christian perspective on the world as being under the lordship of the Risen Christ.²⁵

(e) **Integrity** The literary integrity of Revelation will be assumed in the following discussion. It is clear that John used older traditions, but this is not understood as implying the kind of complex source theories presented, for instance, in R.H. Charles' classic commentary. Both Jewish and "pagan" traditions have been laid under contribution for the prophetic task which the author took upon himself, but as they now stand they represent his views and they show the stamp of his mind.²⁶

(f) **Structure** Various proposals have been made concerning the structure of Revelation.²⁷ For the purposes of this study, their main significance lies in the common recognition that Revelation 12-14 represent an important point in the structure of the overall document. While the impact of various structural models on the particular task in hand is slight, it is worth noting that the material in chs 12ff which concerns the dragon and his two monstrous servants comes at the mid-point of the book and at the beginning of what many commentators see as the second major section of the visions. From this it may be inferred that the ideas in these chapters were of some importance to the author, just as they are for this study.

25 Cf. A. Yarbro Collins, *Crisis & Catharsis*, 84-110. See also D.L. Barr, "Apocalypse as a Symbolic Transformation", 39-50; M. Rissi, "Kerygma", 3-17; A. Yarbro Collins, "Political Perspective", 241-56. A similar view of the kerygmatic character of Revelation can be found in E. Käsemann, *Jesus Means Freedom*, 130-43.

26 Cf. M.D. Goulder, "Apocalypse", 342ff; W.G. Kümmel, *Introduction*, 462-66; C. Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 414; E. Schüssler Fiorenza, "Composition and Structure", 344-66; A. Yarbro Collins, *Crisis & Catharsis*, 145ff.

27 Cf. A.J. Beagley, 'Sitz im Leben', 28-112; G.K. Beale, "Influence of Daniel", 413-23; J.W. Bowman, "Revelation of John", 436-53; A. Feuillet, *L'Apocalypse*, 19-30; W.G. Kümmel, *Introduction*, 462-66; J. Lust, "Order of the Final Events", 179-83; E. Schüssler Fiorenza, "Composition", 344-66; —, "Eschatology and Composition", 537-69; U. Vanni, *La struttura letteraria*; A. Yarbro Collins, *Combat Myth*, 8-44.

11.2.3 The Hostile Powers in the Apocalypse

Chapters 12-14 can be identified as the central section of the Apocalypse, since they deal with the crisis confronting the Christian church in the view of the writer. In these chapters the author developed his understanding of the struggle which he perceived between the church and the powers of evil. Here the reader is introduced to the struggle between God and evil at its apex, the true character of the Roman empire is revealed, and an assurance given that the Lamb will ultimately prove victorious over the dragon. Beasley-Murray comments,

These chapters constitute the most substantial parenthesis in the Revelation. Yet they are more than a parenthesis, for they form the central portion of the book. Not only do they come at the mid-point of the work, they provide an understanding of the nature of the conflict in which the Church is engaged, and into which John sees she is to be drawn to the limit. The struggle of the saints against the Caesars is here portrayed in the context of an age-long resistance to the God of heaven on the part of evil powers. That process is about to reach its climax in an all out warfare against the Church of Christ.²⁸

The author of Revelation has drawn upon diverse mythic traditions to express the magnitude of the crisis faced by the church in his time, and to indicate the character of the opposition they were experiencing. He used these older sources to develop three major evil figures who represent in his work the powers opposed to God, to the Christ and to the people of God. The material which deals with these anti-God figures occurs in Rev 11:7-13; 12:1-13:18; 14:8-11; 17:1-18; and 19:17-20:10.

A close reading of these passages indicates that the three figures were closely related to each other in the author's presentation. While it would be going too far to suggest that they were portrayed as a satanic trinity,²⁹ they do seem to have been represented as a kind of evil triumvirate. The triumvirate was a form of political organisation familiar to Roman subjects, so there was a certain intrinsic appropriateness in using that model in such a polemic against the imperial cult.

²⁸ G.R. Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, 191.

²⁹ Many commentators speak of a "satanic trinity" or such like. Cf. G.R. Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, 207; O. Böcher, *Johannesapokalypse*, 76; J. Ernst, *Gegenspieler*, 96; J.M. Ford, *Revelation*, 210; M. Rissi, "Kerygma", 11. Cf. O. Böcher [*Johannesapokalypse*, 76-83] for a review of scholarship on this grouping of bestial figures.

There was a reasonably consistent use of these symbolic evil figures. This extends beyond their initial description in chs 12ff through to their appearance in subsequent stages of the apocalyptic tableau. As noted, there was even a prior appearance for the beast from the sea (Rev 11:7-13),³⁰ when the writer described events which logically belong to a later stage in his account.³¹

The consistency of Revelation's treatment of these evil figures, despite the clear use of older mythic traditions which have been drawn from disparate sources, is further underlined by signs of a careful structure through this material in chs 12-20. K.A. Strand has argued that a chiasmic structure can be identified in this part of Revelation, and this suggests that the author has carefully handled his traditional material so that it now forms a coherent whole.³²

So as to keep the discussion within the reasonable bounds, only those details which bear directly on the task of establishing the significance of Revelation for the origins and development of the Antichrist myth will be considered. The descriptions of the three evil figures will each be examined briefly in turn, and then some conclusions will be suggested as to the relevance of this material. At the beginning of this process it is important to note John Court's comment on the "kinship" of these three figures, lest their individual examination suggest a false degree of independence among them.

These three beasts must not be distinguished too sharply without recognizing the kinship which exists between them. All three share in, and are motivated by, a power and authority which they have in common. This is why, according to Paul S. Minear, they all have horns, to symbolize this power. It is clear that the kinship does not consist merely in the common purpose and activity described in the visions of the Book of Revelation. There is a common mythological form of a bestial figure with seven heads which underlies the two distinct conceptions of Antichristian power in the dragon and the beast from the sea in chs 12 and 13.³³

30 It should, of course, be noted that while the beast from the pit (Rev 11:7; 17:8) was explicitly equated with the beast from the sea (Rev 13:1-10; 17:7; 19:19-20:10) by the author, they may originally have been separate figures. [Cf. W. Bousset, *Der Antichrist*, 12; A. Yarbro Collins, *Combat Myth*, 165-72.]

31 In addition, the rider on the white horse (Rev 6:1f) may be an Endtyrant figure -- at least in its pre-Apocalypse form? [Cf. R.H. Charles, *Revelation*, I,163; J.M. Ford, *Revelation*, 105f; Z.C. Hodges, "First Horseman", 324-34; M. Rissi, "Rider on the White Horse", 407-18.]

32 K.H. Strand, "Chiasmic Structure", 403.

33 J.M. Court, *Myth and History*, 123. Cf. E. Lohmeyer, *Offenbarung*, 113.

(a) **The Dragon** The description of the dragon figure in Revelation clearly connects that member of the evil trio with the traditional Satan myth. The first thing which strikes the reader of these passages is the clear combination of various ancient mythic elements to form the imagery of the dragon.³⁴ In 12:9 the great red dragon is explicitly identified with other ancient symbolic figures:³⁵ the ancient serpent, the figures of the Devil or Satan; and he is identified as the deceiver of the whole world.³⁶ There is a blending of traditions in this passage, as the Satan figure is represented under the guise of the great dragon myth traditions of the ancient world. The seven-headed red dragon of ancient near eastern mythology is attested in numerous places, and it clearly lies behind the writer's words here.³⁷

The struggles on earth are implicitly identified with the cosmic battles between the dragon and Michael. The creation/unleashing of the beast from the sea is implicitly related to the casting down of the dragon from heaven to the earth. The battle lost when the dragon was cast out from heaven is to be resumed through the agency of the dragon's bestial creatures who share its character and serve its purposes.

The ultimate destiny of the dragon is spelt out in ch 20. In the intervening chapters the two evil creatures of the dragon have been despatched, and the dragon is then said to share the same fate. After an initial incarceration of one thousand years, the dragon would be released to serve as an agent of divine wrath on the wicked. After this, the dragon would also be cast into the lake of fire and sulphur along with its two accomplices.

34 Revelation 12 has had a long history of exegesis, much of which is not relevant for the purposes of this study. For the history of that exegesis see P. Prigent, *Apocalypse 12. Histoire de l'exégèse* (Beiträge zur Geschichte der biblischen Exegese, 2; Tübingen: Mohr, 1959); A. Vögtle, "Mythos und Botschaft".

35 The most complete study of the ancient mythic material is to be found in J. Day, *God's Conflict*. See also: G.R. Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, 191-97; R.H. Charles, *Revelation*, I,317f; J. Ernst, *Gegenspieler*, 104-23; W. Foerster, "δράκων" TDNT II,281-83; H. Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos*, 171-398; W. Speyer, "Gottesfeind", especially pp. 996-1022; A. Yarbro Collins, *Combat Myth*, 76-79 & 117-19.

36 A similar expression occurs in Did 16:4 (cf. §54).

37 D.W. Thomas [Documents, 128-33] provides an annotated translation of the Ras Shamra Baal texts (which date to ca 1400 BCE). The nearest parallel to Rev 12:1ff occurs in lines 20ff, which read: "What enemy rises up against Baal, what adversary against him who mounteth the clouds? Have I not slain Sea, beloved of El? Have I not annihilated River, the great god? Have I not muzzled the dragon, holding her in a muzzle? I have slain the Crooked Serpent, The Foul-fanged with Seven Heads."

Yarbro Collins has established the influence of the much older "combat myth" traditions in ch 12, and throughout Revelation as a whole.³⁸ The elements of the combat myth can be readily identified in ch 12.³⁹

Table T11
Combat Myth Pattern in Rev 12

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- A. The Dragon (vs 3)
 - B. Chaos and Disorder (vs 4a)
 - C. The Attack (vs 4b)
 - D. The Champion (vs 5a)
 - E. The Champion's "Death" (vs 5b)
 - G. The Champion's Recovery (vs 7a)
 - H. Battle Renewed and Victory Attained (vss 7b-9)
 - I. Restoration and Confirmation of the Champion (vss 10-12a)
 - F. The Dragon's Reign (vss 12b-17)

It is clear that older traditions have been used and blended to form the present narrative in ch 12.⁴⁰ Collins identifies the likely versions of the ancient combat myth traditions which have been used to create ch 12,⁴¹ but there is no significance for this study in the details of those older "sources". While ultimately drawing on very ancient sources, as well as more contemporary hellenistic traditions, the material had probably already been adapted by Jewish use before the author reworked it for his own purposes.

38 **Combat Myth**, 57-100, 207-43. These traditions had roots going far back into the cultural history of the ancient Orient but, as noted earlier, were still current in most of the major ethnic communities in NT times.

39 **Combat Myth**, 61. All nine elements of the combat myth identified by Yarbro Collins are found in Revelation 12, but the material relating to the reign of the dragon has been displaced to the end. This may have been for the sake of emphasis.

40 Vss 1-6,13-17 deal with a struggle in heaven between the dragon and the woman, while vss 7-9 relate to a separate form of the combat myth involving a rebellion by the morning star and its ejection from heaven. A. Yarbro Collins [**Combat Myth**, 101-55] suggests that both traditions were separately reworked by Jewish hands before the author took them up and blended them into a new composite version the combat myth.

41 **Combat Myth**, 127ff.

The aim of the writer would seem to have been to identify the empire and its official cultus of the emperor with the embodiment of evil. Apart from its value as an example of anti-Roman polemic, and its testimony to the continued use of ancient mythic traditions in the middle years of the first century CE, the use of the dragon figure in Revelation provides little of relevance to the origins of the Antichrist myth. Its main value lies in the way that the old dragon imagery from the combat myth has been employed to represent the Satan figure, and to associate that figure with the appearance and activity of the two beasts in ch 13. Each of those beasts will now be examined briefly.

(b) The Beast from the Sea Unlike the dragon figure, which was a clear representation of the traditional Satan figure, the beast from the sea has no clear parallels in any of the other mythological figures known in apocalyptic literature. To the extent that the beast from the sea was intended to represent a human being, the nearest analogies would have to be the Endtyrant figures developed in Daniel (Antiochus Epiphanes) and Paul's man of lawlessness in 2 Thessalonians 2.⁴²

The figure of the beast from the sea was fashioned in part directly from the dragon, whose likeness it would bear in many respects, and whose purposes it would serve. It may also have been fashioned partly from the descriptions in Dan 7:3-6, where a series of beasts come up out of the sea and are described as being like a lion, bear and leopard respectively. The portrait of this beast really develops the sea-monster side of the dragon/sea-monster imagery, of which the figure in ch 12 represents the traditional dragon aspect.

This beast, the first of the dragon's monstrous creatures, is the most important of the three evil figures. It is usually spoken of in the Apocalypse simply as "the beast", without need of qualification. It is the figure of most interest for the present study. As the second member of an evil trio, it represents an implicit contrast to the Christ figure. While strict trinitarian schemes are anachronistic in this period, the beast from the sea could have been seen as the "firstborn of Satan", a title applied to Marcion by Polycarp in the second century and used by him as a synonym for the Antichrist⁴³ It is not surprising, then, that this figure has usually been identified as the Antichrist by both ancient and modern commentators.

⁴² Cf. H. Schlier, "Vom Antichrist."

⁴³ Polycarp, Phil. 7:1. Cf. §13.5 below.

Beasley-Murray illustrates this traditional interpretation of the beast. In a passage which is reminiscent of Hippolytus' programmatic description of the Antichrist,⁴⁴ Beasley-Murray writes,

the Antichrist is presented as the Christ of Satan. He has ten diadems (13:1), as the Christ has many diadems (19:12). He has a blasphemous name (13:1), over against the worthy name of the Christ (e.g., 19:11,12,16). He causes men to worship Satan, while the Christ brings men to worship and serve God (1:6, etc). He has had a wound to death, but lives (13:3,12,14) in a monstrous imitation of the Christ who died and rose from death. He has the power and the throne and the authority of the Devil (13:2), as the Christ shares the power and authority and throne of God (12:5 and 10). The second beast, called by John the false prophet (16:13) performs the kind of prophetic activity in relation to the Antichrist that the Holy Spirit does in relation to Christ.⁴⁵

The description of the first beast can be understood, as indicated above, as the development of the sea-monster side of the traditional dragon imagery in ancient mythology. This can be seen in the description of the beast from the sea, in terms which belong to the old sea-monster myth, as a seven-headed red coloured sea monster. The idea doubtless goes back ultimately to such traditions. Far from being a blessing to civilised society, the Roman empire, symbolised by the the beast and personified in its various heads (= emperors), is deliberately vilified by association with the Satan figure of the dragon. The deep significance of this satanic association is underlined by the use of the ancient combat myth traditions still well-known in Asia at the time.⁴⁶ Rome is seen as an "evil empire", the epitome of chaos and disorder — quite a realistic view for a Jewish writer ca 68/69 CE.

These ancient combat myth traditions were also well established in Jewish and Christian apocalyptic thought and, given the author's evident familiarity with the OT tradition, probably were primarily mediated to him through that literature. The description of the beast from the sea has many points which reflect the influence of these traditions. The influence of Daniel 7 seems to be

⁴⁴ Cf. Hippolytus, *antichr.*, 6 (cited at §4.1).

⁴⁵ G.R. Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, 207f. O. Böcher [*Johannesapokalypse*, 83] has a similar list of parallels.

⁴⁶ A. Yarbro Collins [*Combat Myth*, 245-70] gives details of the forms taken by these traditions at that time.

unmistakable throughout this description of the beast.⁴⁷ The description drew on Dan 7:3ff, reversing the order of animal comparisons and blending them all into a single beast probably intended as an equivalent of the fierce and terrible fourth beast of Dan 7:7. The mouth which spoke "great and blasphemous things" was probably modelled on Dan 7:8,20,25 and 11:36,⁴⁸ as was the duration of beast's authority for forty-two months (cf. Dan 7:25; 9:24-27; 12:7) and the persecution of the holy ones by the evil figure (cf. Dan 7:25).

There are also parallels to early Christian apocalyptic traditions, as in the working of signs and wonders through satanic empowerment. This is also seen in the earliest Christian eschatological traditions represented by the eschatological discourses in the synoptic gospels and by Paul's apocalyptic teaching in 2 Thessalonians.⁴⁹ There are sufficient similarities in this reworking of traditional apocalyptic material to indicate that the writer was working with ideas with which his readers would have been familiar. As in other Christian apocalyptic material, the opponents of God unwittingly serve as agents of wrath on the wicked.

In this case, the beast from the sea and its colleague from the land act as agents of God's purposes even when they think that they are opposing him at the behest of the dragon. This aspect is especially clear in 17:15f where the two beasts are said to turn against the harlot, Rome, in response to God having put it into their hearts to carry out his purposes.

There are some aspects of this description of the beast from the sea which indicate the influence of the Nero redivivus myth.⁵⁰ These include the reference to the mortal wound received by one of the beast's heads and the

47 Cf. G.K. Beale [Use of Daniel, 229-48]

48 The blasphemous name(s) was probably a divine title such as "deus noster Caesar", or "dominus et deus".

49 J.P.M. Sweet [Revelation, 52-54] indicates numerous points of agreement over both content and sequence in Revelation and the synoptic apocalyptic traditions. J.M. Ford [Revelation, 230] cites L.A. Vos [The Synoptic Traditions in the Apocalypse (Kampen: 1965)] as a significant investigation of these matters.

50 For discussion of the Nero legend see: W. Bousset, *Offenbarung*, 410-18; —, *Der Antichrist*, 121f; R.H. Charles, *Revelation II*, 76-87; M.P. Charlesworth, "Nero: Some Aspects", 69-76; J.J. Collins, *Sibylline Oracles*, 80-87; J.M. Court, *Myth and History*, 127-37; J.M. Lawrence, "Nero Redivivus", 54-66; E. Renan, *Anti-Christ*; A. Yarbro Collins, *Combat Myth*, 176-86.

survival of that head;⁵¹ the name of the beast and its number which would be used as a mark, to indicate a person's submission to the cult of the beast;⁵² the use of Apollyon in 9:11;⁵³ and the description of Rome being destroyed by fire in 17:16.⁵⁴ Despite the occasional protest,⁵⁵ it seems certain that the Apocalypse reflects the view, current after Nero's death and at its height ca 69 CE, that the world had not seen the last of him.

A. Bell lists the Neronic pretenders that appeared in 69, 79 and 88 CE, noting that the latter two were insignificant compared with the impact of the first pretender in 69.⁵⁶ Such occurrences were noted by Tacitus in his *History* (II.8f). Tacitus begins his description:

Sub idem tempus Achaia atque Asia falso exterritae velut Nero adventaret, vario super exitu eius rumore, eoque pluribus vivere eum fingentibus credentibusque.
[Hist. II.8
(I.G. Orellius, Opera, 88)]

About this time Achaia and Asia Minor were terrified by a false report that Nero was at hand. Various rumours were current about his death; and so there were many who pretended and believed that he was still alive. [ET from A.J. Church & W.J. Brodribb, Tacitus, 480]

Tacitus then continued with a detailed account of the appearance of this pretender in 69 CE, his initial success, and his demise. See also *Hist.* I.2 for another brief mention of this particular pretender.

- 51 On this, in addition to the commentaries, see: C. Bruston, "Tête egorgée", 258-61; J.M. Court, *Myth and History*, 129ff; A. Yarbro Collins, *Combat Myth*, 174ff.
- 52 For the significance of 666, see: W. Barclay, "Revelation xiii", 260-64, 292-96; G.R. Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, 219-21; O. Böcher, *Johannesapokalypse*, 84-87; W. Bousset, *Offenbarung*, 369-74; D. Brady, *British Writers*; C. Bruston, "Tête egorgée"; V. Burch, "Reasons", 18-28; G.B. Caird, *Revelation*, 174-77; R.H. Charles, *Revelation*, 1,365-68; J. Ernst, *Gegenspieler*, 141-45; W. Hadorn, "Die Zahl 666", 11-29; H. Kraft, *Offenbarung*, 183-85; E. Lohmeyer, *Offenbarung*, 117-19; A. Yarbro Collins, *Combat Myth*, 174f.
- 53 A. Bell ["Date", 98f] notes the link between the use of Apollyon in 9:11 and Nero's claim of a special relationship with Apollo.
- 54 *Ibid.*
- 55 Cf. V. Burch, "Reasons".
- 56 "Date", 98.

The wounded head which was healed is generally recognised as a deliberate parody of the death and resurrection of Jesus.⁵⁷ The phrase, ὡς ἐσφαγηνεὴν εἰς θάνατον ["as if slain unto death" (13:3)], seems to have been intended as a parallel to the description of Jesus as the ἀρνίον ... ὡς ἐσφαγμένον ["a lamb ... as if slain" (5:6)]. It is also likely that the description of the beast as "one [who] was, is not, and shall be" (17:8, 11) was intended as a parody of the death, resurrection/ascension and return of Christ. Yarbrow Collins comments,

The force of the parody requires an individual who not only died but also rose from the dead. The only emperor who could conceivably be cast in this role is Nero.⁵⁸

The significance of this insight for the purposes of the present study is enormous. As will be seen when the relevance of the material in the Apocalypse is considered shortly, it may be that the writer gave the traditions at his disposal a new form. He thus either created the form in which the Antichrist myth would later be known, or he gave that process definitive momentum by his adoption and adaption of the Nero legend.

It is clear that the writer wanted to characterise the empire generally as satanic, and yet wished to focus on the personification of the empire in the person and activities of the emperor. The interplay between the beast and its heads allows the author to do this, even though it also complicates the task of interpretation. In ch 17 this is further complicated by the addition of another figure, the harlot, to represent the city of Rome, with its ambivalent relationship to empire and emperor.

To the question of how best to understand the meaning of the beast from the sea, must be added issues concerning the anti-Roman attitudes which lay behind the use of the Nero myth. The writer refuses any invitation for Christians to demonstrate their loyalty to Caesar by making the appropriate sacrifice. Instead, Rome will suffer for its role as an ally of the satanic powers seen to be vested in its leaders and their cult. These attitudes are not that dissimilar to those expressed in the Sibylline Oracles.⁵⁹

57 Cf. R.H. Charles, *Revelation*, I,349; R.E. Brown, *Epistles*, 336.

58 A. Yarbrow Collins, *Combat Myth*, 174.

59 Cf. §12.9 below. Such anti-Roman views had a long history in the East, sometimes having begun as anti-Greek oracles [cf. R.H. Charles, *Revelation*, I,345].

(c) **The Beast from the Earth** The description of the third member of this evil trio was fashioned partly from elements in the preceding descriptions of the dragon and the beast, and partly from other elements. It may have owed something to the description of the ram with two horns in Daniel 8, but it may also have been fashioned partly on the model of the lamb imagery for Jesus. In Rev 19:20 the earth beast is explicitly identified as a false prophet who serves the purposes of the beast from the sea and, through it, the dragon.

If the first beast was modelled on the previously undeveloped aspects of the dragon/sea-monster imagery and represented an adaptation of the idea of Leviathan, the seven-headed serpent in the depths of the sea (cf. Isa 27:1), then this second beast may itself be seen as a blending of the parallel figure of Behemoth with the ram imagery of Daniel 8. In ancient sources, as in first century Jewish apocalyptic traditions, Leviathan and Behemoth, the sea-monster and the land-monster respectively, played important roles in mythic conceptions of the *Urzeit* and the *Endzeit*.⁶⁰

In Revelation it would seem that the model of Daniel 8 has been used so that as the description of the ram there followed that of the terrible fourth beast in ch 7, so here the beast from the land is described as having two horns like a lamb and yet still retains its bestial character since it speaks like a dragon.⁶¹ There may be a deliberate contrast intended between the Christ figure portrayed as a lamb (Rev 5:6-14; 7:9-17; 14:1-5; etc), and if this is so then it would tend to undermine the traditional interpretation of the first beast as an Antichrist figure.⁶²

60 This link was first recognised by H. Gunkel [*Schöpfung und Chaos*, 51-61] and, although opposed by W. Bousset [*Offenbarung*, 435f] has been widely accepted since then. Cf. G.B. Caird, *Revelation*, 161; J. Day, *God's Struggle*, ch 2; A. Yarbro Collins, *Combat Myth*, 164f.

61 While the imagery of Daniel 8 seems to have influenced that in Revelation 13, it is worth noting the structural parallels between Dan 8:10f and Rev 13:5b-6, as pointed out by A. Yarbro Collins, *Combat Myth*, 163.

62 However, it should be noted that Hippolytus [*antichr.*, 49] interpreted the beast from the sea as the Roman empire and the second beast as the Antichrist, whose advent would follow the demise of the empire.

The beast which most clearly represents a deliberate antithesis to the representation of the Christ figure in Revelation is the beast from the land, yet it is also clear that this beast was understood as a false prophet and not as an Antichrist.⁶³ The second beast acts in ways traditionally associated with false prophets (incorrect teaching, impressive signs done with satanic power, etc) and was explicitly named as a false prophet in 19:20 and 20:10.⁶⁴

This beast had a secondary role in the writer's vision of things, but a key role just the same. It exercised the authority of the first beast and was to promulgate the message of that creature. It would persuade all the inhabitants of the earth to worship the first beast, and encourage them to create an image of the beast to which it would give the power to breathe and talk.⁶⁵ It would use economic and social pressures to ensure submission to the new cult by excluding from normal commercial and social intercourse those who refuse to bear the mark of the beast. This beast was both the recruiting officer and the enforcer of the new religion.⁶⁶

In the end, even this creature turns out, to the eye of faith, to be an unwitting servant of the divine purposes: a cipher who would finally fall under judgment along with those it had misled. Like its more important bestial colleague, the creature from the land would eventually be cast into eternal torment where they will ultimately be joined by their creator, the dragon.

R.H. Charles argued that behind Rev 13:11-18 lay a Jewish Antichrist source.⁶⁷ This material was written in Hebrew, according to Charles, and survives in vss 11, 12ab, 13-14ab, 16a,d and 17a.⁶⁸ Charles proposed that the original Jewish version "dealt with a conception of the Jewish Antichrist such as we find in 2 Thess. ii", but he was unable to put a date to it.⁶⁹ Charles

63 Cf. W.A. Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 48-51.

64 As a novelty, it is interesting to note that J. Ford [*Revelation*, 227f] proposes that Flavius Josephus was intended as the false prophet symbolised by the beast from the land.

65 The second beast was probably intended to be understood as the provincial priesthood of the imperial cult [cf. W. Bousset, *Offenbarung*, 365f; H.B. Swete, *Apocalypse*, xci-xcii.]

66 There is a brief note on the commune *Asiae* in G.B. Caird, *Revelation*, 171.

67 R.H. Charles, *Revelation*, I,342-44.

68 R.H. Charles [*Revelation*, I,344] presents a reconstructed Greek text.

69 *Ibid.*

believed that Rev 13:11-18 originally spoke of a false prophet, not a beast from the land. He argued that the reading, ἄλλο θηρῶν ["another beast"], in 13:11 was a deliberate change from an original source with the reading ψευδοπροφήτην. He supposed that this change was designed to transform a formerly independent Antichrist figure into "a mere agent" of the Antichrist, subsequent to the author combining two earlier Antichrist traditions into a composite account in ch 13 with its double figures.

While it is clear that Revelation has used and adapted older Jewish, and non-Jewish, ideas in chs 12f, it is not necessary to postulate the existence of a written Jewish Antichrist source in order to understand the literary data found in ch 13. The extant material in Daniel, in other pseudepigrapha such as those examined in this study, and general Christian eschatological traditions, are quite sufficient without the need of recourse to the hypothetical literary sources so popular around the turn of the present century.⁷⁰

11.3.4 Parallels in the Apocalypse to the Later Antichrist Myth

It is clear that the evil figures who are portrayed as the opponents of God in Revelation are modelled on traditional mythic figures, in particular, the dragon/sea-monster tradition and the Leviathan/Behemoth figures. The dragon and these two beasts were intended by the writer to represent the Satan figure, the Roman empire personified in its deified and worshipped emperor, and the imperial cult which sought to impose that worship upon the empire's subjects, using the resources of the state to enforce its wishes. It is also apparent that the descriptions of the opponents of God in Revelation share many elements with the earlier Jewish apocalyptic literature, as well as with the later Antichrist literature. In addition, the descriptions in the Apocalypse were themselves to become important source texts for the later Antichrist tradition. These various points of similarity, and of difference, can now be considered, before conclusions are drawn concerning the relevance of the Apocalypse for the origins and development of the Antichrist myth.

70 A. Yarbro Collins [Combat Myth, 166f] criticises the loose use of "Antichrist" by both Bousset and Charles.

(a) **Aspects of the Later Antichrist Myth Present in Revelation** There are numerous aspects of the later Antichrist myth which can be identified in the Book of Revelation. In fact, there are only four which are not to be found in Revelation. Tables T12-14 set out the various categories of material clearly. A comparison with Table T4 will indicate that there was a high degree of formal contact between the traditions used in Revelation and those in the later Antichrist literature. As in the case of 2 Thessalonians, it must of course be kept in mind that the later writers explicitly used this material as a quarry for teaching about the Antichrist figure. Consequently, a high percentage of common material is hardly surprising. Similarly, material from Revelation later understood as describing the Antichrist figure need not have originally had such a sense. Each item, and the overall mixture, will need to be evaluated thoughtfully.

Table T12

Aspects of the Later Antichrist Myth Paralleled in Revelation

Use of OT material	12:1ff; 13:1ff
Endtyrant	13:1ff, etc
Mysterious identity (666)	13:18
Close association with Satan figure	13:2b
Deceit motif	12:9; 13:14; 20:3b
Signs and wonders by satanic powers	13:3,13-15
False prophet theme	13:13-15
Universal conquest & dominion	13-7b-8
Sinful pride and blasphemy	13:1c,6
Claim of divine honours	13:1c,4,6,14f
Persecution	13:7,15-17
Two Witnesses	11:3-13
Three and a half year period	13:5b
Speedy defeat at parousia	19:1-20; 20:1-10
Sovereignty of God	13:5,7f; 17:15-17
Anti-Roman attitudes	chs 2-14, 17-18
Nero legend	13:3; 17:8-18

For the present, it will suffice simply to note these elements of the Antichrist myth which have parallels, to varying degrees, in Revelation. There

are so many parallels that the burden of proof almost falls upon those who would deny that the Antichrist myth was known to the author; were it not for the fact that much of the shared traditions can be more readily explained by the dependence of the later Antichrist literature upon the Apocalypse. Before the relevance of the Apocalypse for the origins of the myth can be decided, further material has to be taken into account.

(b) Aspects of the Later Antichrist Myth not Present in Revelation As mentioned above, further considerations to be advanced shortly concerning the use of the Nero myth in the Apocalypse will strengthen the case that the writer was consciously developing a contrast between Jesus as the Christ on the one hand, and Nero, dressed in the garb of the traditional Endtyrant figure, on the other. However, before that is done, it is necessary to note those elements of the later Antichrist myth which are not found in this book, as well as some features found in Revelation but not in the later Antichrist literature.

Table T13

Aspects of the Later Antichrist Myth Absent from Revelation

Present internal troubles for the church:

 false teachers

 divisions

 apostasy

Special relationship between the Endtyrant and the Jewish people

Clear focus on a single opponent/pretender

Use of the technical term, ἀντίχριστος

Since differences often are more important than similarities in such an exercise as this, these four points need to be evaluated carefully before the conclusion is drawn that the Antichrist myth (or at least its earliest stage) is to be found in Revelation. The significance of these elements not being present in Revelation needs to be considered.

While the letters to the seven churches in chs 2f reflect certain tensions and internal problems, it is interesting to note that the sections of Revelation which most clearly employ apocalyptic traditions, especially chs 12-14, made

no use of the idea of internal difficulties. It is not that such difficulties were unknown to the writer, but rather that they were dealt with in other contexts and without recourse to the kind of traditions most nearly related to the Antichrist myth. In those sections which do show affinities to the Antichrist myth the focus was on external pressures, not internal problems. This is the reverse of the situation found in the Johannine epistles and the third century Antichrist literature.

Another important variation from the later Antichrist literature is the absence of any special relationship between the Endtyrant and the Jewish people. Despite A.J. Beagley's recent study, the focus in those parts of Revelation possibly related to the Antichrist myth seems to be on the relationship between the dragon and the Roman empire as enemies of God and of the church. Neither the dragon nor beast are said to have any special relationship with, or interest in, the Jewish people. This fits very well with the circumstances of a Jewish Christian author from Asia ca 68/69 CE. In that kind of *Sitz im Leben*, the lack of reference to a special relationship between the Endtyrant and the Jews is readily understood, but it is a significant difference from the later Antichrist myth.

The lack of a clear opponent/alternative to the Christ figure is perhaps more significant as evidence counting against the idea that the Antichrist myth is to be found in the Apocalypse. While it is clear that the first beast has many features which parallel or parody the Christ figure, it is also true that some of the features traditionally understood as pertaining to the Antichrist figure are distributed over the dragon and the second beast. Even if the description of the beast from the sea was partly constructed as a parody of Jesus, it remains true that it mostly functions as an opponent of God. The discussion will return to this point, as the multiplicity of evil characters is an aspect which is peculiar to Revelation.

Finally, the complete absence of the word "Antichrist" is surely quite important. The freedom with which so many commentators speak of the Antichrist in Revelation, and even of a pre-Christian Jewish Antichrist myth, would suggest that the absence of the actual word is not significant. To challenge this assumption, is not to assert that the actual term must occur in a passage before it can be identified as an "Antichrist text". However, given the absence of *ψευδόχριστου* as well as *ἀντίχριστος*, it seems that some weight should be given to the idea that the author was not interested in developing the anti-Christ dimensions of his imagery.

Rather than the beast from the sea being an Antichrist figure, it may be more apt to see John's portrait of Christ as a deliberate anti-Caesar symbol. Such a view turns much previous scholarship on its head, but it would seem to be consistent with the approach taken by Yarbrow Collins when she says,

the vilification of the emperor and his allies in Revelation 13 tends toward a definition of Christians as a group who not only refuse to recognize the emperor as divine, but do not even acknowledge his right to kingship or universal rule.⁷¹

(c) **Aspects Peculiar to Revelation** So far, then, it can be seen that there is an impressive number of elements which are common to the Apocalypse and to the later Antichrist literature, but also that there are significant omissions. In addition, of course, there are some ideas found in Revelation which do not occur in the later Antichrist literature, and these need to be considered briefly. The following elements either have no parallel in the later Antichrist literature, or they have a different significance in Revelation.

Table T14
Aspects Peculiar to Revelation

Multiplicity of evil figures
Dying/rising Endtyrant
External focus:
 Combat myth
 Nero myth
 Intense anti-Roman polemic

71 A. Yarbrow Collins, "Vilification", 315. Yarbrow Collins also writes of "an alternative symbolic universe with the risen and glorified Jesus as its focus" being offered to the reader in lieu of the imperial society of Rome. Cf. also D.L. Barr, "The Apocalypse", 39-50; E. Schüssler Fiorenza, "The Followers of the Lamb". E. Käsemann [*Jesus Means Freedom*, 130-43] also draws out the idea of conflicting claims to universal authority by Caesar and Christ. (Cf. especially, p. 134.)

The distribution of the eschatological opponent's traits over three figures, each of whom is really a variant of the dragon/sea-monster myth, is unique to Revelation. While it is true that more of the Antichrist traits were given to the beast from the sea than to either of the other two figures, it is also true that there is an interest in the Satan figure throughout the relevant chapters of Revelation. This sustained interest in the Satan figure's role and destiny is not typical of the later Antichrist literature, and suggests a stage in the development of the myth when interest in the Antichrist figure has not yet supplanted the traditional emphasis on Satan as the opponent of God and of Christ. The dragon and Christ are directly opposed in much of the material in Revelation (cf. 12:1ff; 20:7ff), thus reducing the Christ-opposing role of the beast from the sea.

The extent to which the beast from the land is modelled on the prototype of the Lamb that was slain, also suggests that the beast from the sea did not have quite the primacy in the author's view that it came to possess in the minds of later interpreters. This in turn suggests that even if the first beast was understood as an Antichrist figure, the material in Revelation is really a version of the Satan myth in which the emerging figure of the Antichrist makes an appearance in a supporting role only.

The reference to the wounded head is much more important in Rev 12ff than in any of the later Antichrist literature. Where it occurs in later passages it is because, as an item in Revelation, it cannot be ignored and has to be taken up in some fashion. Here, however, it plays a vital role in identifying Nero with the mythic forces of primeval chaos and of damning the imperial cult as inimical to the cosmic order.

It does even more. Yarbro Collins has argued that Revelation developed the contemporary Nero legend into a *Nero redivivus* myth. She points out that the earliest forms of the Nero legend concerned his return at the head of a Parthian army, but made no mention of Nero having died and revived.⁷² The only evidence for a belief that Nero actually had died and may return from the dead to wreck havoc upon the empire is Rev 13:3 and 17:8-18.

This would be a significant enough aspect thus far, but Collins also argues that the author deliberately developed the Nero legend into a parody of the

72 A. Yarbro Collins, *Combat Myth*, 177. Pp. 177-83 review the relevant passages in SibOr III.63; IV.119-40; V.28-34, 93-110, 137-54, 214-27, 361-84 and in MartIs 4:2-4.

death, resurrection and parousia of Jesus in the phrase, "who was, and is not, and shall be" (cf. 17:8). She observes that this is a "double parody" since it parodies God, who is described in 1:4, 8 and 4:8 as "(the one) who is, who was, and who is to come", and it parodies Jesus "who lived on earth, is now exalted in heaven and will come again soon with the clouds (1:7; 3:11; 16:15; 22:7,12,20)."⁷³

Yarbro Collins dates this radical revamping of the Nero legend to "some twenty years" after Nero's death,⁷⁴ but it makes even more sense when dated to the earlier time proposed by Rowland and adopted in this study. In the immediate aftermath of Nero's death, with rumours about his return rife and a major upheaval in 69 CE when such a pretender did actually appear, the clever linking of Nero with the resurgent power of chaos and the Pit as a deliberate counterpart to Jesus who had conquered death and would soon return to vindicate the elect, was a powerful and strategic move. The parallelism of the two figures was simple, and thus effective:

Christ had died;
he was exalted in glory;
he would return as lord.

Nero had died;
he was lurking in the abyss;
he would return as conqueror.

As long ago as 1871, Ernest Renan suggested a similar contrast. He posited a deliberate contrast, by the author of Revelation, between "Jesus and Nero, the Christ and the Antichrist."⁷⁵ He titled volume four of his History, "The Anti-Christ".

It was noted earlier that Yarbro Collins has shown that both ch 12 and the entire book are focused around the idea of the combat myth, and that she has demonstrated that this myth was in current circulation in the province of Asia.⁷⁶ In this study it is not possible to offer a critique of that kind of a proposal, since it would take the discussion too far from its own focus on data relevant to the origins and development of the Antichrist myth.

However, it should be noted that such a deliberate use of the combat myth, as she proposes, is quite unlike anything seen in subsequent Antichrist literature. In Revelation the combat myth seems to have helped shape the book

73 *Combat Myth*, 185.

74 *Combat Myth*, 184.

75 E. Renan, *Anti-Christ*, iv.

76 *Combat Myth*, especially chs II and V.

as a whole, provided the raw material and the structural patterns for describing the various adversaries of God, and to have been employed as a fierce anti-Roman tool. While Revelation itself naturally mediated some of that combat myth pattern to subsequent Christian literature, the historical context was never quite the same as that in Asia ca 68/69 CE and so the sharp edge of the symbolism was blunted.

The use made of the Nero legend material has been discussed just above. There were occasions, late in the literature examined in the first section of this study, when the Nero legend was drawn into service, but this was not typical of the earlier examples of Antichrist literature. It was seen more in that literature which reflected the bitterness left from imperial persecution, and was not so evident in writers such as Irenaeus, Hippolytus and Tertullian. They were at pains to speak well of the empire, rather than to emulate Revelation. But then their situation was nowhere near as precarious as things had looked from Patmos ca 68 CE!

Related to the use of the Nero legend was the intensity of animosity towards Rome. This is clearly at a peak in Revelation but, as just noted, greatly lowered in the classical Antichrist writings of the third century. The interest in Rome by then was to fit the empire into a larger scenario, not to rejoice in its imminent destruction.

The question of anti-Roman polemic raised the issue of focus on external threats, which is the common element to much that is distinctive about the way Revelation has used this material. The use of the combat myth, the development of the Nero legend into a myth of *Nero redivivus*, and the intensity of anti-Roman feelings were all related to the extreme sense that God's people were under concerted attack by the powers of evil and that the threat to be countered lay outside the church rather than within. This focus definitely runs counter to that seen in the Antichrist literature from 1 John onwards. There the myth is employed against internal opponents, to blacken them with the satanic tag. In Revelation the peculiar historical circumstances have resulted in the external focus, which is so rarely observed in other Antichrist writings of any era.

11.3.5 The Book of Revelation and the Origins of the Antichrist Myth

What can be said of the significance of Revelation for the study of the origins and development of the Antichrist myth? Certain viewpoints have been

indicated throughout the discussion, but it will be helpful if they are gathered together in a final summary.

Revelation played a vital role in the development of the Antichrist myth partly because it gathered into one work a wide range of religious traditions and expressed them in a form which was given canonical status in the Christian church. Having acquired that status, it was in a unique position to influence the subsequent stages in the myth's development since, on the presuppositions of later interpreters, any future version of the myth must be consistent with details provided by Revelation.⁷⁷

Like Daniel almost precisely two hundred years earlier, Revelation was the product of a prophetic response to a specific historical situation in which the people of God saw themselves under direct attack. The author doubtless learned some of his response from Daniel, but he drew on wider traditions as well as the intermediate experience of Jesus in the Christian community, to fashion an interpretation of the events which spoke to Christians in the province of Asia. He developed, in bold strokes, a work with a clarity of expression and a power that has been recognised in many later situations. Its power derives in part from that use of archetypal mythic symbols.

There is nothing in Revelation to suggest that there had been an earlier form of the Antichrist myth, and the elements of the later myth which have been brought together in the Apocalypse do not have the same balance as seen in later Antichrist literature. As suggested earlier, Revelation itself might be better described as a Satan myth, rather than an Antichrist myth. The satanic roles are spread over three symbolic figures. H.B. Swete suggested that Revelation disposed of the beast and the false prophet well before the consummation of all things, so that there could be a clear focus on the character and destiny of the Satan figure.

77 J.H. Charlesworth [NTAP, 30-41] has considered the evidence for the impact of Revelation on subsequent apocalypses, noting how surprisingly small that influence seems to have been. His comments seem to relate to literary influence, more than theological influence, since the presence of such an apocalypse in the NT canon doubtless has helped to maintain apocalyptic eschatology as a theological option for the church.

In one important particular, however, St John has made an advance upon St Paul. The Apocalyptic Beast vanishes before the final **parousia**; a long interval appears to intervene between his disappearance and the end, during which the forces of evil muster around Satan himself, who is thus the ultimate antagonist of Christ and of the Church.⁷⁸

All of these figures have some parallels to the later form of the Antichrist figure, but the beast from the sea seems to have been used to transform the contemporary Nero legend into a **Nero redivivus** myth, in which the beast from the sea/pit is a parody of the risen and returning Christ. Yet, in a sense Christ is represented here as an anti-Caesar, rather than Nero being drawn as an anti-Christ. However, such distinctions quickly became blurred as the power of the symbol which the writer had created became evident. Revelation thus provides the earliest example of a specific anti-Christ figure, as well as being itself a powerful stimulus for a whole new way of conceiving the reality of evil from a Christian perspective. It became the classic presentation against which all subsequent portraits would be compared.

78 H.B. Swete, *Apocalypse*, lxxxi.

12. THE ENDTYRANT TRADITIONS AFTER 70 CE

12.1 SIBYLLINE ORACLES

The Sibylline Oracles preserve, in their various Books, traditions from different times which bear on the history of the Antichrist myth and related ideas. The earlier sections of the SibOr were examined at §8.8. Those parts of that collection which can be dated to the last decades of the first century CE will now be examined. To begin with, SibOr III.63-74 will be considered, and then Books IV and V.

12.1.1 SibOr III.63-74

This important oracle introduces the Nero legend for the first time outside the NT. This passage is an important piece of evidence for that legend and it is often seen as significant for the developing Antichrist myth.

ἐκ δὲ Σεβαστηνῶν ἦξει Βελίαρ
μετόπισθεν
καὶ στήσει ὄρέων ὕψος, στήσει
δὲ θάλασσαν,
ἡέλιον πυρόεντα μέγαν λαμ-
πράν τε σελήνην
καὶ νέκυας στήσει καὶ σήματα
πολλὰ ποιήσει
ἀνθρώποις· ἀλλ' οὐχὶ τελεσ-
φόρα ἔσσειτ' ἐν αὐτῷ,
ἀλλὰ πλανᾷ καὶ δὴ μέροπας,
πολλούς τε πλανήσει
πιστούς τ' ἐκλεκτούς θ'
Ἑβραίους ἀνόμους τε καὶ
ἄλλους
ἀνέρας, οἵτινες οὐπω θεοῦ
λόγον εἰσήκουσαν.
ἀλλ' ὅποταν μέγαλοιο θεοῦ
πελάσωσιν ἀπειλαί,
καὶ δύναμις φλογέουσα δι'
οἴδατος εἰς γαῖαν ἦξη,
καὶ Βελίαρ φλέξη καὶ ὑπερ-

Then Beliar will come from the
"Sebastenoi"
and he will raise up the height of
the 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
many faithful chosen Hebrews, and
also other lawless men
who have not yet listened to the
word of God.
But whenever the threats 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.
[OTP, I,363]

φιάλους ἀνθρώπους
πάντας, ὅσοι τούτῳ πίστιν
ἐνιποιήσαντο.

[SibOr III.63-74 (GCS, 50f)]

This oracle must be dated after 70 CE as it so obviously employs the Nero legend. There is uncertainty as to the precise meaning of ἐκ Σεβαστηνῶν in line 63, but it is probably intended to mean "from the house of Sebaste", that is, from the line of Augustus.¹ This oracle, then, provides a very early reference to the belief that Nero would return to Rome, although not necessarily from the dead. (If the majority date for Revelation, ca 95 CE, is adopted then this oracle would be the earliest extant reference to the Nero legend.) The description has many parallels to the accounts of the Antichrist in later literature, and was cited by both Bousset and Charles as an Antichrist text.²

The advent of this combination Beliar-Nero figure will be accompanied by many signs, although they will be false miracles which apparently do not work properly (III.67). With the aid of these signs Beliar will mislead many of the Jews, as well as a number of gentiles. Ultimately, however, this figure will be disposed of by the intervention of God — at which time those who followed him will also be punished. It is not clear that this really is an Endtyrant passage, since there is no description of conquests, persecutions, and other similar activities usually attributed to such a figure. Its main points may be summarised as follows (Table T15, with its parallels to the Antichrist myth being quite clear.

Table T15
The Beliar Tradition in SibOr III.63-74

Beliar	line 63
Nero legend (ἐκ Σεβαστηνῶν)	63
Mighty signs and wonders	64-67
Deceit	68
Lawlessness	69
Jewish people included	69
Divine sovereignty	70f
Destruction at time appointed by God	72-74

- 1 A. Yarbro Collins [*Combat Myth*, 181f] discusses the interpretation of this phrase, and argues for the meaning "from the line of Augustus".
- 2 W. Bousset, *Der Antichrist*, 60; R.H. Charles, *Revelation*, II,84.

The Jewish character of this oracle is clear from its reference to "faithful chosen Hebrews". It can be readily interpreted within the older Beliar myth traditions discussed at §7. There is nothing to connect this Beliar-Nero figure directly with the Antichrist myth. His advent and activities are not linked to any messianic concepts; it may not even be an Endtyrant passage (except that any Nero myth passage must surely warrant that assessment); and there is even the direct contrast with the later idea that the one miracle which the Antichrist would not be able to perform was the raising of the dead (ApEl 3:12f). However, the ideas expressed in this brief oracle are certainly important as evidence for the appearance of the Nero legend within the Jewish apocalyptic tradition.

12.1.2 SibOr Book IV

Book IV is a composite oracle derived from a hellenistic political oracle which was updated by a Jewish Sibylist late in the first century CE and adapted for religious purposes. It has no sign of any Christian redaction. The hellenistic oracle divides history into ten generations during which time there will be four kingdoms: Assyria will reign for six generations, the Medes for two, Persia for one and the Macedonians for the final generation (IV.49-101). As the Book now stands it has been updated to include a reference to Rome as the final kingdom, without any attempt having been made to smooth out the resulting inconsistency with the original sequence of generations and kingdoms. The Jewish redaction involves an introduction (lines 1-48), a section on Rome (lines 102-51), a description of the evil of the last times (lines 152-72) and a conclusion (lines 173-92) which may have been the original conclusion to the hellenistic oracle.

The original oracle dates to around the time of Alexander himself, as the Macedonians are only allocated a single generation and there are no references to any subsequent developments. There is nothing distinctively Jewish about this anti-Macedonian oracle. It could have been composed by a writer from any of the nations conquered by Alexander. The Jewish redaction, on the other hand, mentions the destruction of the Jerusalem temple (IV.116), uses the legend of Nero's return from the Parthians (lines 119-24 and 138f), and refers to the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 CE (interpreting this as divine judgment for the destruction of the temple).

The Jewish redaction can therefore be dated to the 80s with some confidence. It probably comes from Syria or the Jordan Valley, in view of its stress on baptism as an eschatological rite (SibOr IV.165). Book IV cannot be attributed to the Egyptian Jews associated with Onias because of its negative attitude to temple worship (SibOr IV.6-23).

Book IV has two passages which use the Nero legend, and a third which predicts a time when Asia will be avenged on Rome for the latter's conquests and exploitation. They will be cited first, with comment after the third passage.

καὶ τότε ἀπ' Ἰταλίας βασιλεὺς
 μέγας οἷά τε δράστης
 φεύξεται ἄφαντος ἄπυστος
 ὑπὲρ πόρον Εὐφρήταο,
 ὅπποτε δὴ μητρῶον ἄγος
 στυγεροῖο φόνιοιο
 τλήσεται ἄλλα τε πολλά, κακῆ
 σὺν χειρὶ πιθήσας.
 πολλοὶ δ' ἀμφὶ θρόνῳ Ῥώμης
 πέδον αἰμάξουσιν
 κείκου ἀποδρήσαντος ὑπὲρ
 Παρθίδα γαίαν.
 [SibOr IV.119-24 (GCS, 97f)]

Then a great king will flee from Italy like a runaway slave unseen and unheard over the channel of the Euphrates, when he dares to incur a maternal curse for repulsive murder and many other things, confidently, with wicked hand. When he runs away, beyond the Parthian land, many will bloody the ground for the throne of Rome.
 [OTP, I,387]

ἐς δὲ δύσιν τότε νέικος ἐγειρομένου πολέμιοιο
 ἥξει καὶ Ῥώμης ὁ φυγὰς,
 μέγα ἔγχος αἰείρας,
 Εὐφρήτην διαβάς πολλαῖς ἅμα
 μυριάδεσσιν.
 [SibOr IV.137-39 (GCS, 98)]

Then the strife of war being aroused will come to the west, and a fugitive from Rome will also come, brandishing a great spear, having crossed the Euphrates with many myriads.
 [OTP, I,387]

ἥξει δ' εἰς Ἀσίην πλοῦτος μέγας, ὃν ποτε Ῥώμη αὐτὴ συλήσασα πολυκτέανον κατὰ δῶμα θήκατο· καὶ δις ἔπειτα τοσαῦτα καὶ ἄλλ' ἀποδώσει εἰς Ἀσίην, τότε δ' ἔσται ὑπέρκτησις πολέμοιο.
 [SibOr IV.145-48 (GCS, 99)]

Great wealth will come to Asia, which Rome itself once plundered and deposited in her house of many possessions. She will then pay back twice as much and more to Asia, and then there will be a surfeit of war.
 [OTP, I,387f]

In these examples the Sibyl's negative, indeed, hostile attitude towards Rome is quite clear. In the first two passages, the Nero myth is employed without the embellishments seen in III.63-74. This is a simpler form of the anti-Nero tradition, which describes his flight and his legendary wickedness, but does not identify Nero with any traditional satanic figure such as Beliar. The third passage, SibOr IV.145-148, foretells the doom of Rome. It underlines the hostility to Rome, an eastern Mediterranean attitude with which Jewish writers had cause to identify after 70 CE.

12.1.3 SibOr Book V

Book V consists of six oracles, of which only V.256-259 betray signs of Christian redaction. SibOr V.1-51 serves as an introduction and reviews history from Alexander to Hadrian. The four central oracles (V.52-110, 111-178, 179-285 and 286-433) share a common pattern:-

- a) Oracles against various nations
- b) Return of Nero as the eschatological adversary
- c) Coming of a saviour figure
- d) Destruction (usually by fire).

The final oracle (V.434-530) provides a conclusion to the Book, culminating with a battle of the stars in V.511-31. The prominence of the Nero legend requires a date after 70 CE, while the reference to Hadrian requires a date prior to 132 CE. The bitterness of the complaint against Rome for the destruction of the temple suggests that at least the central oracles date from the 80s. The pessimism of the opening oracle seems to reflect the failure of the Jewish revolt in 132-35 CE, and must be dated after that time. The Egyptian origin of Book V is not disputed as it so evidently continues the major themes of Book III: an interest in the Leontopolis temple, the expectation of a saviour, and the portrayal of the eschatological adversary.

The tense relationship between Jews and gentiles in Egypt during the second half of the first century CE is reflected in the more hostile attitude adopted by the Sibylist, while the bitterness to Rome has increased dramatically and is expressed in the figure of Nero. The writer no longer looked to the Ptolemaic house for redemption, looking instead for divine intervention in the form of a heavenly saviour (V.108f, 155-61, 256-59, 414-25).

In this connection, J.J. Collins (OTP, I,392) notes several parallels between Book V and the Revelation to John. These are: 1) use of the Nero legend (Rev 13:3,18; 17:11); 2) the use of "Babylon" as a perjorative title for Rome (SibOr V.159; Rev 18); 3) the contrast of Jerusalem and Rome (SibOr V.418-25; Rev 18 and 21); and, 4) the sharing of some astral imagery (SibOr V.155-59; Rev 8:10; 9:1).

The continuing bitterness towards Rome in the Jewish circles responsible for Book V can be observed readily in the following two selections. These examples particularly stress the sexual perversity of the Romans.

ἔσσειαι ἐν θνητοῖσι κακοῖς
κακα μοχθήσασα,
ἀλλὰ μενεῖς πανέρημος ὅλους
αἰῶνας ἔσαυτις
(ἔσσεται, ἀλλὰ μενεῖ εἰς
αἰῶνας πανέρημος.)
σὸν στυγέουσι· ἔδαφος, ὅτι
φαρμακίην ἐπόθησας·
μοιχεῖται παρα σοὶ καὶ παίδων
μίξις ἄθεσμος
θηλυγενῆς ἄδικός τε, κακῆ
πόλι, δύσμορε πασῶν.
αἰαὶ πάντ' ἀκάθαρτε πόλι
Λατινίδος αἴης
μαινὰς ἐχιδονοχαρῆς, χήρη
καθεδοῖο παρ' ὄχθας,
καὶ ποταμὸς Τίβερις σε κλαύσ-
εται ἦν παράκοιτιν,
ἦτε μαιφόνον ἦτορ ἔχεις
ἀσεβῆ δέ τε θυμόν.
οὐκ ἔγνωσ, τί θεὸς δύναται, τί
δὲ μηχανάαται;
ἀλλ' ἔλεγες· ἴμνη εἰμὶ καὶ
οὐδεὶς μ' ἐξαλαπάξει."
νῦν δὲ σὲ καὶ σοὺς πάντας
ὀλεῖ θεὸς αἰὲν ὑπάρχων,
κούκετι σου σημεῖον ἔτ'
ἔσσεται ἐν χθονὶ κείνῃ,
ὡς τὸ πάλαι, ὅτε σὰς ὁ
μέγας θεὸς εὖρατο τιμάς.
μεινον, ἄθεσμε, ἴμνη, πυρὶ δὲ
φλεγέθοντι μιγείσα
ταρτάεον οἴκησον ἐς "Αἰδου
χώρον ἄθεσμον.

[SibOr V.162-78 (GCS, 112)]

You will be among evil mortals,
suffering evils,
but you will remain utterly desolate
for all ages yet,
(it will exist, but it will remain
utterly desolate forever),
despising your soil, because you
desired sorcery.
With you are found adulteries and
illicit intercourse with boys.
Effeminate and unjust, evil city,
ill-fated above all.
Alas, city of the Latin land,
unclean in all things,
maenad, rejoicing in vipers, as a
widow you will sit
by the banks, and the River Tiber
will weep for you, its consort.
You have a murderous heart and
impious spirit.
Did you not know what God can do,
what he devises?
But you said, "I alone am, and
no-one will ravage me."
But now God, who is forever, will
destroy you and all your people,
and there will no longer be any sign
of you in that land,
as there was formerly, when the
great God found your honours.
Remain alone, lawless one. Mingled
with burning fire,
inhabit the lawless nether region of
Hades.
[OTP, I,397]

μητρολέται, παύσασθε θράσους
 τόλμης τε κακούργου,
 οἱ τὸ πάλαι παίδων κοίτην
 ἐπορίζετ' ἀνάγνως
 καὶ τέγεσιν πόρνας ἐστήσατε
 τὰς πάλαι ἀγνάς
 ὕβρεσι καὶ κολάσει κάσχημο-
 σύνη πολυμόχθω.
 ἐν σοὶ γὰρ μήτηρ τέκνω ἐμίγη
 ἀθεμίστως,
 καὶ θυγάτηρ γενετῆρι ἐῶ
 συζεύξατο νύμφη·
 ἐν σοὶ καὶ βασιλεῖς στόμα
 δύσμορον ἐξεμίγησαν,
 ἐν σοὶ καὶ κτηνῶν εὖρον
 κοίτην κακοὶ ἄνδρες.
 σίγησον, πανόδυρτε κακῆ πόλι,
 κῶμον ἔχουσα·
 οὐκέτι γὰρ παρὰ σοῖο τὴν τῆς
 φιλοθρέμματος ὕλης
 παρθενικὰ κούραι πῦρ ἔνθεον
 ὠρήσουσιν.

[SibOr V.386-96 (GCS, 123)]

These passages leave no doubt as to the basic hostility with which Rome was regarded. The second passage extended some of anti-Nero attitudes to Romans in general. The Nero myth is even more pronounced in the following passages, which refine that hostility and give it voice as prophecies of doom and destruction.

πεντήκοντα δ' ὅτις κεραίην
 λάχε, κοίρανος ἔσται,
 δεινὸς ὄφις φυσῶν πόλεμον
 βαρύν, ὅς ποτε χεῖρας
 ἧς γενεῆς τανύσας ὀλέσει καὶ
 πάντα ταραξει

ἀθλεύων ἐλάων κτείνων καὶ
 μυρία τολμῶν·
 καὶ τμήξει τὸ δίκυμον ὄρος
 λύθρω τε παλάξει·

ἄλλ' ἔσται καὶ ἄιστος ὀλοῖος·
 εἶτ' ἀνακάμψει

ἰσάζων θεῶ αὐτόν· ἐλέγξει δ'
 οὐ μιν ἔόντα.

[SibOr V.28-34 (GCS, 104f)]

Matricides, desist from boldness and
 evil daring,
 you who formerly impiously catered
 for pederasty
 and set up in houses prostitutes
 who were pure before,
 with insults and punishments and
 toilsome disgrace.
 For in you mother had intercourse
 with child unlawfully,
 and daughter was joined with her
 begetter as bride.
 In you also kings defiled their
 ill-fated mouths.
 In you also evil men practised
 bestiality.
 Be silent, most lamentable evil city,
 which indulges in revelry.
 For no longer in you will virgin
 maidens
 tend the divine fire of sacred
 nourishing wood.
 [OTP, 1,402]

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 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.
 [OTP, 1,393]

ἦξει γὰρ Πέρσης ἐπὶ σὸν
 δάπος ὥστε χάλαξα
 καὶ σὴν γαῖαν ὀλεῖ καὶ
 ἀνθρώπους κακοτέχνους
 αἵματι καὶ νεκύεσσι παρ'
 ἐκπάγλοισί τε βωμοῖς
 βαρβαρόφρων σθεναρὸς πολυ-
 αίματος ἄφρονα λυσσῶν,
 παμπληθεὶ ψαμαθηδὸν ἀπαίξων
 σὸν ὄλεθρον.
 καὶ τότε ἔση πόλεων πολυ-
 ολβος, πολλὰ καμουῖσα.
 κλαύσεται Ἄσις ὅλη δῶρων
 χάριν, ὧν ἀπὸ σεῖο
 στεψαμένη κεφαλὴν ἐχάρη,
 πίπτουσ' ἐπὶ γαίης.
 αὐτὸς δ' ὡς Περσῶν ἔλαχεν
 γαῖαν πολεμίζει
 κτείνας τ' ἄνδρα ἕκαστον
 ὄλον βίον ἐξαλαπάξει,
 ὥστε μένειν μοῖραν τριτάτην
 δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσιν.
 αὐτὸς δ' ἐκ δυσμῶν εἰσπτήσ-
 εται ἄλματι κούφῳ
 σύμπασαν γαῖαν πολιορκῶν,
 πᾶσαν ἐρημῶν.
 ἀλλ' ὅταν ὕψος ἔχη κρατερόν
 καὶ θάρσος ἀηδές,
 ἦξει καὶ μακάρων ἐθέλων πόλιν
 ἐξαλαπάξει,

[SibOr V.93-107 (GCS, 108f)]

Ἑλλάδα τὴν τριτάλαιναν
 ἀναιάξουσι ποιηταί,
 ἠνίκ' ἀπ' Ἰταλίας ἰσθμοῦ
 πλήξειε τένοντα
 τῆς μεγάλης Ῥώμης βασιλεὺς
 μέγας ἰσόθεος φῶς,
 ὄν, φάσ', αὐτὸς ὁ Ζεὺς ἔτεκεν
 καὶ πότνια Ἥρη·
 ὅστις παμμούσῳ φθόγγῳ
 μελιηδέας ὕμνους
 θεατροκοπῶν ἀπολεῖ πολλοὺς
 σὺν μητρὶ ταλαίνῃ.

For the Persian will come onto your
 soil like hail,
 and he will destroy your land and
 evil-devising men
 with blood and corpses, by terrible
 altars,
 a savage-minded mighty man, much
 bloodied, raving nonsense,
 with a full host numerous as sand,
 bringing destruction on you.
 And then, most prosperous of cities,
 you will be in great distress.
 All Asia, falling to the ground, will
 lament for the gifts she enjoyed
 from you
 when she wore a crown on her
 head.
 But the one who obtained the land
 of the Persians will fight,
 and killing every man he will
 destroy all life
 so that a one-third portion will
 remain for wretched mortals.
 He himself will rush in with a light
 bound from the West,
 besieging the entire land, laying it
 all waste.
 But when he attains a formidable
 height and unseemly daring,
 he will also come, wishing to
 destroy the city of the blessed
 ones.
 [OTP, 1,395]

The poets will bewail thrice-
 wretched Greece
 when a great king of great Rome, a
 godlike man
 from Italy, will cut the ridge of the
 isthmus.
 Him, they say, Zeus himself begot
 and lady Hera.
 Playing at theatricals with honey-
 sweet songs rendered
 with melodious voice he will
 destroy many men and his
 wretched mother.
 He will flee from Babylon, a
 terrible and shameless prince

φεύξεται ἐκ Βαβυλῶνος ἄναξ
φοβερός καὶ ἀναιδής,
ὄν πάντες στυγέουσι βροτοὶ
καὶ φῶτες ἄριστοι·
ᾤλεσε γὰρ πολλοὺς καὶ
γαστέρι χεῖρας ἔθηκεν,
εἰς ἀλόχους ἤμαρτε καὶ ἐκ
μιαρῶν ἐτέτυκτο.
ἦξει δ' εἰς Μήδους καὶ
Περσῶν πρὸς βασιλῆσας,
πρώτους οὓς ἐπόθησε καὶ οἷς
κλέος ἐγκατέθηκεν
φωλεύων μετὰ τῶνδε κακῶν εἰς
ἔθνος ἀληθές·
ὅς ναὸν θεότευκτον ἔλεν καὶ
ἔφλεξε πολίτας
λαοὺς εἰσανιόντας ὅσους
ὑμνησα δικαίως.

[SibOr V.137-51 (GCS, 110f)]

μύρεο καὶ σύ, Κόρινθε, τὸν ἐν
σοὶ λυγρὸν ὄλεθρον·
ἠνίκα γὰρ στρεπτοῖσι μίτοις
Μοῖραι τριάδελφοὶ
κλωσάμεναι φεύγοντα δόλω
ἰσθμοῖο παρ' ὄχθην
ἄξουσιν μετέωρον, ἕως
ἐσίδωσιν ἐ πάντες,
τὸν πάλαι ἐκκόψαντα πέτρην
πολυήλατι χαλκῶ,
καὶ σὴν γαῖαν ὀλεῖ καὶ κόψει,
ὡς προτέθειται.
τούτῳ γὰρ τοι δῶκε θεὸς
μένος ἐς τὸ ποιῆσαι
οἷά τις οὐ πρότερος τῶν
σμπάντων βασιλῆων·
πρῶτα μὲν ἐκ τρισσῶν κεφα-
λῶν σὺν πληγάδι ρίζας
σπησάμενος μεγάλως ἐτέροις
δώσειε πάσασθαι,
ὥστε φαγεῖν σάρκας γονέων
βασιλῆος ἀνάγνου.
πᾶσι γὰρ ἀνθρώποισι φόνος
καὶ δείματα κείται
εἵνεκα τῆς μεγάλης πόλεως
λαοῦ τε δικαίου

whom all mortals and noble men
despise.
For he destroyed many men and laid
hands on the womb.
he sinned against spouses, and was
sprung from an abominable
people.
He will come to the Medes and to
the kings of the Persians,
those whom he first desired and to
whom he gave glory,
lurking with these evil ones against
a true people.
He seized the divinely built Temple
and burned the citizens
and peoples who went into it, men
who I rightly praised.
[OTP, I,396]

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 murders 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.
[OTP, I,398]

σωζομένου διὰ παντός ὄν
ἔξοχον εἶχε Πρόνοια.
[SibOr V.214-27 (GCS, 114)]

ἔσσειται ὑστατίῳ καιρῷ περὶ
τέρμα σελήνης

κοσμομανῆς πόλεμος καὶ ἐπί-
κλοπος ἐν δολότητι.

ἦξει δ' ἐκ περάτων γαίης
μητροκτόνος ἀνὴρ
φεύγων ἠδὲ νόῳ ὀξύστομα
μερμηρίζων,
ὅς πᾶσαν γαίαν καθελεῖ καὶ
πάντα κρατήσει
πάντων τ' ἀνθρώπων φρονι-
μώτερα πάντα νοήσει.
ἦς χάριν ὤλετό τ' αὐτός, ἐλεῖ
ταύτην παραχρήμα.

ἄνδρας τ' ἐξολέσει πολλοὺς
μεγάλους τε τυράννους
πάντας τ' ἐμπρήσει ὡς
οὐδέποτε ἄλλος ἐποίει,
τοὺς δ' αὖ πεπτηῶτας
ἀνορθώσει διὰ ζῆλον.
ἔσται δ' ἐκ δυσμῶν πόλεμος
πολὺς ἀνθρώποισιν.
[SibOr V.361-71 (GCS, 122)]

There will come to pass in the last
time about the waning of the
moon

a war which will throw the 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.

[OTP, I,401f]

While Nero was not mentioned by name in any of these passages, there were sufficient allusions to his actions as emperor to make the identification definite. The details of the Nero myth, as it occurs in SibOr IV-V, are set out conveniently at Table T16, below.

While there are clearly many parallels to the third century Antichrist literature, these passages cannot simply be understood as examples of the Antichrist myth. They point instead to the diversity of the Nero myth, a myth which was presumably developing its own definitive form at this very time. It is about the time of SibOr V that the Johannine epistles were written, and they refer to the Antichrist figure by name for the first time. Between the time of SibOr V and the time of Irenaeus the Antichrist myth develops, and in doing so it comes to exhibit many similarities to the Nero legend recorded in SibOr. That, surely, cannot be mere coincidence. Rather, it seems that some link must be postulated between the people producing these oracles and the

Christians who, at the same time and over the succeeding few decades, produced the myth of the Antichrist.

Table T16
The Nero Myth in SibOr IV-V

Excessively evil behaviour	IV.122; V.387-95
Matricide	IV.121; V.30f, 142-45, 363-66, 386
Athletic and cultural prowess	V.28-31, 136-42
Symbolic number for name	V.28
Flight	IV.19; V.144
Parthian refuge	IV.120, 123; V.147-49
Chaos after flight	IV.124
A menace after departure	V.33
Return with Parthian army	IV.137-39; V.93-105, 361-71
Divine sovereignty	V.219-21
Rome punished	IV.145-48; V.35, 98-103, 158-61, 225-27
Three kings defeated	V.222f
Universal conquests	V.365
Claim divine honours	V.34
Destruction by God	V.34, 174

12.2 THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS

The Epistle of Barnabas is an anonymous work, attributed to the apostle Barnabas by the Alexandrian church and by some other Fathers.¹ Although written in the form of a letter, it is in reality a general treatise on the pressing question of Jewish-Christian relations. The bulk of the work (chs 1-17) consists of an argument for an allegorical interpretation of the Jewish scriptures, rather than the literal interpretation then favoured by Jewish teachers, while the remainder of the book (chs 18-21) comprises a moral code of the "Two Ways" which is similar to that found in the Didache but is probably a slightly earlier version.²

That the epistle may have been written in Alexandria is suggested by its preference for allegorical interpretation,³ the possible debt to Philo, and from its early acceptance by Alexandrian Christians. The presence of a large and influential Jewish community at Alexandria is also consistent with the composition there of such a work, which addresses itself to Jewish-Christian relationships. The date of Barnabas depends largely on the interpretation of Barn 16:3-4, with its pointed reference to the destruction of Jerusalem.

πέρας γέ τοι πάλιν λέγει·
 Ἰδοῦ, οἱ καθελόντες τὸν ναὸν
 τοῦτον αὐτοὶ αὐτὸν οἰκοδο-
 μήσουσιν. γίνεται διὰ γὰρ τὸ
 πολεμεῖν αὐτοὺς καθηρέθη ὑπὸ
 τῶν ἐχθρῶν· νῦν καὶ αὐτοὶ οἱ
 τῶν ἐχθρῶν ὑπηρετᾶται ἀνοικοδο-
 μήσουσιν αὐτόν.

[Barn 16:3f (AV, 30)]

Further he also says, "Behold, those who destroyed this temple shall themselves build it." It is happening! For through their warring it was destroyed by the enemy; and now the very servants of the enemy will build it up again.

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- 1 LITERATURE: B. Altaner, *Patrology*, 80-82; L.W. Barnard, *Studies in the Apostolic Fathers*; R.H. Connolly, "Didache in Relation to the Epistle of Barnabas", 237-53; ---, "Barnabas and the Didache", 113-46 & 225-48; K. Bihlmeyer (ed), *Apostolische Väter*, xx-xxiv, 10-34; W. Eltester, "Barnabas, Epistle of" IDB 1,357-58; R.A. Kraft, *Épître de Barnabé*; K. Lake, *Apostolic Fathers*, I; J. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 335-409; J. Quasten, *Patrology*, I,85-92; J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the NT*, 313-19; J. Schmid, "Barnabas" RAC I,1212-17; P. Vielhauer, *Literatur* 599-612; H. Windisch, *Barnabasbrief*; A.L. Williams, "Date of the Epistle of Barnabas", 337-46.
- 2 Cf. L.W. Barnard, "The Dead Sea Scrolls, Barnabas, the Didache and the Later History of the 'Two Ways'" in *Studies*, 87-108.
- 3 But see A.L. Williams ["Date", 340] for a contrary view on this point.

This passage clearly dates the epistle later than 70 CE, but has often been understood as reflecting an expectation that Hadrian would allow the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Consequently, the work is frequently dated late in Hadrian's period. However, such a late date seems inconsistent with internal evidence which points to a time during the Flavian dynasty.⁴

Since the writer alluded to eschatological themes at several points in the work, there are a number of passages in Barnabas which may be significant for a study of the origins of the Antichrist myth. While this work never used the actual word "Antichrist," it was contemporary with the Johannine epistles and SibOr IV-V. It therefore provides a further sample of the tradition from the last quarter of the first century CE; one which may add to an understanding of the sources from which the Antichrist myth was drawn.

The points of possible contact with the Antichrist myth are listed in Table T17. As can be seen from that Table, there are only a few points of contact in the eschatological passages of Barnabas. However, these are sufficient to invite consideration of any light which may be shed on the origins and early development of the Antichrist myth by the Epistle of Barnabas.

4 The internal evidence to be considered includes the following. 1.) The phrase διὰ γὰρ τὸ πολέμευ suggests a date when only one Jewish war had been fought. (The similar phrase in Justin Martyr, *Dial.*, where he refers to the war of 132-135 CE as illustrates the turn of phrase more likely to have been used in Barnabas if more than one Jewish war had occurred.) 2.) In any case, it is doubtful whether Hadrian's actions could have been intended. Contrary to many commentators on this passage, there is no evidence that Hadrian ever planned to rebuild a Jewish temple in Jerusalem [cf the discussion in Schürer-Vermes, *History* I,540ff]. 3.) Hadrian's plan was to erect a Roman (pagan) temple — and that would scarcely have qualified as fulfilment of the prophecy! 4.) The writer's own comments at 16:6ff suggest that the "new temple" to be raised up was the spiritual temple of the Christians. 5.) The citation of Dan 7 in Barn 4:1-5 (see the discussion below for the text) twice used the expression "three of the kings under one", a phrase which is probably to be understood as a reference to the triumvirate of the early Flavian period [cf. J.B. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 240f; A.L. Williams, "Date", 343f]. 6.) A date during the Flavian period would also be consistent with the anti-Jewish tone of the Epistle for this was a time when the two communities were refining their respective boundaries, and when the split between synagogue and church was particularly sharp. The tensions between Jews and Christians were heightened after the Jewish revolt of 66-73 and the subsequent "troubles" in Egypt and Cyrene in 72 and 74. 7.) The apparent lack of knowledge of the written Gospels would also suggest an early date rather than a date in the second century.

Table T17
Endtyrant Traditions in Barnabas

Satan figure	2:1,10b; 18:1f
Use of Daniel	4:4f
Human Endtyrant	4:4f, 9b, 13
Deception, error	2:10b; 4:1
6000 year scheme	15:4f
Speedy end of Endtyrant	15:5
Antipathy to Rome	4:4f; 16:3f

12.2.1 Satan and the Demonic Powers in Barnabas

It is clear that the primary evil figure in Barnabas remained the Satan figure of traditional Jewish and Christian thought. This can be seen as the most natural interpretation of 2:1,10b and 18:1f.

Ἡμερῶν οὖν οὐσῶν πονηρῶν
καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἐνεργούντος
ἔχοντος τὴν ἐξουσίαν, ὀφείλ-
ομεν ἑαυτοῖς προσέχοντες
ἐκζητεῖν τὰ δικαιώματα κυρίου.

[Barn 2:1 (AV, 11)]

Since the days are evil, and that the worker of evil himself has power, we ought to take care ourselves to seek out the ordinances of the Lord.

ἀκριβεύεσθαι οὖν ὀφείλομεν,
ἀδελφοί, περὶ τῆς σωτηρίας
ἡμῶν, ἵνα μὴ ὁ πονηρὸς
παρεῖσδυσιν πλάνης ποιήσας
ἐν ἡμῖν ἐκσφενδονήσῃ ἡμᾶς
ἀπὸ τῆς ζωῆς ἡμῶν.

[Barn 2:10b (AV, 11f)]

We then, brethren, should carefully enquire concerning our salvation, so that the evil one may not make a deceitful entry into us and hurl us away from our life.

διαφορὰ δὲ πολλὴ τῶν δύο
ὁδῶν. ἐφ' ἧς μὲν γὰρ εἰσιν
τεταγμένοι φωταγωγοὶ ἄγγελοι
τοῦ θεοῦ, ἐφ' ἧς δὲ ἄγγελοι
τοῦ σατανᾶ. καὶ ὁ μὲν ἐστὶν
κύριος ἀπὸ αἰώνων καὶ εἰς

Now there is a great difference between the two ways. For over the one are set light-bringing angels of God, but over the other angels of Satan. While the one Lord is from eternity to eternity, the

τοὺς αἰῶνας, ὁ δὲ ἄρχων
καιροῦ τοῦ νῦν τῆς ἀνομίας.

[Barn 18:1b-2 (AV, 31)]

other is the ruler of the present
time of lawlessness.

Ἡ δὲ τοῦ μέλανος ὁδὸς ἐστὶν
σκολιὰ καὶ κατάρως μεστή.
ὁδὸς γάρ ἐστὶν θανάτου
αἰωνίου μετὰ τιμωρίας, ἐν ᾗ
ἐστὶν τὰ ἀπολλύοντα τὴν
ψυχὴν αὐτῶν· εἰδωλολατρεία,
θρασύτης, ὕψος δυνάμεως,
ὑπόκρισις, διπλοκαρδία,
μοιχεία, φόνος, ἀρπαγή, ὑπερ-
ηφανία, παράβασις, δόλος,
κακία, αὐθάδεια, φαρμακεία,
μαγεία, πλεονεξία, ἀφοβία
θεοῦ· διώκται τῶν ἀγαθῶν,
μισοῦντες ἀλήθειαν, ἀγαπῶν-
τες ψεῦδος.

[Barn 20:1f (AV, 33)]

But the way of the Black One is
crooked and full of cursing, for it
is the way of eternal death with
punishment, and in it are the things
that destroy their soul: idolatry,
boldness, arrogance of power,
hypocrisy, duplicity, adultery,
murder, robbery, pride, trans-
gression, fraud, malice, willfulness,
enchantments, magic, covetousness,
the lack of the fear of God;
persecutors of the good, haters of
the truth, lovers of lies.

There seems no reason to doubt that these are simply references to the Satan figure. Although it is impossible to rule out a reference to an Antichrist type of figure such as Beliar had become in the Sibylline Oracles by this time, this seems unlikely. The verses in ch 18 suggest the traditional dualism of good and evil angels, each fulfilling allotted roles in human experience, with the Satan figure as the ruler of this age in the Two Age scheme of Jewish apocalyptic thought. "The evil one" is, of course, a generic term for Satan and is used in the Lord's Prayer in just that generic sense. By itself it has no connection with the Antichrist tradition, even though the use of the deceit motif shows the author to be using ideas and expressions which were used in other circles for the Antichrist figure (cf. 2 John 7).

12.2.2 Endtyrant Traditions

If the previous passages used expressions that were elsewhere coming to be used of the Antichrist figure, Barn 4:1-14 is even more significant as various apocalyptic elements are combined including references to Daniel 7, an individual human Endtyrant, the theme of deception and error, and an

anti-Roman polemic. The key portions of the text of this important section read as follows:

Δεῖ οὖν ἡμᾶς περὶ τῶν
ἐνεστῶτων ἐπιπολὺ ἐρευνῶντας
ἐκζητεῖν τὰ δυνάμενα ἡμᾶς
σῶζειν. φύγωμεν οὖν τελείως
ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ἔργων τῆς
ἀνομίας, μήποτε καταλάβῃ
ἡμᾶς τὰ ἔργα τῆς ἀνομίας·
καὶ μισήσωμεν τὴν πλάνην
τοῦ νῦν καιροῦ, ἵνα εἰς τὸν
μέλλοντα ἀγαπηθῶμεν. μὴ
δῶμεν τῇ ἑαυτῶν ψυχῇ ἄνεσιν,
ὥστε ἔχειν αὐτὴν ἐξουσίαν
μετὰ ἀμαρτωλῶν καὶ πονηρῶν
συντρέχειν, μήποτε ὁμοιωθῶμεν
αὐτοῖς. τὸ τέλειον σκάνδαλον
ἤγγικεν, περὶ οὗ γέγραπται,
ὡς Ἐνὼχ λέγει. εἰς τοῦτο
γὰρ ὁ δεσπότης συντέτμηκεν
τοὺς καιροὺς καὶ τὰς ἡμέρας,
ἵνα ταχύνη ὁ ἠγαπημένος
αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν κληρο-
νομίαν ἦξη. λέγει δὲ οὕτως
καὶ ὁ προφήτης· Βασιλείαι
δέκα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς βασιλεύ-
σουσιν, καὶ ἐξαναστήσεται
ὄπισθεν μικρὸς βασιλεύς, ὃς
ταπεινώσει τρεῖς ὑφ' ἐν τῶν
βασιλέων. ὁμοίως περὶ τοῦ
αὐτοῦ λέγει Δαυὶδ· Καὶ εἶδον
τὸ τέταρτον θηρίον τὸ
πονηρὸν καὶ ἰσχυρὸν καὶ
χαλεπώτερον παρὰ πάντα τὰ
θηρία τῆς θαλάσσης, καὶ ὡς
ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἀνέτειλεν δέκα
κέρατα, καὶ ἐξ αὐτῶν μικρὸν
κέρας παραφυάδιον.

[Barn 4:1-5 (AV, 12f)]

διὸ προσέχωμεν ἐν ταῖς
ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις· οὐδὲν γὰρ
ὠφελήσει ἡμᾶς ὁ πᾶς χρόνος
τῆς ζωῆς καὶ τῆς πίστεως
ἡμῶν. ἐὰν μὴ νῦν ἐν τῷ
ἀνόμῳ καιρῷ καὶ τοῖς

It is necessary that we enquire earnestly into the things which now are, and seek out those which are able to save us. So, then, let us flee completely from all the works of lawlessness, lest the works of lawlessness possess us; and let us hate the error of this present time, so that we may be loved in that which is to come. Let us give no freedom to our souls to have authority to consort with sinners and wicked men, lest we be made like them. The final stumbling block is at hand, concerning which it was written, as Enoch says, "For to this end the Lord has cut short the times and the days, in order that his beloved should make haste and come to his inheritance." And the prophet also says, "Ten kingdoms shall reign upon the earth, and there shall arise up after them a little king, who shall subdue three of the kings under one." In a similar way, Daniel says concerning him, "And I beheld the fourth beast, wicked and powerful and more fierce than all the beasts of the sea, and that ten horns sprang from it, and out of them a little horn as an off-shoot, and that it subdued under one three of the great horns."

So then, let us pay heed in the last days, for the whole time of our life and our faith will profit us nothing unless we resist, as becomes the sons of God in this present evil time, against the offences which

μέλλουσιν σκανδάλοις, ὡς
πρέπει υἱοῖς θεοῦ, ἀντιστῶμεν.
[Barn 4:9b (AV, 14)]

are to come; that the Black One
may have no opportunity of entry.

ἵνα μήποτε ἐπαναπαυόμενοι
ὡς κλητοὶ ἐπικαθυπνώσωμεν
ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις ἡμῶν, καὶ ὁ
πονηρὸς ἄρχων λαβὼν τὴν
καθ' ἡμῶν ἐξουσίαν ἀπόσῃται
ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ
κυρίου.
[Barn 4:13 (AV, 14)]

So that we might never rest as the
elect, and slumber in our sins, lest
the wicked ruler gain power over us
and cast us out from the kingdom
of the Lord.

The Endtyrant traditions in Barnabas are clearly derivative, and look back to Daniel (as understood in early Christian eschatology) for their inspiration. The focus, as in most early Christian apocalyptic, remains on the value of the apocalyptic tradition for paranesis. There is little interest in apocalyptic speculation; no elaboration on the figure of the Endtyrant. Rather, traditional teaching on eschatology is used as a basis for exhortation.

One of the few elements to be developed at all, was the idea that the Endtyrant would appear after six thousand years of human history had been experienced. This idea was also noted in Irenaeus. Here it is related, within Barnabas, to ideas of divine sovereignty. It serves to undergird the belief that even such evil times were within the divine plan, and would culminate with the Christ figure destroying the power of the Satan/Antichrist figures in a speedy demonstration of divine victory.

προσέχετε, τέκνα, τί λέγει τὸ
συντελέσειεν ἐν ἕξ ἡμέραις.
τοῦτο λέγει, ὅτι ἐν ἑξακισ-
χιλίαις ἔτεσιν συντελέσει
κύριος τὰ σύμπαντα· ἡ γὰρ
ἡμέρα παρ' αὐτῷ σημαίνει
χίλια ἔτη. αὐτὸς δὲ μοι
μαρτυρεῖ λέγων· Ἴδού, ἡμέρα
κυρίου ἔσται ὡς χίλια ἔτη.
οὐκοῦν, τέκνα, ἐν ἕξ ἡμέραις,
ἐν τοῖς ἑξακισχιλίαις ἔτεσιν
συντελεσθήσεται τὰ σύμπαντα.
Καὶ κατέπαυσεν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ
ἑβδόμῃ. τοῦτο λέγει· ὅταν
ἔλθῶν ὁ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ καταρ-
γήσει τὸν καιρὸν τοῦ ἀνόμου

Notice, children, what is meant in
the statement, "He made an end in
six days." It means this, that in six
thousand years the Lord will make
an end of everything, for a day
with him means a thousand years ...
So then, children, "in six days,"
that is, in six thousand years,
everything will be completed. "And
he rested on the seventh day." This
means, when his son comes he will
destroy the time of the lawless one,
and will judge the godless, and will
change the sun and the moon and
the stars.

καὶ κρινεῖ τοὺς ἀσεβεῖς καὶ
 ἀλλάξει τὸν ἥλιον καὶ τὴν
 σελήνην καὶ τοὺς ἀστέρας.
 [Barn 15:4f (AV, 29)]

Read in the context of the contemporary works such as the Sibylline Oracles and the Johannine epistles, and against the background of Daniel, the synoptic gospels and 2 Thessalonians, this epistle is not far removed from the Antichrist tradition. On the other hand, neither the Nero legend nor the Antichrist myth are mentioned directly, and it is far from certain that the author was familiar with them. The most that can be said is that this writer seems to share the widespread hostility to Rome after 70 CE and that he expected some kind of eschatological adversary to appear shortly. One role of this "stumbling block", as the adversary is at times called, would be to execute the divine judgment upon Rome.

It would seem that the epistle represents one strand of Christian tradition from the last quarter of the first century. This strand of early Christian tradition was not familiar with the Antichrist myth but held views that were quite similar. It drew upon many of the same traditional ideas (lawlessness, the Daniel traditions, etc) and anticipated an imminent end, subsequent to the appearance of an Endtyrant. This eschatological adversary would be related to the activity of the Satan figure in some way, but the precise relationship was not spelt out in the epistle. This whole complex of ideas included a negative attitude to the Roman empire, which was understood as the fourth beast of Dan 7, and whose current ruler, the Flavians, were expected to be undone by the little horn. This was possibly a use of the Nero legend, but is perhaps better understood as an independent and parallel idea, since there is nothing to suggest a knowledge of the theological development of the legend into a Nero *redivivus* myth as seen in Revelation.

12.3 4 EZRA

The Fourth Book of Ezra is one of the more significant Jewish writings from the end of the first century CE.¹ A part of the wider Ezra corpus of literature, 4 Ezra was included in the Latin Vulgate as "2 Esdras". In that

1 LITERATURE: R.L. Bensly & M.R. James (eds), *Fourth Book of Ezra*; P.-M. Bogaert, "Les apocalypses contemporaines", 47-68; G.H. Box, *Ezra-Apocalypse*; —, "4 Ezra" APOT II, 542-624; J.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepi-*

traditional deutero-canonical form the work included four additional chapters: 1-2 and 15-16, sometimes designated 5 Ezra and 6 Ezra. 4 Ezra is also known as the Ezra Apocalypse, but should not be confused with the similar sounding work, the Apocalypse of Ezra.

4 Ezra (ie chapters 3-14 of the deutero-canonical work, 2 Esdras) is a Jewish work in the form of seven revelations to Ezra by the angel Uriel. Using this classical apocalypse genre, the writer addressed matters of theodicy concerning the punishment of Israel and the fate of the wicked; and he speculated on the coming of the Messiah. The first three visions take the form of dialogues between the seer and the angel; the next three are symbolic visions; while the seventh is a narrative of the revelation of the sacred books to Ezra.

4 Ezra has been dated to the last decades of the first century CE,² and was probably composed in Palestine. Its original language was probably Hebrew,³ although it is now extant in various languages of which the most important versions are the Syriac and Latin.⁴ The citations of 4 Ezra below will be taken from the Latin version edited by R.L. Bensly and M.R. James.

grapha, 111-16; J.J. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 156-70; G. Dellling, *Bibliographie*, 160-62; A.-M. Denis, *Introduction*, 194-200; H. Duensing, "Fifth and Sixth Books of Ezra" *NTA* II, 689-703; L.L. Grabbe, "Chronography", 49-64; W. Harnisch, *Verhängnis und Verheissung der Geschichte: Untersuchungen zum Zeit- und Geschichtsverständnis im 4. Buch Ezra und in der syrischen Baruchapokalypse* (FRLANT, 97; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969); —, "Ironie der Offenbarung", 79-104; H.C. Kee, "The Man' in Fourth Ezra", 199-208; A.F.J. Klijn, "Textual Criticism of IV Ezra", 217-28; M.A. Knibb, "Apocalyptic and Wisdom in 4 Ezra", 56-74; —, "2 Esdras", 76-314; R.A. Kraft, "'Ezra' Materials in Judaism and Christianity", *ANRW* II.19.1, 119-36; B.M. Metzger, "Fourth Book of Ezra" *OTP*, I, 517-59; J.R. Mueller, "Prolegomenon", 259-68; J.M. Myers, *I and II Esdras*; G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 287-394; E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 409-28; H. Schneider, "Esdras" *LThK* 3, 1101-03; J. Schreiner, "Das 4. Buch Ezra" *JSHRZ* V.5, 289-411; Schürer-Vermes, *History*, III.1, 294-306; M.E. Stone, *IV Ezra* (Hermeneia; forthcoming); —, "4 Ezra" in *Jewish Writings*, 412-4; P.G.R. de Villiers, "Understanding the Way of God", 357-78; B. Violet, *Die Esra-Apokalypse*.

2 This choice of date is primarily due to the reference to the three heads of the eagle in 4 Ezra 11-13, a clear reference to the Flavian rulers (as in Barn 4:1-5). The reference to a period of thirty years between the destruction of the temple and the first vision, while part of the fiction of a setting in the Babylonian exile, is a probable pointer to a date ca 100 CE. On the Domitian period as the most probable date see, M.A. Knibb, "2 Esdras", 104; B.M. Metzger, "Fourth Book", 520; J.M. Myers, *Esdras*, 129ff; G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 292; Schürer-Vermes, *History*, III.1, 297ff; M.E. Stone, *Jewish Writings*, 412. M.E. Stone [*Jewish Writings*, 643] notes that a dissenting position is argued by J. Schwartz, "Date de IV Esdras" in *Mélanges André Neher* (Paris: 1975) 191-96.

3 Cf. B.M. Metzger, "Fourth Book" in *OTP* I, 519f.

4 For a concise but thorough discussion of the textual issues see B.M. Metzger, "Fourth Book", 518f. Cf. A.F.J. Klijn, "Textual Criticism".

4 Ezra was addressed primarily to internal Jewish needs in the period after the destruction of the temple. To some extent it provided guidance as they sought to adjust to a new era. The Jewish people were without the temple, but they retained a firm belief in their status as the chosen people, and in the importance of the Torah. As a result, while there is a strong messianic element in parts of 4 Ezra, there are not the bitter anti-Roman tirades seen in the more or less contemporary texts in SibOr IV and V.

12.3.1 Eschatological Themes in 4 Ezra

While the eschatology of 4 Ezra had some similarity to the elements identified earlier in the Antichrist tradition, there were also significant differences. There were five aspects of the myth which are paralleled in 4 Ezra and, judging by their distribution over the seven vision accounts, were of some importance to the author. These were: recourse to Daniel for teaching on the subject; the belief that the Roman empire was the final human kingdom before the end; an emphasis on the divine sovereignty; the occurrence of cosmic disorders; and, possibly, the idea of an individual human Endtyrant. These will be examined briefly below, but their distribution throughout 4 Ezra is indicated in Table T18 opposite.

In addition, there were a number of aspects found in the Antichrist myth which occur as minor themes in 4 Ezra: deceit (11:40), false teaching (5:1a), apostasy (5:1b), persecution (11:41-42), a final highpoint of evil (5:2; 14:17), the hybris of the Endtyrant (11:43), his universal power (5:6), perhaps the three and a half year period (5:4), the desecration of the temple (6:19?), the two eschatological witnesses, and the speedy destruction of the Endtyrant (11:45) at the coming of the Messiah (13:1ff). These aspects will not be examined any further as they simply represent further examples of the traditions reviewed in §9. Their distribution throughout 4 Ezra is also indicated in Table T18.

As their absence from Table T18 indicates, there were also several aspects of the Antichrist myth missing from 4 Ezra: signs and wonders performed by the Endtyrant; his claims to divine status; details concerning the advent of this figure; and any special relationship between him and the Jewish people. The absence of any reference to divine claims by the Roman emperors is notable, especially for a work of the Domitian period. It may reflect the special status enjoyed by Jews, in contrast to the situation of Christians. The failure to

Table T18
Aspects of the Antichrist Myth Paralleled in 4 Ezra

	3:1-5:19	5:21-6:34	6:35-9:25	9:26-10:59	11:1-12:39	13:1-53	14:1-48
Use of Daniel					x	x	
Endtyrant figure:							
Nero legend	?						
Deceit					x		
Signs & wonders							
False teaching	x						
Apostasy		x					
Persecution					x		
Climax of evil	x						x
Hybris					x		
Divine claims							
God's sovereignty	x	x	x		x		
Activities of Endtyrant:							
Defeats 3 kings					x		
Universal power	x						
3½ year reign	?						
Desecrates temple		?		?			
Two witnesses		x					
Cosmic disorders	x	x	x				
Speedy doom					x		
Parousia of Messiah					x		
Antipathy to Rome	x			x	x		

speak of any special relationship with the Jewish people, or the rebuilding of the temple, or the Endtyrant's session in the temple is hardly surprising in the generation immediately after the destruction of the temple.

Turning, then, to those elements which are common to 4 Ezra and to the Antichrist myth, and which are given more emphasis in 4 Ezra, two points will require brief separate consideration, while the remainder can be discussed together. The first of these concerns the interest in divine sovereignty, which was a major theme in 4 Ezra, whose character as a theodicy is widely recognised. This theme permeates the entire book, but may be particularly observed in 4:33-52; 6:18-28; and 11:44, where it is related to the idea that God knows the timing of the final judgment, and events are moving in

accordance with the divine timetable. The following citation from 6:18-20 will illustrate this point.

Et dixit, ecce dies uniuert, et erit quando adpropinquare incipio, ut uisitem habitantes in terra. Et quando inquirere incipiam ab eis qui iniuste nocuerunt iniustitia sua, et quando suppleta fuerit humilitas Sion, Et cum supersignabitur saeculum quod incipiet pertransire, haec signa faciam: [4 Ezra 6:18-20 (Bensly, 21f)]

"Behold, the days are coming, and it shall be that when I draw near to visit the inhabitants of the earth, and when I require from the doers of iniquity the penalty of their iniquity, and when the humiliation of Zion is complete, and when the seal is placed on the age which is about to pass away, then I will show these signs:" [OTP, 1,535]

This passage is followed by a lengthy description of the signs which will indicate that the time of the end has arrived (6:20-28), an idea found in other Jewish and Christian apocalyptic works, and a tradition also shared with the Antichrist myth literature. This interest in cosmic disorders prior to the time of judgment, is the other theme which requires at least some consideration (5:5-13; 6:20-28; 8:63-9:6). This idea was seen in some of the later writings that dealt with the destruction of the Antichrist, but has not been a common element in the eschatological traditions up to this point. Its occurrence here almost seems to be a transposition of the signs and wonders theme, although there are some Jewish and Christian precedents for the final woes (cf. the idea of the birthpangs of the new age: Hosea 13:13; Zech 14:13; Dan 12:1; Mark 13:8; Rev 12:1-6). The following passage is typical of these descriptions in 4 Ezra.

et respondi et dixi: Ecce nunc, domine, demonstrasti mihi multitudinem signorum quae incipies facere in nouissimis, sed non demonstrasti mihi quo tempore. Et respondit ad me et dixit: metiens metire in temetipso, et erit cum uideris quoniam transiuit pars quaedam signorum quae praedicta sunt, Tunc intelleges quoniam ipsum est tempus, in quo incipiet altissimus uisitare saeculum qui ab eo factus est. Et quando uidebitur in saeculo motio locorum, populorum turbatio, gentium cogitationes, ducum inconstantia, principum turbatio, Tunc intelleges quoniam de his erat altissimus locutus a diebus qui fuerunt ant ab initio. [4 Ezra 8:63-9:4 (Bensly, 45)]

Then I answered and said, "Behold, O Lord, you have now shown me a multitude of the signs which you will do in the last times, but you have not shown me when you will do them." He answered me and said, "Measure carefully in your mind, and when you see that a certain part of the predicted signs are past, then you will know that it is the very time when the Most High is about to visit the world which he has made. So when there shall appear in the world earthquakes, tumult of peoples, intrigues of nations, wavering of leaders, confusion of princes, then you know that it was of these that the Most High spoke from the days that were of old, from the beginning." [OTP, 1,544]

12.3.2 Rome and the Endtyrant in 4 Ezra

So far, 4 Ezra has not provided anything requiring a knowledge of the Antichrist myth. The ideas noted so far have not moved beyond the familiar bounds of Jewish apocalyptic literature. The recourse to the Daniel traditions (cf. the Eagle Vision, chs 11-12), the negative attitude towards Rome (seen in 3:27ff; 5:3; and 10:21ff; but most of all in the Eagle Vision and its subsequent interpretation), and the possibility that 4 Ezra referred to an individual Endtyrant, may be relevant to the history of the Antichrist myth.

Table T19
The Roman Empire in the Eschatology of 4 Ezra

The First Vision:

"Babylon" pseudonym	3:28, 31b
Terror & chaos in world	5:1a
False teaching, apostasy	5:1b
Highpoint of evil	5:2
Rome laid waste	5:3
After the third period	5:4a
Cosmic upheavals	5:4b-5
Reign of Endtyrant	5:6a
More cosmic disorder	5:6b-12

The Fifth Vision:

Sea-monster imagery	11:1
Universal dominion	11:2,5f,34,40
Historical review	11:10-35
Advent of Messiah	11:36-38
Endtyrant sentenced	11:39-43
Divine sovereignty	11:39,44
Deceit	11:40
Injustice	11:41
Persecution	11:42
Hybris	11:43
Endtyrant banished	11:45
Millennial bliss	11:46

These ideas in 4 Ezra will now be considered. In particular, the passages which express an anti-Roman attitude seem to have drawn on Jewish Endtyrant traditions and, as Table T19 shows, to have had many similarities to the Antichrist myth. From that table it can be seen that there were three distinct passages, each with their own emphases, used in 4 Ezra in connection with the Roman empire. These will each be briefly examined in turn.

(a) 4 Ezra 3:28-36 In 3:28-36 the pseudonym, "Babylon," was employed for Rome. This may simply be a result of the writer's fiction that he is Ezra, writing in the time of the Babylonian captivity. In that case it may not carry the perjorative sense that it did in Rev 18:2ff or SibOr V.159. On the other hand, even in 1 Peter 5:13, Babylon was established as a pseudonym for Rome, and it is difficult to imagine that it was ever used in a neutral or positive manner.⁵ The parallels between Rome and the earlier Babylonian empire were too significant for Jews or Christians after 70 CE not to see a certain appropriateness in the pseudonym.

Et dixi ergo tunc in corde meo-
numquid meliora faciunt qui habitant
Babylonem? et propter hoc dominavit
Sion? Factum est autem cum uenisset
huc, et uidi impietates, quorum non
est numerus, et delinquentes multos
uidit anima mea hoc tricesimo anno;
et excessit cor meum, Quoniam uidi
quomodo sustines eos peccantes, et
pepercisti impie agentibus, et
perdidisti populum tuum, et conser-
uasti inimicos tuos, Et non signifi-
casti nihil nemini quomodo debeat
derelinqui uia haec. numquid
meliora facit Babilon quam Sion?
[4 Ezra 3:28-31 (Bensly, 9)]

"Then I said in my heart, Are the
deeds of those who inhabit Babylon
any better? Is that why she has gained
dominion over Zion? For when I came
here I saw ungodly deeds without
number, and my soul has seen many
sinners during these thirty years. And
my heart failed me, for I have seen
how you endure those who sin, and
have spared those who act wickedly,
and have destroyed your people, and
have preserved your enemies, and have
not shown to anyone how your way
may be comprehended. Are the deeds
of Babylon better than those of Zion?"
[OTP, 1,529]

In a sense the whole of 4 Ezra is based on the use of Babylon as a pseudonym for Rome, a not-so-subtle play on the historical parallels between the two powers which had destroyed the Jerusalem temple. While this is not deliberately highlighted by the writer, his readers would no doubt have identified the significance of the literary fiction and drawn the appropriate conclusions about the character, and destiny, of Rome.

5 For literature and a brief discussion on Babylon, see K.G. Kuhn, βαβυλων TDNT I,514-17

(b) 4 Ezra 5:1-13 The second anti-Roman passage occurs at 5:1-13. These verses reveal that the author believed that Rome was to be the last of the human kingdoms (cf. 4 Ezra 11-12) and that it would be desolated prior to the coming of the messianic era. The woes of the last days would include a degree of disorder in the natural world, false teaching and loss of faith in Israel, an historical peak of evil activity and the ascendancy of an Endtyrant (5:6a). There is no description of this figure, other than the enigmatic statement "And one whom the inhabitants of the earth do not anticipate, will reign." The commentaries usually identify this figure with the Antichrist tradition,⁶ but it is probably better to recognise it as a survival of the older Jewish idea of an Endtyrant. Such a figure was perhaps akin to the Beliar figure in *Martls* or the "Beliar-Nero" figure seen in *THEz* 4:1ff. The following excerpt from these verses, will illustrate these points.

De signis autem: ecce dies uenient,
 et adprehendentur qui inhabitant
 terram in excessu multo, et abscon-
 detur ueritatis uia et sterilis erit a
 fide regio. Et multiplicabitur in-
 iusticia super hanc quam ipse tu
 uides, et super quam audisti olim.
 Et erit incomposita [et sine] uestigo
 quam nunc uides regnare regionem et
 uidebunt eam desertam. Si autem tibi
 dederit altissimus uiuere, et uidebis
 post tertiam turbatum, et relucescet
 subito sol noctu, et luna interdie.
 Et de ligno sanguis stillabit, et
 lapis dabit uocem suam, et populi
 commouebuntur, et gressus commuta-
 buntur. Et regnabit quem non sperant
 qui inhabitant super terram, et
 uolatilia conmigrationem facient.
 Et mare Sodomiticum pisces reiciet,
 et dabit uocem noctu, quam non
 nouerunt multi, omnes autem audient
 uocem eius.

[4 Ezra 5:1-7 (Bensly, 15f)]

"Now concerning the signs: Behold, the days are coming when those who dwell on earth shall be seized with great terror, and the way of truth shall be hidden, and the land shall be barren of faith. And unrighteousness shall be increased beyond what you yourself see, and beyond what you heard of formerly. And the land which you now see ruling shall be waste and untrodden, and men shall see it desolate. But if the Most High grants that you live, you shall see it thrown into confusion after the third period; and the sun shall suddenly shine forth at night, and the moon during the day. Blood shall drip from wood, and the stone shall utter its voice; the peoples shall be troubled, and the stars shall fall. And one shall reign whom those on earth do not expect, and the birds shall fly away together; and the sea of Sodom shall cast up fish; and one whom the many do not know shall make his voice heard by night, and all shall hear his voice." [OTP, 1,531f]

6 Cf. J.M. Myers, *Esdras*, 177; M.A. Knibb, "2 Esdras", 132.

It is evident that these verses presuppose a tradition that has many similarities to the Antichrist myth. The two traditions are not far apart. However, there is nothing here that must be understood as a reference to an Antichrist figure. At most, the passage alludes to the sudden and unexpected advent of an Endtyrant. However, this passage, especially as it continues in vs 8-13, is clearly more interested in speculation about the confusion and chaos which would attend the onset of the last days than in any speculation about an Endtyrant figure, whether an anti-messiah or not. It really belongs to the category of apocalyptic description of the endtime woes, with an allusion to an evil ruler as one of the many misfortunes of that period.

(c) 4 Ezra 11-12 Possibly of more direct relevance to this research into the origins and development of the Antichrist myth, is the Eagle Vision in chs 11-12. This vision involves a modification of the older vision in Daniel 7. The vision is outlined in 11:1-12:3, and an interpretation provided in 12:4-39. Rome is envisaged as an eagle with three heads (the Flavian rulers) and eight little wings (representing the Julio-Claudian dynasty). The section of the vision account which describes the announcement of the empire's judgment, will suffice as a citation from this vision.

Et audiui uocem dicentem mihi:
 conspice contra te et considera quod
 uides. Et uidi et ecce sicut leo
 suscitatus de silua mugiens, et audiui
 quomodo emisit uocem hominis ad
 aquilam et dixit dicens: Audi tu et
 loquar ad te; dicit altissimus tibi:
 Nonne tu est qui superasti de quat-
 tuor animalibus quae feceram regnare
 in saeculo meo, et ut per ea ueniret
 finis temporum meorum? Et quartus
 ueniens deuicit omnia animalia
 quae transierunt, et potentatu tenens
 saeculum cum tremore multo et omnem
 orbem cum labore pessimo, et inhab-
 itabant tot temporibus orbem terrarum
 cum dolo, Et iudicasti terram non cum
 ueritate; Tribulasti enim mansuetos
 et laesisti quiescentes, odisti uerum
 dicentes et dilexisti mendaces, et
 destruxisti habitationes eorum qui
 fructificabant, et humiliasti muros
 eorum qui te non nocuerunt. Et
 ascendit contumelia tua ad altissimum
 et superbia tua ad fortem. Et res-
 pexit altissimus super sua tempora,
 et ecce finita sunt, et saecula eius

Then I heard a voice saying to me,
 "Look before you and consider what
 you see." And I looked, and behold, a
 creature like a lion was aroused out of
 the forest, roaring; and I heard how he
 uttered a man's voice to the eagle,
 and spoke, saying, "Listen and I will
 speak to you. The Most High says to
 you, 'Are you not the one that remains
 of the four beasts which I had made to
 reign in my world, so that the end of
 my times might come through them?
 You, the fourth that has come, have
 conquered all the beasts that have
 gone before; and you have held sway
 over the world with much terror, and
 over all the earth with grievous oppres-
 sion; and for so long have you dwelt
 on the earth with deceit. And you
 have judged the earth, but not with
 truth; for you have afflicted the meek
 and injured the peaceable; you have
 hated those who tell the truth, and
 have loved liars; you have destroyed
 the dwellings of those who brought
 forth fruit, and have laid low the walls
 of those who did you no harm. And so

completa sunt. Propterea non apparens
non appareas tu aquila et alae tuae
horribiles et pennacula tua pessima
et capita tua maligna et unguis tui
pessimi et omne corpus tuum uanum,
Vti refrigeret omnis terra et rele-
uetur liberata de tua ui et speret
iudicium et misericordiam eius qui
fecit eam.

[4 Ezra 11:36-46 (Bensly, 57f)]

your insolence has come up before the
Most High, and your pride to the
Mighty One. And the Most High has
looked upon his times, and behold, they
are ended, and his ages are completed!
Therefore you will surely disappear,
you eagle, and your terrifying wings,
and your most evil little wings, and
your malicious heads, and your most
evil talons, and your whole worthless
body, so that the whole earth, freed
from your violence, may be refreshed
and relieved, and may hope for the
judgment and mercy of him who made
it."⁷ [OTP, I,549]

This passage indicates one way in which the Daniel 7 traditions continued to be used by later generations.⁷ Here they were updated with detailed allusions to the Julio-Claudian and Flavian dynasties being added, so that the reader could discern their application to the current political situation. This Jewish anti-Roman political statement is not unlike some seen in SibOr, but it lacks some of the invective. It seems more interested in the coming of the Messiah, than in the punishments to be inflicted on Rome. Nevertheless, it is clear that the writer regarded Rome as the fourth beast of Daniel 7, and that he looked forward to the time when the Messiah would come and destroy its power.

4 Ezra drew on older Jewish apocalyptic traditions, just as the third century authors did when describing the activity of the Antichrist figure. However, there is nothing in 4 Ezra to suggest that the author or his readers were familiar with an Antichrist myth. Rather than seeing any direct link between 4 Ezra and the Christian Antichrist myth, it seems better to regard them both as drawing on common Jewish traditions. In this example, the Jewish traditions are certainly close in form to the the Antichrist traditions emerging in Christian circles about the same time, but they remain quite distinct and have an integrity of their own which is lost if the passages are forced into the Antichrist literature. As a comparison of this passage with such passages as Didache 16 and THEZ will show (cf. §13.1 & §13.2), this is a parallel or even diverging line of tradition, not the line which would lead eventually to the Antichrist myth.

7 Cf. G.K. Beale, *Use of Daniel*, 112-28; M. Casey, *Son of Man*, 122-24; A. Lacocque, "Vision of the Eagle", 237-58.

12.4 THE APOCALYPSE OF ABRAHAM

The Apocalypse of Abraham is one of the least known and, until recently, least studied Jewish pseudepigrapha.¹ It seems to come from around the end of the first century CE, and it may have something to contribute to an understanding of the interplay of traditions at that time.² The work comprises thirty two chapters: chapters 1-8 provide an account of Abraham's conversion to monotheism, while chapters 9-32 comprise an apocalypse (essentially an expansion on the account in Genesis 15).³

The book is only extant in old Slavonic translations, but was probably composed in a Semitic language in the last quarter of the first century CE. It must date after the destruction of the temple, as this is mentioned in 27:1-12, but could have been written any time between ca 80 and 150 CE. Like 2Bar and 4 Ezra, ApAb analysed the cause of the destruction of the temple, but it did so differently. It diagnosed the problem as having been Israel's infidelity to the covenant and the opportunistic policies of her leaders.

- 1 M. E. Stone [*Jewish Writings*, 415] attributes this fact to its omission from the collections edited by Kautzsch and Charles. R. Rabinkiewicz ["ApAb" OTP I,683] notes that even such a basic question as the original language of ApAb has never been seriously studied. Rabinkiewicz has made the study of this apocalypse his special interest, preparing a critical edition of the text for his 1977 Rome doctoral dissertation, and several subsequent studies.
- 2 LITERATURE: B.J. Bamberger, "Abraham, Apocalypse of" IDB 1,21; G.N. Bonwetsch, *Die Apokalypse Abrahams. Das Testament der vierzig Martyrer* (Studien zur Geschichte der Theologie und der Kirche, I.1; Leipzig: 1891); G.H. Box & J.I. Landsman, *Apocalypse of Abraham*; J.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha* 68-69; J.J. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 180-86; G. Dellling, *Bibliographie* 163-64; A.-M. Denis, *Introduction*, 37f; H.W. Gaylord, "How Satanel lost his '-el'", 303-09; L. Ginzberg, "Abraham, Apocalypse of" JE I,91f; ---, *Legends of the Jews*, I,209-14 & V,217f,229f; R.G. Hall, "Christian Interpolation", 107-10; J. Licht, "Abraham, Apocalypse of" *EncyJud* II,125-27; R. Meyer, "Abraham-Apokalypse" RGG³ I,72; G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 294-99; B. Philonenko-Sayor & M. Philonenko, "Die Apokalypse Abrahams" JSRZ, 415-60; R. Rabinkiewicz, "Apocalypse of Abraham" OTP I,681-705; A. Rubinstein, "Hebraisms in the Slavonic 'Apocalypse of Abraham'", 108-15; ---, "Hebraisms in the 'Apocalypse of Abraham'", 132-35; ---, "Problematic Passage", 45-50; Schürer-Vermes, *History*, III.1,288-92; M.E. Stone, "Apocalypse of Abraham" in *Jewish Writings*, 415-18; E. Turdeanu, "L'Apocalypse d'Abraham en slave", 153-80; N. Turner, "Apocalypse of Abraham" AOT, 363-91.
- 3 In this regard ApAb is similar to 4 Ezra and 2Bar which both refer to a tradition that God revealed cosmic secrets to Abraham during the incident described in Genesis 15 (cf. 4 Ezra 3:14 and 2Bar 4:4).

The main value of ApAb for the purposes of this study is the evidence it provides for the continued use of the Azazel myth as late as ca 100 CE in Jewish circles. The various aspects of the Azazel myth, and of general Jewish eschatological traditions reflected, in ApAb can be seen in Table T20.

Table T20
Eschatological Traditions in ApAb

Azazel	13:1-14:14; 23:7-11; 24:5; 29:3-13
Watchers myth	14:4
Combat myth traditions	13:8,14; 14:5-8
Endtyrant	29:3-13
Lawlessness	24:9; 32:3
Deceit	13:9a,13
Jewish people	29:3-13
Divine sovereignty	13:9b,11; 23:12f
Anti-Roman attitude	29:3-13
Cosmic disorders	30:2-8
Parousia of Messiah	31:1f
Punishment of the wicked	14:6; 31:3-8
Punishment of Azazel	14:5f

As can be seen in this Table, Azazel is mentioned in numerous passages throughout ApAb. The work provides perhaps the fullest description of the Azazel figure seen so far. ApAb 13-14 involve a fairly extensive treatment of Azazel from which it is worth citing some extracts.

And the unclean bird spoke to me and said, "What are you doing, Abraham, on the holy heights, where no one eats or drinks, nor is there upon them food for men. But these all will be consumed by fire and they will burn you up. Leave the man who is with you and flee! For if you ascend to the height, they will destroy you." And it came to pass when I saw the bird speaking I said this to the angel: "What is this, my lord?" And he said, "This is disgrace, this is Azazel!" And he said to him, "Shame on you. Azazel! For Abraham's portion is in heaven, and yours on earth, for you have selected here, (and) become enamoured of the dwelling place of your blemish. Therefore the Eternal Ruler, the Mighty One, has given you a dwelling on earth. Through you the all-evil spirit (is)

a liar, and through you (are) wrath and trials on the generations of men who live impiously. For the Eternal Mighty One did not allow the bodies of the righteous to be in your hand, so through them the righteous life is affirmed and the destruction of ungodliness. Hear, counselor, be shamed by me! You have no permission to tempt all the righteous. Depart from this man! You cannot deceive him, because he is the enemy of you and of those who follow you and who love what you wish. For behold the garment which in heaven was formerly yours has been set aside for him, and the corruption which was on him has gone over to you." And the angel said to me, "... Be bold and do through your authority whatever I order you against him who reviles justice. Will I not be able to revile him who has scattered about the earth the secrets of heaven and who has taken counsel against the Mighty One? Say to him, 'May you be the firebrand of the furnace of the earth! Go, Azazel, into the untrodden parts of the earth. For your heritage is over those who are with you, with the stars and the men born by the clouds, whose portion you are, indeed they exist through your being. Enmity is for you a pious act. Therefore through your own destruction be gone from me.'" [ApAb 13:1-14:7 (OTP, 1,695)]

This passage reveals a number of contacts with the OT and post-biblical traditions about Satan, Azazel and the Watchers. The expression "This is disgrace" is reminiscent of phrases from the Antichrist myth where the impiety and the lawlessness of the Antichrist are described. The description of Azazel as a fallen angel is partly indebted to the traditions of I Enoch and partly to the tradition of the fall of Lucifer. The expression "through you the all-evil spirit (is) a liar" is intriguing. It suggests that Azazel is an agent for Satan, rather than Satan himself. There is insufficient evidence to make anything of this, as the rest of chs 13-14 seem to portray Azazel as the leader of the evil forces rather than a satanic deputy. The deceit motif appears yet again, but this is to be expected in a passage which portrays Azazel tempting Abraham in a manner which is clearly a parallel to the serpent tempting Eve in the Garden of Eden. The reference to scattering the secrets of heaven about the earth seems to be dependent on the account of the Watchers in I Enoch, while the mention of Azazel taking counsel against God is probably a development of the hybris theme in Isaiah 14 and related traditions about Satan.

Chs 20-24 present additional information about Azazel, his wickedness and the fate of those allied with him (ie, the gentiles). The punishment of those subject to Azazel is described, and he is portrayed as a combination of man and dragon tempting Adam and Eve in the garden (ch 23). Azazel is called "the crafty adversary" in 24:5, and blamed for misleading Cain, "the lawless one".

In a recent article, R.G. Hall has drawn attention to the puzzling scene in 29:3-13.⁴ These verses describe a strange figure, who is worshipped by the gentiles and by some Jews, yet despised and abused by other Jews. The whole passage has often been understood as a Christian interpolation, but Hall proposes that it should be understood as a reference to an Endtyrant, what he calls a "man of sin". The passage reads as follows.

And I looked and saw a man going out from the left, from the heathen side. From the side of the heathen went out men and women and children, a great crowd, and they worshipped him. And while I was still looking, those on the right side came out, and some insulted this man, and some struck him and others worshipped him. And I saw that as they worshipped him Azazel ran and worshipped and, kissing his face, he turned and stood behind him. And I said, "Eternal, Mighty One! Who is this man insulted and beaten by the heathen, with Azazel worshipped?" And he answered and said, "Hear, Abraham, the man you saw insulted and beaten and again worshipped is the liberation from the heathen for the people who will be born from you. In the last days, in this twelfth hour of impiety, in the twelfth period of the age of my fulfillment, I will set up this man from your tribe, the one whom you have seen from my people. All will imitate him, ... (you) consider him as one called by me ... (they) are changed in their counsels. And those you saw coming from the left side of the picture and worshipping him, this (means that) many of the heathen will trust in him. And those of your seed you saw on the right side, some insulting him, some beating him, and other worshipping him, many shall be offended because of him. It is he who will test those of your seed who have worshipped him in the fulfillment of the twelfth hour, in the curtailing of the age of impiety. [ApAb 29:3-13 (OTP, 1,703f)]

Hall has pointed out that the vision differs from the interpretation slightly, with the Christian elements being found only in the interpretation. It is thus likely that the vision account has been left largely in its original Jewish form, and that the abused and worshipped figure must be understood within a Jewish framework. When read from that point of view, the passage describes a Jewish figure who gains a following amongst both Jewish and gentile people. This person gathers a following from the gentiles, but also deceives many Jewish people into worshipping him. He is reviled and rejected by some Jews, but aided and supported by Azazel. In addition, his appearance is the result of divine sovereignty, and he serves to fulfil God's purposes by indicating clearly

4 R.G. Hall, "Christian Interpolation", 107-10.

which Jews are truly faithful to God and which are to be cut off with the gentiles. His activity is thus directly related to the final climax of evil and apostasy prior to the divine intervention which will vindicate the faithful and punish the wicked.

Despite the obscurities at some points in the text, this certainly appears to be a Jewish Endtyrant tradition not unrelated perhaps to the traditions behind 2 Thessalonians 2 and Revelation 12-13. This figure is closely related to the activity of Azazel/Satan, and will appear as one of the signs of the end (cf. the following descriptions in 29:14ff). Yet the description, even on this interpretation, lies firmly within the Jewish Endtyrant tradition and the evil man cannot be understood as an Antichrist figure.

The use of the Azazel tradition in ApAb would seem to have no connection with the Antichrist myth, which was presumably taking its definitive shape around the time this book is written. Perhaps the Azazel tradition here represents one of the forms which the old Jewish adversary myths took. In some Christian circles these developed into an early form of the Antichrist myth. In other circles (such as Barnabas), the old Satan myth lay behind such titles as the Black One, the Evil One, the Stumbling Block, etc. In at least some groups, the figure of Azazel continued to serve as a suitable symbol for the power of evil. In ApAb the Azazel tradition seems to have been developed to include an evil human being, doubtless understood by the author as the Roman emperor worshipped in the imperial cult, who would be the figure-head or frontman for the final satanic rebellion at the end of time.

12.5 2 (SYRIAC APOCALYPSE OF) BARUCH

Another of the Jewish writings which reflects the adjustments after the destruction of Jerusalem, 2 Baruch is now fully extant in only one Syriac MS, the Codex Ambrosianus discovered in the middle of the last century.¹ There are numerous MSS of the concluding chs 78-87, known in some circles as the Epistle of Baruch, as it was occasionally accorded canonical status in the Syrian churches.

¹ LITERATURE: P.-M. Bogaert, *L'Apocalypse de Baruch*; —, "Les apocalypses contemporaines", 47-68; L.H. Brockington, "2 (Syriac) Baruch" AOT, 835-95; R.H. Charles, *Apocalypse of Baruch*; —, "Apocalypse of Baruch" APOT II, 481-526; J.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 83-86; J.J. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 170-80; G. Dellings, *Bibliographie*, 162f;

Like 4 Ezra, 2Bar purports to have been written during the Babylonian exile. In this instance, the putative author is represented as Baruch, companion of the prophet Jeremiah. However, the book is best understood as dating in the first two decades of the second century CE, and thus more or less contemporaneous with 4 Ezra, a work with which it has many similarities. 2Bar 32:2-4 refers to two destructions of the temple, but apart from its similarities to 4 Ezra there are no other clear indications of date. The original language remains a matter of uncertainty.

In yet a further parallel to 4 Ezra, 2Bar has seven main sections:

- 1-12 Destruction of Jerusalem;
- 13-20 Impending judgment;
- 21-34 Time of retribution and the subsequent messianic era;
- 35-46 Lament by Baruch; an allegory of the vine and the cedar;
- 47-52 Terrors of the last time, the nature of the resurrected body, and features of paradise and hell;
- 53-76 Review of Israel's history, using the symbolism of alternating dark and bright waters; and,
- 77-87 Letter to the 9½ northern tribes.

2Bar provides an extended but low key critique of Rome as the new Babylon. As in 4 Ezra, 2Bar does this simply by pretending to be a work from the Babylonian exile. But it also draws on the old combat myth traditions to depict Rome in a negative light, as in the following passage.

But the king of Babylon will arise, the one who has now destroyed Zion, and he will boast over the people and speak haughtily in his heart before the Most High. And he too will fall finally. [2Bar 67:7f (OTP, 1,644)]

This use of the ancient combat myth traditions drew upon the Lucifer myth of Isaiah 14, and provides a further example of Jewish use of old mythic traditions to interpret contemporary events. "The one who has now destroyed

A.-M. Denis, *Introduction*, 182-86; L. Ginzberg, "Baruch, Apocalypse of (Syriac)" *JE* II,551-56; L.L. Grabbe, "Chronography"; Y.M. Grintz, "Baruch, Apocalypse of (Syriac)" *EncyJud* IV,270-72; A.F.J. Klijn, "2 (Syriac) Baruch" *OTP* I,615-52; —, "Die syrische Baruch-Apokalypse" *JSHRZ* V.2,103-91; —, "Sources and Redaction", 65-76; F.J. Murphy, *Structure and Meaning of Second Baruch*; —, "2 Baruch and the Romans", 663-69; G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 281-87; M. Rist, "Baruch, Apocalypse of" *IDB* I,361-62; G. Saylor, *Have the Promises Failed?*; Schürer-Vermes, *History* III.2,750-56; M.E. Stone, *Jewish Writings*, 408-10; W. Werbeck, "Baruchschriften, apokryphe" *RGZ* I,900-03.

Zion" was being connected with both Nebuchadnezzar and the ancient rebellious morning star or, ultimately, the sea-monster. This phenomenon has already been observed in several other passages of both Jewish and Christian character, including the extant sources for the Antichrist myth, but there is no reason to conclude from this that 2Bar was familiar with any form of an Antichrist myth.

There is a much more extensive reference to Rome in the Apocalypse of the Forest, an adaptation of Daniel 7, found in 2Bar 35-40. The vision is described in chs 35-37 and explained in chs 38-40. The key portion of the explanation reads as follows.

And he answered and said to me: Baruch, this is the explanation of the vision which you have seen. As you have seen the great forest surrounded by high and rocky mountains, this is the word: Behold, the days will come when this kingdom that destroyed Zion once will be destroyed and that it will be subjected to that which will come after it. This again will also be destroyed after some time. And another, a third, will arise and also that will possess power in its own time and will be destroyed. After that a fourth kingdom arises whose power is harsher and more evil than those of which were before it, and it will reign a multitude of times like the trees on the plain, and it will rule the times and exalt itself more than the cedars of Lebanon. And the truth will hide itself in this and all who are polluted with unrighteousness will flee to it like the evil beasts flee and creep into the forest. And it will happen when the time of its fulfillment is approaching in which it will fall, that at that time the dominion of my Anointed One which is like the fountain and the vine, will be revealed. And when it has revealed itself, it will uproot the multitude of its host. And that which you have seen, namely the tall cedar, which remained of that forest, and with regard to the words which the vine said to it which you heard, this is the meaning: The last ruler who is left alive at that time will be bound, whereas the entire host will be destroyed. And they will carry him on Mount Zion, and my Anointed One will convict him of all his wicked deeds and will assemble and set before him all the works of his hosts. And after these things he will kill him and protect the rest of my people who will be found in the place that I have chosen. And his dominion shall last forever until the world of corruption has ended and until the times which have been mentioned before have been fulfilled. This is your vision, and this is its explanation. [2Bar 39:1-40:4 (OTP, I,633)]

This anti-Roman passage confirms that the writer identified Rome as the final of the four world powers. Rome was understood as the most oppressive and wicked of them all, and the author anticipated its destruction to follow the advent of the Messiah. At the same time, the anti-Roman feeling is relatively low key. There is none of the invective seen in SibOr, nor is there

any hint of the Nero legend, which was used so powerfully in some Jewish and Christian circles around this time. 2Bar seems to present yet further evidence for the diversity of forms in which traditions such as those in Daniel 7 could be understood. While the old Endtyrant myth of Jewish apocalyptic and the Antichrist passages shared a common background, they developed into quite different myths. Despite the clear messianic character of 2Bar, there is no sign of an anti-Messiah figure, no Antichrist. 2Bar indicates the directions taken by some of the Jewish traditions which did not develop into the form seen in the Antichrist myth.

12.6 THE ODES OF SOLOMON

The Odes of Solomon is a collection of 42 early Christian hymns, presumably taking their traditional title from their early circulation along with the PssSol.¹ Forty one of the original hymns are extant, spread unevenly over several manuscripts, of which the most important are in Syriac. Ode 2 and the beginning of Ode 3 are not extant in any of these MSS. The Odes are clearly a Christian work, and were probably composed originally in Syriac.² Their similarities to the Qumran writings and to John have suggested that their author was a Christian who had been influenced by Essene theology.³ They

1 **LITERATURE:** M. Lattke [Die Oden Salomos, III] provides a comprehensive history of research bibliography for the period 1799-1984, with critical notations.

See also A. Adam, "Die Salomo-Oden" *Dogmengeschichte*. I,142-46; D.E. Aune, "Odes of Solomon", 435-60; ---, *Cultic Setting*, 166-94; W. Bauer, "The Odes of Solomon" *NTA* II,808-10; J. Carmignac, "Recherches sur la langue originelle", 429-32; J.H. Charlesworth, *Odes of Solomon*; ---, "Odes of Solomon" *IDB Sup* 637f; ---, "Odes of Solomon" *OTP* II,725-71; ---, "Qumran, John and the Odes of Solomon", 107-36; ---, *Pseud-epigrapha*, 189-94; J.A. Emerton, "Odes of Solomon" *AOT*, 683-731; M. Franzmann, "French Scholarship 1909-1980" in M. Lattke, *Die Oden Salomos, III*, 371-425; J.R. Harris, *Odes and Psalms*; --- & A. Mingana, *Odes and Psalms*; M. Lattke, *Die Oden Salomos, I-III*; J. Licht, "Solomon, Odes of" *EncyJud* XV,114f; J. Quasten, *Patrology*, I,160-68; J. Schmid, "Oden Salomos" *LThK* 7,1094f; S. Schulz, "Salomo-Oden" *RGG*³ V,1339-42; Schürer-Vermes, *History* III.2,787-89; P. Vielhauer, *Literatur*, 750-56.

2 J.A. Emerton, "Some Problems of Text and Language", 372-406.

3 J.A. Emerton, "Odes" *AOT*, 683f.

seem to come from the first quarter of the second century CE, probably from Syria.⁴

There is only one passage in OdesSol which seems to be relevant to this study of the origins and development of the Antichrist myth, and that is a passage in 38:4-15 which mentioned several of the aspects previously noted as being used in the Antichrist tradition. The text of these lines reads as follows.

4. And he went with me and gave me rest, and did not let me err, because he was Truth.

5. And I was in no danger, because I walked with him, And I erred in nothing, because I obeyed him;

6. For Error fled from him, And did not meet him.

7. But Truth went along a straight path; And everything which I did not know He showed me,

8. Even all the drugs of Error, And all the scourges of death which are thought to be sweetness.

9. And the corruptor of corruption I saw while the bride who is corrupted was adorning herself,

Even the bridegroom who corrupts and is corrupted;

10. And I asked Truth, Who are these? And he said to me, This is the Deceiver, and that is Error;

11. And they imitate the Beloved One and his bride, And cause the world to err, and corrupt it;

12. And they invite many to a banquet, And give them to drink the wine of their intoxication,

13. And they cause them to vomit their wisdom and understanding, And they render them irrational;

14. And then they abandon them, But they go about about raving and corrupting, Because they are without understanding,

For neither do they seek it.

15. And I acted wisely, so that I did not fall into the hands of the Deceiver.

And I congratulated myself, because Truth had gone with me.

[OdesSol 38:4-15 (AOT, 726)]

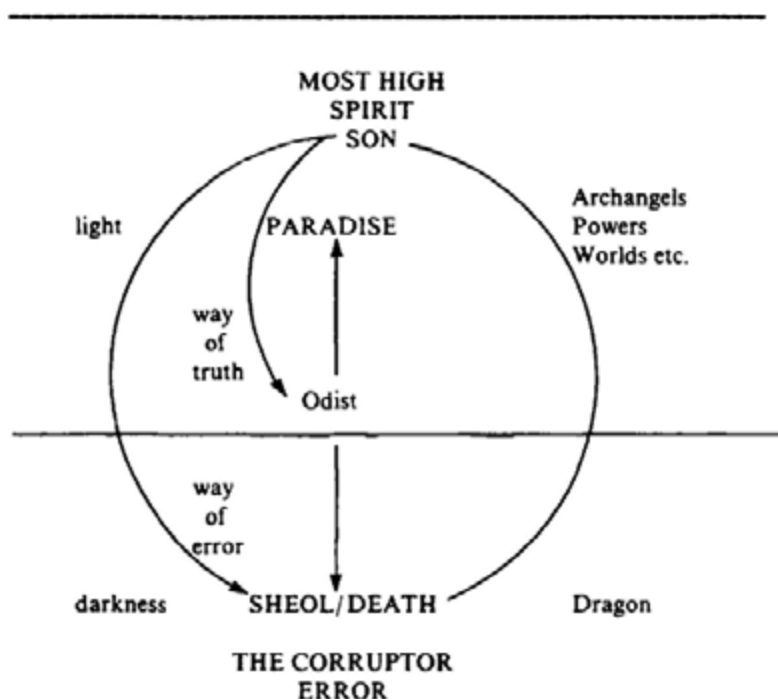
Clearly, there are several points of similarity between this Ode and the Antichrist myth. There is the reference to two figures, "the Deceiver" and "Error" who are said to imitate Christ and the Church ("the Beloved One and

4 J.A. Emerton ["Odes" AOT, 686] says: "More compelling than any are a number of striking similarities between the Odes and Ignatius of Antioch: some of these may be accidental, but there are too many to be entirely so; and, although insufficient to prove literary dependence one way or the other, they leave no doubt that both the author of the Odes and Ignatius were products of the same environment. On the whole, therefore, a date for the Odes c. Ad 100-200 is the most probable and Syria and its neighbourhood the most likely place of origin."

his bride¹⁹) and cause the world to err, inviting "many to a banquet". Each of these points have parallels in the Antichrist myth, a myth which by the time of the Odes was probably quite well established in the churches among whom the Odes are thought to have originated. Further, the way that Truth preserves the Odist from the power of the Deceiver is especially reminiscent of 1 John 4:1-3, where the Spirit of Truth is said to guide the Christian so that he does not fall prey to the Spirit of Deceit which is the Antichrist.

However, despite these points of similarity it does not seem correct to understand the OdesSol as making use of the Antichrist myth. It is better to conclude that the Odist was familiar with traditional apocalyptic ideas, including a dualistic view of reality (cf. Table T21), and was influenced by them. But just as the Odes themselves cannot really be designated as apocalyptic, so this passage cannot really be regarded as an example of the Antichrist myth, even though it is not inconceivable that the Odist was familiar with such a myth and that it has left its influence upon his work.

Table T21
Dualistic Patterns in OdesSol⁵



5 Table T22 is reproduced from M. Franzmann, "Portrait of a Poet", 322.

12.7 3 (GREEK APOCALYPSE OF) BARUCH

3 Baruch is a Jewish work from the second century CE which takes the form of a sustained vision in which the seer is taken on a journey through the heavenly spheres and shown the secrets of the cosmos.¹ The work reveals an intense interest in the idea of reward and punishment, for celestial bodies as well as human beings, but it has no explicit interest in the idea of the End. It begins with Baruch lamenting the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. An angel is sent to him to comfort him and to guide him through the five heavens (an unusual number), after which he returns to earth so that he can share what he has learnt with other people.

3Bar survives in two Greek MSS and a number of Slavonic texts. The latter have been understood as translations from the Greek tradition, but their value for reconstructing the original form of the work is only now being realised.² The original language was probably Greek, even though the present Greek MSS show signs of Christian influence in some places.

Its origins have been the subject of some controversy, with suggestions including a Jewish-Gnostic origin early in the second century³, a Christian apocalypse from the second century,⁴ a Jewish work ca 100 CE redacted by a Christian writer some decades later,⁵ and 3Bar being the product of Jewish mysticism from the Diaspora some time in the first two centuries of the common era.⁶ A date at some considerable time after the destruction of the temple seems to be required as the emotional commitment to the temple is virtually non-existent in 3Bar.⁷

1 LITERATURE: J.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 86-87; J.J. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 198-201; G. Delling, *Bibliographie*, 163; A.-M. Denis, *Introduction*, 79-84; H.E. Gaylord, "3 (Greek) Baruch" *OTP* I,653-79; L. Ginzberg, "Baruch, Apocalypse of (Greek)" *JE* II,549-51; W. Hage, "Griechische Baruch-Apokalypse" *JSHRZ* V.1,1-44; H.M. Hughes, "Greek Apocalypse of Baruch" *APOT* II,533-41; W.R. Morfill, "Apocalypse of Baruch", 95-102; G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 299-303; J.-C. Picard, *Apocalypsis Baruchi Graece*; Schürer-Vermes, *History* III.2,789-93; M.E. Stone, "Greek Apocalypse of Baruch" in *Jewish Writings*, 410-12; R. Thanhill, "3 (Greek) Baruch" *AOT*, 897-914; W. Werbeck, "Baruchschriften, apokryphe" *RGG* 3 I,900-03.

2 Cf. H.E. Gaylord, "3 Baruch" *OTP* I,653-55.

3 L. Ginzberg, "Baruch", 551.

4 M.R. James, "Notes", 413.

5 H.M. Hughes, "Baruch", *APOT*, II,530.

6 J.-C. Picard, *Apocalypsis Baruchi*, 75-78.

7 Cf. H.E. Gaylord, "3 Baruch", *OTP*, I,656; and M.E. Stone, *Jewish Writings*, 412.

The value of 3Bar for the purposes of this study lies in the variety of references to the Satan figure. The work uses the titles of Samael (Greek MSS) or Satanel (Slavonic texts), as well as such epithets as the devil, the serpent, the dragon and the enemy. There are also references to deceit and to lawlessness, elements which occur in the Antichrist literature. These are listed in Table T22.

Table T22
Eschatological Elements in 3 Baruch

Satan figure:	
Samael/Satanel	9:7
Serpent/Dragon	4:3-5,8; 9:7
The Enemy	13:2
Lawlessness	8:5
Deceit	4:8

In 3Bar 4 there are several references to Satan, references related to the story of the fall in Genesis 3. The relevant verses in the Greek MSS read as follows.

Καὶ ἔδειξέν μοι πεδίον, καὶ ὄφιν ὡς ὀράσεως πέτρας. Καὶ ἔδειξέν μοι τὸν Ἅδην, καὶ ἦν ἡ εἰδέα αὐτοῦ ζοφώδης καὶ βέβηλος. Καὶ εἶπον· Τίς ἐστὶν ὁ δράκων οὗτος; καὶ τίς ὁ περὶ αὐτὸν ἀπηνής; Καὶ εἶπεν ὁ ἄγγελος· Ὁ μὲν δράκων ἐστὶν ὁ τὰ σώματα τῶν κακῶς τὸν βίον μετερχομένων ἐσθίων· καὶ ὑπ' αὐτῶν τρέφεται.

[3Bar 4:3-5 (PVTG, II,84)]

Καὶ εἶπον ἐγὼ· Δέομαί σου, δεῖξόν μοι τί τὸ ξύλον τὸ πλανήσαν τὸν Ἀδάμ; Καὶ εἶπεν ὁ ἄγγελος· Ἡ ἄμπελός ἐστὶν, ἣν ἐφύτευσεν ὁ ἄγγελος Σαμαήλ ὅτινη ὠργίσθη Κύριος ὁ θεός· καὶ

And he showed me a plain and a serpent who appeared to be stone. And he showed me Hades, and its appearance was gloomy & unclean. And I said, "What is this dragon and this monster about it?" And the angel said, "This dragon is the one which eats the bodies of those who pass through their lives badly, and he is nourished by them."

[OTP, I,667]

And I said, "I pray you, show me which is the tree which caused Adam to stray [Slavonic: the tree through which the serpent deceived Eve and Adam]" And the angel said, "It is the vine which the angel Samael planted by which the Lord God became angered, and he cursed him and his plantling. For this

ἐκατηράσατο αὐτὸν καὶ τὴν
φυτεῖαν αὐτοῦ. Ἐν ᾧ καὶ διὰ
τοῦτο οὐ συνεχώρησεν τὸν
Ἄδὰμ ἄψασθαι αὐτοῦ. Καὶ
διὰ τοῦτο φθονήσας ὁ
διάβολος ἠπάτησεν αὐτὸν διὰ
τῆς ἀμπέλου αὐτοῦ.

[3Bar 4:8 (PVTG, II,84f)]

reason he did not permit Adam to touch it. And because of this the devil became envious, and tricked him by means of his vine [Slavonic: and by that he deceived the protoplast Adam and Eve]" [OTP, I,667]

The remaining references are quite brief and can be cited here before the possible relevance of 3Bar to the Antichrist myth is considered. The first passage refers to lawlessness.

Καὶ εἶπον ἐγὼ Βαρούχ· Κύριε,
καὶ διὰ τί πολύνονται αἱ
ἀκτῖνες αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς;
Καὶ εἶπεν μοι ὁ ἄγγελος·
θεωρῶν τὰς ἀνομίας καὶ τὰς
ἀδικίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἤγουν
πορνείας, μοιχείας, κλοπᾶς,
ἀρπαγᾶς, εἰδωλολατρείας,
μέθας, φόνους, ἔρεις, ζήλη,
καταλαλίας, γογγυσμούς,
ψιθυρισμούς, μαντείας, καὶ τὰ
τούτων ὅμοια, ἅτινα οὐκ εἰσι
τῷ θεῷ ἀρεστά.

[3Bar 8:5 (PVTG, II,90)]

And I Baruch said, "Lord, by what are its [the sun] rays defiled upon earth?" And the angel said to me, "By the sight of lawlessness and unrighteousness of men committing fornication, adultery, theft, robbery, idol-worship, drunkenness, murder, discord, jealousy, slander, murmuring, gossip, divination, and other things which are unacceptable to God." [OTP, I,673]

Καὶ ἐν τῇ παραβάσει τοῦ
πρώτου Ἄδὰμ παρήψε τῷ
Σαμαήλ ὅτε τὸν ὄφιν ἔλαβεν
ἔνδυμα· οὐκ ἀπεκρύβη ἀλλὰ
παρηύξησε. Καὶ ὠργίσθη αὐτῇ
ὁ θεός. καὶ ἔθλιψεν αὐτήν, καὶ
ἐκολόβωσεν ἡμέρας αὐτῆς.

[3Bar 9:7 (PVTG, II,91)]

And during the transgression of the first Adam, she [the moon] gave light to Samael [Slavonic: Satanel] when he took the serpent as a garment, and did not hide, but on the contrary, waxed. And God was angry with her, and diminished her and shortened her days. [OTP, I,673]

Καὶ εἶπεν Μιχαήλ· Οὐ
δύνασθε ὑποχωρεῖν ὑπ' αὐτῶν,
ἵνα μὴ εἰς τέλος κυριεύσῃ ὁ
Ἐχθρός· ἀλλ' εἶπατέ μοι τί
αἰτείσθε.

[3Bar 13:2 (PVTG, II,94)]

And Michael said, "So that the enemy will dominate at the end, you must not withdraw from them [from wicked men]". [OTP, I,677]

Bearing in mind the fact that 3Bar was especially interested in cosmic speculation about the heavenly bodies and the fate of the just and the wicked, it remains true that the work reveals an awareness of the typical Jewish Satan traditions. Satan was identified with the serpent in Genesis 3, and the references to dragon and monster are reminiscent of Rev 12:7-9 where these same titles were used of Satan. Interestingly, the idea of deceit also played a part in 3Bar's references to Satan, but this can no doubt be explained as due to the influence of Genesis 3 throughout these passages. "Lawlessness" was used as a significant comprehensive word to encompass a whole range of evil actions; it heads the list and is paralleled by "unrighteousness". While lawlessness was an important element in the Antichrist myth scenario, it has also been seen in numerous of the writings examined so far and is no more than a standard element in Jewish and Christian accounts of wickedness. There does not appear to have been any link between 3Bar and the Antichrist myth, but the work does illustrate the continued use of the Satan tradition in the second century; a tradition which contained many parallels to the Antichrist myth proper.

12.8 THE TESTAMENTS OF THE TWELVE PATRIARCHS

The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs is a very significant work from the pseudepigrapha; perhaps the most important of those over which scholars remain seriously divided on fundamental matters of the date and authorship.¹

1 **LITERATURE:** J. Becker, "Testamente der zwölf Patriarchen" *JSHRZ* III.1,115-63; ---, *Untersuchungen*; R.H. Charles, *Greek Versions*; ---, *Testaments*; ---, "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs" *APOT* II,282-367; J.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha* 211-20; J.J. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 106-13; ---, "Testamentary Literature" in R.A. Kraft & G.W.E. Nickelsburg (eds), *Early Judaism*, 268-76; ---, "Testaments" in M.E. Stone (ed), *Jewish Writings*, 331-44; G. Dellling, *Bibliographie*, 167-71; A.-M. Denis, *Introduction*, 49-59; W. Eltester (ed), *Studien*; D. Flusser, "Patriarchs, Testaments of the Twelve" *EncyJud* XIII,184-86; H.W. Hollander & M. de Jonge (eds), *Testaments*; M. de Jonge, "Christian Influence", 196-235; ---, *Studies*; ---, *Testamenta XII Patriarchum*; ---, "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs" *AOT*, 505-600; ---, *Text, Composition and Origin*; ---, et al (eds), *Testaments*; H.C. Kee, "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs" *OTP* I,775-828; G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 231-41; E. von Nordheim, *Lehre*, 12-114; L. Rost, "Testamente der XII Patriarchen" *RGG* VI,701f; Schürer-Vermes, *History*, III.2,767-81; H.D. Slingerland, *Testaments*; M. Smith, "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs" *IBD* 4,575-79.

With respect to T12P, scholars seem unable to advance beyond two longstanding but opposed positions.

Due to the great scholarship and influence of R.H. Charles at the beginning of this century, the consensus view for many decades was that T12P was a Jewish work which attained its present form ca 100 BCE but was subsequently re-worked by a Christian redactor in the second century CE.² An earlier view, the consensus prior to Charles and a view brought back into the centre of debate by M. de Jonge, holds that T12P was essentially a Christian document composed sometime in the second century CE.³ Slingerland summarises the situation rather aptly, using the metaphor of an old photograph.

[it] provides us with that most exciting artefact, the literary photograph of an ancient Jewish or Christian community or communities. Unfortunately, however, this rich and detailed photograph has no inscription on the back telling us when and where it was taken; thus, just as with any such picture in the curio shop, each is left to try and make the identification in accord with what seems most familiar to him.⁴

For the purposes of this study, T12P is being treated as a Christian work dating to around 125 CE; a writing which used traditions whose ultimate derivation had been Jewish, but whose pre-T12P form(s) are no longer discernible. Having given the final form of T12P such a date, the place to discuss its possible contribution to an understanding of the origins and development of the Antichrist myth has been this Chapter, in the context of other Jewish and Christian works from the period 70 to 180 CE, and not amongst the writings considered earlier.

My reasons for following de Jonge on the dating and authorship of T12P spring mostly from the weight I give to his observation that the position popularised by Charles is based on faulty methodology.⁵ Judaism and Christianity shared a complex inter-relationship in the first few centuries of

2 See the "classical" presentation of this case by R.H. Charles, *Greek Versions* and, for a more recent major defence of this view, J. Becker, *Testamente*.

3 H.D. Slingerland, *Testaments*, provides a convenient summary of the history of research prior to Charles' work. De Jonge's work since 1953 has re-opened the debate, but it should be noted that he has modified his views on the date of T12P and no longer posits a date a 200 CE.

4 H.D. Slingerland, *Testaments*, 2.

5 Cf. M. de Jonge, "Christian Influence" *NovT* 4 (1960) 182-235, and his later essay of the same title in *Studies*, 193-246.

this era, and it is improper to excise the distinctively Christian elements of a writing and then to describe the quite non-distinctive text which remains (and for whose independent existence there is no MS evidence),⁶ as either a Jewish or Christian document. Yet this is precisely what has been done with T12P. The distinctively Christian elements have been "removed" as later interpolations and the remaining text has been assigned to Jewish origins on the grounds that there is nothing distinctively Christian about it and it must therefore be Jewish! I do not consider this methodology to be sound and have therefore opted for the later date, as proposed by de Jonge, for the extant form of the work.

T12P takes the form of a collection of "testaments", or farewell exhortations, by the twelve sons of Jacob. In each case, a similar format is followed:

- a) Descendants are gathered prior to the patriarch's death;
- b) Patriarch reviews his life briefly;
- c) Patriarch confesses his own sins and exhorts his family to virtue;
- d) Predictions of Israel's future (including messianic promises); and,
- e) Account of the burial of the patriarch.

While the length of the individual testaments vary, this common structure points to the influence of a single writer who has shaped the traditions at his disposal and ordered them in this way. This impression is reinforced, on a close reading of the text, by the repetitious style of T12P and the many phrases which repeat from one testament to another. Not only does the work give clear evidence of being the product of a single writer, it also is apparent that this person was a Christian, as evidenced by the clear references to Jesus and the allusions to the gospels.⁷

The main area of debate, then, is the extent to which one can talk of a pre-Christian form of T12P. Since the work of R.H. Charles it has been assumed that this is possible, but de Jonge seems to have presented convincing reasons for scepticism in this matter. For the purposes of this study the book

6 To the considerable disappointment of many scholars, not even the Dead Sea Scrolls have produced an early version of T12P.

7 For examples of parallels to the NT see R.H. Charles, *Testaments*, lxxviii-xcii. Charles interpreted these as signs of the NT dependence on the idea of T12P, but they can equally be understood as allusion to the NT tradition by a later Christian T12P.

is being taken, in its final form, as a witness to Christian ideas in the first quarter of the second century CE, and there is no attempt to speculate on any possible links between the pre-Christian antecedents of T12P and the Antichrist myth.

The original language of T12P was most probably Greek, especially in view of its dependence on the LXX. There are 19 continuous Greek MSS and three collections of Greek abstracts. In addition there are 4 other versions (Armenian, Slavonic, Serbian and 'New Greek'), of which the most important is the Armenian. As noted above, no fragments of the work have been recovered amongst the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the two "testaments" (of Levi and Naphtali) which have been found there have nothing in common with T12P.

Table T23
The Hostile Powers in T12P

Satan	TGad 4:7; TAsh 6:4; TDan 3:6; 5:5f; 6:1.
Devil	TNaph 3:1;8:4,6; TGad 5:2; TAsh 1:8f; 3:2.
Beliar	TReu 2:2; 4:6-11; TSim 5:3; TLevi 3:3; 18:12; 19:1; TJud 25:3; Tlss 6:1; 7:6f; TZeb 9:7f; TDan 1:7f; 4:7; 5:1,10f; TNaph 2:6; 3:1; TAsh 1:8f; 3:2; TJos 7:4; 20:2; TBenj 3:3f; 6:1; 6:7-7:1.
Spirit of hatred	TGad 4:7.
Spirit of anger	TDan 1:7f; 2:4; 3:6.
Spirit of error	TReu 3:2; TSim 6:6; TLevi 3:3; TJud 25:3; Tlss 4:4; TZeb 9:7f.
Spirit of envy	TSim 4:7.
Spirit of deceit	TZeb 9:7f; TDan 5:5f.
Spirit of evil	TSim 3:5; TJud 14:8.
Prince of deceit	TSim 2:7; TJud 19:4.
Two spirit dualism	TJud 20:1; TBenj 6:1
Deceit	TReu 2:1; 4:6; TSim 3:2; TLevi 16:3; TJud 13:3; 14:5; 23:1; TZeb 9:7f; TDan 2:4; 5:5f; TBenj 6:1,4.
Lawlessness	TDan 5:5f
Final defeat	TZeb 9:7f.

As can be seen from Table T23, there are a number of points where T12P may have some relevance to this discussion of the origins of the Antichrist myth. This is particularly so when T12P is seen as a Christian work from the early second century, having some links with Johannine Christianity. There are frequent references to the deceit motif, to Beliar, and related ideas.

Some idea of the way T12P treats these themes may be obtained from the following selected citations. The first such passage is TJud 20:1 which spoke of two spirits (the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error) in a way which was reminiscent of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Johannine writings (cf. 1 John 4:1-6).⁸

Ἐπίγνωτε οὖν, τέκνα μου, ὅτι
δύο πνεύματα σχολάζουσι τῷ
ἀνθρώπῳ, τὸ τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ
τὸ τῆς πλάνης.
[TJud 20:1 (PVTG 1.2,73)]

So understand, my children, that
two spirits await an opportunity
with humanity: the spirit of truth
and the spirit of error.
[OTP, 1,800]

This reference to the two spirits is more or less paralleled by TBenj 6:1, among others, which described the two different powers.⁹

Τὸ διαβούλιον τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ
ἀνδρὸς οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν χειρὶ
πλάνης πνεύματος Βελίαρ· ὁ
γὰρ ἄγγελος τῆς εἰρήνης
ὁδηγεῖ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ.
[TBenj 6:1 (PVTG 1.2,172)]

The deliberations of the good man
are not in the control of the
deceitful spirit, Beliar, for the
angel of peace guides his life.
[OTP, 1,826]

In TZeb 9:7-8 there is a reference to "spirits of deceit", "spirits of error" and "Beliar".¹⁰

καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα μνησθήσεσθε
κυρίου, καὶ μετανοήσετε, καὶ
ἐπιστρέψει ὑμᾶς, ὅτι ἐλεήμων
ἐστὶ εὐσπλαγχνος, μὴ λογίζ-
όμενος κακίαν τοῖς υἱοῖς τῶν
ἀνθρώπων, διότι σὰρξ εἰσι καὶ
τὰ πνεύματα τῆς πλάνης
ἀπατᾷ αὐτοὺς ἐπὶ πάσαις

And thereafter you will remember
the Lord and repent, and he will
turn you around because he is
merciful and compassionate; he does
not bring a charge at wickedness
against the sons of men, since they
are flesh and the spirits of deceit
lead them astray in their actions.

8 Cf. H.W. Hollander & M. de Jonge, *Testaments*, 219.

9 Cf. H.W. Hollander & M. de Jonge, *Testaments*, 426ff.

10 Cf. H.W. Hollander & M. de Jonge [*Testaments*, 272f] for comment on these spirits, and [*Testaments*, 47ff] for a discussion of Beliar as "God's principal opponent" in T12P.

πράξεσιν αὐτῶν. καὶ μετὰ
ταῦτα ἀνατελεῖ ὑμῖν αὐτὸς ὁ
κύριος, φῶς δικαιοσύνης, καὶ
λαοὶς καὶ εὐσπλαγχνία ἐπὶ
ταῖς πτέρυξιν αὐτοῦ. αὐτὸς
λυτρώσεται πᾶσαν αἰχμαλ-
ωσίαν υἰῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐκ τοῦ
Βελίαρ, καὶ πᾶν πνεῦμα
πλάνης πατηθήσεται.
[TZeb 9:7f (PVTG 1.2,100)]

And therefore the Lord himself will
arise upon you, the light of right-
eousness with healing and compas-
sion in his wings. He will liberate
every captive of the sons of men
from Beliar, and every spirit of
error will be trampled down.
[OTP, 1,807]

TDan 5:5-6a not only mentioned the spirits of deceit, but also Satan. It is more significant in that it is a passage which seems to have been used by the later writers, who predicted that the Antichrist would spring from the tribe of Dan. They presumably relied on TDan, or else were familiar with the same tradition as the writer of T12P.¹¹ This passage reads,

Καὶ ὡς ἂν ἀποστῆτε ἀπὸ
κυρίου, ἐν πάσῃ κακία
πορεύεσθε, ποιῶντες βδελύγ-
ματα ἔθνῶν, ἐκπορνεύοντες ἐν
γυναίξιν ἀνόμων καὶ ἐν πάσῃ
πονηρία, ἐνεργούντων ἐν ὑμῖν
τῶν πνευμάτων τῆς πλάνης.
ἀνέγνων γὰρ ἐν βίβλῳ Ἐνώχ
τοῦ δικαίου ὅτι ὁ ἄρχων ὑμῶν
ἐστὶν ὁ σατανᾶς.

[TDan 5:5-6a (PVTG 1.2,108)]

To the extent that you abandon the
Lord, you will live by every evil
deed, committing the revolting acts
of the gentiles, chasing after the
wives of lawless men, and you are
motivated to all wickedness by the
spirits of deceit among you. For I
read in the Book of Enoch the
Righteous that your prince is Satan.
[OTP, 1,809]

The evil spirit was also known as the spirit of anger (cf. §7). However, this figure was still related to the idea of deceit.

περιβάλλει γὰρ αὐτὸν τὸ
πνεῦμα τοῦ θυμοῦ τὰ δίκτυα
τῆς πλάνης, καὶ τυφλοῖ τοὺς
φυσικοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ,
διὰ τοῦ ψεύδους σκοτοῖ τὴν
διάνοιαν αὐτοῦ.

[TDan 2:4 (PVTG 1.2,104)]¹²

For the spirit of anger ensnares him
in the nets of deceit, blinds his
eyes literally, and darkens his
understanding by means of a lie.
[OTP, 1,808]

11 Cf. H.W. Hollander & M. de Jonge, *Testaments*, 285ff.

12 H.W. Hollander & M. de Jonge [*Testaments*, 200] deny any connection between this text and the "nets of Belial" in CD IV.15f. Cf. H. Kosmala, "Three Nets of Belial".

As a final example of the ideas found throughout T12P it may be noted that there were occasional references to the Beliar/spirit of deceit figure as "the Prince of Error", as in TSim 2:7.13

καὶ ἐστήρισα ἐπ' αὐτὸν τὰ
ἥπατά μου τοῦ ἀνελεῖν αὐτόν,
ὅτι ὁ ἄρχὼ τῆς πλάνης (...)
ἐτύφλωσέ μου τὸν νοῦν.

I determined inwardly to destroy
him, because the Prince of Error
blinded my mind.
[OTP, 1,785]

[TSim 2:7 (PVTG 1.2,15)]

What emerges from a study of T12P is that the writer was aware of a number of different ways of referring to the hostile powers, but that his favourite terms were Beliar (more than 30 times) and phrases employing the deceit motif (over 20 times). T12P shared the belief in two spirits that was also a significant element at Qumran and in the Johannine churches. The representation of Beliar as the Prince of Error and leader of the demonic hosts suggests that the author was drawing on the common Jewish-Christian traditions of Satan-Beliar, rather than referring obliquely to the Antichrist myth. If, as most scholars believe, T12P is at least using much older Jewish traditions, then T12P is a witness to the consolidation of the connection between the Beliar-Satan tradition(s) and the deceit motif. This helps in enriching an appreciation of the general background on which the Antichrist myth was to draw, but it does not suggest any direct link between the ideas in T12P and the Antichrist myth.

T12P, in its final form, was contemporaneous with Polycarp and yet gives no hint of any knowledge of the Antichrist myth. Nor does it share the anti-Roman ideology of the SibOr and much of the other literature of its time. Assuming, then, that T12P is a Christian work ca 125 CE, it must be concluded that the church circles which T12P represents still worked with a concept of the hostile powers that expressed itself in terms of the older Satan-Beliar myth rather than the Antichrist myth.

13 Cf. H.W. Hollander & M. de Jonge, *Testaments*, 111-13.

12.9 THE SIBYLLINE ORACLES

The eighth book of SibOr is a composite work from the late second century CE through to some time in the third century.¹ The book comprises two large sections: lines 1-216 and 217-500. The first of these is basically a Jewish document, with a pro-Roman insertion in lines 131-38 and a Christian addition in lines 194-216. The Jewish part of the work consists of an extended anti-Roman political prophecy with little or no religious and ethical content. The second part of the book is a thoroughly Christian writing with no political significance.

The Jewish parts of the book can be dated to ca 175 CE since they anticipate the return of Nero during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, who died in 180 CE. Since Lactantius quoted extensively from the finished form of the book, the final form can be dated before the end of the third century. Apart from the pro-Hadrian insertion in lines 131-38, which is clearly of Egyptian origin, there is no hint of the provenance of the book.

The main value of SibOr VIII for the present study lies in its consistent hostility towards Rome, which builds on the material in the earlier SibOr books. The work borrowed numerous expressions and ideas from them, however, its hostility towards Rome seems to have been mainly motivated by Rome's greed and the writer's concern for social justice. While the idolatry of Rome was still mentioned critically, there were none of the charges of sexual perversion seen in the earlier books. In many respects the book is very similar to the ideas of Commodian, in *Carmen*. SibOr VIII testifies to the continued Jewish hostility towards Rome, and to the persistence of the Nero legend at such a late period — more than a hundred years after Nero's suicide!

The book opens with a summary of the role of the Sibyl, which already displays a negative attitude to Rome.

Ἐρχομένης μεγάλης ὀργῆς ἐπὶ
κόσμον ἀπειθῆ
ἔσχατον εἰς αἰῶνα θεοῦ μηνύ-
ματα φαίνω
πᾶσι προφητεύουσα κατὰ
πόλιν ἀνθρώποισιν.
ἔξότε δὴ πύργος τ' ἔπεσεν
γλώσσαι τ' ἀνθρώπων

As the great wrath comes upon the
disobedient world
I show forth the wrath of God to
the last age,
prophesying to all men, city by
city.
From the time when the tower fell
and the tongues of men
were divided into many dialects of
mortals,

1 For literature on SibOr see §7.1 note 12.

ἐς πολλὰς θνητῶν ἡμερίσ-
θησαν διαλέκτους,
πρῶτα μὲν Αἰγύπτου βασι-
λήιον, ...
πέμπτον δ' εἶτ' Ἰταλῶν κλεινὴ
βασιλεία ἄθεσμος
ὑστάτιον πᾶσιν ...
[SibOr VIII.1-10 (GCS, 142)]

first the Egyptian kingdom, . . .
then fifth, the famous lawless
kingdom of the Italians
last of all . . .
[OTP, I,418]

The Sibylist looked forward to the utter desolation of Rome, as this next citation demonstrates.

ἦξει σοί ποτ' ἄνωθεν ἴση,
ὑψαύχενε Ῥώμη,
οὐράνιος πληγὴ καὶ κάμψεις
αὐχένα πρώτη
κάξεδαφισθήσει καὶ πῦρ σε
ὄλην δαπανήσει
κεκλιμένην ἐδάφεισιν ἐοῖς, καὶ
πλοῦτος ὀλεῖται
καὶ σὰ θέμειλα λύκοι καὶ
ἀλώπεκες οἰκήσουσιν.
καὶ τότ' ἔση πανέρημος ὅλως,
ὥς μὴ γεγонуῖα.
[SibOr VIII.36-42 (GCS, 144)]

One day, proud Rome, there will
come upon you from above
an equal heavenly affliction, and
you will first bend the neck
and be razed to the ground, and
fire will consume you, altogether
laid low on your floors, and wealth
will perish
and wolves and foxes will dwell in
your foundations.
Then you will be utterly desolate,
as if you had never been.
[OTP, I,418f]

Despite the passage of time, the figure of Nero still served as a focus for the hopes of the Sibylist for vengeance upon Rome. The tenacity of the Nero myth in Jewish and Christian circles is illustrated by the following passage.

εἷς μὲν πρέσβυς ἐὼν σκήπτρων
ἐπὶ πούλῳ κρατήσει,
οἰκτρότατος βασιλεὺς ὃς
χρήματα κόσμου ἅπαντα
δώμασιν ἐγκλείσει τηρῶν, ἵν',
ὅταν γ' ἐπανέλθῃ
ἐκ περάτων γαίης ὁ φυγὰς
μητροκτόνος αἴθων,
ταῦτα ἅπασι διδοὺς πλοῦτον
μέγαν Ἀσίδι θήσει.
[SibOr VIII.68-72 (GCS, 145f)]

One, an old man, will control
dominions far and wide,
a most piteous king, who will shut
up and guard all the wealth
of the world in his home, so that
when the blazing
matricidal exile returns from the
ends of the earth
he will give these things to all and
award great wealth to Asia.
[OTP, I,419]

Another of the references to Nero is of interest for its use of the old dragon mythology of the ancient east.

πορφύρεός τε δράκων όπόταν
 έπι κύμασιν έλθη
 γαστέρι πλήθος έχων και
 θρέψει σείο τὰ τέκνα
 έσσομένου λιμού τε και
 έμφυλίου πολέμοιο,
 έγγυς μέν κόσμου τὸ τέλος
 και
 έσχατον ήμαρ και δοκιμοις
 κλητοίς κρίσις άθανάτοιο
 θεοίο.

[SibOr VIII.88-92 (GCS, 146)]

When the purple dragon comes on
 the waves,
 pregnant with a host, and will
 nurture your children
 when famine and civil war are at
 hand;
 then the end of the world is near
 and the judgement of the immortal
 God for the approved elect.
 [OTP, I,420]

There are other references to the returning Nero in SibOr VIII,2 but they do not add anything new to what has already been seen. As has been said above, the value of SibOr VIII for the purposes of this study lies in their witness to the persistent hostility to Rome and the use of the Nero legend. Since the work also served as a source for Comodian it may have also been influential in shaping the ideas of other Christian writers of the time.

2 Cf. SibOr VIII.139-47, 151-59 and 169-77.

13. THE EARLIEST ANTICHRIST TRADITIONS

Those writings from before ca 70 CE, in which the Endtyrant tradition seems to be emerging into forms that show some similarities to the fully developed Antichrist myth, were considered at §11. In the following chapter the related, but probably divergent, traditions of the Beliar and Nero myths were noted in a number of Jewish and Christian texts ca 70-150 CE. With the aid of those insights into the Jewish and Christian apocalyptic traditions of the period, it is now possible to examine the texts in which the earliest definite evidence for the Antichrist myth seems to be found: Didache, Testament of Hezekiah, the Johannine epistles, the Apocalypse of Peter, Polycarp's epistle to the Philippians, and the Dialogue of Justin Martyr. These will be examined in turn, and it will be seen how they represent the earliest Antichrist traditions available to the modern reader.

13.1 THE DIDACHE

The existence of the Didache had been known from Eusebius¹, who regarded it as apocryphal, but the text was not available for study until 1883 when it was published by Philotheos Byrennios, Metropolitan of Nicomedia.² He used an eleventh century Greek MS of the Jerusalem patriarchate. Since its publication

1 Cf. Eusebius, *h.e.*, III.25.4.

2 LITERATURE: B. Altaner, *Patrology*, 50-54; J.-P. Audet, *La Didache. Instructions des Apotres* (Paris: Gabalda, 1958); L.W. Barnard, *Studies*; K. Bihlmeyer, *Apostolische Väter*, xii-xx, 1-9; J.P. Brown, "Form of 'Q' Known to Matthew", 27-42; B.C. Butler, "Literary Relations of Did. Ch XVI", 265-83; R.H. Connolly, "Didache in Relation to the Epistle of Barnabas", 237-53; —, "Barnabas and the Didache", 113-46 & 225-48; J. Draper, "Jesus Tradition", 269-87; R. Glover, "The Didache's Quotations", 12-29; R. Knopf, *Lehre der zwölf Apostel*; K. Lake, *Apostolic Fathers* I, 303-34; J.B. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*; J. Quasten, *Patrology*, I, 36-39; C.C. Richardson, *Early Christian Fathers*; J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the NT*, 322-27; M.H. Shepherd, "The Didache" *IDB* 1, 841-43; B.H. Streeter, *Four Gospels*, 507-11; —, *Primitive Church*, Appendix C; P. Vielhauer, *Literatur*, 719-36.

over a hundred years ago the text has been the subject of numerous studies. The Didache is widely recognised as a composite work. The first chapters closely parallel the Two Ways material noted previously in the Epistle of Barnabas. The remainder of the book consists of a church order, whose contents are thought to be primitive even if the redactor worked somewhat later, and a brief eschatological section in ch 16.

The precise relationship of the Didache to Barnabas is uncertain, but a decision on this question is essential for any stance on its date. Some scholars, notably Audet and Robinson, argue for a date contemporary with Paul's epistle to the Philippians. Most scholars prefer a date late in the first century. While the church order appears to be more primitive than that in the pastorals, other factors preclude such an early date as that proposed by Audet and Robinson. It could also be that first century sources have been used by a writer in the second century, but this seems unlikely in view of the book's ignorance of the early episcopacy of the Syrian churches, amongst which the Didache is thought to have originated. While the balance of probabilities seems to favour a date around the turn of the century, there are some considerations which suggest that the eschatological material in Didache 16 is related to the pre-synoptic stage of the early church's eschatological tradition.

One interesting difference between the Didache and Barnabas concerns the material on the Two Ways. It was noted in §12.2 that Barnabas had several references to evil figures such as Satan, the Black One, etc. However, when the Didache used the same material it omitted all references to such figures.³ This serves to highlight the one passage where the Didache did refer to an evil eschatological figure: Didache 16, where the appearance of "the deceiver of the world" was described. The relevant text reads:

3 Note that the Did 1:1 omits references to Satan from the parallel text.

<p>Μεταβώμεν δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ ἑτέραν γνῶσιν καὶ διδαχὴν. Ὅδοι δύο εἰσὶν διδαχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας, ἥ τε τοῦ φωτὸς καὶ ἡ τοῦ σκότους. διαφορὰ δὲ πολλή τῶν δύο ὁδῶν. ἐφ' ἧς μὲν γάρ εἰσιν τεταγμένοι φωτα- γωγοὶ ἄγγελοι τοῦ θεοῦ, ἐφ' ἧς δὲ ἄγγελοι τοῦ σατανᾶ.</p> <p>[Barn 18:1 (AV, 31)]</p>	<p>Ὅδοι δύο εἰσὶ, μία τῆς ζωῆς καὶ μία τοῦ θανάτου, διαφορὰ δὲ πολλή μεταξὺ τῶν δύο ὁδῶν.</p> <p>[Did 1:1 (AV, 1)]</p>
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ἐν γὰρ ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις
 πληθυνθήσονται οἱ ψευδο-
 προφῆται καὶ οἱ φθορεῖς, καὶ
 στραφήσονται τὰ πρόβατα εἰς
 λύκους, καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη στραφή-
 σεται εἰς μῖσος· ἀξαναούσης
 γὰρ τῆς ἀνομίας μισησοῦσιν
 ἀλλήλους καὶ διώξουσι καὶ
 παραδώσουσι, καὶ τότε
 φανήσεται ὁ κοσμοπλανῆς ὡς
 υἱὸς θεοῦ καὶ ποιήσει σημεῖα
 καὶ τέρατα, καὶ ἡ γῆ παρα-
 δοθήσεται εἰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ,
 καὶ ποιήσει ἀθέμιτα, ἃ
 οὐδέποτε γέγονεν ἐξ αἰῶνος.
 τότε ἤξει ἡ κτίσις τῶν
 ἀνθρώπων εἰς τὴν πύρωσιν
 τῆς δοκιμασίας, καὶ σκανδα-
 λισθήσονται πολλοὶ καὶ
 ἀπολοῦνται, οἱ δὲ ὑπομείν-
 αντες ἐν τῇ πίστει αὐτῶν
 σωθήσονται ὑπ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ
 καταθέματος.

For in the last days the false prophets and corrupters shall be increased, and the sheep shall be turned into wolves, and love shall change to hatred; for as lawlessness increases they shall hate one another and persecute and betray, and then shall appear the deceiver of the world as a son of God, and he shall do signs and wonders, and the earth shall be delivered into his hands and he shall commit iniquities which have never been since eternity. Then shall the creation of mankind come to the fiery trial and "many shall be scandalised" and be lost, but "those who endure" in their faith "shall be saved" by the Accursed One himself.

[Did 16:3-5 (AV, 8f)]

This passage may well be related to the developing Antichrist tradition. It not only comes from the appropriate time period, but also from an area where some influence from Revelation and the Johannine epistles is not impossible. The ideas in the passage draw on the general apocalyptic tradition, with several parallels to the full blown Antichrist myth. The parallels are set out conveniently in the Table T24 below.

There is a clear difference between the kind of Endtyrant expectation presented here, and the apocalyptic traditions seen in Barnabas. Here is the kind of belief in an Antichrist figure which seems to be presupposed by 1 John 2:18, but was not provided by Revelation. It was observed at §11.3 that the Nero material in Revelation could be described as a Satan myth in which Nero was given a role as the ultimate human embodiment of evil. It was also suggested that the purpose of Revelation was as much to portray Jesus as an anti-Caesar figure, as to designate the emperor as the Antichrist. However, Didache 16 illustrates the kind of combination of elements that would have had to occur between Revelation and 1 John. The only significant element missing is the word, ἀντίχριστος.

Table T24
The "Deceiver of the World" in Didache 16

In the last days	vs 3a
False prophets and corrupters	vs 3a
Divisions and internal problems	vs 3b
Persecutions	vs 3b
Lawlessness on the increase	vs 4a
Endtyrant	vs 4b
Pretends to be a son of God	vs 4b
Satanic link	vs 4b
Deceit motif	vs 4b
Signs and wonders	vs 4c
Universal dominion	vs 4d
Unparalleled iniquities	vs 4e
Time of great trial	vs 5a
Scandal motif	vs 5b
Hope for the faithful	vs 5c

The setting in a passage dealing with the internal crisis of the church in the last days is consistent with later Antichrist literature. The interplay between a number of forerunners and the major Endtyrant is also seen in the explicit Antichrist writings. The Endtyrant figure himself is a classic Antichrist figure: a deceiver, who appears to be a son of God — ie, not an opponent of Christ, but a pretender to Jesus' messianic office. His particular title, *κοσμοπλανῆς* ["world-deceiver"], is not the same phrase as in Rev 12:9 but the description seems to be a clear allusion to the satanic connections of this figure. This world-deceiver will be given universal dominion, and will commit iniquities that have no historical precedents as the universe itself comes to its greatest crisis.

Such an eschatological outline as occurs in Didache 16 has a great deal in common with the classical Antichrist accounts in the third century literature, yet it occurs far earlier than any comparable Antichrist passage. Its relevance to the history of the Antichrist tradition is beyond challenge, but there remains the important question concerning just how early a witness Didache 16 may be.

The suggestion of a common primitive Christian eschatological tradition has already been encountered several times in the course of this study (cf. §11.1, §11.2 and, below, §13.3 especially Tables T27, T28 and T32). Close study of the synoptic gospels, the Thessalonian epistles and the Apocalypse has given such suggestions some probability, and this has been reinforced by G.K. Beale's work on early Christian use of the Daniel traditions. In addition, as will be seen in due course, both the Johannine epistles and ApPet seem to have drawn on this early Christian *Grundschrift*.

It has been suggested that Didache 16 provides further evidence for the proposed early Christian eschatological tradition, and that it represents a pre-synoptic form of that tradition.³ In that case, Didache 16 would preserve early eschatological traditions pre-dating both the destruction of the temple in 70 CE and the composition of Revelation (whether dated earlier or later).

Clearly, the absence of any Neronic features in the description of the Endtyrant would have to count in favour of such suggestions since it might be supposed that such a work, if dated around the turn of the century, would hardly have failed to utilise the *Nero redivivus* traditions (cf. the evidence of THEz below). Such an early date for the material in Didache 16 would give this passage pride of place in the literary history of the Antichrist myth. Even without going so far as Glover and Draper seem inclined to go, it may not be stretching the evidence too far to suggest that while the Johannine epistles provide the first use of the word ἀντίχριστος (with very little detail), Didache 16 provides the earliest form of the Antichrist myth (lacking only the technical term).

It seems justified to understand Didache 16 as an early form of that mixture of traditional ideas which would become known, under the influence of the convenient cipher attributed to the author of the Johannine epistles, as the Antichrist myth. While the author of the Didache may not have recognised the term "Antichrist", it seems that he was expounding a view of the expected eschatological adversary which can be taken to all intents and purposes as the earliest complete statement of the Antichrist myth. Didache 16 speaks of "the world-deceiver", and it could be that precisely this kind of description was being deliberately invoked in the Johannine epistles where 2 John 7 says, "Such a person is the Deceiver and the Antichrist."

3 T.R. Glover ["Didache's Quotations"] maintained this view, and it has recently been given new support by the work of J. Draper ["Jesus Tradition", 280-84].

13.2 THE TESTAMENT OF HEZEKIAH

The discussion now turns to an early Christian document of great significance for this study.¹ The Testament of Hezekiah provides evidence for the convergence of many of the elements seen earlier in separate sources and it played a key role in the reconstructions of the Antichrist tradition by Bousset and Charles.² While the actual word is not used in THEz, it seems to represent a form of the Antichrist tradition from the early church.

The figure of Beliar was treated at some length in THEz. The presentation of Beliar in these chapters was quite different from that seen in the older parts of the larger work, or in other early Jewish literature. Here, Beliar has been transformed into a new figure, one very close to the tradition of the eschatological adversary in the Didache and the Antichrist figure in the Johannine epistles. This work will therefore be examined with particular care.

13.2.1 Introduction

The clearest external evidence for the existence of THEz associates this text with the Antichrist myth. Georgius Cedrenus (ca 1100 CE) refers to the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the coming of Antichrist.

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- 1 LITERATURE: On the larger question of the literary character of Ascenss, and the specific questions concerning Martls, see the literature cited under note 8 at §7.1. While most critical investigations have concentrated on either Martls or the final six chapters represented in the Slavonic textual tradition, the following works include direct attention to THEz: J.M.T. Barton, "Ascension of Isaiah" AOT, 775-84 & 789-93; W. Bousset, *Der Antichrist*, 53, 99-101; V. Burch, "Literary Unity", 17-23; R.H. Charles, *Ascension of Isaiah* (1900); ---, *Revelation*, II,76-86; J.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 125-30; A.-M. Denis, "Les fragments grecs du Martyre d'Isaie" in *Introduction*, 170-76; ---, *Fragmenta Pseudepigraphorum Graeca*, 105-14; B.P. Grenfell & A.S. Hunt, *Amherst Papyri*, I,1-22; D. Hill, "Ascension of Isaiah" NTA II,642-63; M.A. Knibb, "Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah" OTP II,143-55 & 160-63; R. Meyer, "Himmelfahrt und Martyrium des Jesaja" RGG3 III,336f; E. von Nordheim, *Die Lehre der Alten*, I, 208-19; M. Rist, "Isaiah, Ascension of" IDB 2,744-46; P. Vielhauer, *Literatur*, 523-26.
- 2 Cf. W. Bousset, *Der Antichrist*, especially pp. 53, 86-88 and 99-104; and R.H. Charles, *Revelation*, II,84f.

Ὅτι ἐν τῇ διαθήκῃ Ἐζεκίου βασιλέως Ἰούδα λέγει Ἡσαίας ὁ προφήτης κρατῆσαι τὸν Ἀντίχριστον ἔτη γ' καὶ μῆνας ἑπτά, γινόμενα ἡμέρας ἀσφ'. καὶ μετὰ τὸ τὸν Ἀντίχριστον βληθῆναι ἐν τῷ Ταρτάρῳ ἐλθεῖν τὸν δεσπότην τῶν ὄλων, Χριστὸν τὸν θεὸν ἡμῶν, γενέσθαι δὲ καὶ ἀνάστασιν καὶ ἀνταπόδοσιν καλῶν τε καὶ κακῶν.

[G. Cedrenus, *Historiarum Compendium*³

For in the Testament of Hezekiah the king of Judah Isaiah the prophet says the Antichrist (is) to reign three years and seven months, ... And after casting the Antichrist into Tartarus [and] the coming of the master of all, Christ our God; then shall be the resurrection and reward of both the good and the evil.

This citation clearly refers to *Ascens* 4:12-18, under the title of *THEZ*. Its association of this text with the Antichrist tradition reflects a reasonable interpretation of the passage, as will be seen in the ensuing discussion. However before that association can be tested, some preliminary considerations need to be addressed.

(a) *THEZ* and the *Ascens* The Testament of Hezekiah is a Christian apocalypse which has been inserted into an older Jewish work, the *Martyrdom of Isaiah*.⁴ As noted earlier, *MartIs* itself represents only the first five chapters of a larger extant work, the *Ascension of Isaiah*. In this larger writing, *THEZ* comprises 3:13-4:22. The overall structure of *Ascens* is as follows.

3 The Greek text of Cedrenus is from I. Bekker, *Georgius Cedrenus Ioannis Scylitzae ope* (Bonn, 1838) I,120-21 cited in E. von Nordheim, *Die Lehre der Alten*, I,208.

4 W. Bousset posited a Jewish original behind *Ascens* 3:13ff, arguing for a Jewish Beliar apocalypse without any Neronic elements (*Der Antichrist*, especially 53, 57, 99f). While it is true that the references to Nero in 4:2ff can be excised, leaving what appears to be an early Jewish apocalypse, this is not sufficient to substantiate such a source hypothesis. The literature already examined in this study indicates that such a Beliar-Apocalypse, with a complete range of the elements found in the later Antichrist myth, would have been quite atypical for pre-Christian Jewish thought.

Table T25
Outline of Ascens

INTRODUCTORY SCENE (1:1-13)

Hezekiah summons Isaiah to instruct Manasseh. Isaiah prophesies Manasseh's apostasy and his own martyrdom at the apostate's command due to Beliar's control of Manasseh.

I. THE MARTYRDOM OF ISAIAH (2:1-3:12 & 5:1-16)

2:1-6	Manasseh's evil deeds
2:7-11	Isaiah withdraws from Jerusalem
2:12-16	Balchira the false prophet
3:1-12	Isaiah arrested and charged

II. THE VISION OF ISAIAH ['Testament of Hezekiah'] (3:13-4:22)

3:13-20	The coming of the Beloved
3:21-31	Problems within the church
4:1-13	Beliar, the Endtyrant
4:14-18	Parousia and judgment
4:19-22	Conclusion

5:1-16	Martyrdom of Isaiah
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III. THE ASCENSION OF ISAIAH (6:1-11:35)

6:1-17	Isaiah visits Hezekiah
7:1-9:26	Isaiah travels through the firmament and the seven heavens
9:27-10:6	The heavenly worship
10:7-11:33	Commissioning, descent, birth, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus
11:34-35	Conclusion of the visionary account

CONCLUSION TO THE BOOK (11:36-43)

As can be observed, in the overall form of Ascens -- as within the probable earlier form of MartIs -- the THEz serves an important function. Within the Ascens, THEz purports to be a prediction by Isaiah of the coming of Christ (called "the Beloved"), of the troubles which would beset the church in the last days, of the descent of Beliar as a Neronic tyrant, and of his judgment by the returning Christ. THEz also explains the anger of Manasseh, leading to Isaiah's martyrdom, at 5:1ff. Yet 3:13-4:22 can also be recognised as an insertion, which complements an older form of the material and adapts it to suit the needs of Christian communities around 100 CE.

(b) **Christian or Jewish Character** THEz is readily identified as a Christian work by its explicit references to the life of Christ and its concern over problems within the life of the church. It is almost certainly a Christian addition to the older Jewish MartIs in chs 1-5,⁵ although opinions differ as to whether it once existed as an independent apocalypse.⁶ While that question cannot be finally resolved at this stage of our knowledge, Cedrenus' title, "Testament of Hezekiah," serves as a convenient way to distinguish this material from both the original form of MartIs and the AscenIs materials in chs 6-11. It will be used in this discussion to refer to the distinctively Christian material within MartIs.

(c) **Date** In its extant form, the material in THEz must be dated to around the end of the first century CE.⁷ The clear use of the Nero redivivus myth in 4:2ff, suggests a date not much later than 100 CE even though the tradition became a standard element in much later descriptions. The simple patterns of church order reflected in 3:21-31 seem to parallel the ecclesiastical situation known at that time from the pastoral epistles, 2 Peter and 1 Clement. In addition, as Knibb points out,⁸ 4 Baruch 9:18-22 reflects a knowledge of MartIs in its Christian form (ie, AscenIs 1-5). These various factors suggest that THEz cannot have been composed much later than 100 CE.

5 V. Burch ("Literary Unity", 17-23) and F.C. Burkitt (*Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, 45f) have argued for a single Christian author for the whole AscenIs, but failed to convince. Similarly, Bousset's argument for a Jewish original behind THEz has not carried the critics. The Jewish element in MartIs is often delineated as 1:1-2a,6b-13a; 2:1-8,10-3:12; 5:1b-14. A. Caquot ("Bref commentaire", 92f) has suggested a narrowing of that Jewish stratum even further: 1:6-11; 2:1, 4-6,12-16; 3:6-12; 5:1b-6,8-10.

6 R.H. Charles [*Ascension of Isaiah* (1900) xiii f and 29] argued for its separate circulation. M.A. Knibb (OTP II,147f) criticises Charles' view, but more positive assessments are given in Schürer-Vermes, *History* III.1, 337; A.-M. Denis, *Introduction*, 173f; and E. von Nordheim, *Die Lehre der Alten*, I,219.

7 There seem to be no dissenting voices on this issue. Cf. F.C. Burkitt, *Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, 46; A.-M. Denis, *Introduction*, 175; E. Hammershaimb, "Martyrium", 19; M.A. Knibb, OTP II,149; M. Rist, *IDB* 2,745; Schürer-Vermes, *History* III.1,338; P. Vielhauer, *Literatur*, 526.

8 OTP II,149. Knibb also refers to parallels with the Gospel of Peter, 39f.

13.2.2 Text of the Thez

The original language of Thez is generally agreed to have been Greek.⁹ Further, the Ethiopic version in which the total Ascens alone survives intact is regarded as a good translation of its Greek precursor.¹⁰ There are also Latin and Slavonic witnesses to the textual tradition of Ascens, but only part of the Latin MS tradition (and none of the Slavonic MSS) includes the first five chapters. Fortunately, a fragmentary Greek MS is available for 2:4-4:4 and this will be drawn upon where possible, since it must be accorded priority over Ethiopic and Latin MSS.¹¹ For 4:5-22 only an English translation will be cited.

Isaiah's Prophecy of the Beloved (3:13-20)

ἦν γὰρ ὁ Βελιάρ ἐν θυμῷ
πολλῷ ἐπὶ Ἡσαίαν ἀπὸ τῆς
ὀράσεως καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ δειγμα-
τισμοῦ ὅτι ἐδειγμάτισεν τὸν
Σαμαήλ, καὶ ὅτι δι' αὐτοῦ
ἐφανερώθη ἡ ἐξέλευσις τοῦ
ἀγαπητοῦ ἐκ τοῦ ἐβδόμου
οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἡ μεταμόρφωσις
αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἡ κατάβασις αὐτοῦ,
καὶ ἡ ἰδέα ἦν δεῖ αὐτὸν μετα-
μορφωθῆναι ἐν εἴδει ἀνθρώπου,
καὶ ὁ διωγμος ὃν διωχθήσεται,
καὶ αἱ κολάσεις αἷς δεῖ τοὺς
υἱοὺς τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ αὐτὸν
κολάσαι, καὶ ἡ τῶν δώδεκα
μαθητεία, καὶ ὡς δεῖ αὐτὸν
μετὰ ἀνδρῶν κακοποιῶν σταυρ-
ωθῆναι, καὶ ὅτι ἐν μνημείῳ
ταφήσεται, καὶ δώδεκα οἱ μετ'
αὐτοῦ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ σκανδαλισ-
θήσονται, καὶ ἡ τήρησις τῶν

For Beliar was very angry with Isaiah because of the vision, and because of the exposure with which he had exposed Sammael and that through him there had been revealed the coming of the Beloved from the seventh heaven, and his transformation, and his descent, and the form into which he must be transformed, (namely) the form of a man, and the persecution with which he would be persecuted, and the torments with which the children of Israel must torment him, and the coming of the twelve disciples, and the teaching, and that before the sabbath he must be crucified on a tree, and be crucified with wicked men and that he would be buried in a grave, and the twelve who (were) with him would be offended at him; and the guards who would guard the grave; and the descent of the angel of the church which is in the heavens, whom he will summon in the last

9 Cf. J.M.T. Barton, AOT, 781; A.-M. Denis, *Introduction*, 176; M.A. Knibb, OTP, II, 144, 146f. For the MS evidence see J.M.T. Barton, AOT, 778f; A.-M. Denis, *Introduction*, 171-74; E. Hammershaimb, "Martyrium", 19f; M.A. Knibb, OTP II, 144f.

10 J.M.T. Barton, AOT, 781.

11. A. Caquot, "Bref commentaire", 66.

τηρητῶν τοῦ μνημονείου, καὶ ὡς ἡ κατάβασις τοῦ ἀγγέλου τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς ἐν οὐρανῷ με τος ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις, καὶ ... ὁ ἄγγελος τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ Μιχαὴλ ἄρχων τῶν ἁγίων ὅτι τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ αὐτοῦ ἀνοίξουσιν τὸ μνημονεῖον, καὶ ὁ ἀγαπητὸς καθίσας ἐπὶ τοὺς ὤμους αὐτῶν ἐξελεύσεται, καὶ ὡς ἀποστελεῖ τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ καὶ μαθητεύσουσιν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη καὶ πᾶσαν γλῶσσαν εἰς τὴν ἀνάστασιν τοῦ ἀγαπητοῦ, καὶ οἱ πιστεύσαντες τῷ σταυρῷ αὐτοῦ σωθήσονται καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀναβάσει αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν ἕβδομον οὐρανὸν ὅθεν καὶ ἦλθεν. καὶ ὡς πολλοὶ, καὶ πολλοὶ τῶν πιστευόντων εἰς αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ πνεύματι λαλήσουσιν, καὶ ὡς πολλὰ σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα ἔσται ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις.

The Corruption of the Church (3:21-31)

καὶ ἐν τῷ ἐγγίξειν αὐτὸν ἀφήσουσιν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ τὴν προφητείαν τῶν δώδεκα ἀποστόλων αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν πίστιν καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην αὐτῶν καὶ τὴν ἀγνείαν αὐτῶν. καὶ ἔσονται αἰρέσεις πολλαὶ ἐν τῷ ἐγγίξειν αὐτόν, καὶ ἔσονται ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις πολλοὶ θέλοντες ἄρχειν καὶ κενοὶ σοφίας. καὶ ἔσονται πολλοὶ πρεσβύτεροι ἄνομοι καὶ ποιμένες ἄδικοι ἐπὶ τὰ πρόβατα αὐτῶν ... μενα διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν ποιμένας ἀγνοῦς. καὶ πολλοὶ ... ἐνδυμάτων ... τῶν ἀγνῶν ... φιλα ... αἱ ... ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ χρόνῳ καὶ οἱ φιλοῦντες τὴν δόξαν τοῦ κόσμου τούτου. καὶ ἔσονται καταλαλιαὶ πολλαὶ καὶ

summon in the last days; and that angel of the Holy Spirit and Michael, the chief of the holy angels, will open his grave on the third day, and that Beloved, sitting on their shoulders, will come forth and send out his twelve disciples, and they will teach all nations and every tongue the resurrection of the Beloved, and those who believe in his cross will be saved, and in his ascension to the seventh heaven from where he came; and that many who believe in him will speak through the Holy Spirit, and there will be many signs and miracles in those days. [OTP, II,160]

And afterwards, at his approach, his disciples will abandon the teaching of the twelve apostles, and their faith, and their love, and their purity. And there will be much contention at his coming and at his approach. And in those days (there will be) many who will love office, although lacking wisdom. And there will be many wicked elders and shepherds who wrong their sheep, [and they will be rapacious because they do not have holy shepherds]. And many will exchange the glory of the robes of the saints for the robes of those who love money; and there will be much respect of persons in those days and lovers of the glory of this world. And there will be many slanderers and [much] vainglory at the approach of the LORD, and the Holy Spirit will withdraw from

κενοδοξία πολλή ἐν τῷ ἐγγίζεν
τὸν κύριον, καὶ ἀναχωρήσει τὸ
πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἀπὸ τῶν
πολλῶν. καὶ οὐκ ἔσονται ἐν
ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις
προφήται πολλοὶ λαλοῦντες
ἰσχυρὰ ἢ εἷς καὶ εἷς καὶ εἷς
ἐν τόποις καὶ τόποις διὰ τὸ
πνεῦμα τῆς πλάνης καὶ τῆς
πορνείας καὶ τῆς κενοδοξίας
καὶ τῆς φιλαργυρίας ...ζῆλος
γὰρ ἔσται πολὺς ἐν ταῖς
ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις, ἕκαστος
γὰρ τὸ ἀρεστον ἐν τοῖς
ὀφθαλμοῖς αὐτοῦ λαλήσει. καὶ
ἐξαφήσουσιν τὰς προφητείας
τῶν προφητῶν πρὸ ἐμου καὶ
τὰς ὁράσεις μου ταύτας
καταργῆ ...σουσιν ἵνα τὰ
ὀρέγματα τῆς καρδίας αὐτῶν
λαλήσωσιν.

many. And in those days there will not be many prophets, nor those who speak reliable words, except one here and there in different places, because of the spirit of error and of fornication, and of vainglory, and of the love of money, which there will be among those who are said to be servants of that One, and among those who receive that One. And among the shepherds and the elders there will be great hatred towards one another. For there will be great jealousy in the last days, for everyone will speak whatever pleases him in his own eyes. And they will make ineffective the prophecy of the prophets who were before me, and my visions (.....) also they will make ineffective, in order that they may speak what bursts out of their heart.
[OTP, II,161]

The Reign of Beliar as Endtyrant (4:1-13)

καὶ νῦν Ἐζεκία καὶ Ἰασοῦβ
υἱέ μου, αὐταὶ εἰσι αἱ ἡμέραι
τῆς πληρώσεως τοῦ κόσμου
....τος αὐτοῦ ἐν εἶδει
ἀνθρώπου βασιλέως ἀνόμου
μητραλώου, ὅστις αὐτὸς ὁ
βασιλεὺς οὗτος τὴν φυτεῖαν
ἦν φυτεύουσιν οἱ δώδεκα
ἀπόστολοι τοῦ ἀγαπητοῦ
διώξει, καὶ τῶν δώδεκα εἷς
ταῖς χερσὶν αὐτοῦ παραδο-
θήσεται. οὗτος ὁ ἄρχων ἐν τῇ
ιδεᾷ τοῦ βασιλέως ἐκείνου
ἐλεύσεται, καὶ αἱ δυνάμεις
πάσαι ἐλεύσονται τούτου τοῦ
κόσμου ...

Now, therefore, Hezekiah and Josab my son, [these are the days of the completion of the world]. After it has been brought to completion, Beliar will descend, the great angel, the king of this world, which he has ruled ever since it existed. He will descend from his firmament in the form of a man, a king of iniquity, a murderer of his mother — this is the king of this world — and will persecute the plant which the twelve apostles of the Beloved will have planted; some of the twelve will be given into his hand. This angel, Beliar, will come in the form of that king, and with him will come all the powers of this world, and they will obey him in every wish.

By his word he will cause the sun to rise by night, and the moon also he will make to appear at the sixth hour. And he will do everything he wishes in the world; he will act and speak like the Beloved, and will say, "I am the LORD, and before me there was no one." And all men in the world will believe in him. They will sacrifice to him and will serve him, saying, "This is the LORD, and

besides him there is no other." And the majority of those who have been associated together to receive the Beloved he will turn aside after him. And the power of his miracles will be in every city and district, and they will set up his image before him in every city. And he will rule for three years and seven months and twenty-seven days. And many faithful and saints, when they saw him for whom they were hoping, who was crucified, Jesus the LORD Christ — after I, Isaiah, had seen him who was crucified and ascended — and who believed in him, of these few will be left in those days as his servants, fleeing from desert to desert as they await his coming. [OTP, II,161f]

The Parousia (4:14-18)

And after [one thousand] three hundred and thirty-two days the LORD will come with his angels and with the hosts of the saints from the seventh heaven, with the glory of the seventh heaven, and will drag Beliar, and his hosts also, into Gehenna. And he will give rest to the pious whom he finds in the body in this world, but the sun will be ashamed, and (to) all who because of their faith in him have cursed Beliar and his kings. But the saints will come with the LORD with their robes which are stored up in the seventh heaven above; with the LORD will come those whose spirits are clothed, they will descend and be present in the world, and the LORD will strengthen those who are found in the body, together with the saints in the robes of the saints, and will serve those who have kept watch in this world. And after this they will be turned in their robes upwards, and their body will be left in the world. Then the voice of the Beloved will reprove in anger this heaven, and this earth, and the mountains, and the hills, and the cities, and the desert, and the trees, and the angel of the sun, and that of the moon, and everywhere that Beliar has appeared and acted openly in this world. [OTP, II,162]

Conclusion (4:19-22)

And the rest of the words of the vision are written in the vision of Babylon. And the rest of the vision about the LORD, behold it is written in parables in the words of mine that are written in the book which I prophesied openly. And the descent of the Beloved into Sheol, behold it is written in the section where the LORD says, "Behold, my son shall understand." And all these things, behold they are written in the Psalms, in the parables of David the son of Jesse, and in the Proverbs of Solomon his son, and in the words of Korah and of Ethan the Israelite, and in the words of Asaph, and in the rest of the psalms which the angel of the spirit has inspired, (namely) in those which have no name written, and in the words of Amos my father and of Hosea the prophet, and of Micah, and of Joel, and of Nahum, and of Jonah, and of Obadiah, and of Habakkuk, and of Haggai, and of Zephaniah, and of Zechariah, and of Malachi, and in the words of the righteous Joseph, and in the words of Daniel. [OTP, II,162f]

13.2.3 The Endtyrant Tradition in THEz

There are clearly numerous points at which the tradition in THEz goes further towards a fully-developed Antichrist myth than the earlier Jewish and Christian sources. Rather, THEz is similar to the traditional material seen in Revelation and the Didache, as well as the later Antichrist writings. The major points are set out in the following Table, and then discussed individually in the ensuing paragraphs.

Table T26
The Nero-Belial Figure in THEz

Use of OT	4:19-22
Sammael figure	3:13
Belial figure	3:13
Troubles in the church	3:21ff
Last days	4:1
Belial descends from above	4:2a
Angelic ruler of this world	4:2b
Human form	4:2c
Nero redivivus legend	4:2d
Persecution	4:3
All satanic powers	4:4b
Cosmic upheavals	4:5
Universal sway	4:6a, 10
Act and speak like the Beloved	4:6b
Claim divine honours	4:6c, 12
World will accept his claims	4:7f, 11
Apostasy of majority of Christians	4:9
Roman imperial cult	4:11
Reign 3½ years	4:12
Flight of faithful remnant	4:13
Destruction at parousia	4:14ff

As with *Didache* 16, this is an impressive combination of the elements seen in the Antichrist myth. When the individual elements are considered, there is an overwhelming impression — as Bousset and Charles both correctly sensed — that we are dealing with ideas related to the Antichrist myth here.

(a) Use of the Old Testament Scriptures (passim and 4:19-22) As was observed in §3, it was typical of the Christian Antichrist tradition to appeal to the Jewish Scriptures for support of its teaching. This characteristic is demonstrated in two forms in the present work. First, the pseudonymous attribution of the Beliar apocalypse to Isaiah gives credence to the idea that Isaiah prophesied the coming of the Endtyrant. Secondly, the editorial conclusion to *THEz* (4:19-22) constitutes almost an example of biblical overkill, as virtually the entire prophetic corpus is claimed as supporting the teachings of the apocalypse.

(b) Sammael (3:13) In this opening passage of *THEz* the author used both the Beliar and Sammael,¹² presumably as synonyms for Satan (as in *MartIs*: 1:11; 2:1; 5:15; or in *AscenIs*: 7:9; 11:41) although Beliar in *THEz* does not seem to quite be a synonym for Satan. This was probably a deliberate attempt to tie the *THEz* material into the *MartIs*, just as other aspects of this verse seem intended to tie *THEz* with the heavenly journey of Isaiah in chs 6-11.¹³ Sammael is not used again in *THEz*, the preferred title being Beliar. For the significance of these titles in the earlier Jewish tradition, see the discussion of *MartIs* (§7.1).

(c) Beliar (3:13; 4:2,4,14,16,18) The figure of Beliar has already emerged clearly as a major focus for Jewish and Christian speculation about the evil powers (cf. §§6-7). As just noted, in *MartIs* Beliar seems to have been used as a synonym for Sammael and Satan (cf. 1:9; 2:4; 3:11; 5:1,4,15); but it is not used in chs 6-11. The specific form of the Beliar tradition in *THEz* has been changed by its fusion with significant elements of the *Nero redivivus* myth, as will be discussed below.

12 W. Bousset [*Der Antichrist*, 100] suggests that "Sammael" was not original to this passage, drawing upon a variant in the Latin texts to support his argument.

13 Cf. M.A. Knibb, *OTP* II, 160.

(d) Troubles in the church (3:21ff) These verses are set in "the last days" and portray a sorry state of affairs within the life of the church prior to Christ's return. They point to a loss of faith, to divisions, false teaching, etc. In this respect THEz shared the concern over false prophets and heresy seen in the classical Antichrist literature (cf. §§4.2 and 9.1, and Table T32).¹⁴ The reference to loss of "faith ... love ... and purity" is reminiscent of the concern of the Johannine epistles that the true believers maintain these virtues.

(e) The last days (4:1) While the Ethiopic text is corrupt at this point, it is clear from the Greek that the time of the final consummation of history is envisaged as the setting for the advent of the Endtyrant. This is consistent with the general Christian Antichrist tradition, and also relates to the idea of divine sovereignty working out its purposes in the apparent disasters of evil actions within history (cf. §4.6).

(f) The descent of Beliar (4:2) The Endtyrant is to descend from his firmament. This Beliar is clearly still an evil demonic power, rather than a human tyrant. He comes, however, not from one of the seven heavens inspected by Isaiah in chs 6-11, but from a lower sphere: "his firmament". Barton translates this phrase, "from his abode in the vault of heaven".¹⁵ This suggests the idea of the Lawless One in 2 Thess 2:3, whose sudden advent at the end of time has suggested to some scholars that he was thought to be waiting in a special place pending his release.¹⁶ So far, the Beliar figure in THEz seems to be consistent with its form in the general Jewish and Christian apocalyptic tradition.

(g) The angelic ruler of this world (4:2,4) The description of Beliar as the great angel, or the ruler of this world, is also consistent with the use of this title as a synonym for Satan. The Latin and Greek MSS differ at this point. The Latin MSS read: *descendet Berial angelus magnus rex huius mundi*; while the Greek reads: ὁ κοσμοκράτωρ τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου ('the great ruler of this world').

14 M.A. Knibb [OTP II,161] points to parallels with Acts 20:29f; 1 Tim 1:3-7; 4:1; 2 Tim 3:1-9; and 2 Peter 2:1. W. Bousset [*Der Antichrist*, 77] mentions parallels in 4 Ezra 5:5 and 2 Baruch 49:32ff; 70:1ff.

15 AOT, 791.

16 Cf. J.E. Frame, *Thessalonians*, 252.

(h) **In the form of a human being (4:2)** One of the essential features of the normative Antichrist tradition was the human character of the Antichrist figure (cf. §4.1). No matter how close the association between Satan and Antichrist, the Antichrist always remained a human being — even when, as in Origen, the Antichrist was represented as an incarnation of Satan.¹⁷ This basic and, it would seem, non-negotiable element of the Antichrist tradition, may account for the rather awkward attempt to assert the Endtyrant's humanity despite his demonic and other-worldly character.

(i) **The Nero legend (4:2ff)** The reason for insisting upon the humanity — or at least a semblance of human form — becomes clearer as the passage continues. Here the Beliar tradition of an evil demonic power has been merged with that of the *Nero redivivus* myth, to form a truly diabolical and infernal opponent with pretensions to the messianic privileges of the Beloved.

The presence of the Nero material is clear from the following elements: the king of iniquity, a matricide, persecutor of the church, ruler responsible for death of Peter ("one of the Twelve"), whose image is placed in every city, and in whose royal form Beliar will appear.¹⁸ The combination of all these elements seems to leave no doubt that the Nero myth is in the author's mind. The description is especially close to that in SibOr V.28-34.

As has been mentioned, Bousset argued that these elements were a later addition to a Jewish Beliar-Apocalypse,¹⁹ but Charles is probably more correct when he identifies this passage as a significant development within the history of the Antichrist tradition.²⁰ He notes the significance of this fusion of angelic evil leader and human eschatological tyrant.

17 Origen, *Cels.* VI.45.

18 For literature on the Nero legend, see: W. Bousset, *Der Antichrist*, 121f; —, *Offenbarung*, 410-18; R.H. Charles, *Revelation* II, 76-87; M.P. Charlesworth, "Nero: Some Aspects", 69-76; J.J. Collins, *Sibylline Oracles*, 80-87; J.M. Court, *Myth and History*, 127-37; J.M. Lawrence, "Nero Redivivus", 54-66; A. Yarbro Collins, *Combat Myth*, 176-86.

19 *Der Antichrist*, 53, 99f.

20 *Revelation* II, 85.

(j) **Persecution (4:3)** There is just a brief mention of persecution in this description of Nero-Beliar: the Endtyrant persecutes the church, and the afforded this element is also consistent with the general Antichrist tradition. While the persecution of the faithful is known to the tradition (cf. §4.2 and §5.4), it is usually a minor theme. The real threat in the eyes of most Christian writers on the theme of the Antichrist was concerned with false teaching and apostasy, not with persecution.

(k) **All satanic powers (4:4)** With this evil Endtyrant, when he appears in human form as a revived form of Nero, will come all the powers of this world. Like the Lawless One in the early apocalyptic tradition cited by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2, or the beast from the sea in Revelation 13, this Endtyrant will have at his disposal the full range of satanic powers within this sphere of existence (cf. 2 Thess 2:9; Rev 13:1-4). Like the following two elements, this is part of the eschatological False Prophet strand within the developing Antichrist tradition of the early church. Its presence here adds further depth to the description of the Endtyrant: evil demon, human tyrant modelled on a revived Nero, and false religious authority are all combined in the person of Thez's Beliar figure.

(l) **Cosmic upheavals (4:5)** As demonstrations of the awesome powers at the disposal of this evil character, there would be disruptions to the normal order of the cosmos. This element has its parallels in Daniel 7, the synoptic gospels and numerous other passages. It was an element of the False Prophet form of the eschatological opponent tradition. Particularly clear parallels may be observed in SibOr III.63-65 and 4 Ezra 5:4.

(m) **Universal sway (4:6a, 10)** This Endtyrant is to have universal sway over the world and its inhabitants. Like the beast from the sea in Revelation 13, the whole earth has apparently been committed to his power — albeit only for a brief, pre-determined time.

21 The Greek MS has this reading. Cf. M.A. Knibb, *OTP II*, 161.

(n) **Act and speak like the Beloved (4:6b)** This characteristic of the Nero-Beliar figure in THEz is a decisive one. Here we have an Endtyrant who is not merely the opponent of God or the persecutor of the church. Rather, here the text describes someone who deliberately pretends to be the Beloved. This is a significant step from general Jewish and Christian descriptions of *Gegenspieler* to an anti-Christ figure. Even more clearly than the figures in Rev 12-13, who imitate the Lamb in various ways, this figure is said to act and speak like God's Son.

(o) **Claim divine honours (4:6c, 12)** One of the elements of the ancient combat myth tradition (cf. Table T11) was the claim of divine honours by the protagonist. This element was to become an essential element in the Endtyrant tradition and the subsequent Antichrist myth (cf. 2 Thess 2:4; SibOr V.28-34; §4.5). It is also present in the description of Nero-Beliar in THEz, as one would expect in a passage so closely related to the developing Antichrist tradition.

(p) **The world will accept his claims (4:7f)** Like the beast from the sea in Revelation 13, or the Lawless One in 2 Thessalonians 2, Nero-Beliar will win the recognition and misplaced faith of the world at large. This is yet a further detail in which THEz conforms to the Antichrist myth tradition. The only feature missing from THEz is the use of the deceiver motif. The Endtyrant will turn aside many of the followers of the Beloved, which is close to the deception motif, but he is not explicitly called "the deceiver".

(q) **Apostasy of the majority of Christians (4:9)** Through his power over nature, and his ability to act and speak like the Beloved, the Endtyrant will mislead the majority of Christians. This idea of a final apostasy before the parousia is a well-attested detail in early Christian eschatology, and was one of the central themes in the later Antichrist myth (cf. the outlines in Tables T4 and T32).

(r) **The Roman imperial cult (4:11)** As has been noted at numerous points through this study, negative attitudes towards the Roman empire generally, and the imperial cult in particular, exercised an influence on the shaping of both constituent parts and the overall form of the Antichrist myth. The use of the *Nero redivivus* myth in THEz is itself an indication of these anti-Roman sentiments continuing to shape the traditions found here. This influence runs further, since the mention of images of the ruler being set up in every city

seems to be a reference to the imperial cult.²² If so, then Thez would represent a further example of these anti-Roman sentiments; as well as sharing yet another element with the Antichrist tradition.

(s) **The 3½ year reign of the Endtyrant (4:12)** This detail, of course, is ultimately dependent upon the figures given in Daniel 7 and 12 for the duration of the tyranny under Antiochus IV. They became part of the standard descriptions of the Endtyrant, and their inclusion in Thez simply underlines that work's close association with the broader Jewish and Christian apocalyptic traditions (cf. Tables T4, T7 and T32). By itself, this detail would not suffice to establish the Antichrist character of the Endtyrant; but in association with all the other details, it is a further significant piece of evidence.

(t) **The flight of the faithful remnant (4:13)** The description of the few faithful Christian left, as they flee from desert to desert, is very close to Hippolytus, *antichr.* 61.9.²³ It is related to traditional ideas of the desert as a place of refuge (cf. 1 Kings 17:2f; 19:3f; 1 Macc 2:28-30; Rev 12:6,14),²⁴ and possibly to the dominical injunction to flee to the Judaeen hills at the appearance of the false christs (Matt 24:15ff). There is nothing new in this description of the flight, but it represents a further point at which Thez shares a common tradition with the later Antichrist literature.

(u) **Destruction of the Endtyrant at the advent of the Beloved (4:14ff)** The description of the judgment of the Endtyrant and all who co-operated with him is unusually detailed. The basic assertion of evil's final defeat by the returning Christ is common to all Christian apocalyptic, including the Antichrist myth.²⁵

22 Cf. M.A. Knibb, *OTP II*,162.

23 W. Bousset [*Der Antichrist*, 87, 141] makes a helpful suggestion to clarify the apparent confusion in the text at 4:13. He suggests it originally read "when they saw him whom they were not expecting" (ie, as a reference to the advent of the Endtyrant, rather like 4 Ezra 5:6 which reads: *et regnabit quem non sperant qui inhabitant super terram*) and that this has been confused by the references to Jesus and Isaiah.

24 So M.A. Knibb, *OTP II*,162.)

25 W. Bousset [*Der Antichrist*, 150] points to parallels in *SibOr III.73*.

13.2.4 THEz and the Antichrist Tradition

THEz seems to be within the tradition begun in Revelation. Both Bousset and Charles would seem to have been right when they each recognised the significance of the evidence of THEz for the origins and early development of the Antichrist Myth. THEz evidently employed the Nero legend after it had changed from being a human Nero figure into an other-worldly figure. In this case, the Nero figure has been combined with that of Beliar, thus combining the Satan figure with the figure of the messianic pretender and Endtyrant. In addition, aspects of the False Prophet adversary tradition seem to have been included in THEz's description of the Endtyrant.

When seen as part of the continuum of early Antichrist passages (cf. Table T32), the material in THEz is clearly an important piece of evidence for the origins and development of the Antichrist myth. Here is an Endtyrant who is consciously presented as an imitator of Christ, and one whose actions represent a combination of the activity attributed to the man of lawlessness in 2 Thessalonians and of elements which have previously appeared in separate traditions in Jewish and Christian writings.

THEz seems to indicate that around the turn of the first century CE at least some Christian circles had a concept of an eschatological adversary that was virtually identical with the more developed Antichrist myth in the late second century. This is not to say that the author of THEz would have recognised the term, ἀντίχριστος; but his Nero-Beliar figure seems to be an early description of a figure identical to the Antichrist figure described by Irenaeus and Hippolytus.

While it is likely that the Nero-Beliar figure in THEz was virtually an Antichrist figure, it cannot be assumed that every occurrence of Beliar in Jewish or Christian writings had this same significance. Even within AscenIs itself, Beliar does not seem to have this Antichrist character outside 3:13-4:22. As has been seen, in most of these cases Beliar was simply the leader of the evil spirits; it was an alternative name for the Satan-devil figure. However, in THEz it seems that Beliar was understood as the great eschatological adversary, and portrayed as an opponent of and a pretender to the position of Jesus as the Christ; that is, as an Antichrist (even though the word was not used).

13.3 THE JOHANNINE EPISTLES

13.3.1 Significance of 1 and 2 John for this Study

It has already been observed that the presence of the Antichrist myth seems to have been attested, without the distinctive term, in the Didache and the Testament of Hezekiah (if not even earlier in the Apocalypse). The Johannine epistles are crucial to any study of the emerging the Antichrist myth, since they are the earliest extant works to employ the technical term, "Antichrist." Where Didache and Thez seem to have used the myth without the terminology, the Johannine epistles used the terminology but provide minimal information about the myth.¹

In assessing the significance of the Johannine epistles for this research, there are three major tasks to be addressed. In the first place, some consideration must be given to questions concerning their composition. As was the case with the earlier writings examined, the authorship, setting and literary character of the Johannine epistles need to be considered before their value for research into the history of the Antichrist myth can be drawn out. In their case, the use of the Antichrist myth in the context of an internal church conflict will be of considerable significance, even if there are limits to the certainty with which that situation can be reconstructed.

The meaning of the passages which actually refer to the Antichrist tradition will also need to be considered carefully. It cannot be assumed that the author of the Johannine epistles had in mind the same collection of ideas that are seen in any of the contemporary literature, let alone the later writings on the Antichrist. The word itself only served as a vehicle for those

1 LITERATURE: See R.E. Brown [Epistles, 131-46] for an extensive bibliography (as well as sectional bibliographies throughout his commentary); R. Bultmann, *Epistles*, 118-32; E. Haenchen, "Neuere Literatur zu den Johannesbriefen" TR 26 (1960) 1-43, 267-91; and R. Schnackenburg, "Neue Arbeiten zu den johanneischen Schriften" BZ 11 (1967) 303-07, 12 (1968) 141-45, 306-11 and 13 (1969) 134-45. Commentaries include: A.E. Brooke, *Epistles*; R.E. Brown, *Epistles*; R. Bultmann, *Epistles*; C.H. Dodd, *Epistles*; C. Gore, *Epistles*; K. Grayston, *Epistles*; J.L. Houlden, *Epistles*; J. Lieu, *Epistles*; I.H. Marshall, *Epistles*; R. Schnackenburg, *Johannesbriefe*; J. Schneider, *Briefe*, 137-98; B.F. Westcott, *Epistles*; A.N. Wilder, "Epistles" IB 12,209-313; H. Windisch & H. Preisker, *Briefe*.

meanings known to and intended by the author. These may have been quite different from the interpretations of his words made by later generations. Consequently, an important part of the task faced in this stage of the inquiry is to seek the original meaning of the references to the Antichrist in the Johannine epistles.

Finally, the significance of these epistles for the developing Antichrist myth tradition needs some attention. It may be that the author of the Johannine epistles contributed no more than a particularly apt piece of vocabulary to the development of the Antichrist myth. On the other hand, it is possible that these brief passages in the Johannine epistles represent the chance survival of literary evidence of a well-established Christian Antichrist tradition from the end of the first century CE. As well, the influence of these passages in the subsequent development of the myth will need some clarification. The discussion which follows will address each of these matters in turn.

13.3.2 The Composition of the Johannine Epistles

While this study is not primarily concerned with issues such as the date and authorship of the Johannine epistles, some attention needs to be given to them. There is an extensive body of literature on these matters, and it is not possible here to do much more than indicate the positions adopted for the purposes of this study.

(a) **Genre, Structure and Sources** There is general recognition that 1 John does not conform to the form of hellenistic letters, but should still be recognised as some kind of a pastoral communication from a church leader to specific persons or groups.² While 2 John and 3 John both conform very closely to the letter form, 1 John is more of a general treatise motivated by pastoral concerns. The structure of 1 John is seemingly impossible to define, as the

2 Cf. J. Bogart, *Perfectionism*, 12-15; H. Conzelmann, "Was von Anfang war", 194-200; C.H. Dodd, *Epistles*, xxi; F.O. Francis, "Form and Function", 110-26; R.W. Funk, "Form and Structure", 424-30; K. Grayston, *Epistles*, 3f; P.R. Jones, "Structural Analysis", 433-44; W.G. Kümmel, *Introduction*, 437; J. Lieu, *Epistles*, 37-51; R. Schnackenburg, *Johannesbriefe*, 1f; B.F. Westcott, *Epistles*, xxix; P. Vielhauer, *Literatur*, 462f; H. Windisch & H. Preisker, *Briefe*, 107.

author's thoughts seem to move in cycles that repeat or even contradict himself.³ It is also widely recognised that concerns over christology and communal ethics run throughout the epistle, and were treated alternately by the author.

The matter of literary or oral sources behind 1 John is more complex. Von Dobschütz identified a number of *Grundsätze* which he believed provided a basis for the author to build upon.⁴ His views were developed and modified by subsequent studies, but the more recent studies seem a little cautious of source theories.⁵ However, it is still maintained that some of the maxim-like statements in 1 John may represent the views of the opponents. In addition, Ernst has suggested that an early eschatological source can be identified in chs 2-5 of 1 John.⁶ That idea will be considered in the exegesis of the passages which refer to the Antichrist.

(b) **Composition** It is apparent that the Johannine epistles had some relationship with the large Johannine corpus, particularly the Fourth Gospel; but the exact nature of that relationship is unclear.⁷ The traditional view was that the Apostle John wrote all three epistles and the gospel. This view is

3 Cf. J. Bogart, *Perfectionism*, 15-17; R.E. Brown, *Epistles*, 116-30; A.E. Brooke, *Epistles*, xxxiv-xxxviii; W.G. Kümmel, *Introduction*, 436; R. Schnackenburg, *Johannesbriefe*, ix-x.

4 E. von Dobschütz, "Johanneischen Studien, 1", 1-8. These are reproduced in W. Nauck, *Tradition*, 1f.

5 Cf. J. Bogart, *Perfectionism*, 17f; R.E. Brown, *Epistles*, 36-46; H. Braun, "Literatur-Analyse und theologische Schichtung", 210-42; R.E. Bultmann, "Analyse des ersten Johannesbriefe" in *Exegetica*, 105-23; —, "Die kirchliche Redaktion" in *Exegetica*, 381-93; W.G. Kümmel, *Introduction*, 438ff; W. Nauck, *Tradition*; J.C. O'Neill, *Puzzle*.

6 J. Ernst, *Gegenspieler*, 176.

7 A.E. Brooke, *Epistles*, i-xxvii; R.E. Brown, *Epistles*, 14-35 & 86-115; C.H. Dodd, "Epistle of John and the Fourth Gospel", 129-56 (a seminal study on the issue); —, *Epistles*, xlvii-lvii; F.V. Filson, "Purpose and Message", 259-276; K. Grayston, *Epistles*, 4-14 (arguing for the priority of 1 John); W.F. Howard, "Common Authorship", 12-25; W.G. Kümmel, *Introduction*, 444f; I.H. Marshall, *Epistles*, 31-42; J. Painter, "'Opponents' in 1 John", 50; J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the NT*, 285-311; F.F. Segovia, *Love Relationships*; D. Moody Smith, *Johannine Christianity*; P. Vielhauer, *Literatur*, 466-70; H. Windisch & H. Preisker, *Briefe*, 133.

expressed quite clearly in the Muratorian Fragment,⁸ which asserts apostolic authorship. For a variety of reasons (not least the denial of apostolic authorship to the gospel) apostolic authorship of the epistles is rejected by virtually all modern scholars. The question of the authorship of the Johannine writings is now regarded as secondary. The composition of the gospel is commonly thought to have involved several stages,⁹ and the way(s) in which the epistles (individually and collectively) might relate to those processes is very much under debate.¹⁰

While the precise relationship of the epistles to the gospel cannot be established beyond question, there is a general consensus that all four writings emerge from the Johannine churches and that the disputes addressed by the epistles relate in some way to the interpretation of the traditions found in the gospel. This will be considered further when the situation of the Johannine epistles is examined. The epistles are usually dated ca 100 CE,¹¹ and located in Asia Minor.¹²

8 The relevant passage of the Muratorian Canon reads:

quid ergo mirum si Iohannes tam
constanter sincula etia In epistulis
suis proferam dicens In semeipsu
que uidimus oculis nostris et
auribus audiuimus et manus nostrae
palpauerunt haec scripsimus uobis
Sic enim non solum uisorem sed
auditorem Sed et scriptore omnium
mirabiliu dns per ordi nem
profetetur

[K.Th. Schäfer, *Grundriss*, 3]

"What marvel therefore if John so
firmly sets forth each statement in
his Epistles too, saying of himself,
**What we have seen with our eyes
and heard with our ears and our
hands have handled, these things we
have written to you.** For so he
declares himself not an eyewitness
and a hearer only, but a writer of
all the marvels of the Lord in order."
[J. Stevenson (ed), *A New Eusebius*,
145]

9 Cf. R.E. Brown, *Gospel*, I,xxi-xl.

10 For instance, Brown's comprehensive reconstruction is challenged by K. Grayston, *Epistles*, 14-22.

11 Cf. A.E. Brooke, *Epistles*, lviii; R.E. Brown, *Epistles*, 100; C.H. Dodd, *Epistles*, lxix; W.G. Kümmel, *Introduction*, 445. Earlier dates are proposed by I.H. Marshall [*Epistles*, 48] (who suggests a date 60-90 CE) and J.A.T. Robinson [*Redating the NT*, 285-92] (who seeks to establish a date before 70 CE).

12 However, J.J. Gunther ["Alexandrian Gospel and Letters", 581-603] argues for a setting in Egypt.

(c) **The Problems within the Johannine Community** It is impossible to attempt any interpretation of the Johannine epistles without giving some attention to the problems which they addressed. It is clear that there had been, and was continuing to be, serious differences between members of the "Johannine community". These differences are only alluded to, for the most part, in the epistles but they have left their mark on them. In particular, feelings ran so high that the author of 1 and 2 John had recourse to an eschatological tradition which spoke of the coming of "the Antichrist" at the last days, and he labelled his opponents as "many antichrists," thus providing the first occurrence of the term ἀντίχριστος in extant literature. Before moving to consider the evidence in the Johannine epistles relating to the history of the Antichrist myth, it is necessary to make some comments about the situation within the Johannine churches and the controversy with the opponents.

All the commentaries on the Johannine epistles in the modern era have included some discussion of these matters, often with analysis of the kind of beliefs and/or practices which might be attributed to the opponents.¹³ In the more recent literature on the Johannine writings this has been one of the major points under discussion. Raymond Brown's suggestion, is similar to the view of J.L. Houlden,¹⁴ but is set out in greater detail. Brown has now written extensively on this particular question, making it a focal point for his studies on the gospel and the epistles.¹⁵ His views may well set the agenda, if not the consensus, for the next stage of the debate as people respond to his proposals.

13 Cf. A.E. Brooke [Epistles, xxxviii-lii] for an early example.

14 J.L. Houlden, *Epistles*, 1-20.

15 See R.E. Brown, *Community of the Beloved Disciple*, 93-144; —, *Epistles*, 47-115; —, "Johannine Ecclesiology", 379-93; —, "Other Sheep not of this Fold", 5-22; —, "Relationship to the Fourth Gospel", 57-68. For other discussion of these matters, see W. Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, 91-94; J. Blank, "Irrlehrer", 166-93; J. Bogart, *Perfectionism*, especially pp. 123-35; C.H. Dodd, *Epistles*, xviii-xxi; J. Ernst, *Gegenspieler*, 169-73; F.V. Filson, "First John", 268-72; K. Grayston, *Epistles*, 14-22; J. Lieu, *Epistles*, 125-65; —, "Authority to become children of God", 210-28; A.J. Malherbe, "Hospitality and Inhospitality in the Church" in *Social Aspects of Early Christianity*, 92-112; I.H. Marshall, *Epistles*, 14-22; P.S. Minear, "Idea of Incarnation", 291-302; J. Painter, "Opponents", 48-71; P. Perkins, "Koinonia in I Jn 1:3-7", 631-41; J.A.T. Robinson, "Destination and Purpose", 56-65; R. Schnackenburg, *Johannesbriefe*, 15-23; J.-W. Taegar, "Der konservative Rebell", 267-87; P. Vielhauer, *Literatur*, 470-75; K. Weiss, "Die 'Gnosis' im Hintergrund und im Spiegel der Johannesbriefe" in K.W. Tröger (ed), *Gnosis und Neues Testament*, 341-56; —, "Orthodoxie und Heterodoxie", 247-55).

Brown argues that the epistles were written by a leading member of the Johannine churches in response to a crisis which had developed about a decade after the main body of the gospel had been written -- that is, ca 100 CE. According to Brown, this crisis consisted of a division within the Johannine churches over the implications and application of Johannine theology, especially as given its classical expression in the gospel. Both the author of the Johannine epistles and his protagonists thus stood in a direct relationship to the gospel, and this accounts for the many similarities between the epistles and the gospel.

On the other hand, such a view provides an explanation of the differences which also exist. The writer of the epistles was no longer in the same *Sitz im Leben* as the evangelist; the needs of the moment were different, and his writings reflect that fact. Furthermore, the changes seen in the epistles are consistent with the requirements of the hypothetical new *Sitz im Leben*, as the writer sought to combat what he regarded as excessively "progressive" theology.

The differences in thought include a tendency to ascribe to God the attributes and actions ascribed to Jesus in the gospel. For example, Jesus is the (true) light in John 1:4,9; and 8:12; but 1 John 1:5 states that "God is light". The christology of 1 John seems to have been deliberately pitched at a "lower" level than in the gospel: more stress is put on Jesus' humanity, his coming *ἐν σαρκί* ["in the flesh"]; and his divinity is not emphasised as it had been in the gospel. 1 John gives more attention to the sacrificial atoning value of Jesus' death, and there is a notable decrease in references to the Spirit and the Paraclete. The eschatology of 1 John is more in keeping with the rest of the NT, and it includes apocalyptic references to the parousia and to the Antichrist. Unlike the gospel, 1 John never cited the OT and it gives no sign of a polemic against "the Jews".

All of these changes are consistent with a change in the life setting of the two writers. The writer seems to be battling with opponents within the church. Brown has suggested that the gospel also shows signs of a debate with several groups: the Jews who do not accept Jesus as Messiah or Son of God; the "crypto-Christians" who believe but remain within the Jewish synagogues; the followers of John the Baptist; Jewish Christians who accept Jesus as Messiah but not as Son of God; and also the Christians of the "Apostolic Churches" who followed the teaching and hierarchical structures of Peter and Paul. However, Brown points out that none of these groups appear in the epistles.

What is important and, indeed startling, is that none of these outside groups is in view in the Epistles. The struggle is now with former insiders who have left the community (I John 2.19) -- with **secessionists** . . . If the adversary has changed, so has the point of the struggle. None of the opponents in GJohn seems to have had so high a christology (especially in terms of preexistence) as did the Johannine Community; and so, if the evangelist wrote to strengthen faith in Jesus as "the Messiah, the Son of God", he was emphasising that the Father and the Son were one . . . the struggle in I John is still for a proper faith in Jesus as "the Christ" and "the Son of God" (5.1,5); but now the stress is on the human career of God's Son . . . The struggle is against those who "negate the importance of Jesus" the man (4.3), against those who are too "progressive" (II John 9).¹⁶

The identity of these "secessionists", and the exact form of their beliefs and actions, remain matters under discussion. J. Bogart identified ten groups of people whose views were of concern to the author of I John, although Bogart then eliminates several as merely members of the church with faulty beliefs (who were in need of correction or encouragement) and reduces the remainder to a single group of opponents labelled ἀντιχριστοὶ by the writer.¹⁷ The "real opponents", as Bogart calls them, were former Johannine Christians who held docetic views. Bogart describes them as ecstatic prophets who had gone out into the world, possibly as authorised missionaries of the church, but had developed and promoted beliefs about possession of a special charisma and a unique relationship with the Father unrelated to the place of Jesus as the Anointed One. Bogart connects these opponents of the originator with the Cerinthian heresy.¹⁸

It is not possible to pursue the debate over the controversy any further in this discussion. For the purposes of this research project into the origins of the Antichrist myth, it is sufficient to note that the Johannine epistles which first use the term were documents composed in the context of internal church

16 R.E. Brown, *Epistles*, 29.

17 J. Bogart, *Perfectionism*, 123-35. He identifies Antichrists, False Prophets, Libertines, "Haters of the Brethren", and those who deny that Jesus came by blood, as belonging to this single opposing faction.

18 J. Bogart, *Perfectionism*, 131. K. Grayston [*Epistles*, 25] criticises Bogart for reading too much into some of the expressions used in I John, and he particularly criticises the common association of the heresy in I John with Cerinthus (cf. K. Grayston, *Epistles*, 14-22). See also R.E. Brown, *Epistles*, 766-71.

controversy over allegedly false teaching and, quite likely, related issues of power and leadership. Not only were such factors operative in the setting from which the Johannine epistles emerge, but they also provided the occasion for this first occurrence of "Antichrist" as a perjorative label. It is significant that the word first appears as a device to stigmatise fellow-believers.

13.3.3 The Antichrist Myth in the Johannine Epistles

Before the three passages in the Johannine epistles which actually use the Antichrist myth are examined, it should be noted that traditional apocalyptic elements are found throughout 1 John. While these other elements cannot be examined directly in the ensuing discussion, their presence should be noted and kept in mind since they provide an insight into the broader apocalyptic tradition with which the author and his readers were familiar. These aspects are set out in a convenient form in Table T27. From that Table it can be seen that there was considerable recourse to traditional eschatological material in these two letters, and that the struggle with the opponents was frequently expressed in terms of an eschatological crisis.

Table T27
Eschatological Ideas in 1 and 2 John

Last hour	2:18a,d
World passes away	2:17a
Satan figures:	
Evil one	2:13f; 5:18f
Devil	3:8
Liar	2:22a
Dualism:	
Light/dark	2:9ff
Church/world	2:15ff; 3:1; 4:1ff; 5:4,19
Devil/son of God	3:8
Of God/of devil	3:10
Spirit of truth/error	4:6
Antichrist	2:18,22; 4:3; 2 Jn 7
False prophets	4:1
Deceivers	2:26; 3:7; 2 Jn 7
False teaching	2:4,18; 4:1ff; 2 Jn 10
Lawlessness	3:4
Division	2:19
Parousia of Jesus	2:28; 3:2
Day of judgment	4:17
Rewards for just	2 Jn 8
Ethical/moral exhortation	2:27; 3:3,18; 4:7ff

Table T28

Antichrist Passages in 1 and 2 John

α = 1 John 2:18-27; β = 1 John 4:1-6; γ = 2 John 4-11

- α Παιδία, ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν, καὶ καθὼς ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἀντί-
χριστος ἔρχεται,
β Ἀγαπητοί, μὴ παντὶ πνεύματι πιστεύετε ἀλλὰ δοκιμάζετε τὰ
πνεύματα εἰ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν,
γ Ἐχάρην λίαν ὅτι εὔρηκα ἐκ τῶν τέκνων σου περιπατοῦντας
ἐν ἀληθείᾳ, καθὼς ἐντολὴν ἐλάβομεν παρὰ τοῦ πατρός. καὶ
νῦν ἐρωτῶ σε, κυρία, οὐχ ὡς ἐντολὴν καινὴν γράφων σοι
ἀλλὰ ἦν εἶχομεν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, ἵνα ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους. καὶ
αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγάπη, ἵνα περιπατῶμεν κατὰ τὰς ἐντολάς
αὐτοῦ· αὕτη ἡ ἐντολὴ ἐστίν, καθὼς ἠκούσατε ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, ἵνα
ἐν αὐτῇ περιπατήτε.

- α καὶ νῦν ἀντίχριστοι πολλοὶ γεγόνασιν
β ὅτι πολλοὶ ψευδοπροφήται ἐξεληλύθασιν εἰς τὸν κόσμον.
γ ὅτι πολλοὶ πλάνοι ἐξῆλθον εἰς τὸν κόσμον,

- α ὅθεν γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν.
β ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκετε τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ·
γ —

- α ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐξῆλθαν ἀλλ' οὐκ ἦσαν ἐξ ἡμῶν· εἰ γὰρ ἐξ ἡμῶν
ἦσαν, μεμενῆκεισαν ἀνεμθ' ἡμῶν· ἀλλ' ἵνα φανερωθῶσιν ὅτι
οὐκ εἰσὶν πάντες ἐξ ἡμῶν. καὶ ὑμεῖς χρίσμα ἔχετε ἀπὸ τοῦ
ἀγίου καὶ οἴδατε πάντες. οὐκ ἔγραψα ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐκ οἴδατε
τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἀλλ' ὅτι οἴδατε αὐτὴν καὶ ὅτι πᾶν ψεῦδος ἐκ
τῆς ἀληθείας οὐκ ἔστιν.

- β —
γ —

- α Τίς ἐστὶν ὁ ψεύστης εἰ μὴ ὁ ἀρνούμενος ὅτι Ἰησοῦς οὐκ
ἔστιν ὁ Χριστός;
β πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ ὁμολογεῖ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα
ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν, καὶ πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ μὴ ὁμολογεῖ τὸν
Ἰησοῦν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν·
γ οἱ μὴ ὁμολογοῦντες Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐρχόμενον ἐν σαρκί·

- α οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἀντίχριστος,
β καὶ τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ τοῦ ἀντιχρίστου, ὃ ἀκηκόατε ὅτι
ἔρχεται, καὶ νῦν ἐν τῷ κοσμῷ ἐστὶν ἤδη.
γ οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ πλάνος καὶ ὁ ἀντίχριστος.

Table T28
 Antichrist Passages in 1 and 2 John [cont'd]
 α = 1 John 2:18-27; β = 1 John 4:1-6; γ = 2 John 4-11

-
- α —
 β —
 γ βλέπετε ἑαυτοὺς, ἵνα μὴ ἀπολέσητε τὰ ἐργασάμεθα ἀλλὰ μισθὸν πλήρη ἀπολάβητε.
-
- α ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱόν. πᾶς ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν υἱὸν οὐδὲ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει, ὁ ὁμολογῶν τὸν υἱὸν καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει.
 β —
 γ πᾶς ὁ προάγων καὶ μὴ μένων ἐν τῇ διδαχῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ θεὸν οὐκ ἔχει· ὁ μένων ἐν τῇ διδαχῇ, οὗτος καὶ τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱὸν ἔχει.
-
- α ὑμεῖς ὁ ἠκούσατε ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, ἐν ὑμῖν μενέτω. ἐὰν ἐν ὑμῖν μείνη ὁ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἠκούσατε, καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐν τῷ υἱῷ καὶ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ μενεῖτε. καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπαγγελία ἣν αὐτὸς ἐπηγείλατο ἡμῖν, τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον.
 β —
 γ —
-
- α Ταῦτα ἔγραψα ὑμῖν περὶ τῶν πλανώτων ὑμᾶς.
 β ὑμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστε, τεκνία, καὶ νεικήκατε αὐτούς,
 γ —
-
- α καὶ ὑμεῖς τὸ χρῖσμα ὃ ἐλάβετε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, μένει ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ οὐ χρειαν ἵνα τις διδάσκη ὑμᾶς,
 β ὅτι μείζων ἐστὶν ὁ ἐν ὑμῖν ἢ ὁ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ.
 γ —
-
- α —
 β αὐτοὶ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου εἰσὶν, διὰ τοῦτο ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐσμεν, ὁ γινώσκων τὸν θεὸν ἀκούει ἡμῶν, ὃς οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἀκούει ἡμῶν.
 γ —
-
- α ἀλλ' ὡς τὸ αὐτοῦ χρῖσμα διδάσκει ὑμᾶς περὶ πάντων καὶ ἀληθές ἐστιν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ψεῦδος, καὶ καθὼς ἐδίδαξεν ὑμᾶς, μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ.
 β ἐκ τούτου γινώσκομεν τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πλάνης.
 γ εἴ τις ἔρχεται πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ ταύτην τὴν διδαχὴν οὐ φέρει, μὴ λαμβάνετε αὐτὸν εἰς οἰκίαν καὶ χαίρειν αὐτῷ μὴ λέγετε· ὁ λέγων γὰρ αὐτῷ χαίρειν κοινωνεῖ τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ τοῖς πονηροῖς.

The three passages which actually employed the Antichrist tradition (1 John 2:18-27; 4:1-6; 2 John 4-7) display a considerable amount of agreement in their ideas, the sequence in which they were used, structure (including a noticeable change in focus at 1 John 2:22, 4:3 and 2 John 7), and setting. These texts are presented above in a horizontal line format (Table T28), from which the close literary contacts between them can be easily discerned.

Before proceeding to a more detailed examination of these three passages, there is a further point to be considered. This is a methodological question concerning the use of the material in the Johannine epistles to reconstruct the form of the Antichrist tradition which may have been known to the author and his readers. As an overall principle, there is a question over the uncritical use of statements made by the author concerning the beliefs or actions of his opponents to construct an outline of the Johannine Antichrist tradition.

There are various levels to this matter. On the one hand, it cannot be assumed that his descriptions of his opponents' views were either correct or unbiased. In addition, it is far from clear which of the author's statements on various virtues and vices reflect his opinions on the faults of the opposing faction, and it cannot be assumed that every virtue he espouses is an indicator of a belief or practice missing in the opponents. Of course, even if the beliefs and practices of the opposing group could be determined,¹⁹ that would still not mean that such ideas were related to the Antichrist tradition known to the author. They may have belonged to a wider grouping of ideas and behaviour not approved of by the community, but not necessarily associated with the idea of an Antichrist figure.

It therefore seems better to err on the side of caution. In the ensuing discussion, the passages which actually use the term Antichrist will be examined in some detail. For the purposes of establishing what may have been in the Johannine Antichrist tradition, only information drawn from those three passages will be employed. The evidence for other elements of the early Christian eschatological traditions (as listed in Table T27) will only be utilised when considering what the Johannine epistles, as a whole, have to offer as evidence for the mixture of ideas seen in the later Antichrist literature, and not as evidence for the Johannine form of the myth.

¹⁹ For such lists see R.E. Brown, *Epistles*, 762f and K. Grayston, *Epistles*, 16-18. J. Painter ["Opponents", 51-64] provides a detailed discussion of the evidence on which the views of the opponents might be established, and then discusses their postulated views in some detail. See also the discussion at §56.2(c), and the literature listed at note 14.

(a) 1 John 2:18-27 While there has been some disagreement between commentators over the structure of 1 John and the precise limits of this pericope in particular, there seems to be more general agreement amongst recent studies that vs 18-27 form a unit.²⁰ This impression is reinforced by the similarity in the ideas of the parallel passages in 1 John 4:1-6 and 2 John 4-11. It is apparent that all three passages have a descriptive section (2:18-22; 4:1-3; 2 John 4-7), which is followed by a call for the reader to stay in the truth and live accordingly (2:23-27; 4:4-6; 2 John 8-11). This common pattern may even reflect, to some degree, the older catechesis to which reference is made in 2:18 and 4:3. O'Neill suggests that a Jewish source lay behind this material, and that vs 19, 22-25 were additions by the Christian teacher who re-used older work in his Christian writing, but this has failed to convince anyone.²¹ As will be suggested below, it is more likely that a Christian *Grundschrift* dealing with the appearance of the False Prophet lay behind these passages and was the basis of the author's statement.

The reference to the ἐσχάτη ὥρα ["last hour"] in 2:18 anchors this Johannine Antichrist tradition into the more general Jewish and Christian eschatological traditions. While there is no precise parallel to "last hour",²² the general sense of "the last days" is clear, along with the particular idea that the eschatological woes had begun with the appearance of the antichrists. The author has made the dramatic claim that his opponents' activity is a sure sign that the final moment of human history is upon him and his readers.

Such ideas presuppose a catechesis in traditional eschatological ideas amongst the Johannine churches, and this is made explicit in the next phrase, καὶ καθὼς ἠκούσατε ["and as you have heard"]. This catechesis is said to have included instruction on the coming of Ἀντίχριστος at the last hour. Just what this might have been is unclear. The author does not even remind his readers of as much of their previous instruction as Paul had done in 2 Thess 2:3ff, and there has been very little in the literature studied up till this point that would fulfil the requirements. The statement that "many will come in my name" (Mark 13:22) may be a part of the same tradition given to the Johannine catechumens

20 R.E. Brown [Epistles, 362] cites the names of those who argue that the unit ends at vs 27, vs 28 or vs 29.

21 J.C. O'Neill, *Puzzle*, 23-30.

22 Cf. A.E. Brooke, *Epistles*, 51; R.E. Brown, *Epistles*, 330-32; R. Schnackenburg, *Johannesbriefe*, 142; H. Windisch & H. Preisker, *Briefe*, 117.

as may the Johannine statement, "If another comes in his own name, him you will receive" (John 5:43), but certainty is precluded. J. Ernst has suggested that a traditional eschatological *Grundschrift* can be discerned in parts of 1 John.²³ If he is correct, that may well be a sample of the kind of teaching mentioned. In that case, it would strengthen suggestions made earlier that the synoptic gospels, 2 Thessalonians and Revelation each reflect a very early eschatological tradition common to the primitive church.

The appearance, for the first time in the ancient literature reviewed in this study, of ἀντίχριστος is an appropriate place to comment on the significance of the term. While it is commonly understood as meaning an "opponent of Christ", this is neither the sole meaning nor the primary meaning of the word. The preposition ἀντί can convey several senses.²⁴ The primary sense is the idea of substitution or representation, and this can have a negative dimension in the sense of "phoney, pretended, fake, false". The preposition may also carry the sense of "opposite, opponent, adversary", but this is not the immediate sense of the preposition. Since the word was quite likely coined by the Johannine community, if not by the author of 1 John himself, its initial meaning might be best sought by looking at its use in the immediate passage.

Grayston notes, contrary to the general trend amongst commentators, that the term lacked the definite article and was immediately changed into a plural form. He suggests that this points to it not having been the name for a well-established and dreaded figure,²⁵ and that its precise meaning is to be drawn from the context of a struggle over the Christ-Jesus connection.²⁶ The denial of the unique role of Jesus in salvation as the Christ (the Anointed One — note the stress on anointing in 2:20-26) and the divine Son provided the occasion within which this phrase seems to have been fashioned. Its meaning in the Johannine epistles, although not necessarily in all later occurrences of the word, was thus related to the idea of persons who deny or play down (cf. λῦεν in 4:3)²⁷ the "Christhood" of Jesus. In its original stage, then, the word does

23 J. Ernst, *Gegenspieler*, 176. Cf. the similar text in H. Windisch & H. Preisker, *Briefe*, 170f.

24 BDF, 448(7).

25 J. Grayston, *Epistles*, 76.

26 J. Grayston, *Epistles*, 78. Cf. J. Ernst [*Gegenspieler*, 173] on this point.

27 Cf. R.E. Brown [*Epistles*, 494-96] for points favouring the λῦεν reading.

not seem to have had either of the senses most commonly noted in its later use: either a pretender to messianic status (the equivalent of *ψευδόχριστοι*), or a person directly opposed to the messiah (the human Endtyrant or the leader of the hostile powers).

The probable linguistic significance of the term can be considered fairly readily, but the ideological content behind the linguistic symbol is much more obscure. The author said virtually nothing about this Antichrist of whom his readers had allegedly heard.²⁸ It is commonly asserted that the kinds of traditions identified in the preceding sections of this study had merged in the thought of the early church, so that most (if not all) of the ideas associated with the Antichrist myth in later literature are assumed to be implicit in the occurrence of the mere word in 1 and 2 John.²⁹ This dramatic hermeneutical leap entails a considerable degree of "eisegesis", and a large dash of argument from silence. As can be seen from Table T29 below, the Johannine epistles provide direct evidence for very few of the elements which comprised the Antichrist myth in later literature. Were it not for the occurrence of the term in these letters, they would be of very little interest to this study. There is no explicit idea of an Endtyrant, nor any use of the combat myth pattern.

Brown's discussion of the Antichrist idea correctly identifies four major strands of tradition in hellenistic Judaism that contributed to the eventual form of the Antichrist myth:³⁰ A, the sea-monster traditions of ancient mythology; B, the angelic adversary traditions of the Satan-Beliar type; C, the tyrannical human ruler who embodied evil; and D, the idea of the False Prophet. It is important to note that only D, the False Prophet, plays any significant part in the Antichrist idea within the Johannine epistles. There is also some part given to B, but this is quite minor. It may not be going too far, then, to assert that the Johannine epistles provide the terminology for the Antichrist myth but represent a stage in its development when the dominant element was still the traditional Jewish idea of the False Prophet.³¹ The evolution of the Antichrist

28 Cf. A.E. Brooke, *Epistles*, 78. (K. Grayston [*Epistles*, 80] cites B. Rigaux, *L'Antéchrist*, 386, as making a similar point.)

29 Cf. A.E. Brooke, *Epistles*, 52. R.E. Brown [*Epistles*, 336] is more cautious; while K. Grayston [*Epistles*, 79] is even more reserved.

30 R.E. Brown, *Epistles*, 333-37.

31 A helpful discussion of these traditions, with references to Qumran and other extra-biblical material, is provided by W.A. Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 47-61.

myth may not have proceeded as far in the Johannine epistles as it had in such passages as Didache 16, even though the distinctive terminology had now been created.

The term was no sooner invented, it seems, than it was adapted to include not just the final False Prophet characterised as a counterpart of Jesus Christ, but also the immediate opponents of the author. The ἀντίχριστοι πολλοὶ of 2:18 follows hard on the heels of the statement that Antichrist was to come. The idea, if not the expression, has its counterpart in Mark 13:22 and 2 Peter 2:1. As the subsequent verses in 1 John make clear, these antichrists were the persons who had left the Johannine churches and were espousing an understanding of Jesus which the author, at least, considered to be defective. From 3 John it would appear that other matters of discipline, authority and leadership were also involved, but it is not possible to pursue either the theological or the ecclesial issues involved.

For the purposes of this exercise, it is sufficient to note that the immediate setting of the Antichrist tradition appearing in the Johannine epistles was one of a crisis involving differences over theology and church order. This both explains the subsequent failure to develop any account of this Antichrist teaching, and in itself provides an important parallel to the later writings on the Antichrist figure (many of which had a similar setting).

One final detail of 2:18-27 requires a comment before considering 4:1-6. In vs 22a the phrase, ὁ ψεύστης ["the liar"], occurs. Because of the use of the definite article, its apposition with "the Antichrist", and the similarity to the expression "the deceiver and the Antichrist" in 2 John 7, this expression is widely seen as a proper title for the False Prophet figure.³² It is certainly very similar to the "Man of the Lie" concept seen in some of the Qumran texts. If this interpretation of vs 22a is accepted, it reinforces the point made above that the Johannine epistles were really still working with Jewish False Prophet traditions, even though they happened to have developed the Antichrist label due to the particular nature of the false doctrines they were combatting.

32 Cf. A.E. Brooke, *Epistles*, 58; R.E. Brown, *Epistles*, 351; B.F. Westcott, *Epistles*, 75. R. Schnackenburg [*Johannesbriefe*, 155] disagrees.

(b) 1 John 4:1-6 The discussion of these verses can be shorter than that on 2:18-27 since several of the comments made there will apply to the meaning of these verses. Only a couple of matters will require separate comment.

The first of these concerns the two spirits idea which occurs in a kind of inclusion effect in vs 1 and vs 6. Once again it is clear that the author was working with traditions that had a lot in common with the views of the Qumran community.³³ The treatise on the two spirits in IQS III.13-IV.26 expressed very similar ideas, as was noted above. The existence of the two spirits, their sway over human beings, and the need to test them can all be paralleled in the Qumran literature. The use of these ideas in 1 John, in a passage which purports to be handling traditions which the readers have known "from the beginning", points to the influence within Johannine circles of the kind of dualistic theology attested at Qumran. It is also a further indication that the Johannine epistles were dealing with traditional False Prophet ideas, rather than more recent Christian Antichrist ideas.

In fact, the primary designation of those under the direction of the spirit of error was ψευδοπροφήται ["false prophets"]. These false prophets were explicitly related to the many antichrists through the operation of the "spirit of the Antichrist" (4:3),³⁴ which was associated with the "many false prophets" in a chiasmic arrangement in vss 1-3.³⁵

Since the author had linked the opponents with the distinctively Johannine term, "Antichrist", in 2:18ff he was perhaps now free to develop other more traditional dimensions of his characterisation of the opponents as agents and signs of eschatological evil. The passage in 4:1-6 may reflect traditional forms of Jewish and Christian catechesis more faithfully than the text in 2:18-27 where the simple two-part structure was interrupted by references to the immediate crisis.

33 See H. Braun, *Qumran und das NT*, II,121-24. Cf. J.H. Charlesworth (ed), *John and Qumran*; and R.E. Brown, *Epistles*, 487, 511.

34 H. Windisch & H. Preisker [*Briefe*, 127] note that "the false teachers here are not called ἀντιχριστοῦ, but rather were inspired by the spirit of the Ἀντίχριστος" (my translation).

35 See R.E. Brown, *Epistles*, 502.

There seems to be sufficient evidence of common ideas, sequence, etc in the three Johannine Antichrist passages to suggest an older Grundschrift on the topic of the False Prophet. If so, the original form possibly survives more fully in 4:1-6 than in 2:18-27. Whether this older material was related to the traditions which seem to have lain behind the synoptic gospels, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Revelation and the Didache is difficult to say. The teaching preserved in the Apocalypse of Peter (cf. §13.4, below) seems to have drawn on a source which had some similarities to the traditions behind 1 and 2 John, and this strengthens the likelihood that the author was alluding to tradition Christian catechesis, but drawing only on the False Prophet aspects since they were the aspects most pertinent to the circumstances he faced.

(c) 2 John 4-11 It was suggested above that 2 John 4-11 exhibits similar ideas, sequence, structure and setting to the other two Johannine Antichrist passages. This passage is characterised by its brevity, and by its use of "the Deceiver" as a synonym for the Antichrist. The brevity of the passage, of course, is a function of its location in a very short epistle, and has no relevance for this research. 2 John doubtless assumed a knowledge of 1 John on the part of its readers, either because it was a genuine letter from the author accompanying 1 John or subsequent to it, or because it was a deliberate imitation that drew on the ideas of 1 John.³⁶

The main value of 2 John for this research is the use of the deceit/deceiver motif. This idea has been seen in many of the earlier works examined, and scarcely needs any further comment. The thought is not far removed from Rev 12:9 (cf. Did 16:4, where the deceiver comes in the context of many false prophets appearing). It therefore demonstrates again that traditional Jewish and Christian eschatological ideas about false prophets and deceivers continued through to the end of the first century CE. Since it occurs in a passage which explicitly connects the Deceiver with the Antichrist, 2 John allows one to see these two traditions happily blended in a Christian context. It adds little or nothing to the information about the Antichrist figure that might be gleaned from 1 John, but it reinforces that information and shows how the Grundschrift which may lie behind 1 John 2:18 and 4:1ff has been variously employed in all three passages.

36 H. Koester [Introduction, II,196] describes 2 John as an imitation, but W.G. Kümmel [Introduction, 446ff] sees it as a genuine letter. J. Lieu, [Epistles, 164] sees 2 John "adopting and adapting the forms of 1Jn".

(d) **Summary** In the light of the preceding discussion, what can be said about the evidence concerning the Antichrist myth which may be found in the Johannine epistles? It has already been indicated that the epistles did not set out to give direct instruction on the topic of the Antichrist, and may in fact have been working with a version of the traditional Jewish idea of the False Prophet under the newly-devised name of Antichrist. Still, it is possible to gain some idea of the kind of form this False Prophet-Antichrist tradition had in the circles that wrote and read the Johannine epistles. The conservative conclusions (bearing in mind the strictures mentioned earlier) are set out in Table T29.

Table T29
The Antichrist Myth in 1 and 2 John

False messianic figure:	
False Prophet	4:1
Liar	2:22a
Antichrist	2:18,22; 4:3; 2 Jn 7
Deceiver	2 Jn 7
Satanic associations:	
Evil spirits	4:1,3,6
Spirit of error	4:6
Deception motif	2:26; 2 Jn 7
Antichrist to have "a coming"	2:18; 4:3
At the last hour	2:18
Mislead or deceive Christians	2:26; 4:1ff; 2 Jn 7ff
Activity seen in actions of opponents	2:18; 4:3; 2 Jn 7,10
Challenge Jesus as unique Christ	2:22; 4:3; 2 Jn 7
Division within church	2:19; 2 Jn 10f
Finally defeated by God/Jesus	4:4?

Even when some of the more general apocalyptic traditions found in 1 John (world passing away; dualism between God/Christ/church and devil/evil one/world; lawlessness; the parousia of Jesus; and a day of judgment; etc) are added to this list, it is clear that the Johannine epistles were not working with a form of the Antichrist myth which was even as developed as that seen in the

Didache. The beliefs identified in the Johannine epistles are perfectly consistent with the general hellenistic Jewish setting of early Christianity, and the Qumran sect in particular, but they fall somewhat short of the formulations already seen in several other works. The only really significant innovations that may be observed in the Johannine epistles were the appearance of the word, and the use of the (newly renamed) myth against fellow church members. Were it not for the occurrence of the word, the passage would probably not qualify for listing as an early Antichrist text and would, instead, have been considered under a category of its own since it does not even seem to include any idea of an Endtyrant. Its exclusive focus on religious aspects of eschatological evil (angelic adversaries such as Satan/Belial, and the False Prophet figure) gave the Johannine Antichrist tradition a unique form which was not continued by later writers, even though they were happy to adopt the convenient nomenclature.

13.3.4 1 and 2 John and the Tradition-History of the Antichrist Myth

(a) **Previous History of the Antichrist Tradition** It was noted above that the Johannine epistles only indicate the existence of two of the four major strands of tradition which Brown identified: some minimal reference to the Satan myth, and considerable use of the False Prophet tradition (without, it should be observed, the significant signs and wonders element of that tradition). The epistles therefore provide some evidence for the continued influence of the Satan/Belial traditions, and for the continued use of the False Prophet tradition, but they add little to what was known from other sources.

There is nothing in the epistles to suggest the important place of the combat myth traditions with their symbolic figures of dragon, sea-monster and rebellious prince. Nor is there any sign of the Endtyrant theme such as observed in the synoptic gospels and 2 Thessalonians. The traditions so evident in Daniel have not left any observable influence upon the Johannine epistles' version of the Antichrist myth.

There is no contender for messianic office, just a denial that anyone (Jesus included) had a unique claim to that title and role. There is no actual opponent of God or of Christ, other than the traditional "devil" figure. There is no parody of Jesus, such as the "was, is not, shall be" parody of the Nero *redivivus* figure seen in Revelation. All that these epistles contribute to an understanding of the previous tradition history of the Antichrist myth is an

awareness that there was instruction in Christian circles about an eschatological adversary, and (of great significance) the invention of the name, Antichrist.

(b) Subsequent History of the Antichrist Myth Tradition The minimal value of the Johannine epistles in establishing the content and form of the Antichrist, prior to and around 100 CE, is matched by their insignificant role in subsequent literature on the Antichrist figure. As may be observed from the summary presented in Table T4, there was very little use made of these epistles. The two major sources for the Antichrist myth tradition, Irenaeus and Hippolytus did not refer to the Johannine epistles at all. This was an amazing silence for writers who were conscious of standing in the Johannine tradition, and who had set themselves the tasks of elucidating the doctrine about the Antichrist.

Apart from the increasingly universal use of the name, the Johannine epistles seem to have only influenced those writers whose interest in writing of the Antichrist was stimulated by similar needs to those of the author of 1 John. It is significant that only in Tertullian, Cyprian and the documents of the Council of Carthage are citations of the Johannine epistles' Antichrist traditions to be found. Even so, they are not bountiful: Tertullian had four citations (*praescr.* III; *Marc.* III.8, V.16; *ieiun.* XI); Cyprian, one (*ep.* 69.3); and the Council of Carthage, one (*sent. episc.* 87). The Apocalypse of Elijah also cited the Johannine epistles once, but that was to quote 1 John 2:15, not to draw upon its Antichrist traditions.

13.4 THE APOCALYPSE OF PETER

The Apocalypse of Peter was a Christian writing which, through a survey of the variety of rewards and punishment to be distributed after death, explored the destinies of the righteous and the wicked in heaven and hell respectively.¹ ApPet is one of the few works of this period which reveal a direct awareness

1 LITERATURE: R.J. Bauckham, "The Apocalypse of Peter: An Account of Research" ANRW II.25.4 (in preparation); J.H. Charlesworth (ed), NTAP, 317-21; A. Dieterich, *Nekyia*; Ch. Maurer & H. Duensing, "Apocalypse of Peter" NTA II,663-83; J. Quasten, *Patrology*, I,144-46; P. Vielhauer, *Literatur*, 507-12; R.McL. Wilson, "Apokryphen des NT" TRE III,352.

of the Antichrist myth and it is an important witness to the spread of the myth during the second century. The existence of ApPet had been known from a few patristic citations and a Greek fragment has been available since 1887, but the full work was only recovered ca 1910 when M.R. James recognised it amongst some documents published by the French scholar Sylvain Grébaud.² The Ethiopic translation published by Grébaud and identified by James is now recognised as a fairly close approximation to the original Greek work.³

Since ApPet was known to Clement of Alexandria, the time of composition must be well back into the first half of the second century CE. If ch 10 is correctly seen as a reference to 4 Ezra 5:33, then the probable date was around 120-140 CE. Further, if the references to the fig tree and to the deceiver who is not a true Christ (ch 2), can be correctly taken as pointing to Bar Kochba, the work could be dated ca 135 CE. The work's early attestation by Clement may point to an Egyptian origin.

The value of ApPet for this research lies in its use of the False Prophet/deceiver form of the Antichrist tradition, and a possible quotation of 1 John 2:18. The work may be evidence for the early spread of that form of Antichrist tradition found in the Johannine circles, or else (as is perhaps more likely) further evidence for the existence and influence of the same *Grundschrift* postulated when discussing the Johannine epistles. The second half of ch 2 is dotted with references to the deceiver, possibly with Bar Kochba in mind.

- 1 Hast thou not grasped that the fig-tree is the house of Israel? Verily, I say to you, when its boughs have sprouted at the end, then shall **deceiving Christs** come, and awaken hope (with the words): 'I am the Christ, who am (now) come into the world.'
- 5 And when they shall see the wickedness of their deeds (even of the false Christs), they shall turn away after them and deny him who our father gave praise, the first Christ whom they crucified and thereby sinned exceedingly. But this deceiver is not the Christ. And when they reject him, he will
- 10 kill with the sword and there shall be many martyrs. Then shall the boughs of the fig-tree, i.e. the house of Israel, sprout, and there shall be many martyrs by his hand: they shall be killed and become martyrs. Enoch and Elias will be sent to instruct them that **this is the deceiver who must come into the**

2 M.R. James, "New Text".

3 See Ch. Maurer & H. Duensing, "Apocalypse of Peter", NTA II,665.

15 world and do signs and wonders in order to deceive. And therefore shall they that are slain by his hand be martyrs and shall be reckoned among the good and righteous martyrs who have pleased God in their life. [ApPet 2 (NTA, II,669)]

This passage from ApPet is replete with ideas familiar from the survey of the Antichrist myth in the third century. Indeed, there are so many points at which the text exhibits features of the Antichrist myth that it seems strange that the actual name Antichrist is missing. This is more strange than might otherwise be the case, since the text seems to be familiar with the teaching of the Johannine epistles about the coming of the deceiver. The aspects of the Antichrist myth present in ApPet are set out in the Table which follows.

Table T30
Antichrist Traditions in ApPet

Last days	line 2f
False christs	3ff
Signs and wonders	15
Deceit	3,9,15f
Apostasy	7f
Endtyrant figure	9ff
Contrast between "the first Christ" and "this deceiver"	9
Tyrannical actions	9ff
Persecutions, martyrs	12f,16ff
Enoch and Elijah	13ff

There is considerable room to question whether this description of the deceiver was modelled on the Antichrist figure in the Johannine epistles. The reference to the deceiver who must come (line 15) does not seem to be a citation of 1 John 2:18 or 2 John 7. It is actually nearer to the description in Did 16:4. Further, the same sentence alludes to the idea of signs and wonders performed in order to deceive. This element was completely absent in the Johannine epistles.

The account is much nearer to the tradition of the Antichrist as an Endtyrant, an idea not seen in the Johannine epistles. The Endtyrant comes into the world to deceive. He wins the support of the Jews under false pretences, and leads them away from God. When they realise his true nature, he turns on the Jews and kills many of them. Enoch and Elias come as the two eschatological preachers, and there is an explicit contrast of the claims of the deceiver and those of Jesus, "the first Christ". It is probable, then, that ApPet was using the same apocalyptic Grundschrift which was earlier suggested as a common tradition behind the eschatological discourse traditions of the synoptic gospels, Paul's teaching in 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and Revelation. This may have been known to the Johannine churches, but it has left little influence on the aspects of the Antichrist myth which were seen in the Johannine epistles.

13.5 POLYCARP, EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

Polycarp [ca 70-156 CE], was a highly esteemed figure in the second century Church. He was reputed to have known the original apostles personally and to have been a disciple of John in particular. As a senior churchman in the Asian churches he was looked to for leadership and advice, he played host to Ignatius when the latter was on his way to martyrdom in Rome, and he was an early and consistent critic of Marcion. Irenaeus, who claimed to have known Polycarp in his own youth, referred to his teacher's apostolic connections and described Polycarp's installation as bishop of Smyrna by the apostles.¹ Polycarp was martyred at the age of 86, and earned additional veneration by his legendary dignity of his death.

¹ Irenaeus, *haer.* III.3.4. See also, P. Vielhauer, *Literatur*, 553-57.

Polycarp lived at a significant period in the history of the early church, bridging the movement from first generation Christians to third generation adherents. He was well placed to play an important part in the consolidation of the early church. Strangely, of Polycarp's correspondence, only his letter to Philippi has survived the vagaries of time.² The only complete text is a Latin translation, but 1:1-9:1 is extant in Greek — and that part of the epistle includes the passage of relevance to the Antichrist myth.

The question of the letter's date was the subject of much debate prior to the work of P.N. Harrison in 1936. Harrison won general acceptance for his theory that the extant MSS comprise two letters. He understood chs 13-14 to be a letter sent ca 110 as a covering note for copies of Ignatius' correspondence which the Philippians had requested of Polycarp. Chs 1-12 comprised a letter written when the Philippians were having problems with Marcionite elements, ca 130 CE.³

The only passage to be considered here is Phil. 7:1. This is from the second of the two letters, and it seems to cite 1 John 4:2f and 2 John 7:

Ἰᾶς γὰρ ὃς ἂν μὴ ὁμολογῆ,
 Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ
 ἐληλυθέναι, ἀντίχριστός ἐστιν·
 καὶ ὃς ἂν μὴ ὁμολογῆ τὸ
 μαρτύριον τοῦ σταυροῦ, ἐκ
 τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστίν· καὶ ὃς ἂν
 μεθοδεύῃ τὰ λόγια τοῦ κυρίου
 πρὸς τὰς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας καὶ
 λέγῃ μῆτε ἀνάστασιν μῆτε
 κρίσιν, οὗτος πρωτότοκος ἐστὶ
 τοῦ σατανᾶ.

[Phil 7:1 (AV, 117)]

For "everyone who does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is Antichrist"; and whoever does not confess the testimony of the cross is of the devil; and whoever perverts the words of the Lord to suit his own desires, and says that there is no resurrection nor judgment — such a person is the First-born of Satan.

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- 2 LITERATURE: B. Altaner, *Patrology*, 110-12; L.W. Barnard, "Problem of St. Polycarp's Epistle", 31-40; W. Bauer & H. Paulsen, *Briefe*, 111-26; K. Bihlmeyer, *Apostolische Väter*, xxxviii-xliv & 114-20; H. von Campenhausen, "Polycarp von Smyrna und die Pastoralbriefe", 197-252; W.H.C. Frend, *Rise*, 128-40; A. von Harnack, *Geschichte* I.1,39-47; P.N. Harrison, *Polycarp's Two Epistles*; J.A. Kleist, *Epistles and Martyrdom*, 67-82; H. Koester, *Introduction*, II,306-08; K. Lake, *Apostolic Fathers* I,279-301; J.B. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers* II.3,897-998; J. Quasten, *Patrology*, I,76-82; W.R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*; M.H. Shepherd, "Polycarp, Epistle of" *IDB* 3,839f; P. Vielhauer, *Literatur*, 552-66.
- 3 L.W. Barnard ["The Problem", 34-37] queries the emphasis Harrison put on Marcionite influence, and suggests a date not later than 120 CE.

This verse has the formal structure of three-tiered ascending parallelism such as might be found in a number of the Psalms. This may mean that the three derogatory terms, ὁ ἀντίχριστος, ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστίν and πρωτότοκος τοῦ σατανᾶ are to be understood as three more or less synonymous phrases, whose full meaning is to be obtained through their interaction in this structure, rather than three independent titles able to be interpreted separately. Ἀντίχριστος obviously comes from 2 John 7 as part of a citation from that epistle by Polycarp; ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου is drawn from the general Jewish-Christian tradition; while ὁ πρωτότοκος τοῦ σατανᾶ is a deliberate perversion of a phrase used in the tradition to refer to someone with a special relationship to their father (cf. Gen 25:25; Matt 1:25; Luke 2:7; Barn 13:5).

There were no details of the Antichrist myth supplied by Polycarp, but his little epistle is important to this study for several reasons. First, he assumed that his readers at Philippi ca 130 CE knew the Antichrist tradition. That assumption, in itself, is a significant testimony to the spread of the myth under its Johannine name in a period of less than fifty years. It was evidently known in Macedonia before 130.

Secondly, Polycarp exhibited a similar focus on those aspects of the Antichrist myth which were to be found in the Jewish False Prophet tradition. This may be partly due to a similar context of doctrinal and disciplinary issues, but it also reinforces the suggestion that Polycarp's use of the Antichrist myth was from a Johannine perspective.

Further, Polycarp continued the kind of application of the Antichrist myth to current internal problems which was seen in the Johannine epistles. He was not attacking the Roman empire, as the Jewish Sibyllists did with their Beliar-Nero figure, but warning fellow Christians away from a person regarded as heretical by tainting the alleged heretic with the smear of "Antichrist". This was similar to the action taken by the author of the Johannine epistles, an action to be imitated not only by the early Fathers but for centuries afterwards. Church history is littered with the people who used this appellation for their opponents within the Church.

Polycarp's choice of satanic terminology to fill the other two arms of the parallel structure raises once again the question of the relationship between the Satan and Antichrist figures. In the Antichrist literature, this relationship is often hazy, but never in doubt. By implying some kind of vague relationship between Antichrist, Devil and First-born of Satan (all of whom apply to Marcion in this instance), Polycarp reveals further points of contact between the myth as he knew it and as it is revealed in the later literature.

Finally, if Harrison was correct about Polycarp attacking Marcion, then the use of the Antichrist myth against Marcion is very like the use made of it by Tertullian in his own attacks on Marcion as the Antichrist.⁴ It further indicates that the version of the Antichrist tradition with which Polycarp was familiar included a link between false teachers and heretics and the Antichrist figure. As discussed at §4.2, this was an important element of the myth in the third century.

13.6 JUSTIN MARTYR, *Dialogue with Trypho*

Justin, who was martyred in Rome ca 165 CE, was the first major Greek apologist in the early Church.¹ Born ca 110 of pagan parents in Palestine, near the modern city of Nablus, he was later converted to Christianity and became a powerful spokesman for his new faith in the Roman world. His *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* is one of only three of his works which have survived.²

In the *Dialogue* Justin seeks to substantiate Christian claims to be the true Israel. Although the actual word was not used by Justin, there are two passages of relevance to the origins and development of the Antichrist myth. These will each be noted briefly, as final evidence for the development of the Antichrist myth prior to Irenaeus.

4 Cf. R.N. Harrison, *Epistles*, 197. See also W. Bauer & H. Paulsen, *Briefe*, 120f. Tertullian's criticism of Marcion was cited above, p. 59.

1 L.W. Barnard, *Justin Martyr*, 1-26; H. von Campenhausen, *Greek Fathers*, 5-15; H. Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought*, 1-30; W.H.C. Frend, *Rise*, 172-74, 237-40.

2 LITERATURE: L.W. Barnard, *Justin Martyr*; A.J. Bellinzoni, *Sayings of Jesus*; H. von Campenhausen, *Greek Fathers*, 5-15; H. Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought*, 1-30; —, "Justin Martyr's Defence of Christianity", 275-97; T.B. Falls, *Saint Justin Martyr*; E.J. Goodspeed, *Apologeten*; OCD, 570f; ODCC, 770; F.C. Osborn, *Justin Martyr*; E.B. Pusey, *The Works*; W.A. Shotwell, *Biblical Exegesis*; D. Trakatellis, "Justin Martyr's Trypho", 287-98; A.L. Williams, *Justin Martyr*; J.C.M. van Winden, *Early Christian Philosopher*. J.C. van Winden [*Early Christian Philosopher*, 1] cites N. Hyldahl [*Philosophie und Christentum. Eine Interpretation der Einleitung zum Dialog Justins* (Copenhagen: Munkgaard, 1966)].

The first passage occurs in Dial 32, in the context of a debate over the correct interpretation of the familiar three and half times of Daniel 7. The Antichrist myth is peripheral to the argument, but that actually gives this passage even more worth as evidence.

καὶ τοῦ βλάσφημα καὶ τολ-
μηρὰ εἰς τὸν ὕψιστον μέλλ-
οντος λαλεῖν ἤδη ἐπὶ θύραις
ὄντος, ὃν καιρὸν καὶ καιροὺς
καὶ ἡμισυ καιροῦ διακαθέξειν
Δανιὴλ μηνύει. καὶ ὑμεῖς
ἀγνοοῦντες πόσον χρόνον
διακατέχειν μέλλει, ἄλλο
ἡγείσθε· τὸν γὰρ καιρὸν
ἑκατὸν ἔτη ἐξηγείσθε λέγεσ-
θαι. εἰ δὲ τοῦτό ἐστιν, εἰς τὸ
ἐλάχιστον τὸν τῆς ἀνομίας
ἄνθρωπον τριακόσια πεντή-
κοντα ἔτη βασιλεύσαι δεῖ.

[Dial, 32 (Goodspeed, 126f)]

The second passage of relevance to this inquiry occurs much later in the work (ch. 110). This passage refers more directly to the activities of the "man of sin".

ἡ δὲ δευτέρα, ἐν ᾗ μετὰ
δόξης ἀπὸ τῶν οὐρανῶν
παρέσται, ὅταν καὶ ὁ τῆς
ἀποστασίας ἄνθρωπος, ὁ καὶ
εἰς τὸν ὕψιστον ἔξαλλα
λαλῶν, ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἄνομα
τολμήσῃ εἰς ἡμᾶς τοὺς
Χριστιανούς.

[Dial, 110 (Goodspeed, 226)]

The one that Daniel revealed would reign for a time, times and a half, is now at the door ready to utter bold and blasphemous words against the Most High. And you, being ignorant of how long he will reign, hold a different opinion, interpreting the word "time" as meaning one hundred years. But if this is so, the man of sin must reign at least three hundred and fifty years.

But the other (advent) in which he shall come from heaven with glory, when the man of apostasy (who speaks strange things against the Most High) shall venture to do unlawful deeds on earth against us Christians

There are several points of similarity to the Antichrist myth in these two brief passages (cf. Table T31). There can be little room for doubt that Justin was familiar with a tradition of the Antichrist figure. The version of the Antichrist myth with which he seems to have been familiar was not that seen in the Johannine epistles, but rather the Endtyrant Antichrist tradition that drew on the ideas of Daniel and has been observed as a widely disseminated idea within early Christianity. The fact that Justin failed to use the precise term, ἀντίχριστος, may indicate that he was unaware of the name; but it may

also have been due to his desire to use terminology which his conversationalist could recognise as traditional.

Table T31
Aspects of the Antichrist Myth in Justin Martyr

Use of Daniel 7	32, 110
Sense of last days	32
Predicted Endtyrant	32
"Man of sin"	32
"Man of apostasy"	110
Reign 3½ years	32
Hybris	32, 110
Divine claims?	32, 110
Climax of evil	110
Persecutions	110

14. CONCLUSION: THE ORIGINS OF THE ANTICHRIST MYTH

Now that the relevant literary evidence from both the third century and the earlier stages has been reviewed, it is possible to summarise what has been observed at the various stages of this research and state some general conclusions concerning the origins and development of the Antichrist myth in the early church. This can conveniently be done under three headings: points on which there is general agreement, points which are still matters of debate, and the synthesis proposed by this work.

14.1 POINTS OF GENERAL AGREEMENT

There is, of course, no dispute that the Antichrist myth was an established tradition within early Christian eschatology by the beginning of the third century CE. The material surveyed in the first part of the study demonstrates quite clearly that this was the case (cf. Table T4).

There were works such as Irenaeus' *haer.*, Hippolytus' *antichr.* and ApEI, which were directly concerned with recounting the Antichrist myth. Towards the end of the third century, there was the commentary on Revelation by Victorinus, which reveals a well developed tradition of interpreting that work in terms of the Antichrist myth. There were the writings of Cyprian and Tertullian, designed to address matters arising from internal disputes. These used the Antichrist myth *en passant*, thus providing powerful testimony to a general awareness of the myth amongst their readers. Even a pagan critic such as Celsus was aware of the myth, as Origen's reply to him indicates; and Christian poets such as Commodian picked up the idea in their works as well.

There is also general agreement that, while the word, ἀντίχριστος, first appeared in the Johannine epistles, the Antichrist myth was independent of that particular label. It is possible, then, to speak of the "idea" of the Antichrist predating or occurring separately from the actual word. The term was possibly coined by the author of 1 John, but the complex of ideas to which he attached the term was undoubtedly an established component of the early church's eschatological traditions.

The expression "Antichrist myth" suggests a more unified set of ideas than the evidence perhaps justifies. The myth, at least in its formative stage (ca 40-100 CE), reveals several major strands or complexes within the broader mythic tradition. There was the strand associated with the ancient (but, in hellenistic culture, still contemporary) combat myth, with its sea-monsters, dragons, and rebellious gods. As well as the traditional Jewish idea of the False Prophet, there was the idea of an Endtyrant, which received renewed inspiration from successive religio-political crises in Jewish history.

The roots of this idea went back at least as far as the sixth century BCE when Nebuchadnezzar had been identified with the fallen morning star (Isa 14:4-21). Yet even then, the portrayal of the political tyrant involved the use of ancient combat myth traditions. In addition, there were the various forms of the Satan myth which interacted with these other ideas in differing ways throughout the literature reviewed in this study. Azazel, Belial(r), Mastemah, Sammael, Satan and the Watchers seem to have all played their parts in affecting the origins and development of the Antichrist myth, along with the other strands mentioned.

The extent to which one or other of these strands within the developing Antichrist tradition was emphasised seems to have depended on the immediate situation of the writer. In some circumstances the Endtyrant elements were of more relevance, and the development of those aspects was noted in some of the literature. In others, the need to combat false teaching led to the False Prophet traditions being drawn into play, and perhaps developed a little further in the process. In either case, the older mythic traditions of chaotic powers opposed to God's purposes, or of demonic powers leading a cosmic campaign contrary to God's rule, were liable to be drawn into service as well. The particular blend of these strands can be recognised as varying from text to text, in response to the local circumstances of time, place and sect.

It is clear that historical events had a profound influence on the development of the Antichrist myth. These included the crisis under Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the attempt by Caligula to install an image of himself in the temple, the siege of Jerusalem, the death of Nero, and the Jewish revolts in 115-117 and 132-135 CE. Such periods of crisis gave renewed meaning to older texts (cf. the use of Daniel in Mark 13), and encouraged the revival and embellishment of the Endtyrant traditions. It is possible, as has been argued in this study, that the critical transition from general Jewish Endtyrant tradition to a specifically Christian myth of an anti-Christ figure happened in the context of just such a crisis in 68/69 CE.

It is also apparent that the extant literature only provides limited evidence for the content, form and use of these eschatological traditions in hellenistic Judaism and early Christianity. Wilhelm Bousset was undoubtedly correct when he argued that there had been a developed oral tradition about such matters in Jewish and Christian circles, and that this had only surfaced periodically (and in a piecemeal fashion) in the surviving literature. However, he was incorrect in arguing for an ancient oral Antichrist tradition. It seems quite improbable that the Antichrist myth would not have emerged earlier in extant literature, if it had been an older idea. On the other hand, Bousset's basic insight into the oral character of much of the traditional material, which was to be used to constitute the Antichrist myth seems to have been correct, and is widely recognised.

The related conclusion, that the eschatological passages in early Christian documents reflect at least an oral *Vorlage*, has been noted at several places throughout this study. There is some recognition in recent studies, as noted earlier, for the idea that there was a fairly well-defined body of Christian belief on such matters, and that its connection with the teaching of the historical Jesus is not purely a theological construct but may rest, to some degree, on the actual facts.

While that is too large a question to be pursued in this study, there have been several times when the literary evidence suggested that an older Christian tradition concerning an eschatological adversary lay behind the passage under examination. Table T32 attempts to indicate something of the spread of this evidence for early Christian teaching about eschatology, with particular attention to those aspects more pertinent to the Antichrist myth.

14.2 MATTERS STILL SUBJECT TO DEBATE

While Bousset's masterful treatment of the origins of the Antichrist myth has held the field for many years, and his insight into the oral transmission of the traditions which contributed to the Antichrist myth is still correct, there are several aspects which remain subject to question. The most basic of these is perhaps the methodological issue. Bousset combined the literary evidence of diverse texts from a period of several centuries to reconstruct a fairly uniform "Jewish Antichrist myth". Charles followed Bousset's lead in his treatment of

the Beliar tradition, assuming that a pre-Christian Jewish Antichrist tradition had existed and that some of its written form could be recovered by source analysis of Revelation.

However, it is by no means clear that every instance of "Beliar" can be equated with "Antichrist", nor that the Belial tradition in hellenistic Jewish writings was anything more than a particular form of the older Satan myth. There seems to have been a general confusion of the evidence in many of the past studies of the Antichrist myth. While Beliar in THEZ seems to have been an Antichrist figure, that cannot be extrapolated to all instances of the name. Any reference to human or demonic opposition to God has been too readily interpreted as evidence for a Jewish version of an Antichrist myth, usually seen as being itself a Jewish form of older traditions about a *Chaoskampf*.

In fact, messianic ideas in hellenistic Judaism were much more elusive than such loose talk of Jewish Antichrist figures allows. Hellenistic Judaism seems to have worked with a variety of symbols for God's saving activity on their behalf, not all of which were messianic. Similarly, there was a broad array of symbolic figures available for hellenistic Jews to describe the activity of evil. Even at Qumran, where the messianic consciousness was unusually developed, Belial was only a synonym for Satan. The Endtyrant ideas which may be found there were still far short of the later Antichrist idea. There were numerous ways for the sect's members to describe the opponents of God, of the messiahs, and of the community, but they had no concept of an anti-messiah, and even the evidence for Endtyrant figures is incomplete and ambiguous.

Part of the difficulty in past studies of the Antichrist tradition seems to have been confusion over the meaning of the term itself. At times, it seems that any eschatological adversary of God is granted the epithet, "Antichrist," whether it be a human or angelic figure. It seems more accurate to recognise that the Antichrist myth was not the sole medium early Christians had to describe their experience of evil and of opposition. Rather, the Antichrist myth was a specific form of theodicy with a marked Christocentric character. Some closer definition of the Antichrist myth (and thus of the term, "Antichrist") may now be attempted.

The Antichrist myth was a set of ideas, such as noted in the first part of this study, which had at its centre the figure of a human being inspired and controlled by Satan. This figure would pretend to the position of Christ and, as part of that claim, would promulgate false teaching, perform impressive signs and wonders and (from a Christian point of view) seek to deceive people into recognising him as the messiah. Naturally, such a pretence to messianic office

would involve, in the eyes of Christians, opposition to God and to Jesus, as well as persecution of those who refused to accord this pretender the honours that he claimed. The tension in these rival claims of the two messianic pretenders, Jesus and the future Antichrist, would be resolved by the parousia of the divinised Jesus, who would establish the legitimacy of his claim by defeating the diabolical Antichrist. This event would also mark the culmination of cosmic history, and be the final denouement of the larger struggle between God and Satan. As such, the Antichrist myth was understood in early theology as but a sub-plot in the larger drama of God's activity in the universe, and a particular re-play of the ministry of Jesus as the incarnate Son of God whose messianic status went largely unrecognised.

Within the early church, specific instances of the Antichrist myth being used developed one or other of the component aspects of this myth. For instance, the tyrannical actions of the Antichrist figure were relevant to people considering the hardships they experienced at the hands of Roman officials. On the other hand, the False Prophet tradition within the myth was clearly of relevance to those engaged in internal controversies over doctrine from the Johannine epistles onwards. In such cases, the idea of Antichrist as someone who denies that Jesus was the Messiah/Son of God, would give the myth a specific character. As a general rule, however, it seems that the idea of pretender should be understood as the basic element in the Antichrist myth, with those of denier, or opponent, being secondary.

14.3 THE SYNTHESIS PROPOSED IN THIS STUDY

The conclusion adopted as a result of the research for this study of the origins and development of the Antichrist myth may be stated as follows. It appears that the most significant aspect of the Antichrist myth, in terms of its development as a distinct mythic tradition, was the idea that there would be an eschatological pretender to the role which Christians ascribed to Jesus. The Antichrist myth was thus one example of a larger category of Jewish and Christian mythic traditions that dealt with evil as opposition to God. However, the distinctive character of the Antichrist myth is missed if it is not clearly identified and analysed on its own terms.

The Christian myth of an Antichrist certainly drew on older traditions such as those adduced by Bousset and others. Specifically, it utilised the four major strands mentioned above:

- + **Chaoskampf** traditions
- + the Satan myth
- + the False Prophet traditions
- + the Endtyrant traditions.

Of these, the False Prophet and the Endtyrant traditions seem to have been the most important. Table T32 seems to support this view, as it indicates a clear weighting towards these elements in the common eschatological tradition of the early church. The **Chaoskampf** traditions and the Satan traditions were important since they provided a link to a larger mythological worldview, but to include them as examples of Antichrist traditions is to blur their own character, as well as to misunderstand the particular character of the Antichrist myth.

The precise history of the traditions which constituted the Antichrist myth may never be reconstructed, and the particular relationships between specific documents and aspects will remain problematical. Certain major steps in the process can be identified with some degree of confidence. The ultimate background was no doubt provided by the ancient mythic traditions identified by Gunkel and Bousset, but the more immediate material which lay at hand for constructing the Antichrist myth is to be observed in the Jewish apocalyptic traditions. In particular, the Jewish traditions of the False Prophet, the Satan figure and the Endtyrant seem to have been decisive.

The early Christian eschatological tradition, as discussed at various points and summarised in Table T32, was a christocentric adaption and blending of Jewish religious traditions. It also allowed the use and adaption of hellenistic religious traditions, as was seen when the SibOr and Revelation were examined. In their new Christian context, these traditions about an eschatological adversary underwent decisive developments and became traditions about a pretender to the position attributed to Jesus in Christian thought.

2 Thessalonians and Revelation seem to indicate circles where the Endtyrant ideas were at the centre of this process, even though the False Prophet elements were never entirely lost. The Johannine epistles, on the other hand, indicate that the False Prophet idea remained a powerful symbol on its own for some Christians until the end of the first century. In THEZ, the Nero legend and the Satan/Beliar traditions were blended to form a powerful Endtyrant symbol virtually equivalent to the classic Antichrist figure. The more scanty references in Didache, ApPet, Polycarp and Justin Martyr indicate varying combinations of these traditions as time passes.

Table T33:
The Early Development of the Antichrist Myth

Significant Events and/or Persons	Ancient Mythic Traditions and Their Literature (Major witnesses only)	Symbolic Figures in the Traditions
Antiochus IV	ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN COMBAT MYTH TRADITIONS THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES CONTINUING ORIENTAL CULTURAL TRADITIONS	The Sea, the Dragon, the Morning Star, Death, etc. Leviathan & Behemoth, Rahab, the Serpent, the Foe from the North, Gog, Satan, angelic and demonic powers, etc.
Hasmoneans sectarian schism	Daniel	Evil human political powers, good and evil angelic powers, Endtyrant figure.
Jesus	Qumran texts	Messianic figures, the Teacher of Righteousness, diverse human and demonic opponents: Belial, etc.
	I Enoch	The 'Watchers', and other angelic and demonic powers.
	EARLY CHRISTIAN ESCHATOLOGICAL TRADITIONS	Christ/God vs Satan/Devil, false Christs/prophets, Son of Man, evil spirits, the 'little horn' figure from Daniel, etc.

Caligula		Daniel Endtyrant tradition given fresh focus and energy?
	2 Thess 2	Man of Lawlessness, the restraining power/figure, Satan, God, Lord Jesus.
	'Temple Discourse' traditions (Mk 13 and parallels)	False christs and false prophets, the desolating sacrilege.
Year of the Four Emperors		Satan, dragon, devil, Lamb, the messianic child, Michael, beast from the sea/pit, beast from the land, the two witnesses.
Temple destroyed		Devil, false prophet(s), the/many deceiver(s), the Liar, the/many antichrist(s).
Internal crises	1-2 John	The deceiver of the world
	Didache	Beliar-Nero figure
	ApPet	The deceiver, the Beloved
	Polycarp	Antichrist, Satan
	Justin Martyr	Man of sin, returning Christ
		The Antichrist
	**** Irenaeus and the other third century Antichrist texts ****	

In the literature which was examined in the final part of this study the Antichrist myth could be observed gradually emerging into clear view. At first it was barely able to be distinguished from its surroundings, but as the development proceeded further the distinctive form of the Christian Antichrist myth became clearer. By the turn of the first century CE there could be no doubt that a distinct religious symbol system was involved, even though its roots were not clearly visible. Table T33 attempts present an overview of the origins and development of the Antichrist myth to ca 300 CE. In any such attempt, there are gaps and over-simplifications, but the chart presented there indicates the overall lines of development and influence which can be observed in the Antichrist myth until the end of the third century.

The development and use of the Antichrist myth did not stop at the end of the third century, nor did it remain within Christian theology. It continued to be elaborated and disseminated, with Jewish and Islamic forms of the myth eventually appearing as well. The study of those stages in the myth's history lay well beyond the scope of this examination, but might be included in a list of future areas of research to be considered. Such a list would include the examination of the way later patristic commentators handled the biblical material, the influence of the Antichrist myth on subsequent Christian eschatology, the Antichrist myth in the Middle Ages, as well as the study of contemporary Christian groups in which such ideas continue to flourish and to shape people's lives. The understanding of the myth's origin, which has been established in this study, would serve as a useful basis in such subsequent research.

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