

The Messiah and Eschatology in the *Psalms of Solomon*

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

in the Faculty of Graduate Studies

Biblical Studies Program

Trinity Western University

April 7, 2016

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Abstract

Many of the earliest Christian communities recognized Jesus as a messianic figure very early on in their history, but the reasoning behind this designation is much less clear. The central purpose of this thesis is to read the *Psalms of Solomon* as a literary and theological whole while considering the particular historical and theological milieu in which they were written. My reading of the *Psalms of Solomon* will demonstrate that, in these poems, the Messiah is expected to be a Davidic monarch who will restore the righteous to their appropriate position under the rule of YHWH with a decisive victory that will include the ingathering of the exiles in the penultimate period of history and bring an everlasting theocratic peace. I will further demonstrate that the writers of these psalms came to this conclusion through a careful rereading of their scriptural traditions based on their current historical circumstances. Connections will be drawn between this understanding of the Messiah's eschatological role and the role of messianic figures in the Dead Sea Scrolls as well as messianic interpretations in the Septuagint. These findings will raise important questions about the messianic status of Jesus in the earliest Christian communities, and provide a clearer picture of what some Jews believed about the Messiah in the Second Temple period.

Chapter One: Introduction

Introduction

Many of the most fundamental questions in early Christian studies involve either the self-understanding of Jesus or the different ways in which some of the earliest Christian communities understood Jesus. The synoptic tradition is consistent in its depiction of the disciples as confused,¹ but while the disciples are befuddled, the authors of the gospels are not. The author of Mark removes any potential angst the reader might have about Jesus' identity by immediately introducing Jesus as the Messiah (Ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, Mark 1:1). Later in the gospel, Peter identifies Jesus as the Messiah (σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστός ἐγνωπίσαμεν ὑμῖν τὴν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δύναμιν καὶ παρουσίαν, Mark 8:29) and while Jesus does not accept the title outright, he does not renounce it either (ἐτετίμησεν αὐτοῖς ἵνα μηδενὶ λέγωσιν περὶ αὐτοῦ, Mark 8:30).² It is only at the end of the gospel that Mark is prepared to have Jesus accept the messianic title, albeit somewhat equivocally (ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν· ἐγὼ εἰμι, Mark 14:60–62), and only after Mark provides further explanation about what accepting that title

¹ James H. Charlesworth, "From Jewish Messianology to Christian Christology: Some Caveats and Perspectives," in *Judaisms and their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (eds. Jacob Neusner, William S. Green and Ernest Frerichs; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 225–64.

² It is important to note that while Peter does correctly identify Jesus as the Messiah, he immediately demonstrates to the reader that he does not truly understand what this messiahship will entail. Jesus follows Peter's identification of him as the Messiah with the first of his passion predictions, but Peter is unwilling to accept this prediction and even rebukes Jesus for speaking in this way. It is clear, then, that Peter does not understand Jesus' messianic status in the same way as Jesus does himself.

means.³ The opening verse thus serves to clarify the identity of Jesus for the reader throughout the gospel even if things are much more ambiguous for those in the narrative.

Matthew and Luke are also clear about Jesus' messianic status. Matthew, like Mark before him, explicitly identifies Jesus as the Messiah at the start of his gospel (Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, Matt 1:1, 18). Unlike Mark, Matthew tells the story of Peter's identification of Jesus as the Messiah without any ambiguity; Matthew has Jesus commend Peter for having knowledge that was revealed to him by God (ὅτι σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα οὐκ ἀπεκάλυψέν σοι ἀλλ' ὁ πατήρ μου ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, Matt 16:13–20),⁴ thus demonstrating to the reader that Jesus accepts this title.⁵ Luke waits slightly longer to reveal Jesus' messianic identity to the reader, but he does so in truly dramatic fashion when he puts the identification in the mouth of an angel to a group of shepherds in the middle of the story of Jesus' birth (ἔστιν χριστός κύριος, Luke 2:11).⁶

If the synoptics are clear on this point, John's gospel goes a step further. Descriptions of Jesus' messianic status are much more prevalent. Whether or not Jesus is the Messiah is an open question for many characters both named and unnamed, but significantly, the disciples and other friends of Jesus seem less confused. Andrew (one of the Twelve) testifies that Jesus is the Messiah at the very start of Jesus' ministry (εὐρήκαμεν τὸν Μεσσίαν, John 1:41), and John the

³ M. Eugene Boring, *Mark: A Commentary* (Louisville: John Knox, 2006), 413. Boring mentions Mark's repudiation of the Davidic tradition (placed on the lips of Jesus) in Mark 12:35–37 and his use of the Danielic tradition in Mark 13:24–27, both of which are combined during the court scene of Mark 14:60–62.

⁴ George W.E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1–36; 81–108* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 238–47. In Matthew's gospel this scene occurs in Caesarea Philippi, which was very close to Mount Hermon and often understood as a place of special revelation. Nickelsburg offers several examples from the history of the Ancient Near East, including this text from the book of Matthew, the similar passage that was quoted above from the book of Mark, and other Second Temple works like 1 Enoch 13–14 and *Testament of Levi* 14–17 (246).

⁵ R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 613. France emphasizes the different treatment given by Matthew and Mark here, suggesting that Matthew changes the whole tone of the encounter by having Jesus unambiguously welcome Peter's identification of him as the Messiah while still asking the disciples not to announce his messianic status to the wider world.

⁶ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke: Volume 1: 1:1–9:50* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 216–19. Bock also notes the significance of the phrase χριστός κύριος found both here in Luke and in *Pss. Sol.* 18:7. Luke uses the phrase in combination with another title, σωτήρ ("Savior"). These titles interpret one another even as stacking them like this underscores the importance of the person being described.

Baptist recognizes Jesus' messianic status as well (οὐκ εἰμὶ ἐγὼ ὁ Χριστός, ἀλλ' ὅτι ἀπεσταλμενος εἰμὶ ἔμπροσθεν ἐκείνου, John 3:27-36). Martha describes Jesus as the Messiah in a time of distress (σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστός, John 11:27), and John suggests that the idea was popular enough during Jesus' ministry that some people were being expelled from their communities of worship for expressing their belief that Jesus was the Messiah (ἐάν τις αὐτὸν ὁμολογήσῃ χριστόν, ἀποσυνάγωγος γένηται, John 9:22).⁷ Just in case the reader failed to pick up on the not-so-subtle clues, the book concludes with the author telling his readers that his purpose in writing was so that his readers might believe that Jesus is both Messiah and Son of God (ταῦτα δὲ γέγραπται ἵνα πιστεύσητε ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ χριστός ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, John 20:31).

The earliest New Testament texts also testify that Jesus is the Messiah. Paul's writings⁸ all seem to assume rather than argue this point.⁹ Paul uses the word χριστός consistently in his

⁷ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John I–XII* (Anchor 29; Garden City: Doubleday, 1966), 380. The Gospel of John was almost certainly written later than the synoptics. Brown notes that this picture of people being expelled from their communities because of their faith is likely an instance of the author reading the experience of his own community back into the life of Jesus rather than an expression of historical remembrance.

⁸ The writings that are almost universally regarded as authentically Pauline and for which a pre-70 CE date is clear are Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians and Philemon.

⁹ Although there is no debate about Paul's extensive use of the word χριστός (it appears more than 250 times in Paul's writings), there is some debate about whether or not Paul uses this term as a messianic title. Martin Hengel, "Christos' in Paul" in *Between Jesus and Paul* (trans. John Bowden; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 65–77 argues that Paul uses this term as an alternate name for Jesus that would make sense to his readers whether or not they understood it as a title with any particular significance. But Hengel also notes that "of course [Paul] presupposes that Jesus is the Davidic messiah" (67), so that for Paul himself, the word χριστός carried with it an important history. Nils Alstrup Dahl, *Jesus the Christ: The Historical Origins of Christological Doctrine* (ed. Donald H. Juel; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) offers a similar view, suggesting that "it is not necessary for Paul's readers to know that *Christos* is a term pregnant with meaning... in order to understand the sense of the apostle's statements" (16). That said, even though Dahl thinks that the titular force of "Christ" in Paul's letters is usually "not emphasized" (16), he acknowledges that there are specific passages where this force is much more important (e.g., Rom 1:4, 9:5; 2 Cor 5:10) and recognizes that "one cannot clearly distinguish between statements where the name 'Christ' is used only as a proper name and others where the appellative force is still felt" (17–18). More recently, Matthew Novenson, *Christ among the Messiahs: Christ Language in Paul and Messiah Language in Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) argues that Paul's use of the word χριστός "meet(s) all the criteria for early Jewish messiah language" (172) when compared with other Jewish sources of the time period, an argument that rests largely on Paul's use of scripture. Matthew Novenson, "Can the Messiahship of Jesus Be Read off Paul's Grammar? Nils Dahl's Criteria 50 Years Later," *NTS* 56, no. 3 (2010): 396–412 further suggests that some who have appealed to Dahl seem to have de-nuanced Dahl's view (410). Lloyd Gaston, *Paul and the Torah* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987), for example, suggests that Dahl has "convincingly demonstrated that *Christos* is for Paul a proper name" and that "Jesus is then for Paul not the messiah" (7). These statements are not a fair representation of Dahl's argument. Dahl himself states that "the name 'Christ' is not

descriptions of Jesus (Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:1; Phil 1:1; 1 Thess 1:1; Phlm 1:1; and many times throughout each letter), and never offers any rationale for this belief, unlike so many other issues where disagreement among Christians was rather transparent (e.g., whether or not Gentiles needed to take on the Jewish identity markers in order to become Christians; whether or not Paul's apostolic authority was equal to that of the other apostles; or whether or not people had a responsibility to honor God by living a morally upright life despite the freedom from sin that is found in Christ). This suggests that Jesus' messianic status was taken for granted by both Paul and most of his readers.¹⁰

But it is not just Paul and the gospel writers who share this conviction. The term *χριστός* is used of Jesus in all of the disputed letters of Paul (Eph 1:1; Col 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1; 1 Tim 1:1; 2 Tim 1:1; Tit 1:1), both of the letters attributed to Peter (1 Pet 1:1; 2 Pet 1:1), Jude (Jude 1:1), James (James 1:1), two of the three letters traditionally attributed to John (1 John 1:3; 2 John 1:3), Hebrews (Heb 13:21), and the book of Revelation (Rev 1:2). It seems clear, then, that many of the earliest Christians began to regard Jesus as a messianic figure very early on in their history.¹¹ But the reasoning behind this designation is much less clear. Did Jesus' earliest

completely fixed as a proper name" (16) and suggests that because Paul was Jewish and often writing to Gentile or mixed audiences "we must also reckon with the probability that the messiahship of Jesus had for Paul himself a greater significance than emerges directly from the usage of the name 'Christ' in his epistles" (18). Thus, that it would be possible for someone to read Paul's letters and most often understand *χριστός* as a name rather than a title does not mean that most of his readers understood his use of the term in that way and certainly does not imply that the messiahship of Jesus was unimportant to Paul.

¹⁰ Hengel, "Christos' in Paul," 71–72. It is worth noting that, again, despite Hengel's caution around the significance of the word *χριστός* in Paul's writings, he contends that "in the letters which were written to Christian communities the question of the messiahship of Jesus was no longer a matter of discussion but was completely taken for granted." For these original communities, then, the term functioned, at minimum, as a reminder of Jesus' messianic status, even though the exact content of what "messianic status" meant was likely quite diverse, particularly between predominantly Jewish and predominantly Gentile communities.

¹¹ It is important to note that these writings do not necessarily reflect a unified understanding of what the messianic status of Jesus might mean. It is quite possible that the significance of Jesus' messiahship would be different for different groups of Christians. It would also be inappropriate to say that all of the earliest Christians believed that Jesus was the Messiah because we know very little about many early Christian groups, and because some of the early Christian writings that did not find their way into the New Testament canon do not explicitly state that Jesus is the Messiah despite having contexts where such an identification might be expected. In the Gospel of Thomas, for example, Jesus' disciples describe him as "a messenger", "a lover of wisdom", and a "teacher" (*Gos.*

followers think of him as the Messiah because this is how he thought of himself?¹² Or did they latch on to this title after his death in order to explain why their leader might have died?¹³ If the latter, why did that title become so prevalent instead of one of the many other titles used to describe Jesus in early Christian literature like “Son of God”, “Son of Man”, or “Rabbi”?¹⁴

In order to begin to answer these fundamental questions, it is critical to properly understand whether or not messianic beliefs were already present in some of the Jewish communities of Palestine during the lifetime of Jesus, and if so, whether one should speak of a unified messianic belief across different communities and theological perspectives or a variety of quite different understandings. The first step in this process is to look closely at the presentation of messianic figures in the various Jewish texts that were written in relatively close proximity to

Thom. 13), and Jesus describes himself as “the son of the living one” (*Gos. Thom.* 37), “the son” (*Gos. Thom.* 44), and “the one who comes from what is whole” (*Gos. Thom.* 61), but he is never described by anyone as the Messiah.

¹² As I noted above, there is more than one understanding of what being the Messiah might mean even within the Gospels themselves. In the case of the Gospel of Mark, I have already mentioned that Jesus rebukes Peter for misunderstanding what it means for Jesus to be the Messiah (8:31–33). In Mark 12:35–37 the author has Jesus question whether or not the Messiah ought to fulfill Davidic hopes by problematizing the phrase, “Son of David”. Boring, *Mark*, 347–49 observes that this would have been a live question for Mark’s readers. Could Jesus really be the Messiah without fulfilling the Davidic hope? Interestingly, Boring notes that Mark never states that Jesus is descended from David, and further suggests that, at least for Mark, there is a significant amount of discontinuity between what it might mean for Jesus to be the Messiah and what was expected of a Davidic messianic figure. This stands in contrast to the Gospel of Matthew where Jesus is intentionally presented as the Son of David. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 47 suggests that the author goes out of his way to present Jesus as “Son of David” while judiciously avoiding any description of Joseph as Jesus’ father, even as he gives a genealogy (1:1–17) and tells a narrative (2:1–12) wherein Jesus’ Davidic ancestry is key. Even with just these two examples of early Christian reflection, it seems clear that even if Jesus’ disciples understood him to be the Messiah because this was something that he taught them, there was not complete agreement on the meaning of that teaching.

¹³ William Wrede, *The Messianic Secret* (trans. J.C.G. Grieg; Cambridge: James Clarke & Co. Ltd., 1971). In the synoptic gospels, and especially the Gospel of Mark, Jesus often wants others to keep his identity a secret. In 1901, Wrede was the first to argue that the writers invented this motif themselves after Jesus’ death in order to help explain Jesus’ messianic status.

¹⁴ The word *χριστός* is found 529 times in the New Testament, far more than the occurrences of *ῥαββί* or *ῥαββουνί* (14 times), the possibly titular occurrences of *υἱός* and *θεός* together (45 times), or the possibly titular occurrences of *υἱός* and *ἄνθρωπος* together (85 times, but only in the Gospels, Acts, and Revelation). One of the possible rebuttals to Wrede’s argument is that what Wrede calls the messianic secret may not even be grounded in questions about Jesus’ messianic status. Adam Winn, “Resisting Honor: The Markan Secrecy Motif and Roman Political Ideology,” *JBL* 133.3 (2014): 583–601 argues that Mark’s presentation actually has very little to do with Jesus’ messiahship in particular and more to do with Jesus’ resistance to honorific titles, and thus imperial power, more generally. It is not necessary for Winn’s argument that this resistance be grounded in the person of Jesus (it could simply be a point that Mark is trying to make), but it does offer an explanation that could plausibly ground the secrecy motif in the life of the historical Jesus.

the life of Jesus. I have chosen to focus predominantly on ancient writings rather than the reconstructed theology of ancient communities. I do not intend to ignore the fact that each writing did in fact arise from a particular social and historical context, which in turn helped to shape what was written,¹⁵ but rather, to recognize that our knowledge of these communities is limited and that there is often very little scholarly consensus in these situations beyond the broadest of brushstrokes.¹⁶ As such, discussion of the communities behind various texts can result in an undue commitment being made to otherwise speculative hypotheses that tell a very good story, but that are extremely difficult to evaluate because of the limited evidence available.

The analysis of writings does have its own limitations. Foremost among them is that the writings that have survived are not representative of the various Judaisms¹⁷ prevalent at that

¹⁵ William M. Schniedewind, *Society and the Promise to David: The Reception History of 2 Samuel 7:1–17* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 16. Schniedewind rightly points out that too much analysis, especially what he calls “inner-biblical analysis” (an approach that looks at how one biblical text interprets another), fails to account adequately for the social and political contexts that inform both the original writer and the later readers. My intent is to be careful about using historical judgments as the basis of interpretation, but it is important not to take that approach to an extreme where the political and social contexts are ignored.

¹⁶ I am trying to avoid the kind of thing that happens when, for example, one assumes that the sectarian texts found at Qumran are written by a community of Essenes at which point these “Essene” texts are read through an “Essene perspective” reconstructed from other texts that mention Essenes like the writings of Josephus. John J. Collins, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013) considers an Essene identification “probable” (63), and yet nevertheless acknowledges that “the emphasis on the celibacy of the Essenes had a distorting effect on the study of the Scrolls” (60) and that “any hypothesis is likely to function like blinders, obscuring some aspects of the material even as it illuminates others” (60–61). This is not to say that any comparison with other historical documents is unwarranted, but rather that one must be careful not to claim more certainty than is warranted. Michael Wise, Martin Abegg Jr., and Edward Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation* (San Francisco: Hodder and Stoughton, 1996) argue that the “evidence suggests... that the scroll group resembled the Sadducees in some ways and the Essenes in others” (29), which makes a simplistic identification of this group with groups mentioned in other writings quite problematic.

¹⁷ The belief that Judaism was mostly uniform in structure and belief during the post-Maccabean Second Temple period was once popular but is now widely recognized as an oversimplification. Many scholars still rightly speak of a “common Judaism” when they emphasize the things that most Jews agreed upon, but it is also widely accepted that there were many quite diverse groups who would all self-identify as Jewish, and quite a lot of diversity among the Jewish population that did not identify with any particular group. It is for this reason that a scholar like E.P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE – 66 CE* (London: SCM Press, 1992) can thus say both that he is “more convinced than ever that a broad agreement on basic theological points characterized Judaism in the Graeco-Roman period” (ix) and that “Judaism in the [Graeco-Roman period] was both dynamic and diverse” (3). According to Sanders, “very few” (19) Jews belonged to a named and known group like the Sadducees, Pharisees, or Essenes, but he nevertheless acknowledges that common Judaism included “people of many shades of opinion” (18). It thus seems preferable to recognize that there is enough commonality to identify most people as belonging to what might be called “common Judaism,” and yet that there is also enough diversity among various Jewish groups that it will

time: Qumran¹⁸ and the New Testament communities are over-represented while the rest of Judaism (writ large) is under-represented. If we accept it as a given that these two communities made up only a small percentage of all people who self-identified as Jews in the century before and after the birth of Jesus, then it is possible to be quite confident that their writings do not provide an unbiased view of the most common beliefs held by Jews at that time, just as it would be very difficult to generalize about modern Christianity if the bulk of the sectarian texts that were provided were those of, for example, Seventh-Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses. A lot of the theological understanding represented in those texts would in fact find common ground with many forms of Christianity, and there would be enough diversity amongst the two sects that differences of opinion would be plain, but it would be impossibly tempting to think of these communities as being much more influential in the church and in society than they actually are, and certain emphases that these two share would no doubt be greatly overemphasized because of their importance in these two groups relative to most other expressions of the Christian faith.

William Scott Green argues that this is exactly what has happened in modern scholarship. He suggests that the portrayal of Jesus as Messiah in Matthew and Luke has shaped the way that scholarship has assumed all Jews conceived of the Messiah, and seems to imply that the messianic idea with eschatological implications did not even exist until Christianity was born; he then suggests that this messianic idea was read back into early forms of Judaism to justify

make sense to speak of "Judaisms" in some contexts, just as we might speak of both "Christianity" and "Christianities" today.

¹⁸ John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 9. Collins argues that while some of the notions in the writings at Qumran reflect the views of the particular sect, others are more widespread. This is rather intuitive, but Collins does not give criteria to help interpreters recognize when a teaching is limited to the community and when it might be more widespread, especially amongst the non-biblical literature (unless one is to assume that all of the non-biblical literature does not reflect more widespread beliefs).

Christian belief.¹⁹ Green's first point provides a stern warning about methodology that needs to be taken seriously, but I will argue below that the messianic idea with eschatological implications clearly predates Christianity.

In an attempt to at least partially deal with this concern in the ancient context, I think it wise to admit up front that in most instances we can talk only about the beliefs of some or most first-century Jews rather than of Judaism as a whole.²⁰ Unfortunately, a detailed study of all of the texts that make reference to a messiah after the exile to Babylon in 586 BCE and before the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE is too large a scope for this thesis. As such, I have decided to focus on one particular text, namely, the *Psalms of Solomon*.²¹ Other primary sources will not, of course, be ignored; many of the ideas present in the *Psalms of Solomon* are products of the religious traditions that came before, and were in dialogue with traditions present at the time of their composition and redaction. As such, these texts will need to be consulted (sometimes frequently), but always in the service of gaining a better understanding of this one anchor text.

I have chosen the *Psalms of Solomon* as my focus for several reasons, including its close proximity to the birth of Jesus, its use of the term $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$, and its ability to represent the views of Jews who are neither early Christians nor associated with the scrolls found at Qumran.²² But

¹⁹ William S. Green, "Introduction: Messiah In Judaism: Rethinking the Question," in *Judaisms and their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (eds. Jacob Neusner, William S. Green and Ernest Frerichs; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 1–13

²⁰ Craig A. Evans, "Messiahs," in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (eds. Lawrence Schiffman and James C. Vanderkam; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) 1:537–42. Evans suggests that since the messianism of Qumran is similar to the messianism of other Jews in the same time period such caution is not absolutely necessary. This seems like a poor choice because it is equally plausible that the perceived agreement among the relevant Jewish texts is the result of a lack of texts from a wide array of other Jewish groups. To attribute the views found mostly (even if not exclusively) in the Qumran scrolls to Judaism more broadly is irresponsible regardless of the issue being discussed.

²¹ All verse references will correspond to the versification used in Robert B. Wright's critical edition of the Greek text. Except where otherwise indicated, all translations from the *Psalms of Solomon* will also follow Wright's translation.

²² Joshua Efron, *Studies on the Hasmonean Period* (Leiden: Brill, 1987), 253. Efron argues that "the complex of epithets, similes, concepts and notions embedded in the *Psalms of Solomon* is entirely steeped in early Christianity and understandable only in light of its beliefs." Much of his discussion rests on his interpretation of the

the biggest reason is that the text contains “the first explicit expression of hope for a Davidic Messiah.”²³

The *Psalms of Solomon* has come to the attention of scholarship mostly because of its use of the Greek word *χριστός* in the last two psalms of the collection to describe a figure anointed by God who would come in power to liberate his people, but who had yet to appear. These psalms are often cited as an important example of messianic thought, and represent one of the earliest uses of the term *χριστός* in the Jewish literature of the Second Temple period. As such, my work will spend significant time on these last two psalms.

Even though it is very likely that the individual psalms contained within the *Psalms of Solomon* were written by a variety of authors, it is also likely that an individual or group within Second Temple Judaism brought these works together, and thus encouraged those using these poems to read and understand them as a unified document. Therefore even though much of my analysis will focus on the last two psalms, I will interact with the other sixteen regularly.

The time between the composition of the final psalm and the redaction is probably less than one hundred and thirty years,²⁴ which suggests that some of these psalms did not exist for very long (if at all) outside the collection. For this reason I will often speak from the viewpoint

dragon imagery in *Psalms of Solomon* 2, which he thinks can be better explained as a reference to the Christian antichrist than as a historical reference to the Roman general Pompey. The vast majority of scholars have not found his argument convincing and continue to think of these poems as the work of Jews during the first century BCE. Though I will not deal with Efron’s argument in detail below, I will discuss the social location of the text at length.

Of the many documents found among the Qumran scrolls, there was not one copy of the *Psalms of Solomon*. Since we do not know how much authority the *Psalms of Solomon* had in various Jewish communities (though the lack of physical evidence suggests that it is more likely to be limited than it is to be widespread), the same caution applies to it as other sectarian documents: whatever it says is representative of only some Jews and not Judaism as a whole. This does not, however, preclude us from looking at the possible social and historical context of the authors and/or the redactor in order to better understand the texts and how they may have been used.

²³ Kenneth E. Pomykala, *The Davidic Dynasty Tradition in Early Judaism: Its History and Significance for Messianism* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1995), 5.

²⁴ See below on why the date for the latest psalms must be after Pompey’s death in 46 BCE and why the redaction was likely completed several years before the Temple was destroyed in 70 CE.

of the redactor in an attempt to better understand the *Psalms of Solomon* as a literary and theological whole.²⁵

By reading these poems together it becomes possible to gain a better understanding of the eschatological ideas present in the last two chapters. In addition to the promise of a messiah, the poems testify to other important eschatological themes, most notably the Day of Judgment and Israel's return from exile. Both themes appear in the last two psalms, but unlike the description of a messianic figure, they also appear somewhat frequently in the earlier portions of the collection, which will help to better understand how the eschatology of the corpus fits with its theology more broadly. These and other themes also appear in other messianic literature written at about the same, and comparisons with these texts will also help to shape our understanding. The central purpose of this thesis is to read the *Psalms of Solomon* in their historical and theological contexts as a literary and theological whole. This reading will demonstrate that, in these poems, the Messiah is expected to be a Davidic monarch who will restore the righteous to their appropriate position under the rule of YHWH with a decisive victory that will include the ingathering of the exiles in the penultimate period of history and bring an everlasting theocratic peace. This fuller understanding may, in turn, provide insight into a possible way forward in answering questions about the messianic status of Jesus in the earliest Christian communities.

²⁵ Kenneth Atkinson, "Responses," in *The Psalms of Solomon: Language History, Theology* (ed. by Eberhard Bons and Patrick Pouchelle; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 175–91. Atkinson does not argue for adopting the viewpoint of the redactor, but he does point out that "all the extant manuscripts of the *Psalms of Solomon*... contain improvements that were likely added by later scribes" and that "the manuscripts also reflect Greek common to the 10th century CE" (178). As a result, adopting the position of the redactor is similar to but not quite the same as adopting the final form of the text. It will sometimes require the work of textual criticism to discern whether or not a reading goes back to at least the first century CE. Danny Zacharias, "The Son of David in *Psalms of Solomon* 17," in *"Non-canonical" Religious Texts in Early Judaism and Early Christianity* (eds. Lee Martin McDonald and James H. Charlesworth; New York: T&T Clark, 2012), 73–87 does suggest that a reading from the perspective of the redactor is beneficial, especially for understanding *Psalms of Solomon* 17–18. For Zacharias, "the final redactor shaped the corpus so that the hope for the Davidic messiah was presented as the solution to the trouble and tribulation envisaged in the earlier psalms" (80).

Programmatic Statement

In the next chapter, I will provide a historical and theological introduction to the *Psalms of Solomon*. This will include a brief introduction to the book itself, a section on the history of various forms of Jewish eschatology relevant to the Second Temple period, an examination of the roots of messianism in the prophetic literature of ancient Israel, and a close look at the roots of apocalyptic messianism in the literature of the late Second Temple period.

In the third chapter, I will look closely at the historical and theological context of the *Psalms of Solomon*. This will include a detailed examination of several themes including the practice of faithfulness, the Day of Judgment, and the ingathering of the exiles. My focus will be the use of the word $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ in the last two chapters of the *Psalms of Solomon*, and how this messianic piece fits with the other important eschatological themes.

In the fourth chapter, I will compare the results of that discussion with other presentations of the Messiah in late Second Temple literature written before the time of Jesus. I will focus in particular on the role of the Messiah in the scrolls found at Qumran and possible messianic interpretations found in the Septuagint. Special attention will be paid to passages in the Septuagint that received a messianic interpretation in the *Psalms of Solomon*.

Finally, in the fifth chapter, I will offer some concluding remarks about the messianic idea present in the *Psalms of Solomon* and offer some suggestions about how this information might be used going forward to better understand the early Christian use of messianic language and the relationship of Jesus to the religious authorities of the first third of the first century CE.

Chapter Two: The Historical and Theological Context of the *Psalms of Solomon*

Introduction to the *Psalms of Solomon*

The *Psalms of Solomon* are a collection of eighteen distinct writings, at least some of which were composed shortly after the capture of Jerusalem by the Roman general Pompey in 63 BCE. Pompey had benefited tremendously from an ongoing conflict between the Hasmonean brothers John Hyrcanus II and Judas Aristobulus II who were vying for control of Palestine (*Ant.* 14.3.2).²⁶ After gauging the support and loyalty of the parties involved, Pompey decided to support Hyrcanus II against his rivals after some missteps by Aristobulus II (*Ant.* 14.3.3–14.4.1). Hyrcanus II, in turn, helped Pompey take Jerusalem and supported him in the siege of the Jerusalem Temple (*Ant.* 14.4.2). This history is helpful in determining the time of composition for at least some of the *Psalms of Solomon* because of allusions to these historical events. For example, in the eighth psalm, there is a description of present evil rulers who invite a foreign conqueror to enter Jerusalem (*Ps. Sol.* 8:16–17), and in doing so unwittingly fulfill the judgment that God had planned against them. This is most often understood as an allusion to Hyrcanus II opening the city gates to Jerusalem, and thus enabling Pompey to enter the city freely, defeat Aristobulus II and his supporters, and take control of Palestine for Rome, bringing an end to

²⁶ Hanan Eshel, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Hasmonean State* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 133.

Jewish independence in the process.²⁷ Although the psalmist again refrains from naming him directly, the second psalm describes another historical event involving Pompey, though this one is not so pleasant for the Roman general. In this psalm there is a description of one who was killed in Egypt (*Ps. Sol. 2:26*), which is most often understood as an allusion to the death of Pompey who was killed in Egypt in 48 BCE.²⁸

Because of these historical allusions, there is a broad scholarly consensus that the last of the *Psalms of Solomon* must have been composed sometime after Pompey's death in the first century BCE.²⁹ Although many of the poems do not contain explicit historical allusions, the fact that these poems have come to form a collection further suggests to most scholars that they were all likely composed within a relatively tight timeframe.³⁰ Since there is no explicit reference to the ultimate destruction of the Jerusalem Temple under the Roman general Titus during the First Jewish-Roman War, it is also generally agreed that the collection has to have been redacted into

²⁷ George W.E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah* (2d ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 232. Efron, *Studies on the Hasmonean Period*, disputes the majority opinion represented by Nickelsburg, suggesting that the psalms “imply that the conqueror entered the city unopposed in a joyous procession” while noting that they have nothing to say about the “brave defensive action” and “the devoted priests who died at their posts” (238) during Pompey's siege of Jerusalem. Efron's observations about what the text says and does not say are quite correct, but they do not make his case that none of the *Psalms of Solomon* were written around the time of Pompey's siege. Instead, these observations, when combined with the strong indications for a Pompeian setting, suggest that the authors of the *Psalms of Solomon* are writing about Pompey's siege of Jerusalem from a particular theological and political perspective, namely, one that uses hyperbole to cast blame on the religious and political leaders in Jerusalem when these events took place.

²⁸ Kenneth Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord: A Study of the Psalms of Solomon's Historical Background and Social Setting* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 23. Pompey is almost certainly in view as no other historical figure attacked Jerusalem, left the Temple standing, and died surprisingly in Egypt. Josephus (*Ant. 14.4.2*) corroborates the author's note that Pompey used battering rams during the siege (cf. *Ps. Sol. 2:1*), and the description of “Gentiles who worship other gods [going] up to [the] altar... brazenly trampling around with their sandals on” (*Ps. Sol. 2:2*) corresponds well to Josephus' description of Pompey entering the Holy of Holies (*Ant 14.4.4*).

²⁹ Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 238.

³⁰ Mikael Winnige, *Sinners and the Righteous: A Comparative Study of the Psalms of Solomon and Paul's Letters* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell International, 1995), 13. Winnige, who is representative of the majority opinion, suggests that all of the psalms were likely composed between 70–40 BCE. Kenneth Atkinson, “Toward a Redating of the Psalms of Solomon: Implications for Understanding the *Sitz im Leben* of an Unknown Jewish Sect,” *JSP 17* (1998): 95–112, offers reasons for thinking that some of the psalms may have been composed after Herod the Great's siege of Jerusalem in 37 BCE. This issue will be discussed more thoroughly when I begin a detailed discussion of the seventeenth psalm below, but even if Atkinson's interpretation is accepted, all of the psalms are still supposed to have been written over a period of less than forty years.

its final form before 70 CE.³¹ It is sometimes possible to pin down a more precise date for the individual psalms,³² but it is probably best to be satisfied with these rather wide parameters for the final redaction.³³

Geographically, it is possible to be substantially more confident. It seems quite likely that many of the psalms were either composed or edited in Jerusalem because of the sheer number of events that take place in that most important city.³⁴ I have already mentioned the siege of Jerusalem described in the eighth and second psalms, but the city of Jerusalem is also a major part of several other psalms in the collection: Jerusalem is personified as tormented speaker (*Ps. Sol.* 1); serves as the subject of the psalmist's lament (*Ps. Sol.* 2); and is the locale of an eventual redemption (*Pss. Sol.* 11 and 17).

The earliest manuscript that mentions the *Psalms of Solomon* is the famous fifth-century document, Codex Alexandrinus. According to the index, the full text was found at the end of the codex, after the Septuagint, the New Testament and the epistles of Clement. Unfortunately, the text itself has not been preserved. Nevertheless, its placement alongside these texts suggests that some may have regarded it as being religiously authoritative or at least comparable with other authoritative writings since all of the other texts in that codex were understood in this way in at

³¹ Robert B. Wright, ed., *The Psalms of Solomon: A Critical Edition of the Greek Text* (JCTSRS 1; New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 7.

³² Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord*, 29–30. Atkinson uses historical references in the second psalm to place it between the deportation of Aristobulus II and his family after Pompey's conquest of Jerusalem in 63 BCE, and the escape of Aristobulus II's son Alexander in 57 BCE ("*Psalm of Solomon* 2 must have been written prior to [Alexander's] revolt"). This is a very narrow window indeed, but unfortunately, it is also impossible since the second psalm clearly refers to Pompey's death in 48 BCE. Atkinson himself seems to recognize this later in the book, arguing for a range of 48 BCE to 37 BCE (between the death of Pompey and the rise of Herod to power) (53). The second range he gives seems probable, but the date of 37 BCE is based on an argument from silence (Herod is not mentioned, and Atkinson expects that he would be if he had already come to power), which as we have seen in the case of Alexander's earlier absence, can sometimes lead to an incorrect conclusion! Regardless, the kind of precision Atkinson is somewhat reasonably seeking here is not possible with many of the other psalms in the collection.

³³ *Psalms of Solomon* 17 and 18 are of particular interest because of their use of the term *χριστός* and the dating for these psalms will be discussed in more detail in a subsequent chapter.

³⁴ Wright, *A Critical Edition*, 7.

least some circles.³⁵ Another piece of evidence that suggests some may have regarded the *Psalms of Solomon* as religiously authoritative is the similarity of *1 Baruch* 5:5–9 and *Psalms of Solomon* 11:3–7.³⁶ The author of this section of *1 Baruch* is likely borrowing from the Greek text of the *Psalms of Solomon*, and thus it is clear that the text’s tradition was authoritative enough to borrow from, even if the author of *1 Baruch* does not actually cite it as an authoritative writing. Against the supposition that the collection was regarded as religiously authoritative is the fact that the text is nowhere cited in this way and is nowhere placed in a formal canonical listing. As such, it is safest to conclude that the collection was regarded as important in some Jewish circles, but probably not regarded as authoritative scripture.

³⁵ Michael W. Holmes, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers in English* (3d ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 39. The Septuagint and New Testament writings were widely accepted. The letters attributed to Clement—in addition to their placement in Codex Alexandrinus—are found listed as part of the New Testament in *The Apostolic Canons*, a Syrian text written in the fourth century CE, and are a part of the New Testament (found between the Catholic and Pauline epistles) in a Syrian manuscript that dates to the twelfth century CE. The letter of 1 Clement is also cited as scripture by Clement of Alexandria.

³⁶ H.E. Ryle and M.R. James, *Psalms of the Pharisees, Commonly Called the Psalms of Solomon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1891), lxxii–lxxvii. Ryle and James correctly recognize that these two passages share many similarities, which strongly suggests that either one is borrowing from the other or that both are borrowing from a common source. They think that *1 Baruch* is probably borrowing from the *Psalms of Solomon* even as both make reference to earlier biblical tradition, and I am inclined to agree with this position. Given that this conclusion from Ryle and James is over a century old, it is important to look at the issue again after considering the insights of Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990) who argues that scholarship was often far too interested in making genealogical rather than analogical comparisons even though an analogical comparison is often much more appropriate (46–53). This insight is very important and analogical comparisons will be put to good use several times later in this thesis, but in this particular instance, there is quite a lot of evidence for literary dependence. Carey A. Moore, *Daniel, Esther, and Jeremiah: The Additions* (Anchor; Garden City: Doubleday, 1977) notes that *1 Bar* 5:5–9 is simply too similar to *Ps. Sol.* 11:2–5 to believe that the two are completely independent unless they are both based on a common source (314). There are substantial verbal similarities between *Ps. Sol.* 11:3, 5, 7 and *1 Bar* 5:5, 7, and 8. For example, *Ps. Sol.* 11:2 reads, “Στήθι Ἱερουσαλήμ ἐφ’ ὑψηλοῦ καὶ ἴδε τέκνα σου ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν καὶ δυσμῶν συνηγμένα εἰς ἅπαξ ὑπὸ κυρίου” and *1 Bar* 5:5 reads, “Ἀνάστηθι Ἱερουσαλεμ καὶ στήθι ἐπὶ τοῦ ὑψηλοῦ καὶ περίβλεψαι πρὸς ἀνατολὰς καὶ ἴδε σου συνηγμένα τὰ τέκνα ἀπὸ ἡλίου δυσμῶν ἕως ἀνατολῶν τῷ ῥήματι τοῦ ἁγίου χαίροντας τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ μνεΐα.” The similarities between these two passages are striking with only the last four words of *Ps. Sol.* 11:2 missing from *1 Bar* 5:5. Moore suggests that the inconsistency of tense in *1 Bar* 5:5–9 and the more concise text in *Ps. Sol.* 11 make it possible to rule out *1 Bar* 5 as the source text (315). That leaves just the two options of *Ps. Sol.* 11 or a common ancestor. Moore suggests that it is “quite probable” (516) that a later editor is making use of *Ps. Sol.* 11, perhaps even in its Greek translation, to compose *1 Bar* 5:5–9. Since there is no evidence of this common ancestor, and since the verbal parallels in Greek are so striking, it seems to me that this conclusion is warranted.

As was noted above, Codex Alexandrinus does not actually preserve a copy of the text itself because the pages on which it would be written are now missing. In fact, apart from the probable use of the *Psalms of Solomon* in *1 Baruch*, no part of the text is preserved in any manuscript until the tenth century CE,³⁷ and the copies that have been preserved are in either Greek or Syriac rather than Hebrew, which most scholars agree is the original language of composition.³⁸ One positive note is that the first translation into Greek likely happened at a very early stage since the Greek version was probably available by the time that *1 Baruch* 5:5–9 was written.³⁹

Although the psalms are sometimes associated with the Pharisees⁴⁰ or the Essenes⁴¹ there is insufficient evidence to make identification with either group more than possible. Kenneth

³⁷ Wright, *A Critical Edition*, 12. It is mentioned in many other lists between the fourth and tenth centuries, but none of those lists are accompanied by the actual writings.

³⁸ Robert R. Hann, *The Manuscript History of the Psalms of Solomon* (SBLSCS 13; Chico: Scholars Press, 1982), 6. For a detailed study of how a Hebrew original best explains some of the differences between the Greek and Syriac versions of the *Psalms of Solomon* (if both the Syriac and Greek versions are translations of the original Hebrew) see Grant Ward, “The Psalms of Solomon: A Philological Analysis of the Greek and Syriac Texts,” n.p. [cited 14 March 2016]. Online: <http://www.http://daniel.eastern.edu/seminary/tmcdaniel/GrantWard.pdf>. It should be noted, however, that the majority position is that the Syriac is translated from the Greek rather than the Hebrew. This is of particular interest because a minority of scholars argue for a Greek original. Jan Joosten, “Reflections on the Original Language of the Psalms of Solomon,” in *The Psalms of Solomon: Language History, Theology* (ed. by Eberhard Bons and Patrick Pouchelle; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 31–47 argues for a Greek original imitating a Septuagintal style, which he thinks helps to explain the difficult mix of Hebraisms and “typically Greek syntax” (41). That said, he recognizes that this suggestion has problems of its own (e.g., it is unlikely for this kind of Greek literature to be written in Jerusalem, which remains the most likely place of composition), and concludes that while his argument “does not suffice, perhaps, to turn around a consensus that has lasted well over a century” (46), it does at least raise important questions about the scholarly consensus.

³⁹ Albert-Marie Denis, *Introduction Aux Pseudépigraphes Grecs D’Ancien Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 63. Denis agrees that the *Psalms of Solomon* were composed in Palestine, but speculates that the Greek translation may have been done in Egypt, which suggests fairly wide usage. Either way he is confident that the translation would have been finished by the end of the first century BCE.

Carey A. Moore, *Daniel, Esther, and Jeremiah: The Additions* (Anchor; Garden City: Doubleday, 1977), 260. Moore suggests that most of *1 Baruch* was written in the first part of the second century BCE, but notes that *1 Baruch* 4:5–5:9 was likely added during the first century BCE, which would place the Greek translation very early indeed, but he notes that others place the final form of *1 Baruch* between 70–135 CE, which provides us with the latest possible date for the translation to have been made.

⁴⁰ Julius Wellhausen, *Die Phariseer und die Sadducäer: Eine Untersuchung zur inneren jüdischen Geschichte* (Greifswald, 1874), 113.

⁴¹ André Dupont-Sommer, *The Essene Writings from Qumran*, (trans. Geza Vermes; Cleveland: World Publishing, 1973), 120. Dupont-Sommer is, so far as I can tell, the first to suggest an Essene provenance. P.N. Franklyn, “The Cultic and Pious Climax of Eschatology in the Psalms of Solomon,” *JSJ* 18.1 (1987): 1–17.

Atkinson's suggestion that the psalms were redacted for "an unknown sectarian community that resided in Jerusalem" seems much more prudent,⁴² especially since the majority of Jews during the time period in question probably did not belong to identifiable parties.⁴³ Mikael Winninge pushes for a more precise identification, saying that "it is by no means a solution to ascribe the *Psalms of Solomon* to a hopelessly vague and unidentifiable entity."⁴⁴ Winninge goes on to suggest that attributing the *Psalms of Solomon* to the Pharisees makes good sense, but there are several drawbacks to this approach. Winninge says that the *Psalms of Solomon* are primarily concerned with an improper handling of the throne rather than with an improper handling of the high priesthood,⁴⁵ but as we shall see in the third chapter, these two issues cannot be so easily separated in the time period under study, and especially in this document which includes several negative comments about the priests stationed in Jerusalem. Furthermore, it is probable that some Pharisees were priests,⁴⁶ and thus part of the group being criticized by the *Psalms of Solomon*. In addition, the Pharisees may not have been a sect,⁴⁷ so it is even possible that some Pharisees could have been on both sides of this argument. Finally, as Winninge himself concedes, even if a positive identification with the Pharisees were possible, there are very few sources that are indisputably describing pre-70 CE Pharisaism (Rabbinic literature, Josephus, and the New Testament), and these sources are both generally composed well after the events they

Franklyn is noncommittal but does "leave open the possibility that the psalms were collected by a relatively undiscovered and unnamed stream in the Essene movement" (17).

⁴² Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord*, 1.

⁴³ Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief*, 17–18.

⁴⁴ Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous*, 15.

⁴⁵ Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous*, 172.

⁴⁶ Shaye J. D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1989), 162. Winninge cites Cohen approvingly on this matter.

⁴⁷ Cohen, *Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 162. Cohen says that "none of the ancient sources views the Pharisees as a sect, and there is no sign that the Pharisees of the first century had that exclusivist ideology, strict organization and group-oriented eschatology which characterize sects" though does concede that they form an identifiable group. This quotation comes from his discussion about Pharisees of the first century CE, but Cohen later says that we can be much less precise about the nature of the Pharisees of the second and first centuries BCE.

describe and “heavily biased in different ways.”⁴⁸ As such, it is worth pondering whether or not a riskier positive identification with the Pharisees would actually help in deciphering the meaning of these writings. A concrete identification, it seems, will make subsequent interpretations of the texts dependent on which view of early Pharisaism to adopt and thus introduce much more unnecessary uncertainty. A more cautious approach along the lines of Atkinson’s “unknown sectarian community that resided in Jerusalem” therefore seems best given all of these considerations, though it is probably worthwhile to add that this unknown sectarian community may well have included some (even many) Pharisees.

Such a description works well for the writers of these poems and the individual or community who collected them, but it is important to note that in terms of the overall influence, this position may be too restrictive. It seems quite possible that these poems were put together and used by a particular community, and then subsequently disseminated more widely in Jerusalem and beyond so that the collection may have been used by a variety of groups in Palestine and the Diaspora.⁴⁹

Some consider the eighteen psalms to be independent compositions, put together in essentially random order;⁵⁰ others see them as crisis literature that have gone through several stages of intentional development;⁵¹ and others still as being primarily literature of hope with a

⁴⁸ Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous*, 1.

⁴⁹ Atkinson argues that “the use of fictive names in the *Psalms of Solomon* may also indicate that their authors used distinctive language for religious reasons to separate their community from outsiders” (11). While I acknowledge that this is possible, it seems unlikely. One of the main reasons that these fictive names are difficult for modern scholars to identify is the historical distance from the time of composition and uncertainty about the time of writing. It seems likely that it would have been much easier for contemporaries of the writers to identify these personages correctly.

⁵⁰ Denis, *Introduction Aux Pseudépigraphes Grecs*, 63. I do not find this option compelling. One obvious example of thoughtful ordering is the position of the last two psalms, which offer a picture of redemption; this placement of hope at the end of a document or collection was quite typical of Jewish literature (e.g., Hag 2:20–23; Hos 14; Isa 65–66).

⁵¹ Robert B. Wright, “The Psalms of Solomon” in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; 2 vols.; Garden City: Doubleday, 1985), 639–70 (641).

unified theology and purpose.⁵² It seems quite possible for these last two views to be complementary. The theological material is broad enough that a variety of Jews could have read the *Psalms of Solomon* and come to the conclusion that they were, in fact, the righteous being described therein,⁵³ but it is also specific enough to say that the poems display a consistent theological perspective.⁵⁴ There is some evidence that the redactor who brought these compositions together made some additions in order to help his readers better understand these poems as a theological whole. It is possible, for example, that the first and last psalms of the collection were composed or edited only after the collection had been compiled.⁵⁵ The first psalm, which is the only one lacking an editorial heading, seems like an introduction to the collection (or at least to the second psalm) since it does not contain any typical concluding remarks.⁵⁶ If the supposition that the first psalm was written after the others were gathered holds, this also helps to explain some of the similarities between the first and eighth psalms. If the first psalm is later, it seems that the author of this poem might have even made use of the eighth psalm as a base for his own reflections.⁵⁷ The last psalm also contains material that may have been added when these poems were brought together into a collection since much of the material

⁵² Brad Embry, “The Psalms of Solomon and the New Testament: Intertextuality and the Need for a Re-Evaluation,” *JSP* 13.2 (2002): 99–136 (134); Franklyn, “The Cultic and Pious Climax,” 3. Of particular interest for the broader discussion here is Franklyn’s comment that “the collection was organized primarily along an ascent of eschatological hopes.”

⁵³ Embry, “The Psalms of Solomon and the New Testament,” 121. This is especially true at the time of Pompey when, according to Sanders, we find “unnamed pietists who regarded the Hasmoneans as wicked, but who were neither Pharisees nor Essenes” (*Judaism: Practice and Belief*, 28).

⁵⁴ Kenneth Atkinson, “Theodicy in the Psalms of Solomon” in *Theodicy in the World of the Bible* (eds. Antti Laato and Johannes C. de Moor; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 546–75 (553).

⁵⁵ Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous*, 19.

⁵⁶ Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous*, 19.

⁵⁷ Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous*, 20. Winninge points to similarities between *Ps. Sol.* 1:2–6 and 8:1–6; 1:7 and 8:9; and 1:8 and 8:13. He does not, however, give specific examples of verbal parallels. This is no doubt because the similarities tend to be more thematic than verbal (the closest verbal parallel is probably the words ἀκούω and πόλεμος occurring together in both poems (1:2 and 8:1)). The thematic similarities are certainly striking, but it is possible that two authors from the same community simply offered similar reflections or that one author offered two similar reflections on the same historical situation.

seems to reflect some of the earlier poems.⁵⁸ The eighteenth psalm serves as a fitting conclusion to the collection because it alludes to many of the earlier themes even as it balances the opening psalm's statement of crisis with a concluding statement of hope for the coming Messiah, and reassurance that God is, in fact, sovereign over all things.⁵⁹ Even if there is no direct dependence on the previous psalms and the composition is entirely independent, it seems clear that the redactor chose this psalm to be last in the collection in order to close with these themes.

Having established that some of the psalms were written no earlier than the middle of the first century BCE, it is obvious that the collection's title is at least somewhat misleading. None of the psalms mention Solomon in the body of the text,⁶⁰ and none of them have any historical connection to the third king of Israel. While the reasoning behind their identification with Solomon remains something of a mystery,⁶¹ some possibilities do seem more likely than others.

Pseudonymous literature was quite common in the Second Temple period,⁶² at least partially because older ideas were generally thought to be more valuable in antiquity than newer ones,⁶³ but the *Psalms of Solomon* are somewhat different than most of this literature since the

⁵⁸ Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous*, 20. Winninge gives several examples of how this psalm serves as a good conclusion for many of the themes present in the collection, but as with the comparison between the first and eighth psalms, he does not give examples of verbal parallels. In fact in most instances he suggests that the eighteenth psalm is echoing several others in the collection (e.g., he suggests that there are similarities between *Pss. Sol.* 18:3 and 2:10, 8:8, and 9:9). In doing so, I think Winninge has demonstrated that these poems share a similar religious outlook and that this poem is a fitting conclusion to the collection, but once again, it seems quite possible that this poem could have been composed without any direct reference to the other psalms in the collection, especially if these compositions were all created by the same community.

⁵⁹ Kenneth Atkinson, *An Intertextual Study of the Psalms of Solomon: Pseudepigrapha*. (SBEC 49; Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2000), 393.

⁶⁰ Joachim Schüpphaus, *Die Psalmen Salomos* (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 153. Solomon is mentioned by name in some of the superscriptions, but Schüpphaus argues that these superscriptions were probably later additions based on the inclusion of musical instructions. It is, of course, possible that these instructions were never intended to be followed, but rather to give the reader the impression of the document's authenticity. Either way, it seems likely that they were added to the text later, possibly even when the collection was given its title.

⁶¹ Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 238.

⁶² Bruce Metzger, "Literary Forgeries and Canonical Pseudepigrapha," *JBL* 91.1 (1972), 3-24; Ernst Käsemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1960), 177.

⁶³ Kent D. Clarke, "The Problem of Pseudonymity in Biblical Literature and Its Implications for Canon Formation" in *The Canon Debate* (eds. Lee Martin McDonald and James A. Sanders; Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002), 440-68 (449).

original compositions were not written in Solomon's name. It seems obvious that the later association of these texts with a recognizable name from the past would imbue them with more widespread authority, but it is only possible for this attribution to happen at all because some groups already recognized the authority of these writings.⁶⁴ In the case of this collection of psalms, Solomon is an obvious choice for several reasons.

The canonical psalms were associated with David, so it was perhaps natural to associate a second set of psalms with Solomon, David's son and successor. This natural tendency would only be buttressed by the fact that some of the *Psalms of Solomon* place a lot of theological importance on the coming rule of a king from the line of David. The association with Solomon is made even easier because he was already regarded as the author (or subject) of two canonical psalms (Pss 72 and 127), one of which (Ps 72) is used extensively in *Psalms of Solomon* 17.

There are also some important thematic links between the messianic figure described in the *Psalms of Solomon* and king Solomon himself. For example, king Solomon consecrates Jerusalem as the center for worship in Israel when he builds the Jerusalem Temple (1 Kgs 3–9), an action that is mirrored by the Messiah described in *Psalms of Solomon* 17 (*Ps. Sol.* 17:30). Both figures also have foreign peoples serve them (1 Kgs 4:21 and *Ps. Sol.* 17:30), receive visitors from afar to admire them (1 Kgs 4:34 and *Ps. Sol.* 17:31), and have a reign characterized by wisdom (1 Kgs 3:5–14 and *Ps. Sol.* 17:35). Where there are differences, they often favor the messianic figure who manages to avoid some of Solomon's biggest mistakes. Whereas Solomon is said to have turned to worship other gods toward the end of his life because of his association

⁶⁴ David G. Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon: An Investigation into the Relationship of Authorship and Authority in Jewish and Earliest Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 68. Meade downplays the role that Solomonic attribution had in claiming authority and emphasizes the role it had in recognizing authority. I would suggest that both functions are present here. I would further suggest that Meade's more general argument—that biblical pseudonymity is usually the result of imitating the characteristic anonymity of Jewish literary and oral tradition (12–16)—is overly optimistic.

with foreign people (1 Kgs 11:1–10)—a decision that resulted in his being punished by God (1 Kgs 11:11–13) with the division of Israel into two kingdoms after his death—the messianic figure in the *Psalms of Solomon* will be completely intolerant of unrighteousness in his presence (*Ps. Sol.* 17:27–28). Of the other differences between these two figures, the most glaring is that Solomon inherited an existing kingdom from his father David without engaging in warfare, whereas the messianic figure in the *Psalms of Solomon* will at times use violence to achieve his purposes (*Ps. Sol.* 17:22–25). Overall, the picture of the Messiah in *Psalms of Solomon* 17 is that of a more faithful Solomon, and the return from exile described in the *Psalms of Solomon* is the reversal of a process that began during the reign of Solomon and has continued until the author’s time.

Finally, the *Psalms of Solomon* are quite didactic and include many teachings that one might associate with wisdom traditions, themselves generally associated with Solomon in ancient Jewish thought.⁶⁵ By the first century BCE, Solomon’s name had already been attached to the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon and the apocryphal *Wisdom of Solomon*.⁶⁶ It is clearly beneficial to the redactor of the *Psalms of Solomon* to place this collection within that larger tradition if he hoped for it to be regarded as authoritative, and it is plausible that he may have believed at least some of the poems to be of Solomonic origin.

Defining Eschatology

Since a large part of this thesis will be concerned with clearly understanding the eschatology present in the *Psalms of Solomon*, it will be very important to have a clear definition

⁶⁵ This tradition comes partially from the book of 1 Kings; Solomon asks for and receives wisdom from God (1 Kgs 3:5–14), and is described as being a marvelous writer (1 Kgs 4:32).

⁶⁶ Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon*, 72.

of eschatology. The word itself is a combination of two Greek terms (ἔσχατος and λόγος), which can be literally translated, “last things”. As such, eschatology can be fairly described as the study of the “last things” or “the end of the world as we know it”. This is preferable to “the end of the world” because most eschatological systems involve some kind of human existence *after* the “last things” have happened, and this renewed existence often takes place on a renewed earth.

There were many different eschatological systems present in the ancient Near East from the sixth century BCE to the second century CE. Although each system of beliefs had its own unique nuances, these can be helpfully categorized under four broad headings, namely, political eschatology, cosmic eschatology, personal eschatology, and realized eschatology.⁶⁷ Significantly, these categories are not mutually exclusive. Quite often, one category is dominant, but there are also eschatological systems that blur the lines.⁶⁸

Political eschatology includes any system that makes the hope for an ultimate and lasting political order (often by way of kingship) its primary focus.⁶⁹ Cosmic eschatology includes any system that has the destruction of the current world and the advent of a new creation as its primary focus.⁷⁰ Personal eschatology includes any system that has a personal experience of the afterlife (often including some kind of divine judgment) as its primary focus,⁷¹ including those

⁶⁷ J.J. Collins, “Eschatologies of Late Antiquity,” in *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 330–37 (330).

⁶⁸ Collins, “Eschatologies of Late Antiquity,” 332. Collins cites Jewish apocalyptic thought as an example of this kind of combination. In some Jewish apocalyptic thought (e.g., Daniel 7 and 4 Ezra 7) cosmic eschatology is mixed with political eschatology.

⁶⁹ Collins, “Eschatologies of Late Antiquity,” 330. Collins includes Babylonian, Judean, and Jewish texts in his list of examples.

⁷⁰ Collins, “Eschatologies of Late Antiquity,” 330. Collins includes Zoroastrian, Christian, and Jewish texts in his list of examples.

⁷¹ Collins, “Eschatologies of Late Antiquity,” 330. Collins includes Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Zoroastrian, Christian, and Jewish texts in his list of examples.

systems that have reincarnation as the means of achieving life beyond death.⁷² Finally, realized eschatology includes any system in which the idealized future can be experienced in the present, either partially or fully.⁷³

The fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE and the experience of exile in Babylon that followed had an enormous impact on subsequent eschatological thinking. The people of Judah understood YHWH to be a deity far greater than the gods of other nations and understood themselves as YHWH's chosen people. The Jerusalem Temple was the center of worship for the whole nation and was regarded as YHWH's dwelling place;⁷⁴ it seemed to follow that such a place would be under divine protection and therefore inviolable.⁷⁵ Proof of this inviolability had been demonstrated to the people when YHWH's miraculous protection kept them from enduring the same fate as their secessionist neighbors to the north who had been exiled to Assyria after a defeat at the hands of Sargon II in 722 BCE. About twenty years later, the Assyrians, now under the leadership of Sennacherib, turned their attention to Judah; they stormed through much of the country with relative ease before being turned away after reaching Jerusalem. While there are many interpretations of this event in modern scholarship—just as there were in antiquity—the people of Jerusalem understood their survival to be the result of YHWH's protection (cf. Isa 37:21–38). It was thus a traumatic blow to Judahite self-understanding when Jerusalem was sacked and the Temple destroyed by the Babylonians just over one hundred years later.

In order to maintain their belief that YHWH was in fact far greater than the gods of other nations and that a now-defeated people were this supreme deity's chosen ones, many Jews came

⁷² Collins, "Eschatologies of Late Antiquity," 334. Collins cites Plato's *Phaedrus* as an example (Lines 246–254).

⁷³ Collins, "Eschatologies of Late Antiquity," 330. Collins includes Johannine Christian, Gnostic Christian, and Jewish (Dead Sea Scrolls) texts in his list of examples.

⁷⁴ This idea is expressed clearly in 1 Kgs 14:21; 2 Kgs 21:4; Ps 135:21; and Deut 12 (this last text likely reflects Jerusalem, although the city is technically anonymous).

⁷⁵ This idea is expressed clearly in Ps 46:4–7; Ps 48:1–8; Isa 31:4–5; and Jer 7:3–11 (where Jeremiah's opponents hold this view).

to understand the exile as the just punishment for national sin.⁷⁶ But this punishment from YHWH did not mean complete renunciation. In fact, if the people were willing to repent, it was expected that YHWH would then redeem them. This system of thought is often called prophetic eschatology because it reflects the ideas found in many of the exilic and post-exilic prophetic texts.⁷⁷ Of the four categories mentioned above, prophetic eschatology corresponds closely with political eschatology because it is concerned primarily with geographical nation-states rather than individuals, and an eventual return to the land for those who are faithful to YHWH rather than the annihilation of the world.

Jewish apocalyptic eschatology came later and has several significant additions and alterations to what is found in prophetic eschatology. Whereas in prophetic eschatology restoration from exile was generally regarded as something that would happen with the heavenly world remaining largely unchanged,⁷⁸ apocalyptic eschatology sees a much greater degree of discontinuity between both the heavenly and earthly world as it is and those worlds as they will (or will not!) be. In other words, the changes sought tend to be political and this-worldly in prophetic eschatology, but both political/this-worldly and cosmic/other-worldly in apocalyptic eschatology.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ A good example of this is found in Amos where the “Day of YHWH” is described as something that would be dark instead of light (5:18). Those that are longing for that day will be disappointed because it is, in fact, the nation of Israel that will be brought to an end because of the earthly injustice that has been taking place in the nation (8:2). Interestingly, Amos ends in 9:11–15 with a promise for a restored Davidic ruler.

⁷⁷ David E. Aune, “Eschatology,” *ABD* 2:575–609.

⁷⁸ David E. Aune, “Apocalypticism,” in *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 45–51 (47). Changes like this did not, of course, happen in an instant. One example of an eschatology in the process of transition is Isaiah’s description of a new heavens and a new earth in Isaiah 65:17–25. While there is clearly a cosmic component in this passage (“new heavens”) the author’s focus is an idealized earthly Jerusalem. See Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40–66* (WC; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 246.

⁷⁹ Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 5. Nickelsburg recognizes that the “spatial dualism between this world and heaven... [is an] important component of the worldview of *1 Enoch*” but also states that “future salvation would be realized in a new Jerusalem, situated on a renewed earth.” This is a good example of a clearly apocalyptic text interested with heavenly matters also being interested in important political changes on earth.

Apocalyptic eschatology is characterized by the dualism of two distinct ages: the current evil earthly age and the heavenly age to come.⁸⁰ This is matched by a corresponding ethical dualism that produces a sharp contrast between the wicked and the righteous.⁸¹ But this distinction between the wicked and the righteous is not limited to what is happening on earth. Apocalyptic eschatology also has a pronounced interest in the heavenly world, and especially angelology and demonology.⁸² Life is thus shaped by the supernatural forces of good and evil to such a degree that the conflict happening on earth is a reflection of a similar conflict going on in the heavens. Of course, the heavenly tension present in apocalyptic eschatology is somewhat artificial because the apocalyptic writings retain the view that the course of history is determined in advance in favor of YHWH: the forces of evil, though influential, perhaps even seemingly insurmountable, in the current age ultimately have no chance because “the enemies of God are predestined to be defeated and destroyed.”⁸³

This sovereignty is emphasized in apocalyptic writings in a few different ways. Firstly, human beings will feel the impact of their choices both during their lives on earth as well as beyond the grave: divine rewards and punishments will extend to a life after death in a personal way for each individual.⁸⁴ This heavenly judgment occurs either in the context of an eschatological war or a scene of judgment from an eschatological throne room.⁸⁵ Secondly, both the heavenly, post-mortem judgment and God’s earthly battle take place on a global rather than local scale, which is to say that the events impact all people in all times, and not just the people

⁸⁰ M.C. de Boer, “Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology,” in *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism Volume 1: The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity* (ed. John J. Collins; New York: Continuum Publishing Company, 1998), 345–83 (348), e.g., *1 Enoch* 71:15; 4 *Ezra* 7:47.

⁸¹ Aune, “Apocalypticism,” 49, e.g., *Daniel* 12:10; *1QM* 1:1–8.

⁸² John J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: Routledge, 1997), 7, e.g., *Testament of Asher* 1:34–37; *1QM* 1:11–15.

⁸³ Aune, “Apocalypticism,” 48, e.g., *1QS* 4:16–20; *Daniel* 11:36–12:3.

⁸⁴ Collins, *Apocalypticism*, 7, e.g., *Daniel* 12:1–3; 2 *Baruch* 49:1–50:3.

⁸⁵ de Boer, “Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology,” 349, e.g., *1QM* 18:1–9; *Revelation* 20:11–15

currently living in Israel or Judah.⁸⁶ Thirdly, many apocalyptic writings divide history into a specific number of segments, and demonstrate how God has been either present or allowing evil to reign in the unfolding of each segment.⁸⁷ Usually, apocalyptic writings present the current segment of history as the penultimate period (something that remains true of apocalyptic groups in our own day), which means that the supernatural intervention of God and the destruction of God's enemies is imminent.⁸⁸ This is frequently presented as one final battle to end human history where the angelic and human forces of good are able to overcome the demonic and human forces of evil.⁸⁹ This battle does not always involve a messianic figure,⁹⁰ but it certainly can.⁹¹ In fact, in some apocalyptic eschatology there is a period of transition between the present evil age and the future heavenly age that sees the messianic figure rule for a specified period of time.⁹²

That last point is an excellent reminder that, although there is significant discontinuity between prophetic and apocalyptic eschatology, there is also much commonality. It is thus too rigid to suggest that apocalyptic eschatology sees supernatural intervention as the means of achieving its ends whereas prophetic eschatology sees the restoration of David's throne "through ordinary historical developments."⁹³ After all, those espousing a prophetic eschatology have a

⁸⁶ de Boer, "Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology," 349, e.g., *2 Baruch* 72:2–6; *4 Ezra* 7:30–35.

⁸⁷ Aune, "Apocalypticism," 48, e.g., *2 Baruch* 27:1–15; *1 Enoch* 93:1–10 and 91:11–17.

⁸⁸ Aune, "Apocalypticism," 48, e.g., *Daniel* 12:1–4; *2 Baruch* 72:2–74:3; *1 Enoch* 91:12–17 (in this passage the transition happens in the eighth of ten "weeks" rather than the penultimate week, but the author nevertheless understands himself as living in the time period just before the transition to God's rule).

⁸⁹ Aune, "Apocalypticism," 48, e.g., *1QM* 18:1 and *Testament of Daniel* 5:10–11.

⁹⁰ William S. Green, "Rethinking the Question," 8. Green is not addressing this question of the final battle directly; he is instead looking at the question of whether or not messianic belief was present during this period at all. While I do not agree with Green's conclusion that it was not, that Green can raise this question does at least suggest that there should be examples where a final eschatological battle does not include a messianic figure. For an example of this see *1QM* 17:4–8 where the leading figure in the battle is not a messianic figure, but rather, the archangel Michael.

⁹¹ Aune, "Apocalypticism," 50, e.g., *4 Ezra* 12:31–34.

⁹² Aune, "Apocalypticism," 50, e.g., *2 Baruch* 72:2–74:3.

⁹³ David G. Clark, "Intertestamental Period," *NIDOTTE* 4:718–23. Clark argues for the more rigid schema, which I am opposing above.

deeply held belief in an interventionist deity, and those espousing an apocalyptic eschatology are still interested in addressing the fate of people in the world now.⁹⁴

The idea that God is sovereign is not new to apocalyptic eschatology, and the idea that a just God is punishing the wicked and rewarding the righteous is ubiquitous in ancient Jewish literature. There is, in fact, tremendous continuity between Jewish apocalyptic thinking and the Jewish thought that preceded it. Furthermore, the shift towards apocalyptic thinking did not take place suddenly. Instead, apocalyptic eschatology was building on the ideas already present in some of the prophetic literature of the Hebrew Bible.⁹⁵ The divine judgment that is envisaged in prophetic eschatology is the justifiable destruction of an earthly power, whether Israel or some other nation, and the salvation hoped for is a return to political autonomy for the people of Israel,⁹⁶ which sometimes explicitly includes the presence of a renewed priesthood.⁹⁷

Apocalyptic eschatology does not do away with this idea, but builds on it, emphasizing that these

⁹⁴ Marvin A. Sweeney, *Form and Intertextuality in Prophetic and Apocalyptic Literature* (FAT 45; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 7.

⁹⁵ Many of the exilic and post-exilic prophets show evidence of some but not all aspects of apocalyptic eschatology. The eschatology present in Zechariah, Isaiah 24–27 and Ezekiel 8–10 seems to be transitioning from prophetic eschatology and as a result these passages are used frequently by apocalyptic authors. For instance, if we understand that Ezekiel 8–10 is written prior to Daniel 10, it becomes quite obvious that the former serves as a foundation for the latter. In both cases the prophet describes his experience as a “vision” (Ezek 8:3; Dan 10:1) and in both cases before the vision starts, the passages are marked off by an indication of their exact place in history (Ezek 8:1; Dan 10:1). In both cases the vision is mediated by an intermediary, but only the prophet himself sees the events even though others are present (Ezek 8:1–4; Dan 10:7–8). Furthermore, “the man clothed in linen” that appears in Ezek 9:2 reappears in Dan 10:5. In Ezekiel “the man clothed in linen” dispatches the mercy of God by placing a mark on the righteous in a scene of harsh judgment (Ezek 9:3–6); in a similar way, “the man clothed in linen” gives Daniel strength by touching him (Dan 10:12–19). In Ezekiel, the prophet takes the position, almost exclusively, of observer. Although Ezekiel (especially Ezek 10) makes observations about heavenly realities, Daniel is much more explicit, briefly describing a heavenly battle between Michael and the prince of the kingdom of Persia.

⁹⁶ Collins, *Apocalypticism*, 6. The book of Zephaniah provides a good example. Therein, God is understood as the agent of destruction for the unrighteous in all the earth (Zeph 1:2–6). That general promise of destruction is made specific with oracles against many nations (Zeph 2), including Assyria (Zeph 2:13–15). Jerusalem must also be punished for its transgressions (Zeph 3:6–8), but will ultimately be restored (Zeph 3:18–20). An example where God is targeting Judah specifically is Habakkuk where God is understood as the ultimate agent of Judah’s destruction even though there is an obvious (and evil) human agent as well (Hab 1:5–11).

⁹⁷ Jeremiah 33:14–26 is a good example of God’s concern for the restoration of both the monarchy and the priesthood. This passage is widely considered to be post-exilic, which explains its concern for restoration, but it does not yet show evidence of some of the more important apocalyptic themes (the presence of otherworldly mediation in delivering the oracle, parallel events occurring both in heaven and on earth, or a theology that includes the reward and punishment of those who have died).

events might also be taking place in the heavenly realm, stressing the universality of these events, proclaiming a strict dualism between good and evil, and promoting the idea of an individual existence after death beyond the traditional conception of Sheol.⁹⁸ In this way, apocalyptic eschatology includes elements from at least three—and at times all four—of the main groups that were discussed above: political, cosmic, personal, and at times, realized.

The Roots of Jewish Messianism in the Prophetic Tradition

The messianic idea in some apocalyptic eschatology follows a similar trajectory: there are roots in the prophetic tradition that have apocalyptic ideas layered onto them later. But before turning to the literature itself, it is important to decide how to track messianism through the Hebrew Bible. Some scholars have suggested that study of the Messiah ought to be confined to instances where the word משיח (or the Greek equivalent χριστός) is used.⁹⁹ This approach is a useful corrective to earlier work that sometimes had a tendency to think of all early Jewish thought as one large marching monolith with the Messiah as a central component.¹⁰⁰ Unfortunately, while this newer, more limited approach is elegant in its simplicity, it is likely also too rigid.

⁹⁸ Collins, *Apocalypticism*, 6. Collins describes “the new belief in the judgment of the dead, and the possibility of the reward and punishment of individuals beyond the grave” as “perhaps the most momentous difference between apocalyptic and prophetic eschatology.” This is substantially different from the earlier Israelite conception of Sheol. For a good discussion of the Israelite conception of Sheol see N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (vol. 3 of *Christian Origins and the Question of God*; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 86–108. This discussion is particularly helpful because Wright is looking forward to a time when some Jews become convinced of the possibility of life beyond death. One key point is that, according to Wright, in the earlier Israelite conception, Sheol “is not another form of real life” (89).

⁹⁹ Green, “Rethinking the Question,” 7.

¹⁰⁰ Joseph Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel: From Its Beginning to the Completion of the Mishnah*, trans. G. W. Anderson (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956).

Many interpreters during the Second Temple period shared an important interpretive framework, which held that the biblical texts were more than simply historical documents. Instead, they believed that these texts were cryptic messages given by God, which when carefully interpreted, could inform people on how to live their lives in the present as well as provide guidance on what to expect in the future.¹⁰¹ Often, this meant an interpretation that either combined a historical reading with an allegorical reading, or simply ignored the historical reading in favor of the allegorical. This led to several phrases being understood in ways that should probably be considered messianic. That such a dogmatic approach is too rigid is especially obvious when referring to texts like the *Psalms of Solomon* that *do* make use of the term $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ (or משיח) as well as several other titles that refer to the same individual. It is, in fact, quite common for the *Psalms of Solomon* and other early Jewish texts to use a variety of phrases to indicate the presence of a human eschatological leadership figure. Thus, in texts where a messianic figure is clearly present, it seems wise to broaden our study to include phrases like “Son of David,” “Branch of David,” and “Stem of Jesse.”¹⁰² Although it is virtually certain that these terms did not originally refer to an eschatological figure in the earliest literature,¹⁰³ they are frequently reinterpreted in later centuries in exactly this way,¹⁰⁴ much like the word משיח itself. In the end, the use of the term משיח is an important indicator and its presence in a given document can provide strong assurance that the text does have a messianic figure in view, but it is too restrictive to exclude all other terms *a priori* as having no bearing on who is or could be a

¹⁰¹ James L. Kugel, *How to Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture, Then and Now* (New York: Free Press, 2002), 10–15.

¹⁰² Collins, *Apocalypticism*, 72.

¹⁰³ K.H. Rengstorf, “ $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$,” *NIDNTT* 2:334–43 (337). It is widely held that in the early prophetic writings there was no concept of an eschatological messiah, and why would there be? Anointed kings, prophets and priests were the leaders of Israel and Judah at that time.

¹⁰⁴ Evans, “Messiahs,” 1:539. Genesis 49:10, for example, is interpreted messianically at Qumran (4Q252; 4Q161), in the *Testament of Judah* 22:3, in the New Testament (Rev 19:11–16) and in some Targums. The other key passages identified by Evans, Numbers 24:17 and Isaiah 11:1–6, have similarly widespread usage.

messianic figure during the Second Temple period. In texts where the term משיח is not used, the situation is much more delicate, and it is likely best to make judgments on a case-by-case basis rather than setting dogmatic criteria about vocabulary, acknowledging that there are some titles that could refer to a messianic figure in some contexts, but not in others.

Returning to the texts of the Hebrew Bible, the verb משה is used frequently to express the idea of anointing oneself, someone else, or a particular object in a ritualistic context, most often with oil, for the purpose of setting that person or object apart for special and usually sacred use.¹⁰⁵ It is possible to be confident in such a specialized meaning for two reasons. First, there are other Hebrew verbs that are used to express acts of pouring or anointing that have a much broader range of meaning and cover a wider variety of contexts, freeing this one up for more specialized use. For example, the verb טך is used to express anointing with oil in non-sacred contexts,¹⁰⁶ and יצק is used to express pouring in a wider variety of contexts that includes both the sacred and the non-sacred.¹⁰⁷ Second, the specialized usage is confirmed by the frequent use of משה throughout the Hebrew Bible where it is used outside of sacred contexts only on very rare occasions.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ John N. Oswalt, “משה,” *NIDOTTE* 2:1123–7.

¹⁰⁶ John N. Oswalt, “טך,” *NIDOTTE* 3:234. A good example is Ruth 3:3 where Ruth anoints herself in order to look her best before going out to meet with Boaz.

¹⁰⁷ Herbert M. Wolf and Robert Holmstedt, “יצק,” *NIDOTTE* 2:519–21. A good example of a sacred context is when the verb is used in concert with משה in Exod 29:7 where Aaron is anointed (משה) through the act of pouring (יצק) oil on his head, and on its own in Gen 35:14 where Jacob pours (יצק) oil on a makeshift monument that he erects in order to honor the place God spoke with him, naming it Bethel. A good example of a non-sacred context is 1 Kings 22:35 where blood pours out of King Ahab after he’s hit by a wayward arrow.

¹⁰⁸ משה is found in the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Judges, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Amos. Of the seventy occurrences of the verb, thirty-three are connected to a king, and usually a king’s inauguration (Judg 9:8, 15; 1 Sam 9:16, 10:1, 15:1, 15:17, 16:3, 16:12, 16:13; 2 Sam 2:4, 7, 3:39, 5:3, 17, 12:7, 19:11; 1 Kings 1:34, 39, 45, 5:15, 19:15, 16; 2 Kings 9:3, 6, 12, 11:12, 23:30; 1 Chr 11:3, 14:8, 29:22, 23:11, Pss 45:8, 89:21), fourteen are connected to a sacred object or place (Gen 31:13; Exod 29:36, 30:26, 40:9, 10, 11; Lev 8:10, 11; Num 7:1 (x2), 10, 84, 88; Dan 9:24), thirteen are connected to priests, usually at the time of their commissioning (Exod 28:41, 29:7, 30:30, 40:13, 15 (x2); Lev 6:13, 7:36, 8:12, 16:32; Num 3:3, 35:25; 1 Chr 29:22), four are used of oil smeared on wafers that will be used for an offering to God (Ex 29:2, Lev 2:4, 7:12; Num 6:15), three are connected with (holy) war (2 Sam 1:21; 2 Chr 22:7; Isa 21:5), two are connected with prophets (1 Kings 19:16; Isa 61:1), and two are used in what seem to be clearly non-sacred contexts (Jer 22:14; Amos 6:6).

The adjective משיח is derived from the same root and is used of figures that are set apart by God to function in the office of prophet (Ps 105:15), priest (Lev 4:3) or king (1 Sam 2:10).¹⁰⁹ In all of these cases the anointed person receives authority to act on behalf of or in the presence of YHWH.¹¹⁰ The anointing of priests purified them, and thus enabled them to conduct valid worship while the anointing of prophets and kings enabled them to speak and act with authority. Thus, the anointing gave all of these individuals the authority to act as an intermediary between YHWH and the people: the priests were given authority to speak to YHWH on behalf of the people, while the king and prophet were given authority to speak or act on YHWH's behalf for the good of the people.

1 Samuel 10:1 describes Saul being anointed with oil by Samuel, but it is not Samuel that gives Saul authority as king. Rather, he declares that YHWH has chosen Saul to be king. The author later makes it clear that prior to Saul's death, YHWH rejects Saul's kingship (1 Sam 16:1) and instructs Samuel to anoint David as king (1 Sam 16:2, 12–13). YHWH's anointing is sometimes accompanied by the presence of his spirit, which serves as confirmation of Samuel's choices in both of the above cases (Saul's anointing in 1 Sam 10:6 and David's in 1 Sam 16:13). Once the spirit rests on David, it is described as having left Saul (1 Sam 16:14) who no longer has authority to act on behalf of YHWH. To be a king in Israel clearly meant that one was ruling by the grace and power of YHWH.

During David's reign, signs of a special covenant between YHWH and David begin to surface. This arrangement is formalized in a promise that YHWH delivers to David through the prophet Nathan (2 Sam 7:8–16). In that text, YHWH makes a series of promises, with each

¹⁰⁹ J.J.M. Roberts, "The Old Testament's Contribution to Messianic Expectations," in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1992), 39–51.

¹¹⁰ Rengstorf, "Χριστός," 335.

statement building on what precedes it, beginning with the marvellous things that he has done for David in his own life before moving on to what he will do for David after his death. YHWH first promises to install a descendant of David on the throne of Israel after David's death (והקימתי) את־זרעך אחר־יך אשר יצא ממעיך והכינתי את־ממלכתו (2 Sam 7:12), and then adds to that promise by saying that he will establish the throne of David's kingdom forever (וכוננתי את־כסא ממלכתו עד־עולם), 2 Sam 7:13). YHWH further promises that his relationship to the Davidic king will be like that of a father to a son (אני אהיה־לו לאב והוא יהיה־לי לבן), 2 Sam 7:14), and that unlike Saul, who was deposed for his iniquities, the descendants of David will be forgiven (והסדי לא־יסור ממנו כאשר) (2 Sam 7:15). YHWH then summarizes all that he has promised by once again declaring that David's house will be established forever (ונאמן ביתך וממלכתך עד־עולם), 2 Sam 7:16). It seems from this text that the promise to David is unconditional.¹¹¹

This special relationship is then passed on to David's son Solomon who is anointed by Zadok the priest (1 Kgs 1:39) in a successful attempt to invalidate the royal claims of Solomon's brother. Interestingly, the spirit of YHWH is not mentioned as transferring to Solomon as it had from Saul to David, and while it is clear that David believes that YHWH has chosen Solomon to be king (1 Kgs 1:30, 48), David is also presented as an old man who has been manipulated by Nathan and Bathsheba (1 Kgs 1:11–14). The ideal, it seems, is already slipping. Nevertheless, it is clear that the act of anointing and the recognition of anointed figures was an important aspect of bestowing authority on a new king during the monarchic period.

The promises made to David are reiterated in other parts of the pre-exilic, exilic, and post-exilic literature of the Hebrew Bible. In the midst of praise put on the lips of David himself, David declares that YHWH's covenant will remain with him and his descendants forever

¹¹¹ In this way, the promise to David is similar to the covenants that God makes with Noah (Gen 9:8-17) and Abraham (Gen 15:12:21), which are also unconditional.

(2 Sam 22:51; 23:5), language that also finds its way into other worshipful texts like Psalm 2 and Psalm 89:3–18. These pre-exilic texts reaffirm the everlasting promise to David (Ps 89:4) and describe the king as the anointed one of YHWH (2:2) who is installed by YHWH (Ps 2:6) and is again called his son (Ps 2:7).¹¹²

The phrase משיח יהוה is used almost exclusively of Saul or of the kings that will reign in the line of David.¹¹³ In their respective historical contexts, the phrase is never used to refer to an eschatological figure whose coming will coincide with the inauguration of an era of salvation, but all of these figures were designated with this title in order to demonstrate that God’s favor rested upon them. These ideas were expressed in a provocative enough fashion that later generations, who often did not have the luxury of political self-determination, reinterpreted them as messianic prophecy. Because of this phenomenon, several texts from the Hebrew Bible will end up being tremendously important in the interpretation of the *Psalms of Solomon* and other texts from the Second Temple period.

It is noteworthy that the later messianic traditions are derived from source texts that were written when an independent political kingdom ruled by YHWH through his chosen kings was only just emerging.¹¹⁴ The literary and archaeological records both suggest that “the classic characteristics for an early state emerge only in the Solomonic period,” but that the promise to

¹¹² Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1–59: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), 126. Kraus considers this a royal enthronement psalm, though there are definite elements of a psalm celebrating YHWH’s kingship as well. Kraus points out that the opposition seems to reflect a rebellion of nations that were once under the authority of a king; this lends credence to the idea that the psalm was sung during a time of enthronement since it was quite common for nations to rebel against a recently installed king in the Ancient Near Eastern context and thus also supports a relatively early date for the earliest material since the only period when a king “of YHWH” is possible is either the Judean or united monarchy. Schniedewind, *Society and the Promise to David*, 42–43 offers a strong linguistic and cross-cultural argument for dating Psalm 89 to the pre-exilic period.

¹¹³ Hesse, “Χρίω,” *TDNT* 9:496–509. One important partial exception to this is the use of משיח in Isaiah 45:1 to describe Cyrus as YHWH’s anointed. It is only a partial exception because the exact phrase is not used (an object marker is used instead of יהוה), but it is very likely that Isaiah was referencing this phrase intentionally in order to shock his readers and to emphasize the point that being “the Lord’s anointed” does not have to do with whether or not a person is from the line of David (or an Israelite at all!); instead, he is anointed when he is set apart and used by YHWH.

¹¹⁴ Schniedewind, *Society and the Promise to David*, 21.

David is nevertheless critical because “it provided the common ideology on which subsequent rulers based their legitimacy.”¹¹⁵ One critical example of this legitimizing tradition at work is in the Deuteronomic History’s interpretation of the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel. This event seemed to justify the perspective that Jeroboam and the other kings of the north had acted wrongly by seeking independence, not just from Judah, but from the divinely chosen house of David (2 Kgs 17:20–21).¹¹⁶ David’s status as a divinely chosen king who would have an everlasting line is also echoed in some of the important promises given to Hezekiah (2 Kgs 19:34, 20:6), and is even conditioned in the much more ominous evaluation of Manasseh.¹¹⁷ For these rulers, it is clear that the promise to David served an important function in legitimizing their rule, and that the life of David provided others with the means to evaluate them.

The Davidic promise, perhaps surprisingly, remained very powerful for some of the people living in Babylonian exile during the sixth century BCE when a Davidic king was no longer on the throne of Israel.¹¹⁸ Promises of a righteous branch (צֶמַח צְדִיקָה) from the prophet Jeremiah (Jer 23:5–6, 33:15–16) and similar language from the prophet Isaiah (Isa 11:1–5) are often supposed to have originated during the exilic period, although there is no scholarly

¹¹⁵ Schniedewind, *Society and the Promise to David*, 24.

¹¹⁶ Schniedewind, *Society and the Promise to David*, 60. Schniedewind offers an unusual translation of this passage that emphasizes this point: “YHWH rejected all the seed of Israel; he punished them and gave them into the hand of plunderers until he had banished them from his presence because Israel had torn away from the house of David. Then they made Jeroboam, son of Nebat, king.” Some translations, like the NRSV, understand YHWH as the subject of “torn away” and so offer a translation like, “The LORD rejected all the descendants of Israel; he punished them and gave them into the hand of plunderers until he had banished them from his presence. When he had torn Israel from the house of David, they made Jeroboam, son of Nebat, king.” Other translations that make YHWH the subject of that verb include the ESV, KJV, NIV, NLT, but the JPS translation is very similar to Schniedewind’s (“For Israel broke away from the house of David...”) so he is not alone in this interpretation, which seems to make better sense of the context.

¹¹⁷ Iain W. Provan, *Hezekiah and the Book of Kings*, (BZAW 172; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988), 117.

¹¹⁸ Pomykala, *The Davidic Dynasty Tradition in Early Judaism*, 41. Pomykala agrees that this Davidic promise remained important for some, but also points to several texts that seem to reject the validity of the Davidic promise (e.g., Isa 55:3–5).

consensus for their exact date of composition.¹¹⁹ It is clear, however, that these passages became an important source of hope for people during the time of the restoration towards the end of the sixth century BCE. Zechariah, an important transitional document between prophetic and apocalyptic eschatology,¹²⁰ presents Zerubbabel (a descendent of David) as the fulfillment of these prophecies when he describes Zerubbabel as the *מָשִׁיחַ* (Zech 3:8; 6:12).¹²¹ Zerubbabel, then, can properly be described as fulfilling the messianic hope for a restored Davidic monarchy in the book of Zechariah.¹²² But the eschatology present in Zechariah cannot be described as apocalyptic,¹²³ in part because despite the distinctly religious overtones (Zechariah is primarily concerned with the restoration of the Temple, cf. Zech 6:15), the impact of Zerubbabel's work is exclusively political rather than cosmic or personal.

That said, the presence of messianic expectation in some of the exilic and post-exilic prophets does not mean that messianic expectation became a dominant theme in the religious experience of those who had been deported and were now returning to Judah (or what was then the Persian province of Yehud): the historical works of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah are completely devoid of any messianic expectation,¹²⁴ even though the writers of these texts (those who have returned or are returning from exile) are exactly the people who might make use of the

¹¹⁹ John J. Collins, "Pre-Christian Jewish Messianism: An Overview," in *The Messiah in Early Judaism and Christianity* (ed. Magnus Zetterholm; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 1–20 (4–5). Pomykala, *The Davidic Dynasty Tradition in Early Judaism*, 34, correctly notes that the book of Jeremiah as a whole expresses many different understandings of the Davidic line; the passages mentioned above have a positive view, but other passages (e.g., Jer 39–41) seem to suppose that the Davidic dynasty would not recover.

¹²⁰ John J. Collins, "The Eschatology of Zechariah" in *Knowing the End from the Beginning: the Prophetic, the Apocalyptic and Their Relationships* (ed. Lester L. Grabbe and Robert D. Haak; JSPSup 46; London: T&T Clark, 2003), 74–84 (74). Collins states that the book of Zechariah contains some but not all of the features of apocalyptic eschatology, which were outlined earlier in this chapter ("Defining Eschatology").

¹²¹ Collins, "The Eschatology of Zechariah," 79. Neither Zerubbabel nor David is mentioned by name in either passage, but the use of *מָשִׁיחַ* strongly suggests a Davidic connection, and Collins argues that Zerubbabel is by far the most likely candidate to receive this title in the earliest interpretations of this text because of the important role he played alongside Joshua in the restoration of the Temple during the Persian period.

¹²² Collins, "The Eschatology of Zechariah," 81.

¹²³ Collins, "The Eschatology of Zechariah," 82.

¹²⁴ John J. Collins, *Jewish Cult and Hellenistic Culture: Essays on the Jewish Encounter with Hellenism and Roman Rule* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 61.

Davidic traditions to legitimize their rule over “the people of the land” (i.e., those who were never exiled to Babylon).¹²⁵ Instead, this group seems to focus on a different part of the promise to David, namely the promise of a Temple in Jerusalem.

This aspect of the promise started to take on greater emphasis in some of the material written in the exilic period that describes a much earlier time. For example, when Solomon celebrates the building of the first Temple, it is framed as a fulfillment of the promise to David (1 Kings 8:22–24),¹²⁶ and the unconditional promise to David made in the earlier material (2 Sam 7:8–16) is subsequently made conditional (1 Kings 8:25).¹²⁷

Even in Zechariah, where there does seem to be a reference to a restored Davidic monarchy, the role of the king is greatly diminished. There is no explicit reference to the promise made to David in 2 Samuel, and some of the royal powers are handed over to the high priest (usually understood as Joshua).¹²⁸ This muted usage of the Davidic tradition with which people were already familiar may have been a way of establishing divine authority for a new governing structure wherein the priesthood held more power. That the focus on Temple rather than messianic ideas remains similar for much of the rest of the ancient Jewish literature created between the time of Zechariah and the Dead Sea Scrolls lends credence to this perspective.¹²⁹ As such, it seems fair to say that the use and importance of messianic ideas during this period was quite scant.

¹²⁵ Ezra 4:4 is a good example of “the people of the land” and “the people of Judah” being described as two distinct entities.

¹²⁶ Schniedewind, *Society and the Promise to David*, 107. Schniedewind argues that the first two parts of Solomon’s prayer are pre-exilic, which suggests that the Temple was understood as part of the promise to David even at the earliest stages. He thinks the third part (1 Kings 8:22–53) “has its locus in the exilic experience” because of the specificity of the concerns put on Solomon’s lips.

¹²⁷ Schniedewind, *Society and the Promise to David*, 110. This conditionality shows up in other references to the promise as well (e.g., 2 Kings 21:7–8).

¹²⁸ Pomykala, *The Davidic Dynasty Tradition in Early Judaism*, 56.

¹²⁹ Collins, *Jewish Cult and Hellenistic Culture*, 62–63.

The Origins of Apocalyptic Messianism in the Late Second Temple Period

Jewish messianic expectations grow in importance during the late Second Temple Period, but they do not fit into one tidy package. Messianic expectations appear in various books of many different genres from a variety of communities, but these expectations are often only mentioned briefly; each description is thus only an imprecise sketch instead of what must have been a more detailed painting. From 200 BCE to 135 CE, many Jews remained keenly interested in anointed figures,¹³⁰ but even though some Jews were actively looking for a Davidic kingly Messiah,¹³¹ others dismissed the idea entirely.¹³² Discussing Jewish messianic belief is often difficult because it is not clear that the majority of Jews around this time were looking for a messiah, and the messianic ideas that are found often differ from one another. For example, support for the view that Jews were expecting a militant Messiah is found in *2 Baruch 72* where

¹³⁰This is not confined to the examples that we will discuss below. Other messianic figures also appeared in Judaism, and often contributed to tensions between the Jewish community and the Romans. Josephus describes three messianic pretenders (Judas, Simon, Athronges) who arrived during the unrest that followed the death of Herod the Great (4 BCE). He identifies another two messianic figures (Menachem, Simon bar Giora) who arrived around the time of the great Jewish revolt. Simon bar Giora is executed at the end of the Jewish uprising of 66–70 CE by the Romans, demonstrating that both he and they considered him to be an important leader in the uprising. One obvious example that comes after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple is Simon bar Khokba, who led a messianic movement against the Romans in the second century CE and prompted the Romans, after his defeat, to change the name of Jerusalem. After being defeated this many times, it is perhaps unsurprising that the violent Davidic Messiah fell out of favor with the vast majority of the Jewish faithful.

¹³¹ Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 65.

¹³² Charlesworth, "From Messianology to Christology," 5. Charlesworth states that there was no general expectation for a coming messiah, and denies that a critical historian would be able to refer to a common messianic hope during the time of Jesus. It would be wonderful if scholars all agreed as Charlesworth seems to imply, but the unanimity Charlesworth describes is absent. For a contrary view see Hermann Lichtenberger, "Messianic Expectations and Messianic Figures During the Second Temple Period" in *Qumran-Messianism: Studies on the Messianic Expectations in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (eds. James H. Charlesworth, Hermann Lichtenberger and Gerbern S. Oegema; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1998), 9–20 where Lichtenberger argues that because "messianic figures" (according to Lichtenberger, "most figures in positions of unusual leadership are messianic") often originated from the lower class, a general expectation of the appearance of a messianic figure was present although not always represented in the mostly upper-class literature.

the text is explicit that the Messiah will bring death to those who have oppressed Israel,¹³³ whereas 4 Ezra 13:4–11 stresses the non-military means of the Messiah.¹³⁴

One group completely unconcerned with the fulfillment of Davidic promises is the Maccabeans. As many different factions battled for supremacy in the region, the Jewish people often endured tremendous hardship shortly before the Maccabeans came to power. In 169 BCE King Antiochus sacked the Temple and Jerusalem (1 Macc 1:20–28, 2 Macc 5:1–23); in 167 Apollonius orchestrated a massive slaughter, took a large numbers of Jews captive (1 Macc 1:29–40, 2 Macc 5:23–27), imposed an idolatrous cult upon the people, and instituted the death penalty for obeying the Torah (1 Macc 1:44–64, 2 Macc 6:1–11).¹³⁵ All of these events, traumatic to the religious life of the people, are described in the books of the Maccabees, and yet these texts are silent about messianic expectation. In some instances, the author of 1 Maccabees may intentionally avoid the wording of biblical prophecies when speaking of the Hasmonean leaders,¹³⁶ focusing instead on the similarities that they have with biblical heroes like Phinehas

¹³³ Stone and Heinze, *4 Ezra and 2 Baruch*, 10–11.

¹³⁴ Charlesworth, “From Messianology to Christology,” 20. Other examples of the inconsistencies between different traditions include the description of the Messiah as judge and the extent of the Messiah’s kingdom. 4 Ezra 12:31–34, and 2 Bar 40:1–2 describe the Messiah as judge, but according to 4 Ezra 7:31–44 and 7:113–14, judgment commences only after the Messiah dies, and after a time of silence. 2 Baruch 36–40 and 4 Ezra 7 both describe the kingdom of the Messiah as finite and only part of the limited messianic age that precedes the *eschaton*, but according to 1 Enoch 38, 48–52, and 2 Baruch 73–74, the Messiah’s kingdom will be eternal.

¹³⁵ Jonathan A. Goldstein, “How the Authors of 1 and 2 Maccabees Treated the ‘Messianic’ Promises,” in *Judaisms and their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (eds. Jacob Neusner, William S. Green and Ernest Frerichs; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 69–96.

¹³⁶ Goldstein, “The Authors of 1 and 2 Maccabees,” 77. Goldstein states this with much more vigor. He points to 1 Macc 13:41 as an occasion when the author should have made an allusion to Isa 10:27 or 14:25, where instead of using the word for Assyria, as in Isaiah, the author uses the word for Gentiles. Goldstein also expects that with so many stories of Hasmonean military victories in 1 Maccabees (3:41, 4:12–22, 5:1–23, 55–68, 10:67–89, 11:60–62) there ought to be more allusions to texts like Num 24:17–18, Isa 11:14, 25:9–12, Jer 49:1–6, Amos 9:12, Obad 19 and Zeph 2:4–10. The argument is predominantly from silence, which Goldstein acknowledges, but he describes the silence as telling. It seems to this observer that the silence may not tell quite so much. The evidence points to the simple fact that the author of 1 Maccabees does not make reference in these cases to biblical prophecies and therefore chooses not to emphasize them, but it seems something of a leap to suggest that he is intentionally omitting them, as though their absence will disable the reader from remembering their existence. The people knew that the Hasmoneans were fighting the Seleucids (“modern-day Assyria”), and while the author of 1 Maccabees does not make any explicit reference to prophecy, it seems reasonable that many readers would understand an allusion–

(1 Macc 2:24–26). The reason for these omissions is that the author of 1 Maccabees wrote to defend the Hasmonean dynasty as the chosen instrument of God, a family that was not related either to David (the ancient king), or to Aaron (and more specifically Zadok, the family from which the high priests had come since the re-establishment of the Temple after the return from Babylon).¹³⁷ As such, it is perhaps unsurprising that the author of 1 Maccabees hints that God’s election of David’s dynasty may not have been permanent (1 Macc 2:57)¹³⁸ and asserts that the Hasmoneans were the new family chosen by YHWH to deliver Israel (1 Macc 5:62).¹³⁹ Ironically, it is precisely because the Hasmoneans organized the people around faithfulness to YHWH and Torah rather than allegiance to a particular anointed figure¹⁴⁰ that the Davidic promises became so important to their opponents. It seems overwhelmingly likely that eschatological Davidic messianism rose up during this period at least in part because of Jewish dissatisfaction with Hasmonean rule.¹⁴¹

they were after all familiar with the scriptures—even without direct linguistic parallels. Nonetheless, the premise that the author of 1 Maccabees has his focus on biblical heroes, rather than biblical prophecy seems sound.

¹³⁷ Gabriele Boccaccini, *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism: An Intellectual History, from Ezekiel to Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002). For the rise of the Zadokites after their return from the Babylonian exile see Chapter One (pp. 43–72), and for the fall of the Zadokites from power see Chapter Three (pp. 151–163).

¹³⁸ Jonathan A. Goldstein, *1 Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Anchor; Garden City: Doubleday, 1976), 240. Goldstein’s argument rests on his interpretation of the plural use of αἰών in this passage, coming up with “David for his piety received as his heritage a royal throne for ages.” He acknowledges the possibility that the phrase “for ages” could be translated “forever” but based on the fact that the author is trying to legitimize the Hasmonean dynasty, Goldstein argues that the ambiguity presented here is an attempt to soften the eternity of the royal Davidic promise. Efron, *Studies on the Hasmonean Period*, disagrees with this interpretation and points to 1 Maccabees 2:57 and 4:30 for proof that “1 Maccabees stresses faith in the eternal mission of the Davidian dynasty” (233). But 1 Maccabees 4:30 has nothing to say about the eternal nature of the Davidic promise; instead David is treated like one hero among many. I find Goldstein’s argument, which points to the overall thrust of devaluing the Davidic tradition in 1 and 2 Maccabees, convincing in this case.

¹³⁹ Goldstein, “The Authors of 1 and 2 Maccabees,” 80.

¹⁴⁰ J.H. Charlesworth, “From Messianology to Christology: Problems and Prospects,” in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* (ed. by James H. Charlesworth; Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1992), 3–35. According to 1 and 2 Maccabees the Maccabean revolt was organized around faithfulness to YHWH and Torah, rather than allegiance to a particular anointed figure.

¹⁴¹ John J. Collins, “Messianism in the Maccabean Period” in *Judaisms and their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (eds. Jacob Neusner, William S. Green and Ernest Frerichs; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 97–109 (105). Herbert W. Bateman IV, Darrell L. Bock, and Gordon H. Johnston, *Jesus the Messiah: Tracing the Promises, Expectations, and Coming of Israel’s King* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2012), 34.

Chapter Three: The Messiah in the *Psalms of Solomon*

The Theology of the *Psalms of Solomon* in Their Historical Setting

It is now time to return to the *Psalms of Solomon* themselves. As I mentioned at the beginning of chapter two, some of the psalms can be confidently dated to the latter half of the first century BCE because of historical allusions to the Roman conquest of Jerusalem in 63 BCE and the death of the Roman general Pompey in 48 BCE. That we can be confident of this dating is helpful because it provides the historical context necessary to interpret the ample evidence that these texts reject what they understand to be a corrupt priesthood in the Jerusalem Temple.

The author of the second psalm holds the Temple priests responsible for Pompey's destruction of Jerusalem, saying that this destruction has come upon the holy city because the priests "desecrated the Lord's sanctuary" and "profaned the offerings to God" (*Ps. Sol.* 2:3).¹⁴² It is also possible that a charge of sexual immorality is directed against the priests (*Ps. Sol.* 2:11),¹⁴³ and against their families (*Ps. Sol.* 2:13).¹⁴⁴ Many of these charges are very serious indeed, so it is important to remember that the majority of these accusations are the result

¹⁴² It is difficult to know what the exact objections are in this case. The Temple priests are presented as being extremely devoted to their task at this time by Josephus. They were able to maintain their sacrifices during Pompey's siege, and even continued sacrificing when Pompey entered the Temple rather than making an attempt to fight back (*Ant.* 14.4.3; *War* 1.7.4–5). So whatever the problem, it certainly was not an obvious lack of faithfulness to their task.

¹⁴³ Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord*, 20. Atkinson suggests that the group mentioned in 2:11 could be the priests, just as "the people of Jerusalem" (οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰερουσαλήμ) are in 2:3, a passage that uses the same Greek phrase. That said, it is nevertheless also possible that the critique in 2:11 is of the population of Jerusalem in general.

¹⁴⁴ Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord*, 21. Atkinson argues that, because the phrase "women of Jerusalem" appears immediately after the "men of Jerusalem" in 2:11 that "they are seemingly the family of the Temple clergy." Of course, if 2:11 is meant more generally, 2:13 would need to have a wider application as well.

of disagreements regarding interpretation of the Law rather than blatant transgressions that most or all would recognize.¹⁴⁵ Still, it is clear that the psalmist saw the behavior of the priests as reprehensible and understood the natural consequences to be God's rejection of their offerings made in the Temple (*Ps. Sol.* 2:4) as well as God's punishment in the form of capture by the Romans (*Ps. Sol.* 2:6–10).¹⁴⁶

The author of the eighth psalm is more explicit with his similar complaints. The psalm opens with the declaration that sounds of war can be heard in Jerusalem (*Ps. Sol.* 8:1–5). Although the author does not immediately take delight in what is transpiring (*Ps. Sol.* 8:5–6),¹⁴⁷ he comes to understand the events in Jerusalem as God's righteous judgment (*Ps. Sol.* 8:7).¹⁴⁸ And why are the people of Jerusalem being judged? As in the second psalm, the attack is warranted because of the sins of the Temple priesthood. These priests have committed numerous transgressions, engaging in what the author considers to be incest, adultery, unrighteous oaths, theft from the Temple, profanation of the altar, and disobedience regarding laws concerning the treatment of menstruating women (*Ps. Sol.* 8:9–13).¹⁴⁹ It is significant that, while the writer finds much to critique, he does not criticize the sacrificial system itself. For this author, the problem is

¹⁴⁵ Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief*, 184.

¹⁴⁶ Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord*, 37. Atkinson suggests that the opponents in view here are Aristobulus II and his followers since they were the only ones taken captive by the Romans. He cites Josephus, *Ant.* 14.4.5 and *War* 1.7.7 and Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 37.15–16. While Aristobulus II is mentioned in all three cases, supporting the most important part of Atkinson's point, all three sources mention only Aristobulus II and/or his family members being taken captive and not any of his followers.

¹⁴⁷ My translation: "My insides were crushed by the news; my knees buckled, my heart dropped, my bones trembled like a flickering flame. I said, 'Do these people not direct themselves along the way of righteousness?'"

¹⁴⁸ A similar point is made by the author of *Ps. Sol.* 7:8–10 where the possibility of devastation in Jerusalem is understood as an element of God's compassionate discipline of the righteous. I will say more on this topic below.

¹⁴⁹ As I mentioned above, it is unlikely that any of these accusations reflect straightforward offenses as we might imagine them, but instead reflect disagreements about the interpretation of purity laws. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief*, 184 speaks about the accusation of bringing menstrual blood into the Temple as an example. He suggests that "this should not be taken as a literal description" but rather as an indication that the author believes the priests to be in violation of Leviticus 15:25–30. Although "we do not know what the actual disputes were" it is not hard to imagine different groups coming to different conclusions about the interpretation of phrases like "many days" (Lev 15:25) or "when the bleeding stops" (Lev 15:28). It is also not hard to imagine these disagreements being voiced with the kind of pejorative language we find here in the *Psalms of Solomon*.

not the Temple, which is indeed the holy dwelling-place of God, but rather those ministering within it.¹⁵⁰

With Pompey's violent removal of the sinful priests (*Ps. Sol.* 8:1–13) and John Hyrcanus II installed as the new high priest,¹⁵¹ has the Temple then been restored? That does not seem to be the case, although it would be difficult to make that point looking at this poem in isolation. The author clearly knows Hyrcanus II (*Ps. Sol.* 8:16–17), and Atkinson argues that “because the psalmist does not speak favorably of any Jews in this composition, his community did not belong to either [the party of Aristobulus II or the party of Hyrcanus II].”¹⁵² While I agree with Atkinson that the author probably belonged to neither group, I think that point rests in part on the poem's inclusion in the collection because there is insufficient evidence in this psalm alone to draw that conclusion. The last portion of the psalm (*Ps. Sol.* 8:23–32) is concerned primarily with explaining why a just God would allow the Romans to conquer Jerusalem.¹⁵³ It is clear that the psalmist takes a dim view of Aristobulus II in this explanation, but his view of Hyrcanus II is less plain. While it is true that the author does not take this opportunity to offer an interpretation of events that is explicitly positive for Hyrcanus II, neither does he condemn

¹⁵⁰ Atkinson, “Theodicy in the Psalms of Solomon,” 559. Atkinson notes that the authors sometimes call on God to protect the Temple. He offers *Pss. Sol.* 1:8; 2:2; 7:2; 8 as examples. The first two examples are not good. They offer strong evidence that the priests within the Temple are corrupt, but the authors there do not call on God to protect either Jerusalem or the Temple. The third example—a prayer from the psalmist which states, “May their feet not trample your holy inheritance (μη πατησάτω ὁ ποὺς αὐτῶν κληρονομίαν ἁγιάσματός σου)—is easily the strongest and clearly demonstrates concern for the Temple (cf. Wright, *The Psalms of Solomon*, 109). The last example is an entire chapter, and the evidence there is mixed. The author of the eighth psalm is clearly distressed about the sounds of war appearing in Jerusalem (8:4–5) and later calls on God to “gather the scattered of Israel” (συνάγαγε τὴν διασπορὰν Ἰσραὴλ), which likely implies a future role for the Temple, but this is not stated explicitly. That said, there are other examples of the authors calling on God to stop the destruction of Jerusalem (e.g., *Ps. Sol.* 2:22), or proclaiming a return to a reconsecrated Jerusalem (e.g., *Pss. Sol.* 11:1–9; 17:21–28).

¹⁵¹ Hyrcanus II is not mentioned by name in the *Psalms of Solomon*, but he and his party are described in *Ps. Sol.* 8:16–17 and his installation as high priest after Pompey's victory is described in other ancient sources (Josephus, *War* 1.7.6; *Ant.* 14.4.4; cf. Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 37.16.4, which does not use the term high priest, but which does say that Pompey handed control of the area over to Hyrcanus II).

¹⁵² Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord*, 59. The full quotation is “because the psalmist does not speak favorably of any Jews in this composition, his community did not belong to either of these groups.”

¹⁵³ Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord*, 59.

him.¹⁵⁴ The question is simply left open. This openness is enough for Atkinson to withhold judgment about the loyalties of the author in other instances,¹⁵⁵ and I would suggest that the same caution is appropriate here.

But if the eighth psalm is read in the context of the entire corpus, I believe that a firmer conclusion is warranted. The fourth psalm opens by addressing “the profaner” (βέβηλε, *Ps. Sol.* 4:1), and while a precise identification is difficult, almost all commentators suggest that someone from the Hasmonean dynasty is in view.¹⁵⁶ Similar language is present in the critique of “the lawless and evil man” in the twelfth psalm (ἀνδρὸς παρανόμου καὶ πονηροῦ, *Ps. Sol.* 12:1),¹⁵⁷ which has led some to conclude that it is likely the same individual.¹⁵⁸ While it

¹⁵⁴ If forced to choose between a supportive or condemnatory position, there are some hints suggesting the author takes a condemnatory attitude towards Hyrcanus II. The closest the author comes to outright condemnation is probably in *Ps. Sol.* 8:14 and *Ps. Sol.* 8:19, which state that “God confused their minds; he made them drink as if with undiluted wine” and “God led him in unscathed in their confusion.” The antecedent for “their” certainly includes the party of Aristobulus II, but probably also includes the party of Hyrcanus II and perhaps even all other Jews in Jerusalem since the whole city is punished. The tone of the passage also suggests that the author may take a dim view of Hyrcanus II allowing Pompey’s army into the city. Wright, *The Psalms of Solomon*, 119 suggests that *Ps. Sol.* 8:17 (“they graded the rough roads for his coming”) may be a parody of Isaiah 40:3. If so, that would suggest that the “highway” being created by Hyrcanus II for Pompey provides only false salvation, a cheap copy of what God will eventually do himself.

Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord*, 62 may be less concerned with an outright condemnation of Hyrcanus II because he understands this psalm to have been written while the Romans were in control of Jerusalem and thus before Hyrcanus II had been made high priest. This is based on his interpretation of *Ps. Sol.* 8:30, which reads “Don’t neglect us our God, lest the Gentiles swallow us whole as if there were no deliverer.” It is possible that this refers to direct Roman control of the city, but this sentiment also seems quite possible even after the Romans have left given that Jerusalem had just been decimated and the Temple itself profaned. It may well be that the author, reflecting on the whole experience, recognizes the need for God’s deliverance even after Pompey has left since he now knows that, based on human strength alone, the Romans could crush Jerusalem completely at some point in the future.

¹⁵⁵ Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord*, 127. In his reading of *Pss.* 4, 7, 12, 13, and 15 Atkinson says that “it is significant that none of these *Psalms of Solomon* explicitly condemn Hyrcanus or his Pharisaic supporters” and further suggests that “it is possible that one or more of the authors... backed Hyrcanus.” That said, Atkinson concludes that “it is more likely that the writers of these *Psalms of Solomon* disliked both the Hasmonean brothers... [but] appear to have supported Hyrcanus’s claim to the throne.” I think it is quite clear from the individual poems that the authors actively opposed the rule of Aristobulus II, but I do not think that support for Hyrcanus’s claim can be substantiated. In the context of the whole corpus, it is clear that the redactor takes the position that both brothers (and the Hasmonean dynasty as a whole) ought to be condemned. I will elaborate on this below.

¹⁵⁶ Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord*, 96–104. Atkinson summarizes the discussion, mentioning Alexander Jannaeus, Salome Alexandra, Judas Aristobulus II, and John Hyrcanus II all of whom are of the Hasmonean dynasty. The non-Hasmonean suggestions are Antipater the Idumean and Herod the Great. It seems to me that Hyrcanus II, Aristobulus II, and Alexander Jannaeus are much more likely than the other three suggestions.

¹⁵⁷ Wright, *The Psalms of Solomon*, 143. I have altered Wright’s translation here in order to use two adjectives as modifiers, which is what we find in the Greek text.

is at least possible that the conflict in the twelfth psalm is with an external enemy (unlike the fourth psalm, the opposition is never described as being affiliated with the “council of the devout”),¹⁵⁹ the similar concerns, and the clear presence of internal opponents in *Psalms of Solomon* 2, 8, and 17 strengthen the case that an internal opponent is in view here as well. The internal opponents found in the seventeenth psalm may suggest a broader objection to the Hasmoneans since it is clear that those being condemned are the rulers after the conquest of Jerusalem by Pompey (*Ps. Sol.* 17:11–20). Furthermore, this psalm looks forward to a time when a Davidic king will rule in Jerusalem (*Ps. Sol.* 17:21–46), which is a rather obvious tell that the author sees no place for the Hasmonean dynasty in his idealized future. Finally, in all of *Psalms of Solomon* 2, 8, 12, and 17 (and indeed, in the collection overall), the inhabitants of Jerusalem are referred to in the third person, which would seem to be a clear effort by these authors, who probably live in Jerusalem, to put some distance between themselves and the unrighteous inhabitants of the city who have abandoned the covenant.¹⁶⁰ Thus, when the eighth psalm is read

¹⁵⁸ Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord*, 106.

¹⁵⁹ Wright, *The Psalms of Solomon*, 83. I have altered Wright’s translation of *Ps. Sol.* 4:1 from “the Holy Sanhedrin” to the more literal and cautious “council of the devout”. Wright suggests that since this council is gathering in Jerusalem it “most probably refers to the supreme council, the Great Sanhedrin, rather than to a local Sanhedrin.” I do not deny that this is possible, but the more cautious translation already allows for this possibility and so seems preferable. The word ὅσιος occurs twenty other times in the *Psalms of Solomon*. It is used to describe God once where Wright translates it as “holy” and used to describe a righteous group of worshippers nineteen times where Wright translates it either as “devout” (eighteen instances) or “holy” (once). Since I am using Wright’s translation as a base, “devout” seems like an appropriate translation here.

¹⁶⁰ Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous*, 125–26. Winninge lists *Pss. Sol.* 8:8, 20, 22 and 17:20 as examples where a form of ἀπτός is used to describe the inhabitants of Jerusalem. To this, we might add clear examples in *Pss. Sol.* 1:4–8; 2:6–9, 11–14. 2:11–14 is particularly noteworthy in demonstrating the distance these authors are trying to achieve from the unrighteous because of the editorial comment from the author in 2:14 that “thinking about these things makes me sick to my stomach.” It is important to remember that, although the author of the second psalm speaks of the inhabitants of Jerusalem in this way, Jerusalem itself still has a special place in God’s redemptive plan in another poem (*Ps. Sol.* 11). Benedikt Eckhardt, “The Psalms of Solomon as a Historical Source for the Late Hasmonean Period,” in *The Psalms of Solomon: Language History, Theology* (ed. by Eberhard Bons and Patrick Pouchelle; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 7–29 notices these more general comments directed against the inhabitants of Jerusalem as a whole and suggests that it is the whole city rather than the priests and rulers who are the cause of the Temple’s rejection, pointing especially to the authors’ use of phrases like “οἱ υἱοὶ καὶ αἱ θυγατέρες,” which is found in that exact form in *Ps. Sol.* 2:6 and in a similar form in *Ps. Sol.* 8:9, 21 (16). The inclusion of women in these statements is intentionally inclusive (there are many other examples where women are not included when reference is probably being made to the whole group, e.g., *Pss. Sol.* 2:3; 9:4; 17:15), and it is thus

in the context of the entire corpus, it is appropriate to conclude that it would be read as part of this larger attempt to discredit both Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II, and more to the point, the Hasmonean rulers in general.

Since it is clear that the Temple establishment has been corrupted (*Pss. Sol.* 1:7–8; 2:3–10; 8:7–13), how do these psalms reimagine faithfulness to the covenant? The authors of these psalms clearly believe that they are the devout so often mentioned throughout the collection,¹⁶¹ that God’s faithfulness to them does not exempt them from the discipline of God’s righteous judgments,¹⁶² and that God’s faithfulness to them alongside his punishment of the wicked in the midst of national difficulties is compatible with God’s promise to never abandon Israel completely.¹⁶³ By understanding themselves as being under God’s good discipline, the authors are able to speak of their present suffering as a manifestation of God’s grace in their lives;¹⁶⁴ their present suffering, in other words, exists only because God loves them and is preparing them for a fast-coming change in the current situation where the unrighteous prosper exactly because God has not yet disciplined or destroyed them. Because God is disciplining the

important to understand the condemnation as an inclusive condemnation of the whole city. I agree with Eckhardt that there are certainly times when the whole population is in view, but the evidence mentioned above suggests to me that there were some in Jerusalem who were righteous and that the priests and rulers in charge of the Temple were often singled out for special condemnation because of their sins.

¹⁶¹ The “devout” (ὄσιος) are mentioned in twelve of the eighteen psalms (i.e. *Pss. Sol.* 2:36; 3:8; 4:1, 6, 8; 8:23, 34; 9:3; 10:6; 12:4, 6; 13:10, 12; 14:3, 10; 15:3, 7; 16:1; 17:16). This group is also frequently referred to as the “righteous” (δίκαιος, e.g., *Pss. Sol.* 2:34–35; 3:3–7, 11; 4:8; 9:7; 10:3; 13:6–9, 11; 14:9; 15:3, 6–7; 16:15).

¹⁶² Examples include *Pss. Sol.* 3:5–8; 7:6–10; 8:26–34; 9:6–7; 10:1–3; 13:7–12; 14:1–5; 16:1–11; 17:42; 18:4.

¹⁶³ Examples include *Pss. Sol.* 2:33–37; 7:6–10; 8:26–34; 9:9–11; 10:4–8; 11:7–9; 12:6; 14:1–5; 17:4, 42–45; 18:3–6. Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous*, 131. Winninge notes that covenantal names like “Jacob” (*Pss. Sol.* 7:10; 15:1) and “the seed of Abraham” (*Pss. Sol.* 9:9; 18:3) are also used to indicate “the covenantal status of the devout,” though it seems to me that the authors have a broader understanding of what constitutes the covenantal community. At minimum, we would need to understand “the devout” as an inclusive term since some of these authors express hope for the ingathering of the exiles (e.g., *Pss. Sol.* 8:28; 11:1–6; 17:26–28). So while these poems are clear that some sinners will be excluded from the redemptive relationship (they are sometimes described as being worse than the Gentiles, e.g., *Pss. Sol.* 1:8; 8:13), there are also going to be people from outside the redactor’s immediate community that will be included.

¹⁶⁴ Patrick Pouchelle, “Prayers for Being Disciplined: Notes on παιδεύω and παιδεία in the Psalms of Solomon,” in *The Psalms of Solomon: Language History, Theology* (ed. by Eberhard Bons and Patrick Pouchelle; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 115–32.

righteous but promising destruction for their enemies, the authors are able to frame themselves as the true inheritors of the covenant, a mindset that is particularly evident in their usage of the first person when speaking of Israel.¹⁶⁵ Holding these ideas together is useful for the writers of the *Psalms of Solomon* because it both explains the suffering that they endure while still providing hope for the eventual victory of Israel in the future.¹⁶⁶

This perspective also gives the readers a measure of agency. The readers are called to be active participants in the redemptive process by practicing various forms of communal piety in order to demonstrate faithfulness to God. Throughout the *Psalms of Solomon*, the authors present even their own community as being guilty of sin,¹⁶⁷ and thus in need of God's discipline. What distinguishes the "sinfully righteous" from sinners is their willingness to accept this discipline and testify to God's righteousness.¹⁶⁸ By accepting their own terrible situation as an instance of God's discipline, the readers remind themselves that they are God's chosen people and can therefore be confident in their eventual redemption.¹⁶⁹

This form of piety demands devotion, but does not ask that true devotion happen through the now-corrupt Temple. At various points, the *Psalms of Solomon* emphasize the importance of prayer (*Pss. Sol.* 2:36; 6:1; 7:7; 15:1) and fasting (*Ps. Sol.* 3:8) as a substitute for Temple

¹⁶⁵ Winnige, *Sinners and the Righteous*, 131. Winnige draws attention to *Pss. Sol.* 9:8 and 17:45 as clear examples of this phenomenon. To this I would add *Pss. Sol.* 5:18–19; 7:6–10; 8:26–28; 9:10–11; 10:5–8; 16:3; 18:4–5.

¹⁶⁶ Atkinson, "Theodicy in the Psalms of Solomon," 556. The authors often present a dualistic understanding of the pious and the wicked wherein both groups are at least nominally part of Israel. Atkinson points out that whenever the pious are described as sinning, their sins are unintentional (*Pss. Sol.* 3:7–8; 13:7–10; 18:4). The sins of the wicked, by contrast, are intentional, repeated, and/or hidden (*Pss. Sol.* 1:6–8; 2:15–17, 34–35; 3:9–12; 8:1–15; 14:6–10). Atkinson suggests that God's judgments, which negatively impact his own community, are justifiable because they bring these sins of the wicked to light. Whether or not this justification would be compelling to a modern audience, it seems to me that Atkinson is likely correct in his assessment.

¹⁶⁷ Winnige, *Sinners and the Righteous*, 133. Winnige offers many examples of this including *Pss. Sol.* 3:5–8; 5:6; 9:6–7; 10:1; 13:7–10; 17:5; 18:4.

¹⁶⁸ Winnige, *Sinners and the Righteous*, 131. Winnige coins the helpful phrase "sinfully righteous". Atkinson, "Theodicy in the Psalms of Solomon," 561 argues that "for the writers of the *Psalms of Solomon*, righteousness does not depend only upon following the Law; rather, the truly righteous are those who first acknowledge God's righteousness."

¹⁶⁹ Examples include *Pss. Sol.* 3:5; 7:3, 9–10; 8:29–34; 9:6–11; 10:1–4; 13:10–12; 14:1–5.

sacrifice; the appropriateness of congregating in places other than the Temple for worship (*Pss. Sol.* 10:6; 17:16);¹⁷⁰ and the possibility of atoning for sin without making a Temple sacrifice because of God’s mercy (*Pss. Sol.* 16), usually in concert with the practice of confession (*Pss. Sol.* 9:6),¹⁷¹ remembrance (*Pss. Sol.* 16:1–11), fasting (*Pss. Sol.* 3:8), or mortification (*Pss. Sol.* 10:1–2).¹⁷² Because God has been responsive to these actions in the recent past (e.g., in *Pss. Sol.* 2:22–26 God’s punishment of Pompey is in response to the prayers of the psalmist and his community), the readers can move forward with some assurance that these practices will continue to be effective in both the present and the future.¹⁷³ That this community would emphasize communal acts of piety as transformative also helps to make sense of their choice of genre. It is likely that these psalms were written *as psalms* so that they could be performed liturgically, thus enabling the community to engage in the acts that the psalms call for (e.g., confession and remembrance) even as they are being read.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁰ Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord*, 3. Atkinson describes the worship setting as “synagogues of the pious.” Franklyn, “The Cultic and Pious Climax,” 5–6 is much more careful with the use of the term “synagogue” because there is considerable uncertainty about when the rise of the synagogue as an institution occurred and when worship became one of the things people did in the synagogue. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief*, 198–208 agrees with Franklyn that “we do not know the history of the synagogue or house of prayer, either its age or the degree to which practice varied from one synagogue to another” (198), but does suggest that singing (202) and the study of scripture (207) in synagogues would have been present by the time the *Psalms of Solomon* was being circulated. Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous*, looks at the available evidence and suggests that “we cannot know for sure” (19) whether or not synagogues would have been in use when the *Psalms of Solomon* were written. While both Franklyn and Sanders are comfortable using the term “synagogue”, I find myself closer to the position of Winninge and think that something with less historical specificity is preferable, which is why I have instead opted for the descriptive phrase “congregating in places other than the Temple.”

¹⁷¹ It is important to recognize that confession was already a part of the program for forgiveness of sins alongside sacrifices in the Temple (cf. Lev 5:2–5). See Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief*, 192.

¹⁷² Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord*, 3. Atkinson only mentions “righteous suffering”. He is likely thinking of that as an umbrella term that encompasses everything that I have listed, but it seems prudent to give a complete list.

¹⁷³ Rodney Alan Werline, *Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism: The Development of a Religious Institution* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 187. Werline offers several other examples of Second Temple literature where an author cries out to God for God’s foreign agent of punishment to be destroyed or punished itself (e.g., 2 Maccabees 7, 3 Maccabees 2, the Prayer of Azariah, Greek Esther).

¹⁷⁴ Rodney Alan Werline, “The Formation of the Pious Person in the Psalms of Solomon,” in *The Psalms of Solomon: Language History, Theology* (ed. by Eberhard Bons and Patrick Pouchelle; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 133–54 (154).

It is interesting that the corpus encourages this shift away from the traditional practices of Temple piety while doing little to condemn the traditional practices themselves; even in the idealized future, a consecrated Jerusalem remains central (*Ps. Sol.* 11:7; 17:30),¹⁷⁵ and the expected Messiah may even have priestly qualities.¹⁷⁶ How do the authors achieve this? It seems that a return to the scriptures was instrumental. According to Atkinson, the psalmists' rereading of familiar scriptures is informed by their desire to invalidate Hasmonean rule and suggest a viable alternative.¹⁷⁷ The promises of YHWH to the house of David in the prophets (e.g., 2 Sam 7:16) serve as a means to this end. The Hasmoneans, as mentioned above, never claimed that they were descendants of David and pro-Hasmonean texts seem to suggest that the reign of David's house had been replaced by Hasmonean rule (e.g., 1 Macc 5:62). In order to invalidate this claim and establish the importance of a Davidic ruler, the psalmists reread the scriptures and become some of the first writers in the Second Temple period to use the term *χριστός* to refer to a coming Davidic king.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ Atkinson, *An Intertextual Study of the Psalms of Solomon*, 234. Atkinson does not make reference to chapter 17 here, but he does draw attention to the fact that the author of the eleventh psalm "personified Jerusalem as a priest who had adorned her sacred robes in preparation for worship." This verse occurs while the author is speaking about the ingathering of the exiles, and thus about an idealized future.

¹⁷⁶ Atkinson, "Theodicy in the Psalms of Solomon," 573. Atkinson understands descriptions of the Messiah's purity as a description of "the Messiah's priestly qualities," which is, of course, not the same as an explicit description of the Messiah as a priest.

¹⁷⁷ Kenneth Atkinson, "On the Use of Scripture in the Development of Militant Davidic Messianism at Qumran: New Light from *Psalm of Solomon* 17," in *The Interpretation of Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity: Studies in Language and Tradition* (ed. Craig A. Evans; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 106–23.

¹⁷⁸ Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 49. This is, of course, complicated by the fact that the text was probably originally written in Hebrew and only later translated into Greek. That said, we can be reasonably confident that this is a translation of the Hebrew *מָשִׁיחַ*, as a more detailed study of the biblical passages used by the authors of the *Psalms of Solomon* will show.

The Presentation of the Messiah in *Psalm of Solomon 17*

The last two psalms in the collection address the subject of Davidic kingship directly, but the lengthier and more important of these two psalms is *Psalm of Solomon 17*. A visual representation of the structure explained below may help the reader to follow the discussion and can be found in an appendix.

The whole psalm is framed by an inclusion, which emphasizes the fact that, ultimately, God is the only true ruler:

Ps. Sol. 17:1 Κύριε· σὺ αὐτὸς βασιλεὺς ἡμῶν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ ἔτι·

Ps. Sol. 17:46 κύριος αὐτός βασιλεὺς ἡμῶν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ ἔτι.

But the psalm is also put into three distinct sections, each of which begins with an address to the Lord that is then followed by a more didactic section in which the author speaks about God to his readers.¹⁷⁹ Here is the opening line of each section:

Ps. Sol. 17:1 Κύριε· σὺ αὐτὸς βασιλεὺς ἡμῶν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ ἔτι·

Ps. Sol. 17:4 Σὺ· κύριε· ἠρετίσω τὸν Δαυὶδ βασιλεία ἐπὶ Ἰσραὴλ·

Ps. Sol. 17:21 Ἴδε, κύριε· καὶ ἀνάστησον αὐτοῖς τὸν βασιλέα αὐτῶν· υἱὸν Δαυὶδ·

The first section is introductory and exalts God as both king (βασιλεὺς, *Ps. Sol. 17:1*) and savior (σωτήρ, *Ps. Sol. 17:3*). It also reminds the reader that God's kingdom will last forever, no matter the current circumstances (καὶ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, *Ps. Sol. 17:3*). This point is of particular importance given the political situation outlined above. As with each of the next two sections, this one begins with a prayer to God (*Ps. Sol. 17:1*), which is then followed by didactic material in which the author speaks about God (*Ps. Sol. 17:2–3*).

¹⁷⁹ Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous*, 95. Although Winninge breaks each section down further, he also suggests this broader structure of three major sections broken into pairs, and this broader suggestion seems to me to be the most helpful and the most obvious textually.

The second section reminds God of his previous promises, and especially of his promise to have a son of David on the throne forever (Σύ· κύριε· ἡρετίσω τὸν Δαυὶδ βασιλέα ἐπὶ Ἰσραὴλ· καὶ σὺ ὥμοσας αὐτῷ περὶ τοῦ σπέρματος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα·, *Ps. Sol.* 17:4). It is no coincidence that the phrase εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα is used to speak both of God's eternal kingship in 17:3 and the eternal promise for a Davidic king in 17:4. For this author, those two ideas are inseparable from one another, God's faithfulness being tied directly to an eventual fulfillment of the author's request. After the opening section of prayer (*Ps. Sol.* 17:4-8), the author then outlines the sins of those opposed to him and his community, sins that have resulted in negative consequences for those that deserved to be punished and those who are still willing to be faithful (*Ps. Sol.* 17:9-20).

This leads directly into the last section, which is introduced by the author crying out for God to raise up a son of David to rule over now-battered Israel (Ἴδε, κύριε· καὶ ἀνάστησον αὐτοῖς τὸν βασιλέα αὐτῶν· υἱὸν Δαυὶδ, *Ps. Sol.* 17:21). The use of imperatives (Ἴδε... ἀνάστησον... ὑπόζωσον, *Ps. Sol.* 17:21-22) in the opening section of prayer (*Ps. Sol.* 17:25) suggests that the situation requires urgent action.¹⁸⁰ This is followed by the longest didactic section of the poem, which is dedicated to describing both the coming Davidic king and the restoration of God's rule that will accompany him. That it is God's rule being anticipated is emphasized by the inclusion that concludes the psalm (*Ps. Sol.* 17:46).

The author establishes early on in this psalm that God has chosen the descendents of David to rule in Jerusalem forever (ἀΐῶνα, *Ps. Sol.* 17:4), a clear reference to the promise in 2 Samuel 7:16 discussed above. The promise to David, which describes a kingdom that will never fall, strongly implies that the Hasmonean rulers were illegitimate when presented in this

¹⁸⁰ Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous*, 94.

context. When that reference is combined with the author speaking about a group of “sinners” who have “set up their own royal house” (ἀμαρτίαις... ἔθεντο βασίλειον ἀντὶ ὕψους αὐτῶν, *Ps. Sol.* 17:5-6) the allusion to the Hasmonean dynasty seems plain, especially in light of the negative views expressed toward the Hasmonean dynasty in many of the other poems in the collection.

The historical allusions to Pompey in other poems (e.g., *Ps. Sol.* 2) have led some interpreters to read *Psalms of Solomon* 17 against a similar historical backdrop.¹⁸¹ The author describes “a man alien to our race” (ἄνθρωπον ἀλλότριον γένους ἡμῶν, 17:7) who will stamp out the Hasmonean dynasty as well as “the lawless one” (ὁ ἄνομος, 17:11), a foreigner who will make Jerusalem virtually uninhabitable, exile some of the population, and engage in pagan religious practices (17:12–14). Both of these passages could be a reference to Pompey’s siege of Jerusalem and the exile of Aristobulus II. But are they?

Kenneth Atkinson disputed this interpretation,¹⁸² arguing that the future tense verbs in this poem suggest the anticipation of one who will come to end the Hasmonean line for their past sins,¹⁸³ which means that Pompey cannot be in view.¹⁸⁴ If Atkinson’s view is accepted, the theology of the psalmist ought to be understood as taking a firm stand against the Hasmonean

¹⁸¹ Pomykala, *The Davidic Dynasty Tradition in Early Judaism*, 159. Pomykala states that the psalm “can be dated between 61 and 57 BCE, since it describes Pompey’s capture of Jerusalem and Aristobulus II’s exile (and the puppet kingdom of Hyrcanus II), but makes no reference to the revolt of Alexander in 57 BCE.”

¹⁸² I have said “disputed” because Atkinson changes his view. I will discuss this change below.

¹⁸³ Kenneth Atkinson, “On the Herodian Origin of Militant Davidic Messianism at Qumran: New Light from *Psalms of Solomon* 17,” *JBL* 118.3 (1999): 435–60. He reads the Greek future tense verbs in *Psalms of Solomon* 17:7–8 as, “But you, O God, will overthrow them and will remove their offspring from the earth, when there rises up against them a man that is foreign to our race. According to their sins you will repay them, O God, so that it may befall them according to their works.” The verbs are sometimes translated in the past tense and understood as a reference to Pompey’s conquest of Jerusalem, and while Pompey did overthrow a Hasmonean *ruler* he did not end the Hasmonean *line* since he installed Aristobulus II’s brother, Hyrcanus II, as high priest after his conquest.

¹⁸⁴ Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord*, 135–39. Atkinson’s view seems to have changed over time as, in this instance, Atkinson does interpret the future tense verbs as pertaining to Pompey, suggesting that *Ps. Sol.* 17:1–10 was “likely written before Pompey’s conquest of Jerusalem in 63 BCE” and that this section “describes Pompey’s future punishment and extermination of the Hasmoneans” (136). In the rest of the paragraph, I will offer several reasons for finding this view less plausible than Atkinson’s original suggestion.

line as a whole, rather than against any one Hasmonean ruler. As I will demonstrate below, an objection like this would likely come to fruition at least in part because of Hasmonean claims to the throne and their management of priestly duties. The last psalm's later comment that YHWH will bring back his anointed king (*Ps. Sol.* 18:5) further insinuates that neither the Hasmoneans nor the current ruler—the one who disposed of the Hasmoneans—is the chosen one of God (cf. *Ps. Sol.* 17:11). This Herodian setting also helps to make sense of the fact that Herod, rather than a Davidide, is the one who ends the Hasmonean dynasty (cf. *Ps. Sol.* 17:9).¹⁸⁵

Atkinson suggests that, despite Herod's victory over the Hasmoneans, the author of the seventeenth psalm immediately turns on him, describing him, and not Pompey, as “a man alien to our race” (ἄνθρωπον ἀλλότριον γένους ἡμῶν, *Ps. Sol.* 17:7) and “the lawless one” (ὁ ἄνομος, *Ps. Sol.* 17:11) who persecutes the author's community and reigns in Jerusalem.¹⁸⁶ This description actually makes better sense when it is taken as a description of Herod than it does of Pompey because Herod's Jewish identity was disputed among the people of Jerusalem at this time.¹⁸⁷ Furthermore, this understanding of God's sovereignty—using one undesirable group to punish another only to have the first group destroyed later—is relatively common in the prophetic literature (e.g., Isa 10:5–19; Hab 1:5–11; Nah 1:12–13), and is modeled elsewhere in the *Psalms of Solomon* themselves (e.g., in *Ps. Sol.* 2:22–29 the author suggests that God is punishing the people through the agency of Pompey, after which Pompey is killed because of his own sins). Although this interpretation makes the reading a little bit more complex for an outsider, it makes

¹⁸⁵ Zacharias, “The Son of David in *Psalms of Solomon* 17,” 74. Zacharias agrees with a Herodian setting, and seems to find this point about the extermination of the Hasmoneans particularly compelling. The interpretation even informs his dating of the psalm as he suggests that “the *terminus ad quem* can possibly be pushed a little further to after 25 BCE, the year when the sons of Babas, the last male representatives of the Hasmonean dynasty, died.”

¹⁸⁶ Atkinson, “Scripture,” 108.

¹⁸⁷ Eckhardt, “The *Psalms of Solomon* as a Historical Source,” 19.

good sense of the historical context. For some Jews who were dissatisfied with Herodian rule, Davidic messianism was understood as a genuine (even if extreme) alternative.¹⁸⁸

The Davidic king is presented as the righteous counterpart to “the lawless one” (ὁ ἄνομος, *Ps. Sol.* 17:11). He is described as both υἱὸν Δαυίδ (*Ps. Sol.* 17:21) and χριστὸς κύριος (*Ps. Sol.* 17:32), titles that are used only of messianic kings in post-exilic non-biblical literature.¹⁸⁹ The psalmist’s description is that of a violent figure (*Ps. Sol.* 17:22–25) who, perhaps somewhat paradoxically, puts his full trust in God rather than weapons of war (*Ps. Sol.* 17:33–34).¹⁹⁰ He will serve as judge of both the tribes of Israel (*Ps. Sol.* 17:26) and the nations (*Ps. Sol.* 17:29).¹⁹¹ But in order to do that, he will first come to purge Jerusalem of evil, and call the Jews to return to Jerusalem (*Ps. Sol.* 17:26–28).

The belief that YHWH is eternally concerned for the people of Israel and that he will one day restore Jerusalem with an ingathering of his exiled people is a common eschatological theme

¹⁸⁸ Sean Freyne, “The Herodian Period,” in *Redemption and Resistance: The Messianic Hopes of Jews and Christians in Antiquity* (ed. Markus Bockmuehl and James Carleton Paget; London: T&T Clark, 2009), 29–43 (36).

¹⁸⁹ Atkinson, “Scripture,” 107.

¹⁹⁰ Zacharias, “The Son of David in *Psalms of Solomon* 17,” 81. Zacharias argues that the messianic figure is entirely non-violent, a leader “whose strength resides in his words alone.” I do not find this suggestion compelling. There are several instances in the Hebrew Bible where significant leaders are encouraged to both rely on God rather than military might and nevertheless engage militarily. Deuteronomy 20, for example, suggests that the people of Israel should go to war when they are overmatched militarily because God is on their side: “When you go out to war against your enemies, and see horses and chariots, an army larger than your own, you shall not be afraid of them, for the Lord your God is with you” (Deut 20:1). Similarly, Psalm 20 is a prayer for victory in battle that includes the following couplet: “Some take pride in chariots, and some in horses, but our pride is in the name of the Lord our God” (Ps 20:7). It seems very likely to me that the *Psalms of Solomon* share this view. Some of the terminology used in *Psalms of Solomon* 17 suggests that at least some violence will be used, both from God and from his human agent. The word θραύσαι (“to destroy,” *Ps. Sol.* 17:22), for example, is used in the LXX to describe God’s destruction of the Egyptians in the Red Sea (Ex 15:6), but also of a human figure in a passage that is often given a messianic interpretation (Num 24:17). Given that background, it seems extremely likely that the prayer to “undergird him with the strength to destroy the unrighteous rulers” has a measure of violence in mind. Similarly, the word ἐκτριψαί (“to smash,” *Ps. Sol.* 17:23) is used to describe both God’s destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:13, 29), and the violent animosity that can exist between nations (Jos 7:9; 2 Chr 20:23). In this psalm, the prerogatives of God are often enacted by the messianic figure, which makes it seem even more probable that the violent destruction of enemies will be among the messianic figure’s actions.

¹⁹¹ The rightness of God’s judgment is an important theme in the collection (cf. *Pss. Sol.* 2:10; 2:15–18; 2:30–32; 4:24; 5:1; 8:7–8; 8:23–26; 8:32–34; 9:2–5; 10:5; 17:10), so it is particularly significant that the anointed one is given this role. That said, the psalmist makes it very clear that the anointed understands that “the Lord himself is his king” (*Ps. Sol.* 17:34) and later, speaking of the whole community, that “the Lord himself is our king” (*Ps. Sol.* 17:46). So while the anointed is taking on the role of God’s representative on earth, he is not being presented as God’s equal.

in prophetic literature,¹⁹² and is found in several of the *Psalms of Solomon* (e.g., *Pss. Sol.* 8:28; 11:1–6). As I mentioned above, the fulfillment of this promise for the psalmist will transpire during the time of the Messiah (*Ps. Sol.* 17:26–28), which can be expected soon. Interestingly, though this passage seems to have some linguistic similarities with Ezekiel 47:21,¹⁹³ the general thrust of the two passages could not be more different. Whereas God tells Ezekiel, “you shall allot [this land] as an inheritance for yourselves and for the aliens who reside among you and have begotten children among you [for] they shall be to you as citizens of Israel” (Ezek 47:22), the psalmist suggests that “the stranger and the foreigner will no longer live with them” (*Ps. Sol.* 17:28). This more exclusivist position is very similar theologically—and to some degree linguistically—to Joel 3:17.¹⁹⁴ This combination of theology and language from different scriptural texts is relatively common in the *Psalms of Solomon* and points to a group of writers who are willing to use scriptural texts for their own creative purposes.¹⁹⁵

But even though the image of a restored Davidic king is clearly dominant, it is not the only possible comparison. The return to Jerusalem described in *Psalm of Solomon* 17 also has

¹⁹² Restoration after a period of exile is a theme present as early as the eighth century BCE in the books of Hosea (1:11; 2:14–15; 3:4–5) and Amos (9:11–15). These expectations are also present in exilic texts like Jeremiah (33:4–9) and Ezekiel (36:22–24) and what most scholars would agree are post-exilic passages like Isaiah 62:10–12 and Micah 7:11–13.

¹⁹³ Atkinson, *An Intertextual Study of the Psalms of Solomon*, 351. There are definitely similarities between the two passages, but they are not close to identical. The passage from Ezekiel reads, “καὶ διαμερίσετε τὴν γῆν ταύτην αὐτοῖς ταῖς φυλαῖς τοῦ Ἰσραηλ” compared to “καὶ καταμερίσει αὐτοὺς ἐν ταῖς φυλαῖς αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς” in the *Psalms of Solomon*. The main verb is from the same root but is not exactly the same, and other key words are present in both passages but structured differently in the sentence. Noting the difference is particularly significant because Atkinson is explicitly naming the similarity as being with the Septuagint version of the text. Atkinson often draws attention to these intertextualities where the comparisons between passages have both significant similarities and significant differences.

¹⁹⁴ Atkinson, *An Intertextual Study of the Psalms of Solomon*, 351. This is another instance with both important similarities and major differences. Joel’s text reads, “καὶ ἀλλογενεῖς οὐ διελεύσονται δι’ αὐτῆς οὐκέτι” compared to “καὶ πάροικος καὶ ἀλλογενὴς οὐ παροικήσει αὐτοῖς ἔτι” in the *Psalms of Solomon*. Here again, Atkinson is drawing an explicit comparison with the Septuagint version.

¹⁹⁵ Gene L. Davenport, “The Anointed of the Lord in Psalms of Solomon 17,” in *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism: Profiles and Paradigms* (ed. John J. Collins and George W. E. Nickelsburg; Chico: Scholars Press, 1980), 67–92. One example that Davenport points out is the use of both Psalm 2 and Isaiah 11 in *Psalm of Solomon* 17:22–24 (72–74). In the midst of that discussion, Davenport says that “the psalmist has exercised more skill as an interpreter of texts than as a poet” (90), which suggests that he is operating primarily on the level of sense rather than morpheme.

much in common with the conquest narrative described in the book of Joshua. Like the people in Joshua's time, God's chosen people have been wandering in the wilderness because of the nation's sins (*Ps. Sol.* 17:17, cf. Josh 5:6),¹⁹⁶ but are now on the verge of seeing God fulfill his promise to drive out or destroy the unrighteous currently in the land (*Ps. Sol.* 17:23–24, cf. Josh 3:10)¹⁹⁷ that will be given to them as an inheritance (*Ps. Sol.* 17:23, cf. Josh 1:15).¹⁹⁸ Like Joshua, the messianic figure will have those Gentiles who are not destroyed serving him (*Ps. Sol.* 17:30, cf. Josh 9:26–27) and will divide the people of Israel according to their tribes (*Ps. Sol.* 17:28, cf. Josh 11:23). Just as God worked through Joshua to bring the people into the Promised Land, the psalmist indicates that God is working through a new chosen leader to restore the Promised Land to his chosen people.

The royal psalms are yet another important canonical source of messianic thought that the writers of *Psalms of Solomon* 17–18 draw on in their presentation of the Messiah. There are clear

¹⁹⁶ The word for wilderness, ἔρημος, is the same in both texts, but the verb is different; the Septuagint of Joshua 5:6 uses ἀναστρέφω while the *Psalms of Solomon* uses πλανάω. This does not mean that the reader is not likely to think back to the conquest upon hearing these words, but it is interesting that, although both of the words used by the *Psalms of Solomon* are used quite frequently in the Septuagint, they are not frequently combined. The only times that they are used together to mean “wandering in the wilderness” are Genesis 21:14, which describes Hagar wandering in the wilderness of Beersheba after being sent away by Abraham; Isaiah 16:8, which describes the vastness of a field of grapes (i.e., it is so vast that it wanders into the wilderness) and Psalm 107:4, which describes a group of people wandering in the wilderness until God brings them to safety. With Psalm 107, there are enough verbal parallels between the text in the *Psalms of Solomon* and the Septuagint to think that the authors were quite familiar with it. In *Ps. Sol.* 17 we have, in addition to the phrase mentioned above, God rescuing (ῥύομαι) his people (*Ps. Sol.* 17:45 and Ps 107:6), God delivering them from their enemies (ἐχθρός, *Pss. Sol.* 17:45 and Ps 107:2), and God gathering (συνάγω) his people (*Ps. Sol.* 17:26 and Ps 107:3). There are also parallels between Psalm 107 and *Pss. Sol.* 5 and 11. *Ps. Sol.* 5:5–8 shares a lot of the same terminology as Ps 107:5–6—both use the words πεινάω (be hungry), κράζω (cry out), θλίβω (afflict), and ἀνάγκη (distress)—and *Ps. Sol.* 11:2–3 uses very similar imagery to that found in Ps 107:3—both passages are talking about the ingathering of the exiles into the city/Jerusalem and both use the words συνάγω (gather), ἀνατολή (east), δυσμή (west), and βορέας (north). Any one of these examples would not be all that convincing by itself, but when taken together, it seems likely that the writers of the *Psalms of Solomon* were very much influenced by the language of Psalm 107.

One might reasonably wonder about the usefulness of drawing these kinds of linguistic parallels with the Septuagint if the *Psalms of Solomon* are originally written in Hebrew. My view, which is shared by Wright (640) among others, is that the translator is well acquainted with the Septuagint. It is true that there are probably times when the translator may be creating a parallel that is not already present (or that I might be seeing one that is not there!), but it seems equally probable that many of these points of connection are also found in the original Hebrew.

¹⁹⁷ Both texts use the word ὀλεθρεύω (to destroy).

¹⁹⁸ Both texts use the word κληρονομία (inheritance).

references to the second canonical psalm: certain sinners are expelled from the “inheritance” (*Ps. Sol.* 17:23)¹⁹⁹ that was promised to David in Psalm 2:8, and the destruction of sinners “like a potter’s jar” (*Ps. Sol.* 17:23)²⁰⁰ and “with an iron rod” (*Ps. Sol.* 17:24)²⁰¹ offer verbal parallels with the Septuagint’s translation of Psalm 2:9 but in reverse order. The author similarly makes a direct reference to Psalm 89:4, a passage that clearly rearticulates the promise to David saying, “ἔως τοῦ αἰῶνος ἑτοιμάσω τὸ σπέρμα σου.” This is very similar to *Psalms of Solomon* 17:4, which declares, “καὶ σὺ ὡμοσας αὐτῷ περὶ σπέρματος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.” The portrait of the ideal king in Psalm 72—a canonical psalm attributed to Solomon—is also echoed a couple of times, both with regard to the Messiah’s role as judge (*Ps* 72:2, cf. *Ps. Sol.* 17:26) and with regard to the service rendered to the Messiah by other nations (*Ps* 72:11, cf. *Ps. Sol.* 17:30).²⁰² There are, of course, other times in the collection where the themes of these royal psalms are emphasized (e.g., care for the poor in needy in *Ps* 72:12–13, cf. *Ps. Sol.* 5:11); other royal psalms that contain a promise to David probably also reinforced the messianic viewpoint found in the *Psalms of Solomon* even though they are not referenced explicitly (e.g., *Ps* 132).

The influence of Isaiah 11:1–4 is particularly significant because Isaiah 11 is used to describe the Messiah in many other texts as well.²⁰³ the king is girded with strength (ἰσχύς, *Ps. Sol.* 17:22) and wisdom (σοφία, *Ps. Sol.* 17:23), both descriptions taken from Isaiah 11:2. The king’s destruction of the godless nations “with the word of his mouth” (*Ps. Sol.* 17:24) is

¹⁹⁹ κληρονομίας in the *Psalms of Solomon* and κληρονομίαν in the Septuagint.

²⁰⁰ ὡς σκεύη κεραμέως in the *Psalms of Solomon* and ὡς σκευός κεραμέως in the Septuagint.

²⁰¹ ἐν ῥάβδῳ σιδηρᾷ in the *Psalms of Solomon* and ἐν ῥάβδῳ σιδηρᾷ in the Septuagint.

²⁰² *Psalm* 72:2 and *Psalms of Solomon* 17:26 both use the key words κρίνω, λαός, and δικαιοσύνη. *Psalm* 72:11 and *Psalms of Solomon* 17:30 both use the key words δουλεύω and ἔθνος.

²⁰³ Evans, “Messiahs,” 1:537. Evans identifies all of *Isa* 11:1–6, *Gen* 49:10, and *Num* 24:17 as particularly significant Old Testament passages used by later writers as messianic texts. *Isa* 11:1–6 is used in *Rom* 15:12; *Rev* 5:5; 4Q161; 4 *Ezra*; *Test. Levi* 18:7. Other texts that speak specifically of a restored Davidic monarchy include *Ezek* 34:23–24; 37:24–25; *Hos* 3:5; *Jer* 30:9; 33:17.

taken from the Septuagint's translation of Isaiah 11:4.²⁰⁴ This same phrase returns later in the psalm when we hear that the Messiah “will strike the earth with the word of his mouth” (*Ps. Sol.* 17:35). The psalmist adds “forever” to the end of that description in order to emphasize the everlasting reign of the Messiah. The language of Isaiah 11:1–4 continues in the eighteenth psalm's description of the Messiah,²⁰⁵ where he is presented as teaching the people of Israel in the ways of righteousness. Righteousness and justice are common traits of the idealized king in several prophetic portraits, both before and after the exile to Babylon. Isaiah 9:7 describes a time of “endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom” when the coming king (probably Hezekiah in the original context) “will establish and uphold [the kingdom] with justice (משפט) and righteousness (קדש) (Septuagint: κρίμα and δικαιοσύνη).”²⁰⁶ A similar theme emerges in Isaiah 16:4–5 where, after a time of judgment, “the oppressor is no more, and destruction has ceased... then a throne shall be established in steadfast love in the tent of David... a ruler who seeks justice (משפט) and is swift to do what is right (קדש) (Septuagint: κρίμα and δικαιοσύνη).” Isaiah 32:1 also envisions “a king [who] will reign in righteousness (קדש), and princes [who] will rule with justice (משפט) (Septuagint: δίκαιος and κρίσις).” Lest we think that this theme is found only in Isaiah, we find God's promise that he “will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice (משפט) and righteousness (קדש) in the land (Septuagint: κρίμα and δικαιοσύνη)” in Jeremiah 23:5 (cf. Jer 33:15).

These similarities between the messianic figure in the *Psalms of Solomon* and leadership figures from Israel's past, including Joshua and several royal figures in the books of Samuel and Kings demonstrate tremendous continuity with earlier biblical ideas. A leader who depends on

²⁰⁴ Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 54. ἐν λόγῳ στοματός αὐτοῦ in the *Psalms of Solomon* and τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ στοματός αὐτοῦ in Isaiah.

²⁰⁵ Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 54. The Lord's anointed is described in 18:7 as disciplining the Lord's people and is again described as having σοφία and ἰσχύος (wisdom and strength).

²⁰⁶ Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1–39* (WC; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 82.

the strength of YHWH in order to conquer his enemies and receive the promised inheritance is nothing new. This idea is quite compatible with traditional prophetic eschatology, which emphasizes a political, this-worldly resolution to Israel's problems, including a restoration from exile that would happen with the heavenly world remaining largely unchanged.²⁰⁷ The *Psalms of Solomon* simply do not show much evidence of the heavenly preoccupations so distinctive of apocalyptic eschatology. The authors of *Psalms of Solomon* 17–18 are concerned for the restoration of the Davidic monarchy (*Ps. Sol.* 17:21), the restoration of the people to holiness (*Ps. Sol.* 17:27), the restoration of Israel to its ancestral land (*Ps. Sol.* 17:28), and the restoration of Jerusalem as the center of worship (*Ps. Sol.* 17:30), but do not speak of a new heavenly order, do not speak of angelic or demonic forces, and do not speak of a means for the Messiah's followers to transcend death. The author of the seventeenth psalm does speak in somewhat dualistic terms, demonstrating that “the lawless one” of 17:11 is opposed to God, but does not give the impression that he is under demonic control, which is what one might expect from a writer with an apocalyptic worldview. In fact, if there is anyone that controls his behavior, it is YHWH, who earlier uses him to punish the Hasmoneans (*Ps. Sol.* 17:7–9). Both earthly and heavenly forces respond precisely as YHWH directs (*Ps. Sol.* 18:10–12),²⁰⁸ a theological perspective very similar to that present in the prophetic literature of the Hebrew Bible.

²⁰⁷ Aune, “Apocalypticism,” 47. For more detailed information on prophetic eschatology, see “Defining Eschatology” in chapter 2 above.

²⁰⁸ Atkinson, *An Intertextual Study of the Psalms of Solomon*, 382. Atkinson notes that *Ps. Sol.* 18:12 may, in fact, make reference to angels, describing them as servants (δούλων). This interpretation of “[The sun and moon] have not veered off their course except when God directed them by the command of his servants” is likely correct. But while it suggests a belief in the existence of angelic beings, it also emphasizes their absence from the eschatological scenes in the earlier psalms.

The Messiah Set in the Overall Eschatological Context of the *Psalms of Solomon*

All of the factors outlined above strongly suggest a prophetic worldview.²⁰⁹ But this conclusion is challenged when we understand the last two psalms as the climax and denouement of the whole collection. There is, for example, a possible allusion to earthly powers being mirrored by demonic forces in the psalmist's description of Pompey as "the dragon" (*Ps. Sol.* 2:25). This image is used somewhat frequently in other sources from this period to describe demonic forces,²¹⁰ and it is possible that the term is carrying those connotations here as well, although given that it is the only possible reference to demonic forces, this seems unlikely.²¹¹ That said, with regard to the earthly sphere, the *Psalms of Solomon* demonstrate the kind of dualism more characteristic of apocalyptic literature. There are two distinct groups that are described: the righteous (ὁσίοϛ) on the one hand (e.g., *Pss. Sol.* 2:36; 3:8; 4:6–8; 8:23; 8:34; 9:3; 10:6; 12:4–6; 13:10–12; 14:3; 14:10; 15:3–7; 17:6) and the sinners (ἀμαρτωλόϛ) on the other (e.g., *Pss. Sol.* 2:34–35; 3:9–12; 4:8; 12:6; 13:5–8; 14:6; 15:8–13; 16:2; 17:5), and while this may seem similar to earlier wisdom texts that frequently offer contrasts between opposing

²⁰⁹ Possibly against Franklyn, "The Cultic and Pious Climax," 13. Franklyn suggests that "an apocalyptic and messianic eschatology is intensifying as the national response to overwhelming and harsh punishment." It is obvious that the messianic ideas do not come until the last two psalms, but I do not see an intensification of apocalyptic themes in these last two poems. Franklyn does not give a detailed outline of apocalyptic themes in these poems and it seems possible (perhaps likely) that Franklyn is seeing the presence of a messiah as evidence of apocalyptic eschatology. As I have discussed above, a messianic figure can be present without an apocalyptic eschatology. That said, Franklyn is also reading the *Psalms of Solomon* as a whole rather than isolating these last two compositions, and it is much easier to see the messianic figure of these last two psalms as the climax of an apocalyptic eschatology when read in that context, as I will argue below.

²¹⁰ Adela Yarbro Collins, *The Combat Myth and the Book of Revelation* (HTRHDR 9; Missoula: Scholars, 1976), 57–58. Collins offers examples from Akkadian, Jewish, Ugaritic, Egyptian, and Greek mythology. One of the texts she mentions is 1QH 3:3–18, which was written and read in the same rough time period as the *Psalms of Solomon*.

²¹¹ Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord*, 36. Atkinson notes this possibility, but also notes that the image may depend on Ezekiel 32:2, which compares the Egyptian Pharaoh to a dragon (both passages use the Greek δράκων) in the midst of a larger oracle that tells of the Pharaoh's future unceremonious death (Ezek 32:1–16). Although it may not be necessary to choose only one of these two possibilities, the dependence on Ezekiel seems far more likely given that this is the only possible reference to demonic forces in the *Psalms of Solomon*.

pairs (e.g., the wise and the foolish in Prov 10:8, 14, 23), Franklyn distinguishes the dualism present in the *Psalms of Solomon* from these earlier texts by noting that the two groups often refer to specific groups of people in the *Psalms of Solomon* as opposed to the more general descriptions present in the older texts.²¹² Thus, while the dualism present in the *Psalms of Solomon* includes few, if any, references to a heavenly dualism, the earthly dualism present in the text seems to fit quite well in an apocalyptic eschatology.

Perhaps most striking is the stated belief in the eternal life of the righteous and the eternal punishment (or destruction) of the wicked (*Pss. Sol.* 2:31–32; 3:11–12; 13:11; 14:1–5; 15:10–13).²¹³ In a couple of instances, this belief in eternal life and eternal destruction is paired with the concept of a climactic “Day of Mercy” (ἡμέρα ἐλέους and variations, *Pss. Sol.* 14:9; 18:5, 9; the words “day” and “mercy” both also appear in *Ps. Sol.* 7:10 in an eschatological context, though the phrase itself is not used). Interestingly, this word combination does not occur in the Septuagint or the New Testament. The more common “Day of Judgment” (ἡμέρα κρίσεως, *Ps. Sol.* 15:12) is also used in the *Psalms of Solomon*,²¹⁴ and these phrases would seem to refer to the same anticipated day. This becomes clear when scenes of judgment are depicted without using the “Day of...” construction and include both the judgment of the wicked and mercy for the righteous. The best example of this is probably *Psalms of Solomon* 13:11–12,²¹⁵ but there are several others (*Pss. Sol.* 2:32–36; 4:24–25; 17:3). Significantly, God’s righteousness is

²¹² Franklyn, “The Cultic and Pious Climax,” 9.

²¹³ *Psalms of Solomon* 3:11–12, one of the clearest examples listed above, reads, “the destruction of sinners is forever, and they will not be remembered when God looks after the righteous. This is the fate of sinners forever; but those who fear the Lord shall rise up to eternal life, and their life shall be in the Lord’s light and it shall never end.”

²¹⁴ The phrase is used in Isa 34:8; Jdt 16:17.

²¹⁵ The text reads: “For the life of the righteous goes on forever, but sinners will be taken away to destruction, and no memory of them will ever be found again. May the Lord’s mercy be upon the devout, and may his mercy be to those who fear him.”

almost always described in connection with his judgments,²¹⁶ particularly important given the harsh circumstances from which these authors are writing.

That the day might be both described as a day of judgment and a day of mercy depends in large part on the psalmists' understanding of mercy. For many of these authors, God's discipline is one expression of mercy (*Pss. Sol.* 10:2–3; 16:14–15; 18:4–5).²¹⁷ In *Psalms of Solomon* 14:9–10 the author speaks of his enemies, saying “their inheritance is Hades and darkness and destruction and they will not be found on the day of mercy for the righteous” and of his own community saying, “the Lord's devout will inherit life with joy.”²¹⁸ The language in 15:12–13 is similar: “sinners will perish forever in the day of the Lord's judgment” but “those who fear the Lord will receive mercy on that day.”

The fifteenth psalm is particularly interesting because it also describes the marks of deliverance (τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπὶ δικαίους εἰς σωτηρίαν, *Ps. Sol.* 15:6) and destruction (τὸ σημεῖον τῆς ἀπωλείας ἐπὶ τοῦ μετώπου αὐτῶν, *Ps. Sol.* 15:9) on the righteous and wicked respectively, imagery that is used in some apocalyptic writings. This imagery is used, for example, in the much later (and clearly apocalyptic) book of Revelation, where the mark of the beast (χάραγμα, Rev 13:16) and the seal of the living God (σφραγίς, Rev 7:2) reflect the ultimate fate of two different groups of people. It is especially important to draw these

²¹⁶ Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous*, 135. Winninge states that “God's righteousness is always connected with his activity as judge, except perhaps in 9:4.” Winninge lists 2:10, 15, 18, 32; 4:24; 5:1; 8:8, 23–26; 9:2, 5; and 10:5 as examples of this phenomenon. Given the proximity of 9:4 to some of these verses, Winninge's qualification about that verse seems entirely unnecessary. There is also a connection between the righteousness of God and the judgments of God in *Ps. Sol.* 3:3. The possible exception I would identify is *Ps. Sol.* 3:5, which states “ἐδικαίωσεν τὸν κύριον” or “He pronounced the Lord righteous” without any direct connection to mercy or judgment.

²¹⁷ Atkinson, “Theodicy in the Psalms of Solomon,” 565.

²¹⁸ I have done my own translations in this paragraph because the word I have translated “inheritance” (κληρονομία) is significant, but gets obscured in Wright's translations, which read “there is reserved for them the world of the dead...” and “a happy life is reserved...” Foerster and Herrmann, “Κληρονόμος,” *TDNT* 3:767–785 demonstrate that κληρονομία is used to refer both to an extension of the Abrahamic promise of land to include the whole world (e.g., *Jub* 22:14–15) and to refer to life beyond death (*I En* 40:9) in literature of the Second Temple period. Both of these ideas are also articulated in the *Psalms of Solomon*.

connections because the deliverance (σωτηρία) described in *Psalm of Solomon* 15:6 might otherwise be understood to have “no special relation... to judgment in the hereafter,”²¹⁹ and while it is true that the writers of the *Psalms of Solomon* expect some form of deliverance in the present life, as has been demonstrated above, there is also some sense of the life hereafter. It might be difficult to make the case that this is in view here if we were to read *Psalm of Solomon* 15 in isolation, but the intertextual evidence discussed below combined with the overall eschatological perspective of the collection suggests that the deliverance here has both realized and future eschatological applications.

There was a widespread understanding in Second Temple Judaism that YHWH, like earthly kings, had a seal.²²⁰ To be marked with this seal was a clear indication of divine protection and deliverance.²²¹ While the text of *Psalm of Solomon* 15 uses the word sign (σημείον) instead of seal (σφραγίς), this theological motif is stated explicitly there as “famine, sword, and death shall be far from the righteous” (*Ps. Sol.* 15:7). This is somewhat similar to the book of Revelation where supernatural locusts are commanded to torture all of humanity, excepting only those with the seal (σφραγίς) of God on their foreheads (*Rev* 9:1–11).²²²

This use of the mark of God’s deliverance in a judgment scene is likely derived at least in part from the book of Ezekiel, where the linguistic parallel is even clearer. In Ezekiel 9, an avenging angel walks through the streets of Jerusalem killing everyone who is not marked with God’s sign (LXX: σημεῖον, *Ezek* 9:4–6). In that context, the wrath of God has arisen because of

²¹⁹ Foerster and Fohrer, “Σώζω,” *TDNT* 7:965–1024 (1985).

²²⁰ David Aune, *Revelation 6–16* (WBC 52B; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 453. Some examples of God’s mark or seal being used include 4 *Ezra* 6:5; *T. Moses* 12:9; and *CD* 19:12.

²²¹ G.K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 409.

²²² It is interesting that, in both cases, although the mark is able to protect the people from God’s punishment, it is not able to protect them from human (and demonic) persecutors who have been granted authority by God (e.g., *Ps. Sol.* 2:22; *Rev* 13:7).

cultic sins and injustices,²²³ a clear parallel to the situation of the writers of the *Psalms of Solomon*. The author of *Psalm of Solomon* 15, it seems, may be making reference to this entire storyline and not just the idea of a divine mark: the opponents of the psalmist will be destroyed for their cultic sins in the Day of Judgment just as those responsible for worship in the Temple were destroyed for their unfaithfulness in Israel's past.

Of course, both Ezekiel and the *Psalms of Solomon* are drawing on previous instances of God using a mark to designate deliverance for some while others are judged. The most famous reference is no doubt to the Passover story in the book of Exodus. In Exodus 12, the people are to mark their doorposts with blood before the plague of the firstborn is unleashed; this is described as being a “sign” (LXX: σημεῖον, Exod 12:13) for the avenging angel that the inhabitants should be protected. Both Ezekiel and the *Psalms of Solomon* have modified the story so that a small group of faithful worshippers is playing the role of God's protected people, while the rest of Israel plays the role of Egypt as the object of God's wrath, and at least in the *Psalms of Solomon*, the persecutors of the righteous. The connection between Ezekiel and Exodus is strengthened by a verbal parallel as the Hebrew root עבר is used in both instances (Exod 12:23 and Ezek 9:4): just as YHWH passed through Egypt and spared only those with God's mark of protection on their homes, so also are YHWH's angels to pass through Jerusalem in Ezekiel, sparing only those with God's protective mark.²²⁴ Although the same linguistic parallel about passing over or through is not present in *Psalm of Solomon* 15, the poem does conclude with those who lack God's mark “perish[ing] forever” (*Ps. Sol.* 15:12) while “those fearing the Lord... live on in their God's mercy” (*Ps. Sol.* 15:13).

²²³ Leslie Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19* (WBC 28; Dallas: Word, 1994), 150.

²²⁴ William Brownlee, *Ezekiel 1–19* (WBC 28; Waco: Word, 1986), 144.

I mentioned above that the eternal life of the righteous and the eternal punishment (or destruction) of the wicked (*Pss. Sol.* 2:31–32; 3:11–12; 13:11; 14:1–5; 15:10–13) can be found in several poems in the collection. But can we be more specific about what form that life after death might take? Mikael Winninge suggests resurrection,²²⁵ and while resurrection was the traditional hope of several Jewish groups during the Second Temple period, there does not seem to be enough evidence to justify that kind of specific claim in this particular text. On the basis of some similarities between *Psalm of Solomon 2* and some texts from Qumran (especially 4Q491 and 1QH), Kenneth Atkinson argues for a realized eschatology in which “the psalmist is apparently confident that he has experienced on earth some of the rewards that the righteous look forward to in the afterlife.”²²⁶ The transcendence of death seems to be an important theme, especially in the latter half of the collection,²²⁷ so at first blush it is somewhat surprising that psalms seventeen and eighteen do not offer any clear examples. The events described in psalms two and eight are earlier than those described in psalm seventeen; it is plausible that the psalms are organized in some semblance of chronological order and that the idea of a messianic figure appeared later, possibly even as a response to the growing helplessness of the psalmist’s community. So why omit the eternal punishment of the wicked and eternal life of the righteous, given that the context of the chapter is one of judgment? One possible answer is the genre of these last two psalms, which are both national psalms.²²⁸ Almost all of the references to individual life beyond death in the *Psalms of Solomon* occur instead in the individual psalms, making the lack of reference to

²²⁵ Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous*, 178.

²²⁶ Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord*, 49–52.

²²⁷ Franklyn, “The Cultic and Pious Climax,” 11. Franklyn describes the increase in references to eternal life in the latter half of the collection as “a subtle yet intentional climax of eschatological reflection which moves from the very vague hints of eternal bliss in [3:11–12] toward a more detailed presentation of eternal life and inevitable destruction of individuals in psalms 13–15.” Franklyn actually makes reference to 3:16 in the above quotation, but with only twelve verses, this is clearly an error, so I have modified the quotation to what seems most likely.

²²⁸ Franklyn, “The Cultic and Pious Climax,” 4–5.

individual life beyond death in these closing national psalms somewhat less surprising. This also helps to explain why the redactor did not add it to the text so that this theme might be present. If the redactor's community read and understood these psalms together, an added reference to individual life beyond death would have been even more unnecessary since that idea appears relatively frequently already. Further, when understood as part of a larger whole, the idea of individual life beyond death is somewhat less absent. The reference in *Psalms of Solomon* 2:32 to a time of judgment also speaks to a new reality that will be brought about in the future. That future is being described in the last two psalms. It is likely that the time of judgment mentioned in *Psalms of Solomon* 2 corresponds to the judgment imposed by YHWH through his anointed Davidic king. This interpretation is buoyed by *Psalms of Solomon* 18:5 which describes "the blessed day of mercy, the appointed day for the appearance of his Messiah." The only two figures described as sitting in judgment are YHWH (*Pss. Sol.* 2:32; 4:24; 8:3; 8:24–26; 9:2; 10:5; 17:4) and his Davidic king (*Ps. Sol.* 17:26, 29, 43).²²⁹ Given that many of the earlier judgment scenes involve life beyond death, it seems fair to say that, when read as a whole, the theme of life beyond death is much more present in these messianic passages.

So what is the role of the Messiah for the authors of the *Psalms of Solomon*? He will come as a Davidic monarch on the Day of Mercy/Judgment to discipline the righteous so that they might be restored to their appropriate position under the rule of YHWH with a decisive victory over their enemies that will include the ingathering of the exiles in the penultimate period of history; the result will be an everlasting theocratic peace.

²²⁹ This also helps to establish the messianic status of the Davidic king. He is both called "anointed" and functions in ways that had previously only been ascribed to God, both righteous judge and righteous king.

Chapter Four: A Comparison with Presentations of the Messiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Septuagint

The Messiah at Qumran

Does the picture of the Messiah presented in the *Psalms of Solomon* resemble the other literature that contains a messianic hope written around the same time? If so, we might be able to speak of a more unified messianic hope in Second Temple Judaism, which would be very significant. If not, it will be useful to see the ways that the presentation in the *Psalms of Solomon* differs from that of other writings.

The Dead Sea Scrolls are a valuable resource for comparison because several of the scrolls were written at about the same time as the *Psalms of Solomon*; because they provide examples of messianic interpretations that sometimes—albeit infrequently—use the word משיח; and because several of the penitential prayers found in the Dead Sea Scrolls are literarily similar to the *Psalms of Solomon*.²³⁰ Some of the documents from Qumran also express similar sentiments toward the Temple priesthood as the *Psalms of Solomon*, offering similar criticisms and making reference to the same historical events.²³¹ The language used, however, is different. In the

²³⁰ Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord*, 7.

²³¹ Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief*, 182–3. Examples include 1QpHab 12:8, which condemns the “wicked priest” for defiling the Temple; CD 5:6–9, which condemns the priests for their sexual practices; and CD 6:15–16, which accuses the priests in the Temple of acquiring wealth dishonestly. Sanders also mentions two relevant texts that are not found in Qumran in the *Testament of Moses* 6:1, which “accused the Hasmonean priest/kings of performing ‘great impiety in the Holy of Holies’” and the *Testament of Levi* 14:5, which accuses a

Damascus Document, the priests are understood as being under the influence of evil, supernatural forces, namely Belial (CD 4:15–18),²³² an otherworldly emphasis that is much more typical of an apocalyptic worldview than what is found in the *Psalms of Solomon*.

While the Dead Sea Scrolls are an important source of messianic thought, it is important to note that there are actually very few instances in which messianic figures feature in the Qumran texts, and that those texts that do carry messianic connotations are do not contain a uniform presentation of the Messiah. Thus, it is difficult to come to firm conclusions about “what the Qumran community believed,” especially given the fact that some of these texts may have been written elsewhere.²³³ It is thus preferable to discuss the beliefs present in each individual text rather than assuming they come together to form a coherent whole while also making note of the common themes.

The texts at Qumran provide us with an example of how narrowing the discussion of messianic figures to the use of the term משיח does an incredible disservice. Messianism at Qumran cannot be understood through a simple study of the texts using the term משיח. As will

group of priests of thievery and sexual impropriety. Sanders does not mention 1QpHab 9:4–6, which makes reference to the priests of Jerusalem being given over to the Romans because of their dishonest accumulation of wealth, another possible reference to the supporters of Aristobulus II. He also does not mention 4QpNah Frag. 3–4 Col. IV 2–4. Shani L. Berrin, *The Peshet Nahum Scroll from Qumran: An Exegetical Study of 4Q169* (vol. 53 of *Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah* ed. Florentino García Martínez; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 268–71 highlights the most relevant section of this passage, which reads, “his women, his infants and his children will go into captivity, his warriors and his nobles by the sword.” Berrin suggests that the author of this passage is referring to Pompey’s defeat of Aristobulus II. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 54–55 mentions another text that Sanders does not highlight that was probably written during this period and which takes a decidedly negative view of the Temple establishment in *1 Enoch* 12–16. Nickelsburg writes that “the description of the heavenly rebellion in chap. 14 seems to reflect a concern about the cultic defilement of the priesthood due to sexual impropriety” (54). Nickelsburg does not explicitly state which rulers the author may have in mind, and given the complications around dating this document, that is probably wise. That said, it is possible to be confident that the book was written in the post-exilic period, and that the Greek translation probably took place around the turn of the era (14). That the translation took place at this time suggests that the book was quite popular, and given the reading practice surrounding apocalyptic works (i.e. that they contain a message relevant to the situation of the present reader), it is likely that these passages would have been read as a polemic against the Temple establishment present in the first century BCE.

²³² Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord*, 67. The specific sins get a significant amount of attention in this book; they are outlined in CD 4:15–5:15.

²³³ William M. Schniedewind, “Structural Aspects of Qumran Messianism in the Damascus Document,” in *The Provo International Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls: Technological Innovations, New Texts, and Reformulated Issues* (eds. Donald W. Perry and Eugene Ulrich; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 523–36.

become apparent, one must instead focus on the overall theology present in each writing, without, of course, neglecting the importance of the aforementioned term.

It seems best to begin with commonalities in the presentation of the Messiah. Interestingly, where there is commonality among the scrolls, there tends to be commonality between the scrolls and the *Psalms of Solomon*. Perhaps most notable is the fact that the Messiah is usually presented in the scrolls as achieving his purposes using violence.²³⁴ Other similarities include a connection to the Davidic promise of a king who would rule on the throne of Israel forever,²³⁵ the conviction that a messianic figure would feature prominently to establish an earthly kingdom,²³⁶ and the belief that God would be the one who is ultimately in control of this radical political shift.²³⁷

But the similarity between the scrolls and the *Psalms of Solomon* is not always obvious. One example where the presentation is disputed is the use of the term משיח in the reconstructed text of the Damascus Document.²³⁸ Joseph Baumgarten, looking closely at the evidence provided by 4Q266, suggests that there is one singular Messiah of Aaron and Israel who is tasked with

²³⁴ Atkinson, *An Intertextual Study of the Psalms of Solomon*, 368. Atkinson identifies 4Q252, 4Q174, 4Q161, 4Q285, and 4Q246 as texts that contain a violent messianic figure. I think it is reasonable to suggest that four of these texts are good examples. 4Q246, however, is more likely a reference to a villainous figure than it is to a messianic figure in the first half of the text, and the second half does not seem to refer to an individual messianic figure. See Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 346. Specific examples from the other four texts include 11Q14 1:4 (this is the same text as 4Q285 but includes some different material) and 4Q161 3:21. Atkinson suggests that “it is likely that Herod’s assumption to the throne was the primary impetus for [the development of a violent messianic figure]” (376), but just a few sentences later says that “the Davidic messiah is a righteous counterpart to the Herodian or non-Davidic Hasmonean rulers” (376). This second sentence suggests that belief in a violent messianic figure was at least developing during the rule of the Hasmoneans.

²³⁵ Atkinson, *An Intertextual Study of the Psalms of Solomon*, 369, e.g., 4Q252 5:1–5; 4Q174 3:10–13; 11Q14 1:1–6.

²³⁶ Atkinson, *An Intertextual Study of the Psalms of Solomon*, 373, e.g., 4Q161 3:18; 4Q174 3:3–7.

²³⁷ Atkinson, *An Intertextual Study of the Psalms of Solomon*, 373, e.g., 4Q161 3:20–24; 11Q14 2:9–10.

²³⁸ Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (Allen Lane: Penguin, 1997), 145; Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 1996, 76. The word משיח is only partially present in CD 14:19, but this word is used in both translations cited above, and is widely accepted as an accurate reconstruction.

forgiving the sins of the people.²³⁹ Baumgarten goes on to demonstrate that there are other instances in the Qumran literature when an intermediary is assigned a task normally reserved for God.²⁴⁰ Here, then, we may have another commonality between one of the distinctive characteristics of a messianic figure found in one of the Scrolls and that found in the *Psalms of Solomon*.²⁴¹ If Baumgarten's interpretation of 4Q266 is correct it would lend credence to the idea that there is actually only one messiah present in the Damascus Document,²⁴² and that this one messiah shares certain important characteristics with the messianic figure in the *Psalms of Solomon*.

Hermann Lichtenberger, among others,²⁴³ interprets 4Q266 differently, suggesting that there are two distinct messiahs. This interpretation of the text is buttressed by an understanding of shared leadership that may be present in the book of Zechariah.²⁴⁴ In some Qumran texts, it seems to Lichtenberger, the priestly messianic figure is prioritized over the kingly messiah of

²³⁹ Joseph M. Baumgarten, "Messianic Forgiveness of Sin in CD 14:19," in *The Provo International Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls: Technological Innovations, New Tests, and Reformulated Issues* (eds. Donald W. Perry and Eugene Ulrich; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 537–44. This suggestion is similar to the presentation of Jesus in the gospels. When Jesus forgives the sins of the people, his testimony is described by the Pharisees as blasphemous (Mark 2:7). While it is true that what may have been blasphemy to the Pharisees was not to the Qumran community, this similarity in the messianic understanding between the synoptic and the Qumran traditions merits attention.

²⁴⁰ Baumgarten, "Messianic Forgiveness," 540. One example that Baumgarten uses is 11QMelech 2:7–8 where Melchizedek is presented as forgiving the sins of the people, an act normally reserved for God.

²⁴¹ The anointed one is described as ruling righteously as both judge and king (*Ps. Sol.* 17:28, 31, 48).

²⁴² The rationale is that the word משיח is the subject of the verb. Because the verb is singular it would then follow that there is only one messiah present. The word order here is slightly unusual as the subject would then appear before the verb, but this is not altogether uncommon if one is trying to emphasize the subject. Baumgarten assumes that if his reconstruction is correct there is only one messiah involved in the forgiveness of sin, and therefore only one messiah.

²⁴³ Craig A. Evans and Peter W. Flint, "Introduction," in *Eschatology, Messianism and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (eds. Craig A. Evans and Peter W. Flint; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 1–9. In addition to this text Evans and Flint also speak of another text that puts 'messiah' in the plural (1QS 9:11) as well as looking at 1QSa 2:11–21 where it seems intuitive to understand the structure of the community as a joint rule shared by the priestly Aaronic messiah and the kingly Davidic messiah.

²⁴⁴ Collins, "The Eschatology of Zechariah," 80–81. Collins describes the government envisioned by Zechariah as a "diarchy" that would see leadership divided between high priest and king. Pomykala, *The Davidic Dynasty Tradition in Early Judaism*, 56 agrees, suggesting that the role of the king is intentionally diminished in favor of this new two-person system, which if anything, emphasizes the role of the high priest.

Israel.²⁴⁵ While he is in agreement with the idea of two messiahs, Schniedewind argues that the leadership between the messianic priest and king is held in a balanced fashion.²⁴⁶ It seems, then, that the text is open to a variety of theological interpretations. For this reason, it may be helpful to turn to the theology present in some of the other scrolls for guidance.²⁴⁷ 1QS 9:11 uses a plural noun to describe a messiah and 1QSa 2:11–21 speaks of a meal where it again appears that there are two messiahs, with the kingly messiah subordinate to the priestly messiah.²⁴⁸ The historical context of the scrolls may also help to give insight. These scrolls were written and read during a time of significant change in the priesthood. The ongoing process of Hellenization in Jerusalem led to several different cycles of reform, many of which were quite radical.²⁴⁹ In this case, the general separation of the two figures may be emphasized because of animosity toward the Hasmoneans who had combined the two offices of priest and king under their rule. The casting of two messiahs instead of one then makes more sense: both the corrupt Hasmonean kingly court, and the corrupt calendar of the Temple court needed to be redeemed, and as such, both needed a messianic figure.

Another important and potentially messianic title in the scrolls is צמח דוד.²⁵⁰ The “branch of David” is identified with the image of the “stump of Jesse” from Isaiah 11 to describe a coming king in several Qumran texts written around the time of the *Psalms of Solomon*.²⁵¹ The Wisdom of Ben Sira also extends the promise to David of an everlasting kingly line and applies

²⁴⁵ Hermann Lichtenberger, “Messianic Expectations,” 14. Lichtenberger mentions the use of Zechariah 4:14 as a source text that describes two anointed figures.

²⁴⁶ Schniedewind, “Structural Aspects,” 527.

²⁴⁷ Uniformity of the theology of the Qumran writings should not be expected, but there are often similarities and when the interpretation of a fragmentary text is disputed, it seems reasonable to pursue others texts used by the community for help, especially if those texts are generally agreed to be sectarian.

²⁴⁸ Lichtenberger, “Messianic Expectations,” 14. Lichtenberger interprets the passage in this way because the priestly messiah is the first to stretch out his hand for the bread and is then followed in this action by the kingly messiah.

²⁴⁹ Boccaccini, *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism*, 157.

²⁵⁰ M.G. Abegg Jr, “צמח,” *NIDOTTE* 3:815–7. The phrase is used in Jer 23:5, 33:15; Zech 3:8; 6:12 as well as at Qumran in 4Q174 and 4Q285.

²⁵¹ Atkinson, “Herodian Origin,” 449. These texts include 4Q161, 4Q285, 4Q252, 4Q174.

it to Aaron: just as David would always have a son to sit on the throne, so Aaron would always have a son in the office of High Priest.²⁵² *4QFlorilegium* 10–12 uses Ben Sira and 2 Samuel 7 to describe the “Branch of David” and the “Interpreter of the Law”. These two figures are distinct but will rise up together to fulfill the promises of God,²⁵³ and deliver God’s people. The emphasis of the Qumran community seems to be similar in some respects to that of the *Psalms of Solomon*—both texts are expecting a Davidic Messiah to return and conquer by the power of God²⁵⁴—but the traditions differ significantly because of the presence of a messianic high priest in the Qumran texts.

The “Branch of David” is later used in *4QFlorilegium* to refer to a messianic king, following in the tradition of Jeremiah 33:15–18, which conflates this phrase with the promise made to David in 2 Samuel 7: David would always have someone to sit on the throne of Israel.²⁵⁵ The “Branch of David” may not, however, refer to a final messianic figure. 4Q252 uses the phrase משיח הצדק צמח דוד, which seems like an ideal phrase to describe a coming messiah, especially when the phrase is used to refer to a king sitting on the throne of David, as it is here. But it is important to note that the covenant that is promised to this anointed figure is promised not only to him, but also to his seed. What is being reflected in 4Q252, then, is a figure concerned with the reestablishment of a continuous Davidic reign on an earthly throne,²⁵⁶ the same earthly, restorative focus as was found in the *Psalms of Solomon*. 4Q252 does seem to see this future existence as the final future existence of the community—the Messiah will come in the

²⁵² Schniedewind, “Structural Aspects,” 528. This is based on the promise of God through Samuel in 1 Sam 2:35.

²⁵³ Schniedewind, “Structural Aspects,” 528.

²⁵⁴ Atkinson, “Herodian Origin,” 458.

²⁵⁵ Schniedewind, “Structural Aspects,” 528.

²⁵⁶ Gerbern S. Oegema, “Tradition-Historical Studies on 4Q252,” in *Qumran-Messianism: Studies on the Messianic Expectations in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (eds. James H. Charlesworth, Hermann Lichtenberger and Gerbern S. Oegema; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1998), 154–74.

penultimate period of history²⁵⁷—but its earthly focus suggests that the eschatology present here remains political even if it is apocalyptic. The expectation is for the Messiah to come to restore the Davidic line using violence as a tool, and to usher in an era of justice,²⁵⁸ but not to reign forever. Psalm 2, which almost certainly dates to the time of the monarchy,²⁵⁹ also refers to the king as being the משיח יהוה. As was discussed above, royal psalms like this one have exerted influence throughout the development of messianic thought; they are central in the time of the monarchy, serve as a base for post-exilic prophecy, and are used extensively in the *Psalms of Solomon*. We now find them used in the Qumran corpus as well.

And so the question arises: do the texts present in the Qumran community have a different understanding of the kingly messiah's place in their eschatological framework than the *Psalms of Solomon*? There are, after all, many similarities. Both make reference to David, a king who led out an army and was promised that his seed would reign forever, as the model for the coming Messiah who will again lead an army and reign under the same earthly covenant as that given to David. In this way, both the texts at Qumran and the *Psalms of Solomon* are explicitly political.

Scholarship widely considers the community apocalyptic since many of their ideas are built on apocalyptic themes.²⁶⁰ The community believes that it is living in the “end of days” prior

²⁵⁷ Oegema, “Tradition,” 168.

²⁵⁸ Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 67.

²⁵⁹ Collins, *Apocalypticism*, 92.

²⁶⁰ Although the community probably did not write any apocalypses, the apocalyptic literature that it possessed (Daniel and *1 Enoch* for example) exerted a tremendous amount of influence on the way the community lived. Why, then, did the Qumran community not write apocalypses itself? One plausible answer is that the authority for apocalyptic texts resides in the pseudonymous author, whereas authority for the Qumran community resides in the Teacher of Righteousness and his successors. The lack of apocalypses may well be a function of the fact that the whole community believed that it was in constant encounter with the divine, and so it had no need to couch its interpretations in a pseudonym. There may, however, be a deeper reason the Qumran community did not actually write apocalypses. The author of the Community Rule says that his eyes have gazed on that which is eternal (1QS 11:5) but he does not go on to explain what he sees, assuming that his readers will understand him. While the apocalypses are filled with mystery, it seems that the sect at Qumran believed that they were in the midst of an intimate encounter with the divine and that things were being made plain to them.

to God's breaking into history and saving his chosen people.²⁶¹ They believe themselves to be that chosen people of God and understand history in dualistic terms (as a battle between the sons of Light and the sons of Darkness) until a final eschatological battle when God will intervene in human history and deliver the righteous.²⁶² God's plan of salvation, laid down from the very beginning, is seen as climaxing in this community²⁶³ as they persevere through the unjust rule of the Romans.²⁶⁴ God is going to help his chosen people claim victory in war so that his Messiah might rule over a time of peace on a restored earth. This picture is very similar to what we have seen in the *Psalms of Solomon*.

The transcendence of individual death is another point of theological connection between the Qumran scrolls and the *Psalms of Solomon*, although it is important to note that the Qumran community seems to hold a more realized understanding of that transcendence. Not only did the community believe in a future hope of transcendence, they also seem to indicate that they had indeed already transcended death (1QH 3:19–23) and that angels were present with them (1QSa 2:3–11; 1QM 7:4–6).²⁶⁵ Although the *Psalms of Solomon* do suggest that individuals can transcend death, the emphasis on heavenly beings simply is not present in the *Psalms of Solomon*, and the eschatology of the *Psalms of Solomon* is decidedly future-oriented as compared to the more realized eschatology found in some of the scrolls.

²⁶¹ Collins, *Apocalypticism*, 56.

²⁶² Collins, *Apocalypticism*, 56. The best example of this is probably the War Scroll (1QM), especially the first column which describes the struggle between the sons of light and the sons of darkness.

²⁶³ James H. Charlesworth, *The Pesharim and Qumran History: Chaos or Consensus?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 15.

²⁶⁴ Charlesworth, *Pesharim*, 7. The kingdom is not fully realized in their presence because the reign of God has not yet been made complete. They are still forced to deal with the unjust rule of the Kittim (Romans), instead of being free to live in the land that God has already promised them.

²⁶⁵ Collins, "Apocalyptic Eschatology," 39.

Messianic Ideas in the Septuagint

While there are not many primary texts that can be clearly dated to the first and second centuries BCE that give further evidence of messianic interpretation of texts from the pre-exilic, exilic, and post-exilic periods, some scholars see messianic thought present in the Septuagint. If this is the case, it is of particular interest for this study because there are examples “where the Greek text of the *Psalms of Solomon* shows a connection to original interpretations in the Septuagint.”²⁶⁶ The translators of the Septuagint were not generally free to invent passages out of whole cloth, but they were constantly making decisions about how to bring difficult Hebrew passages into Greek. When the passages offer a plurality of possible interpretations, it is possible for the interpretive biases of the translator to result in a messianic interpretation becoming clear in the Greek text when it is far from clear in the Hebrew.

If these kinds of messianic interpretations are present in the Septuagint, it would be especially significant because that would enlarge the geographical footprint of messianic thought during the Second Temple period. The *Psalms of Solomon* and the Dead Sea Scrolls were likely composed in Palestine, and as I have articulated above, were likely composed in response to a particular political situation involving the rise of the Hasmonean dynasty. The Septuagint, by contrast, was likely composed in Alexandria where the rise of the Hasmoneans in Jerusalem was much less significant politically. If there is, in fact, a significant amount of new messianic thought expressed in the Septuagint, its presence in this very different social context must also be

²⁶⁶ Joosten, “Reflections on the Original Language,” 38. Joosten offers two clear examples comparing *Ps. Sol.* 8:29 with Hos 5:2 and *Ps. Sol.* 8:23 with Mic 5:6. These connections could be possible even with a Hebrew original, though Joosten uses them as evidence for his argument that a Greek original is more likely. Atkinson, “Responses,” 177–79, for example, recognizes the difficulties Joosten has raised about the original language of composition, but suggests that it is better explained by recognizing that the text has changed over time, bringing the Greek text as we have it today in line with the Septuagint over a long period of transmission (177–79).

explained.²⁶⁷ In his discussion of the Septuagint text of Isaiah, Arie van der Kooij suggests that the translation “was made by Jewish scholars who [flew] from Jerusalem and took refuge in Egypt” during the first half of the second century BCE.²⁶⁸ His thesis provides at least one broad possible connection between the ancestors of the community of the *Psalms of Solomon* and those who created the Septuagint of Isaiah while also providing some rationale for the presence of messianic themes in some of the Septuagint texts themselves. But even if van der Kooij’s thesis is correct for the book Isaiah, it is also true that many Greek manuscripts existed prior to the Septuagint text becoming more standardized and that these “var[ied] considerably as regards both time and place of origin.”²⁶⁹ These older traditions were sometimes incorporated and sometimes ignored by the text that was “eventually... declared to be the only authentic one.”²⁷⁰ This reality makes it very difficult to come to firm conclusions about the origin of individual texts (as van der Kooij attempts), but it also offers a rationale for both wide differences in the theological perspective evinced in the texts as well as offering “every possible feature peculiar to a translation... from the closest adherence to the original Hebrew to the freest possible translation.”²⁷¹

²⁶⁷ Heinz-Joseph Fabry, “Messianism in the Septuagint,” in *Septuagint Research: Issues and Challenges in the Study of the Greek Jewish Scriptures* (ed. Wolfgang Kraus and R. Glenn Wooden; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 193–205. Fabry does find significant messianic development in the Septuagint and suggests that “the messianisms of the Septuagint do not articulate discontent with the political system in the Egyptian-Jewish communities, [but rather] are to be seen as the result of a creative interaction between the traditional Jewish faith and Hellenistic philosophy” (204). Fabry does not spend enough time developing this argument for me to find his suggestion compelling, but the underlying point that the Alexandrian context must be considered is sound.

²⁶⁸ Arie van der Kooij, “Isaiah in the Septuagint” in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah* (VTSup 70; ed. Craig C. Broyles and Craig A. Evans; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 513–29 (528).

²⁶⁹ Isaac Leo Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah and Cognate Studies* (FAT 40; ed. Robert Hanhart and Hermann Spieckermann; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 125.

²⁷⁰ Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 125.

²⁷¹ Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 126.

So are there any of these interpretive translations that favor a messianic understanding present in the Septuagint? Some scholars offer a resounding “yes” to that question,²⁷² but the answer is likely somewhat more complicated. One of the complications present when trying to identify messianic interpretations in ancient translations is establishing the text from which the ancient translator was working. In some instances a Septuagintal departure from the Masoretic Text may reflect a translator working from a different version, and many important messianic passages have significant textual issues.²⁷³ Sometimes these textual issues may not reflect a different version, but when this is the case, the Septuagint translator himself is likely often working with a text that he finds difficult to understand. It is exactly these instances that may lead to a more interpretive translation. But in order to determine whether or not an interpretive translation is messianic, it is important to know the level at which the translator is thinking. The translator may be working at the sentence level, the clause level or the morpheme level, and one’s understanding of the translator’s approach should make a significant contribution to one’s interpretation of the translator’s work.²⁷⁴ That said, it is important to recognize that, even if a translator is mostly conscious of translating at the morpheme or clause level, his theological presuppositions will still influence his work.²⁷⁵

²⁷² J. Schaper, “Messianism in the Septuagint of Isaiah and Messianic Intertextuality in the Greek Bible,” in *The Septuagint and Messianism* (BETL 195; ed. M.A. Knibb; Leuven: Peeters Press, 2006), 371–80. Schaper argues that there exists “a wider system of what one may call messianic intertextuality within the whole of the Septuagint” (372).

²⁷³ J. Lust, “Messianism and the Greek Psalter: In Search of the Messiah,” in *Messianism and the Septuagint: Collected Essays* (ed. K Hauspie; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2004), 9–26 (13–14). Lust identifies Numbers 24:7, 17 and Amos 4:3 as examples complicating a decision on the translator’s theology.

²⁷⁴ A. Pietersma, “Messianism and the Greek Psalter: In Search of the Messiah,” in *Messianism and the Septuagint: Collected Essays* (ed. K Hauspie; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2004), 49–75 (69). James Barr, *The Typology of Literalism in Ancient Biblical Translation* (MSU 15; Göttingen; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 291. Barr, writing earlier than Pietersma, makes a distinction between the syntactic element of interpretation and the higher levels of making meaning (e.g. theological interpretation). Pietersma takes this point further by distinguishing between different levels of syntactic interpretation.

²⁷⁵ Rodrigo Franklin De Sousa, *Eschatology and Messianism in LXX Isaiah 1–12* (LHB/OTS 516; New York: T&T Clark International, 2010), 31. De Sousa states that “one needs to make clear that the ‘higher’

Another complication for modern readers is in knowing which texts later became important for Jewish messianism in the centuries following the creation of the Septuagint. Even where the Septuagint makes a messianic interpretation more plausible, it can be difficult to demonstrate that this was the translator's intent rather than an unwitting move in a messianic direction that later messianic interpreters discovered.²⁷⁶ This is further complicated by the fact that the Septuagint was transmitted in later centuries mostly by Christians who sometimes introduced messianic interpretations during the transmission of the text that were not present in the original translation.²⁷⁷

I will argue below that there are, in fact, some instances of messianic interpretation in the Septuagint that are significantly similar to the messianic interpretations found in the *Psalms of Solomon*, even though it must be acknowledged that there are also many passages for which the Septuagint translators could have offered a messianic interpretation but decided against it, and still others where a messianic interpretation is actually weakened in the Septuagint.²⁷⁸ Since it is quite likely that the Septuagint had a variety of translators with sometimes differing theological

(contextual) level of interpretation does not occur as a successive stage to the first but lies behind it all the way, informing and shaping the comprehension of linguistic structures at the basic level.”

²⁷⁶ Pietersma, “Messianism and the Greek Psalter,” 52. Pietersma makes a distinction between the text “as produced” and the text “as received” (75). This distinction is important, and while Pietersma does not say it directly, he also rightly assumes that it is important to recognize that these distinctions are sometimes fuzzy. When a source text is changed by a subsequent redactor, the one receiving the text is then also engaging in an act of production for the next receiver.

²⁷⁷ J. Lust, “Le messianisme et la Septante d’Ézéchiel,” in *Messianism and the Septuagint: Collected Essays* (ed. K Hauspie; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2004), 27–40 (30). Lust gives a section of Justin Martyr’s *Dialogue with Trypho* as an example of this phenomenon. Therein, Justin points to a Greek version of Psalm 96:10, which reads “Say among the nations, ‘The LORD reigns from the wood’” and accuses Jewish scribes of removing the phrase, “from the wood” from the text. In fact, that phrase is present in neither the Hebrew Bible nor the Greek versions that have come down from antiquity, which suggests that this was a later Christian addition to some manuscripts.

²⁷⁸ Lust, “Messianism and Septuagint,” 10–11. For Lust, this is especially true of the decision to offer collective (national) rather than individual (messianic) interpretations in the Septuagint version of several different texts (e.g., Isa 4:2, 49:1–6; Mic 5:2; Ps 89:4).

perspectives,²⁷⁹ it seems likely that some Septuagint translators had a messianic bias while others did not, a state of affairs that mirrors the theological diversity of the late Second Temple period.

So is there a Septuagint text that offers a relatively clear messianic translation? I think that there are several, but one text that does so in a reasonably clear manner is Genesis 3:15. In this text, the Hebrew phrase *הוא ישופך ראש* is translated quite woodenly into the Greek as *αὐτός σου τηρήσει κεφαλήν*. In Hebrew, the masculine singular pronoun is used, but the clear antecedent of *הוא* is the word for “seed,” which should be understood as a collective noun referring to the descendants of Eve. The Septuagint translator has decided to bring that word into Greek as a masculine singular pronoun, which is surprising because the Greek word for “seed”, *σπέρμα*, is grammatically neuter. While it is true that in other parts of the book of Genesis the Septuagint translator was willing to change the gender of *הוא* in order to provide a more accurate Greek translation,²⁸⁰ this is not the case here as this is the only instance in the book of Genesis where the translator ends up with a Greek translation that does not have grammatical gender agreement.²⁸¹ So why does the translator not use a neuter form of the third person pronoun in this instance? It seems possible, even likely, that the translator does so because he understands this passage to be a reference to the Messiah. At the very least, his translation makes this identification much more likely for his readers.²⁸² While the *Psalms of Solomon* do not make a

²⁷⁹ Lust, “Messianism and Septuagint,” 15.

²⁸⁰ Raymond Albert Martin, “The Earliest Messianic Interpretation of Genesis 3:15,” *JBL* 84.4 (1965): 425–27 (426). Martin identifies several instances where the pronoun is not simply translated by the third person pronoun in Greek and eight instances where the gender of the pronoun is changed in the Septuagint translation of Genesis (2:19; 14:3; 17:17; 18:10; 19:33; 30:16; 32:23; 42:14).

²⁸¹ Martin, “The Earliest Messianic Interpretation,” 427.

²⁸² John William Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Genesis* (SBLSCSS 35; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 44. Wevers points out that this translation gave rise to a messianic interpretation of this verse by early Christians. The first certain example of the text being used in this way comes from Irenaeus who interprets this text as a reference to Jesus in *Against Heresies* 5.21.1 in the second century CE. Samson H. Levey, *The Messiah: An Aramaic Interpretation* (Jerusalem: Hebrew Union College Press, 1974), 2 points to a messianic interpretation found in both the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan to the Pentateuch and the Fragmentary Targum to the Pentateuch. He translates Pseudo-Jonathan 3:15 as follows: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between the offspring of your sons and the offspring of her sons; and it shall be that when the sons of the woman observe the commandments of

direct reference to this passage from the book of Genesis, it is interesting to note that the author of *Psalms of Solomon* 17 may have understood this passage messianically. He refers to the Messiah as the “seed” (σπέρμα τοῦ) of David (*Ps. Sol.* 17:4). The primary reference here is probably to Psalm 89:4 (σπέρμα), and this choice makes sense given the Davidic nature of the psalm and the writer’s desire to present the Messiah in direct opposition to the Hasmoneans. But if, as the Septuagint of Genesis seems to suggest when read alongside texts like Psalm 89:4, there were Jews who understood “seed” in a messianic sense in other contexts, his argument that *the seed would be the seed of David* has more explanatory power for his audience.

That suggestion is, admittedly, somewhat speculative. What about the passages that are more obviously influential for the authors of the *Psalms of Solomon*? One of the most influential passages for both the *Psalms of Solomon* and late Second Temple messianism in general is Psalm 2. The language from this psalm is used in a messianic context in *Psalms of Solomon* 17:23–24 and 18:6–7, so it is quite clear that the writers understood Psalm 2 to be making an explicit reference to a coming messiah. Are there indications that the Septuagint translator understood the passage in this way as well? Not really. Although the Septuagint passage does contain the Greek word χριστός, this is simply a faithful translation of the Hebrew word משיח while it is true that the Greek text lends itself very well to a messianic interpretation, this opportunity was maintained rather than created or enhanced by the Septuagint translator.²⁸³

the Torah, they will direct themselves to smite you on the head, but when they forsake the commandments of the Torah you will direct yourself to bite them on the heel. However, there is a remedy for them, but no remedy for you. They are destined to make peace in the end, in the days of the King Messiah.” It is notoriously difficult to discern how much to trust the Targums as evidence of Jewish thought in the first or second century CE since they were likely composed significantly later. Levey suggests that “the influence of the Targum on Christian exegesis has been clearly demonstrated” (144) in this case, which suggests that, for Levey, this passage reflects thinking going back to at least the second century. In my view, a messianic reading of the Septuagint seems more likely. Regardless of the exact date, it is of interest that there were non-Christian Jews who were reading Genesis 3:15 messianically.

²⁸³ Alison Salvesen, “Messianism in Ancient Bible Translations in Greek and Latin,” in *Redemption and Resistance: The Messianic Hopes of Jews and Christians in Antiquity* (ed. Markus Bockmuehl and James Carleton Paget; London: T&T Clark, 2009), 245–61.

But there are other significant passages used in the *Psalms of Solomon* where a messianic interpretation does seem to be encouraged by the Septuagint translator. Isaiah 11:1–4, is one significant, though disputed, example. One reason for skepticism is that there are many other passages from Isaiah where opportunities for messianic interpretation are not taken. In Isaiah 42:1, for example, the identity of the servant of the Lord in the Hebrew text could have been clarified with a messianic interpretation, but is instead clarified with a communal interpretation, the servant being identified instead with Jacob and Israel.²⁸⁴ Similarly, Isaiah 9:5–6 is often understood messianically because of the emphasis on God’s chosen one as an agent of change; in the Septuagint, this agency is removed from the human agent and is returned to God,²⁸⁵ with some even suggesting that a messianic interpretation is being consciously “dismantled” by the translator.²⁸⁶

Raija Sollamo argues that the case of Isaiah 11:1–4 is similar; in her view, while Isaiah 11:1–4 is not hostile to a messianic interpretation, there are “no significant deviations from the ‘Messianism’ represented in the Masoretic text.”²⁸⁷ This gives short shrift to what seems to me to be a very significant shift to one of the passage’s most important words, namely, the rare Hebrew word, *חֵטֶר* in Isaiah 11:1. In the Septuagint, we find the rendering *ῥάβδος*, which might be brought into English as “sceptre” and always refers to an object created by human beings (even though the context of Isaiah 11 suggests that *חֵטֶר* is probably referring to organic material in a

²⁸⁴ Salvesen, “Messianism in Ancient Bible Translations in Greek and Latin,” 245.

²⁸⁵ Salvesen, “Messianism in Ancient Bible Translations in Greek and Latin,” 253.

²⁸⁶ Fabry, “Messianism in the Septuagint,” 201.

²⁸⁷ Raija Sollamo, “Messianism and the ‘Branch of David’: Isaiah 11,1–5 and Genesis 49,8–12,” in *The Septuagint and Messianism* (ed. Michael A. Knibb; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2006), 357–70. Salvesen, “Messianism in Ancient Bible Translations in Greek and Latin,” 253 also argues that there are only minor differences, none of which suggest a messianic interpretation.

metaphorical context).²⁸⁸ This is especially interesting because the translation evokes the promise of a star and scepter from another important messianic passage, Numbers 24:17.²⁸⁹

De Sousa argues that, since different Greek words are used in Isaiah 11 and Numbers 24, there is no translational connection between these two passages,²⁹⁰ but this argument is not compelling since a different translator was working with each text. It seems quite possible that both the translator of Isaiah and the translator of Numbers understood Numbers 24:17 messianically, but were unaware of one another's work. In this case, they simply chose different Greek words to reflect their messianic views. As De Sousa himself points out later, the choice of ῥόβδος suggests "that the translator operated in an exegetical climate that interpreted Isaiah 11 messianically and that associated the chapter with the Balaam oracle in Numbers 24."²⁹¹

This interpretation of a kingly messiah is encouraged by the slightly different surrounding context as well. The Masoretic Text closes chapter 10 with a metaphor that includes the destruction of trees, which connects 10:33–34 metaphorically with earlier sections of the chapter (cf. 10:15–19) and makes it clear that these verses should be read with what comes before them, likely in reference to an actual Assyrian attack.²⁹² It also helps to connect the text metaphorically with the beginning of chapter 11; whereas the community was once imaged by ecological devastation (they have become a stump), they are now characterized by a period of new growth (the shoot coming out from the stump of Jesse).²⁹³ In the Septuagint, the conclusion of chapter 10 offers no such metaphorical lens; instead people, and especially the lofty, are the explicit focus

²⁸⁸ De Sousa, *Eschatology and Messianism*, 140.

²⁸⁹ Kevin J. Cathcart, "Numbers 24:17 in Ancient Translations and Interpretations," in *The Interpretation of the Bible: The International Symposium in Slovenia* (ed. Jozse Krasovec; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 511–20. Cathcart offers examples of several different messianic translations of this passage, though these mostly come from the Targums. Of note, the Septuagint removes the metaphor altogether and simply uses ἄνθρωπος.

²⁹⁰ De Sousa, *Eschatology and Messianism*, 141.

²⁹¹ De Sousa, *Eschatology and Messianism*, 142.

²⁹² Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1–39*, 97.

²⁹³ Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1–39*, 97.

of YHWH's wrath.²⁹⁴ The Septuagint translator nevertheless seems to understand 10:33–34 and 11:1–5 together, modifying his translation of Isaiah 11:1 in order to reflect the changed metaphorical context. The idea of a stump is replaced by that of a rod (ῥαβδος), which connects well thematically with the destruction of 10:33–34, a passage that may now function as an introduction of the violent Messiah rather than a summary of the past Assyrian destruction. The connection between the two chapters can thus be more easily understood if the person described in Isaiah 11 is seen as the agent of YHWH's wrath.

This fits very well indeed with the portrait in *Psalms of Solomon* 17:21–25, a passage that uses the Septuagint's version of Isaiah 11:4 alongside Psalm 2:9 in order to describe a violent, Davidic Messiah who will destroy unrighteous rulers.²⁹⁵ Further evidence that the Septuagint version is being used here can be seen in the author's lengthier quotation of Isaiah 11:4 in *Psalms of Solomon* 17:35 (both texts use the phrase “πατάξει γῆν τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ”). A few key words from Isaiah 11:2 and 11:12 also appear in *Psalms of Solomon* 17:38 (ἰσχύς) and 17:26 (συνάγω) respectively. Sollamo points out that the two passages have different theological emphases (Isaiah 11 cares very little about cultic purity).²⁹⁶ This is true, but it is also true that the thought patterns behind the Septuagint translation and the writers of the *Psalms of Solomon* have significant similarities, and that these similarities seem to be tied to a messianic understanding. It is therefore essential not to discount these similarities because the texts differ on other points.

The conclusion I have reached with regard to Isaiah 11 seems helpful in concluding this section overall. It is clear that while the Septuagint does not have an overwhelming messianic

²⁹⁴ Sollamo, “Messianism and the ‘Branch of David,’” 360.

²⁹⁵ William Horbury, “Monarchy and Messianism in the Greek Pentateuch,” in *The Septuagint and Messianism* (BETL 195; ed. M.A. Knibb; Leuven: Peeters Press, 2006), 79–128 (123). Horbury also posits a connection with Numbers 24:17, not only in Isaiah 11 but also in *Psalms of Solomon* 17:21–24.

²⁹⁶ Sollamo, “Messianism and the ‘Branch of David,’” 365.

bias, there are also instances where messianic translations are present, and that some of these instances are connected to the interpretations of the Messiah found in the *Psalms of Solomon*.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Conclusion

When reading the *Psalms of Solomon* as a theological and literary whole, it becomes clear that the Messiah of *Psalms* 17–18 is expected to be a Davidic monarch who will restore the righteous to their appropriate position under the rule of YHWH with a decisive victory that will include the ingathering of the exiles in the penultimate period of history and bring an everlasting theocratic peace. Many of these ideas are echoed in other documents that were written at about the same time, namely some of the Dead Sea Scrolls and certain translations found in the Septuagint.

Messianic belief became increasingly popular during the first century BCE because of the unique political circumstances of that time. The Jewish state was transitioning out of political autonomy. Further, the individuals and parties ruling in Jerusalem at that time were all unpalatable options for these authors on religious grounds, and the politicking of several of these individuals and groups had resulted in a tremendous amount of suffering for Jerusalem's inhabitants. Those who wrote and recited the *Psalms of Solomon* at this time had come to understand this suffering as an expression of God's judgment and (somewhat paradoxically) God's mercy. The ultimate expression of this judgment and mercy would result in the coming of a Davidic figure who would rule the land in righteousness.

This expectation of a messianic ruler was part of a larger eschatological framework that contains elements of distinctly apocalyptic eschatology while also retaining many elements of more traditional prophetic eschatology. On the one hand, the authors testify to a strong dualism: one is either righteous or sinner, pious or wicked, and the ultimate fate of every individual is tied to one's identity in one of these two groups. Furthermore, several of these poems suggest a belief in an individual existence after death, at least for the righteous (*Pss. Sol.* 2:31; 3:11–12; 13:11; 14:3–5, 9), and a coming Day of Judgment upon which the wicked would be destroyed (*Pss. Sol.* 2:32–36; 4:24–25; 13:11–12; 17:3), a theological perspective characteristic of an apocalyptic worldview. On the other hand, several major characteristics of apocalyptic eschatology are absent from these writings. There does not seem to be any interest in angelic beings or in a detailed periodization of history and the earth in its current iteration would seem to have an important role in the authors' idealized future: these poems express a belief that there will be an ingathering of the exiles (*Pss. Sol.* 8:28; 11:1–6; 17:26–31), and that even some Gentiles will come to Jerusalem for worship, acknowledging the authority of the Davidic Messiah on earth (*Ps. Sol.* 17:30–31).

The *Psalms of Solomon* offer an important early witness to the Davidic messianism present in a theologically diverse set of Jewish communities in the Second Temple period. Though diverse, the communities that used this language seemed to share some things in common that were probably not common to all Jews, namely, some apocalyptic leanings, a dissatisfaction with the Temple, and a dissatisfaction with those in positions of political power. That early Christians also used the language of messianism at about this time suggests some degree of compatibility with these views. In some cases, these points of connection can be made explicit. Jesus offers similar teachings with regard to the relative faithfulness of God and human

beings (Matt 7:8–11, cf. *Ps. Sol.* 5:13–14),²⁹⁷ and especially God’s faithfulness in the area of prayer. Jesus also seems to have a similar eschatological perspective with regard to the ingathering of the exiles (Matt 19:28, cf. *Ps. Sol.* 11:1–6) and the Messiah’s role as judge (Mark 14:61–62, cf. *Ps. Sol.* 17:26).²⁹⁸

It is particularly interesting, however, that while Jesus and the early Christian movement used this messianic language and shared many beliefs, they also understood some aspects of the Messiah’s role quite differently. This is most obvious with regard to the use of violent force to achieve God’s purposes. It seems that the disciples of Jesus were originally expecting a conquering ruler (Mark 8:31–33) and were devastated when Jesus was killed (Luke 24:21).²⁹⁹ It was only in their subsequent reflections that they came to better understand the non-violent nature of Jesus’ messianic mission.

These similarities and differences lead to some possible avenues for further research. Further study might include tracking the use of messianic language in Paul’s writings to better discern the relationship of the early church to the Temple and the political institutions of the day. The Synoptic Gospels present Jesus as having an adversarial relationship with the Temple, but these documents were all written shortly after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE.³⁰⁰ It would seem possible that this later history influenced the presentation of Jesus; might this historical calamity have encouraged an interpretation of Jesus’ life along more messianic and apocalyptic lines? A comparison between Paul’s letters and some of the later literature (especially later literature written to the same communities, e.g., a comparison of the letters that Paul and

²⁹⁷ David A. deSilva, “Military Messianism and Jesus’ Mission: The Psalms of Solomon” in *The Jewish Teachers of Jesus, James, and Jude: What Earliest Christianity Learned from the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 141–57 (153).

²⁹⁸ deSilva, “Military Messianism and Jesus’ Mission,” 155–57.

²⁹⁹ deSilva, “Military Messianism and Jesus’ Mission,” 155.

³⁰⁰ The Gospel of Mark may be an exception, but it would have nevertheless been written very close to the time of the Temple’s destruction.

Clement wrote to Corinth) might shed some light on this question. The *Psalms of Solomon* also show that a messianic understanding may well be tied to other important eschatological concepts like the return from exile and the Day of the Lord. These themes are also significant for early Christians. A comparison of these themes in the *Psalms of Solomon* and early Christian literature may be quite illuminating. Finally, a comparison of some of the differences between the early Christian movements and the *Psalms of Solomon* might prove interesting. In addition to the issue of whether or not the Messiah would be violent, we might want to examine the issue of ritual purity. Ritual purity was very important to the writers of the *Psalms of Solomon* and several of the Dead Sea Scrolls, but was sometimes criticized by Jesus and his followers (e.g., Mark 1:40–41; 7:17–19). Are these differences as large as they seem, and if so, what might account for them?

A close analysis of the *Psalms of Solomon* and the train of thought that led to the theology that we find there presents many interesting avenues for continued research. The analysis also helps to demonstrate that while some Jewish groups of the Herodian period did not have a messianic hope as part of their religious program, those that did often shared many similarities. Recognizing this fact helps readers to both better understand individual texts like the *Psalms of Solomon* as well as the Second Temple period in which those texts were written, used, and transmitted.

Appendix A – Diagram of *Psalms of Solomon 17*

Inclusion and three-part structure:

To God:

Ps. Sol. 17:1

Κύριε· σὺ
αὐτὸς
βασιλεὺς ἡμῶν
εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα
καὶ ἔτι...

About God:

Ps. Sol. 17:2-3

...ὅτι το
κράτος τοῦ
θεοῦ ἡμῶν εἰς
τὸν αἰῶνα μετ'
ἔλεους...

To God:

Ps. Sol. 17:4-8

Σύ· κύριε·
ἤρετίσω τὸν
Δαυὶδ βασιλέα
ἐπὶ Ἰσραὴλ...

About God:

Ps. Sol. 17:9-20

...πιστὸς ὁ
κύριος ἐν πᾶσι
τοῖς κρίμασιν
αὐτοῦ...

To God:

Ps. Sol. 17:21-25

Ἴδε, κύριε· καὶ
ἀνάστησον
αὐτοῖς τὸν
βασιλέα
αὐτῶν· υἱὸν
Δαυίδ...

About God:

Ps. Sol. 17:26-46

...καὶ κρινεῖ
φυλὰς λαοῦ
ἡγιασμένου
ὑπὸ κυρίου θεοῦ
αυτοῦ...

Inclusion:

Ps. Sol. 17:46

κύριος αὐτός
βασιλεὺς
ἡμῶν εἰς τὸν
αἰῶνα καὶ
ἔτι.

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