

There is one omission from my list of ascent apocalypses that may require some defense, for Dean-Otting and others treat the Testament of Abraham as an Egyptian Jewish ascent apocalypse of the first century. I am far less certain than they about Jewish provenance and first-century date, but more important, despite its formal features, which allow it to be classified as an apocalypse, and its subject matter, which includes a visit to heaven for a glimpse of the judgment of souls, I do not think that the Testament of Abraham is best understood as an apocalypse.¹⁵ The apocalypses considered here, with all their differences, share certain assumptions; read alongside them, the Testament of Abraham stands apart. When George Nickelsburg describes the Testament not as an apocalypse, but as "a didactic but entertaining story,"¹⁶ he is responding to this difference.

I hope that this study of the ascent apocalypses will meet the challenge of the developments of the last decades not only for the history of apocalyptic literature, but also for the history of ancient Judaism and Christianity. For I believe that our understanding of the ascent apocalypses has important implications for ancient Judaism and Christianity and their place in the Greco-Roman world.

I

From Ezekiel to the Book of the Watchers

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The vision of 1 Enoch 14 marks a crucial departure in the history of ancient Jewish literature. To a certain extent Enoch's vision stands in the tradition of prophecy. From one angle it can be seen as a dramatic call vision, like Ezekiel's vision of the chariot throne, to which it has some striking parallels. In the culmination of the vision, God commissions Enoch to perform a prophetic task, to deliver a message of judgment to the fallen Watchers. But there is one central difference between Enoch's vision and the visions of the prophets, including Ezekiel's: unlike any of the prophets, Enoch ascends to heaven.¹

8. And it was shown to me thus in a vision: Behold! clouds were calling me in my vision, and dark clouds were crying out to me; fire-balls and lightnings were hastening me on and driving me, and winds, in my vision, were bearing me aloft, and they raised me upwards and carried and brought me into the heavens. 9. And I went in till I drew near to a wall, built of hailstones, with tongues of fire surrounding it on all sides; and it began to terrify me. 10. And I entered into the tongues of fire and drew near to a large house built of hailstones; and the walls of the house were like tessellated paving stones, all of snow, and its floor was of snow. 11. Its upper storeys were, as it were, fireballs and lightnings, and in the midst of them (were) fiery Cherubim, *celestial watchers*. 12. And a flaming fire was around *all* its walls, and its doors were ablaze with fire. 13. And I entered into that house, and it was hot as fire and cold as snow; and there were no delights in it; horror overwhelmed me, and trembling took hold of me. 14. And shaking and trembling, I fell on my face. And I saw in a vision, 15. and behold! another house greater than that one and its door was completely opened opposite me; and it (the second house) was all

constructed of tongues of fire. 16. And in every respect it excelled in glory and honour and grandeur that I am unable to describe to you its glory and grandeur. 17. Its floor was of fire, and its upper chambers were lightnings and fire-balls, and its roof was of blazing fire. 18. And I beheld and saw therein a lofty throne; and its appearance was like crystals of ice and the wheels thereof were like the shining sun, and (I saw) *watchers, Cherubim*. 19. And from underneath the throne came forth streams of blazing fire, and I was unable to look on it. 20. And the glory of the Great One sat thereon, and his raiment was brighter than the sun, and whiter than any snow. 21. And no angel was able to enter this house, or to look on his face, by reason of its splendour and glory; and no flesh was able to look on him. 22. A blazing fire encircled him, and a great fire stood in front of him, so that none who surrounded him could draw near to him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. He had no need of counsel; in his every word was a deed. 23. And *the watchers and holy ones* who draw near to him turn not away from him, by night or by day, nor do they depart from him. 24. As for me, till then I had been prostrate on my face, trembling, and the Lord called me with his own mouth and said to me: 'Come hither, Enoch, and hear my word'. 25. And there came to me one of the holy angels, and he raised me up and brought me to the door, and I bowed my face low. (1 Enoch 14)²

Enoch's ascent belongs to the Book of the Watchers, one of the five originally independent works contained in 1 Enoch. Milik's publication of the Aramaic fragments from Qumran places the composition of the Book of the Watchers in the third century B.C.E., making the Book of the Watchers the earliest extant apocalypse after another Enochic work, the Astronomical Book.³ The Astronomical Book is concerned almost exclusively with calculations of the paths of sun and moon in the service of a 364-day solar year. It is thus of far less importance for the development of apocalyptic literature than the Book of the Watchers with its interest in the divine throne and the entourage of angels that surrounds it, the fate of souls after death, and cosmology, as well as the last judgment.

Although ascent is a new development, the debt of 1 Enoch 14 to Ezekiel is profound. The source for the picture of the throne of cherubim⁴ Enoch sees in the heavenly sanctuary is not the Second Temple, which no longer contained these central symbols of the First Temple,⁵ nor the instructions for constructing the tabernacle in the priestly document of the Torah, nor the description of Solomon's temple in 1 Kings (and 2 Chronicles), but rather, Ezekiel's visions of the chariot that carries God's glory (Ezekiel 1, 8–11, 43). The line of descent is made clear by the wheels of the throne, which appear only in Ezekiel among biblical works and which no longer have a function in Enoch's ascent, where the throne sits fixed in heaven. This throne, on which God is seated, is the counterpart of the cherubim without a rider that stood as a throne for the invisible God in the holy of holies in the Jerusalem temple. The earthly cherubim in turn were intended to represent the winged crea-

tures on which the God of Israel, like other ancient Near Eastern deities, was sometimes said to ride.⁶

As the text of the Book of Ezekiel now stands, Ezekiel himself notes the correspondence between the chariot he sees and the furniture of the temple. The term "cherubim" does not appear in the elaborate description of the chariot in Ezekiel 1, where the mysterious four-faced beings that bear the glory of God are called "living creatures."⁷ But in chapters 8–11, as the prophet stands in the temple watching the movements of the creatures carrying the glory of God as God prepares to depart from the temple before turning it over to the Babylonians for destruction, he realizes the identity of the living creatures from his first vision: "These were the living creatures that I saw underneath the God of Israel by the river Chebar; and I knew that they were cherubim" (10:20). The text suggests that Ezekiel is able to recognize the creatures as cherubim because of his proximity to the sculpted cherubim of the temple. Clearly the heavenly originals are more awesome and wonderful than their earthly representations.⁸

Ezekiel's visions of the chariot throne mark the beginning of a trend to dissociate God's heavenly abode from the temple in Jerusalem. A century and a half before Ezekiel, the prophet Isaiah saw his vision of God seated on his throne, surrounded by the heavenly host, in the Jerusalem temple. For Isaiah the temple was truly God's earthly home, the place where heaven and earth come together. Isaiah's vision reflects the belief current among Israel's neighbors in Canaan and Mesopotamia that the god actually dwelt in the temple human beings built for him. Sometimes the earthly temple was understood to be modeled on the god's house in heaven or on a sacred mountain.⁹ Sometimes, as in the Bible, the god is depicted giving instructions for building the temple,¹⁰ and ceremonies mark the moment when the god takes up residence in the temple.¹¹

Recent scholarship has rejected the view so popular with earlier historians of religion that a cosmic mountain played a central role in ancient Mesopotamian cosmology.¹² A cosmic mountain, a place where heaven and earth come together and the divine is present on earth, does, however, appear prominently in the Ugaritic texts, where the mountains on which the gods live and assemble are understood in these terms.¹³ Some strands of biblical literature treat Mount Sinai as a cosmic mountain, but it is primarily Mount Zion to which the imagery associated with the mountain of the gods in Ugaritic literature is applied.¹⁴ The view that Zion is inviolable, immune from conquest, which shows up especially in the Zion psalms, has its background in these myths about the mountains of the gods.¹⁵

According to the biblical narrative (Isaiah 36–37, and the parallel in 2 Kings 18:13–19:37), when Jerusalem was under siege by the Assyrians, Isaiah counseled King Hezekiah not to surrender. Hezekiah

listened to Isaiah, and the Assyrians returned home without taking the city. Modern critics differ about whether such a retreat ever took place, and Isaiah's role in the events is also unclear. While Isaiah may have counseled resistance as an act of trust in God, it seems unlikely that he believed in the absolute inviolability of Jerusalem. He certainly did not hesitate to liken the sinful Jerusalem to Sodom and Gomorrah (1:9–10) and to threaten destruction if its people continued to sin.¹⁶

What the narrative does show, however, is that people who held that Zion was inviolable understood the events in light of their own convictions and represented the great prophet of their time as the heroic spokesman for these views. For them the Assyrian retreat guaranteed the correctness of their position. This understanding was clearly popular, for more than half a century after the Assyrian siege, Jeremiah argued against the belief that the temple could save Jerusalem from the Babylonians despite its sins: "Do not trust in these deceptive words: 'This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD'" (Jer. 7:4).¹⁷

The Deuteronomistic school too rejected the popular view of the cosmic significance of the temple and Zion. God's true home is in heaven. It is not because Mount Zion is inherently holy that God chooses to be present there; rather its holiness is a result of God's choice. This view finds expression in Deuteronomy's way of speaking of Jerusalem and the temple, which, according to its narrative framework are still in the future. They are "the place which the LORD your God will choose . . . to put his name" (12:5, etc., with variations).¹⁸

If for Isaiah in the mid-eighth century the temple was the natural place to encounter God, by the beginning of the sixth century Ezekiel had come to understand the temple as so defiled that it was no longer a fit resting place for the glory of God. From the point of view of history, Ezekiel's charges are grossly exaggerated. Greenberg calls the vision of idolatry in the temple in chapter 8 "a montage of whatever pagan rites were ever conducted at the Jerusalem temple." But the vision's very lack of historicity indicates the depth of Ezekiel's conviction of the temple's defilement.¹⁹

For Ezekiel it is God himself who commands the destruction, ordering angels to begin the job that the Babylonians finish (Ezek. 9:3–8). The temple's doom is God's fitting reaction to the terrible pollution Ezekiel perceives. Thus even before the destruction God has abandoned the temple for a chariot.²⁰ His return to a fixed dwelling awaits the temple of the eschatological future; only then will the people of Israel finally be purified. The Book of Ezekiel concludes with a vision of this temple (chs. 40–48), and in the vision Ezekiel falls on his face as he witnesses the return of God's glory to the temple, "like the vision which I had seen when he came to destroy the city and like the vision which I had seen by the river Chebar" (43:3).

The Second Temple is never able to emerge from the shadow of the disengagement of the glory of God. The ark and the cherubim are gone. In the period of the Second Temple, under the influence of Ezekiel, those who are unhappy with the behavior of the people and especially its priests come to see the temple not as God's proper dwelling, the place where heaven and earth meet, but rather as a mere copy of the true temple located in heaven. It is this desacralization of the earthly temple in favor of the heavenly that opens the way for Enoch's ascent in the Book of the Watchers. The first ascent in Jewish literature is thus a journey to the true temple.

Ascent to the Divine Council

The debt of the Book of the Watchers to the Book of Ezekiel is not limited to the impetus for the development of the picture of a heavenly temple. Through its innovations in form, Ezekiel also provides a model for the process of ascent. The series of verbs of motion of which Enoch is the subject in the course of his ascent find their only prophetic precedent in Ezekiel's perambulations in the Jerusalem temple as he watches the departure of the glory of God (chs. 8–11) and his guided tour of the eschatological temple at the end of the book (chs. 40–48).²¹

In content, Enoch's ascent must be understood against the background of an aspect of prophetic thought not limited to Ezekiel, the idea of the prophet's participation in the divine council. As he progresses toward God's throne, Enoch sees a host of angels: "Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. He had no need of counsel; in his every word was a deed" (1 Enoch 14:22).²² This picture is clearly related to the picture of God surrounded by angels described in Isaiah's vision in the temple (ch. 6) and in the narrative of Micaiah b. Imlah's prophecy (1 Kings 22:19–22) and alluded to elsewhere in biblical literature.²³

The Israelites' understanding of the divine council is indebted to that of their neighbors in the ancient Near East. The council of El plays an important role in Ugaritic literature. The members of El's council are gods, yet unlike the gods of the Mesopotamian myths, who assert themselves as individuals in the proceedings of the council, the gods of the council in Ugaritic literature show no independence, but simply confirm El's decrees. So too the members of Yahweh's council exist only to do his will. With the exception of the accuser, who emerges relatively late, these demoted gods have no individuality.²⁴

In Ugaritic literature divine messengers convey the decision of the council. In ancient Israel the prophets claim for themselves the role of messengers alongside the regular members of the council. When Isaiah finds himself in the midst of a session of the council in the Jerusalem temple, he volunteers to carry God's message of judgment to the people of Israel. The prophecy of Second Isaiah begins with a report of the

proceedings in the council, during which the prophet undertakes to deliver a message of comfort.²⁵

The prophets' participation in the council takes place on earth through visions. Enoch's participation also takes place in a vision (vv. 8, 14) while Enoch is asleep (v. 2), but in the course of the vision he ascends to heaven, where the council is located. Upon his arrival before God's throne, Enoch is commissioned to deliver a message of judgment to the Watchers.

The dominant imagery of the divine council in biblical literature is of the royal court. In those texts in which the prophet actually sees the council, God is seated on a throne (1 Kings 22:19, Isa. 6:1), and the purpose of the deliberations of the council is always judgment (in addition to the passages just cited, Psalm 82, Zech. 3:1-10, Job 1:6-12, 2:1-6).²⁶ In 1 Enoch 14, however, the dominant understanding is of heaven as temple, and it is in the heavenly temple that the divine council meets.

In biblical Hebrew *hekhal* serves for both the king's palace and the temple. In relation to a god, temple and palace are two aspects of the same dwelling place. Thus even in those texts where the idea of temple dominates, the imagery associated with the royal palace never disappears. The purpose of Enoch's ascent is still participation in the deliberations of the heavenly court, but a shift in emphasis in the description of the council and its setting has begun.

The Heavenly Temple

The Book of the Watchers was an extremely influential work, and one aspect of its influence is the picture of heaven as temple that explains so many features of the other ascent apocalypses, whether it stands in the foreground or in the background. Here I would like to consider briefly the weight of architectural detail pointing to the understanding of heaven as temple in the Book of the Watchers and then to turn to the way in which that understanding affects the encounter between Enoch and God.

The two houses through which Enoch must pass according to the Ethiopic (vv. 10-14, 15-17) to reach the throne of God have been treated by some critics as the *hekhal*, or sanctuary ("nave" in RSV), and *devir*, or holy of holies ("inner sanctuary" in RSV), of a temple.²⁷ But the correspondence is more exact than that. Both the First and Second Temples contained a third, outer, chamber, the *'ulam*, or vestibule (First Temple: 1 Kings 6:3; Second Temple: Josephus, *Jewish War* 5.207-19, m. Middot 4:7).²⁸

In fact the text of 1 Enoch 14 does mention a third structure (14:9). In the Ethiopic it is simply a wall. In the Greek, however, Enoch passes through a *building* of hailstones and fire. The Greek text, then, provides a heavenly structure that matches a three-chambered temple quite nicely.²⁹

The heavenly temple creates an impression of awesome glitter. It is built from fire, lightning, and fire-balls or shooting stars,³⁰ and forms of

water, including hailstones, snow, and ice. These opposing elements of fire and water can coexist only in heaven.³¹ And yet it appears that the earthly temple was described in similar terms.³² Josephus offers a striking description of the Second Temple that contains many of the same elements:

The exterior of the building wanted nothing that could astound either mind or eye. For, being covered on all sides with massive plates of gold, the sun was no sooner up than it radiated so fiery a flash that persons straining to look at it were compelled to avert their eyes, as from the solar rays. To approaching strangers it appeared from a distance like a snow-clad mountain; for all that was not overlaid with gold was of purest white.³³

Reading this description we cannot fail to be reminded of the heavenly temple of 1 Enoch 14. Of course Josephus, who is here describing Herod's temple, wrote perhaps three centuries after the Book of the Watchers. But the cosmological symbolism of Josephus's account has ancient roots, and it may be that his description draws on earlier praise of the temple.³⁴

The furnishings of the heavenly temple, too, reflect the earthly. Between the floor of snow (14:10) and the upper stories, or, as Nickelsburg translates, ceiling,³⁵ of fire-balls and lightnings (14:11) of the middle building of the Greek text, there appear fiery cherubim (14:11). These are not the cherubim of the divine throne discussed earlier, which are mentioned later in the course of the description of the inner temple (14:18), but the heavenly counterpart of the images of cherubim woven into the hangings that form the walls of the tabernacle (Ex. 26:1, 31; 36:8, 35) or engraved on the walls of the temple (1 Kings 6:29, 2 Chron. 3:7, Ezek. 41:15-26).³⁶

While it is clear that the heavenly temple of 1 Enoch 14 corresponds to the earthly temple, it does not seem to correspond in detail to any particular temple described in the Hebrew Bible. The only instance of technical terminology is the description of the activities of the angelic priests to be discussed later. The heavenly temples of later apocalypses are also characterized by an absence of technical terminology and by an even more limited correspondence of detail between the earthly and the heavenly temples.

The same limited correspondence is found even in the elaborate description of the Sabbath Songs, which in Newsom's view come close to picturing a particular biblical temple, the eschatological temple of Ezekiel 40-48.³⁷ The terminology of the songs is eclectic, and the description of the heavenly temple in fact reproduces only the broad outlines of the earthly.³⁸

I doubt that this lack of correspondence between the heavenly temple and its earthly counterparts in the apocalypses and the Qumran Sabbath Songs is the result simply of dissatisfaction with the Second Temple. Dissatisfaction is an important motive for interest in heavenly temples.

But our authors surely felt no such dissatisfaction with the tabernacle, Solomon's temple, or Ezekiel's eschatological temple, which, unlike the Second Temple, are described in the Bible.

Rather, the loose correspondence of heavenly temple to earthly seems to reflect the belief that the heavenly temple so transcends the earthly that the correspondence cannot be exact. This is Newsom's understanding of the Sabbath Songs' frequent references to the heavenly temple or its components as seven-fold. The usage is not consistent; singulars stand alongside the plurals in "an attempt to communicate something of the elusive transcendence of heavenly reality."³⁹

Finally, it is worth considering Enoch's reaction to the sight of the heavenly temple. Upon entering the outer house, the one built of hailstones, Enoch is overcome by fear and falls on his face (vv. 13-14). Prostration before God hardly requires comment; it is an adaptation of the etiquette of greeting human monarchs, and its meaning is readily apparent. But Enoch is surely drawing on the model of Ezekiel, who regularly falls on his face before the Glory of God.⁴⁰ Like Enoch, the heroes of many other apocalypses follow Ezekiel's lead in this, as in so much else.⁴¹

The fear and trembling that Enoch describes, however, are quite foreign to Ezekiel. When Isaiah stands before God in the Jerusalem temple, he exclaims, "Woe is me! For I am lost!" (6:5). He is afraid that the corruption of his people makes him unfit to stand in God's presence. But Ezekiel's prostrations are never attributed to fear; they are reported each time in the same words, without any mention of emotion, as almost ritual acknowledgments of the majesty of God. The Book of the Watchers, on the other hand, emphasizes the intensity of the visionary's reaction to the manifestation of the divine.

Enoch's prostration stands apart from Ezekiel's in another important respect. Although Enoch catches sight of God on his throne of cherubim from his prostrate position, it is not the sight of God that causes his terror. Rather it is the fearsome experience of standing inside the house of hailstones that makes Enoch tremble and quake and finally fall on his face: "And I entered into that house, and it was hot as fire and cold as snow; and there were no delights in it; horror overwhelmed me, and trembling took hold of me. And shaking and trembling, I fell on my face" (14:13-14). Thus the Book of the Watchers emphasizes the glory of God's heavenly temple by making it, rather than the vision of God himself, the cause of Enoch's fear.

God on His Throne

The description of God seated on his throne in 1 Enoch 14 is also related to the understanding of the heavenly throne room as temple. To be more precise, it is not God himself who is described, but his garment:⁴²

And I beheld and saw therein a lofty throne; and its appearance was like the crystals of ice and the wheels thereof were like the shining sun, and (I saw) *watchers, Cherubim*. And from underneath the throne came forth streams of blazing fire, and I was unable to look on it. And the glory of the Great One sat thereon, and his raiment was brighter than the sun, and whiter than any snow. (14:18-20)

The description of the enthroned deity in Ezekiel 1 and 8 shares with this description the mention of radiance. But there is no garment in Ezekiel, and in Ezekiel 1 the radiance around the figure is rainbowlike rather than white.

A much closer parallel to the picture of 1 Enoch 14:20 appears in Dan. 7:9-10: "As I looked, thrones were placed and one that was ancient of days took his seat; his raiment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, its wheels were burning fire. A stream of fire issued and came forth from before him. . . ."

The shining thrones with wheels that appear in both visions are a sign of their debt to Ezekiel. But the fiery streams do not appear in Ezekiel, although they are similar in visual effect to elements of Ezekiel's vision. They have their origins in the ancient traditions of the divine council. The mountain of El at which the council meets in Ugaritic literature has two rivers at its base. The rivers of Canaanite myth are not fiery, but Israelite (and Canaanite) traditions of fiery theophanies could easily suggest fiery rivers.⁴³ Like other features of the Canaanite traditions of the abode of the gods, the rivers at the base of the cosmic mountain have been transferred in biblical literature to the temple mount, as in the concluding vision of the Book of Ezekiel (47:1-12).⁴⁴ On the throne, according to both Daniel and Enoch, God sits, dressed in white. In Daniel God's hair is also described, and it too is white. Daniel 7 maintains the association of the heavenly council with judgment that appears in 1 Kings 22, Isaiah 6, and Psalm 82. It explicitly treats the divine council as a court: "The court sat in judgment and the books were opened" (v. 10).

The scene described in Dan. 7:9-14 has given rise to a large corpus of scholarly literature. It is now widely accepted that the proper background for this vision is Canaanite mythology; the one like a son of man (v. 13) is described with the attributes of Ba'al, while the Ancient of Days resembles El, the patriarch of the Canaanite pantheon, who sits enthroned in the council of the gods to render judgment.⁴⁵

Many scholars have drawn attention to the mentions of El's hoary hair and beard in the texts from Ugarit, which surely account for the white hair of the Ancient of Days.⁴⁶ But what of the white robe that appears in Daniel and the Book of the Watchers? To my knowledge the published Ugaritic texts contain no references to a white robe worn by El, although Pope describes a limestone stela in low relief that depicts El enthroned, wearing a crown with bull horns and a long robe.⁴⁷ A robe

is implied in Isaiah's vision in the temple, ("I saw the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple" [6:1]), but there is no description of the robe.⁴⁸

Lacocque relates the whiteness of the robe and hair of the Ancient of Days to the symbolism of white in judgment,⁴⁹ and it is true that 1 Enoch 14 is also concerned with judgment by the heavenly court. Enoch ascends to plead before the divine judge on behalf of the Watchers, and at the end of the vision the sentence of the Watchers is read out once more.

I suggest a somewhat different explanation for the robe and its whiteness in 1 Enoch 14, an explanation related to the picture of heaven as temple. In the regulations for the garments of the priests and the curtains of the tabernacle in P, the priestly document of the Torah, the general principle is "the more important the object, the more expensive and magnificent it has to be." The high priest dresses daily in four elaborate garments of wool and linen adorned with gold and gems. But there is an exception to this general rule: the one set of plain linen (*bad*) garments that the high priest wears once a year to enter the holy of holies (Lev. 16:4).⁵⁰

The linen of these plain linen garments is plain indeed. The linen used for the garments of the ordinary priests and the undergarments of the high priest is fine linen (*šēš*) (Ex. 39:27–28).⁵¹ Only the breeches of the ordinary priests (Ex. 28:42) and the garments they wear when removing the ashes from the altar (Lev. 6:3) are to be of plain linen (*bad*). And yet the "plain linen vestments [of the high priest on the Day of Atonement] reflect a holiness transcending that of gold and wool-linen mixture. . . . These garments serve to indicate a kind of dialectical elevation into that sphere which is beyond even the material, contagious holiness characterizing the tabernacle and its accessories." Not coincidentally, in Ezekiel (9:2–3, 11; 10:2) and Daniel (10:5, 12:6–7) angels wear garments of linen (*bad*).⁵²

Plain linen is more or less white, but the Bible does not comment on the color of the high priest's once-a-year garments. The Mishnah, however, explicitly describes them as white (Yoma 3:6). That white is the color of innocence and purity, especially suited to the judge of all the world, is surely not irrelevant to the white garment of the one seated on the throne in 1 Enoch 14. But here, as opposed to Daniel, the garment alone is mentioned without reference to hair or beard, and this emphasis on the garment may indicate that the plain linen garment that the high priest wore when he entered the holy of holies, the earthly counterpart of the spot where God sits enthroned in the heavenly temple, contributed to the whiteness of the garment in 1 Enoch 14.⁵³ If this type of projection seems extreme, it should be remembered that the author of 1 Enoch 14 is far more restrained than the rabbis, who did not hesitate to describe God's prayer shawl and phylacteries.⁵⁴

At this point I would like to return to the picture of God in Ezek. 1:26–28, where the aura around the deity is "like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain . . ." (v. 28). This mode of describing the glory of God appears also in Rev. 4:3, which seems to be drawing directly on Ezekiel. Appropriately enough, Revelation also describes an angel in these terms, "a mighty angel . . . with a rainbow over his head" (Rev. 10:1). Some have seen this glow as a transformation of the rainbow's original purpose as a weapon of the warrior god.⁵⁵ Whatever the origins of this image, it comes to be understood in relation to the wardrobe of the high priest, this time the glorious garments he wears daily when he officiates in the sanctuary.

In the period of the Second Temple the high priest's vestments were the object of considerable interest. Their symbolism was discussed in some detail by Philo and Josephus.⁵⁶ The Letter of Aristeas offers a fairly straightforward description of the high priest in full dress that may nonetheless suggest something like Ezekiel's glow:

He was girded with a girdle of conspicuous beauty, woven in the most beautiful colours. On his breast he wore the oracle of God, as it is called, on which twelve stones, of different kinds, were inset, fastened together with gold, containing the names of the leaders of the tribes, according to their original order, each one flashing forth in an indescribable way in its own particular colour. On his head he wore a tiara, as it is called, and upon this in the middle of his forehead an inimitable turban, the royal diadem full of glory with the name of God inscribed in sacred letters on a plate of gold . . . having been judged worthy to wear these *emblems* in the ministrations. Their appearance created such awe and confusion *of mind* as to make one feel that one had come into the presence of a man who belonged to a different world. (Letter of Aristeas 97–99)⁵⁷

That at least one author of the Second Temple period saw a relationship between Ezekiel's description of God and the garments of the high priest is clear from one of the similes Joshua ben Sira applies to the high priest Simeon in his praise of the fathers: "How glorious he was in the midst of the people when he came out of the house of the veil . . . like the rainbow shining in clouds of glory . . ." (50:5, 7; my tr.).⁵⁸

The Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice suggest that the Qumran community too saw a relationship between priestly garments and the appearance of God. In the thirteenth and last of the Sabbath Songs, the garments of the angelic high priests are described in what Newsom views as the climax of the Songs.⁵⁹ The variegated colors of the garments are described using the language of the biblical instructions for the dress of the high priest:⁶⁰

In their wondrous stations are spirits (clothed with) many colors, like woven work, engraved with figures of splendor. In the midst of the glorious appearance of scarlet, the colors of most holy spiritual light, they stand firm in their holy station before the [K]ing, spirits in garments of [purest] color in the midst of the appearance of whiteness. And this glorious spiritual substance is

like fine gold work, shedding [lig]ht. And all their crafted (garments) are purely blended, an *artistry* of woven work. (4Q405 23 ii, lines 7–10)⁶¹

A description of the glory of God seated on the chariot throne in heaven appears in the twelfth of the Sabbath Songs. “And *there is a radiant substance with glorious colors, wondrously hued, purely blended . . .*” (4Q405 22, lines 10–11).⁶² The glory is described in terms associated with the angelic priests, which in turn are drawn from biblical instructions for the clothing of human priests.

The description of the glory of God in the Sabbath Songs, then, is surely influenced by priestly dress. It may also have been influenced by the comparison of the glory of God to a rainbow by the prophet Ezekiel, whose vision of the temple is so important for the Songs. But does Ezekiel’s description of the glory of God draw on an understanding of the garment of the high priest as rainbowlike? Ezekiel is certainly the most priestly of prophets, and I do not think that it would be at all surprising to find him depicting God as priest. The problem is that there is no consensus about Ezekiel’s relationship to P or about P’s relationship to conditions of the period before the exile. Ezekiel’s vision of the restored temple provides only for linen (*pištim*) garments for the priests (44:17–19), and no high priest is mentioned. The omissions of Ezekiel 40–48 relative to P have been interpreted in very different ways,⁶³ but if Ezekiel knew the institution of high priest and the associated garments and preferred not to place them in his temple of the future, it would not be surprising to find them transferred to God.⁶⁴

The Heavenly Priesthood

Every temple needs priests, and the priests of the heavenly temple in 1 Enoch 14 are angels:

A blazing fire encircled him, and a great fire stood in front of him, so that none who surrounded could draw near to him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. He had no need of counsel; his every word was a deed. And *the watchers and holy ones* who draw near to him turn not away from him, by night or by day, nor do they depart from him. (14:22–23)⁶⁵

The negative language, “none who surrounded him could draw near to him,” “he had no need of counsel,” points to God’s greatness, his utter self-sufficiency. Despite the negatives, the role of the angels as members of the divine council is clear.

The depiction of the angels as priests is perhaps more subtle, but it is also clear. *Engizō*, the Greek verb translated “draw near,” is used in the Bible of priests serving in the sanctuary.⁶⁶ The priestly role of the angels is implicit in the language of God’s response to the petition of the fallen Watchers: “It is you who should be petitioning on behalf of men, and not men on your behalf” (15:2). Intercession is a task for priests.

Next God accuses the Watchers of having defiled themselves through contact with women:

Why have you left the high heaven and the eternal Holy One,⁶⁷ and lain with the women, and defiled yourselves with the daughters of men and taken to yourselves wives, and acted like the children of earth and begotten giants for sons. And you were holy, spirits that live forever, yet you have defiled yourselves with the blood of women, and have begotten (children) by the blood of flesh; and you lusted after the daughters of men and have produced flesh and blood, just as they do who die and perish. (1 Enoch 15:3–4)

The blood of women with which the Watchers are defiled must be the blood of virginity rather than menstrual blood.⁶⁸ For the very fact of marriage is defiling to the Watchers, who as spiritual beings should have no such physical needs. Both the Damascus Covenant (col. 5, lines 6–7) and the Psalms of Solomon (8:12 [13]) claim that defilement with menstrual blood causes pollution of the temple, but in neither text are the sinners said to be priests. Ordinary Jews might pollute the temple if, while themselves defiled, they brought sacrifices for the priests to offer.

The charge that the Watchers married improperly echoes accusations against priests of the Second Temple, who come under attack for marriage to foreign women as far back as the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. Priestly families made up a large part of the Jerusalem aristocracy from the period of the return, and thus they were more likely than common people to intermarry as a means of cementing cordial relations with neighbors who were political allies or trading partners. The marriage of any Jew to a foreign woman is a subject of concern to Ezra and Nehemiah, but when such marriages involve priests they are a threat not only to the definition of the holy people but also to the sanctity of the temple. Indeed, even the native women permitted to a priest are more carefully regulated in the Bible than the women permitted to an ordinary Israelite.⁶⁹

Charges of fornication and improper marriages continue to figure prominently in condemnations of the people in the later Second Temple period as in the Damascus Covenant (col. 4, lines 12–19)⁷⁰ and the Psalms of Solomon (2:11–13 [13–15]; 8:9–13 [9–14]). Such charges are also directed specifically against priests. The Testament of Levi 14–16 is a diatribe against descendants of Levi for a variety of sins, including sexual sins. It mentions specifically marriage to gentile women purified “with a *form of purification contrary to the law*” (14:6).⁷¹

At the start of his condemnation of the future sins of his descendants, Levi claims to have learned about them from the “writing of Enoch” (T. Levi 14:1). In a fragment of the Aramaic Levi document that seems to correspond to the Testament of Levi 14, Levi claims that Enoch had already accused the priests of the sins he inveighs against. Since such accusations are not to be found elsewhere in the extant Enoch literature, it seems likely that the author of Aramaic Levi understood the

Book of the Watchers as a polemic against the priesthood.⁷² Thus the sins attributed to the Watchers point to an understanding of angels as priests of the heavenly temple.

We have seen that the origins of the development of an elaborate picture of the heavenly temple lie in the feeling that the Jerusalem temple is defiled. If the earthly temple is polluted, the true temple must be found in heaven. This is the picture of the Testament of Levi; the surviving fragments suggest that it was also the picture of Aramaic Levi, but it is impossible to be certain. Such a picture is implicit in the attention given the heavenly temple in the Sabbath Songs from Qumran.

In the Testament of Levi and the Sabbath Songs the heavenly temple functions perfectly. Priests on earth may be corrupt, but their angelic counterparts are not. In the Book of the Watchers the relation between heaven and earth is quite different. If the heavenly temple remains undefiled, it is only because the Watchers had to leave it to go astray. The very feature that calls into question the sanctity of the earthly temple is projected onto the heavenly: some of the priests of the heavenly temple are defiled!

The absence of an absolute dichotomy between heaven and earth in the Book of the Watchers suggests an attitude toward the Jerusalem temple and its priests somewhat different from that of the Testament of Levi or the Qumran literature. The picture of heaven in the Book of the Watchers implies that not all earthly priests are bad. The fallen Watchers, condemned to eternal damnation, are the counterparts of the polluted priests. But the fact that other priests persevere in the service of the heavenly temple implies that some priests on earth continue to serve as they should. So the presence of evil in heaven in the Book of the Watchers is the result of a more positive view of the situation on earth.

The milder condemnation of the Jerusalem priesthood in the Book of the Watchers fits its third-century date well. At least as early as Ezra, the priests of the Second Temple were not without blemish in the eyes of the pious, but nowhere in Ezra or Nehemiah is there a blanket condemnation of priests. As late as 180 B.C.E., a traditionalist like Joshua b. Elazar b. Sira could sing the praises of a high priest. Simeon the Righteous was righteous in the eyes of the pious. But just at this time priests without any respect for the old ways were coming to prominence; their intrigues, recounted at length at the beginning of 2 Maccabees, provide the background for the revolt. Indeed ben Sira may have used the example of Simeon as an admonition to Simeon's sons to preserve the ways of their father, which they appeared to be in danger of deserting.⁷³ So the Jerusalem priesthood of the late third and early second centuries was not all of a piece; a pious man like the author of the Book of the Watchers might not have wished to condemn all priests. Only later do the Hasmonean usurpation of the high priesthood and the rapid loss of traditional values by the new high priestly family and the priestly aristocracy

generally lead to a view of the Jerusalem priesthood as utterly corrupt, a view that precipitated the emergence of the Qumran community.

Enoch as Priest and Scribe

Enoch enters the narrative of the Book of the Watchers in his professional capacity, as scribe.⁷⁴ The Watchers who remain in heaven ask Enoch to deliver a message of doom to their fallen brethren (12:3–6), who in turn request that Enoch draw up a petition on their behalf to read to God (13:4). It is not clear why the message of doom requires Enoch's professional expertise, but his scribal skills are surely needed for the proper drafting of a petition.

But Enoch's title is not simply scribe, as Enoch refers to himself (12:3). First the Watchers who remain in heaven (12:4) and then God himself (15:1) address Enoch as "scribe of righteousness."⁷⁵ The title suggests the exalted role Enoch plays: as scribe he mediates not between man and man or even God and man, but between God and the angels.⁷⁶

The history of Judaism in the Second Temple period is often written as the tale of tension between two types of religious leaders, priests and scribes. Priestly leadership represents a certain continuity with the preexilic period; the institution of the temple bridges the two periods. But it also represents a change, for the power of priests before the destruction was limited to their own arena, the cult, while in the period of the return the high priest emerges as the political head of the Jewish community in Palestine in relation to its imperial rulers.

A scribe is a professional writer in a society in which literacy is rare. In the ancient Near East scribes served their kings by composing diplomatic correspondence and decrees.⁷⁷ The covenant form that shapes Deuteronomy has suggested to some scholars that it is the work of court scribes, the only group likely to be familiar with the form.⁷⁸ Scribes also offered counsel to their kings, a function derived not so much from the ability to write as from the learning and experience that go with that ability.⁷⁹

The scribal profession, then, was well established in the period before the exile, but, like the priests, scribes came to occupy more important political roles with the return. Their increased importance has to do in large part with the needs of the Persian empire, and the Hellenistic empires that succeeded it, for civil servants to administer their territories. The codification of the Torah as the constitution of the Jewish polity is in large part a consequence of that same need.⁸⁰

It is the emergence of a written legal corpus that makes conflict between scribe and priest possible. As long as priestly practice was passed on orally within families, it was impossible for outsiders to hold opinions about it. But with a written code non-priests are in a position to offer interpretations of the code that compete with those of priests.

We find a striking example of such conflict in the career of Nehemiah,

a high-ranking Jewish official in the Persian civil service.⁸¹ In his memoirs Nehemiah tells us that he drove Tobiah the Ammonite from the rooms in the temple that the high priest himself had given him and then purified the rooms of the uncleanness caused by the presence of a foreigner (Neh. 13:1–9). Nehemiah was able to expel Tobiah from the temple because he was the Persian governor with the might of the Persian empire behind him, and his motives were surely in part political, since Tobiah's priestly friends opposed Nehemiah's reforms. But he justified his action by appealing to his interpretation of the Torah: "On that day they read from the book of Moses in the hearing of the people; and in it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever enter the assembly of God . . ." (Neh. 13:1).⁸²

The implications of Nehemiah's action must be stressed:

By all traditions of ancient religion the High Priest was the final authority on cult law, especially on purity law, and above all on purity law as it applied to his own temple. Yet here is Nehemiah, not a priest at all, a layman who could not even enter the holy area reserved to the priests (6.10 f.), not only declaring unclean and forbidden what the High Priest had declared clean and permitted, but also overriding the High Priest's ruling and cleansing the temple of the pollution which he said the High Priest had introduced into it.⁸³

This potential for conflict between priests, who actually practice in the temple, and skilled interpreters of the law, who respect the priesthood but not always the priests, believing that they know better than many priests how to run the temple, comes to an end only with the destruction of the Second Temple.⁸⁴

Yet in Egypt and in Babylonia scribes and priests were regularly one and the same. And indeed many of the men of the Second Temple period who are known to us as scribes were also priests by heredity. Ezra, "a scribe skilled in the Torah of Moses" (Ez. 7:6), is often regarded as the founding father of Second Temple scribes. But Ezra was a priest as well as a scribe; the Book of Ezra introduces him as "Ezra the son of Seraiah, son of Azariah . . . son of Phineas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the chief priest" (Ez. 7:1–5). Michael Fishbane discerns scribal activity in the transmission of priestly regulations and suggests the existence of scribes trained at the temple.⁸⁵ Indeed, Steven Fraade has recently argued against the existence of a class of scribes independent of the priesthood in the Second Temple period. Rather, he claims, teaching and interpretation of scripture were seen as part of the biblical mandate for priests.⁸⁶ Teaching is a priestly duty in many places in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Lev. 10:11, Deut. 17:10, Mal. 2:7, Hag. 2:11–13). Scribes are among the groups of Levites listed in Chronicles (2 Chron. 34:13). Later Antiochus III refers to the temple scribes of Jerusalem in an edict preserved in Josephus (*Antiquities* 12.142). Ben Sira writes of Aaron, "In his commandments [God] gave him authority in statutes and judgments, to teach Jacob the testimonies, and to enlighten Israel with his law" (45:17).

Like Ezra, Enoch is priest as well as scribe.⁸⁷ While Enoch is actually designated "scribe" in the Book of the Watchers, his priestly role is implicit in the narrative. Enoch's intercession on behalf of the Watchers is a traditional priestly task,⁸⁸ and in order to intercede, Enoch enters the heavenly temple and gains access to the sanctuary, a place reserved for priests.

The understanding of Enoch as priest becomes explicit in the Book of Jubilees, written some time in the middle of the second century B.C.E. According to Jubilees, when Enoch is taken off to the Garden of Eden he serves not only as scribe, recording the judgment of all humanity (4:23), but also as priest, "burn[ing] the incense of the sanctuary" (4:25).⁸⁹ It seems probable that the author of the Aramaic Levi document, who took from 1 Enoch 12–16 traditions about Enoch's ascent for his account of the commissioning of the ancestor of the priestly line, also understood Enoch as priest.⁹⁰ As we shall see, Enoch is considered priest as well as scribe in 2 Enoch also.

Finally, there is a strong prophetic element in the way Enoch is pictured in 1 Enoch 12–16.⁹¹ Like the biblical prophets Enoch participates in the proceedings of the heavenly council, although with a priestly overlay to this prophetic activity since heaven is a temple.

The claims made for Enoch in the Book of the Watchers are powerful indeed. He is a human being who mediates between angels and angels and then between God and angels. He ascends to the heavenly temple, passes through the court to the sanctuary, and looks in to the holy of holies. The God enthroned within speaks to Enoch "with his own mouth" (14:24). For our author the three roles of prophet, priest, and scribe coexisted as ideals, and only by bringing them together could he define the role of the most exalted of men.

The Heavenly Temple and the Origins of Apocalyptic Literature

The fact that the heaven to which Enoch ascends is understood as a temple has implications that go beyond the Book of the Watchers. In the next chapters I hope to show how the picture of heaven as temple influences later apocalypses, even those not particularly interested in temples, and shapes their understanding of the experience of the visionary and the righteous after death. Here I would like to consider the implications of this picture for the emergence of apocalyptic literature.

The publication of the Aramaic fragments of Enoch from Qumran has forced a reassessment of some of the old assumptions about apocalyptic literature. The Astronomical Book and the Book of the Watchers are quite different in content from the once standard description of an apocalypse, for they are far less concerned with the eschatology that dominates a work like Daniel. As a result of the reassessment, more attention has been focused on features of apocalyptic literature particularly

prominent in the Book of the Watchers and the Astronomical Book, such as secrets of nature.⁹² In addition, greater care has been taken to distinguish apocalyptic eschatology from the genre apocalypse as such.⁹³ The Book of the Watchers clearly belongs to the genre apocalypse, and it contains some apocalyptic eschatology, although the center of its interests lies elsewhere. Nonetheless, because of its early date and wide influence it is of considerable interest even for the discussion of apocalyptic eschatology.

For one influential school of thought, the origins of apocalyptic eschatology lie in intracommunal tensions of the period of the return from Babylonia.⁹⁴ On the one hand, the argument goes, there emerges a "hierocratic"⁹⁵ group that finds the fulfillment of its hopes in the rebuilding of the temple and the political power of priests, recognized as the leaders of the Jewish community by the imperial rulers. On the other hand, a "visionary" group remains loyal to the traditions of the prophets and refuses to find in the reality of the present the fulfillment of the prophetic visions. The visionary group, powerless against the priestly establishment, becomes progressively more alienated from it. This alienation leads to the divorce of prophecy from history and the emergence of an eschatology that can now be characterized as apocalyptic.

For Paul Hanson, Ezekiel 40–48 plays a particularly important role in the dialectic out of which apocalyptic eschatology emerges.⁹⁶ He admits that the vision comes from a priest "who [has] been denied [his] temple."⁹⁷ Since the chapters employ visionary forms, in the context of Ezekiel's own time they might be considered truly visionary. Yet in the end Hanson insists that Ezekiel's vision of the new temple is "the fountainhead of the hierocratic tradition"⁹⁸ and that even without regard to later use it is essentially hierocratic:

The ultimate goal of Ezekiel's prophecy seems to be the promulgation of a program of restoration which is dedicated to the preservation of the institutions of the immediate past and which thus stands in marked contrast to the themes of later apocalyptic such as the absolute break with structures of the past and the imminent judgment followed by a new creation. The priestly interests of Ezekiel are thus very visible beneath the visionary forms, and they determine the use to which those forms are put: the temple would be rebuilt according to the traditional patterns of the era immediately preceding the Babylonian destruction, and the Glory of Yahweh would then return to a cultic setting emulating that which existed prior to the exile.⁹⁹

There can be no doubt that Ezekiel's temple is in accord with "traditional patterns" if by that we mean that Ezekiel worries about the issues involved in the proper maintenance of the sacred that have always concerned priests. But the relationship between the details of his plan—and for priests details are all-important—and the preexilic reality is far from straightforward.¹⁰⁰ Hanson's claim that Ezekiel's plan calls for rebuilding "according to the traditional patterns" might be paraphrased, "If you've seen one temple, you've seen them all." For Hanson it settles

the argument to say that Ezekiel's "priestly interests" are visible beneath the visionary forms, because Hanson sees priestly interests as incompatible with visionary concerns.

In a much less extended discussion, Hanson reaches conclusions about the background of 1 Enoch 6–11 in line with his views of the visionary group in *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*. In the account of the punishment of Asael, Hanson sees a "mythologization and eschatologization" of the ritual of the Day of Atonement described in Leviticus 16, in which a scapegoat is sent into the wilderness to Azazel. This process must have taken place in circles that stand "outside the mainstream of temple praxis" because only there "the *textus classicus* of the holiest festival of the cultic calendar could be dealt with so freely." The Asael story, then, represents "a harsh indictment against the temple cult," involving a rejection of the efficacy of the ritual for the Day of Atonement.¹⁰¹ But why mythologization and eschatologization of a ritual should imply rejection of the ritual as practiced in the present is far from clear, unless you assume, as Hanson does, that apocalyptic eschatology entails rejection of the temple.¹⁰²

Hanson nowhere considers the Book of the Watchers as a whole. 1 Enoch 12–16, usually taken as a development of and comment on 1 Enoch 6–11, certainly makes the work a problematic case for Hanson. We have seen that chapters 12–16 involve a critique of the Jerusalem priestly establishment that takes seriously the priesthood's claims for itself and the importance of priestly duties and categories. This attitude is at once critical of the reality it sees in the temple and deeply devoted to the ideal of the temple understood in a quite concrete way.

This stance toward the temple and the conduct of affairs there is one that Hanson seems unable to imagine. For Hanson there is no mid-ground between the dismissal of priestly rules in favor of an ideal future of utter equality in 3 Isaiah (a reading of 3 Isaiah that is itself not unproblematic)¹⁰³ and the practical agenda for priests he finds in Ezekiel.

Hanson is in good scholarly company in his view of Ezekiel 40–48 as "hierocratic" rather than visionary. Indeed, many scholars have reduced Ezekiel's own contribution to chapters 40–48 to a very small portion since such pedantic concern with the temple is not fit for a prophet's vision.¹⁰⁴ But others have insisted on the continuity between these chapters and the extravagant visions at once priestly and prophetic that characterize the rest of Ezekiel.¹⁰⁵ Susan Niditch has recently made a strong case that Ezekiel's model of the temple is of cosmological significance (like all temples), and thus entirely appropriate for a prophetic vision.¹⁰⁶

Our reading of 1 Enoch 12–16 lends support to a view of Ezekiel 40–48 as visionary hope rather than "pragmatic" building instructions. In 1 Enoch 12–16 the heavenly temple is the appropriate abode for the deity, but it also serves as a vehicle for criticizing the conduct of affairs in the temple on earth. Ezekiel's critique is directed at a temple already in the past, which Ezekiel saw as having been polluted by idolatry. A

temple untainted by idolatry means the dawn of a new era. For Ezekiel, as for the author of 1 Enoch 12–16, a deep concern with the proper conduct of affairs in the temple is not only not in conflict with eschatological hope; it represents the very essence of eschatological hope.

Ezekiel himself was not responsible for ordering the material in his book, but his followers showed real insight in their arrangement. The vision of the return of the glory to the restored temple (43:1–4), in a sense the culmination of the book, answers the vision on the River Chebar at the beginning of the book, to which it is explicitly compared. Further it cannot be accidental that the vision of a restored temple follows the eschatological wars of Gog and Magog.¹⁰⁷ Hanson might have considered this placement in his comment quoted earlier about apocalyptic eschatology requiring a break with the past to be followed by new creation. Proper conduct of affairs in the temple and proper regulation of the holy and the profane: without divine intervention these can be a reality only in heaven. It is worth remembering that Ezekiel is the prophet who looked forward to having God replace Israel's hearts of stone with hearts of flesh (11:19). Human beings have it in their power to fulfill God's will, yet only God's intervention will make human beings truly human. So too a properly functioning temple is at once within human reach and miraculous.

I suspect that the real basis for the view that apocalyptic groups are inherently antitemple, of which Hanson is one of the most prominent representatives, is to be found in Christian theology. Like so many scholars before him, Hanson takes it as given that prophecy and cult—read gospel and law—are entirely separate spheres.¹⁰⁸ Significantly, although Hanson mentions Qumran in his book as a place where alienated priests have become an apocalyptic community, he never develops this point.¹⁰⁹ Even for priests more accepting of the status quo than those at Qumran, there could surely exist a sense of the disparity between the actual—the Second Temple, under foreign domination—and the ideal.

Johann Maier has argued that it is precisely in priestly speculation about the heavenly correlate of the earthly temple that we find the origins of that strand of apocalyptic literature concerned with the throne of God.¹¹⁰ The content of 1 Enoch 12–16 makes it difficult to disagree that there is a large priestly component in apocalyptic speculation. Of the great classical prophets before the destruction, Isaiah was deeply devoted to the temple, and Jeremiah, that great opponent of the temple, was a priest by heredity. Hanson himself understands several of the prophets of the Second Temple as hierocratic, and I believe that he is wrong to read 3 Isaiah as antitemple. We have seen too the community of interests between priests and scribes and the remarkable overlap of membership in the two groups. If we ignore priests and their friends in our search for the origins of apocalyptic literature or even apocalyptic eschatology, we are in danger of losing all of our candidates.

2

Heavenly Ascent and Priestly Investiture

In the centuries that followed its composition, the Book of the Watchers was among the most influential works outside the canon for both Jews and Christians. Several of the later ascent apocalypses are deeply indebted to it. Even those that show no clear signs of dependence take over a central aspect of its legacy, the depiction of the visionary's ascent to heaven in terms drawn from the understanding of heaven as a temple. This is not to suggest that the picture of heaven as temple was restricted to the Book of the Watchers; on the contrary, it is clear that the picture was widely held in early Judaism. But the Book of the Watchers is the first Jewish work to depict an ascent to heaven, and it sets the tone for the entire body of later apocalyptic literature.

In the Book of the Watchers, Enoch is overcome by fear at the awesome majesty of the heavenly temple, yet God welcomes him and speaks to him without requiring any purification or change in his physical being. In most of the later apocalypses the visionary undergoes some kind of physical transformation in order to stand before God, a transformation that is shaped by the understanding of heaven as temple. This chapter examines such transformation in works explicitly indebted to the Enochic tradition, 2 Enoch and 3 Enoch (Sepher Hekhalot). Chapter 3 treats transformation in works that are not directly dependent on this tradition, the Apocalypse of Zephaniah, the Ascension of Isaiah, and the Apocalypse of Abraham, as well as the Similitudes of Enoch (1 Enoch 37–71), which, despite its debt to the Book of the Watchers, is better treated with those works for reasons to be discussed there.