

Jewish Hermeneutics of Divine Testing
with Special Reference to the Epistle of James

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ABSTRACT

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The nature of trials, tests, and temptation in the Epistle of James has been extensively debated in New Testament scholarship. However, scholarship has underexamined the tension between the author's mitigation of divine agency in testing (Jas 1:13–14) and the author's appeal to well-known biblical testing narratives such as the creation account (1:15–18), the Binding of Isaac (Jas 2:21–24), and the Trials of Job (Jas 5:9–11). This juxtaposition between the author's theological apologetic and his biblical hermeneutic has the potential to reveal either the author's theological incoherence or his rhetorical and hermeneutical creativity.

With these tensions of divine agency and biblical interpretation in mind, this dissertation compares the Epistle of James against other examples of ancient Jewish interpretation, interrogating two points of contact in each Jewish work: their portrayals of the cosmic drama of testing, and their resulting biblical hermeneutic. The dissertation assembles a spectrum of positions on how the divine, satanic, and human roles of testing vary from author to author. These variations of the *dramatis personae* of the cosmic drama exercise a direct influence on the reception and interpretation of the biblical testing narratives.

When the Epistle of James is examined in a similar light, it reveals a cosmic drama especially dependent on the metaphor of the divine law court. Within this cosmic drama, God stands as righteous judge, and in the place of divine prosecutor stand the cosmic forces indicting both divine integrity and human religious loyalty.

These cosmic and human roles have a direct impact on James' reading of biblical testing narratives. Utilising an intra-canonical hermeneutic similar to that found in Rewritten Bible literature, the Epistle appeals to a constructed 'Jobraham' narrative in which the Job stories mitigate divine agency in biblical trials such as those of Abraham, and Abraham's celebrated patience rehabilitates Job's rebellious response to trial.

In conclusion, by closely examining the broader exegetical discourses of ancient Judaism, this project sheds new light on how the Epistle of James responds to theological tensions within its religious community through a hermeneutical application of the dominant biblical narratives of Job's cosmic framework and Abraham's human perfection.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Jewish Hermeneutics of Divine Testing with Special Reference to the Epistle of James

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The Epistle of James is one of numerous voices within Jewish antiquity that expresses concern for the theological and exegetical implications of divine involvement in testing. The author of James openly mitigates divine responsibility in testing or temptation (Jas 1:13–14). However, the author also engages in a close reading of well-known biblical testing narratives: the Binding of Isaac (Jas 2:21–24) and the suffering of Job (Jas 5:9–11). Is this juxtaposition between open theological apologetic and the use of potentially conflicting biblical narrative intentional or unintentional? Is it a demonstration of the author's theological incoherence or rhetorical and hermeneutical acumen? I will address these questions by providing a robust description of both the theology and the hermeneutic of testing in the Epistle of James. My method for investigation will be comparative: this dissertation positions James within a spectrum of ancient Jewish thought on testing, focusing on two main poles for its comparison. First, I use the metaphor of cosmic drama to analyse how Jewish authors variously depict both the supernatural agents (i.e. God, angels, Satan, demons) and human objects of testing. Secondly, I demonstrate that variations in the cosmic *dramatis personae* in Jewish literature impact an author's reading of biblical testing narratives such as the temptation of Adam, the binding of Isaac and the suffering of Job. The Epistle of James shares both in the broad concern to mitigate God's role as the agent of testing, and also in the biblical application of this theological impulse. The argument of the dissertation unfolds in three parts: it describes the problem in James, maps the wider spectrum of Jewish theological and interpretive frameworks, and finally analyses James' theology and hermeneutic of probation.

Part 1 establishes the working question and investigative approach. In chapter 1 I examine James' theological statements on the divine, supernatural, and human roles in testing, especially in Jas 1:12 (μακάριος ἄνθρωπος ὃς ὑπομένει πειρασμόν), 1:13 (πειράζει δὲ [ὁ θεὸς] αὐτὸς οὐδέν), and 1:14 (ἐκαστος δὲ πειράζεται ὑπὸ τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας ἐξελκόμενος καὶ δειλαζόμενος). I then juxtapose these statements against the author's reading of biblical testing narratives such as the *Aqedah* (Jas 2:21–24) and Job's suffering (Jas 5:9–11), texts that could be read to implicate God as the agent of testing (ὁ Πειράζων). I argue that the task of defining the author's probationary language such as πειρασμός/πειράζειν/ἀπειραστος should involve more than simply semantic/translational choice (e.g., 'test', 'trial',

‘temptation’) based on theological intuition, but rather requires a comprehensive analysis of the author’s cosmology and anthropology with a keen eye to the author’s reading of Scripture. Chapter 2 lays out my methodology. Starting from a minimalist historical position on James’ *Sitz im Leben*, I argue for an investigative framework that positions the twin poles of James’ cosmic drama and biblical hermeneutic of testing within a spectrum of perspectives across the Hellenistic period. These perspectives are drawn from a wide range of genres and philosophical orientations. A robust analysis of the *dramatis personae* and the biblical hermeneutic of testing of each comparative source in turn will generate a body of repeatable data against which James can then be compared. Chapter 3 surveys a number of current scholarly discussions foundational to the investigation. Meira Kensky’s analysis of the heavenly law-court and role reversals of testing agent/tested object in Jewish literature contributes to my operative metaphor of cosmic drama. A survey of the ongoing debate on Jewish anthropology, specifically the various functions of the Jewish *yetzer*, provides a foundation for my recurring analysis of the human roles of testing.

In Part 2 I detail the attention this question of divine testing received in ancient Judaism, including various Second Temple, early Christian and rabbinic sources. In Chapters 4–8 I identify a number of texts that manifest the cosmic and exegetical variations of testing described above. Chapter 4 examines how the genre of Rewritten Bible emphasises an elevated role of Satanic and demonic actors and a fundamentally vulnerable anthropology within the cosmic drama to mitigate divine agency and responsibility. I show how various examples within this genre (notably *Jubilees*, 4Q225, and *L.A.B./Pseudo-Philo*) apply their heightened supernatural frameworks to their readings of the *Aqedah*, in which the authors demonstrate heavy reliance on the cosmic framework of the Job story. Chapter 5 examines the book of Sirach. While divine responsibility for testing is specifically rejected, Ben Sirā’s alternative is not the cosmic supernaturalism as seen in *Jubilees*, but is rather based in a heightened anthropology: the language of demonology becomes internalized into the voluntary choice of the human agent, for which Adam and Abraham provide the examples *par excellence*. Chapter 6 engages with Philo of Alexandria, whose exegetical corpus, relying heavily on Middle-Platonic philosophical discourse, Alexandrian exegetical method, and an elevated vision of the Mosaic Law, provides a rich environment for Philo’s philosophical instantiation of the question at hand. Philo’s philosophical system drives his hermeneutical framework, for which Adam, Abraham, and Moses provide the biblical test cases. Chapter 7 examines how the strongly dualistic cosmic roles of the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* mitigate divine agency in testing. Here, the cosmic drama is applied to biblical testing narratives through the lens of False Pericopes, in which Satan’s cosmic intervention applies even to errors within the biblical text. Chapter 8 examines various voices within the rabbinic traditions. Here I note especially a heightened anthropology, in which a reified *yetzer* assumes much of the cosmic responsibility for evil. However, unlike other works which use anthropology to minimise the supernatural role, the quasi-demonic anthropologies in the rabbinic literature cooperate with satanic and demonic agents to war against the person. Here, the stories of Abraham and Job become especially important in exemplifying respectively a correct anthropological response to testing and in framing a theologically appropriate cosmology. Throughout Part 2, my purpose is not to establish a consistent Jewish ‘doctrine of testing’ to which James adheres, but rather to demonstrate various instantiations of ancient Jewish interpretation. Each of these works shows, in its own way, a natural inclination to defend divine integrity and beneficence. However, this broadly consistent theological sensibility is matched with a diverse array of perspectives on the

cosmic agents and objects of testing and a corresponding spectrum of biblical hermeneutics.

In Part 3 I insert within this spectrum of ancient thought the Epistle of James as a final Jewish perspective on the cosmic drama and hermeneutic of testing. In chapter 9 I read James within the metaphor of cosmic drama, specifically the *dramatis personae* of the divine law court. I detail the author's sensibilities regarding divine, supernatural and human agents as depicted in relation to the topic of testing. I argue that a heightened role for demonic/Satanic agency and a vulnerable, compromised anthropology provide the means to mitigate divine agency for testing. However, the Epistle's commitment to rejecting the divine role of ὁ Πειράζων leaves open the question of whether external supernatural agents or the internal human nature absorb this role of testing agent: does James place the role of 'Tester' on external supernatural forces (a la *Jubilees*, Qumran, the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*, and much of the rabbinic literature), or on the human nature itself? Much of James scholarship has rejected the former in favour of the latter. However, it is at this point that the hard work of Part 2 begins to bear comparative fruit. While there existed a wide range of anthropological models in ancient Judaism, these anthropologies function in a dialectical relationship to the cosmic actors. It would be ill-conceived to describe the anthropologies of Philo, *Jubilees*, or in Qumran while ignoring the cosmic forces at play. Similarly, the anthropological and supernatural actors within James' cosmic drama must be read within a dialectical relationship. Taking seriously this dialectical nature of the divine, supernatural, and human roles, I conclude that James' cosmic drama of the divine courtroom depicts God as ultimate judge whose biblical role of ὁ Πειράζων is nevertheless mitigated and replaced by supernatural agents that act upon a vulnerable, even self-destructive anthropology. This answer to the question of probation fits within a spectrum of broadly similar approaches found within the popular, wide-ranging, and often (though not exclusively) Palestinian genre of Rewritten Scripture.

Chapter 10 applies James' depiction of the cosmic drama of testing to its reading of biblical testing narratives. For this task, I identify three relevant biblical narratives embedded within the Epistle of James: the story of Adam and Eve, the Binding of Isaac, and the suffering of Job. I suggest that these narratives serve as a hermeneutical testing ground for the author's cosmic framework. In the first instance, I argue that Gen 1–3 lies at the heart of Jas 1:13–18 and provides the author with a protological origin for supernatural and human agency. The author depicts a deep fracture within the human heart, native to humankind since the time of Adam and likewise vulnerable to the same demonic deception and human distrust in divine goodness as experienced by the first parents. A similar combination of demonic interference and human weakness threatens the religious faithfulness of the author's addressees. In defence of divine integrity, the author argues that God's goodness is unchanging, manifested both in the original creation and in the continued promise of eschatological renewal available to God's creatures. Whereas Gen 1–3 provides a biblical touchstone for James' theological sensibilities, Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac in Jas 2 and Job's trials in Jas 5 are more theologically problematic. The Abraham and Job narratives contain potentially ambiguous human and cosmic actions. In fact, the very act of reading these narratives could provoke an illegitimate human response ('did God really...?'), to which the author responds in the negative ('let no one say, 'God tests'). James' engagement with the Abraham and Job narratives therefore provides the final section of this dissertation. I argue that James shows both similarity and dissimilarity to the various interpretive responses detailed in Part 2. James' portrayal of Abraham and Job operates outside purely canonical boundaries and moves into the diverse traditional accounts of the

two patriarchal figures. James' Abraham is the defender of monotheism who passed ten trials as a demonstration of God's righteousness and was named God's friend. James' Job stands patiently and silently as the example of tested endurance. I show that the history of reception of Abraham and Job frequently unites these two figures, whether debating which man was the greatest example of righteous endurance, or assimilating characteristics of both narratives into a single, rewritten 'Jobraham' story of the ideal trial. I argue that James uses a similar literary technique of assimilating the Abraham and Job stories. Furthermore, I analyse the motivation for these 'Jobraham' narratives in both James and in the wider literature, arguing that many ancient texts show unease with certain implications of both the Job and Abraham narratives. Despite universal recognition of Abraham's exemplary patience under trial characterised especially by Abraham's refusal to 'speak words' against God, the canonical account of Abraham's test at the *Aqedah* allows for potentially damaging readings of the *dramatis personae* within the cosmic drama. In the *Aqedah*, God tests man directly, with no mention of intermediating cosmic forces. In contrast to the Abraham narrative, the Job story provides a famously robust cosmic drama with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. However, Job's narrative also portrays its human protagonist as potentially self-righteous and a 'speaker of words' against God's integrity. The inter-canonical reading of these two narratives was adopted in a number of interpretive strategies. Some Jewish sources debated whether Abraham or Job offered the better example of testing. Others, however, saw within these two narratives the potential for an exegetical solution that could solve a compromised cosmology on the one hand and a compromised anthropology on the other. Certain retellings of the Job story make heavy use of anthropological features drawn from traditional Abraham legends to suppress Job's less salutary characteristics. Likewise, retellings of Abraham's trials interweave language and imagery from Job's cosmic vision to mitigate the implications of a God who tests. In this manner, these two figures become inter-canonical interpretive solutions capable of solving a variety of theological and hermeneutical problems. I propose that this 'Jobraham' solution is likewise operative in James' hermeneutic. Within a discourse heavily dependent on the language and theology of probation, the author's appeal to both Tested Abraham and Patient Job is not unrelated. Rather, the author's desire to construct for his readers an example of the perfect, tested person and the perfect righteous God leads him to draw from both biblical narratives to suppress less-desirable traits and enhance other desirable features. The author's reworking of Job's character in conformity with Abraham's patience under trial results in the Patient Job of Jas 5 and provides insight into the author's statements elsewhere that his readers exhibit patience and proper speech under trial. The author's willingness to engage with the *Aqedah* in Jas 2 by appealing to both extra-canonical characteristics of Abraham and to a heightened demonology is explained by an assimilation of Job's cosmology into Abraham's trial. This well-attested interpretive strategy mitigates the divine role of Tester and corresponds to the author's theological declarations in Jas 1:13–14. In conclusion, the discourse of 'testing,' from antiquity to modernity, is fundamentally a matter of interpretation. The semantic definition of a 'test,' a 'trial,' or a 'temptation' is highly dependent on the metaphor of cosmic drama. Within ancient instantiations of Jewish interpretation, the divine, supernatural, and human agents of this drama vary, with the resulting cosmic framework applied to various interpretations of key biblical proof-texts. These twin poles of cosmic drama and biblical interpretation can be identified and compared throughout the ancient Jewish literature. When applied to the Epistle of James, we are able to demonstrate a shared concern to clarify the cosmic drama and interpret Scripture accordingly.

Preface

The opening section of the Epistle of James makes a number of declarations concerning the ambiguous term *πειρασμός*. The reader is to respond with joy when experiencing *πειρασμός* (1:2) and is blessed for having endured *πειρασμός* (1:12). However, the reader is not to claim that God *πειράζει* (1:13a) for God is *ἀπειραστος* (1:13b) and God does not *πειράζει* anyone (1:13c). Rather, *πειρασμός* is internalised, linked with the allure of personal desire (1:14), though the principle agent (*ὁ πειράζων*, as it were) remains ambiguous. These fourteen verses and the surrounding discourse raise a number of philological, theological, and exegetical questions.

Philologically, should one translate the semantic event encoded by *πειρασμός*/*πειράζειν*/*ἀπειραστος* as a *test*, a *temptation*, a *tribulation*, or a *trial*? Described metaphorically, does the author imagine here the proving ground of the athletic gymnasium, the crucible of the smelter or the kiln of the potter, the psychological enticement of demonic forces, the religious persecution of the martyr, or a courtroom prosecution? Is the metaphor consistent or does the author shift his conceit mid-discourse? If we are to answer these questions semantically, what are the controls that govern the available range of meaning? Further, if the semantic controls are theological/philosophical, then *whose* theology or philosophy are we to use in governing James' semantic meaning?

These philological, metaphorical, and semantic options, often debated within scholarly discussions of James, result in theological ambiguity. In 1:13c the author makes a

strong statement on the divine role: ‘God Himself *πειράζει* no one’. Does the author intent to say that God *never* *πειράζει* (at least insofar as how the author uses the term in Jas 1:2–14)? If God *is* exempt from the role of *ὁ πειράζων*, what are the implications for how the author understands the various roles within related cosmic drama: is *πειρασμός* generated entirely from within the human psyche (e.g., *ὑπὸ τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας*, 1:14) or are other external forces at work (e.g., *ὁ διάβολος* in 4:7)? Is *ὁ πειράζων* in James’ metaphor(s) a demonic temptress, the satanic prosecutor of the divine court, or an embedded, quasi-demonic entity inherent to the human condition?

Beyond these philological and theological ambiguities, moreover, there looms an often-overlooked exegetical problem within James’ discourse. Despite the theological declaration in 1:13 (*πειράζει δὲ [ὁ θεός] οὐδέν*) the author engages in a close reading of three famous biblical narratives that could be and historically have been used to refute this very theological declaration: the creation story of Gen 1–3 (Jas 1:15–18), the suffering of Job (Jas 5:7–11), and, most evocatively in Jas 2:21–24, Abraham’s near-sacrifice of Isaac that opens in LXX Gen 22:1 with the statement *ὁ θεὸς ἐπείραζεν τὸν Ἀβραάμ*. In light of James’ theological claim in 1:13, what can James’ reading of these famous probation narratives say about the author’s theological hermeneutic and about the exegetical expectations he vests in his readers?

This study will argue that semantics and philology alone are incapable of decoding the concept embedded within the author’s use of the term *πειρασμός*. Rather, the task of defining James’ language requires a deeper study of the cosmic roles in play and how the related cosmic drama manifests in the author’s reading of Scripture. The first task will be to deconstruct the notion that a modern systematic understanding of cosmic roles and a

modern hermeneutic for the interpretation of the Old Testament provide the appropriate grid to understand James. James' vision of the cosmic drama may not match our theology, and its hermeneutic may differ from our own reading strategies. Indeed, even within ancient Judaism we find a number of approaches to these two poles of theology and hermeneutic. Given the theological and hermeneutical distance between the modern reader and the author of James, how then are we to construct an appropriate theological and hermeneutic grid to which James may be compared?

My approach will be comparative, examining how the literature of Jewish antiquity asked similar questions and arrived at wide-ranging conclusions. Recent research has illuminated how authors in antiquity recognised and resisted a popular tendency that held God responsible for *πειρασμός*, identified God himself as *ὁ πειράζων*, and therefore placed God under *πειρασμός* through the indictment of divine integrity. One of the most common metaphors appropriated for this task in antiquity was that of the divine courtroom, depicted through the cosmic drama of prosecution, indictment, defence, and justice. The Jewish literature of the hellenistic period shows a wide range of opinions on the supernatural and human roles involved in this courtroom drama. Authors' readings of biblical probation narratives such as the temptation of Adam and Eve, Abraham's ten trials, Israel's wilderness tests, and Job's suffering become the biblical stage on which this cosmic drama unfolds. These interpretations prove to be diverse and at times contradictory, but they nevertheless reveal a shared concern to defend divine integrity, to identify the cosmic agent of *πειρασμός*, and to model an appropriate anthropological response.

This common theological and exegetical concern in ancient Jewish and Christian literature provides a model for our assessment of the Epistle of James. The author's fairly

conventional theological sensibilities on divine beneficence lead him to suppress the inculcating claim that God is ὁ πειράζων. The application of the metaphor of the drama of the cosmic law court proves helpful: while God does act as judge in the heavenly court (Jas 2:12; 4:12), the role of ὁ πειράζων is left either to a fractured anthropology that indicts God (Jas 1:14–15; 3:5–8), and/or else to external, supernatural actors (Jas 2:19; 3:15; 4:7). This perception of the cosmic stage leads to an exegetical encounter with the biblical narratives of Adam and Eve, Abraham, and Job. James both reads and in a sense rewrites his own version of these narratives according to his purposes. Guided by a confessional reading of Gen 1–3 that inculcates the rectitude of the All-Beneficent Creator, the author recasts the Abraham and Job narratives within an assimilating, intra-canonical hermeneutic to defend the Perfect Just God, to exemplify the Perfect Just Man, and to reveal the true identity of ὁ πειράζων. This exegetical activity substantiates James' theological vision, which in turn elucidates the metaphorical and finally the philological significance of πειρασμός in James.

PART I

Introduction and Methodology

CHAPTER 1

The Epistle of James and the Discourse of Probation

The modern conception of tests, trials, temptations, or tribulations is filtered through multi-layered influences that are both conscious and subconscious. One might think especially of Old Testament stories such as the Fall of Adam and Eve, or New Testament imagery such as the temptation of Christ in the gospel tradition, Paul's warring demonic powers (Eph 6:12), or Peter's Satan, the roaming, devouring lion (1 Peter 5:8). Of perhaps more subtle but even more widespread influence is the literary and popular reception and development of these concepts from Goethe to Marlowe and from Milton's 'Paradise' to Al Pacino's 'The Devil's Advocate'. These religious and literary influences populate a cosmic universe with divine, supernatural, and human actors playing a variety of roles. The western theological framework accesses this cosmic drama through a nuanced system of lexical and cognitive semantics, enabling one to distinguish the subtle differences between an 'Anfechtung' and a 'Versuchung', or a 'test' and a 'temptation'.

But what of those religious communities whose influences predate New Testament, medieval and modern literature? More specifically, what texts, traditions, legends, and myths populated the early Jewish instantiations of the cosmic narrative of probation with their various *dramatis personae*?¹ What semantics were employed to access this conceptual

¹Though I use the term 'probation' throughout this study in an attempt at avoiding the theological assumptions associated with 'trial', 'test', or 'temptation', one realises quickly that finding theologically unmarked language on the topic becomes an exercise in futility. I use 'probation' to denote any opportunity to prove religious faithfulness, irrespective of a demonic (e.g., 'temptation'), a divine (e.g., 'test') or a mundane source (e.g., 'trial').

universe? In other words, whether in modern or ancient literature, defining the event and actors of probation is fundamentally a question of interpretation.

In the Epistle of James we encounter one particular instantiation of this ancient Jewish theological and exegetical discourse. James reveals a particular viewpoint on the semantics, cosmic drama, and biblical hermeneutic of probation. In the following chapter I will examine James' language of *πειράζειν/δοκιμάζειν* in 1:2–4, 12–15 and the author's reading of relevant OT biblical narratives throughout the Epistle. Following a survey of past scholarly treatments, I will then argue that, beyond the semantic level, scholars have under-examined the manner in which James relies on a particular version of the cosmic drama and how these cosmic roles guide the author's reading of Scripture.

1.1. The Semantics of Probation in James

The Epistle of James displays two immediately available points of contact with the topic of probation: (1) a series of declarations in 1:2, 12–14 explaining the process and roles of probation, and (2) the interpretation of Old Testament narratives traditionally linked to this topic. First, let us examine James' use of language.

1.1.1. The Semantics of Probation

The Epistle follows the opening salutation with a statement on the beneficial nature of probation (1:2–3):

Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you encounter various probations (*πειρασμοῖς*), knowing that the proof of your faith (*τὸ δοκίμιον τῆς πίστεως*) produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete lacking nothing.

After a discussion of various topics probably denoting examples of such probations (e.g., a lack of wisdom, poverty, and wealth), in 1:12–14 the author returns to his initial opening frame:

Blessed (μακάριος) is the man who endures probation (πειρασμόν), for once he has been proved (δόκιμος γενόμενος) he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love him. Let no one say when undergoing probation (πειραζόμενος), 'I am being proved (πειράζομαι) by God'. For God is ἀπειραστός by evil (people), and He Himself proves (πειράζει) no one. Rather, each person is proved (πειράζεται) when he is baited and captured by his own desire (ὑπὸ τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας).

In 1:2–3, 12–14 the author contemplates challenges to religious faithfulness. On the one hand, the readers are to respond with joy, since these challenges initiate a potentially beneficial process (described by the term δοκιμion) that can result in the development of endurance and personal wholeness. In v. 12 the author continues to describe the beneficial results of enduring πειρασμός. In contrast to this generally positive tone, however, in vv. 13–14 the author shifts to a defence of divine integrity: those who experience such challenges to their religious faith (πειραζόμενος) are not to identify God as the agent provocateur (μηδεὶς λεγέτω . . . ἀπὸ θεοῦ πειράζομαι). Having used the noun πειρασμός in vv. 2, 12, the author now shifts to the participle πειραζόμενος and the verb πειράζειν to describe the probationary activity. Further declarations distance the divine actor: God is ἀπειραστος, and God Himself 'proves' no one (πειράζει δὲ αὐτὸς οὐδένα). Finally, the author offers an alternative to divine agency: the probationary process (πειράζεται) occurs by the agency of or through the instrument of the enticement and deception of 'one's own desire' (τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας).

In attempting to define the various actors, patients, and instruments in this text, the scholarly analysis of Jas 1:2–4 and 1:12–14 has focused on (1) identifying the lexical

meaning and semantic roles within the probationary event encoded by *πειρασμός/πειράζειν* and (2) whether the meaning and roles are consistent throughout the passage.² The various scholarly explanations and my problematisation of these matters are examined below in section 1.2. The following will serve to introduce the lexical and semantic issues involved.

- (1) The available Greek lexical data shows a number of possibilities for the relevant terms available to authors from the hellenistic period:

πειράζειν [n. *πειρασμός*] - (i) to make an effort to do something: to try, to attempt; (ii) to endeavour to discover the nature, character, or integrity of something: to try; to place on trial; to put to the test; (iii) to attempt to entrap through a process of inquiry or prosecution: to test or try; (iv) to entice to improper behaviour: to tempt; (v) to place under tribulation (in a religious, eschatological sense).³

ἀπείραστος [adj.] - The adjectival form of *πειράζειν*, *ἀπείραστος* draws from all of the above semantic possibilities, but in the negative, whether ontologically or ethically: (i) inexperienced, untried, untested; (ii) untestable, untemptable; (iii) when something can not or ought not be tested, tempted, placed under trial.⁴

Most scholarly discussion on Jas 1:2–15 has focused on determining the equivalent lexical term most appropriate to fit the semantic roles operative behind each occurrence of *πειρασμός/πειράζειν/ἀπείραστος*. That is to say, the lexical terms shift as translators and commentators attempt to communicate the

²In what follows, ‘lexical’ describes the terms used to translate *πειρασμός*, where ‘lexeme’ is the ‘minimal unit of language which has a semantic interpretation and embodies a distinct cultural concept’ (so Loos 2004 s.v. ‘lexeme’. Further, ‘semantic’ describes the implied roles of agent, patient, and instrument that lies behind a particular lexical term. Cf. Payne 1997, 47. Here, the semantic ‘agent’ is a person or thing who is the doer of an event, and the ‘patient’ is the person or thing that is affected by an event, undergoes a process, or experiences an event. Similarly ‘instrument’ is the object or tool used by the agent to affect the patient. Cf. Longacre 1983, 155–56; Larson 1984, 199–203.

³From Liddell Scott Jones s.v. *πειράζω*; cf. the helpful discussion in *TDNT*, vol. 6, p. 23–36, s.v. *πειρα*.

⁴Cf. Liddell Scott Jones s.v. *ἀπείραστος*.

intended ‘agent’ and ‘patient’ of probation. This tricky business of semantic equivalence is further complicated by the next point:

- (2) Does the author intend consistent semantic roles throughout the pericope, or does he insert a marked (or unmarked) shift in semantic roles at some point within the pericope? Translations and interpretive discourses frequently presume a semantic shift at some point, generally coded lexically as a move from a ‘test/trial’ to a ‘temptation.’ I argue below that this semantic shift has traditionally been provoked by a latent concern to clarify theologically appropriate roles for God, Satan, and humanity within the cosmic drama of probation.⁵

1.1.2. The Exegesis of Probation

Beyond the semantic possibilities available to Jas 1:2–14, the Epistle signals a strong point of biblical contact to the topic of probation through its reading of Old Testament narratives such as Adam and Eve, Abraham, and Job. While James’ discourse stands within the biblical tradition in some ways, echoing such widely available sentiment that God ‘ought not to be tested’ (ἀπειραστος, so Deut 6:6), nevertheless James’ statement that God *πειράζει* δὲ αὐτὸς οὐδένᾱ feels as though it runs blatantly contrary to what had become by the author’s

⁵Throughout this study I dwell on the various *dramatis personae* of testing, specifically the roles of God, angels, Satan, demons, and other intermediaries, and then on the human role. As my interests go beyond simply the divine role, the language of ‘theology of probation’ is overly narrow; a ‘philosophy’ or ‘cosmology’ of probation is likewise problematic, for while some of our literature is truly ‘philosophical’, others are so only in the broadest sense of the term. The term ‘cosmology’ encroaches confusingly into the terminology of wider scholarship: we are not discussing the makeup of the ancient cosmos, but rather focusing on questions of supernatural and human agency. With these cautions in mind, I will frequently use the language of ‘cosmic drama’ to describe the various supernatural and human roles in testing.

day normative Scripture:⁶

Exod 16:4	Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Watch, I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people are to go out, and they are to collect the day’s portion. This will happen so that I might test (πειράσω / אנסנו) them to see whether or not they will walk by my law.
Exod 20:20	And Moses said to them, “Take courage! For God has come to you in order to test (πειράσαι / נסות) you.
Deut 13:4	For the Lord God tests (πειράζει/בנסה) you, in order to know whether you love the Lord your God with the whole of your heart and with the whole of your soul.
Ps 26(25):2	Prove (δοκίμασόν) me, O Lord, and test (πειρασόν/נסיני) me; smelt (πύρωσον) my kidneys and my heart.
Jdt 8:25	On account of all these things, let us give thanks to the Lord, our God, who tests (πειράζει) us, just as he tested our fathers before us.
Wisd 3:5–6	Having been disciplined a little, they will be greatly benefited, because God tried (ἐπείρασεν) them and found them worthy of himself; as gold in the furnace, he tested (ἐδοκίμασεν) them, and as a whole burnt offering he accepted them.

Beyond these texts, which were in all likelihood available to both the author and the readers of James, of greater immediate relevance is the exegetical encounter at Jas 2:21–24 with perhaps the most prominent declaration of divine agency of probation in the Old Testament, namely the near-sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham. This story begins famously:

After these matters God ἐπείραξεν/נסה Abraam and said to him, ‘Abraam, Abraam!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’ (Gen 22:1)

Furthermore, the author also appeals to the sufferings of ‘patient Job’ in Jas 5:11, a

⁶The following translations are my own.

story often at the centre of ancient discussions on the cosmic agency of evil. A biblically conversant reader of James may well have asked, both at the initial apologetic of Jas 1:12–14 and then at Jas 2:21–24 and again at Jas 5:11, ‘Who then is the divine provocateur of Scripture?’

1.1.3. Summary of the Semantic and Exegetical Problem of Probation

The above semantic and exegetical points thus coalesce into a combination of linguistic and theological questions. What semantic roles should be understood within the event of *πειρασμός*? Is the agent of probation consistent or inconsistent? When James declares in 1:13 that *πειράζει δὲ [θεὸς] αὐτὸς οὐδένα*, does the author intend that God *never* *πειράζει*? If not, then when is the agent *ὁ πειράζων* to be identified as God and when is it an alternative agent? Using modern theological language, should the challenges to religious faithfulness be divided into *tests* of divine agency that when endured stimulate personal growth, spiritual *trials* or *tribulations* to be endured, and satanic *temptations* to be resisted? What are the controls for determining these divisions? Finally, how does this opening discourse relate to the author’s subsequent reading of biblical narrative?

As I will now argue, ancient and modern translators and commentators have primarily shouldered the task of identifying appropriate lexical terms and semantic roles of probation. However, most have given minimal consideration to the Epistle’s portrayal of the cosmic drama of probation as a whole, while also failing to attend to the embedded exegetical questions.

1.2. History of Scholarship

The popular and scholarly reception of the Epistle of James reveals conflicting opinions of how to interpret the Epistle's semantics and hermeneutics of probation.

1.2.1. James and the History of the Semantics

The history of New Testament translation reveals a long history of wrestling with the wide semantic range available to the Greek term *πειράζειν*. Ancient languages, especially those sharing a common linguistic base with Greek or Hebrew (e.g., the Coptic Bible and the Syriac Peshitta), as well as the Latin Vulgate, simply default to a unified lexeme:

Version	Verse 2	Verse 12	Verse 13	Verse 14
Greek	πειρασμοῖς	πειρασμόν	πειραζόμενος . . . πειράζομαι . . . ἀπείραστός . . . πειράζει	πειράζει
Peshitta	ܡܝܬܬܐ	ܡܝܬܬܐ	ܡܝܬܬܐ ܡܝܬܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ	ܡܝܬܬܐ
Coptic	ⲉⲁⲛⲡⲓⲣⲁϥⲙⲟϥ	ⲉⲛⲟⲩⲡⲓⲣⲁϥⲙⲟϥ	ⲉⲩⲉⲣⲡⲓⲣⲁⲩⲛ ⲡⲉⲧⲉⲣⲡⲓⲣⲁⲩⲛ ⲉⲣⲡⲓⲣⲁⲩⲛ ⲉⲣⲡⲓⲣⲁⲩⲛ	ⲉⲩⲉⲣⲡⲓⲣⲁⲩⲛ
Vulgate	temptationibus	temptationem	temptatur temptor intemptator temptat	temptatur

Later translations, however, demonstrate a desire to clarify the semantics through the use of various lexemes. As a result, a wide range of available translation equivalents begin to appear in the dominant Western European languages.

Version	Verse 2	Verse 12	Verse 13	Verse 14
Early Printed Bibles				
The Luther Bible (1534)	Anfechtungen	die Anfechtung	versucht . . . versucht . . . versucht zum Bösen . . . versucht	versucht
The Olivetan Bible (1535)	tentatios	tentation	tête, tête, tête, tente	tête
The Bishop's Bible (1568) / The Authorised Version (1611)	temptations	temptation	tempted . . . tempted . . . tempted . . . tempteth	tempted
Modern Printed Bibles				
Revised Standard Version (1971)	trials	trial	tempted . . . tempted . . . be tempted with evil . . . tempts	tempted
New American Bible (1971)	various trials	temptation	temptation . . . tempted . . . subject to temptation to evil . . . tempts no one	tempted
New International Version (1984)	trials	trial	tempted . . . tempting . . . tempted . . . tempt	tempted
New Revised Standard Version (1989)	trials	temptation	tempted . . . tempted . . . tempted by evil . . . tempts	tempted
New Jerusalem Bible (1990)	trials	trials	put to the test . . . tempting me . . . tempted. . . put to the test	put to the test
Nouvelle Version Second Révisée (1978)	épreuves	la tentation	tenté . . . tente . . . tenté . . . tente	enté

La Biblia de las Américas (1997)	pruebas	la prueba	tentado . . . tentado . . . tentado por el mal . . . tienta	tentado
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The lexemes used by modern Bible translations represent various understandings of the semantic roles in play. The English translations typically render a ‘trial’ in v. 2, with some question as to whether a shift to ‘temptation’ occurs in either v. 12 or v. 13. English translations dependent on the Bishop’s Bible such as the Authorized Version follow the tradition of the Vulgate in unifying their semantic emphasis to ‘temptation’.

The history of Bible translations is mirrored by the scholarly discussion. While the question has been surprisingly absent from monograph-length treatments, the focus of the commentary tradition has been on decoding the semantic roles within the *πειρασμός* word group in 1:2–14. Traditionally, an underlying theological apologetic has guided the semantic descriptions. In modern scholarship the question is also framed by theories of the structural coherence of the pericope or of James as a whole. A brief survey of the scholarly discussion serves to illustrate these points.

1.2.1.1. Structure and Semantics of Jas 1:2–14

Many scholars turn to the question of structural coherence of 1:2–15 when determining the semantic unity of the *πειρασμός/πειράζειν* word-group.⁷ Dibelius’ structurally minimalist position that reads the Epistle as a series of loosely connected paraenetic sections led him to influentially describe an ‘obvious and not accidental resumption’ of the terms, but with a semantic unity that is nevertheless ‘only superficial’.⁸ In

⁷On the *πειράζειν* word-group as a biblicism cf., e.g., Seesmann, *TDNT* VI, 26–34. Allison 2013, 147 considers the term to refer to any test of religious faithfulness.

Dibelius' view, vv. 2, 12, 13–14 are three independent sections, unconnected by anything more than simple catchword, thereby requiring no unity of semantic meaning.⁹

Against Dibelius, however, subsequent scholarship has argued for a tighter literary unity both in this section and throughout James, a unity that requires giving additional consideration to the semantic connections in vv. 2, 12, 13–14.¹⁰ McKnight argues accordingly that 'testing' forms one of the central themes for the epistle (noting 2:1–7; 4:13–17; 5:1–6), with chapter 1 stating the purpose for 'trials' (1:2–4), the proper response to 'trials' (1:3–8), the form of 'trials' (1:9–11), and how God relates to 'trials' (1:12–18).¹¹ Frankemölle goes so far as to argue that the concept of *πειράζειν* unifies not only the structure of 1:2–1:18, but also the argument of the entire Epistle.¹² Johnson notes the theological question brought into play throughout chapter 1: 'if God is an active agent in the process by which humans are proven worthy of the crown of life, is it not fair to place responsibility for every sort of testing and temptation on God?'¹³ Allison argues that the question answered in v. 13–14 ('does God do evil things?') arises logically out of v. 12, where evil results in good; James first addresses 'suffering', then turns to the 'problem of evil'.¹⁴

⁸Dibelius 1976, 71.

⁹Cf. Dibelius 1976, 90; followed by, among others, Mußner 1987, 58.

¹⁰Note Davids 1982, 13, *contra* Dibelius, stating 'the age of the string-of-pearls conception of the letter is past, and its essential theological unity is ready for exploration'. Cf. Martin 1988, 13; Isaacs 2000, 183; Johnson 1995, 183.

¹¹McKnight 2011.

¹²Frankemölle 1990; as well as Frankemölle 1989, 21–24; rejected by Popkes 1997, 92, who labels it a 'symptom of an ever resurgent attempt to discover an external master-plan or pattern of the Epistle'. Similar 'unified' readings include those of von Lips 1990a; Johnson 1995, 14; Francis 1970; Martin 1988, 14, who reads a 'reaction to trials' in both chapter 1 and in chapter 5; Isaacs 2000, 183; Davids 1982, 35; and Bauckham 1988, 307, for whom the letter's general theme of *πειρασμός* ties the epistle together; also Versepunt 1998, 703–705.

¹³Johnson 1995, 203.

¹⁴Allison 2013, 225.

When scholars allow for a general structural unity from 1:2–14, there ensues a discussion on how to identify the event described by the ‘test/trial/temptation.’ Some scholars have understood vv. 2–4 to treat the physical persecutions of the early Church.¹⁵ Sophie Laws attempts to define suffering broadly in terms of economic and social disadvantages.¹⁶ Nuria Calduch-Benages compares Ben Sira 2:1 and James 1 as witnesses to a society in turmoil, lacking wisdom (1:5–6), faith (1:6b–8) and solidarity between poor and rich (1:9–11).¹⁷ Others perceive a context of near-apostasy sparking James’ demands for faithful perseverance to the ideals of Jewish monotheism.¹⁸ Davids sees this faithfulness as including endurance (ὑπομένειν) through ‘all sorts of evil for God’s cause’ (cf. 4 Macc 16:19), evils not necessarily due to personal human sin but rather stemming from various external challenges to Christian loyalty.¹⁹ Perhaps such trials are eschatological: Allison wonders whether the ‘trials’ in Jas 1:2–12 can be read as paralleling the great tribulation or messianic woes that precede the return of Jesus seen in the Gospels, Paul, 1 Peter and Revelation.²⁰

Despite the arguments for a logical connection between 1:2, 12, 13–14, nevertheless most scholars continue to argue for a semantic shift that occurs either in 1:12 or 1:13. Most understand vv. 2–3 (and probably v. 12) to reference common ‘tests’ or ‘trials’ enacted though divine agency, in contrast to v. 13ff where psychological or spiritual enticement to evil thoughts and sin, i.e., ‘temptations’ are enacted without divine agency.²¹ Allison notes an

¹⁵E.g., Martin 1988, 13–15 who sees a ‘persecuted community under oppression for one’s religious convictions’.

¹⁶Laws 1980, 3 noting 2:7; 4:7–10 and 5:1–6.

¹⁷Calduch-Benages 2005, 258; cf. Frankemölle 1989, 26.

¹⁸E.g., Bauckham 2004; Johnson 1995; Kessler 2005, 60, who cites broad parallels in Sir 2:1–6; 4:17–18, 4 Macc 1:11; 9:30; 17:12; *T. Jos.* 2:7.

¹⁹So Davids 1982, 81–82.

²⁰Allison 2013, 225; cf. similar descriptions in Dubis 2002; Pitre 2006; *contra* Schnider 1987, 27.

²¹So Ropes 1916a; Laws 1980; Johnson 1995. The argument that v. 2 and v. 12 function as an *inclusio*

‘imbedded distinction’ between ‘God testing or trying with hope of a good outcome, vs. the devil who tempts with nothing save an evil end in view.’²²

This shift between lexemes and their underlying semantic roles is almost universally justified by a corresponding grammatical shift from the substantive *πειρασμός* (vv. 2, 3, 12) to the verbal *πειράζειν* (vv. 13–14).²³ With this notion of a semantic shift in view, the options for translating 1:13 come down to any number of variations. For example,

πειράζειν as ‘test’ only: ‘No one, when tested, should say, “I am being tested by God”, for God does not test anyone. For each one is tested by his own desire.’

πειράζειν as either ‘test’ or ‘tempt’: ‘No one, when tested/tempted, should say, “I am being tested/tempted by God”, for God does not test/tempt anyone.’

πειράζειν as ‘tempt’ only: ‘No one, when tempted, should say, “I am being tempted by God”, for God does not tempt anyone.’

Johnson accordingly explains ‘testing’ as the external threat in view through v. 12, whereas vv. 13–15 examine the ‘internal psychological division that outward trials create’. For Johnson, the verb *πειράζειν* in v. 13 begins the semantic shift from the testing of vv. 2, 12, and by v. 14 ‘the author has so emphasised the psychological dimension of temptation, being rooted in human desire’ that the reading of ‘being tempted’ is required.²⁴ Moo alternates the lexemes in vv. 13–14: ‘Never, when you are being put to the test, say, “God is tempting me”;

opening and closing the first sub-unit and therefore referencing the same probation is argued, e.g., by Isaacs 2000, 183.

²²Allison 2013, 147.

²³Cf. the authors cited in what follows.

²⁴Johnson 1995, 192, who notes that dividing *πειράζειν* into ‘trial’ and ‘temptation’ mandates a similar distinction between the *ὑπομονή* in vv. 3 and 12. As Martin 1988, 33 argues, in 1:2–8 trials or tests are to be ‘endured’ with fortitude; in 1:13–15 temptations are to be ‘resisted’ with steadfast resolution (reading 4:7). Isaacs 2000, 184 inserts the readers’ role in *πειρασμοί*: ‘in the opening section of 1:2–12 there is nothing to suggest trials occur as a result of one’s own sins; however, in 1:13–19a inner temptations result as punishment for sin.’

God cannot be tempted by evil, and he does not put anybody to the test.²⁵ Though noting that such semantic distinctions were not always so clear cut in Jewish literature, nevertheless Allison urges that such discussions do not ‘obliterate the distinction in James between a demonic trial and a divine test.’²⁶

While the majority of scholars implicitly suggests a variation of semantic roles in play through their use of lexemes, a minority has attempted to read a unified semantic meaning across 1:2–14. Most notably among modern scholars, Peter Davids has insisted on a consistent translation of ‘test’ and ‘testing’ from vv. 2–14. Davids suggests that in v. 13 the author describes the ‘tests’ of vv. 2, 12 as an ‘enticement to abandon God’ or ‘any impulse to abandon the faith.’²⁷ On the other hand, the influence of the Authorised Version frequently led Anglophone scholars to translate throughout using ‘temptations.’²⁸

1.2.1.2. The Semantics of Ἀπειραστός in Jas 1:13

Many scholars have recognised the problematic semantics of the adjective Ἀπειραστός in 1:13. The Vulgate reads this in an active sense: God does not tempt to evil (*Deus enim intentator malorum est*). However, this translation has typically been rejected by modern translations and scholars as an ungrammatical reading of a semantically passive Ἀπειραστός. There remain three possibilities:

²⁵Moo 2000, 72.

²⁶So Allison 2013, 225 who notes the ambiguous metaphors in vv. 2–12. Similarly, Laws 1980, 69 sees an intentional worldplay, and wonders whether the translation should likewise be left ambiguous.

²⁷Davids 1982, 81–82. Davids’ argument is supported by Davids 1978 where he reads the Ἀπειραστος in v. 13 as ‘God ought not to be tested’, drawing from the divine commandment in Deut 6:16 and from the Wilderness narrative where Israel tested God.

²⁸E.g., Matthew Henry’s Commentary on James.

- (1) 'God cannot be solicited/tempted to evil'.²⁹
- (2) 'God is inexperienced in evil'.³⁰
- (3) 'God ought not to be tested by evil persons'.³¹

These three options are grammatically and semantically permissible. Davids makes an argument for the final option based on the well-known appeal to the divine command of Deut 6:16, where the Israelites were commanded not 'to test the Lord your God'. In this translation, when the author of James describes a person who illegitimately accuses God, the author recalls the Deuteronomy text and responds with a biblical rebuke, 'God ought not to be tested by evil people'.³² This argument is dismissed by Allison based on the logic that James would not revert back to the concept of 'testing' once he has already shifted to 'temptation'.³³ With ἀπείραστος as well, then, the lexical decision falls back on what amounts to a semantic thimble rig.

1.2.1.5. Anthropological Features of Probation

Finally, alongside the discussion of divine or supernatural agency, the commentaries exhibit frequent debates on the anthropological nature of probation. After rejecting divine agency in the πειράζειν of 1:13–14, the author states that each person is πειράζεται 'when baited and captured by one's own desire (ἐπιθυμία)'. Scholars have debated the precise agent the author intends to substitute for divine agency. Some argue for an external demonic agent that acts upon the human psyche while others argue for a purely internal anthropological

²⁹ E.g. Laws 1980, 71; Mußner 1987, 87; Dibelius 1976, 121–122.

³⁰ So Hort 1909, 23.

³¹ Spitta 1896a, 33–34; Davids 1978.

³² On the widespread appeal to the testing narrative of Deut 6:16, cf. Gerhardsson 1966, 28–31.

³³ So Allison 2013, 242. Note, however, that Allison's position must beg the question of whether a semantic shift to 'temptation' has already taken place in v. 13.

agent that ‘tempts itself’. For example Kuhn sees the moral incitements in vv. 12–15 as under the authority of ὁ πειράζων, ‘the Tempter’ who seduces people to evil ways.³⁴ Against this, Davids argues that the author intentionally removes any external excuse for human failure.³⁵ With Davids, Hanson prefers to read the ἐπιθυμία as an indication of James’ anthropology, something akin to the rabbinic evil *yetzer*, by which James actively resists Greek notions of determinism.³⁶ Reading in the opposite direction to Hanson, Kloppenborg imagines a context of psychagogy and the unification of the human mind influenced by popular notions of hellenistic philosophy.³⁷ Other scholars argue for a mixture of external and internal agents of evil, for example DeLuca who argues from Christian and rabbinic sources that the evil inclination might be identified with the Satan who incites humankind to sin.³⁸

1.2.1.6. Summary of the Semantics of Probation

The semantics of probation and the related lexical choices within both translations of James and in scholarly discourses have generally been based on the interpreter’s understanding of the differences between ‘trials’ and ‘temptations’. Scholars have identified differences in semantic roles based partially on grammatical discourse markers, but primarily

³⁴Cf. Kuhn 1958, 95–96, 111, also considered by Dibelius 1976, 93, against which, cf. Martin 1988, 35; Isaacs 2000, 190.

³⁵Davids 1978, 392.

³⁶Hanson 1979, 526. A *yetzer* concept in James is expanded upon significantly by Marcus 1982, 606–621, though see my critiques of Marcus’ conclusions in Part 2 below.

³⁷Kloppenborg 2010.

³⁸DeLuca 2006a, citing *b. Ber.* 60b for its parallels to temptation in the Lord’s Prayer and the rousing of ἐπιθυμία by the provision of divine commandments; also noting similar concepts in Romans 7. On the parallels to Paul, see Jewett 1971; Dibelius 1976. Isaacs 2000 argues against both demonic influence and the rabbinic *yetzer* or any specific theory of evil in James, proposing instead a ‘practical repudiation’ of God’s authorship of temptation.

on apologetic notions of a God who ‘tests’ but does not ‘tempt’. However, care should be taken to establish appropriate controls on when such semantic shifts take place in the discourse, and to ensure that the underlying cosmic drama that governs these semantics is native to the Epistle of James and not merely a manifestation of the apologetic impulse of the modern interpreter.

1.2.2. Probation and Biblical Hermeneutics

Most scholarly treatments of the concept of probation in James have focused on defining appropriate translation equivalents for the semantics of *πειρασμός* in 1:2–14. Treatments of the topic beyond chapter 1 have been limited to the question of whether probation provides a unifying structural ‘theme.’³⁹ Only a few scholars have noted the potential for latent biblical/exegetical tensions in the author’s appeal to divine probation narratives from the OT in 2:21–24 and 5:9–11.

Some scholars have noticed a potential conflict between the author’s theology and hermeneutic, only to press this point to the expense of literary integrity or theological coherence. The assumption here is that an author would not intentionally claim that *πειράζει* *δὲ θεός οὐδένα* only to undermine his theodicy through an appeal to OT narratives. Rather, such an aporia either reveals multiple and conflicting sources or traditions in James, or else serves as evidence of the author’s rather weak and underdeveloped theological framework.⁴⁰ Dibelius’ source-critical model of James amplifies the theological tension between 1:12–14

³⁹Note especially Frankemölle 1990 above. Lockett 2008 has offered an initial attempt at describing the cosmology of James, with a brief mention of the role of God, Satan and Gehenna. DeLuca 2006a has made comparisons with the theological sensibilities of the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*; Calduch-Benages 2005 has made comparisons with the theological sensibilities of Sirach.

⁴⁰Notably Dibelius 1976; Popkes 1997; Popkes 1999.

and 2:21–24 accordingly.⁴¹

More commonly, however, most scholars simply gloss the Epistle's statements on probation in a manner that removes the biblical tension from the Epistle's discourse commensurate with the modern interpreter's theological framework. As with the semantic decisions in 1:2–14, the assumption is that while God may test his people (as he did with the Old Testament forefathers in the wilderness), nevertheless God does not 'tempt one to evil things'. For example, while McKnight recognises the biblical-theological tension embedded within the semantics of *πειράζειν* and acknowledges that an apologetic informs his own reading, he overtly mitigates this tension:

It is not possible to deny that God 'tests' in scriptural Judaism: Abraham and Isaac in Genesis 22 and the wilderness wanderings of Exodus-Deuteronomy are driven by such a theme, and Job is filled with it. Jewish apocalyptic literature often sees tribulation as a testing ground to prove the fidelity of God's people. . . . Though some think the word *peirazo* [in 1:13] means 'test,' I find it nearly impossible to think James would deny that God tests — and what he does deny is inherent to his response in 1:13b-18. God regularly tests in Scripture (see Gen 3:12-13; 22; Job 1:12; 2:6; 1 Chron 21:1; 2 Sam 24:1; Prov 19:3; Sir 15:11-20; Jubilees 17:16; Sir 15:11-20) [but he does not tempt].⁴²

Informed by the biblical/theological tension in the text, McKnight's translation of *πειράζειν* in 1:14 must shift towards the semantics of 'temptations'. The resulting reading of James mitigates the theological tension by allowing a role for God as tester but not as tempter. A similar sensibility, though generally without acknowledging the biblical tensions involved, has guided the earliest commentators on James to distinguish between 'testing for

⁴¹So Dibelius 1976, 90.

⁴²McKnight 2011, 17, 115.

virtue', in the domain of God, and 'tempting to evil', within the domain of Satan.⁴³

Against McKnight's claim above, however, the literary record of 'scriptural Judaism' is full of precisely such claims that God does not 'test'. Popular expansions of the Old Testament (the so-called Rewritten Bible genre), the philosophical discourses of Philo of Alexandria, Second Temple pseudepigrapha, rabbinic literature, and Christian discourses provide numerous discussions on whether God could in fact 'test for virtue' without impinging on divine integrity.⁴⁴ In James' discourse, then, Burchard wonders whether the interlocutor in 1:13, as the antagonist who indicts divine integrity, operates for the author as a 'pseudo-Job', a well-known foil who embodies the dissenting theological voices.⁴⁵ Dale Allison is joined by Peter Davids and John Kloppenborg in recognising, given the presence of such tensions within the wider Jewish discourses, that James as well may share a similar theological and hermeneutical sensitivity to such charges.⁴⁶ Of these, Davids proceeds the farthest in correlating James' theological declaration in 1:12 with its biblical hermeneutic. Davids argues from an appeal to *Jubilees* that James' reading of the OT probation narratives has been informed by traditions in which Satan acts as ὁ πειράζων, to the exclusion of divine agency. In Davids' reading:

[James] assumes this tradition so completely that he apparently does not imagine that his readers might not know the tradition. When he writes πειράζει δὲ αὐτὸς

⁴³E.g., the Vulgate; Dionysius of Alexandria, *Commentarium in Lucam* XXII, 46 (PG 10: 1596); note the full list of similar interpretations in Cantinat 1973, 89.

⁴⁴Allison 2013, 221 notes as much in his response to McKnight, urging caution that ancient hermeneutical sensibilities may not be those of modern interpreters. A number of the texts cited by Allison provide the basis for our comparative investigation that follows in Part 2.

⁴⁵Burchard 2000, 71. Similarly, Allison 2013, 221 ponders whether the language of 1:12, as recalling and restating the basic content of 1:2–4, echoes the Job narrative that would be cited explicitly in Jas 5:11–12.

⁴⁶Cf. Davids 1982, 80–82; Davids 1993; Kloppenborg 2010; Allison 2013, 221.

θεὸς οὐδέναι (“God tests no one”), he apparently feels no tension between this and Gen 22.1.⁴⁷

While Davids’ approach takes seriously the biblical/theological tensions in James, there are, as I argue below, significant problems with his hermeneutical solution both on source-critical grounds and due to Davids’ disregard for the rhetorical tension created within the author’s discourse.

1.3. The Problem with the Semantics in Jas 1:2–14

In sum, considerable scholarly effort has been spent on defining the appropriate terminology and implicitly the semantic roles of probation in Jas 1:2–14. However, numerous unanswered questions remain. In what follows, I suggest that the common scholarly suggestion that grammatical markers in James’ discourse indicate a shift in semantic roles lacks meaningful controls. Rather, the assignment of semantic value to James’ use of probationary language often seems arbitrary, or at best guided by the modern interpreter’s theological predilections. I will argue that there is value in recognising the semantic ambiguity in Jas 1:2–14, and suggest that decoding the semantic roles of probation requires a more comprehensive effort than has been taken to date. I then conclude this chapter by suggesting a way forward.

1.3.1. The Problem of Semantic Controls

With regard to the internal evidence for marking a semantic shift from a ‘trial’ to a ‘temptation’, the argument that such an intention is marked by the author’s use of a noun (πειρασμός) in v. 12 but a corresponding verb, participle, and adjective in vv. 13–14 is vague

⁴⁷Davids 1993, 230.

and lacking in controls. To reframe the argument: if the author had *not* intended a series of semantic shifts between vv. 2, 12, 13, and 14, what preferable *unmarked* lexical, grammatical or syntactical arrangement would have been used? On closer examination, the argument that grammatical changes in 1:12–14 mark a reassignment of semantic event and roles seems little more than a thin legitimisation of the interpreter's own solution to a theological or biblical tension in the text, a solution invariably well-stocked with the interpreter's theological and hermeneutical predilections.

1.3.2. The Value of Semantic Ambiguity for Author and Reader

While the impulse for theological clarification and application is understandable, in this case it has often had the unfortunate result of removing a marked theological and hermeneutical tension common to Jewish exegetical discourses. If we allow that Jas 1:2–14 offers no clear internal markers to indicate a shift of semantic meaning, there are reasons to consider the rhetorical weight of the resulting semantic ambiguity. For example, we should consider whether such semantic ambiguities and resulting theological tensions would have been available to the author and his recipients. The author's awareness of such a tension with regard to divine agency is signalled by the insertion of the interlocutor in 1:13 and the following rebuttal in 1:14–18. If such a concern lies in the margins of the remainder of the discourse, this may contribute to the author's extended defense of God as just judge developed in the remainder of the Epistle (e.g., Jas 2:12; 4:11–12; 5:9).

Likewise, the original audience may also have had access to such theological and hermeneutical tensions. As I will argue below, similar questions on the agent, patient, and instrument of probation are widespread in the Jewish literature of the Hellenistic period.

With the reader's concerns in mind, we should consider whether a series of dialogical events take place between author and reader as the text unfolds. For example, after the author states 'consider it joy when encountering *πειρασμός*' in v. 2, the reader may wonder 'but what are these benefits', to which the author responds with a clarification of the 'blessing' and 'crown of life' that await those who endure. When the reader then wonders 'should God stand responsible for such *πειρασμός*?', the author mirrors this claim and follows with an apologetic to refute such thinking: 'God *πειράζει οὐδέν*'. When corresponding examples of biblical narratives then jump to the reader's mind, the author responds with a nuanced reading of these narratives.⁴⁸ This reader-aware approach may offer a different result than the interpretive impulse to clarify (and often to nullify) the theological tensions that arise as the discourse unfolds. If we are to consider the full discourse dynamics between original author and audience, this semantic tension should be taken into consideration rather than reflexively mitigated.

1.4. A Way Forward: Cosmic Drama and Biblical Hermeneutics

How then does the modern interpreter avoid configuring James' semantic framework of probation according to one's own presuppositions or in an uncontrolled manner? I suggest that an analysis of two related features that run throughout the Epistle's discourse may offer a way forward: (1) the metaphor of cosmic drama, specifically within the divine law-court; and (2) the interpretation of biblical narratives of probation. As a control mechanism, these two features of James' discourse may be compared against the spectrum of thought found in ancient Judaism.

⁴⁸This dialogical style is made explicit in both 1:13 and in 2:18–20.

1.4.1. *The Metaphor of Cosmic Drama*

The scholarly impulse (and perhaps the professional and confessional necessity!) to make explicit lexical decisions on the nature of probation in James 1:2, 12–14 unavoidably narrows the range of available metaphors to explain event, agent, and patient: the test of the potter’s kiln, the purification of the smelter’s fire, the discipline of the study hall, and the prosecution of the courtroom each carry their own nuance. However, the act of defining the language of probation before carefully examining the characters that populate James’ cosmic universe of probation is to place the semantic cart before the exegetical horse. It is precisely the inherent volatility and instability of the language of divine, satanic or human roles that invites a dialectical, theologically informed reading of these concepts in James. Rather than allowing the language of probation to dictate the metaphor, we may find in James an operative metaphor that guides our choice of language.

If we delay the semantic decision in Jas 1:2–14, we can allow for maximum flexibility when interrogating the author’s operative metaphor. In Part 2 and Part 3 of this thesis, I appropriate one particular metaphor, namely that of cosmic drama, to examine the various semantic roles of probation. Throughout the Epistle, the author shows himself to be deeply invested in the *dramatis personae* of probation.

With respect to James’ concern for the divine actor, the most prominent statement is that of 1:12–13 where the interlocutor and the author present differing views of divine agency.⁴⁹ Against the interlocutor’s indictment, the author presents God as consistent and true (1:5; 2:19), all-beneficent (1:16–18), the trustworthy judge who stands acquitted of

⁴⁹On this passage, see most recently Heath 2013.

human charges (2:12–13; 4:12; 5:4; 5:9). In these places, and throughout James, the metaphor of cosmic drama takes on the features of the heavenly law-court. The author likewise maintains a place for other supernatural actors that interfere with human faithfulness. The wisdom that comes from God is contrasted against a wisdom from below described as ‘earthly, natural and demonic’ (3:15). Submission to God is contrasted with fellowship with the devil, who is to be actively resisted (4:7). When James removes God from the role of active agent, does he transfer these responsibilities to these external cosmic forces that act within or against the human psyche? Or, does the author embed this responsibility entirely within the human condition? The extent to which these supernatural actors play a marked role as either general antagonist or specifically a courtroom prosecutor will be examined below.

With respect to the human actors in this cosmic drama, the author of James makes a number of statements on the compromised human heart. The concept of the ‘double-souled person’ (διψυχος) is prominent at two points in the Epistle. In 1:8 the divided soul buckles under challenges to religious faithfulness. In 4:8 the divided soul divides its loyalties between friendship with the world and friendship with God, apparently under satanic influence (4:7). These double-souled persons are commanded to ‘purify their hearts’ (4:8), while in 1:21 it is the ‘implanted word’ that is capable of ‘healing the soul’ (similarly 5:19–20). In 1:13 probation is linked closely to human desire (ἐπιθυμία). The ἐπιθυμία functions here either as the instrument of probation for an unnamed πειράζων or else substitutes for God as the actual, personified πειράζων embedded within the person. More positively, however, the author expresses confidence in human perfection in 1:2–4 and 2:14, as well as extending possibilities for divine friendship in 2:14 and 4:4.

The identification of these cosmic roles opens up a number of questions that are common to ancient Jewish discourses. To what extent is God transcendent or accessible? Other Jewish authors who, like the author of James, are clearly concerned about the theological implications of divine immanence and agency, nevertheless demonstrate remarkable flexibility in their portrayals of God in the cosmic drama. Likewise, Jewish conclusions on demonic or satanic actors are varied, ranging from cosmic dualism to the rejection of demonic agency altogether. Finally, in placing the human actor within this cosmic drama, does the the author adopt, to take one example, a view of a base and delinquent anthropology that is to be restrained, cultivated, and reformed through appropriate pedagogical models and psychagogy?⁵⁰ Or, is the human heart compromised by a quasi-demonic enemy, something akin to the rabbinic evil *yetzer* embedded within the human condition that seeks to co-operate with satanic forces to destroy its host? These and other instantiations of the cosmic drama found within ancient Judaism should cause us significant pause in applying a particular theological framework to the modern interpretation of James absent a careful investigation of the Epistle's cosmology.

1.4.2. Biblical Interpretation

A second feature that provides us with an interpretive window into James' view of probation is its reading of OT probation narratives. When we examine the Jewish reception of the Creation, the *Aqedah*, Job, and other narratives of probation, we find that these interpretations are deeply informed by the authors' operative cosmic frameworks. Therefore, just as one should not make assumptions with regard to a particular instantiation of the

⁵⁰Adopting the language of Kloppenborg 2010.

cosmic drama of probation in Judaism, so also should care be taken to constrain one's hermeneutical expectations— indeed, these two features are closely linked. Therefore, these twin considerations of cosmic drama and biblical hermeneutic will inform my ensuing investigation. I will focus my efforts on overtly reconstructing James' cosmic drama, imagining how human, demonic, and divine actors populate the cosmic roles, and finally in assessing how these cosmic roles inhabit James' reading of Scripture. Only then will I attempt to map this cosmic and interpretive framework semantically in Jas 1:2–14.

1.4.3 Instantiations of Jewish Interpretation

As a method for controlling my descriptions of cosmic drama and biblical hermeneutic in James, I will compare features in James against a broad spectrum of Jewish works that exhibit similar concerns. The theological and hermeneutical tensions described above are not of James' making. Rather, they appear throughout Jewish antiquity. Authors across a wide spectrum of social, religious, and literary backgrounds mitigated divine agency, alternately heightening and diminishing the internal anthropological and external supernatural roles, while applying their theological conclusions to their interpretation of biblical texts. This project will therefore proceed in two further parts. Part 2 will use the metaphor and *dramatis personae* of cosmic drama and its impact on biblical interpretation to demonstrate the spectrum of thought in ancient Judaism. Part Three will then insert the Epistle of James within this spectrum of thought.

However, before proceeding to Part 2, it is necessary to construct an appropriate model by which other Jewish literature can be analysed and usefully compared with the Epistle of James. This model must be methodologically rigorous, broad enough to cover the

available spectrum of thought in ancient Judaism, but sufficiently limited so as to remain useful. Chapter 2 presents this model, to which we now turn.

CHAPTER 2

Comparative Methodology and Historical Models

2.1. Constructing an Analytic/Comparative Framework

As I have argued above, a helpful control to examining the concept of probation in the Epistle of James will be to place James within a spectrum of thought available to ancient Judaism. I proposed to focus this comparison specifically on two related aspects: the *dramatis personae* of probation and the manifestation of this cosmic drama within the interpretation of testing narratives. While numerous sources in antiquity offer general comparisons in some aspects of their cosmic drama or their hermeneutic, I will limit my comparison to sources that match questions of divine, cosmic, and human roles in probation with their reading of Old Testament probation narratives.

However, some might wonder whether this comparative approach already begs a significant methodological question: can a range of ancient sources provide meaningful comparisons to the Epistle of James, without resorting to an uncontrolled ‘parallelomania’?⁵¹ What sources are appropriate for the task? Scholars hold entrenched and conflicting views on the Epistle of James’ historical situation as well as the sociological and theological makeup of its religious community. In situating James’ thought, scholars must choose whether to limit comparisons to sources that share its basic, theoretical provenance, or to widen the comparison to include sources that lie outside a particular reconstruction of James’ historical, religious, and social occasion. Is it possible to identify works in antiquity

⁵¹That is, avoiding the pitfalls famously described by Sandmel 1962.

that share historical or social proximity with the Epistle? In what follows, I argue that it is precisely the diversity of antique Jewish perspectives on the question at hand that allows us to gain a greater understanding how the Epistle of James is situated within the macro-structure of ancient Jewish theology and hermeneutic.

2.2. The Debated Historical Situation of the Epistle of James

When scholars engage in comparative research in ancient literature, the starting place tends to be with sources that show historical, sociological, or religious proximity.⁵² However, since the first commentaries on James there has been broad disagreement on how to position James within any of these three spheres. Research on James' historical context remains in a state of uncertainty.⁵³ The most commonly held scholarly positions can be summarised broadly as follows:

1. The Epistle was written early, authored by James the brother of Jesus who wrote either before Paul to the first generation of Jewish believers in Jesus or else in response to Paul to correct certain Pauline (or perhaps misappropriations of Paul's) teachings.
2. The Epistle is a reworking of James' actual teachings by a group of later disciples, likely from within and for a Jewish diaspora community in the late first or early second century.
3. The Epistle is a pseudepigraphon unrelated to the teaching of the historical James, authored by a group of Jewish-Christians who responded to the growth of anti-nomian Paulinist teachings within the church.

This lack of an established scholarly consensus on the historical position of James has engendered various approaches to situating the Epistle. Indeed, scholarly efforts in the

⁵²Chester 1994, 6–11 describes these three 'disciplines' in James studies.

⁵³For the various positions cf. most recently Allison 2013, 1–50, 94–109.

areas of source criticism and literary criticism have been deeply linked to the Epistle's date and provenance, often resulting in conflicting conclusions. In the following subsections I survey a number of scholarly views on James' provenance and the resulting comparative efforts.

2.2.1. *Historical Silence on the Epistle of James*

The early generations of Christian literature are silent on the Epistle's origin. Though hagiographic traditions of James of Jerusalem or James the Just were widespread from the time of Josephus, none of these traditions mention an Epistle of James. Possible use of the Epistle in early Christian documents such as *The Didache*, *The Letter of Barnabas*, *1 Clement* and *Hermas* is sparse and ambiguous.⁵⁴ The Epistle is absent from the (admittedly problematic) Muratorian canon list.⁵⁵ Use of James in Irenaeus (e.g., *Adv. Haer.* 4.16.2) or Clement of Alexandria (e.g., *Strom.* 6.18.164; 3.6.49) is likewise ambiguous. Arguably, no clear citation of the work is extant until Origen (c. 185–253).⁵⁶ However, while Eusebius (270–340) acknowledged that some categorised James among the disputed books, its wide attestation by the third century led Eusebius to accept its place within the canon and to defend its use within the churches.⁵⁷ This general ambiguity and lack of concrete historical

⁵⁴Cf. Johnson 1995, 67–79 who acknowledged the limited influence of James with the exception of possibly *1 Clement* and *Hermas*, and even further Nienhuis 2007, 29–50 who argues that the Epistle as a later work may even exhibit the influence of these Apostolic Fathers. Nienhuis' conclusion that James is a product of the second century due to the lack of reception witnesses is supported by the analysis of Allison 2013.

⁵⁵On the wide-ranging scholarly opinion on the provenance of this document, cf. Sundberg 1973; Sundberg 1982; Hahneman 1992; Horbury 1994; Kaestli 1994; Hill 1995; Verheyden 2003; Armstrong 2008.

⁵⁶Pace Johnson 1995, 130; cf. Nienhuis 2007, 34–46. The first unambiguous appeal to the Epistle appears to be in Origen's *Comm. Jn.* 19.23.152, 20.10.66, though note the Pseudo-Clementine tractate *De Virginitate* 1.11.4. However, the dating of the Clementine literature is likewise notoriously problematic; cf. Bockmuehl 2010, 94–112 and chapter 7 below.

⁵⁷Eusebius *Hist. Eccl.* 3.25.3. See a full recitation of James' reception tradition in Yates 2004.

evidence led most ancient commentators up to the Protestant Reformation to consider James' historical situation unimportant, preferring to treat the Epistle as a useful if somewhat historically mysterious source of practical Christian instruction.⁵⁸

2.2.2. *James in Apostolic Conflict: The Legacy of 18th–19th Century Protestant Thought*

With the Enlightenment, however, the interest in James' historical situation shifted dramatically. The early Humanists were the first to show an interest in the Epistle's broader literary parallels, with a particular focus on parallels to Greco-Roman literature.⁵⁹ More ambitious were the 'conflict models' proposed by the German Idealists within Protestant scholarship of the 18th–19th centuries that juxtaposed Paul's Hellenistic Christianity against the Palestinian-Jewish Christianity of Peter and James.⁶⁰ Scholars such as Baur and Kern introduced the Epistle of James as a pseudonymous product of second-century, diaspora-based Jewish Christianity written in dissent against the ever-expanding Hellenistic Christianity of Paul. Rather than using the 'orthodox harmonisations' of Luke–Acts to explain the background of the Epistle of James, Baur's historical reconstruction preferred readings of the Pseudo-Clementine literature that placed the particularist, nationalist Jewish-Christian sensibilities of James in conflict with Pauline universalism.⁶¹ In response to

⁵⁸Cf. The Venerable Bede (673–735), *Super Epistolas Catholicas Expositio* (PL 93:9–42), as well as Isho'dad of Merv (c. 850) who makes the statement that the author of the Epistle was James, 'whoever he may be' (Isho'dad of Merv 1913). This sentiment continued to resonate with some commentators into the Protestant Reformation, such as in the opening section of John Calvin's commentary on James. On the reception and interpretation of James from Origen through Erasmus, cf. Arnold 2012.

⁵⁹E.g., Erasmus 1705, 1025–38, noting parallels with Jas 1:6 and 1:12 in Pliny and Suetonius. Grotius 1757 notes similar parallels, but with numerous references to Hebrew rabbinic material; similarly Wettstein 1752.

⁶⁰See the formative work of Semler 1777, 126, and his influences in the writings of Thomas Morgan (e.g., Morgan 1738, 378–381). On the 18th–19th century fascination with historical models of early Christianity, cf. Alkier 1993.

⁶¹See especially the work of Johann Herder (1744–1803) and F.C. Baur (1792–1860), who detailed a rift between the 'legalistic particularism' of Peter and James and the 'antinomian universalism' of Paul:

the protests of contemporary scholars who observed that the Epistle of James lacked the core disagreements between James and Paul proposed by Baur, namely the imposition of circumcision, Jewish ritualism, or Gentile inclusion into the Jewish faith, the historical situation of the Epistle was pushed back into the later ‘catholicising’ context, when Jewish Christian ethical sensibilities had in time blended with Pauline universalist tendencies.⁶² Within this reconstruction, an appropriate sociological and theological setting for the Epistle of James was identified within the adoptionist, anti-Pauline, historically elusive ‘Ebionite communities’ of the second century.⁶³

This historical and sociological orientation has continued to provide a working framework for a large proportion of James scholarship.⁶⁴ The Epistle is often read as originating from within a ‘Petrine school’ centred in second-century Syria or more specifically in Antioch. Recent studies have examined this school’s ‘canonical impulse’, evinced by the inclusion of the Catholic Epistles within the canon to represent traditional Jewish-Christian sensibilities against certain misappropriations of Pauline themes.⁶⁵ Taking

Herder 1899, 294; Herder 1884, 471–573; Baur 1845, I.163, 188; also the reprinted Baur 2003, 306–307.

⁶²Note, for example, the complaints of Salmon 1888, 458. In response to similar criticisms, Kern 1835, 18–20, 44 argues for the ‘catholicising’ nature of James in the first edition of his commentary. Kern’s historical repositioning of James was subsequently adopted by Baur 2003, 310 and De Wette 1847, who thereafter characterised James as an example of late pseudepigraphical Christian writing produced by ‘Ebionite Jewish Christian communities’. Note that Kern himself had already been influenced and had quoted the Handbook of the New Testament written by De Wette 1830, in Kern 1835, 86, 101–108. Despite Kern’s subsequent revision of his early theory in the second edition of his commentary, the catholicising argument held the day within the Tübingen school and in much of the subsequent literature. On the continued influence of Kern’s early theory in the Religionsgeschichtliche Schule, cf. von Weizsäcker 1899, 30–32; then on a similar basis in von Harnack 1897, 2.486–491 who proposed an initial composition of James no earlier than 120–140, and a final revision of the Epistle as late as the third century.

⁶³So Herder 1884, 471–573; cf. the reprinted edition of Baur 2003, 306–307.

⁶⁴Among those who continue to defend Baur’s general theories with respect to the Epistle of James, cf. Goulder 1994; as well as Lüdemann 1989, 140–149.

⁶⁵E.g., Wall 2009; Nienhuis 2007; Popkes 1999, 222–224.

this historical reconstruction to its most optimistic manifestation, Konradt has proposed that 'Pseudo-James' was influenced by the Syrian synoptic tradition of the Gospel of Matthew, as moderated through the language and theology of second-century Petrine traditions.⁶⁶

Within this historical reconstruction, the search for appropriate comparative sources has led scholars to the Pseudo-Clementine literature as an aid to determining James' traditio-historical, sociological and theological context.⁶⁷ Operating within this paradigm, Elisabetta DeLuca has highlighted several similarities in the way the Epistle of James and the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* approach the question of probation. After a lexical comparison and an argument for the general structural importance of the theme of probation in both works, DeLuca emphasises their mutual attempts to mitigate divine agency and to insist on God's integrity and goodness. Drawing on the Matthean tradition of the temptation of Christ and on the Lord's Prayer, DeLuca suggests that the *Homilies* and James both rely on a common second century synoptic source, probably of Syrian origin.⁶⁸ DeLuca concludes that both works shared a common geography, a common source, and a common doctrinal orientation.⁶⁹

2.2.3. *James in Apostolic Communion*

Since the 19th century scholars have challenged the arguments for a late orientation of James within anti-Paulinist 'Jewish-Christianity'. Rather, many scholars read James as a

⁶⁶Konradt 2009, cf. Viviano 2004. More moderately, Kloppenborg 2004; Kloppenborg 2009a, 90–100; Metzner 2013.

⁶⁷E.g., DeLuca 2006b; cf. Painter 2005, 207, Wall 2009, 21.

⁶⁸DeLuca 2006a, 348, suggesting as a possible candidate the Gospel of Thomas.

⁶⁹DeLuca 2006a, 349.

product of early Palestinian Christianity, written by James the brother of Jesus in the opening decades of Christianity from within the community of apostolic orthodoxy. Early modern scholars, generally anglophone in the sixteenth–eighteenth centuries or in the stream of German thought influenced by Spener, Tholuck, Beck, and Delitzsch, rejected the theories of conflict within second-century catholic Christianity and defended apostolic unity.⁷⁰ This historical perspective was then applied to the Epistle of James, resulting in a group of scholars highly sympathetic to a Jerusalem-based messianic Judaism standing in continuity with Jesus and the Apostles. Though James’ voice was at times recognised as unique from Paul, it was seen as compatible with early Christian orthodoxy.⁷¹

Similar arguments for Palestinian origins and influences have continued within twentieth and twenty-first century scholarship. The Epistle is seen to be written either by James the Lord’s brother from a position of authority in Jerusalem,⁷² or else as a compilation of James’ teachings edited by his disciples upon his death.⁷³ The initial composition of James is dated between A.D. 40–65, and a general Palestinian ‘ethos’ is often detected in the traditions, language, and geographical orientation of the letter.⁷⁴ The form of the letter has

⁷⁰The theological influence of Tholuck 1845, 141–142 and Beck 1884, I.9–12 appears to have been key in German scholarship on this point. On James the brother of Jesus writing within the orthodox, Jewish apostolic community, see especially Schlatter 1930, 5. A similar perspective was also held by a large section of English scholarship, building especially on the scholarship of John Lightfoot; cf. the 17th century works of Manton 1845; Burkitt 1794; the 18th century works of Hammond 1702; Whitby 1727; Wall 1730; Gilpin 1790; the 19th century works of McKnight 1841; Clarke 1836; Gill 1854. On the roots of the Christian Hebraist movement in England and the Continent, cf. Horbury 2010.

⁷¹E.g., Schlatter 1932: in comparison with Pauline thought pp. 43–67; with Petrine thought pp. 67–73; with Johannine thought pp. 73–77.

⁷²See especially Hengel 1974; Adamson 1989; Johnson 1995; Bauckham 1999; Niebuhr 2009.

⁷³So Martin 1988, lxxvi; cf. Davids 1982, 21–22; Chester 1994, 14; Wall 1997, though with emphasis on the creative contribution of the editor.

⁷⁴Cf., e.g., Davids 1978, 33–57; Bauckham 1988, 303, though see the agnosticism about any ‘Lokalkolorit’ in Wischmeyer 2008, 36; Burchard 2000, 6–7.

been compared to early Palestinian ‘Diaspora letters.’⁷⁵ The sociological situation is reconstructed not as a non-conformist, anti-Pauline Jewish-Christian community, but rather the majority community Jewish Christians in the Jerusalem-based apostolic church (or synagogue) comprised of those who claimed loyalty to and awaited the return of their recently departed Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth.⁷⁶

This historical positioning of the Epistle of James has guided the selection of sources against which James has been compared. Comparisons are typically made with Second Temple Jewish sources, with a special emphasis on Jewish works identified as ‘Jewish wisdom literature’. Sirach especially rises in prominence as a comparative source.⁷⁷ Indeed, Richard Bauckham’s influential theories on James as a product of Jewish wisdom have led some James scholars to restrict their comparative focus entirely to literature from within this genre.⁷⁸ Hubert Frankemölle and Nuria Calduch-Benages have independently made extensive comparisons of the theme of ‘testing’ between James and Sirach. Building on her previous analyses of ‘testing’ (or ‘prueba’) in Sirach,⁷⁹ Calduch-Benages has proposed that James, as an inheritor of Ben Sira’s sapiential teachings, reformulated the theme of trial for the catechesis of the primitive Church and in doing so utilised the same terminology and style.⁸⁰ Frankemölle goes beyond Calduch-Benages, emphasising a direct literary dependence on

⁷⁵So Niebuhr 1998.

⁷⁶This social context is explicitly described in Jackson-McCabe 2003, 725.

⁷⁷Cf. Hanson 1983, 147–55; Johnson 1995, 33 n. 119; Calduch-Benages 2005; Bauckham 1999; Frankemölle 1989.

⁷⁸So Lockett 2005; Kamell 2010.

⁷⁹Calduch-Benages 1991; Calduch-Benages 1997a.

⁸⁰Calduch-Benages 2005, 258–263, emphasising the teleological purposes for testing, namely that trials purify the disciple and serve as a means of education, though with no direct literary dependence between James and Sirach.

Sirach based on shared ‘semantic fields’ and ‘lexical parallels.’⁸¹ Frankemölle notes both a shared view of the benefits of testing and also a shared concern in James and Sirach to clarify the agent of tests and to defend the goodness of God.⁸²

Given the recent surge of arguments for an ‘early Jewish’ provenance for James, a case might be made for focusing our comparison on Second Temple wisdom literature. However, this approach also contains significant flaws, not least of which are the blurry historical, religious, and sociological situations of many of these primary sources. Furthermore, the narrowing of the Epistle of James into the comparative slot of ‘wisdom’ will need to withstand significant challenges in its own right.⁸³

2.2.4. James and Popular Hellenistic Philosophy

As a final example of literary comparison with the Epistle of James, recent studies have shown a growing interest in the broad field of popular hellenistic philosophy. John Kloppenborg has engaged in considerable work in this area, the capstone of which will presumably be his forthcoming commentary in the Hermeneia series. Kloppenborg has argued that James’ interest in human interiority parallels widespread interest in the cultivation of the soul through ascetic practises or *ἄσκησις* as found in various strains of hellenistic philosophy in the early Roman period.⁸⁴ Kloppenborg sees in James a reworking of the Jesus tradition that casts Jesus’ invective against serving two masters, now within the broader hellenistic desire for internal ‘singleness’ of personhood. For comparative sources,

⁸¹Frankemölle 1989, 21, 33; Frankemölle 1994, 84.

⁸²Frankemölle 1989, 26.

⁸³Cf. McKnight 2011 and previously Verseput 1998, 706 who argues that James’ ‘does not present itself to the reader on the whole as a product of wisdom reflection’; cf. Allison 2013, 74 n. 401. Kynes 2014, (forthcoming) questions whether such a literary category even exists.

⁸⁴Kloppenborg 2010.

Kloppenborg appeals to an ‘amalgam of Platonism and Stoicism mediated through Hellenistic Judaism’, a combination likewise traced in philosophically aware literature as diverse as Sirach, Philo, and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*.⁸⁵

2.2.5. *Blurring the Boundary Lines*

The result of these diverse historical analyses of James has often been to isolate comparisons of the Epistle to various strands of literature: Jewish wisdom, catholic anti-paulinism, and Hellenistic philosophy. These comparisons exemplify not only differing schools of historical thought, but also broadly differing ideas of James’ social and theological community. Increasingly, however, recent studies have begun to explore the historical complexities of James and the methodological pitfalls of overly dogmatic reconstructions of its literary influences and its social and religious milieu.⁸⁶ There is a growing awareness of the dangers of attempting to define historical or sociological theories too tightly, especially when the Epistle consistently defies firm identification.⁸⁷ These developments in James studies are resonant with a broader scepticism arising against long-held religious or ideological distinctions such as ‘Palestinian Judaism’, ‘Hellenistic Judaism’, or ‘Ebionite Judaism’. As the distinctions between ‘Jewish’ and ‘Hellenistic’ were challenged in previous decades,⁸⁸ now the easy categorisation of ‘Jewish’ and ‘Christian’ identity markers has likewise come under scrutiny. Recent work on the sociological situation of Jewish

⁸⁵ Kloppenborg 2010, 43. Similar comparisons between James and the philosophical schools can be found in Wilson 2002; Dibelius 1976, 111; Mussner 1964, 71 n. 6; *TDNT* II, 925.

⁸⁶ Cf. Wischmeyer 2008; similarly, Schröter 2008, 237 who has pointed out in particular the difficulties of identifying early Jesus traditions in James or to positioning James within a particular Matthean/Petrine context.

⁸⁷ So Zetterholm 2008, 73–90. As Pratscher 1987 has argued, the traditional figure of James was easily adoptable into a wide range of early Christian communities.

⁸⁸ On which see seminally Hengel 1974; also Hill 1992, 143–47.

Christianity has challenged the idea that ‘Christians’ and ‘Jews’ had become identifiably distinguishable religious communities by the second, third or fourth centuries.⁸⁹ This reconsideration of the early Jewish (including Christian) sociological and religious contexts as increasingly diverse and unsettled⁹⁰ undermines overly positivistic classifications of James as an example of ‘Jewish-Christianity’ over and against a ‘hellenistic Christianity’ or as a ‘catholicising Christianity’ or even simply as ‘Christian’ where such opposes ‘Jewish.’⁹¹ Due to the fragmentary character of the available sources and a general lack of criteria by which to judge between what Verheyden labels uniquely Jewish or Christian ‘theological, ideological and behavioural phenomena,’ many scholars are now concluding that, with respect both to James and to other so-called Jewish-Christian works, scholarship has lost an acceptable definition of how a particular text and its represented community fits into early Jewish Christianity.⁹²

2.2.6. Conclusions on the Historical Analysis of James

With the standard crutches kicked out from underneath a narrow historical or sociological study of James, isolating a comparative analysis of James to a particular historical, literary, or theological paradigm becomes increasingly difficult to defend.⁹³ Given

⁸⁹E.g., Skarsaune 2007a, Boyarin 2004, Lieu 1996; Lieu 2002; Lieu 2004, and Schäfer 2007.

⁹⁰Cf. the various approaches portrayed in Becker 2007; the alternative models in Goodman 2007, and the sobering work of Carleton Paget 2010b.

⁹¹Cf. the recent proposal by Allison 2013, 32–45 that the Epistle of James intentionally suppresses any uniquely sectarian ‘Christian’ identity in communicating with a broader Jewish constituency.

⁹²So Verheyden 2008, 128. Though problematisations abound and solutions are few, see the following works: Pines 1996; Bauckham 1998; Carleton Paget 1999; Horrell 2000; Jones 2005; Marcus 2006; Jackson-McCabe 2007; Skarsaune 2007a; also the promising work of Rudolph 2011.

⁹³A parallel to the historical problem of James may be seen in the fascinating study of the Wisdom Text of the Cairo Geniza. This document, written in a manner that mimics biblical style, does not use pseudonymity nor does it appeal to any biblical or rabbinic text or authority. This document was dated by Berger 1989 as a ‘late 1st century’ document, and then two years later by Rüger 1991 as ‘no earlier’ than the

that the author of James never cites directly from a known post-biblical source,⁹⁴ but rather writes both synthetically and creatively,⁹⁵ it seems that the hopeful expectation that any single source might provide a ‘match’ for James’ theological reflections is misguided.⁹⁶ Furthermore, the theory that a particular genre or religious community could accurately provide the sole legitimate parallels to James seems misplaced. Such overemphasis on narrow historical, religious or sociological contemporaneity inevitably produces flawed comparisons and radicalises both the similarities and the differences observed between sources. More fundamentally, such an approach tends to misunderstand the very nature of the comparative task. J. Z. Smith’s *Drudgery Divine* provides penetrating insight in the nature of comparison between what prove to be inherently diverse ancient sources:

A comparison is a disciplined exaggeration in the service of knowledge. It lifts out and strongly marks certain features within a field of difference as being of possible intellectual significance, expressed in the rhetoric of their being “like” in some stipulated fashion. Comparison provides the means by which we “re-vision” phenomena as our data in order to solve our intellectual problems.⁹⁷

That is to say, the comparative agenda in analysing ancient sources should not be to find exact sociological or theological parallels, for such is to undermine the inherent volatility and unavoidable uniqueness of individual voices. Furthermore, theological breadth

12th century and under the influence of a completed Talmud. As Haymen 1993, 151–152 has argued, both reconstructions, stemming as they do from philology, ultimately fall victim to the circular reasoning so often presumed in the study of ancient texts.

⁹⁴Though see Allison 2011.

⁹⁵cf. Bauckham 2009; Kloppenborg 2009b; also Popkes 1997; Popkes 1999.

⁹⁶A similar conclusion for historical agnosticism can be felt in Oesterley 1910, 404–405; Deppe 1990, 375–379; Johnson 1995, 121, 153.

⁹⁷Smith 1990, 52.

can be as revealing as theological univocality: one can learn just as much from the differences as from the similarities.⁹⁸

In comparing the Epistle of James with other ancient Jewish literature, therefore, my analysis will emphasise the way individual works articulate cosmic roles within the framework of biblical probation. In general, I will evaluate similarities and differences without over-valuing certain, often unprovable literary dependencies between these diverse ancient authors.

2.3. Assessing Comparative Literature

In light of the preceding material, my own working historical assumptions on the Epistle of James for this purposes of this study will be minimalist. I assume the letter to be written from an uncertain location (though likely the Levant or Asia Minor) within the first two centuries of the Common Era. The author was likely circumcised and Torah-observant, as was his audience. The letter's purpose was to engage with the socio-religious circumstance of certain Jewish Diaspora communities.⁹⁹ Accordingly, my selection of comparative literature shares a broadly similar background. This includes Jewish authors operating throughout the broader Hellenistic period (c. 300 B.C. – A.D. 300) who wrote from various social and religious contexts across the Mediterranean world. These sources will exhibit a shared concern to clarify the roles and implications of probation, though they will often

⁹⁸ As Ruzer 2013, 82 has argued with respect to the Epistle of James, '[the historical and social settings] are secondary, because the gist lies in demonstrating that sometimes, even when the *Sitz im Leben* of a source remains unclear, the source can still be used in reconstructing the larger picture of ancient Jewish Bible exegesis'.

⁹⁹ *Contra* Spitta 1896b and Massebieau 1895, I hold that these communities were likely comprised of members who had committed themselves to the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. Note however Allison 2013, 32–45.

arrive at differing conclusions. This diversity offers the opportunity to engage with a range of interpretive discourses, without attempting to draw clean lines of influence, dependence, or trajectory. Once a spectrum of views on the cosmic drama of probation and related hermeneutics have been established, the Epistle of James will likewise be analysed and then compared against the diversity of available thought.¹⁰⁰

2.3.1. Additional Considerations on Ancient Sources

In the following study, I will include a number of so-called pseudepigraphal and apocryphal works. For example, I will appeal to the *Testament of Job*, a text widely considered to be of Jewish origin, but one which survives in four Greek manuscripts dating from the eleventh to the sixteenth century, three manuscripts in Old Church Slavonic, and a fragmentary Coptic papyrus from the early fifth century, all of Christian provenance.¹⁰¹ James Davila has recently questioned whether works that may have originally been composed in the Second Temple period but have only been preserved and transmitted in much later Christian manuscripts should legitimately be compared with earlier Jewish writings, arguing that such texts should rather be considered primarily examples of later Christian interpretation.¹⁰² Davila's concern is to avoid reconstructing an imprecise picture of Second Temple Judaism, preferring to limit descriptions of pre-rabbinic Judaism to works

¹⁰⁰While there are times when interpretive traditions can be traced to a common source, more frequently interpretive similarities may stem from what has been described in other disciplines as 'polygenesis': two interpretations that relate to a similar text from a relatively close time period arriving at similar conclusions. I derive the term polygenesis from Weitzman 1999 who uses the term within Peshitta studies to identify the relationships between Hebrew, Aramaic, and Syriac textual traditions of the Old Testament. I find the term helpful to describe ancient interpretive conclusions that cannot be traced to a common textual or traditional source with certainty.

¹⁰¹Cf. Spittler 1989.

¹⁰²Davila 2005a.

that unquestionably stem from that period.¹⁰³ Is the *Testament of Job* a legitimate comparative source? Davila himself notes the difficulties of delineating textual or religious identities.¹⁰⁴ This is especially true as the lines of separation between pluralities of Judaism and pluralities of Christianity during the first three centuries A.D. and beyond have become increasingly hazy. In contrast with Davila, then, I am less concerned with identifying whether the *Testament of Job*, to resume the example, can be identified as a particularly ‘pure’ form of Judaism, and more interested in whether the *Testament of Job* provides insight into a particular instantiation of the cosmic drama and hermeneutic of probation.¹⁰⁵

Additionally, I make extended appeals to later rabbinic literature. There is a longstanding debate on whether any such appeal to rabbinic (and especially Talmudic) material is helpful or even acceptable for the study of New Testament literature. Some scholars reject any such attempts. For example, Fitzmyer argues that New Testament scholarship should limit the study of parallel interpretation to explicitly Second Temple sources.¹⁰⁶ This sentiment has developed in part as a response to scholars who have

¹⁰³Similar arguments have been made with regard to the *Test. XII* and other pseudepigraphal works by de Jonge 1975a; de Jonge 2003a.

¹⁰⁴Davila 2005a, 38–47.

¹⁰⁵In a similar discussion regarding the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, deSilva 2013 concludes that Davila’s cautions there as well are overblown:

‘However, the impossibility of establishing the exact wording of the original, Jewish form of the Testaments with methodological precision at some points has led some scholars only to value reading the Testaments as a Christian document. This position moves well beyond scholarly caution into a counsel of despair. While we may not recover with certainty the ip-sissima verba of the pre-Christian version of the Testaments, we do not need therefore to abandon the Testaments as a witness to pre-Christian Jewish reflection on ethics, eschatology, and the stories of the patriarchs themselves. There are sufficient text-critical and literary-critical grounds to certify the fact of Christian glossing and expanding, if not the precise extent. There are also sufficient traditional-critical grounds for affirming that the Testaments are best explained as a Jewish text that was later adapted to Christian interests than an original Christian composition.’

¹⁰⁶Fitzmyer 1970. Against Fitzmyer, thoughtful discussions of the appropriate use of rabbinics in NT studies include Daube 1949; Daube 1956; Gerhardsson 1961; Parsons 1985; Alexander 1992, 238, 240–241;

confidently drawn explicit parallels between New Testament texts and Talmudic traditions in spite of the large chronological and religious gaps.¹⁰⁷ However, there has been in recent years a trend to explore potential ways forward in tracing recurring OT interpretive traditions through the Second Temple period and into later rabbinic sources by investigating the reception and transmission of particular biblical texts.¹⁰⁸ In my use of these sources, I will frame the rabbinic instantiations of the cosmic drama and hermeneutic of probation carefully, again without making assumptions of literary trajectory or linear development.

Finally, I will limit my analysis and comparison to literature that lies outside of the New Testament corpus. This may be surprising, as enticing parallels on divine probation can be found in the Gospel traditions (e.g., the Lord's Prayer and the Temptation of Christ), in Paul (e.g., the implicit divine role in the assurance that believers will not be 'tested beyond their ability', as well as the satanic role of Tempter and Enemy in 1 Cor 7:5, 10:13; Eph 6:12), and in the Petrine literature (e.g., Satan as devouring lion in 1 Pet 5:8, the Messianic Woes of eschatological tribulation, and a number of close semantic parallels to James in 1 Pet 1:6–7). These texts as well contain intriguing questions of semantic ambiguity and particular Jewish cosmologies.¹⁰⁹ However, such NT comparisons will remain beyond the scope of this investigation for a number of reasons. On a practical level, these works (the Gospels and Paul in particular) carry the weight of NT secondary scholarly literature that is prohibitive given the limited space available. Further, one of the key points of contact in my comparison is that of the various readings of the *Aqedah* and Job, neither of which feature

Horbury 2010.

¹⁰⁷Most notorious, thought at times unfairly criticised, is Strack 1965.

¹⁰⁸Cf., e.g., Kister 1994; Kugel 1990; Kugel 2006; Kister 2010a.

¹⁰⁹For example, scholars are divided as to whether the Lord's Prayer is a protection from satanic temptation, divine testing, or eschatological tribulation; cf. Pitre 2006.

prominently in broader NT literature.¹¹⁰

2.4. Conclusions on a Methodology and Structure for the Investigation

In light of the preceding discussion, Parts 2 and 3 will take the following shape. Part 2 will provide an extensive analysis of the concept of probation in a number of Jewish works, with a particular focus on detailing each work's theological cosmology, its anthropology, and its engagement with biblical testing narratives. My selection of sources will be diverse in genre and diachronic, appealing to Jewish sources written throughout the Hellenistic period and across the Mediterranean world. In Part 3, I will then return to the Epistle of James and position its theological cosmology and its hermeneutic of probation within the spectrum of thought available from the preceding analysis. Before turning to Part 2, however, chapter 3 will survey two important conversations on Jewish cosmology: (a) a recent study on the availability of the question of divine agency in ancient Judaism, and (b) the ongoing scholarly debate on the nature of Jewish anthropology.

¹¹⁰However, once the cosmic *dramatis personae* have been sufficiently defined in James, a comparison between James and the broader New Testament literature would entail a productive area of research.

CHAPTER 3

Current Scholarly Conversations in Jewish Cosmology

In this chapter I survey two scholarly discussions significant for the supernatural and anthropological orientations toward probation in broader ancient Judaism. In section one I interact with Meira Kensky's recent analysis of courtroom scenes in Mediterranean Jewish antiquity. In section two I survey the long-standing scholarly debates specific to the role of the *yetzer hara* or evil inclination in Jewish anthropologies.¹¹¹

3.1 Heavenly Trials and Inversions of the Divine Courtroom

In her 2010 doctoral dissertation, 'Trying Man, Trying God: The Divine Courtroom in Early Jewish and Christian Literature', Meira Kensky has detailed how authors across the ancient Mediterranean world recognised and resisted a popular tendency that held God responsible for *πειρασμός*, identified God as *ὁ πειράζων*, and therefore placed God under indictment.

Starting with the Ancient Near Eastern context, Kensky builds on the research of her mother, Tikva Frymer-Kensky, to describe the trial by ordeal common to ancient cultures.¹¹² The trial by ordeal appears throughout the ANE (e.g., Codex Hammurabi §2;

¹¹¹The limits of space require that I forego a survey of a third ongoing scholarly conversation on the development of Satan, demons, and other supernatural forces within Judaism. While I will focus my attention on particular instantiations of this topic in the literature that follows, more comprehensive scholarship of note includes Schärf Kluger 1948; Day 1988; Sacchi 1996, 211–32; Sacchi 2000; Steudel 2000; Lange 2003. See the recent summary of the field by Brown 2011 and the more comprehensive discussion in Brown's unpublished 2011 dissertation.

¹¹²Frymer-Kensky's finding can be found in her 1979 Yale dissertation *The Judicial Ordeal in the Ancient Near East*.

§132) in which God stands as judge over the judicial process. Such texts commonly express concern that the trial operate without regard for personal wealth or class. So, for example, see the prayer of an individual to the god Amon:

O Amon, give ear to one who is alone in the law court, who is poor; he is not rich. The court cheats him of silver and gold for the scribes of the mat and clothing for the attendants. May it be found that Amon assumes his form as the vizier, in order to permit the poor man to get off. May it be found that the poor man is vindicated. May the poor man surpass the rich.¹¹³

This concern for a fair trial by divine fiat appears frequently in the Hebrew Bible. Yahweh is both King and Judge, as in Ps 96:10, 13 where God's justice is proven through his impartial treatment. God is judge of both the divine assembly and also in human matters, as in 1 Kings 22:6, 19–23 where God appears as both judge and executioner. There also appears in the Hebrew Bible a constant refrain that justice must guard against partiality to the wealthy or socially privileged. For example, Exod 23:1–8; Lev 19:15; Deut 16:19; 2 Chr 19:7 all connect the necessity of impartiality in judgment to the nature of God as impartial judge. God will not 'acquit the guilty' (Exod 23:7), 'show partiality, or take a bribe' (Deut 10:17), for 'with YHWH there is no injustice, showing partiality, and taking bribes' (2 Chron 19:7). Further, these references to God's judicial impartiality are used to provoke fear in the human judges, on the basis that God will judge without mercy on those who pervert the judicial system.

Kensky argues that in the common *rib*-pattern in Hebrew legal texts God functions

¹¹³. ANET 380.

in a double role, as both prosecutor and judge.¹¹⁴ So Ps 50:3–7

May our God come and not keep silence. He summons the heavens above, and the earth, to judge his people: ‘Gather my godly ones to me, those who have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.’ And the heavens declare his righteousness, for God Himself is judge. Selah. ‘Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, I will testify against you; I am God, your God.

Within biblical monotheism or monolatry, when God’s role is that of the injured party as here in Ps 50 he must act as both prosecutor and judge. To add a third party to the dispute would be to give power over God to someone who is not God, and thus compromise monotheistic principles.¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, God can also be depicted as the courtroom defendant. For example, in Deut 32–34, the Song of Moses (Deut 31:17) stands as a witness for God and against Israel to counter claims that God had abandoned his people. In the prophets, Jeremiah mulls over divine responsibility in Israel’s broken covenant, declaring in Jer 12:1 ‘You are innocent (*tzadik*), O Lord, when I lodge a complaint with you; yet I would pass judgment upon you’. While God will in the end be judged not guilty of the charges, still the prophet will present his indictment against God. Here, Jeremiah is prosecutor, and God sits in the dock of the defendant.¹¹⁶ Similarly, Isaiah consistently places God in the prosecutorial role while simultaneously defending him against the indictments brought by Israel.¹¹⁷ For example, in Isa 43:22–28 God allows himself to be put on trial, where he will

¹¹⁴On the ‘rib-’ pattern in Hebrew legal texts, cf. Gemser 1955.

¹¹⁵Cf. Nielsen 1978. On the problematisation of the term ‘monotheism’ in recent scholarship, cf. Smith 2003; Macdonald 2003.

¹¹⁶Cf. Holliday 1963, 280–287.

¹¹⁷Kensky 2010, 36 cites Isa 40:12–16; 40:17–20; 21–26; 41:1–5, 41:21–24; 18–25; 43:8–13; 48:14–16; 49:14–21.

be acquitted even by human standards of justice.

Finally in the Hebrew Bible, Kensky examines how the book of Job presents God as judge, prosecutor, and defendant.¹¹⁸ The opening scene of Job famously presents God as judge, sitting as 'King over the Sons of God'. Within this courtroom scene Satan places the righteous man Job on trial. However, by questioning the divine declaration of Job's righteousness, Satan also places the divine declaration of righteousness on trial. Within this cosmic drama, when Job is tried it is truly God who is on trial.¹¹⁹ Satan questions God's judgements. Job questions whether the divine system can justly refuse him access to his accusers (31:35–37) or evidence of his sin (32:1). Even the reader is led to question whether God is righteous or justifiable in allowing Job to be harmed (8:3). Throughout, the author acknowledges the potential to question divine impartiality and justice, while also defending God as impartial, righteous, and a trustworthy judge. As discussed in the following chapters, the courtroom scene of the Job narrative becomes the defining cosmic stage for discussions of divine justice.

Kensky broadens from the Hebrew Bible into the Greco-Roman context and then into the literature of Second Temple Judaism. In the Greco-Roman context the heavenly courtroom provides a well-known and often repeated scene in which the gods are described, characterised, and evaluated by their judgments of humans.¹²⁰ The polytheistic cosmologies of classical and hellenistic depictions of the divine law court allowed for various divine figures to play the role of judge, defence council, and prosecutor.¹²¹

¹¹⁸So Kensky 2010, 39.

¹¹⁹Kensky 2010, 41.

¹²⁰Kensky 2010, 63.

¹²¹Kensky notes especially the Homeric literature, Pindar's writings, the author of *Prometheus Bound*, and also Seneca's more cynical perspective on the divine legal system.

Within monotheistic religions, however, the portrayal of the divine law-court becomes religiously problematic. A single God who functions as Judge, Prosecutor, and Defence seems to compromise the biblical descriptions of God as impartial, fair, and just. Whereas the Greco-Roman pantheon allowed multiple deities in the courtroom to act as prosecutors, judiciaries, and advocates, the literature of Jewish monotheism expresses a pronounced concern for role differentiation within the heavenly court.¹²² Already in the later sections of the Hebrew Bible this tension of divine agency is felt. For example, in the reworking of 2 Sam 24:1-25 in 1 Chr 21:1, the chronicler senses the need to clarify that the ‘adversary’ in the heavenly court who stood up to prosecute Israel was Satan and not God Himself. Second Temple Jewish literature would continue to develop this question even further. Various authors use the divine courtroom scene to provoke questions on the equity and propriety of God’s judgements. Kensky argues that, in doing so, the roles of judge and defence are reversed, with the judged human assuming the role of judge over divine integrity.¹²³

In sum, Meira Kensky’s provocative and insightful thesis raises the metaphor of the divine court as an operative means of examining questions of probation and divine justice. There are places where her application of the divine courtroom scene to certain literature can strain the evidence (for example, her discussion of the divine courtroom in early Christian literature may at times over-reach), and her interpretations of the significance of

¹²²So Kensky 2010, 65–118.

¹²³Kensky notes that beyond the roles of judge, a fourth important role becomes prominent in Jewish literature: that of the intercessor. The literature emphasised that God can be *convinced* to change his judgements, especially through such figures of Abraham and Moses. On the courtroom scene in Gen 18:17–33 where Abraham calls God’s planned justice into question see Bruckner 2001, 157–158. A similar role is played by Moses after the Golden Calf incident in Exod 32:11–14, and at Kadesh Barnea in Num 14.

such courtroom scenes should be reevaluated on a case-by-case basis across the Jewish literature. Nevertheless, Kensky provides an important sounding board for the widespread availability of this theme in broader ancient literature, a theme which I will argue is operative in the Epistle of James.

3.2 Debates on Jewish Anthropology

A second current scholarly discussion relevant to this investigation is the long-running debate on the development of the anthropological concept of *yetzer* in Jewish thought more broadly and the Epistle of James specifically. While I will address specific manifestations of the *yetzer* idea in the various analyses that follow, this brief introduction to the history of scholarship on the term addresses necessary background data from the OT source material and scholarly disagreements on its reception within Jewish literature.

3.2.1. The Human Yetzer in the Old Testament

The Hebrew Bible provides humble origins for the anthropological theories that would develop in later Jewish literature. Genesis describes the person simply as a **נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה**, a ‘living being’ or ‘living soul,’ or as Bruggemann prefers a ‘psychosomatic entity’.¹²⁴ Bruggemann further describes the Old Testament image of the human being as fundamentally monadic, existing as a ‘dependent, vitality-given unity’.

Even more limited, moreover, is the biblical term *yetzer*. In Biblical Hebrew and Ugaritic the term expresses the notion of ‘forming, shaping, or fashioning,’ especially of the creative work of pottery. In the Hebrew Bible, the root **יצר** appears around seventy times.

¹²⁴Bruggemann 1997, 453 argues against the classical distinctions drawn between the soul and the body.

The verbal sense ascribes the act of fashioning, creating, and designing objects, generally of clay, both to humans and to God, including the divine fashioning of the human form.¹²⁵ In the nominal form, יצר signifies the result of the creative act, whether an inanimate object or a living creature. By extension, the term *yetzer* can, though infrequently, describe the creative acts of the mind, such as thoughts, inclinations, and intentions. This use of the term appears in only six OT verses, most of which present the human inclination as natural, of divine origin, and generally positive.¹²⁶ Two places in the OT, however, describe *yetzer* as evil:

Gen 6:4 - The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on earth was, and how every plan devised by his heart (וכל יצר מחשבת לבו) was nothing but evil all the time.

Gen 8:21 The Lord said to himself: 'Never again will I doom the earth because of man, since the devisings of man's heart (יצר לב האדם) are evil from his youth'.

In these texts God appears to be saddened, even surprised to find that the *yetzer* of the human heart is 'only evil continually' (6:5), even 'from its youth' (8:21), since the *yetzer* does not appear to have been created as inherently evil.¹²⁷ Nevertheless, by Gen 6 the inherent sinful tendencies of the human heart appear to be fully in place. These descriptions of a compromised *yetzer* in Gen 6:5 and 8:21 would provide an important focal point for later anthropological discussions.¹²⁸

¹²⁵For pottery, cf. Isa 29:17 and Hab 2:18; creation of the world, cf. Jer 10:16 and Isa 45:7; the fashioning of humanity, cf. Gen 1:27 and 2:7. For a full review of the root and its various uses cf. *TDOT* 4: 257–65.

¹²⁶Cf. Gen 6:5; 8:21; Deut 31:21; Ps 103:14; 1 Chr 28:9; 29:18; Is 26:3.

¹²⁷So Cohen Stuart 1984a, 81.

¹²⁸To a lesser extent, a possibly developed sense of plans, imagination or disposition may appear in Deut 31:21; Isa 26:3 29:16; Hab 2:18; Ps 103:14; 1 Chr 28:9 and 29:18.

3.2.2. *Translating Yetzer*

The biblical term *yetzer* contains sufficient semantic elasticity as to provide a wide range of metaphorical possibilities. This semantic range includes the ideas of formed substances, human inclination, disposition, instinct, council, and desire. The reception of this term in non-Hebrew literature makes for an interesting study, for when the concepts semantically coded by the term in Hebrew (the source language, often referred to as L1) were then transferred into Greek or Latin, these receptor languages (L2) proved incapable of carrying the metaphorical weight of the Hebrew term within a single translation-equivalent. As a result, the term *yetzer* is translated with such terms as *πλάσμα*, *διάνοια*, *ἐπιθυμία*, *ἐνθύμημα*, *διαβούλιον*, *cogitatus*, and *corum*. To complicate the situation further, these L2 terms often bore the weight of their own technical and religious meaning due to the theological or philosophical influences already present within the various cultures and communities that used the L2 target language. As a result of both the normal linguistic overlap of multiple languages, as well as due to the technical nature of the terms, the precise semantic interface between the biblical and then highly developed post-biblical L1 term and its various L2 renderings is complex and extremely difficult to trace.

This linguistic mismatch is seen most directly in the Greek Bible translations, where at least six terms render *yetzer*. The most common and literal translation of *yetzer* as *πλάσμα* reflects the moulding or shaped of objects such as pottery.¹²⁹ However, *ἐνθύμημα* glosses *yetzer* in 1 Chr 28:9(= Sir 27:6). The phrase ἡ διάνοια τοῦ ἀνθρώπου translates יֵצֶר לֵב הָאָדָם in Gen 8:21. The verb διανοεῖσθαι translates the noun יֵצֶר into a verbal form in Gen 6:5.

¹²⁹Cf. Hab 2:18; Ps 102[103]:14, as well as Aquila's and Symmachus's rendering of *πλάσμα* in Deut 31:21 and Isa 26:3 (against the LXX's *πονηρία*); see Field 1875, II 474.

Whereas *πονηρία* typically (44 times) glosses *רע*, in Deut 31:21 the term translates *yetzer*.¹³⁰

In sum, a variety of terms in Greek, Latin, and other languages were employed to transfer the metaphors for the created body, the heart, the mind, the flesh, and then the human inclination and other metaphysical tendencies. Furthermore, as variances and developments in theological and philosophical anthropologies occurred across centuries, cultures, and individual authors, the appropriate L2 terms likewise vary across the literature. For example, an L2 term commonly used in the 200's B.C. may no longer be an appropriate gloss for *yetzer* in a work from the A.D. 200s that operating from a different theological or philosophical orientation.

3.2.3. *Scholarly Debates on the Significance and Development of the Yetzer*

In general terms, the use of *yetzer* in the Hebrew Bible to describe human interiority and the life of the mind is universally recognised to have undergone significant development in later Jewish and especially rabbinic thought. However, modern scholarship has disagreed on both the basic meaning of *yetzer* at any particular stage of development, and also the term's developmental history from early post-exilic through rabbinic literature. Even the exact meaning of *yetzer* as found in its most frequent usage in the rabbinic literature has eluded scholarly consensus. Theories vary on whether the rabbinic *yetzer* includes an anthropological duality in which good and evil *yetzarim* struggle within the human heart, or whether a single, evil *yetzer* is at war with its host. Some load the term with hellenistic concepts of *askesis* and the self-control of base, often sexual desire, while others see the term

¹³⁰On this flexibility of L2 renderings cf. Porter 1901, 137 n.3. Cohen Stuart 1984a, 85–86 notes similar issues in Latin: *cogitatio* (Gen 6:5; Deut 31:21; 1 Chr 28:9); *voluntas* (1 Chr 29:18); *consilium* (Sir 15:14); *cogitatus* (Sir 27:6); in Aramaic, cf. *Tg. Isa.* 26:3 which renders *רע* as *לִבָּב*.

as a reference to fallen human nature, sin, and demonic influence.

The rabbinic *yetzer* frequently features in discussions of Second Temple Jewish theology, influencing scholarly opinions on anthropology, nomism, and even sexual ethics in literature such as Qumran, Ben Sira, Paul and *4 Ezra*. New Testament scholarship in particular has suffered from an overly optimistic ability to describe a single ‘Jewish anthropology’.¹³¹ However, the uncertainty of meaning of the rabbinic *yetzer* has caused confusion across Second-Temple scholarship dependent on rabbinic descriptions of the *yetzer*.¹³²

With this volatility of meaning in mind, in what follow I will survey the history of scholarship on the Jewish concept of *yetzer* and clarify the various theories of development of *yetzer*-based anthropologies in Second Temple and later Jewish literature. The resulting conclusion, namely that various, even conflicting perspectives on the inner-workings of human decision making and interaction with external supernatural influences were operative in ancient Judaism, guides my broader study of the human role in probation as detailed in James and other Jewish works.

3.2.3.1. The *Yetzer* as Original Sin

Scholars have debated the extent to which the term *yetzer* signifies a unified anthropological perspective common to early Jewish and Christian thought. Most scholars have recognised some core unity based on the biblical origins.¹³³ Scholars of the 19th and

¹³¹As will be discussed below, this has particularly been the case in James studies, where the *ἐπιθυμία* of 1:14 and the *διδυμία* of 1:8 and 4:8 is deeply informed by the rabbinic double-*yetzer*.

¹³²Reliance on the rabbinic definitions for NT anthropology, with varying results, may be seen in Davies 1955; Bultmann 1960; Jewett 1971; Betz 2000; Hultgren 2002.

¹³³E.g., Stiegman 1979; Urbach 1987.

early 20th centuries appealed to the rabbinic *yetzer* as an explanation for a biblical ‘original sin’ and the source of evil,¹³⁴ as well as to the question of theodicy given God’s role in creating the *yetzer*.¹³⁵ Thus, Porter’s influential 1901 essay argues that the rabbinic *yetzer* provided a relatively static concept of evil human tendencies from rabbinic literature, then back to *2 Baruch*, *4 Ezra*, *2 Enoch*, and Sirach, drawing primarily from a biblical orientation of the source of evil and the basis of legitimate human choice between good and evil.¹³⁶ Porter concludes that the term *yetzer* in Second Temple literature shows both direct coherence with the Hebrew Bible’s monist anthropology and also direct lineage to the reified *yetzer* of the rabbinic literature. While Porter’s study proved seminal there are a number of weaknesses: Porter did not have access to the Dead Sea Scrolls or to large tracts of Jewish pseudepigrapha; furthermore, he wrote from a strongly apologetic perspective, attempting to refute the fashionable scholarly perspective of a gnostic worldview that manifested in a rejection of the body and influenced both NT and rabbinic literature.

With the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls a number of additional studies made proposals on the development of a prominent role for the term *yetzer* within Jewish anthropology. J. P. Hyatt’s study of human sin in the *Hodayot* suggested the *yetzer* served as the basic source of sinfulness within the human being.¹³⁷ Focusing on the semantic development of the term itself, R. Murphy analysed the Hebrew Bible, Sirach, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, and the *Hodayot*, emphasising the ‘individualising

¹³⁴This (often Pauline) definition of original sin was then applied to Sirach’s free choice, Qumranic cosmic determinism, Paul’s ‘law of the flesh’, and *4 Ezra*’s ‘evil heart’; e.g., Schoeps 1961, 184–187; Macky 1969; Thompson 1977, 51.

¹³⁵See especially Schechter 1961, chapter 15; Moore 1924, chapter 3.

¹³⁶Porter relied on the study of Weber 1897.

¹³⁷Hyatt 1955, 276–84.

tendencies' in Sirach and the dualism of the *Testaments* and at Qumran.¹³⁸ Herman Lichtenberger then used the *yetzer* as the focal point of his project to construct a unified anthropology at Qumran.¹³⁹ Perhaps most influentially, the Jewish scholar Ephraim Urbach described the *yetzer* as the anthropological focus of Judaism from the Second Temple to the rabbinic literature. For Urbach, the *yetzer* is synonymous with the *yetzer hara*, and as such functions as a 'stereotyped phrase' that expresses an antithesis to the 'good inclination' (or *yetzer hatov*) that co-exists within the human nature. Urbach declares this 'lifelong struggle' between the two *yetzarim* to be the foremost challenge within the human condition.¹⁴⁰

3.2.3.2. *Yetzer* as Desire: Ancient Philosophy and Modern Psychology

The embedded understanding in Jewish and Christian studies of a double *yetzer* began to manifest in 20th and 21st century comparisons between Jewish anthropology and hellenistic concepts of duality, *askesis* and psychogogy. These theories on early Jewish and Christian interiority have moved away from discussions of original sin and theodicy and towards the identification of the *yetzer* with the base, psychological, and often sexual dynamics of the inner man.¹⁴¹ In this reading of the *yetzer*, the internal battle within man becomes associated with the development of the mind, the control of sexual desire, and the unification of the self.¹⁴² Special emphasis is given to parallels within hellenistic literature

¹³⁸ Murphy 1958.

¹³⁹ Lichtenberger 1980; later, Lichtenberger 1983 suggested the *yetzer* in *Jubilees* and Qumran provides a less negative anthropology than is the case in the rabbis.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Urbach 1987, 472–475.

¹⁴¹ The male orientation here is intentional, as the scholarly discussion tends to concentrate on the sexual nature of the *yetzer* and especially on the male reproductive parts. See here Stiegman 1979, 487–579; Cohen 1980, 495–520; Schofer 2003. For two relatively recent summaries of this trend, cf. Alexander 2002, 97–132; van der Horst 2007. The assumption that the *yetzer* is primarily sexually oriented is ubiquitous in the secondary literature, e.g., Cohen Stuart 1984a, 28; Biale 1997, 44; Satlow 2006, 621.

¹⁴² Cf. Fraade 1986, arguing against Urbach 1987, 483 where Urbach had previously rejected

and philosophies that reject the body for the sake of the soul. Rather than a question of the origin, cause, and absolution of sin, the *yetzer* is seen to function within the sphere of psychology, where the base physical and especially sexual appetites, though natural, are something dangerous that must be tamed and controlled by the psychologically integrated person.

Arguing along these lines, Michael Satlow has written influentially in describing the *yetzer* as the ‘irrational animal part of man’ that must be controlled by the ‘rational’.¹⁴³ Satlow traces this anthropology from the rabbis through the Middle Platonists, Neoplatonists, and even some church fathers (most notably Origen) who considered the soul to have a higher, rational part that struggled with its ‘lower part(s)’.¹⁴⁴ Similarly, Yona Frankel has emphasised the psychological aspects of the rabbinic *yetzer*. For instance, he analyses *b. Sukka* 52a as follows: ‘Abaye’s soul is split. The hated *yetzer* comes as if from the outside, and [Abaye] refers to “himself” in the third person. The split structure of the story reflects the description of the split soul’.¹⁴⁵ Rosen-Zvi argues that Frankel’s notion of the rabbinic dualism is indebted to modern psychological theory such as the ‘Homo Duplex’ of William James in which the Double Man signifies the common religious experience of the split between divine and mundane emotions and wills. For James the psychological duality of this ‘war within the flesh’ is abnormal and pathological, and a healthy religious mindset requires a ‘unification’ of the ‘self’.¹⁴⁶ Yona Frankel appropriates this pathological duality in his

hellenistic *askesis* and asceticism as the basic orientation of rabbinic Judaism.

¹⁴³Satlow 2004, 497; cf. Satlow 1996, 19–40.

¹⁴⁴Satlow 2003, 212.

¹⁴⁵Frankel 2001, 9–10, 101.

¹⁴⁶Cf. James 1902, 174–75. For a comprehensive assessment of James’ psycho-religious theory and its impact within Jewish and Christian studies, cf. Rosen-Zvi 2011, 83–86.

portrait of the *yetzer*, in which the ‘self’ turns to the other part of the soul, called ‘my *yetzer*’ and reproaches it as the cause of inner tension and poor mental health.¹⁴⁷

Similar psycho-sexual approaches, conformed to the standards of Hellenistic theories of self, have been explored by a wide array of scholars. D. Boyarin influentially adopts the position that the rabbinic *yetzer* was both sexual and dualistic at its core, and that this concept could be traced into earlier literature such as the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*.¹⁴⁸ Similar hellenistic origins for a dualistic rabbinic *yetzer* are argued by J. Cook, and its sexual impulse is traced by E. Tigchelaar in the Damascus Document and in the *Barkhi Nafshi* texts (4Q434–438).¹⁴⁹

3.2.3.3. *Yetzer* as Duality: The War Between Good and Evil *Yetzarim*

As a general rule, the above studies accept as an essential starting point the notion that Jewish anthropology operates within an internal dualism of conflicting good and evil natures, i.e., two warring *yetzarim*. Though some noted in passing that most Second Temple and rabbinic sources typically mention only a single *yetzer*, this absence of the *yetzer tov* is generally explained via the concern in the primary literature to defeat the stronger evil

¹⁴⁷Frankel 1991, 498.

¹⁴⁸See especially Boyarin 1995, and similarly Schofer 2004; Hayman 1976; Stiegman 1979, 487–579; van der Horst 2006, 59–65; Alexander 2002, 97–132; Schofer 2003. This psychological approach to anthropology has found significant traction within Pauline studies, such as in the seminal studies of Bultmann and Jewett. See Bultmann 1952, 245; on Romans 7: “‘I’ and ‘I,’ ‘self’ and ‘self,’ are at war with each other; i.e. to be innerly divided, or not to be at one with one’s self, is the essence of human existence under sin”; cf. Bultmann 1960, 175, and the critique of Bultmann’s position by Sanders 1977, 474–85. See further Jewett 1971, 61–62, as well as C.H. Dodd who reads Romans 7 as such an ‘intense experience of divided personality’ that the ‘man feels that some alien power in him is actually performing his actions’ Dodd 1932, 114. On Paul’s split ‘ego’ cf. Betz 2000, 337.

¹⁴⁹Cook 2007; Tigchelaar 2008. Note the mediating position previously taken by Hengel 1989, 48, for whom the Jewish *yetzer* of the Second Temple period ‘stands between Essene speculation on the two spirits and Hellenistic anthropology with its distinction between the higher and lower powers of the soul in human beings’.

inclination. This general dualistic anthropology based on the good and evil *yetzarim* has influenced a great deal of secondary literature on Qumran's light vs. darkness and two spirits, the διπρόσωπος of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* and the δίδυμος of Hermas.

3.2.3.4. Recent Critiques and Developments in Jewish Anthropology

In the past few decades two dedicated monograph studies on the history and development of Jewish anthropology have in turn challenged the validity of a unified 'doctrine of the *yetzer*' across early and late Jewish literature, as well as the common assumption that such a 'doctrine' includes a dualism between a good and evil *yetzer* dependent on strains of hellenistic psychology.

G. Cohen Stuart's 1984 dissertation argued for a greater diversity of thought within Second Temple and rabbinic literature than had previously been articulated. Cohen Stuart contends that the concept of an 'evil inclination' as expressed in the term *yetzer hara* arises only after the second century A.D. from within certain rabbinic schools. Therefore, in Cohen Stuart's argument, the concept of the 'evil *yetzer*' should be distinguished entirely from pre-rabbinic uses of the term.¹⁵⁰ In this reading, pre-rabbinic occurrences of the term indicate simply the 'human disposition' or 'personal choice', whereas from the second century A.D. the meaning of the word shifted to that of 'the good and evil impulses' or 'inclinations'.

Like most scholars before him, Cohen Stuart found it 'self-evident' that rabbis see in humankind two *yetzarim* that wage war within the soul.¹⁵¹ Against this position, however,

¹⁵⁰Cohen Stuart 1984a, 4.

¹⁵¹So Cohen Stuart 1984a, 10–15, 29–30 citing *m. Ber.* 9:5 and the two *yods* in the ויִצְרֵן of Gen 2:7; cf. Satlow 2003, 209: 'The concept of the good and evil inclinations, each pulling the individual toward and away from God, is fundamental to rabbinic anthropology of all times and places'; similarly, van der Horst

Ishay Rosen-Zvi has responded with a series of articles and a book-length study attempting to reevaluate the consensus model that the rabbinic *yetzer* functions as a dualism between good and evil human natures.¹⁵² Rosen-Zvi emphasises that the dualistic understanding of the *yetzer* has effectively ignored the general absence of the *yetzer tov* in a majority of both Second Temple and rabbinic sources. In advancing his theory that almost all sources hold to a single, evil *yetzer*, Rosen-Zvi analyses the rabbinic sources within a variety of historical criteria, including chronological, geographic, and source-critical factors. Building on the work of Menachem Kahana,¹⁵³ Rosen-Zvi isolates discussion on the *yetzer* to rabbis from the Tannaitic (c. A.D. 10–220) Amoraic (c. A.D. 220–500) and later anonymous Stammaic sources (c. A.D. 500–800). Furthermore, within the early Tannaitic period, Rosen-Zvi isolates discussions of the *yetzer* to the two dominant schools of R. Akiva and R. Ishmael.¹⁵⁴

Rosen-Zvi concludes that the dual *yetzarim* are rarely presented within the rabbinic sources and are never presented in pre-rabbinic sources. Rather, almost all rabbinic sources from the Tannaitic and Amoraic periods understood the *yetzer* to operate as a single, quasi-demonic force for evil that resides on but remains separate from the heart and wars against its human host and the divine law. Rather than attempting to control the *yetzer*, unify the *yetzer*, or turn its impulses for good, the rabbis taught that humans must ‘excise the *yetzer* of the heart’, removing the offending member through divine intervention and Torah

2006, 59.

¹⁵²See Rosen-Zvi 2006a; Rosen-Zvi 2006b; Rosen-Zvi 2007; Rosen-Zvi 2008; Rosen-Zvi 2010; Rosen-Zvi 2011.

¹⁵³E.g., Kahana 2006.

¹⁵⁴On these two schools, the history of their scholarly reconstruction, and the methods of identifying specific midrashic units to each school, cf. Kahana 2006, 17–39. Additional studies on the schools of Akiva and Ishmael include Heschel 2005, the critique of Heschel’s method in Yadin 2003b, 106–7, and Rosen-Zvi 2007, 41–79.

observance. In pre-rabbinic sources, this single *yetzer* is also in view, though with various tendencies that vary between authors.

In this stark departure from past scholarly conclusions on the duality of the Jewish *yetzer*, Rosen-Zvi has presented a provocative, far-reaching thesis, one that has significant implications for both rabbinic and Second Temple anthropology. While Rosen-Zvi's theory has been challenged in part by scholars such as Menachem Kister, these critiques are based on Rosen-Zvi's description of the development of the *yetzer* in Second Temple thought and less on his refutation of the dominant theory of a pervasive anthropological dualism.¹⁵⁵

In sum, past scholarship has arrived at various and often contradictory conclusions on the nature of Jewish anthropology. Most have constructed anthropological models on the assumption of a universally accepted dual-*yetzer*, one good and one evil. Recent scholarship, however, has questioned whether this concept of a dual *yetzer* is consistent across the varieties of Judaism. As I will argue below, scholarship in the Epistle of James has in the past been dependent on these various portrayals of Jewish anthropology and will benefit from the ongoing developments in broader research.

3.3. Summary of Chapter 3

As I now turn to an extended analysis of Jewish texts in Part 2 and then to a comparison with the Epistle of James in Part 3, the ongoing scholarly discussions in Jewish theology (with special reference to the centrality of the divine law-court) and anthropology (notably the significance of the *yetzer*) will provide orientation to the questions of divine

¹⁵⁵Note, for example, Kister's dialogue with and general acceptance of Rosen-Zvi's approach to the *yetzer*, though with some reservations on the origins of the reification process, in Kister 2010a, 264.

agency and human interiority. The following five chapters will examine in depth a number of instantiations of these divine and human features within ancient Judaism, to which Part 3 will refer in an extended comparison with the Epistle of James.

PART II

Divine Probation in Jewish Literature

CHAPTER 4

Rewritten Bible and Demonic Paradigms

*Now words were in heaven concerning Abraham,
that he was faithful in everything which was told him
and that he loved the LORD and was faithful in all affliction.*

Jubilees 17:15

The genre of Expanded or Rewritten Bible provides us with numerous examples of the inherent cosmic and hermeneutical tensions related to divine probation. As Kensky notes, there is a concern throughout the Rewritten Bible genre for the ‘operations, procedures, and choreography of the divine courtroom.’¹⁵⁶ Courtroom scenes are inserted into narratives even at points where the biblical text does not justify the inclusion. The roles of the heavenly courtroom are redefined to highlight a strongly demonic paradigm where a combative, satanic prosecutorial figure and his servants actively battle against God’s people. Limited human ability to resist demonic interference requires a strong reliance on angelic assistance, apotropaic prayers, and other supernatural interventions. When this cosmic paradigm is applied to biblical testing narratives, works such as *Jubilees*, Qumran sectarian texts, and later Jewish literature employ an intertextual, assimilating hermeneutic that appeals to biblical narratives with robust cosmic frameworks (most notably the divine court of Job 1–3) in order to explain narratives with less-explicit cosmic roles such as the stories of Abraham and the Children of Israel in the Wilderness. In what follows, I will show how this

¹⁵⁶Kensky 2010, 120.

broad cosmic paradigm and hermeneutic is instantiated in three specific works: the book of *Jubilees*, the Qumran document 4Q225, and the *Biblical Antiquities* (L.A.B.).

4.1. *The Book of Jubilees*

The *Book of Jubilees*, an influential example of the ‘Rewritten Bible’ genre, offers an extended reworking of the biblical testing narratives from the opening of Genesis to the first half of Exodus.¹⁵⁷ Composed in Hebrew, this work enjoyed widespread reception and was subsequently translated into Greek and possibly Syriac. From Greek, additional translations were produced in Latin and Ethiopic, of which only the Ethiopic survives in its entirety.¹⁵⁸

The theme of trials and testing of the patriarchs occurs throughout *Jubilees*. The driving emphasis is a concern to detail righteous divine and human responses to supernatural interference, especially in the lives of Noah, Moses, and Abraham. In what follows I will investigate the way *Jubilees* portrays the various *dramatis personae* of probation (4.1.1.–4.1.4.) and how this cosmic drama informs the author’s reading of Scripture (4.1.5.).

4.1.1. *God in the Courtroom*

Jubilees invests great effort in positioning God as a righteous judge who rules impartially and fairly, especially in his dealings with Israel. *Jub.* 1:5 opens by declaring the intention that the book serve for Israel’s descendants as proof that ‘I have not abandoned

¹⁵⁷Cf. Crawford 2008 on the history of scholarship on ‘Rewritten Bible’ and pp. 61–62 on *Jubilees* in particular; also Segal 2007, 4–5. Most scholars date *Jubilees* either c. 160–150 B.C. (the period following the Hasmonean victory) or ca. 170 B.C. (shortly before the decrees of Antiochus Epiphanes in 167 B.C.); on the former, cf. VanderKam 2001, 1:17–21; on the latter date cf. Goldstein 1983, 69–72.

¹⁵⁸Cf. VanderKam 1977, 95, who notes that the Hebrew fragments of *Jubilees* discovered in Qumran demonstrate a ‘remarkable, though not complete’ correspondence to the later translations. Hebrew fragments of *Jubilees* have been found in Caves 1 (1Q17–18), 2 (2Q19–20), 3 (3Q5), 4 (4Q216–224) and 11 (11Q12) and in an unknown cave (XQ5a).

them because of all the evil they have done in straying from the covenant [at Mt. Sinai]'. 1:6 continues 'then they will recognise that I am more righteous than they in all their judgments and in all their actions'. In this statement, *Jubilees* self-describes as a witness to cosmic justice, together with the witness of the heavenly tablets.¹⁵⁹ Presiding over this judgment, God sits as righteous judge over both angelic Watchers and humans. *Jub.* 5:15–16 establishes the impartiality of the divine judgement:¹⁶⁰

In regard to all He will judge . . . and he is not one who will regard any with respect to their person, nor is He one who will receive gifts. He will not regard the gifts or the person, nor accept anything at his hands, for He is a righteous judge.

This (biblical) defence of divine judgement extends throughout the book with a special emphasis on God's unwillingness to be bribed into unjust verdicts. So in *Jub.* 21:3–4 God is 'just above all others', with whom there is 'no accepting of persons and no accepting of gifts, for God is righteous, and executes judgment on all those who transgress His commandments'. As a witness to divine integrity, *Jubilees* retells the stories of Genesis and Exodus as part of a forensic defence of God's actions, persuading the reader to acquit God of wrongdoing and injustice. Kensky reorients the perspective of the judgement in view, arguing that although God is named judge by the narrative, ultimately it is the reader whom *Jubilees* asks to judge God's actions in history in light of *Jubilees*' witness.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹So *Jub.* 4:5, 18; 23:1; 30:1–23; 31:18; 30:19 on the heavenly tablets as judicial testimony. These tablets will be read in a courtroom scenario of Man before God, with the tablets serving as evidence.

¹⁶⁰Translations of *Jubilees* are based on Charlesworth 1983 unless otherwise noted.

¹⁶¹So Kensky 2010, 126.

4.1.2. *Satan as Prosecutor and the Demonic Paradigm*

Within *Jubilees*' stated intention to establish God as righteous and impartial judge, the role of cosmic prosecutor takes centre stage in the book's cosmic drama. *Jubilees* extends the tradition of the Watchers, derived from the Enoch tradition, into a combination of demonic enemies and a Satanic prosecutorial figure active in the heavenly court. In *Jubilees* 4:15 the Enochic Watchers descend to intermingle with human kind with disastrous results. However, *Jubilees* moves beyond Enoch to construct a supernatural paradigm in which the demonic offspring of the Watchers become the cause of seduction and then the destruction of humankind both before (*Jub.* 7:27–28) and after the Flood narrative (*Jub.* 10:1–11). These demons oppress the sons of Noah until, on Noah's request for divine intervention, they are bound, leaving only a portion of the demonic forces under the control of the angelic prosecutorial figure Mastema.¹⁶² In *Jub.* 10:8–11 Mastema is introduced:

And the chief of the spirits, Mastema, came and said: 'Lord, Creator, let some of [these demons] remain before me, and let them obey my voice, and do all that I shall say unto them; for if some of them are not left to me, I shall not be able to execute the power of my will on the sons of men; for these are for corruption and leading astray before my judgment, for great is the wickedness of the sons of men.'¹⁶³ And God said: 'Let the tenth part of them remain before him, and let nine parts descend into the place of condemnation.' And God commanded one of us [angels] to teach Noah all their remedies.

Jubilees introduces Mastema as the prince of the spirits, further identified with Satan in 10:8–11.¹⁶⁴ He is given control over a portion of demons in order to fulfil his divinely

¹⁶²See further below on Noah's apotropaic prayer.

¹⁶³Brand 2011, 336 notes here that both external and internal sources of evil appear in *Jubilees*, though the emphasis lies on the external sources.

¹⁶⁴Identified with Satan in v. 11, which may function as a proper name or as a description.

appointed role of the prosecutor of humanity. In 11:5 Mastema's role as provocateur is expanded to include complete control over demons and evil spirits as they spread idolatry and perversion in humanity. In Mastema's role we see a merging between the demonic (i.e., evil spirits) and satanic (i.e., angelic prosecutor) roles that will be exerted in *Jubilees* particularly against the seed of Abraham.¹⁶⁵ Against Mastema's enmity, however, God has the angels teach humans 'remedies' in *Jub.* 10:11, presumably providing means of resisting demonic oppression. Furthermore, throughout *Jubilees* Mastema is alternately bound through divine command and elsewhere released in order to provoke Israel.¹⁶⁶

In a number of places Mastema serves as a substitute for God in potentially compromised roles. This occurs in *Jub.* 49:2 where Mastema takes the place of the angel of death, as well as in *Jub.* 48:2 where God's attempt to put Moses to death in *Exod* 5:24 is recast as the actions of Mastema. A further example of Mastema recasting the divine role of the biblical narrative will be examined below in the study of *Jubilee's* reading of the *Aqedah*.

In sum, the author of *Jubilees* recasts the biblical narrative within an explicit demonic paradigm. This demonic paradigm explains the supernatural roles and responsibilities both in the divine courtroom and in human experience.¹⁶⁷

4.1.3. *Human Weakness and Divine Intervention*

The strongly demonic paradigm in *Jubilees* is matched by a presentation of human interiority that is unable to resist demonic interference. While Enochic accounts of the

¹⁶⁵Cf. *Jub.* 11:10 where Mastema's ravens steal seed from the ground to symbolise his enmity against Abraham's descendants in 9:28; 11:18; 12:20.

¹⁶⁶Due to divine intervention Satan is alternately bound and released in 46:2, 48:15 and 49:2 (where he slays the firstborn of Egypt). The future hope is for a time when 'there shall be no Satan nor any evil destroyer' (so 23:29–31; 50:5).

¹⁶⁷So Brand 2011, 319, with Stuckenbruck 2004.

antediluvian world provided ample precedent that humankind is susceptible to spiritual enticement, *Jubilees* extends this weakened condition to Noah's descendants. The resulting relationship between demonic interference, human weakness, and the need for divine intervention is highlighted throughout *Jubilees*, but especially in a series of apotropaic prayers in *Jubilees* 1, 10, 12, and 22.¹⁶⁸

4.1.3.1. Apotropaic Prayers in Jubilees

Jub. 1:19–23 opens with a call for divine intervention in the hearts of his people:

And Moses fell on his face and prayed and said, 'O Lord my God, do not forsake Thy people and Thy inheritance, so that they should wander in the error of their hearts. . . Create for them an upright spirit, and don't allow your people and inheritance to proceed from the errors of their hearts.'¹⁶⁹ And a spirit of Belial shall not rule them to divert them from all ways of justice, so that they might be destroyed from before your face; create a pure heart and a holy spirit for them. And do not let them be ensnared by their sin henceforth and forever . . . But after this they will return to me in all uprightness and with all of (their) heart and soul. And I shall cut off the foreskin of their heart and the foreskin of the heart of their descendants.

A number of points introduced in this passage will reoccur throughout *Jubilees*.

Moses requests divine aid from the 'error of [Israel's] hearts' and asks God to create an

¹⁶⁸In an apotropaic prayer, the worshipper asks for divine aid in protection against evil powers; this prayer-form is a recurring feature in *Jubilees*. Scholars have argued that apotropaic prayer as a remedy to supernatural powers serves an important role throughout ancient Judaism. Flusser 1966 argues that apotropaic prayers illuminate a shift from personal to demonised sin, and function primarily as a personal shield against evil; cf. Eshel 1999; Eshel 2003. Stuckenbruck 2006 argues that apotropaic prayers reflect an inclusion of demonic forces within traditional biblical prayers for deliverance. Brand 2011 explores the use of similar prayers at Qumran where the inclination to sin is only escapable through divine assistance. Brand argues that whereas 'covenantal' texts in Qumran such as the Damascus Document and 1QS V–VI emphasise human ability to control sin, the prayer texts (e.g., 11Q5 and 4QBarkhi Nafshi, the Hodayot and the 'Hymn of Praise' [1QS X.9–XI.22]) emphasise human inability and the need for divine intervention. On the later use of these prayer forms, Kister 2010a traces apotropaic prayers from *Jubilees* through their use in later rabbinic traditions.

¹⁶⁹Falk 1999, 56 sees here a parallel in 3Q393: 'Do not forsake your people [and] your inheritance, and do not let any man proceed in the stubbornness of his [ev]il heart / בשרירות לבו [הר]ע'.

upright spirit. These requests are substantially biblical, in the model of the prophet Ezekiel, in which personal purity is available only through a divinely bestowed heart (e.g., Ezek 11:19, 18:31, 36:26). However, rather than the ‘new heart’ from Ezekiel, Moses’ request continues along more demonological lines. Beliar is named as the invading ruler of the heart, therefore Moses enlists divine aid in order to purify the heart and specifically to ‘circumcise the heart’ of the embedded source of evil. Here, the problem is not that the heart itself needs to be replaced, but rather that a foreign appendage has been added which requires excision.¹⁷⁰ This ‘foreskin of the heart’ provides a base of operations from which demonic spirits launch assaults against the righteousness of God’s people.

In a similar manner, in *Jub.* 10:1–9 an apotropaic prayer of Noah names demonic figures as the ‘rulers of the spirits of men’ and agents of probation. Noah prays on behalf of his sons:

‘God of the spirits of all flesh, who has shown mercy unto me, and has saved me and my sons from the waters of the flood . . . Let your grace be lifted up upon my sons, and let not wicked spirits rule over them, lest they should destroy them from the earth. . . . And you know how your Watchers, the fathers of these spirits, acted in my day: and as for these spirits which are living, imprison them and hold them fast in the place of condemnation, and let them not bring destruction on the sons of your servant, my God; for these are malignant, and created in order to destroy. And let them not rule over the spirits of the living; for you alone can exercise judgement over them. And let them not have power over the sons of the righteous from now and forever.’

Then the Lord commanded the archangel Michael to cast them into the abyss, until the day of judgment. But the devil requested to take the portion from them, for tempting (πρὸς πειρασμὸν) of humans. And the tenth (part) of the demons was given to him, according to the divine command, so that they might test (πειράζειν) the worth (δοκιμὴν) of the commitment of each person toward God.

¹⁷⁰On parallels to the rabbinic ‘circumcision of the *yetzer* of the heart’, see below in the rabbinic discussion.

In this passage the demonic interference of the Enochic narrative is extended to the postdiluvian world. The insidious effects of the demonic offspring on Noah's children causes Noah to pray for divine aid. There is a special concern that the demons not be allowed to 'rule over the sons of Noah' and 'over the spirits of the living'. After Noah's prayer, God intervenes in the fate of humanity by removing all but a tenth of the evil spirits. These spirits are left at Satan's request for the purpose of fulfilling their mandate to 'test the worth' (πειράζειν τὴν δοκιμὴν) of each person's commitment to God. Brand proposes that *Jub.* 10 harnesses the supernatural enmity to divine purposes and shifts the narrative: now humankind will be required to prove their faithfulness under supernatural trial.¹⁷¹ But in what manner does this demonic probation take place? A further apotropaic prayer in *Jub.* 12 emphasises that the locus of trial is specifically centred on the *yetzer* of the heart.

The prayer in *Jub.* 12:1–20 contains a request by Abram for divine assistance in rejecting the idols of his father.

(1) And in the sixth week, in the fifth year, Abram sat up throughout the night on the new moon of the seventh month to observe the stars from the evening to the morning, in order to see what would be the character of the year with regard to the rains, and he was alone as he sat and observed. . . . (19) And he said, My God, my God, God most high, You alone are my God. You have created everything; Everything that is and has been is the product of your hands. You and your lordship I have chosen. (20) Save me from the evil spirits who rule the *yetzer* of a person's heart, and may they not mislead me from you, my God. Do establish me and my seed forever, and may we not go astray from now until eternity.

In this apotropaic prayer, Abram attempts to effect divine intercession as a remedy

¹⁷¹Cf. Brand 2011, 325. Similarly, see *Jub.* 7, where Segal 2007, 149 emphasises the demonic source of evil; *pace* Stuckenbruck 2004, 115 who holds to a continued place for human responsibility for sin.

for his descendants' sinfulness.¹⁷² The prayer opens with an acknowledgement of God's sovereignty in all things (12:18), that while evil spirits may cause humankind to be led astray nevertheless God has the power to overcome this enemy. The prayer then clarifies the specific locus for satanic interference: demons rule the *yetzer* of a person's heart, and not merely the heart itself.

The Ethiopic phrase used in 12:20 to describe the human heart is the equivalent of the biblical *יצר לב האדם* 'the *yetzer*/inclination/thought of the human heart' found in Gen 6:5; 8:21.¹⁷³ While this prayer emphasises that evil spirits rule the '*yetzer* of a person's heart', the *yetzer* as an anthropological construct appears to be a neutral term in *Jubilees*, at times corresponding to the evil within evil people and the good within good people.¹⁷⁴ The term itself does not denote a reified force for evil within the person, nor a sexual lust, but rather the person's thoughts and decisions.

However, within Abram's apotropaic prayer this *yetzer* becomes the place in which demonic beings make their home and launch their attacks.¹⁷⁵ With the *yetzer* vulnerable to the evil influences of demonic powers, what might appear or feel to be the fault of an internal sinful flaw is in actuality the effect of powerful demonic forces taking control of the person's natural tendencies.¹⁷⁶ The human inability to resist demonic interference creates a

¹⁷²Kister 2010a, 256–7, with Lichtenberger 1983, 10; Stuckenbruck 2006, 158–9 argues that this prayer was originally an independent liturgical prayer inserted by the author into *Jubilees* to explain the desire for sin in the righteous. Similarly, cf. 10:3 'may the evil spirits not rule them'; 19:28 'may the *mastemah* spirits not rule you and your posterity, to distance you from God'.

¹⁷³Ethiopic: *hellina lebba sab'e*, following Kister 2010a, 244–5.

¹⁷⁴Cf. Esau's wicked *yetzer* in *Jub.* 35:9 (as in 4Q223–224 and 1Q18) and Jacob's good nature in *Jub.* 35:12. Similarly, see Judith 8:29: 'all the people know your mind and that your heart's *yetzer* is good' (καθότι ἀγαθόν ἐστὶν τὸ πλάσμα τῆς καρδίας σου); also in Sir 15:14 noted below.

¹⁷⁵See Flusser 1988, 217.

¹⁷⁶Kister 2010b, 245–6, 258 compares this combination of demonic and internal anthropological features with the term *רוח* in 4Q230; cf. Tigchelaar 2004, 529–47. Similarly, Brand 2011, 350–70 has argued

problem: how then can an internally flawed nature resist demonic temptation? The apotropaic prayer functions as a solution, whereby divine aid is mustered in defence of God's people.¹⁷⁷

The prayer-forms found in *Jubilees* maintained their essential features through the Second Temple and into the later rabbinic periods, especially as regards the role of the demonic agent, the place of the *yetzer* as the locus for demonic action, and the need for divine aid.¹⁷⁸ Similar prayer forms are employed through the Second Temple literature. Examples include a prayer found in Ben Sira (see chapter 5 below), as well as in the *Aramaic Levi* document. The prayer in *Aramaic Levi* seeks protection from both the spirits external to man and from evil thoughts in the heart of man:

Grant me all the paths of truth, make far from me the unrighteous spirit, and evil thought and fornication turn away from me ... grant me counsel and wisdom and knowledge and strength, And let not any satan rule me to make me stray from your path... the wall of your peace shall be around me, and let the shelter of your power shelter me from every evil.¹⁷⁹

Similarly, a medieval prayer was found in the Cairo Genizah that draws on a number

that the use of the root *sht* in Ethiopic to describe demonic deception ('may they not mislead me', Eth. 'i-yashetuni), and the errors of Abram's seed ('may we not go astray'; Eth. 'ineshat) and Abram himself ('in the error of my heart'; ba-ssehtata lebbeya) creates a link between demonic activity and personal sin: sin resides in the human heart (lebb) but is controlled by demonic rule.

¹⁷⁷Cf. *Jub.* 7:20–23 for the giving of the law to aid against impurity. Kister 1999, 169; Kister 2009, 507–9 notes that similar apotropaic functions move from prayer into Torah observance in broader Jewish literature.

¹⁷⁸Kister 2010a, 255 sees similar prayer language employed in the Qumran Psalm scroll (11Q5: 'Let me not stumble in transgression, let not Satan rule over me, nor an impure spirit, let neither pain nor evil *yetzer* take possession of my bones'); Matt 6:13 ('Do not bring us to *πειρασμόν*, but save us from the Evil One'); *b. Ber.* 60b (following ms. Munich 95; Oxford OPP, Paris 671: 'do not bring me to sin, and not to transgression and not to disgrace and not to temptation [*לְפָסֵד*], and the evil *yetzer* shall not rule over over me').

¹⁷⁹Text and translation from Greenfield 2004, 60–62.

of older styles, genres, and literary sources in appealing that God save the soul of the petitioner from the demonic interference on the *yetzer* of the heart:

... and your good spirit will direct me in a level land, for the sake of your name. Yah-weh, save my soul while I am alive, and give full justice and redeem me and save me from all the evil spirits which rule the *yetzer* of a person's heart and distance from me the evil *yetzer* and the evil tongue and evil man and all that your soul hated.¹⁸⁰

4.1.4. Summary of Theological Cosmology in *Jubilees*

In sum, the cosmic drama of probation portrayed in *Jubilees* includes a God whose integrity is defended and a number of satanic and demonic actors as the source of evil. When Satan targets the human condition, the *yetzer* provides the point of attack. While the language of the *yetzer* is similar to that of its biblical origins, its function within the anthropological framework has expanded to define the vulnerable point from which demonic forces rule the human spirit. However, *Jubilees* also illustrates that God's people are not completely helpless: they are equipped with a powerful weapon to combat demonic forces, namely a prayer-form with the power to bind the *yetzer* to the divine will and release it from demonic control. The series of apotropaic prayers in *Jubilees* by Moses, Noah, and Abraham functions as the means by which God's people can escape demonic powers. This prayerful remedy against demonic interference would be used by later Jews from the Second Temple period through Medieval Jewry, though with various modifications to fit their various theological cosmologies.

¹⁸⁰Translated from Margaliot 1973, 139. For a comprehensive recitation of these prayer forms in Jewish and Christian texts, cf. Kister 2010a.

4.1.5. Exegetical Solutions to Divine Probation in Jubilees

The cosmic drama that underlies much of *Jubilees* is made explicit in the retelling of various probation narratives in Genesis and Exodus, foremost of which is the near-sacrifice of Isaac in Gen 22. This rewritten narrative in *Jub.* 17–18 recasts the trial of Abraham by God into a trial of God by Satan, as the various *dramatis personae* of the biblical narrative are conformed to *Jubilee's* overarching cosmic framework.

Now words were in heaven concerning Abraham, that he was faithful in everything which was told him and that he loved the LORD and was faithful in all affliction. And Prince Mastema came and he said before God, 'Behold, Abraham loves Isaac, his son. And he is more pleased with him than everything. Tell him to offer him (as) a burnt offering upon the altar. And then you will see whether he will do this thing. And you will know whether he is faithful in everything in which you test him.' (Jub. 17:15–16)

Do not put forth your hand against the child and do not do anything to him because now I have made known that you are one who fears the LORD and you did not deny your first born son to me'. And Prince Mastema was shamed. (Jub. 18:8–12)

4.1.5.1. Words in Heaven at the *Aqedah*

Genesis 22 opens with the phrase 'and after these דברים God נסה Abraham'.¹⁸¹ The Hebrew term דברים has a wide semantic range including, 'words', 'things', or 'deeds'. Despite the majority rendering of 'things', various early translations such as the LXX's ῥήματα demonstrates that some early interpreters read 'after these words'. As Genesis 22 recorded no 'words' in its preceding context, some rabbinic writers would imagine words between Isaac and Ishmael that caused God to test Isaac's faithfulness.¹⁸² However, an interpretation with a

¹⁸¹ יהי אחר הדברים האלה והאלהים נסה את אברהם

¹⁸² E.g., *Gen. Rab.* 55.4; *Tan.* (Buber) *Ve-yera* 42; *b. San.* 89b.

remarkably strong and lasting attestation in both Second Temple and rabbinic literature told of ‘words in heaven’ spoken between God and the heavenly host.¹⁸³ The earliest record of this reading of Gen 22 occurs in *Jub.* 17, where words or voices in heaven debate the worth of Abraham's faithfulness. From *Jub.* 17:15 to 18:1 the author uses this implicit dialogue to interject an entirely new pericope, focused on the divine council and deeply dependent on the story of Job 1–3, that functions to preemptively explain a number of potentially compromising ideas from the biblical narrative.

4.1.5.2. God on Trial at the *Aqedah*

The pericope at *Jub.* 17:15–18:1 opens with a shift of scene from earth to the heavenly court. Van Ruiten details how this scene is deeply dependent on the details and dialogue of Job 1–3, in which Satan comes before God to indict Job.¹⁸⁴ As the divine council declares Abraham's righteousness (likely an allusion to Gen 15:6), the prosecutorial figure Mastema, responsible for all of Abraham's difficulties to this point in *Jubilees*, enters the scene to indict Abraham's love for God as inferior to Abraham's love for his son Isaac.

Throughout *Jubilees* the defendant Abraham has been presented as the idealised tested man through a series of challenges. In 17:15–18 the narrator explains preemptively that Abraham was ‘faithful’, ‘patient’, ‘quick to act’, and a ‘lover of the Lord’, ‘faithful’ and ‘patient in his soul’. In chapter 19 these characteristics will be reiterated at Sarah's death to further confirm that Abraham is ‘faithful, controlled of spirit’, and controlled of speech, ‘not uttering a word’ against God. As a result, Abraham is recorded on the heavenly tablets as a ‘lover of God’ (19:9). Because of Abraham's patient response, at his death *Jubilees* describes

¹⁸³For this interpretation of Gen 22 across broader Jewish literature, cf. Weinberg 1994; Kister 1994.

¹⁸⁴van Ruiten 2002.

him as ‘perfect in all his deeds with the Lord, and well-pleasing in righteousness all the days of his life’ (*Jub.* 23:10).

Abraham’s patient faithfulness is reiterated by the narrator in 17:15–18:1, where the narrator further clarifies that ‘God already knew’ that Abraham was faithful. This statement of divine knowledge recognises a latent tension in the canonical narrative, namely, ‘why must God test except to discover what he does not know?’ Suddenly, both God and Abraham are on trial together. Against the divine forensic statement in Gen 15:6 that God had declared Abraham to be righteous, Mastema becomes the prosecutorial challenger of both Abraham’s righteousness and also of God’s declarations. Indeed, as if to clarify precisely who is ὁ πειράζων in this narrative, the biblical phrase from Gen 22:1 ‘God tested Abraham’ is replaced entirely by the intervening explanatory pericope.

With Mastema’s statement in 17:16 ‘*then* you will see whether he will do this thing. . . and *then* you will know whether Abraham is faithful in everything’, Mastema becomes the indictor of divine knowledge. Mastema’s charge against Abraham thinly veils an indictment against the Almighty. The author of *Jubilees* builds Mastema’s charge from a reading of the canonical text at Gen 22:12, where after Abraham’s trial the angel states: ‘Abraham, Abraham . . . do not lift your hand against the boy, for *now* I know that you fear God’ (כִּי עַתָּה יָדַעְתִּי כִּי־יִרָא אֱלֹהִים). The remainder of Abraham’s ordeal in the *Jubilees Aqedah* is therefore reconfigured as a defence against the charge that God’s biblical actions impinge upon divine integrity and foreknowledge. Commensurate with the author’s declaration in 17:17 that ‘the Lord already knew that Abraham was faithful’, the theologically compromised call from heaven in *Jub.* 18:11 is rewritten: ‘do not lift your hand against the boy, for *now I have made known* that you are one who fears God’ (in the Latin: ‘quod quo

nunc manifestavi quia times Deum tuum'). Here, *Jubilees* reads ידעתִי in Gen 22:12 not as the qal perfect ידעתִי 'now I know' as read by the masoretic text, but rather as the piel ידעתִי with its causative meaning 'I have made known'.¹⁸⁵ Rather than the test proving *to God* that Abraham feared him (Gen 22:12), the *Aqedah* becomes a demonstration *to others* what God already knew: Abraham was faithful, and God stands righteous and justified in his judgements. Those who would challenge God and his friend Abraham in the heavenly court stand defeated, just as *Jub.* 18:12 continues 'and Mastema was shamed'.

4.1.5.3. The Hermeneutic of the Aqedah in Jubilees

Jubilees makes a number of explicit interpretive decisions in removing God from the role of ὁ πειράζων and in clarifying potentially compromised readings of the *Aqedah*. *Jubilees* reads creatively within the boundaries of the Hebrew text, assimilating Gen 22 with other canonical narratives, most notably the cosmic drama of Job 1–3, to construct a narrative framework that fits its theological sensibilities. *Jubilees* offers a complex reconfiguration of the cosmic drama, placing an emphasis on clarified divine agency, active external satanic interference, a compromised anthropology, and divine assistance. Mastema assumes the role of prosecutor in order to mitigate divine agency and the compromised foreknowledge inherent to the act of testing. The anthropological characteristics of the exemplar Abraham are highlighted and expanded upon to create the perfect, patient, friend of God.

¹⁸⁵The Ethiopic of *Jubilees* likely renders 'I have known', as in the masoretic and Samaritan texts of Gen 22:12=ידעתִי. However, 'shown' or 'demonstrated' is supported by the Latin, Ethiopic, and Syriac versions in ver. 16: 'Because you have obeyed My voice, and *I have shown to all that you are faithful* unto Me in all that I have said to you'. This reading has been noted by Jacobs 1975, 459 and Kessler 2005, 38 n. 7, and was graciously explained to me by James Kugel during his time in Oxford, Hilary Term 2010.

4.2. Further Examples from Rewritten Bible

A cosmic drama similar to *Jubilees* can be found in Qumran. However, Qumran demonstrates an even stronger dualistic framework where sin is attributed entirely to external cosmic forces ruling over the human heart.¹⁸⁶ For example, in an apotropaic hymn in the Psalm scroll from Qumran, we find the following request:

Bestow on me a spirit of faith and knowledge, let me not stumble in transgression.
Let not Satan rule over me, nor an impure spirit, let neither pain nor evil *yetzer*
take possession of my bones.¹⁸⁷

Kister argues that in this text the evil angel and impure spirit act within the person and cause the ‘evil *yetzer*,’¹⁸⁸ illnesses, and pains.¹⁸⁹

The hermeneutical effect of this cosmic drama in Qumran can be seen in 4Q225. Here, we find a retelling of Gen 22 highly dependent on the *Jubilees* story, but with an additional dualistic emphasis placed on the warring heavenly forces. 4Q225, like *Jubilees*, expands the biblical narrative to include Abraham’s faithfulness from Gen 15 as a primary focus of the *Aqedah*. However, a few notable developments in the Qumran text move the narrative beyond the *Jubilees* text, primarily by expanding the cosmic drama. Whereas

¹⁸⁶The demonic framework at Qumran has been well documented. See, e.g., Steudel 2000; Martone 2004, 115–27. On the *yetzer* at Qumran, cf. Rosen-Zvi 2011, 44–64, especially pp. 50–51 where he details the inherent tensions between the *yahad*’s deterministic framework driven by divine election and the continued presence of evil in its members.

¹⁸⁷11QPs 19.14–16, in Sanders 1965, 40.

¹⁸⁸*Yetzer hara* also read here by Lichtenberger 1983, 7; Cohen Stuart 1984a, 99.

¹⁸⁹So Kister 2010a, 254–55. Kister sees similar language in the ending of 4QMMT: ‘seek from him that he may support your counsel and keep far from you the evil thought and the counsel of Belial’, as well as in the *Hashkivenu* blessing (‘let us sleep’): ‘and cover us with your canopy of peace, and correct us with a good counsel from before you... and protect us... and remove Satan from before us and behind us’; here cf. Flusser 1988, 201–202; Greenfield 2004.

Jubilees speaks of just Mastema, 4Q225 imagines entire heavenly armies, some with God and others with Mastema. As Abraham is about to slay Isaac, the ‘holy angels’ stand weeping above the altar, while the ‘angels of Mastema’ rejoice, saying ‘now he shall perish’.¹⁹⁰ 4Q225 likely follows *Jubilees* in reading the piel of יָדַע as a demonstration of Abraham’s faithfulness to the entire heavenly host. Here as well the test is transformed from a certification of the quality of Abraham’s faith to a contest between the forces of good and evil, with the ultimate divine vindication resulting in Mastema’s binding.

This reading of the *Aqedah* continues into later examples of Rewritten Bible. In the *Biblical Antiquities* (*L.A.B*) 32:2–4 the Job story provides a heavenly background for Abraham’s test within the heavenly court, but here there is no central Satanic figure. Rather, angelic jealousy about God’s favour for Abraham prompts the divine test. As Abraham prepares to kill Isaac,

the Most Powerful hastened and sent forth his voice from on high saying, You shall not slay your son, nor shall you destroy the fruit of your body. For now I have appeared so as to reveal you to those who do not know you (*nunc enim manifestavi ut appareres ignorantibus te*) and have shut the mouths of those who are always speaking evil against you.

Here, the test was to prove ‘to all who speak evil against Abraham’ that *God* was justified in favouring Abraham. As in *Jubilees* and 4Q225, *L.A.B* extends both the cosmology of Genesis and its trial to include both God and man.¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ This conflict with Abraham builds from the *Jubilees* source, where Mastema continually attempts to kill the seed of Abraham; cf. VanderKam 1997, 259 n. 41; Kister 1994, 20; Martínez 2002, 49.

¹⁹¹ Cf. Vermes 1961, 201. Cohen Stuart 1984a, 141 identifies in *L.A.B* a continued instantiation of the *yetzer* concept in the notion that in the eschaton ‘the desire to sin (*cupiditas peccandi*) ended, and the evil *yetzer* (*plasmatio iniqua*) lost its power’ (33.3). Both the parallel between ‘desire to sin’ and ‘evil *yetzer*’, as well as the emphasis that there will not be an evil *yetzer* after death are found in rabbinic literature.

4.3. *Conclusions to Rewritten Bible*

In conclusion, literature within the so-called Rewritten Bible genre demonstrates a particular instantiation of the cosmic drama. The heavenly court plays a key function in these narratives, with special emphasis placed on defining the roles of judge, prosecutor, and defendant. While God serves as judge, a Satanic figure serves as the prosecuting *ὁ πειράζων*, and the human sits as defendant, these texts also place God on defence both within the narrative and from the perspective of the readers. This cosmic drama results in an intertextual hermeneutic in which well-known canonical narratives, most notably Job's heavenly trial, are assimilated to provide a composite of biblical stories. For the purpose of my broader comparison, I will label this general range of exegetical responses a Hermeneutic of Intertextual Assimilation. On returning to the Epistle of James, we will use these particular instantiation of the cosmic drama, and the resulting biblical hermeneutic, to interrogate whether James shares similar cosmic and exegetical features.

However, this demonically focused, assimilating hermeneutic was not the only option available to ancient interpreters. Some literature shied away from such an overt demonic framework and its tendency toward a cosmic dualism, preferring instead to internalize the demonic *dramatis persona* as a function of the human condition. This preference can be seen in two examples: the anthropology of Ben Sira and the philosophical system of Philo's Middle-Platonism, to which we turn in the following two chapters.

CHAPTER 5

The Wisdom of Ben Sira and Human Ability

*Do not say, 'On account of the Lord I fell away'
for what he hates, he will not do.
It was he who from the beginning made humankind,
and he left him in the hand of his yetzer.*

Sirach 15:11–14

The book of Sirach records the teachings of the Palestinian sage Jesus Ben Sira. The text remains generally extant in Hebrew and in Greek. Ben Sira probably taught around 180 B.C., a Jewish sage in the middle of the hellenistic transformation of Palestine.¹⁹²

Sirach represents one of the oldest extant reflections on the Jewish law from the Second Temple period. It enjoyed widespread circulation in both Jewish and Christian circles, was translated into Latin, Coptic, Syriac, Ethiopic, Armenian, and Arabic, was cited by many Patristic writers both Greek and Latin and generated a rich commentary tradition in the late patristic and medieval periods.¹⁹³ A number of studies, most comprehensively those by Nuria Calduch-Benages, have emphasised probation as one of Sirach's principle

¹⁹²So Di Lella 1987, 8–10; Coggins 1998, 19; Collins 1997b, 23. The philosophical implications of Ben Sira's discourse have led a number of scholars to investigate parallels between Ben Sira and the broader philosophical discourses of his day. The scholarly interest has focused primarily on parallels with broader Jewish Hellenistic philosophy, and more broadly on contact between popular philosophical systems. See especially Marböck 1971, esp. 170–173; Winston 1973, 42–45; Hengel 1974, 1:138–153. Arguing specifically against a Stoic influence, cf. Mattila 2000.

¹⁹³On the reception and longevity of Sirach, cf. Harrington 1999, 90.

themes.¹⁹⁴ Though at times God stands under trial (e.g., Sir 18:23), most often the person serves as the object of testing, generally for pedagogical intent (e.g., Sir 2:1; 33:1; 39:4; 34:10). Ben Sira utilises a number of images and metaphors to describe the challenges of religious faithfulness, including the study hall, the crucible, the sieve, the potter's kiln, and agricultural cultivation (cf. Sir 2:22; 7:4–7). Calduch-Benages argues that the social context of the probation in Sirach evokes the figure of a law-abiding Jew in danger of allowing faithfulness to the One God to wither under the new social and religious practices of the hellenistic context.¹⁹⁵ In what follows I will examine how this context of probation impacts Ben Sira's understanding of divine, supernatural, and human nature.

5.1. Probation and Divine Responsibility in Sirach

There is some debate on the extent to which Sirach mitigates divine agency in probation. The clearest statement of such mitigation is in Sir 15:11–12.

Do not say, 'On account of the Lord I fell away', for what he hates, he will not do.
Do not say, 'It was he who led me astray', for he has no need of a sinful man.

While this passage will be discussed in greater depth below for its anthropological implications, we should note that the author demonstrates a concern that his readers not place God under indictment. Indeed, despite frequently treating the question of *πειρασμός*, Ben Sira demonstrates a reticence to identify God as *ὁ πειράζων*.

¹⁹⁴See Calduch-Benages 1991, 150; Calduch-Benages 1997a; Calduch-Benages 2005. Also Reiterer 1994; Di Lella 1997a; Gregory 2008. Korn 1937, 6 details the semantics of testing in Ben Sira, noting the translation equivalents of *πειρασμός* and *nissayon* in the Greek and Hebrew texts at Sir 2:1, 4:17, 6:7, 13:11, 18:23, 27:5–7, 33:1, 34:10, 37:37, 39:4.

¹⁹⁵Calduch-Benages 2005, 259, citing Sir 2:12–14.

Calduch-Benages argues that in four places (2:1; 33:1; 34:10; 44:20) Ben Sira names God as the agent of testing.¹⁹⁶ She states that in these passages God assumes the role of pedagogue: ‘God educates the righteous man through tests; by this process the person maintains a close relationship with the fear of God and attains to Wisdom.’¹⁹⁷ For example, when analysing Sir 2:1 (‘Child, if you come to serve the Lord, prepare your soul εἰς πειρασμὸν’), Calduch-Benages states that ‘although God may not be grammatically the subject of the action “to test”, the example of the older generations (2:10–11) clarifies any possible doubt about it.’¹⁹⁸ A similar reading is applied to Sir 33:1: ‘no evil will befall him who fears the Lord, but in a test (ἐν πειρασμῷ) he will also be delivered in turn’. What Calduch-Benages overlooked, however, is that Ben Sira carefully avoids naming the agent of probation at any point in his work.¹⁹⁹ In a discourse replete with the theme of probation, we should ask why God is removed from the role of active agency.

Analysing Sirach through Kensky’s courtroom framework is useful here. Throughout the book God is positioned as the judge in the heavenly court. God is ‘on the throne’ (1:8), and he rules with mercy and compassion ‘in times of affliction’ (2:7). God judges with mercy those who show mercy (3:18, 20). His judgments can be harsh, as in the case of the ancient giants of Gen 6 (Sir 16:7), the story of Lot (16:8), or even sinful Israel (16:9), for the Lord judges man according to his deeds (16:12). In Kensky’s analysis, God’s role as cosmic judge opens him to critique: does God rule justly? Does he accept bribes? Is he partial to the rich or those of high social standing? Sir 18 shows an explicit concern for

¹⁹⁶ Calduch-Benages 1991.

¹⁹⁷ Calduch-Benages 1991, 32.

¹⁹⁸ Here Calduch-Benages 1991, 29 cites the explicit role of God as tester in Prov 2:5 and 17:3.

¹⁹⁹ Calduch-Benages 1997, 140 later acknowledges that the divine role is somewhat ambiguous: ‘the text does not specify that the Lord is the subject of testing, and this must be inferred’.

human evaluation of divine righteousness. 18:2 argues that when all is placed in the balance ‘the Lord alone will be justified’ (δικαιωθήσεται). It is beyond human ability to either ‘diminish or increase’ the works of the Lord. In 18:8 humankind has no standing in evaluating the Lord: ‘what is man, and what is his use’? His days are limited, unable to comprehend the vastness of divine judgement. Therefore, before man enters into judgement (πρὸ κρίσεως), the person is to instead ‘examine himself’ (ἐξέταξε σεαυτόν); then, in the hour of God’s judgement he will find mercy (18:20). The passage concludes in 18:23 with an appeal to Deut 6:16, exhorting the human indicter that he not ‘test the Lord’ (πειράζων τὸν κύριον).

In Sirach’s evaluation, the attempts to turn the tables of judgement on God and place humankind in the judgement seat will be defeated and the cosmic order established. Nevertheless, despite Ben Sira’s rejection of the divine indictment, the author’s constant awareness of and defence against indictments of divine justice lie in the margins of his discourse. The author must continually emphasise that God’s judgements are both just and merciful (16:11; 17:20; 18:13). In an extensive treatment of God as judge, Sir 35 is careful to describe God as fair and impartial: he will never judge unjustly or receive bribes from the wealthy (35:14). He will never give preference to the rich over the poor, the orphan, or the widow (35:15–18). With this concern for fairness in the judgement seat, Ben Sira may have found it counterproductive to explicitly name God as ὁ πειράζων.

Therefore, God never acts as the immediate agent of probation in Sirach. However, the book does at times insert the personified Wisdom in such a role. Notably, when Wisdom appears as ὁ πειράζων the metaphor shifts from a courtroom scene to the study hall. Sirach pictures Wisdom as with the disciple in a growing pedagogical relationship. In 4:17

Wisdom walks with the disciple ‘cunningly’ (בהתנכר/διεστραμμένος, ‘by torturous roads’ or possibly ‘in disguise’ in Skehan’s translation), without the disciple realizing her presence.

Wisdom transforms herself in a veiled but ever-present guide of the disciple, rendered invisible in order to examine the disciple more easily. In 4:17 Wisdom ‘will torment him with training’ and ‘test him with her statutes’ (πειράσει αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς δικαιώμασιν αὐτῆς).²⁰⁰ In 6:20–21 Wisdom appears again a harsh mistress, a ‘stone of testing’ (ὡς λίθος δοκιμασίας).²⁰¹

5.2. Ben Sira’s Internalised Cosmology

In the absence of divine agency, one of the striking features of Ben Sira’s discussions of probation is the complete absence of the cosmological shift of responsibility to supernatural agents such as Mastema, Belial, or angelic forces such as seen in *Jubilees* and Qumran. In fact, the only mentions of supernatural forces in Ben Sira are in 42:16–17, where the emphasis is on divine sovereignty over the heavenly angels, and in 21:27 where Ben Sira explicitly internalises external supernatural interference: ‘when an impious person curses the Satan (τὸν σατανᾶν), he curses his own soul’. With neither God nor Satan tasked as ὁ πειράζων, Ben Sira systematically internalises the source of evil into the individual’s own person. As in *Jubilees*, Ben Sira uses the biblical term *yetzer* to focus his anthropological discussion. The cosmic implications of the term, however, are significantly different.

²⁰⁰ Note the Hebrew: ‘he will be proven worthy through trials (בנסיונות)’.

²⁰¹ Wisdom’s role brings to mind the context of 2:1–6, particularly of 2:1b, where according to Calduch-Benages 1997b, 142–143 trials have already made their ‘programmatic appearance’. The continued context of ‘faith and trial’ (e.g., 44:16–17) looks forward to the example of Abraham in 44:20, on which see below.

5.2.1. *Ben Sira and the Human Inclination*

Ben Sira builds his anthropological vision especially from his reading of Gen 1–3. The language of creation permeates Sirach from the opening verses of Sir 1. Wisdom was created before everything (1:4). The Lord is the Creator whose works are from the beginning and form the basis for God’s ongoing interaction with humans (Sir 16–17). The Wisdom that Ben Sira advocates shown forth at the moment of creation, though the first man did not completely know her (24:28). The Adam narrative is alluded to throughout Sirach, with Adam functioning as the predecessor to humankind (so 33:8–13) and his condition extending to his descendants in (e.g., 40:1).

The most relevant passages on the relationship between human nature and sin appear in chapter 15, where the author launches the first of a four part defence of divine integrity stretching from chapters 15–18. In 15:1–20 an interlocutor claims that people fall away on account of divine agency, to which Ben Sira responds with an extended refutation.²⁰²

²⁰²In 16:1–16 a second implicit objector claims that God blesses those without faith, to which Ben Sira responds that God requites the disobedient. 16:17–17:24 provides a third explicit objection and Ben Sira’s response, while 17:25–18:24 records a final recapitulation. So Levenson 1993, 30.

vv. 11 -12 Do not say, 'It was the Lord's doing that I fell away,' for he does not do what he hates. Do not say, 'It was he who led me astray,' for he has no need of sinful mankind....	μη εἴπῃς ὅτι Διὰ κύριον ἀπέστην. ἃ γὰρ ἐμίσησεν, οὐ ποιήσει μη εἴπῃς ὅτι Αὐτός με ἐπλάνησεν. οὐ γὰρ χρείαν ἔχει ἀνδρὸς ἁμαρτωλοῦ.	אל תאמר מאל פשעי כי את אשר שנא לא עשה: פן תאמר הוא התקילני צי אין צורך באנשי חמס:
vv. 14 - 15 From the beginning God created humankind [and placed him in the power of his own inclination (Greek)]; [and placed him in the hand of his kidnapper, and gave him into the hand of his yetzer (Hebrew)]. If you choose, you can keep the commandments, and it is faithfulness to do his will. (Hebrew: and if you trust in him you too shall live).	αὐτὸς ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐποίησεν ἄνθρωπον καὶ ἀφῆκεν αὐτὸν ἐν χειρὶ διαβουλίου αὐτοῦ ἐὰν θέλῃς, συντηρήσεις ἐντολὰς καὶ πίστιν ποιῆσαι εὐδοκίας.	אלהים מבראשית ברא אדם וישתיחו ביד חותפו ויתנהו ביד יִצְרו: אם תחפץ תשמר מצוה ותבונה (ואמונה) לעשות רצונו: אם תאמין בו גם אתה תחיה:

Rejecting divine agency for sin, Ben Sira places responsibility entirely within the free will of the person. This claim is bolstered by the creation account. In v. 14 Ben Sira amends the well-known opening line of Genesis ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς / בראשית ברא אלהים to the more the universalising statement ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐποίησεν ἄνθρωπον / מבראשית ברא האדם, thereby extending the implications of man's original created state to his audience. 'Since the

beginning of human creation' (that is, until this very day) 'God has placed each person in the power of his own inclination (διαβουλίου/יצר)'. With this statement, Ben Sira takes the original created state of Adam and applies it to his descendants. All, including Adam, have a choice to either obey or disobey the divine law.²⁰³ Further, any person can 'keep the commandments' (15:15), choosing 'fire and water', 'life and death' (15:17). Those who fear the Lord, hold on to the Law (15:1), keep the commandments and 'act faithfully' (πίστιν ποιῆσαι) will obtain wisdom (15:1), a 'crown of rejoicing' (στέφανον ἀγαλλιάματος, 15:6) and finally 'life' (15:17). Ben Sira concludes against his interlocutor that while God may observe sin, he refuses to give permission for it (vv. 18–20) and stands vindicated of any such responsibility for human sin. Rather, the responsibility lies entirely within the human capacity for choice, within the יצר.²⁰⁴ The same choices faced by the first people are now available to every individual.²⁰⁵

²⁰³On this reading of מבראשית cf. Levison 1988, 35.

²⁰⁴Levison 1988, 34 has argued that the author's use of διαβουλίου/יצר in 15:14b is taken from Ben Sira's reliance elsewhere on the flood narrative of Gen 6:5.

²⁰⁵The Genizah manuscripts (MS A and MS B) at 15:14 add the phrase: 'God has placed him in the hand of his "snatcher" (דורחפו), giving him into the power of his יצר'. This gloss clarifies the meaning of *yetzer*, and shades it toward the more negative, demonic notions of later literature. Di Lella 1966, 124 has argued that this gloss is a medieval retroversion of the Syriac phrase in Sir 4:19b, 'And I will deliver him up to the hand(s) of plunderers (*hṭp*)'; alternately van Peursen 2001, 63–64 reads דחף as an early, though still secondary Hebrew development, based on the use of the verb in Job 9:12 in the *Hodayot* (cf. 1QHa XIII and its parallel in 4Q429), and twice elsewhere in Sir 32:21 and 50:4. In either reading, this darkening of the *yetzer* to fit the later, rabbinic concept of a reified, quasi-demonic evil inclination should probably be considered foreign to Ben Sira's original cosmology. See further on this point Cohen Stuart 1984a, 88; Rüger 1970, 77.

5.2.1.1. Defining Ben Sira's Anthropology

A great deal of attention has been focused on Ben Sira's use of the term *yetzer*.²⁰⁶

With its dependence on the Genesis creation narrative, Ben Sira is assuredly dependent on the biblical origin of the term, but how far Ben Sira's thought had developed past the biblical sense has been extensively debated.

Some scholars have suggested that Ben Sira provides an early taste of the later 'rabbinic dualism' of the *yetzer hara* and the *yetzer hatov*. When Sir 21:11 states: 'He who keeps the law gains mastery over the object of his thought (κατακρατεῖ τοῦ ἐννοήματος αὐτοῦ)', Porter argues that Ben Sira's τοῦ ἐννοήματος is 'unmistakably' the rabbinic sense of the *yetzer*. For Porter, the rabbinic phrase from *b. Qidd.* 30b 'I created the evil *yetzer* . . . If you are occupied with the Law you will not be delivered into its hand' is 'either a parallel or indeed a free citation of [Sir 21:11]'.²⁰⁷ In Sir 27:5–6 the *yetzer* may be read as vesting the garments of a reified agent of testing, where both the Greek and the Hebrew position the person's inclination as the source of trial: 'as the vessel of the potter [יִצְרָר] is fired in the kiln, so also one's thoughts are in accordance with one's inclination [יִצְרָר]' (Greek: 'in a like manner a person's test is through his reasoning [πειρασμὸς ἀνθρώπου ἐν διαλογισμῷ αὐτοῦ]').²⁰⁸ Murphy argues that the emphasis on *yetzer* in Ben Sira seems to be primarily on the evil inclination, rather than a base faculty for reason.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁶The Greek mss translate *yetzer* with διαβούλιον in 11:16; 15:14; 27:6; 31:27; 33:10; 37:3; 40:15; 46:1; 49:7; 49:14; 51:12. In 21:11 the Hebrew has not been recovered to date, but the Greek and Syriac indicates that here as well διαβούλιον likely translated *yetzer*. Elsewhere, the Greek renders the Hebrew term as ἐννόημα in 21:11, and ἐνθύμημα in 27:6.

²⁰⁷Porter 1901, 141.

²⁰⁸A reified human agent is read in Hughes 1916, 152, following Porter 1901, 142.

²⁰⁹Murphy 1958, 334–38; also Tennant 1903, 114; Hughes 1916, 151; Davies 1955, 20; Hyatt 1955, 103

Other scholars argue that, while the *yetzer* in Ben Sira may not reflect the purely evil *yetzer* of R. Ishmael and Amoraic thought (on which, see chapter 8 below), nevertheless Ben Sira signals a key developmental point in the move towards a more negative nuance. So Hengel argues that the term *yetzer* gained its central anthropological significance in the sense of ‘character’ or ‘disposition’ for the first time in Ben Sira.²¹⁰ Cohen Stuart sees similarities in trajectory between Ben Sira and the theology of R. Akiva in *m. Abot* 3:15, a parallel that is more fully examined by Rosen-Zvi.²¹¹

Finally, some scholars have argued that Sirach shows a significantly less-developed anthropology than that of the rabbis.²¹² In this view, Ben Sira designates the *yetzer* as a generic, neutral description of human anthropology that does not include the later concept of an evil inclination but functions rather as the capacity for free choice.²¹³ So Urbach describes the *yetzer* in Sirach as the inclination of Gen 6, emphasising the power of human thought and the source of all human desire.²¹⁴ Similarly, Cohen Stuart argues that *yetzer* should be translated throughout Ben Sira as ‘council’ or ‘choice’ rather than ‘evil inclination’.²¹⁵ More recently, Brand has argued that neither the Hebrew nor the Greek versions of Sir 15:11–20 present an inborn inclination or predisposition to sin, but rather a neutral state from which humans can make a choice.²¹⁶

280; Thompson 1977, 25.

²¹⁰Hengel 1989, 140; similarly, Cook 2007, 87.

²¹¹Cohen Stuart 1984a, 88; Rosen-Zvi 2008, 7.

²¹²Or more precisely, the fully developed anthropology in R. Ishmael and later amoraic thought; Rosen-Zvi and Cohen Stuart both argue for parallels between Sirach and the *yetzer* of R. Akiva.

²¹³Per Collins 2005, 34, a ‘naive’ volunteerism.

²¹⁴Urbach 1987, 472.

²¹⁵Cohen Stuart 1984a, 90, also arguing from Sir 27:6.

²¹⁶Brand 2011, 170.

5.2.1.2. *Yetzer* as Internalized Evil

Within Sirach's 'underdeveloped cosmology',²¹⁷ some scholars have noted a sort of 'anti-supernaturalism' or 'demythologising'. For example, Ben Sira does not reflect an external evil agent within the 'fall' tradition. In Sir 15 there is no mention of the devil or a talking snake or any kind of supernatural deception. Collins has argued that this absence is intentional, due to the author's desire to emphasise a solely human responsibility for transgression rather than any external agency.²¹⁸

It would be a mistake, however, to assume Ben Sira is simply unaware of supernatural sources of evil. Kister and Rosen-Zvi have argued that Ben Sira's anthropology assumes the forms of an internalized demonology, as in Sir 22:27–23:2 where classical demonological language is ascribed to the body parts.²¹⁹ This internalisation of evil is made explicit in 21:27, where the Greek translates 'when the fool curses the satan (τὸν σατανᾶν), he is cursing his own soul (καταρᾶται τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχὴν)'. For this reason Ben Sira insists that the human heart is not to be trusted and must constantly be assessed. So Sir 37:27, 'Child, during your life test your soul (πείρασον τὴν ψυχὴν σου / נִסּוּ נַפְשְׁךָ), and see what is bad for it, and do not give to it'.

Kister argues that a demonically shaded anthropology is pervasive within Sirach, making special note of an apotropaic prayer-form in Sir 22:27–23:6. However, whereas most apotropaic prayers such as those seen in *Jubilees* and Qumran target external demonic forces, Ben Sira redirects this prayer-form to one's own body parts.

²¹⁷So Malina 1969, 26; cf. Maier 1971, 91, 154; Hadot 1970, 91–103; Segal 1958, 97.

²¹⁸Collins 2005, 34.

²¹⁹Kister 2010a, 265.

English Translation from the Reconstructed Hebrew Text ²²⁰	English Translation from the LXX
22:27 Who will put a guard on my mouth and on my lips a wise seal, lest I fall by them and my tongue will destroy me?	22:27 Who will grant a guard upon my mouth and a shrewd seal upon my lips, lest I fall because of them and my tongue destroy me?
23:1 My father's God and the lord of my life, do not abandon me to their counsel and do not allow me to fall by them.	23:1 O Lord, Father and Master of my life, do not abandon me to their design, and do not let me fall among them.
23:2 Who will put a scourge on my yetzer ²²¹ (מי יתן על יצרי), and on my heart a rod of castigation and will not pity my sins // and will not pass by my crimes (3) so that my sins not multiply // and my crimes not become mighty, And an enemy not rejoice over me // and a hater will not be glad for me	23:2 Who will set whips upon my thought (διανόημα) and discipline of wisdom upon my heart (καρδία) so that they might not spare my faults of ignorance and he shall not let their sins go?— (3) that my acts of ignorance may not be multiplied, and my sins may increase, and I will fall before my adversaries, and my enemy will rejoice over me. [Far from them is the hope of your mercy.]
23:4 My father's God and the lord of my life, Do not give me haughty eyes // (5) and a reckless heart distance from me (ולב פחז הרחק)	23:4 O Lord, Father and God of my life, do not give me a lifting up of eyes, (5) and turn desire away from me. (καὶ ἐπιθυμίαν ἀπόστρεψον ἀπ' ἐμοῦ)
23:6 Let not recklessness of flesh (פחז בשר) make me rash // and let not a shameless soul rule me (אל תמשל בי).	23:6 Let not the belly's appetite and sexual intercourse seize me, and do not give me over to a fierce soul (ψυχῇ ἀναιδεῖ μὴ παραδῶς με).

Kister notes that this passage is formulated as a supplicatory prayer. The requests that God govern or remove the power of uncontrollable body parts (the 'haughty eyes', 'reckless heart', 'reckless flesh', a 'shameless soul', etc.) are reminiscent of the apotropaic

²²⁰Following the reconstruction of Segal 1958.

²²¹Segal's translation corresponds to the phrase in P: 'allow me to control my yetzer' (רדני על יצרי).

supplications seen above. As in other apotropaic prayers, this prayer asks for divine intervention from a powerful entity controlling the person. However, where texts such as *Jubilees* and *Aramaic Levi* explicitly address a demonic power embedded within the body (i.e., within the *yetzer*), Sirach applies this language solely to the physical and psychological members themselves. Sirach asks that God not abandon man to the ‘counsel of his mouth, lips and tongue’, but rather to ‘scourge his *yetzer*’. The danger is therefore not ‘the counsel of Belial’ but the ‘council of the lips and tongue’.

Kister sees this language of demonic anthropology as informing Sirach’s cosmology. He argues that the generally base characteristics of the *yetzer* that combine with quasi-demonic descriptions of the human being are akin to concepts found in certain Talmudic sayings. For example, the metaphor in Sir 23:2 ‘put a scourge to the *yetzer*’ is closely paralleled in the Talmudic phrase ‘he punished (יָדָה) his *yetzer*’ (*b. Sotah* 11b; *b. Sanh.* 111b) and ‘admonish your *yetzer*’ (*b. Sanh.* 105a).²²² Kister takes this demonic language in Sirach as an intentional reaction against broader Second Temple Palestinian currents that attributed all evil to external forces, with Ben Sira preferring to ascribe the source of sin to the human interior.²²³ In contrast to Kister, Rosen-Zvi has argued that this demonic imagery in Ben Sira is merely rhetorical, in contrast to the later rabbinic texts where the demonic imagery is ontological to the evil *yetzer*. That is, whereas the later rabbinic descriptions espouse an anthropology with actual demonic influences, Ben Sira’s demonic vocabulary veils a ‘pious voluntarism’ that ultimately demands human responsibility.²²⁴

²²²So Kister 2010a, 267 n. 119, n. 123.

²²³Kister 2010a, 265.

²²⁴Rosen-Zvi 2011, 171. Similarly, Thompson 1977, 40 sees here a polemic against any external source of evil.

5.2.1.3. *Yetzer* and Internal Conflict

Whether one views Ben Sira's *yetzer* as taking on demonic characteristics or whether this description is only rhetorical, Sirach stands as an early witness to a growing polemic between an 'internalising' perspective and the 'externalising' perspective of ὁ πειράζων. This internalised cause of troubles can be seen in Sir 3:23, which reads 'their presumption has led many astray (ἐπλάνησεν), and their evil fancy (ὕπόνοια πονηρά) has diminished their understanding'; the Hebrew reads here the 'evil imagination' (דמיונות רעות) that causes the 'machinations of people to go astray'. Sirach often eyes with suspicion the imagination, the heart, the eyes, or the soul, as in 5:2 'Do not follow your soul (ἢ ψυχῇ) and your strength, to walk in your heart's desires (πορεύεσθαι ἐν ἐπιθυμίαις καρδίας σου)'; as the Hebrew reads, 'do not follow after your heart and your eyes (לבך ועיניך), to walk in evil desires (ללכת בחמורות) (רעה)'. The self-suspicion in Greek Sir 2:6 ('Do not raise yourself up in your soul's deliberation [ἐν βουλῇ ψυχῆς σου]') is even more explicit in the Hebrew: 'do not fall into the hand of your own soul (אל תפול ביד נפשך), lest you lay siege to yourself'. Similar sentiments are made explicit in Sir 6:4 ('an evil soul [ψυχῇ πονηρὰ / נפש עזה] will destroy him who possesses it'). In Sir 11:30 the heart is a 'decoy partridge in a cage';²²⁵ a 'spy' who observes his owner's downfall; an 'enemy who lies in ambush'. In Sir 19:3 (Hebrew) this 'insolent soul' (ונפש עזה) will destroy its owner.

Furthermore, one of Ben Sira's concerns about the human heart is that it tends towards doubleness. Sir 2:2 and following commands that the disciple 'make straight your heart to the Lord' (εὐθύνον τὴν καρδίαν σου καὶ καρτέρησον), followed by an extended

²²⁵Note the Hebrew, which is even more negative: the heart is 'a wolf/swindler lying in wait to tear him to pieces'.

discussion of the dangers of the heart. In 2:12 the heart is timid.²²⁶ It belongs to a sinner who ‘treads on two paths (ἐπὶ δύο τρίβους) in times of trouble.’²²⁷ This heart is condemned, ‘because it does not have faith (ὅτι οὐ πιστεύει), and therefore will not be sheltered’ (2:13). This duality should not be read as the ‘double *yetzer*’, but rather the result when the heart divides due to inherent human weakness. In contrast, those who have a ‘prepared heart’ are those who ‘fear the Lord’, and those who ‘love the Lord’ and keep his ways (2:15–16).²²⁸

5.2.1.4. Testing for Personal Purification

Ben Sira’s suspicion that the source of temptation comes from within rather than from without explains why the person must be purified with the aid of Wisdom’s chastisement. Ben Sira’s ultimate goal is the mastery of one’s own faculties, in which Wisdom plays a key role.²²⁹ The consistent metaphor is that of purification and metallurgical refinement: the approved person (ἀνθροποι δεκτοί) in Sir 2:5 is refined in the kiln (ἐν καμίνῳ) to reveal his precious value. Purification must happen in both the body parts, and also such human actions and characteristics such as speech (4:24; 5:9–11), anger (1:22–23), endurance (2:1–18), actions to the poor (3:17; 4:1–10; 10:28–31) and humility (7:16–17).²³⁰ While humans have free choice in this matter, the provision of the divine Law provides the remedy for the sinful person (so 17:11; 21:11).

²²⁶ I.e., καρδίας δειλαῖς, though the Syriac and dependent Latin and Ethiopic texts read ‘two hearts’, καρδίας δισσαις.

²²⁷ καιρῷ ἐπαγωγῆς; note the similar ἐν καιρῷ θλίψεως in 2:11b.

²²⁸ Di Lella 1997b comments that the disciple’s reaction to inevitable trials should be with single-hearted/single mindedness loyalty.

²²⁹ On wisdom’s role in mastering one’s *yetzer*, see especially Sir 21:11, ‘He who keeps the law gains mastery over the object of his thought (κατακρατεῖ τοῦ ἐννοήματος αὐτοῦ), and consummation of the fear of the Lord is wisdom.’

²³⁰ So Calduch-Benages 1997a, 140; cf. Sir 18:13–14.

5.3. Ben Sira's Hermeneutic of Probation

As we have seen, Sirach has a general interest in the roles of trials on the righteous. Divine and cosmic roles are suppressed, while the anthropological roles have been elevated. This cosmic vision of probation is applied to Ben Sira's reading of Israel's history, especially in Abraham's near-sacrifice of Isaac in Gen 22.

Ben Sira concludes his book with an encomium at chapter 44 recounting the 'famous men and our fathers'. In 44:19–22 he turns his attention to the life of Abraham.

Greek ²³¹	Hebrew ²³²
44:19 Abraam was a great father of a multitude of nations, and one was not found like him in glory (καὶ οὐχ εὐρέθη ὁμοίος ἐν τῇ δόξῃ), (20) who kept the law of the Most High, and he entered in a covenant with him; in his flesh he established a covenant, and in a trial he was found faithful (καὶ ἐν πειρασμῷ εὐρέθη πιστός). (21) Therefore he established by means of an oath with him that nations would be blessed by his seed, that he would multiply him as the dust of the earth and like the stars to exalt his seed and to give them an inheritance from sea to sea and from the river to the end of the earth. (22) And with Isaac he likewise established, on account of Abraam his father. A blessing for all humankind and a covenant.	44:19 Abraham, the father of a multitude of nations [] did not soil his glory with a blemish (לֹא נִתַּן בְּכַבְּדוֹ מוֹם). (20) Who kept the commandments of the Most High [] and entered into a covenant with him. In his flesh he cut a statute for him [] and in the trial he was found faithful (וּבְנִיסוֹ נִמְצָא נֶאֱמָן). (21) Therefore he swore to him by an o[a]th [] to bless the nations in his seed. To give them an inheritance from [s]ea to sea [] and from the river to the ends of the earth. (22) And also to Isaac, he promised a son <likewise> [] for the sake of Abraham his father. He gave him the covenant of all those who were from the first.

²³¹Here and below I follow the translation of Pietersma and Wright.

²³²Here and below I follow the English translation of the Hebrew by Parker and Abegg.

Though Ben Sira's appeal to Abraham is brief, it includes a number of crucial interpretive points which demonstrate how the Patriarch fills an exemplary role within Sirach's discourse. This includes Abraham's 'unique glory', his status as a 'law-keeper', and how he was 'found faithful in testing'.

5.3.1. *Abraham's Unblemished Glory*

The first statement that Ben Sira makes regarding Abraham is that 'there was none like him in glory (δόξα)', or perhaps preferably 'he did not soil his glory with a blemish'.²³³ What is this glory, and in what way was it unblemished? Possible connections have been made to Abraham's sexual purity (so Di Lella 1987) and in a connected manner to his legal purity (so Gregory 2008).

Di Lella reads 44:19 as a commentary on the incidents with Pharaoh, Abimelech, and Sarah (Gen 12:10–20; 20:1–18) that posed a threat to the sexual purity of Abraham's line.²³⁴ A verbal parallel is drawn from 47:20 and the chastisement of Solomon, who brought a 'blemish' (בִּזְיוֹן) on his glory, specifically through his sexual union with foreign wives. Read in this light, Ben Sira's claim that Abraham was 'unblemished' may be a defence of Abraham's line of descendants in spite of a number of sexual misadventures in his history.²³⁵ Against Di Lella, however, Gregory argues that the phrase 'you brought a stain upon your glory' in Sir 47:20 focuses specifically on Solomon's failure to keep the law, rather

²³³Gregory 2008, 67 prefers the Hebrew: 'he did not soil his glory with a blemish'. The Hebrew text is probably correct, with the modification in Greek resulting from a translator rendered the Hebrew בִּזְיוֹן as μῶμος which was then later mistaken by a scribe for the phonetically similar ὁμοιος; so Oesterley 1912, 302.

²³⁴Di Lella 1987, 505.

²³⁵Similar defences of Sarah's purity were fairly common: cf. *Tg. Ps.-J.*; *lQapGen* 20.16b–18a; Philo *Abr.* 96–98; Josephus *Ant.* 1:163–65 and Jerome *Questions in Genesis* 12.15–16.

than on illicit sexual union.²³⁶ In this reading, whereas Solomon was faithless with regards to the Torah commandments regarding the marriage bed, Abraham's glory (δόξα) remained unblemished through his faithfulness to the divine law under trial (so Sir 44:20).

5.3.2. *Adam's Glory and the Image of God*

Neither Di Lella nor Gregory, however, attended to how the concept of δόξα / כבוד that runs throughout Sirach as an anthropological concept that extends from Adam to his descendants. While most scholars have studied Ben Sira's anthropology in light of the language of *yetzer*, there is in Sirach a positive anthropological trait likewise inherited from Adam. In the encomium of Sirach 44, Ben Sira begins by recounting Israel's past heroes from Adam through the high priest Simon. As Ben Sira called his readers in 2:10 to look to the 'ancient generations' who 'had faith' (ἐνεπίστευσεν) in the Lord and were not put to shame, so now he praises the 'famous men and our fathers', including Abraham who was 'found faithful in trial' (ἐν πειρασμῷ εὐρέθη πιστός). The opening lines of Sirach 44 initiate the theme of the divine gift of glory to humanity.

²³⁶Gregory 2008.

Greek	Hebrew
Sirach 44:2 The Lord created much glory (δόξαν), his majesty from eternity.	Sirach 44:2 The Most High's portion, great in glory (כבוד) <The great glory (כבוד) of the Most High is theirs> [[]] and his greatness from the days old.
Sirach 44:3 When they ruled in their kingdoms, men also became noteworthy through power; when they counselled with their intelligence, when they announced through prophecies,	Sirach 44:3 • (Mas1h 7:8) And those who counseled with understanding [[]] and perceived everything by pro[phecy]. • (Sirb 13v:4) Those who dwelt on <Those who ruled> the earth in their kingdoms, [[]] who were men of renown in their might <by their mighty men>. (Sirb 13v:5) Those who counseled with understanding [] [[]] and perceived everything by prophecy.
Sirach 44:4 when they led people by deliberations and with understanding of a people's scribal art—wise words there are in their instruction—	Sirach 44:4 • (Mas1h 7:9) Princes of the nation by their design, [[]] who ruled by [their] decrees. (Mas1h 7:10) Wise in literary composition, [[]] speakers of proverbs in their jo[yous festivals]. • (Sirb 13v:6) Princes of the nations by their design [[]] who ruled through their careful study. (Sirb 13v:7) Wise in literary composition <in > [[]] and speakers of proverbs while they fulfilled their obligations.

Sirach 44:5 when they searched out musical tunes and set out verses in writing—	Sirach 44:5 • (Mas1h 7:11) Composers of psalms in poetic lines, [[]] and collectors of prove[rbs in writing]. • (Sirb 13v:8) Composers of psalms according to decree <his decree>, [[]] and collectors of proverbs in writing.
Sirach 44:6 rich men well endowed with strength, being at peace in their dwelling—places—	Sirach 44:6 • (Mas1h 7:12) Valiant men, steadfast in power, [[]] living at [ease upon their sure foundation]. • (Sirb 13v:9) Valiant men, steadfast in power, [[]] living at ease upon their sure foundation.
Sirach 44:7 all of these were glorified (ἐδοξάσθησαν) in generations and in their days were a boast.	Sirach 44:7 • (Mas1h 7:13) All these were honored (נכבדו) in their generation [[]] [and renowned in their days]. • (Sirb 13v:10) All these <were honored> in their generation [[]] and their days were renowned <in their days>.
Sirach 44:8 There were some of them who left behind a name so that their praises might be told in detail.	Sirach 44:8 • (Mas1h 7:14) Some of them left behind a name, [[]] that [their legacy might] be [looked upon with wonder]. • (Sirb 13v:11) Some of them left behind a name, [[]] that they might be laid to rest upon their legacy <might be looked upon with wonder>.
Sirach 44:11 With their seed it will remain; a good inheritance is their offspring.	Sirach 44:11 • (Mas1h 7:18) Their fortune will be passed onto their descendants [[]] and [their] inheri[tance to their children's children].
Sirach 44:12 In the covenants their seed stood, and their children for their sake.	Sirach 44:12 • (Mas1h 7:19) Their descendants stand in their covenant [[]] and their posterity [for their sake].
Sirach 44:13 Forever will their seed remain, and their glory (δόξα) will not be blotted out.	Sirach 44:13 • (Mas1h 7:20) Their descendants will stand forever [[]] and their glory (וכבודם) will never be blotted [out].

Both the Greek and certain Hebrew manuscripts contain the idea that God endowed his creatures with ‘God’s great glory’. Using a number of references to Gen 4–10

Ben Sira extends this divine glory to ‘valiant men’ (44:6) who left behind a name and a legacy of honour and praise. This glory is then extended to their descendants: it will remain with their seed as an inheritance, based in the covenant, and this glory will never be blotted out (44:13). From this point, the encomium then begins to recount some of these men, starting with Enoch, and continuing until the High Priest Simon.

Elsewhere in Sirach, Adam explicitly provides the starting point for the bestowal of divine glory. In 49:16 Adam’s glory is exalted above every living thing. While the Greek states that Shem, Seth, and Enoch were glorified (ἐδοξάσθησαν) by their visitation with God, in the Hebrew of 49:16 (B) nevertheless ‘above all the living was the splendour of Adam’ (תפארת אדם). The divine glory that covered Adam in Paradise (so 40:27) is especially described in terms of Adam’s original clothing: (17:3) ‘He clothed them in a strength like himself, and in his image he made them.’²³⁷ In 16:16 this language is combined with the glory and light that was given to humanity in creation: ‘His compassion appeared to all of his creatures, and his light and glory he has apportioned to humanity.’²³⁸ In the next verse Sirach continues with the allusion to Adam and Eve’s hiding from God in Gen 3:3. ‘Do not say, “I will be hidden from the Lord, and from on high who will remember me?” Among a great many people I will not be known; for what is my soul in an immeasurable creation?’²³⁹ In the frequent appeal to the ‘glory of Adam’ Ben Sira may represent an early reflection on what would become a well-known tradition of Adam’s participation in the divine glory that

²³⁷ Similarly, (6:31): You will wear [Wisdom] as a robe of glory, and you will put her on like a crown of joy (στéφανον ἀγαλλιάματος / ועטרת תפארת העטרה).
²³⁸ Hebrew (A) וארו ושכחו חלק לבני אדם.

²³⁹ Cf. 11:4 Let not beautiful clothing be your glory (בגדים אל תתפאר). Do not mock the one who has only a loincloth and do not scoff at the bitterness of his day.

could be passed on to his descendants.²⁴⁰

Rather than this glory dissipating with Adam's sin, in Sirach this glory, like the compromised *yetzer*, was communicated to his descendants. So, in Sir 45:2–4 Moses inherits Adam's lost glory: 'He made [Moses] equal to the glory of holy ones, and he made him great by terror for enemies. By his words he hastened signs; he glorified him in front of kings.'²⁴¹

Ben Sira also applies this glory to Aaron, who operates as a sort of adamic priest. So Sir 45:7–8 (Hebrew):

And he appointed him an eternal office, and caused splendour to rest upon him, and made him his glorious minister. And he girded him with <majestic beauty> and dressed him with bells <or flight>. And he adorned him with a crown of [his] beauty, and beautified him with glory and strength, including trousers, tunic, and a robe.

Just as Aaron is girded with a cloak of glory and receives the clothes of perfection, this language of inherited glory continues through David (who receives a diadem of glory in 47:6 and a throne of glory in 47:11) and Solomon (who disgraced his glory by defiling his seed in 47:20). The list climaxes with the glory of Simon the High Priest, who in the model of Aaron puts on a robe of glory (50:11).

²⁴⁰E.g., *Apoc. Moses* interprets the 'nakedness' in Gen 3:7 as the realisation of the loss of the 'glory' in which humans had been clothed; so Lambden 1992, 80. On the provision of clothes of glory to Adam at the moment of creation, cf. the reception of Gen 1:26–27 where the image of God is a sharing of divine luminescence; so *Tg. Ps.-J.*, *Tg. Neof.*, *Frg. Tg.* on the 'garments of glory' rather than 'garments of skin' in Gen 3:21. This reading is matched by Rabbi Meir in *Gen. Rab.* 20:12, which tells of a scroll that read 'garments of light (אור)' rather than the 'garments of skin' (עור) in Gen 3:21, referring to Adam's garments as a torch. In later rabbinic literature this exegesis is commonplace: e.g., *Lev. Rab.* 20:2; *Gen. Rab.* 11. On the widespread reception of this tradition in Syriac Christianity, cf. Anderson 2001.

²⁴¹In Jewish and Samaritan sources Moses inherits Adam's luminescence. The Samaritan texts insist that when Moses ascended to Mount Sinai, he received the image of God which Adam cast off in the Garden of Eden; e.g. *Memar Marqa* 5.4; so Fossum 1985, 93; Macdonald 1963, 209. Cf. *Deut. Rab.* 11:3 on the debate between Adam and Moses' glory; similarly *Midr. Tadshe* 4.

Given this broader theme, when Ben Sira discusses Abraham's superlative glory it should be read within the author's wider understanding of anthropological glory as a beneficial gift from creation. Abraham's exalted status relates to the description of what follows, that Abraham is a law-keeper of the covenant, and that his faithfulness to the covenant was proven through his test at the *Aqedah*.

5.3.3. *Abraham the Law-Keeper*

The second statement that Sirach makes about Abraham concerns his status as a law-keeper who 'kept the Law and the covenant'. Gregory argues that both the Hebrew and the Greek texts are dependent on Gen 26:4–5 as their textual background for understanding Abraham's covenant with God. This from the use of חק where one would expect ברית, given the general use of the latter in Gen 15:18; 17:2,4, 7 (2x), 9,10,11,13,14,19 (2x), 21).²⁴² The terms חק and מצה in Gen 17 describe God's promise to Isaac, a possible parallel to Sir 44:20. In Gen 17:1–14 the author depicts the covenant as the basis for the multiplication of Abraham's seed, the possession of the land, and the blessing of the nations. In Gen 26:5 the receipt of these promises is said to be due to Abraham's law-keeping: 'because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws'. While Gen 17 speaks of circumcision as the means of keeping the covenant, Gen 26 speaks of Abraham's obedience to God's laws as the means of keeping the covenant. Sirach appears to conflate these two passages so that circumcision and law-keeping are linked to fulfilling the covenant.²⁴³ Gregory therefore argues that Ben Sira stands at the beginning of a tradition of

²⁴²Gregory 2008, 70.

²⁴³Similar arguments on Abraham as Law-Keeper are made throughout Second Temple and later literature; e.g. *Jub* 6:18-19; CD 3.2-4; *Jub.* 12:25-27 on Abraham having an early copy of the Law; also 1QapGen 19.24b-26a where he receives the law from Enoch; cf. 2 *Bar.* 57:1-2; *m. Qidd.* 14; *Gen. Rab.* 61:1;

halakic exegesis that viewed Abraham as the keeper of legal Torah.²⁴⁴

5.3.4. *Abraham Tested, Faithful, and Unblemished*

Ben Sira concludes that Abraham ‘was found faithful in trial’ (וּבְנִי סוּרִי נִמְצָא נֶאֱמָן / καὶ ἐν πειρασμῷ εὐρέθη πιστός). Calduch-Benages see this as a restatement of Gen 22:1, 16–18 due to the immediate context of 44:20 and the transition to Isaac.²⁴⁵ However, Gregory notes that although Ben Sira refers to Abraham’s test at the *Aqedah*, he does so via an exegetical movement that conflates Gen 22 and Gen 15.²⁴⁶ Similar to *Jubilees*, Ben Sira sees Abraham’s test as connected to a broader theme of faithfulness displayed in Gen 15.

5.4. *Conclusions to Sirach’s Internalised Cosmology*

While roughly contemporary with the composition of *Jubilees*, Sirach shows significant differences in how it portrays the cosmic drama of probation. Despite some light mitigation of divine agency, there is a complete absence of *Jubilee’s* demonic paradigm. The operative metaphor is not primarily that of the heavenly court, but rather of the study hall. Rather than a demonic persecutor, Wisdom functions as the testing pedagogue. However, this is not to say that Ben Sira does not know of demonic actor: rather, the eternal cosmic role is internalised into the human heart, where human volunteerism is hampered by certain demonic traits. Since the time of Adam the cause of sin is the human nature itself. The apotropaic prayer-form, so prominent in *Jubilees* as a weapon against demonic interference, is targeted at the inner-person. The appeal for divine intercession is answered through the

Tg. Neof. Gen 22:1.

²⁴⁴Gregory 2008, 72.

²⁴⁵Cf. Calduch-Benages 1997b, 148, Oesterley 1912, 302, and Gregory 2008.

²⁴⁶Gregory 2008, 73 sees a previous conflation of the ‘faithfulness’ of Gen 15 and the ‘test’ in Gen 22 in Neh. 9:8 (וּמִצָּאָתָא אֶת לִבְבוֹ נֶאֱמָן לְפָנֶיךָ), which Ben Sira uses as his source.

provision of the law, to which humans can adhere through their choice.

Hermeneutically, this anthropological emphasis is applied throughout the historical narrative of Israel. By weaving together various examples from Scripture in Sir 44, Ben Sira calls his readers, like Simon the Priest, to keep their glory unblemished through obedience to the law and faithfulness to God. By yielding to Torah, one may exemplify the faithfulness and obedience that characterises the path of wisdom. This promise fits within the broader responsibilities of Ben Sira's theological cosmology. Rather than external cosmic forces providing the challenge to law-keeping and faithfulness, the responsibility for religious faithfulness is placed within the person. Rather than appealing to the cosmic narrative of Job as its operative biblical framework as is the case in *Jubilees*, Ben Sira relies on a reading of the Genesis story that emphasises human responsibility.

The Epistle of James and Sirach have commonly been compared due to numerous parallels in language, the pervasive theme of probation, the explicit mitigation of divine agency, an emphasis on the human nature as the source of evil, and a commonly proposed similarity in the genre of 'Jewish Wisdom'. Many scholars have suggested that James shares a similar focus on volunteerism and free will while minimising external agency for evil. In chapter 10 we will compare these features specifically to see if such a comparison holds true. However, in the next chapter, I will examine an author whose rejection of cosmic dualism is based on significantly different philosophical grounds than Ben Sira. Philo of Alexandria's middle-platonic cosmic framework and his philosophical hermeneutic provide our next point of comparison.

CHAPTER 6

Philo and Hellenistic Philosophy

*There are no wicked actions which are done through the will of God,
but they are done only through our own will.
For the storehouses of wickedness are in us ourselves,
and only the stores of goodness are with God.*

On Flight and Finding 79

6.1. Historical and Literary Introduction to Philo

The third comparative voice in this study moves us from the house of study in Palestine to the philosophical schools of Alexandria.²⁴⁷ According to Eusebius, Philo of Alexandria (20 B.C. – c. A.D 50) was born into a leading Jewish family of Alexandria.²⁴⁸ Philo's literary project presents the writings of Moses as philosophical discourse of the highest order, superior to any of the Greek philosophers. While this study cannot attempt to move beyond a cursory examination of Philo's extensive literary corpus and his philosophical framework, Philo's thought provides this study with an explicitly philosophical, Alexandrian counterpoint to the preceding Palestinian approaches to probation.

Despite conflicting opinions on the value of Philo's philosophical project,²⁴⁹

²⁴⁷Note that some scholars see the synagogal setting(s) of Alexandria as the primary context for many of Philo's exegetical activities, especially his allegorical materials; cf. Sterling 1999.

²⁴⁸Eusebius, *EH* 2.4.

²⁴⁹E.g., Philo as Jewish philosopher par excellence (so Wolfson 1947), vs the inconsistent, unoriginal philosopher (per Festugière 1949, vol. 2:519–85).

nevertheless, the Alexandrian's genius for defending the Mosaic writings within a Middle-Platonic philosophical framework is undeniable. Philo's literary production is both extensive and problematic. He composed around four dozen books of various genres. Both his explicitly exegetical works and his non-exegetical works attempt to explain contemporary history, philosophy and politics in the light of Moses' writings.²⁵⁰ Philo's exegetical corpus contains three distinct series of commentaries on the Pentateuch: (1) *Questions and Answers in Genesis and Exodus*, (2) *Expositions on the Law*, and (3) *Allegorical Commentary*, each with its distinct style and substance. David Runia has emphasised the importance of the different expectations of each literary corpus.²⁵¹

The *Questions and Answers* were written in the zetematic question-and-answer format on various basic exegetical topics following the principle 'the beginning and end of happiness is to be able to see God' (*QE* 2.51). Secondly, the *Expositions on the Law* were written to a general audience with little or no knowledge of the Mosaic legal system, presenting a wide range of Torah texts mingled with philosophical ideals. Ryu argues that Philo writes here with two agendas: on the one hand, Philo's fundamental Jewish and Torah-based orientation draws from preexisting Jewish tradition to portray Moses as exemplary of the natural law; on the other hand, Philo's intellectual commitments guide his reading of the Pentateuch within the framework of Platonic, Stoic, and Pythagorean ideas prominent in the Middle-Platonic milieu of contemporary Alexandrian thought.²⁵² These two sides of

²⁵⁰So Runia 1993, 37; Nock 1943, 77–81.

²⁵¹Runia 2002, 286–87 states 'it is sound methodology first to work within the framework of the separate commentaries before mixing together results from all three', and that 'it is reasonable to expect that the internal doctrinal consistency of these large-scale works will be greater than that of the corpus as a whole.' While the limits of space preclude structuring the entire chapter in this manner, conclusions along these lines are made in 6.3.2. below.

²⁵²Cf. the dissertation by Ryu 2013, 7; under contract for publication with Mohr Siebeck (WUNT

Philo's loyalties result in a mingling of biblical exposition and non-biblical philosophy that extends Moses' law as the unrivaled means by which humans can access knowledge of God.

Finally, Philo wrote the *Allegorical Commentary* for more advanced students who knew both Moses' Torah and Greek philosophy. As such, the *AC* contains Philo's most elaborate attempt to interpret the Pentateuch. Given Philo's combined loyalties to existing Jewish tradition and Greek philosophy, the *AC* contains interpretations that may variously agree with or usurp and reconceptualise contemporary thought.²⁵³ Philo uses the standard formal conventions of Alexandrian commentary writing to gain access to the deeper hidden layers of meaning, often linking numerous proof-texts drawn from across the Pentateuch to a primary textual unit in order to interpret the primary text's true meaning.²⁵⁴ When Philo connects these proof-texts into chains of thought, Philo's exegesis becomes pregnant with various elements of mystical thought as he explores the hidden layers of meaning embedded within a particular Mosaic text.²⁵⁵ The *AC* unfolds in three distinct anthologies, the first of which maps the protological relationship between God, cosmic powers, and the complex anthropology of mind, sense, and body. The second anthology in the *AC* maps the interior relationships between the human mind and soul. Finally, the third anthology in the *AC* maps the relationship between God and Man from a teleological, rather than protological perspective, combining Platonic and Mosaic concepts to describe how the mind's ascent to God brings about human transformation.²⁵⁶

II series) in 2014.

²⁵³Cf. Dawson 1992, 73–126.

²⁵⁴Runia 1984, 238 has noted an average of six secondary proof-texts for every primary textual unit from Genesis.

²⁵⁵Ryu 2013, 243.

²⁵⁶Ryu 2013, 245.

With Philo's literary corpus and broader philosophical agenda in view, we can anticipate that Philo's cosmology and hermeneutic will deeply depend on his fundamental Middle-Platonic orientation, but also engage with the philosophical interpretation of Moses.²⁵⁷ In what follows, we will focus on how Philo's philosophical exegesis portrays the cosmic drama of divine probation and applies it to his reading of Scripture.

6.2. *Cosmic Drama and the Problem of Evil In Philo*

The topic of biblical probation is addressed frequently in Philo. At times, he uses the paired terms *πειράζειν/δοκιμάζειν* and their cognates. For example, in *Congr.* 163–164 he cites God's test of Moses through trials and proofs of the soul within an athletic metaphor:

And Moses cried unto the Lord; and the Lord showed him a stick, and he cast it into the water, and the water was made sweet. And then he gave him decrees and judgment (*δικαιώματα καὶ κρίσεις*), and then he tempted (*ἐπείραζεν*) him (Exod 15:25). For the invisible trial and proofs (*ἀπόπειρα καὶ δοκιμασία*) of the soul are in the struggle.

Here the wilderness probation of Exod 15:25 is read allegorically as the soul that labours to resist the natural passions. Similarly, in *Fug.* 149 Philo comments on the 'admirable trial and sacred temptation' (*θαυμαστῆς δοκιμασίας . . . ἱεροπρεποῦς πείρας*) of Judah through Tamar, as well as Joseph's resistance to the sexual advances of Potiphar's wife (*Joseph* 37, 51). *Somn* 1:195 uses the term *πειρασμός* as a hookword into a discussion of Gen 22, and in *Leg.* 3:162–7 Philo discusses the giving of bread from heaven from Exod 16 as a test of the people.

²⁵⁷So Borgen 1984, 118.

When not discussing a biblical narrative that contains a *πειρα*-hookword, Philo typically prefers to use the term *βάσανος* (26x) or *βασανίζειν* (7x) to examine the ‘tortures, torments, harassments, cross-examinations, or tests’ of biblical characters. Building on the test of Judah and Tamar in *Fug.* 151–55 Philo continues:

Therefore he examines (*βασανίζει*) the question as to whether he had properly given this pledge. What, then, is the examination (*τίς οὖν ἡ βάσανος*)? To throw down some bait (*δέλεαρ*) having an attractive power, such as glory, or riches . . . I, indeed, did what was proper for a man to do who wished to make experiment of and to test her disposition (*τὸν βουλόμενον τρόπου βάσανον καὶ δοκιμασίαν λαβεῖν*), throwing out a bait (*δέλεαρ καθείς*) and sending a messenger; but he has showed me that her nature is not easily caught.

Here (as in *Jas* 1:14) the concept of the ‘test’ is combined with the metaphor of fishing or entrapment (*πειράζεται . . . δελεαζόμενος* in *Jas* 1:14, *βασανίζει . . . δέλιαρ* in *Fug.* 151–55).²⁵⁸ Other metaphors include the common appeal to metallurgy, as in *Legum* 1:77: ‘Prudence, which he likened to gold . . . pure, and tried in the fire (*πεπυρωμένη*) and thoroughly tested (*δεδοκιμασμένη*).’²⁵⁹

While I have in general attempted to limit the topic of this thesis specifically to probation rather than the general topic of evil, this is not strictly possible with Philo. Philo’s broader philosophical concern is to address the overall metaphysical problem of evil rather than the specifics of probation, and his observations on the latter are folded into the former. Given the constraints of this project and the expansive quality of Philo’s work, there is no space to explore all the facets of his view of the problem of evil. Instead I focus on the

²⁵⁸This entrapment metaphor for probation is used elsewhere in *Plant.* 102; *Jos.* 213; *Moses* 1:295.

²⁵⁹Cf. *Legum* 3:168; *Sacr.* 80; *Her.* 308 on the tempering of the soul.

implications of his view for the topic of probation and refer the reader elsewhere for more extended treatments of Philo's metaphysics as a whole.²⁶⁰ As we will see, Philo's deep reliance on a Middle-Platonic cosmology guides his defence of divine integrity, his portrayal of the cosmic *dramatis personae*, and his anthropology.

6.2.1. *Defending God*

Throughout his literary corpus Philo demonstrates an agenda to distance God from evil. In *Fug.* 79 Philo argues:

There is nothing therefore of the wicked actions which are done secretly, and treacherously, and of malice aforethought, which we can properly say are done through the will of God (κατὰ θεόν), but they are done only through our own will (καθ' ἡμᾶς). For, as I have said before, the storehouses of wickedness are in us ourselves, and those of good alone are with God.

Similarly, in Philo, *Det.* 122: 'For Moses does not say, as some impious people do, that God is the cause of evil, but rather it is in our own hands.'²⁶¹ At one point, Philo (*Leg.* 3.104–6), citing Deut 32: 34–35, concedes that God has 'treasuries of evil' that are 'sealed in the day of vengeance', but then argues that God does not unleash these immediately upon the wicked, giving them time to amend and reform.²⁶² Due to these statements, Brand draws parallels between Philo and Ben Sira's sentiments that human interiority and not God is the source of evil.²⁶³ Unlike Ben Sira, however, where the anthropological language takes on a demonological hue, for Philo the anthropological sentiment is couched explicitly in the

²⁶⁰Cf. Winston 1973; Leaman 1995, 33–47; Runia 2003.

²⁶¹Cf. *Opif.* 75; *Sacr.* 63; *Post.* 80; *Conf.* 161, 179–81; *Mut.* 221; *QG* 1.100; *Spec. Leg.* 4.187.

²⁶²Noted in Kloppenborg 2010, 67. Further on Philo, free will, and determinism cf. Winston 1974, 47–70.

²⁶³Brand 2011, 211.

language and history of Greek philosophical thought.²⁶⁴ Despite texts in Philo that acknowledge the divine hand in all things, Philo explicitly refutes those who would use Moses to prove that God is unjust or wicked. In *Prov.* 2:82 Philo clarifies that

when Providence is said to govern the universe, it does not mean that God is the cause of everything; certainly not of evil, of that which lies outside the course of nature, or of any of those things that are not at all beneficial.²⁶⁵

Within the *Exposition of the Law*, in *Spec. Leg.* 1.209 Philo assures the reader that ‘God is good, He is the maker and begetter of the universe and His providence is over what He has begotten; He is a saviour and a benefactor, and has the plenitude of all blessedness and all happiness’. Similarly, in the *Allegorical Commentary* Philo reads a number of texts through a rhetorical question that leads to a theological impossibility: ‘if God is the Moving Cause of all things’ (as asserted in *Fug.* 8), ‘then is God the cause of human evil’? Philo rejects this possibility outright (*Fug.* 80), followed by an allegorical reading of Exod 21:14

²⁶⁴Kloppenborg 2010, 67 traces Philo’s argumentation back to Plato, who argued against the proposition that god had agency in evil (citing *Resp.* 335D, 379C–380C; *Tim.* 29E–30A; cf. Plutarch, *Suav. Viv.* 22). This same premise of divine noninvolvement informed later Stoic arguments that suffering, poverty, illness and even death were not to be considered evil at all, but merely *ἀδιάφορα*. The essence of virtue was to pursue only the proper ends—prudence, moderation, courage, and justice. Illness, poverty, and death are only regarded as evils by those who misperceive their opposites. For example, Seneca argues in *De Ira* 2.27.2 that it is irrational to project malice onto the gods for storms, long winters, and the like. Thus, Seneca rejects the idea that god is the cause of evil: ‘nature never permits good to be injured by good; between good men and gods there exists a friendship brought about by virtue’ (*De Providentia* 1.5.70). Similarly, ‘what appear to be evils are *ἀδιάφορα* and therefore not evils at all to the sage. What counts is not that one suffers, but how one suffers’ (*De Providentia* 2.4.71). Philo arrives at similar conclusions, despite acknowledging elsewhere that God functions as the ultimate cause of all things. For example, in *Spec. Leg.* 2:209 Philo comments on people who have experienced both prosperity and adversity, are thankful for their current happy state and are therefore ‘urged on to piety by fear of a change of state to the contrary condition’. These people ‘honour God in songs and words for their present wealth and persistently entreat and conciliate him with supplications that they will no longer be tested with calamities (ὅτι περ τοῦ μηκέτι πειραθῆναι κακῶν)’. Cf. the divine role in *Chr.* 33–37.

²⁶⁵Though the implications of this text may appear to limit divine sovereignty, Runia 2003, 588 maintains that the arguments in *On Providence* are used for dialectical purposes and do not represent Philo’s views on theodicy in their entirety. Similarly, Thompson 1977, 47.

(*Fug.* 81) and an interpretation of Plato's *Theaetetus* 176C (*Fug.* 81) that appeals to the 'mystery' of God's non-involvement with evil and the discipline of discriminating between divine allowance and human responsibility (*Fug.* 81). At this point in the *Allegorical Commentary* Philo turns to a discussion of divine intermediaries that provides a key cosmological feature of his philosophical hermeneutic. Philo's answer to the question of evil hinges on whether God can legitimately discipline his people through intermediaries without compromising his essence.²⁶⁶

Before moving to an analysis of Philo's theories of cosmic intermediation, we can briefly summarise: Philo demonstrates deep dependence on Platonic notions of divine transcendence in defence against claims of God's interaction with evil.²⁶⁷ However, while Philo is careful to argue that God is not responsible for evil (e.g., *Fug.* 79 above), Philo never specifically addresses whether God's biblical role as *ὁ περὶ ἁλόν* is questionable. The answer to this problem of the acceptable roles in probation is answered by Philo's broader cosmology of divine transcendence and intermediation, rather than through a direct apologetic.

6.2.2. *The Role of Intermediaries in Philo's Cosmology*

Philo's philosophical vision of divine transcendence and his related defence of divine non-participation in evil relies on a significant role played by cosmic intermediaries. These intermediaries were present at the moment of creation and continue to mitigate divine interaction with the physical world. This necessary division of roles is explained in *Conf.* 179–182, beginning with an explanation of the divine words 'let us make man' from the

²⁶⁶So Ryu 2013, 263.

²⁶⁷Dillon 1997, 377–79 argues that Philo's philosophical position can be best seen as a form of Middle-Platonism which 'firmly reject[s] Stoic materialism and their doctrine of an immanent divinity.'

Creation narrative:

(179) Very appropriately therefore has God attributed the creation of this being, man, to his lieutenants, saying, 'Let us make man', in order that the successes of the intellect may be attributed to God alone, but the errors of the being thus created, to his subordinate power. For it was not suitable to the dignity of God, the ruler of the universe, to make the road to wickedness in a rational soul by his own agency; for which reason he has committed to those about him the creation of this portion of the universe. . . . (180) God is the cause only of what is good but is absolutely the cause of no evil whatever, since he himself is the most ancient of all existing things, and the most perfect of all goods. . . . (181) But the fate of the wicked is, on the other hand, referred to the angels (182) Knowing therefore that these powers are beneficial to the race of man, he has appointed the punishments to be inflicted by other beings; for it was expedient that he himself should be looked upon as the cause of well-doing, but in such a way that the fountains of his everlasting graces should be kept unmingled with any evils, not merely with those that are really evils, but even with those which are accounted such.

Philo is at pains to argue that God is neither the cause nor the agent of evil, as by his very nature he remains unmingled with anything that is not good or beautiful. It is important for Philo that God 'should be looked upon as the cause of well-doing'; further, it is beneath the essence of divine dignity for God to engage in any kind of agency that involves evil, physicality, or irrationality. Therefore, at the base physical level, the task of the original creation is explained by the agency of intermediary actors.

This line of argumentation is followed in *Fug.* 68–72, where Philo reads the statement 'let us make man' in Gen 1 to indicate a plurality of makers.²⁶⁸ The divine Father 'assigned [to the Powers] the task of making the mortal part of our soul . . . while he was fashioning the rational part within us'. Since the soul of man was destined to receive notions

²⁶⁸Runia 1986, 244–6 traces this reading back to Plato's 'young gods' who make the mortal parts of humanity (i.e. the body) as well as living beings who 'have no part of immortality' (*Tim.* 41a, 42e).

of good and evil, the Father ‘assigned the origin of evil to other workmen than himself, but retained the generation of good for himself alone.’ Since the ‘real man’ exists within the pure rational mind, but the external senses are only that which is ‘called man’ (*Fug.* 71), the statement that ‘God made man in his own image’ can still be regarded as true (so *Fug.* 72).

What then are these other agents within Philo’s cosmology? *Somn.* 1:69 states that God does not condescend to ‘come down to the external senses’, but rather sends his own ‘word’ or ‘angels’. These agents, ‘like the trainers of wrestlers’, implant in their pupils strength and power. *Somn.* 1 then continues with an extended exposition on the Divine Word as the chief intermediary.²⁶⁹ These cosmic actors are found across Philo’s corpus, especially in the *Questions in Genesis and Exodus* and in the *Allegorical Commentary*. In *QE* 2.68 Philo offers numerous instances of the intermediary role of the Logos and the revelatory functions played by an accompanying class of intermediaries.²⁷⁰ Ryu summarises that the *Allegorical Commentary* likewise presents God as incomprehensible with respect to his essence but nevertheless accessible to human knowledge through the revelatory mediation of the Logos, the divine powers, the divine spirit, as well as human agents such as Moses the mediator *par excellence*.²⁷¹

6.2.3. *On the Suppression of Demonic Forces*

While Philo mitigates divine involvement through the use of supernatural intermediaries, nevertheless he avoids appealing to the demonic cosmologies seen so

²⁶⁹Ryu 2013, 105 argues that Philo uses Mosaic language to caution against the notion of an all-pervading, quasi-divine *Logos* in the Stoic imaginations; rather, Philo tasks the *Logos* as chief intermediary between God and humanity, unrivaled among created things but nonetheless inferior to the uncreated God.

²⁷⁰On these classes, see the chart at Ryu 2013, 422.

²⁷¹Ryu 2013, 9.

prominently within the Rewritten Bible genre. In a number of places these cosmic forces have been internalised, as in *Spec. Leg.* 1:89 where Philo remarks that ‘falsehood’ (rather than Satan) ‘has been banished entirely from heaven . . . to the earthly regions and has its lodging in the souls of accursed men’. Here, Philo apparently knows the tradition of a Satanic fall, but applies this narrative to a cosmology that internalises cosmic evil.²⁷² Accordingly, A.T. Wright sees Philo as the clearest case in the Second Temple period, perhaps aside from Sirach, for rejecting demonology as an explanation of human actions: ‘Philo was not willing to accept this [demonic paradigm] and chose to explain the struggles of humanity in light of individual responsibility to overcome the temptations of evil’.²⁷³ As with Ben Sira, it would be a mistake to conclude that Philo does not know of a demonic cosmology; rather, we see with Philo a specific rejection of a broader cosmological framework.

6.3. Philo and the Anthropology of Probation

As intimated in the preceding paragraphs, Philo’s cosmology has direct implications for his anthropology. The involvement of lesser agents in the creation of humans, as well as the move to internalise cosmic evil within the human soul, result in a particular understanding of human nature that draws on both biblical and philosophical language.

Due to the agency of intermediaries at creation, human nature is mixed, reflecting both the higher characteristics of the divine nature as well as the baser characteristics of intermediaries. This division within the human nature is described in a number of texts,

²⁷²Perhaps we see here an implicit awareness of the popular Watchers tradition from Gen 6, but reworked in light of Philo’s philosophical (or even social/educational) orientation; cf. Wright 2005, 487.

²⁷³Wright 2005, 487.

including the ‘twofold nature’ of the heavenly man and the earthly man in *Legum* 1:31, the opposites of *Opif.* 73 (wisdom and folly, temperance and dissoluteness, courage and cowardice), and the ‘singleness’ of God contrasted to the ‘mixed nature’ of humans in *Mut.* 183-185.²⁷⁴

Despite the supernatural roles that caused the mixed human nature, Philo consistently internalises the responsibility for personal sin. *Fug.* 79–80 argues that premeditated evil ‘originates from us ourselves . . . For the treasures of evil things are in ourselves’. If the responsibility for evil lies entirely within humanity, does human free will offer a legitimate choice for good, or does the irrational, mixed nature make human knowledge of God impossible? There seems to be some ambiguity on this point in Philo (see 6.3.2. below). For example, *Mut.* 183–85 presents the human irrational self as warring against the rational, divine aspect of human nature; some have been granted by God more of the rational than the irrational. In contrast, *Deus* 49–50 uses Deut 30:15 as a proof-text for human freedom of choice. Here, Philo defends the idea that choice to sin is subject to the free human will, though humans naturally incline toward irrational evil. However, Philo does appear to allow room for appeals to God in prayer for help in fighting the desire to sin, as in *Ebr.* 125–26 where Philo details the need to petition God for help specifically regarding drunkenness.²⁷⁵

²⁷⁴Philo often uses the term *πλάσμα* to describe the ‘formed’ aspect of the earthly man (e.g., *Legum* 1:31; *Det.* 125; *Her.* 57). While *πλάσμα* is a natural translation of the literal sense of *yetzer* (as is commonly seen in the LXX), in Philo this seems to be limited to a sense of physical humanity as a base, formed material, not to its mixed constitution (so Cohen Stuart 1982, pp. 102, 199). This is apparent in *Her.* 57, where the earthly man is a mould of earth (*πλάσμα γῆς*), but the heavenly man is a copy of the divine image.

²⁷⁵See here Brand 2011, 225.

6.3.1. Human Nature and Base Desire

With the cause of and responsibility for evil embedded firmly within the irrational part of human nature, Philo appeals extensively to the desires or passions (ἐπιθυμία) of the irrational man as the basis for the anthropological impulse. In *Spec. Leg.* 4.84–85 Philo goes so far as to claim that the base human desire is the cause of all evil:

So great and so excessive an evil is desire (ἐπιθυμία); or rather, if I am to speak the plain truth concerning it, it is the source of all evils. For from what other source do . . . all mischiefs, whether private or public, or sacred or profane, take their rise? For most truly may desire (ἐπιθυμία) be said to be the original passion which is at the bottom of all these mischiefs, of which love (ἔρως) is one and the most significant offspring, which has not once but many times filled the whole world with indescribable evils.

Philo uses a variety of images to illustrate his point, describing desire as a ‘creeping sickness’, the ‘force of fire’, ‘venomous animals or deadly poisons’, all of which leads to the ‘beginning of wickedness’ and the ‘death of the soul’ (*Spec. Leg.* 1.106). Even love is compromised. In an exposition of the Decalogue’s οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις ‘thou shalt not covet’ Philo identifies ἐπιθυμία as the chief culprit in the battle for the soul. In *Spec. Leg.* 4.79–81 the desires and impulses are compared to a horse which must be bridled and controlled. Like an unbridled horse these passions are seek to control, and breeds (ἐντίκτουσα) fierce and endless yearnings and baits (δελιάσαι) those who would capture it.

This emphasis on the dangers of base human desire leads Philo to emphasise the necessity of controlling the ἐπιθυμία. In *Virt.* 113 the lawgiver does not permit ἐπιθυμίαν to proceed onwards ‘with unbridled course’, but rather ‘tests love’ (τὸν ἔρωτα βασανίζει) to see whether it stems from ‘frantic passion that is easily satisfied and originates wholly in desire

(πάθους)’ or whether it has any share in that most ‘pure essence of well-tempered reason, for reason will bridle the ἐπιθυμίαν.’²⁷⁶

6.3.2. *Ascent to the Divine Mind*

Not only are humans to control the irrational parts of their nature such as the ἐπιθυμία, but Philo also desires that humans attain to a knowledge of the divine. Here, however, Philo’s divine transcendence and mixed anthropology creates a tension: Philo is convinced that humanity can ascend to the knowledge of the divine, but also that it is restrained from doing so at the most basic created level. Philo’s solution is complex, deeply philosophical, and often multi-faceted, and space will not allow a full treatment here. The most recent attempt to map Philo’s argument is Ryu’s 2013 dissertation, where he notes variations in Philo’s argument between the *Allegorical Commentary* and the *Exposition of the Law*.²⁷⁷ The *Allegorical Commentary* presents a God who is incomprehensible with respect to his essence but who reveals his existence to human knowledge through mediation of incorporeal agents. In the *AC* human ascent to the knowledge of the divine focuses on the enhancement and then ultimately the eviction of human rationality, which is replaced by metaphors for mystery initiation and ecstatic inspiration.²⁷⁸ In contrast, the *Exposition of the Law* establishes Moses, rather than the mysteries and divine inspiration, as the means by which people can attain knowledge of the divine. Ryu argues that Philo effectively establishes two classes of people, corresponding to the envisaged audiences of his two commentary series. The initiated insiders of the *AC* find in Moses the mystagogue the means

²⁷⁶On the human ability to control the ἐπιθυμία, see Winston 1986, 108–9; *contra* Frick 1999, 166.

²⁷⁷Ryu 2013.

²⁷⁸Ryu 2013, 9.

to allow their mind's nonrational ascent to God as it opens up to the full richness of the *Allegorical Commentary*. On the other hand, Philo's closer attention to the literal sense in the *Exposition* remains tied to the basic education of the less-advanced students, for whom God remains invisible and unknowable by the human mind. Ryu's argument, while not uncontroversial, is that Philo operates with two distinct epistemologies.

These epistemological nuances notwithstanding, Philo seems to think that the human mind, despite its conflicts with the non-rational parts of the soul, is nevertheless endowed with the potential to ascend to a knowledge of its Creator. Therefore, Philo endorses Plato's commitment to human assimilation with God (insofar as this idea is presented in Plato's *Theaetetus*), but recasts this widely accepted philosophical position in terms of Moses' divine revelation. It is through Moses that God, through all his various intermediaries and manifestations, 'calls aspirants to achieve noetic purification and perfection and thereby experience cognitive healing and transformation'.²⁷⁹

6.3.3. *Summary of Philo's Cosmology*

Philo's cosmology deserves greater space than we have available. In attempting to summarise Philo's position, we may say that he is concerned to distance God from the causation and responsibility of human evil, and does so through appeals to his overarching philosophical framework. God's ontological transcendence demands a distance from the base natural substance of humanity, to the point that even in the act of creation God utilised intermediary agents (the angels, the Logos, etc.) to form the natural substance of humankind. The resulting irrational part of the human constitution serves as the source and

²⁷⁹So Ryu 2013, 105–106.

bears the responsibility for human evil. Philo internalises external sources of evil into this irrational part of the human soul, rejecting external demonic influences.

6.4. Philo's Philosophical Hermeneutic

Philo's theological cosmology is applied exegetically throughout his literary corpus. Indeed, reading Moses through a Middle-Platonic philosophical system serves as one of the core purposes of Philo's writing.²⁸⁰ Philo's use of scripture varies according to his genre. The *Questions in Genesis and Exodus* are the most direct, explicitly citing biblical texts followed by commentary. Across the corpus, however, Philo will often explain a difficult text by introducing a chain of secondary proof-texts.²⁸¹ As Philo is primarily interested in Moses, the large majority of his citations are drawn from the Torah. Fundamentally, Philo sees two sets of laws: the unwritten Law of nature, and its perfect counterpart, the written law of Moses. Both are divine in origin (*Spec. Leg.* 1.279), and they correspond perfectly to each other.²⁸²

6.4.1. Philo's Hermeneutic of the Letter and Spirit

In terms of general hermeneutical method Philo allows for both literal and allegorical method, each with its own purposes. For example, the literal interpretation of any Mosaic text 'applies to the man' while the allegorical interpretation 'applies to the soul' (*Abr.* 88). Allegorical interpretation is to be sought 'only after the literal' (*Jos.* 125).²⁸³

²⁸⁰Nikiprowetzky 1977, 97–108, attempting to establish the complexity of Philo's concepts about God and humanity, argued that the centrality of scriptural exegesis is core to Philo's discourse.

²⁸¹See the numerous examples listed in Ryu 2013, 242, 296.

²⁸²Cf. *Spec. Leg.* 1.152–155, 202, 279; 2.13, 109, 124, 129, 239; 3.28, 33, 48, 137; *Virt.* 18–19, 94, 122, 127–33; *Praem.* 155–58.

²⁸³Cf. *Dec.* 1, *Spec. Leg.* 1.200; 4.114. According to Niehoff 2010, this combination of 'letter' and 'spirit' in Philo is an interesting and important variant on contemporary Homeric commentary writing in

These interpretive principles can be seen when Philo discusses the Flood in *QG*

1.11:²⁸⁴

Why does he say: 'Enter you and all your house into the ark, because I have seen that you are a just man before me in that generation'? . . . This is the sense of the passage taken according to the letter. But if we look at its inward meaning, when God will save the intellect of the soul, which is the principal part of the man, that is to say, the head of the family, then also he will save the whole family along with him; I mean [all the parts of the human soul].

Philo first examines the passage literally 'according to the letter' on the saving of Noah and his family, but then by looking at the 'inward meaning', the passage is redirected towards the salvation of the 'intellect of the soul'. The pairing of a high regard for the biblical text with a willingness to engage in allegorical readings is a feature that runs throughout Philo's reading of the testing narratives.²⁸⁵

6.4.2. *The Probation of Adam and Eve*

As we have already seen previously the story of the creation of humankind forms a core facet of Philo's cosmological framework. The creation of humankind is accomplished through intermediate agents and has significant implications for human nature. In *Leg.* 3.96–105 Philo uses the biblical phrase 'let us make man according to our image' and 'God created man in his image' to reinforce the goodness of God:

Alexandria. On the complex notion of 'allegory' in Philo's approach to his authoritative texts, cf. Ryu 2013, 195–198, 241–243; with relation to Philo and broader Alexandrian exegesis cf. Matusova 2010.

²⁸⁴Translation by C. D. Yong 1993.

²⁸⁵On the complex notion of 'allegory' in Philo's approach to his authoritative texts, cf. Ryu 2013, 195–198, 241–243; with relation to Philo and broader Alexandrian exegesis cf. Matusova 2010.

(96) You see then that there are several storehouses of evil things, and only one of good things. For since God is One, so also is his storehouse of good things one likewise. But there are many storehouses of evil things because the wicked are infinite in number. And in this observe the goodness of the true God, He opens the treasure house of his good things freely, but he binds fast that which contains the evil things. For it is an especial property of God to offer his good things freely and to be beforehand with men in bestowing gifts upon them, but to be slow in bringing evil on them.

Philo combines the creation account with an appeal to the *Shema* to establish, based on God's unity, the singularity of his goodness, beneficence, and mercy.²⁸⁶ In *Opif.* 74–75, after reiterating the intermediary roles in the creation act, Philo shows an awareness that the creation narrative could open God's character to scrutiny. This potential claim that God could be indicted for the effects of the mixed human nature is defused through a reading of the 'let us make man' statements from Gen 1:26.²⁸⁷

There are a few additional passages which discuss potential problems in the Adam and Eve narrative. In *QG* 1.45 Philo explains why God must ask Adam 'where are you?' in Gen 3:9 given divine omniscience. Philo answers by reading the biblical clause not as a true interrogatory, but rather as a threat and a conviction:

Where are you now, O man? And from how many good things are you now changed? Forsaking immortality and a life of the most perfect happiness, you have become changed to death and misery in which you are buried.

In *Leg.* 3.51, this same problem of divine knowledge is answered with a different solution, namely by reading the particle *ποῦ* to affirm that 'you (Adam) are somewhere'

²⁸⁶This argument is almost identical to that made in *Jas* 1:15–18.

²⁸⁷A similar apologetic reading of Gen 1:26 occurs in *Fug.* 68–72, *Conf.* 168–83, and *Mut.* 30–32.

rather than as the interrogative ‘where are you, Adam?’ These dual readings of Gen 3:9 may indicate that Philo has greater discomfort with the absence of divine knowledge than with the question of divine participation with evil that was answered by his philosophical framework.²⁸⁸

6.4.3. *The Probations of Abraham and the Patriarchs*

Philo addresses the trials of the Patriarchs extensively throughout his literary corpus. In returning often to the Patriarchs, Philo seems indebted to the hellenistic mode of *exempla*, with the Patriarchs serving, both individually and as a group, as the means of human ascent to visionary knowledge of God.²⁸⁹ I will focus the remaining section on Philo’s reading of the near-sacrifice of Isaac in Gen 22. Philo addresses Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac extensively in *Abr.* 168 and *Somn.* 1. More limited discussions of the *Aqedah* appear in *Cher.* 1:37, in *Deus* 4, *Migr.* 134–166 and elsewhere. Space does not allow a close reading of all of these passages, and we will focus our attention on *Abr.* 168, *Somn.* 1.63–70, 195, and *Migr.* 134–66.²⁹⁰

6.4.3.1. *Patriarchs as Allegorical Figures*

Before turning to Philo’s reading of the trials of the patriarchs, an introductory word should be made on the general hermeneutical significance of the patriarchs across Philo’s corpus. Throughout Philo’s literary corpus the patriarchal triad of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

²⁸⁸Further on the Expulsion from the Garden, cf. *Opif.* 155.

²⁸⁹So Reed 2009, 188–189, 194–95.

²⁹⁰In *Mut.* 4 the ‘perfect Abraham’ offered his son ‘the beloved and only legitimate offspring of his soul, the self-taught wisdom Isaac’. In *Cher.* 1.31 the sacrifice of Isaac is presented as the opportunity to ‘eagerly slay and burn the mortal creature’ by which the ‘intellect is thus disentangled from the body’. In *Fug.* 136 the fire and wood and ram are allegorised into reason and divine providence. These interpretations function to illustrate Philo’s broader philosophical project.

are read as universal ideas of human ascent. Abraham represents noetic transformation by way of instruction; Isaac as the self-taught nature; Jacob by practice. This triad mirrors the approaches to education of instruction (διδασκαλία), nature (φύσις), and practice (ἄσκησις, ἐπιμέλεια, μελέτη) in antiquity as discussed by Plato and Protagoras of Abdera. These approaches to education were commonly accepted by Philo's contemporary philosophers.²⁹¹ Abraham and Isaac and Jacob as symbols of noetic ascent are then applied in various ways throughout Philo's corpus.

In the *Allegorical Commentary* Philo extends Abraham as an example of how physical man can interact with the incorporeal God. Abraham becomes an example of the ecstatic phenomena of divine possession in which the aspirant's mind moves out of itself and enters a state of cognitive passivity and the obviation of reason.²⁹² In the *Expositions of the Law*, however, the Patriarchs serve as evidence of the relationship between the law of nature and its subsequent codification by Moses.²⁹³

Philo applies these philosophical portrayals of Abraham and Isaac to his various readings of Abraham's trials. For example, in the recounting of the *Aqedah* in *Somn.* 1.194–95 Philo describes Isaac as the 'self-taught race', and proceeds to read the trial both literally and according to the allegorical principles established throughout his corpus.²⁹⁴

And Abraham also, on the occasion of offering up his beloved and only son as a burnt-offering, when he was beginning to sacrifice him, and when he had given proof of his piety, was forbidden to destroy the self-taught race (αὐτομαθὲς γένος), Isaac by name, from among men for at the beginning of his account of this transac-

²⁹¹See the detailed discussion in Ryu 2013, 174–179.

²⁹²Ryu 2013, 272, noting especially Philo's use of Gen 15:12.

²⁹³E.g., *Praem.* 2.

²⁹⁴On the *Aqedah* as ascent, cf. *Mut.* 201–212; *Abr* 200–202; the opening lines of *Joseph*.

tion, Moses says that ‘God did tempt Abraham (ὁ θεὸς ἐπείραζε τὸν Ἀβραάμ),’ and said unto him, ‘Abraham, Abraham; and he said, Behold, here am I.’

Here we see a combination of Philo’s exegetical principles. The trial in Gen 22 extends Abraham as the instructed aspirant and Isaac as the ‘self-taught nature’ who is capable of apprehending divine wisdom.²⁹⁵ This follows the passage in *Somn.* 1.63–70 where the *Aqedah* is read as the secondary proof text to explain how divine intermediaries deliver knowledge to the world. It is the Divine Word that meets with Abraham: ‘For God, not condescending to come down to the external senses, sends his own words or angels for the sake of giving assistance to those who love virtue.’ This Divine Word is the same agent who spoke to Abraham at Gen 22:1, to Jacob through the operation of attendant angels in Gen 28:12, and who asked Adam ‘where are you’ in Gen 3:9.

6.4.3.2. De Abrahamo and the Victory of Divine Affections

Abr. 168 introduces a long exposition on the *Aqedah* which continues through *Abr.* 204 and is then taken up again in 275–6. The passage is too long to cite in its entirety, but a few notable points can be highlighted. In 169–170 the ‘oracular word’ (θεσπίζεται λόγιον) brings word to Abraham. The motivation for Abraham’s trial is his ‘indescribable fondness’ (ἀλέκτω πόθῳ) for Isaac, which is placed in conflict with his ‘love for God’ (ἔρωσ θείῳ). When the higher affection for God conquers the natural affection for Isaac, ‘God the Savior’ (ὁ σωτήρ θεός) in *Abr.* 176 stops the deed. In *Abr.* 178–191 this narrative is then defended

²⁹⁵ Cf. *Det.* 29–30. Similarly, *Sacr.* 79 applies the testing process to the Abraham and Isaac narrative, specifically to their acquisition of divine knowledge and their move away from irrational passion: God causes new shoots of ‘self-taught wisdom (αὐτοδιδάκτου σοφίας). It is impossible that a ‘follower, or a friend, or a disciple of God’ should tolerate mortal lessons. The ripeness of this new soul is to be tested by powerful reason, as gold is tried (δεδοκιμάσθαι) in the fire.

against ‘unbridled and evil-speaking mouths’: against such interlocutors, Philo argues that Abraham’s actions were not performed out of fear (δέους), custom, or desire for glory, but rather purely out of his affection for God (θεοφιλές). In *Abr.* 198 Abraham does not ‘divide his feelings’ and allot one part to his son and another part to God; rather, he devoted the whole soul (ὅλην τὴν ψυχὴν) to holiness and divine affection. Within Philo’s hermeneutic, this meaning may not appear evident in the ‘plain and explicit language’, but is evident to those who ‘place the objects of the intellect above those perceptible by the outward senses’ (*Abr.* 200). Philo will then proceed to offer an explanation of Isaac based on his name, ‘laughter’ (*Abr.* 201–202), on God’s nature as a giver of gifts (*Abr.* 203), and concludes that the ‘joy of divine beneficence’ falls on humans from heaven to earth.

Several exegetical points from *Abr.* 168–204 can be highlighted as frequently appearing throughout Philo’s works. Abraham’s virtue is highlighted as one who’s ‘love for God’ (θεοφιλεῖς; ἔρωτι θεῷ) overcomes his ‘affection for Isaac’ (φιλοστοργία, πόθος) and his fear (170, 186–88). Irving Jacobs has noted how, beyond serving to exemplify Philo’s broader agenda of unifying the entire soul to God, Abraham’s attitude in the service of God was a synthesis of the irrational notions of love and fear.²⁹⁶ Philo portrays Abraham as having mastered his natural affections, comparing Abraham to an athlete who ‘develops the strength of his soul’ in order to achieve victory over his passions, and is thereby designated a lover of God, and God-beloved. This affection for God is described as single-minded, undivided, and as a unified soul that overcomes the base loyalties of affection that would divide his devotion to God. This interpretation relies on Philo’s method of first providing a description of the ‘literal’ text, before turning to the allegorical for deeper meaning.

²⁹⁶Jacobs 1975; cf. Amir 1965.

In *Abr.* 275 Philo describes Abraham as a faithful keeper of Torah. Similar to Sir 44 and later rabbinic descriptions, since the ‘written law’ was not yet available, Abraham becomes a keeper of the ‘unwritten law of nature’ that began to overrule his natural impulses. In this way, his obedience to the divine law is manifest in his faith, for ‘what is the duty of man except to believe (πιστεύειν) those things which God asserts?’ Philo acknowledges that Abraham’s fulfilment of Moses’ law is widely accepted in Jewish interpretation (276), but he insists that this law-keeping is in according to the unwritten law of God. In a similar manner, *Migr.* 132 insists on uniting Abraham’s piety and his faith to establish Abraham’s ascension as the ‘perfect man’. In *Migr.* 139 Abraham exemplifies the ‘perfect mind’ which pays proper tribute to the God who causes perfection; accordingly, Abraham pays tribute by offering his son in Gen 22. However, in *Migr.* 140 the *Aqedah* must be read allegorically so as not to impinge on Abraham’s virtue: Abraham ‘does not sacrifice a man (for the wise man is not a slayer of his children), but the male offspring of a virtuously living soul.’²⁹⁷ This combination of Abraham’s faith (from Gen 15) with his law-observance that results in his perfection is in keeping with readings of the *Aqedah* across the wider Jewish literature.²⁹⁸

6.4.3.3. Overcoming the Passions

The death of Sarah in Gen 23 provides Philo an opportunity to comment on Abraham’s ability to overcome his base emotions. *Abr.* 256 describes Abraham as a wrestler, pitting his reason against the passions that threatened to overwhelm his soul. The Scriptures provide evidence that

²⁹⁷ Cf. *Migr.* 166–167.

²⁹⁸ On which see below in Part 3.

Abraham, having wept a short time over his wife's body, soon rose up from the corpse; thinking, as it should seem, that to mourn any longer would be inconsistent with that wisdom by which he had been taught. (259) He did not think it becoming to show impatience when nature reclaimed what belonged to her, but preferred to bear what was inevitable with cheerfulness.

Here Philo applies his own convictions on the appropriate responses of the soul to calamity, using the image of a wrestler to portray reason overcoming the natural passions. Abraham does not respond with impatience, but rather with appropriate measures of grief and cheerfulness.

6.4.3.4. God as the Tester

As noted above, there is no indication that Philo shrinks directly from the biblical description of God as *ὁ πειράζων*. Though Philo at times rejects negative implications for divine foreknowledge, Philo's cosmology explains how God maintains a separation between the divine essence and the physical world. So, in *Somn.* 1.195 Philo cites directly from Gen 22, stating that 'Moses says that "God did test (*ἐπεράζει*) Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham, Abraham; and he said, Behold, here am I"'. However, in *Congr.* 170–172 Philo notes the potential for misunderstanding the divine role in probation:

(170) Does not, then, the prophetic word, by name Moses, very rightly speak in dignified language when he says, "You are to remember all the roads by which the Lord God led you in the wilderness, and how he afflicted you and tried you and proved you (*κακώσῃ σε καὶ ἐκπειράσῃ καὶ διαγνώσῃ*), that he might know what was in your heart, and whether you would keep his commandments. Did he not afflict (*ἐκάκωσέ*) you and oppress you with hunger, and feed you with manna? . . . (171) Who, then, is so impious as to conceive that God is one who afflicts, and who brings that most pitiable death of hunger upon those who are not able to live without food? For God is good, and the cause of good things, bounteous, the saviour, the supporter, the giver of wealth, the giver of great gifts. . . . (172) Let us, then, not

be led aside by words, but let us consider and examine what meaning is intended to be conveyed under figurative expressions, and pronounce that the words “he afflicted” (ἐκάκωσε) are equivalent to “he instructed, and he admonished, and he corrected.”

Philo recognises that in the probation of Israel in the wilderness at Gen 16:4 there was potential for some to indict the divine character. The divine defence is made via an appeal to God’s beneficence. Further, an allegorical reading then explains that God was not physically oppressing with hunger, but rather testing the base irrational nature to bring them into an ascendant, rational state. This is made explicit in *Leg.* 3:166, where the divine gift of manna exemplifies the giving of divine knowledge. Here as well Exod 16:4 exemplifies the divine reason providing education for the benefit of the students:

On which account Moses adds, “In order that I may test (πειράσω) them and see whether they will walk according to my law or not,” for the divine law enjoins us to honour virtue for its own sake. Accordingly, right reason tests those who practise virtue as one might test a coin, to see whether they have contracted any stain, referring the good things of the soul to any of the external things; or whether they decide upon it as good money, preserving it in the intellect alone. These men are nourished not on earthly things, but on heavenly knowledge.

6.4.4. Conclusion to Philo’s Hermeneutic of Probation

In the preceding analysis, Philo has shown only passing concern to address the specific problem of probation. However, Philo does show concern for the problem of evil in general, with natural extensions of the broader philosophical discussion entering into our concern for probation. Here, Philo has exemplified how a deeply philosophical Judaism answered a number of cosmic and hermeneutical problems related to the roles and responsibilities of probation. When reading biblical texts that may implicate God’s

participation in evil, Philo appeals first and foremost to his operative philosophical framework in which God's ontological transcendence both distances his essence from irrational humanity and is mediated by intermediary agents.

This philosophically informed cosmology is manifested in Philo's reading of the testing narratives, from the creation and fall of Adam to the probation of the Patriarchs. Philo's combination of literary and allegorical hermeneutic reads both according to 'the letter' and 'the spirit'. Within this hermeneutical framework, God's role as *ὁ περᾶζων* is not mitigated via exegesis or retold Scripture, but rather Philo's robust philosophical system makes explanation largely unnecessary.

Both Philo's portrayal of the cosmic drama and his biblical hermeneutic are radically different from the Jewish literature surveyed in the preceding two chapters. Unlike Sirach and *Jubilees*, the theme of probation is not central to Philo's discourse. This may be due to the fact that Philo's Middle-Platonic philosophical context distances God from even the possibility of divine agency. What is clear, however, is that Philo rejects the demonic explanation for sin seen in *Jubilees*, in favour of an internalised, anthropological explanation. Unlike Ben Sira, however, who recasts the cosmic drama within Wisdom's hall of discipline, Philo adopts a pedagogical model consonant with his philosophical context, ultimately ascribing the possibility of human ascent to God through the great intermediary, Moses. The stories of Adam and the Patriarchs offer fertile ground to apply this philosophical and hermeneutical system for Philo's students.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁹It is noteworthy that Philo's ability to work within a Middle-Platonic context would be mirrored and indeed exert direct influence on many of the Christian church fathers. On Philo's enduring influence, see Runia 2009, 210-30, as well as Norris 2009, 15-23 who notes possible impact on Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 5.4; Theophilus of Antioch, *Autol.* 2.3; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 4.20.2; and Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 6.5.39.

From Philo's philosophical hermeneutic, we now move into the realm of Jewish Christianity. The Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* will address the question of probation from within a strongly demonic framework but utilising a particular hermeneutical answer that rejects Scriptural contradiction.

CHAPTER 7

The Pseudo-Clementine Homilies

*The written law had added to it by the Wicked One
certain false scriptures contrary to the law of God.*

Everything that is spoken or written against God is false.

Homily 2.37–40

7.1. Historical Provenance of the Pseudo-Clementine Literature

From the philosophical hermeneutic of Philo, we now move forward a few centuries to the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*. The history of the *Homilies* has been a matter of debate both with respect to their *Sitz im Leben* and their theological orientation within the early Church. In what is one of the first Christian novellas, the core plot of the *Homilies* follows Clement of Rome as he journeys with the Apostle Peter and combats the heretical teachings of Simon Magus.³⁰⁰ Most scholars agree that the early *Grundschrift* from which the *Homilies* were redacted was likely written in Syria, probably by a circumcised Christian who continued to follow many of the practices common to wider Judaism. Accordingly, most scholars have seen within the *Homilies* a strongly Jewish-Christian provenance, though historically this identification has meant different things to different scholars.

³⁰⁰The *Homilies* and their parallel in the possibly earlier *Recognitions* provide an expansion on a *Grundschrift* dating from the early 200's identified variously as the *Periodoi Petrou* or the *Kyrgemata Petrou*; see Drijvers 1990, 320–25, Stanton 2007, 311–314, and most recently Jones 2012.

F.C. Baur was one of the first to suggest that the *Homilies* provided evidence for certain 'judaising' tendencies that approximate Baur's theories of early Jewish/Hellenistic, Petrine/Pauline conflicts. Baur influentially argued that the Clementine literature reveal that such anti-Pauline thought continued within the early Church in certain Ebionite communities of Jewish Christianity, a theory that continues to manifest in modern New Testament scholarship.³⁰¹ However, recent scholarship has issued a number of challenges to the conflict-theory reconstructions of the Clementine literature. Many now recast the corpus as more reflective of later fourth-century heretical controversies than an early anti-Pauline debate.³⁰² The scholarly conversation has developed to the point where even the previously-assumed context of 'Jewish Christianity' has been called into question.³⁰³ The most recent scholarship affirms that the author is likely circumcised, probably continued to observe Torah ordinances in one form or another, and that the inherent 'Jewishness' of the *Grundschrift* can be affirmed.³⁰⁴

7.2. Probation within the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies

Testing and trials of faith provide one of the central narrative themes that runs throughout the *Homilies*. The term *πειράζειν* is used seven times, and *δοκιμάζειν* fifteen times

³⁰¹Baur 1878, 55; cf. Lüdemann 1989; Verheyden 2004, 349 on the Ebionite hypothesis; Manns 2003, 158 on the *Homilies*' anti-Paulinism.

³⁰²For a recent summary of the *status quaestionis*, cf. Bremmer 2010, chapters 1–2. On the tentative provenance of the Clementines, cf. Jones 2003 who prefers an Elkasaite to an Ebionite community. On the question of anti-Paulinism, cf. Skarsaune 2007a; Carleton Paget 2010b, Carleton Paget 2010a; and Bockmuehl 2010, esp. Chapter 5, who questions the almost universal identification of Simon Magus as the Apostle Paul.

³⁰³E.g., Drijvers 1990, 323, who sees primarily anti-Marcionite rather than Jewish-Christian interests in view.

³⁰⁴Cf. Jones 2012, who points out that in *Hom.* 4–6 Clement is presented as a convert to Judaism rather than to the worship of Jesus; similarly, in *Hom.* 8.5–7 Moses and Jesus at times function in a quasi-equal status (though *Hom.* 4–6 may have its origins not in the author of the *Homily* but in an earlier Jewish source).

to describe the various probations that certify the quality of Christian faith. These trials manifest in various forms, but within the narrative the primary antagonist is the magician Simon Magus. Simon wields a number of heretical teachings against the Apostle Peter and his group of disciples, most notable of which are a number of ‘false pericopes’ in the Old Testament which test the faithfulness (πειραν πιστεως) of the saints by questioning God’s goodness, omniscience, fairness, and foreknowledge (2.39; cf. 3.3; 4.2; 16.13). Simon Peter acts as the divine defender against such claims, combatting both Simon Magus and also the Satan who originally placed the false Scriptures. Thus in 4.2 Simon Magus, acting as Satan’s proxy, stands as a deceiver (πλάνος) who seeks to lead the people astray into accepting false beliefs about God and in doing so to ‘steal their souls’ (συναρπάξει ψυχάς). In *Homily* 11.35 Simon’s work of deception is compared to the testing of Jesus in the wilderness: the Apostles and disciples pass through the same kinds of deception. God’s people must engage in combat against Simon for these souls (ὕπὲρ πολλῶν ψυχῶν τὸν ἁγῶνα ἔχοντες, 4.1), tasked with determining what is true and what is false based on the fundamental assumption that God’s character is unchangingly good and fair and just. Thus, to put the Pseudo-Clementine approach to probation in terms of our operative courtroom metaphor, throughout the novella God sits as defendant, with Simon Peter as defence council and Simon Magus as human representative of the satanic prosecutor.

7.3. The Cosmic Drama of the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies

An extended debate guides the narrative structure of the *Homilies* in which Simon Magus and Simon Peter alternately indict and defend God’s role as righteous judge. These debates typically centre on Simon Magus’ claims that God is ὁ πειράζων, and therefore guilty

of ignorance, capriciousness, and as the source of evil things. Simon Peter attempts to refute Simon Magus through a number of what typically amount to *a priori* arguments for God's goodness.

The debates are frequently biblical, revolving around the correct reading of the testing/temptation texts such as Adam and Eve and Abraham. For example, in *Homily* 3.39 Simon Magus argues that God's goodness is contradicted by Scripture. In the writings of Moses, God tests out of ignorance and envy (Gen 3), and must inquire and investigate in order to know (3.39). God has needs (Gen 8:21), God lacks knowledge (Gen 18:21), God is envious (Gen 3:22), God is capricious (Gen 6:6), and when God tests Abraham in order to know the patriarch's true intentions (Gen 22:1, 12) this demonstrates wickedness and ignorance. Similar arguments are repeated throughout the *Homilies* by Simon Magus.

In order to rebut such claims, Simon Peter argues that 'without contradiction God is good and just', and that unless God is just and righteous 'to whom can any one ascribe justice or even the possibility of it?'³⁰⁵ This is followed by a series of arguments in 2.43–44 based on an *a priori* assumption of divine goodness: If God lies, then who can speak the truth? If he must experiment due to ignorance (i.e., if God has to test in order to know truth) who then can have knowledge? If God capriciously changes his purposes, then who can understand anything? If God envies, hardens hearts, makes blind and deaf, mocks, is weak, unjust, or makes evil things, then who can be good, righteous, and powerful? In Simon Peter's theological framework, the only appropriate thoughts about God are the assumption of a good, righteous Creator, the merciful benefactor, and the righteous judge (2.46). This argument is supported in 3.57 by an appeal to the *Shema* as the basis for the Singleness of

³⁰⁵. *Homily* 2.13–14.

the Godhead, whereby God can not contradict himself. While in *Homily* 7:2 God may use bad things for his purposes, Simon Peter urges ‘let no one, amid seeming evils, rashly charge God with unkindness to man. For men do not know the issue of those things which happen to them, nay, suspect that the result will be evil; but God knows that they will turn out well.’ In 9.19 God is to be identified properly as ‘the giver’ (δεδωκότι εὐχαριστήσατε) who blesses the obedient and opposes evil and resists demons on behalf of his people.

7.3.1. Demonic Cosmology and Subordinate Dualism

With Simon Peter taking pains to distance God from any kind of evil throughout the *Homilies*, the novella paints a strongly demonic paradigm in which Satan operates as the active agent of evil, controlling his own army of demonic and human servants. The relationship between the divine, the demonic, and the human elements is one of the most developed features of the *Homilies*. In what F.W. Bussell describes as a ‘system of subordinate dualism’, the author constructs a system in which God is sovereign but a malignant Satan still operates autonomously and with full responsibility for evil.³⁰⁶

Homily 19 is dedicated to a discussion of Satan’s origins, his co-existence and his subordination to God. This passage describes God’s kingdom in strongly dualistic terms, including the ‘two hands’ of God: one for good, and the other for evil.³⁰⁷ Satan is the wicked Prince of the left hand, and Christ the righteous Prince of the right hand. They each have their own tables, Christ the Eucharist, and Satan the idolatrous meals (cf. 7.3). Satan is the one who kills, while Christ makes alive. Within this strongly dualistic framework, however,

³⁰⁶Bussell 1846, 133–188. On the demonology of the pseudo-clementine literature as a whole, cf. Schoeps 1950.

³⁰⁷So 7.3 and 20.2–3.

Simon Peter indicates in 20.9 that Satan is still subordinate to divine law as he prosecutes

God's intentions:³⁰⁸

And Peter said: "I indeed allow that the evil one does no evil, inasmuch as he is accomplishing the law given to him. And although he has an evil disposition, yet through fear of God he does nothing unjustly; but, accusing the teachers of truth so as to entrap the unwary, he is himself named the devil."³⁰⁹

Within this divine economy of subordinate dualism God allocates to Satan the role of ὁ πειράζων in contradistinction to the divine role. Simon Peter makes clear in 3.55: 'in response to those who suppose that God πειράζει, [in fact] ὁ πειράζων is the wicked one'. Satan is therefore tasked with executing suffering and disease (11.11). In 8.12 demonic forces under Satan's control provide the prosecutorial agents of sinful man. Due to Satan's role as prosecutor and enemy, God's people should view their own lives as an ongoing battle, as in *Homily* 9.7:

You shall not only be able to drive away the spirits which lurk in you; but yourselves, by no longer sinning, and believing in God unswervingly, you shall drive out from others evil spirits and dire demons, with their terrible diseases.

In *Homily* 9.7, while external cosmic agents provide the immediately obvious cause of trials in the *Homilies*, a close reading shows an inseparable relationship between external cosmic agents of evil and the human soul. This anthropological emphasis in the *Homilies* requires further explanation.

³⁰⁸Translations of the *Homilies* are from Roberts 1885 unless otherwise noted.

³⁰⁹It should perhaps be noted that at this point the editor of the *Homilies* reaches the limits of his philosophical defences for divine goodness.

7.3.2. *Demonic Anthropology*

Throughout the Homilies, anthropology and demonology are closely linked.³¹⁰ This is not an internalisation of the demonic forces, as in Philo and Ben Sira, but rather a recognition of the direct spiritual contact possible between humans and demons due to their shared citizenship within the kingdom of the Satanic world. As a result, the human body is open to demonic influence. This relationship is especially apparent when the evil serpent, as it tempts to sin, enters into the body. In 9.10–11 the demonic serpent ‘seduces you by the promise of better reason, creeping from your brain to your spinal marrow’. In 11.16 it is the ‘terrible serpent within you’ that tempts to idolatry. In 10.14 the serpent tempts to polytheism, but now using a deceptive, legal argument.³¹¹

Throughout *Homily* 9 the description of demons is of sophisticated spirits made of fire which come to live inside of the human body. While these demonic forces do not actually become an internalised, anthropological force as will be seen in the rabbinic *yetzer*, defeating them becomes an exercise of purity, abstinence, and prayer. *Homily* 20.2–3 emphasises that a person who is in the kingdom of God does have the ability to obey the divine command and therefore defeat the demonic forces:

Moreover, each man has power to obey whichever of them he pleases for the doing of good or evil. But if any one chooses to do what is good, he becomes the possession of the future good king; but if any one should do evil, he becomes the servant of the present evil one. . . . Now it is within the power of every unrighteous then to

³¹⁰On the link between demonology and the opponent in the Pseudo-Clementines, cf. Verheyden 2004.

³¹¹See the similar legal argument made by the rabbinic *yetzer* to Boaz in *Sifra Num.* 88, on which see chapter 8 below. On parallels between the rabbinic *yetzer* and Clementine cosmology cf. Rosen-Zvi 2011, 37; DeLuca 2006a.

repent and be saved; and every righteous man may have to undergo punishment for sins committed at the end of his career.

In this manner, the demons of the *Homilies* provide an opportunity for God's servants to test the quality of their own faith. In *Homily* 9 the 'good and righteous' God, 'the Giving One' (τῷ δεδωκότι, 9.19) will on the day of judgement reward those worthy servants who endure satanic trials. The faithful are to oppose evil lusts and thoughts (ταῖς κακαῖς ἐπιθυμίαις καὶ ἐννοίαις). In doing so, the soul will receive blessings, finally rescued from the trial of evil (πεῖραν τῶν κακῶν, 9.19). For those who are in God's kingdom, human sin is fundamentally a matter of free-will. Without human desire, demonic oppression would be impossible. While under demonic oppression the choice is set before the person: either reject anything (even Scripture, on which see further below) that denigrates the character of the One True God, or else remain open to the demonic lure of doubt (2.39–40).

7.3.3 Summary of the Cosmic Drama of the Pseudo-Clementines

In the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* the defence of God's integrity forms an explicit basis for recasting the cosmic drama. The metaphor throughout is that of the law-court, with the servants of God and Satan standing in defence of their masters. Satan operates as both dualistic enemy of God and also subordinate prosecutor of humans, the true πειράζων of the human race.

This emphasis on the divine and satanic roles also reveals important perspectives on the human interaction with trials. Provided with the ability to resist demonic interference, humans are held responsible for their own actions. The human heart is deeply entwined with the invasive presence of the demonic, to the extent that it becomes difficult at times to

separate the anthropological and the demonic. However, the author does not internalise the forces of evil; rather, external cosmic forces are front and centre within the author's worldview, but with direct access to and influence on the human heart.

7.4. The Hermeneutic of Rejection

The subordinate dualism of the *Homilies* presents a transparent, *a priori* defence of divine beneficence and integrity. God by his very nature is removed from evil, testing, or temptation, and indeed has no need to test given his absolute and perfect knowledge. Such roles are left entirely to lesser, subordinate agents, as Satan's forces operate both externally and internally to build their own kingdom of evil and lead God's people astray. Given this framework, how does the author of the *Homilies* respond to texts that present God as tester, tempter, or examiner of the human soul? This problem is recognised by the author, placed on the lips of Simon Magus, and answered with a blunt and decisive answer by Simon Peter.

In *Homily* 3.39 Simon Magus appeals to the books of Moses as proof that God tests and examines.

'Therefore also Adam, being made at first after his likeness, is created blind, and is said not to have knowledge of good or evil . . . In like manner also, he who made him, because he sees not in all places, says with reference to the overthrow of Sodom, "Come, and let us go down, and see whether they do according to their cry which comes to me; or if not, that I may know". Thus he shows himself ignorant. . . And whereas it is written that "God repented that he had made man", this implies both repentance and ignorance. And whereas it is written, "And the Lord smelled a scent of sweetness", it is the part of one in need; and his being pleased with the fat of flesh is the part of one who is not good. But his tempting, as it is written, "And God did tempt Abraham", is the part of one who is wicked, and who is ignorant of the issue of the experiment'. In like manner Simon, by taking many passages from the Scriptures, seemed to show that God is subject to every infirmity.

Simon Magus points to Gen 1–3, Gen 6, and Gen 22 as passages that call into question divine omniscience and steadfastness. Simon Peter responds to these claims in *Homily 3.43* by establishing a hermeneutical principal for what is true and false in the Scriptures:

But if Adam, being the work of God, had foreknowledge, much more the God who created him. And that is false which is written that God reasoned, as if using reasoning on account of ignorance; and that the Lord tempted Abraham, that He might know if he would endure it; and that which is written, 'Let us go down, and see if they are doing according to the cry of them which cometh to me; and if not, that I may know.' And, not to extend my discourse too far, whatever sayings ascribe ignorance to Him, or anything else that is evil, being upset by other sayings which affirm the contrary, are proved to be false. But because He does indeed foreknow, He says to Abraham, 'Thou shalt assuredly know that thy seed shall be sojourners in a land that is not their own.'

The Scriptures are therefore to be read with the *a priori* understanding of divine character detailed previously. Simon Magus responds by demanding an explanation of Peter's view on the veracity of these Scriptures:

Then said Simon: 'You are clearly avoiding charge from the Scriptures against your God. . . . Confess that if the things written against the Creator are true, he is not above all, since, according to the Scriptures, he is subject to all evil'.

It is at this point that Simon Peter must declare his hermeneutic. In preparation for the debate with Simon Magus, Peter had already explained to his disciples (*Homily 2.37*) that any Scripture that impinges upon divine integrity is to be judged as false. This corruption is due to satanic interference during the transmission of Moses' Oral Law to the

(2.37) For the Scriptures have had joined to them many falsehoods against God on this account. The prophet Moses having by the order of God delivered the law, with the explanations, to certain chosen men, some seventy in number, in order that they also might instruct such of the people as chose, after a little the written law had added to it certain false scriptures (ψευδέγραφοι) contrary to the law of God, who made the heaven and the earth, and all things in them; the Wicked One having dared to work this for some righteous purpose. And this took place in reason and judgment, that those might be convicted who should dare to listen to the things written against God, and those who, through love towards Him, should not only disbelieve the things spoken against Him, but should not even endure to hear them at all, even if they should happen to be true, judging it much safer to incur danger with respect to religious faith, than to live with an evil conscience on account of blasphemous words.

With the danger of the False Scriptures established, Simon Peter gives his principles for determining which Scriptures are true and which are false.

(2.39) We . . . must give in private an explanation of the chapters that are spoken against God to the well-disposed after a trial of their faith; and of this there is but one way, and that a brief one. It is this: (2.40) Everything that is spoken or written against God is false.

A number of points can be made from *Homily* 2.37–40. Simon Peter is convinced of the veracity of the original revelation, but sees satanic interference causing a number of ‘false scriptures’ to be inserted. How then is one to know which is a False Scripture and which is a True Scripture? Peter’s answer in 2.40 is simply that ‘everything that is written against God is false’. If the Scriptures match up to the *a priori* understanding of divine beneficence these are to be trusted. Otherwise, they are to be rejected and understood as a Satanic trial of

³¹²This argument is reiterated at *Homily* 3.47 after the debate with Simon Magus.

faith.³¹³

7.5. *Conclusions to the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies*

The *Homilies* lay down clearly defined roles and responsibilities for cosmic and human actors within a system of subordinate dualism. A hermeneutical principle is employed to defend this world order: since all things that impinge on God's righteousness are to be rejected on an *a priori* basis, the passages of Scripture that are in harmony with divine goodness are true, but whatever contrary to it are to be rejected as a satanically induced test of faith. Due to the willingness of the *Homilies* to reject the controversial passages in the Bible, we can label this hermeneutical response a 'Hermeneutic of Rejection'.³¹⁴

To this point in our study, the Rewritten Bible of *Jubilees*, the Wisdom of Ben Sira, the Philosophical Hermeneutic of Philo, and the subordinate-dualism of the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* have presented four diverse instantiations of the cosmic dramas and hermeneutics available to ancient Judaism. These works are witness to the diverse creativity available to Torah-observant Jews who adapted Moses to their various religious, pedagogical and philosophical needs. Within this diversity, we have noted a 'debate' on whether the agent of probation, ὁ πειράζων as it were, should be externalised to demonic agents or internalised into the human condition. As we turn to our final comparative chapter, this debate will reach its most comprehensive manifestation in the rabbinic rejection of external

³¹³ A further example of how the *Homilies* address the problem of divine testing appears in 16.13 where Simon Peter acknowledges reworks Deut 13:4 to prove that God knows all things and can not be judged guilty of testing.

³¹⁴ Vaccarella 2007 has traced the use of the false pericope argument in other early Christian literature, for example in the *Didascalia* and the *Letter of Ptolemy to Flora*.

demonic responsibility for evil, where the rabbis prefer a reified, quasi-demonic anthropology embodied by the evil *yetzer*.

CHAPTER 8

Rabbinic Traditions and Demonic Anthropology

*Do not bring me to sin,
and not to transgression and not to disgrace
and not to נסיון
And the evil יצר shall not rule me*

B. Berachot 60b

From the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies we now move into the complex traditions of the rabbinic sources. As would be expected from traditions that ostensibly range from the 2nd through the 6th century, the rabbinic literature provide us with a wide array of approaches to the question of divine character, cosmic evil, anthropology, and exegetical principles for explaining difficult biblical texts. Here we find a more fully developed concept of the evil *yetzer* as a reified agent of testing. The rabbis used this anthropological concept to mitigate divine responsibility and internalise cosmic evil, without reverting to the volunteerism and rejection of the supernatural as seen in Ben Sira and Philo while also rejecting the cosmic dualism such as seen in Qumran. The *dramatis personae* of this highly developed theological cosmology provide a unique and highly flexible biblical hermeneutic.

8.1. *The Divine Council and the Rabbinic Courtroom*

Kensky has detailed how the courtroom provides a vehicle for rabbinic discussion on the nature of God, man, evil, the role of Torah and numerous other topics.³¹⁵ Commonly the courtroom scene is used to explain perceived gaps in Scripture, placed in the margins of biblical accounts for exegetical clarification as a universally-agreed metaphor to clarify and justify divine action.³¹⁶

The most common courtroom scene found in the rabbinic texts is that of the Job narrative, which provides a common framework for discussing the various cosmic roles and responsibilities. For example, in tractate *Beshallah* 7 in the *Mek. de-R. Ishmael* (ed. Lauterbach) Rabbi Pappias and Rabbi Akiva debate the righteousness of God's unilateral judgements:

Rabbi Pappias said, 'But he is at one with himself (וְהוּא בְּאֶחָד) and who can turn him (Job 23:13)? He judges all that come into the world by himself and there is no one to argue against his work'. R. Akiva said to him, 'that is enough for you, Pappias'. He said to him: 'how do you interpret "but he is at one with himself, and who can turn him"? He said to him: 'there is no possible argument against the words of Him who spoke and the world came into being, for every word is in accordance with truth, and every decision in accordance with justice.'

Pappias applies a statement on the divine unity from Job 23:13 and applies it to the courtroom, concluding that the cosmic imbalance of power removes the possibility for a fair trial. In the canonical chapter Job vacillates between optimistic hope that God the Judge would agree with his defence and the stark realisation that within the monotheistic system

³¹⁵Kensky 2010, 290–300.

³¹⁶Kensky 2010, 297.

there exists no recourse to appeal. In rebuttal, R. Akiva rejects the critique against the unjustness of God and his heavenly court, arguing instead that God's decisions are always true and just. Nevertheless, this text is seen to embed a certain discomfort with the divine economy. A similar critique occurs in *Gen. Rab.* 93:11, where Rabbi Eleazar b. Azariah ponders the disadvantages faced by humans in the divine lawcourt. As Joseph's brothers were powerless to counter the unjust claims made against them by their brother, so humans are powerless against a God who is both 'judge and prosecutor, who sits on the throne in judgment'. Previously in *Gen. Rab.* 49:9 R. Judah argues, similarly to R. Pappias in *Mek., Beshallah* 7 above, that since God is 'בְּאֵחָד' there exists no one to offset his judgements.

This recognition of an imbalance of power within the divine courtroom frequently creates the need for a separate advocate. For example, in *Pesiq. de-R. Kahana* 23:7 the petitioner must appeal to the merits of his fathers as 'law-pleaders' for the defendant before the divine tribunal. Other examples include Elijah, as in *Eccl. Rab.* 4:1 where R. Judah comments on Eccl 4:1 that Elijah will 'sit and present a defence' after which the 'fathers will be saved on the merits of their children'.³¹⁷

Rarely, the rabbinic sources will attempt to mitigate the problem of divine unity by providing a full slate of courtroom characters. For example, *Exod. Rab.* 18:5 shows a keen awareness of the need for a complete courtroom as it presents God as judge, Michael as advocate, and Samael as accuser.³¹⁸ Fishbane also notes the development of the 'Attribute of Justice' (מִדַּת הַדִּין) who functions as a sort of prosecutorial figure in *Lam. Rab.* 1:41 and

³¹⁷Other common advocates include Moses, as in tractate *Bo'* of the *Mek. de-R. Ishmael*; Abraham, as in *Lam. Rab.* 27:2.

³¹⁸Kensky 2010, 321 argues that this full courtroom is not common in the rabbinic texts, though noting the frequent role of Satan as prosecutor as in *b. Yoma* 19b–20a.

possibly earlier in *t. Ber.* 6:1.³¹⁹ At times we also find angelic prosecutors, as in *Midr. Ps.* 8:2.

In such texts Kensky notes an underlying tension in the rabbinic economy of divine justice. She points especially to *b. Abod. Zar.* 2a–3b, where we find one of the fullest manifestations of the divine courtroom in all of rabbinic literature. The scene is that of the future trial that awaits the nations of the world, but as God sits on the tribunal seat the tractate rotates the courtroom scenario so that God is really the defendant and the reader is the judge of whether the heavenly proceedings are in fact just. Though the general conclusion of the rabbinic sources is that God is in fact just, more than any of our previous sources the rabbis show a willingness to engage with the question of divine justice and the equality of the cosmic order.

8.2. *Satan and Demons as Cosmic Agents*

Within the rabbinic law court Satan operates as an angelic, prosecutorial figure responsible for temptation. In *b. Yoma* 20a Satan is depicted (per R. Bar Hama) as the prosecutor, and in *b. Sanh.* 107a R. Judah casts Satan as the provoking agent in God's test of David:

Said R. Judah: One should never put himself to the test, for lo, David, king of Israel, put himself to the test and he stumbled. David said before God, 'Lord of the world, on what account do people say, "God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob", but they do not say, "God of David"?' God replied, 'They endured a test for me, while you have not endured a test for me.' He said before him, 'Lord of the world, here I am. Test me.' For it is said, 'Examine me, O Lord, and try me' (Ps 26:1). He said to him, 'I shall test you, and I shall do for you something that I did not do for them. I did not inform them [what I was doing], while I shall tell you what I am going to do. I shall try you with a matter having to do with sexual rela-

³¹⁹Cf. Fishbane 2003, 125ff.

tions.' And then 'and it came to pass in an eventide that David arose from off his bed' (2 Sam 11:2).

...

And David walked on the roof of the king's palace, and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself, and the woman was very beautiful to look upon (2 Sam 11:2):

Bath Sheba was shampooing her hair behind a screen. Satan came to [David] and appeared to him in the form of a bird. He shot an arrow at [the screen] and broke it down, so that she stood out in the open, and he saw her. . . . That is in line with what is written: 'You have tried my heart, you have visited me in the night, you have tried me and shall find nothing; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress' (Ps 17:3).³²⁰

Here in *b. Sanh.* 107a Satan substitutes for God as the divine agent for testing.³²¹ In *b. Ned.* 32a this blurring of the lines between the divine and the satanic occurs when reading Exod 4:25, where Satan takes the place of the Angel of the Lord.³²²

Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel says, 'It was not our Lord, Moses, whom Satan wanted to kill, but the child: "Then Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son and cast it at his feet and said, Surely a blood groom you are to me"' (Exod 4:25).

Whereas Satan appears to be a specific messenger for evil within the divine economy, in contrast demons are omnipresent, polymorphous creatures responsible for all kinds of sickness and illness. In *b. Ber.* 6a according to R. Abbaye, 'demons are more numerous than we and stand around us like a ridge around a field.' R. Huna agrees: 'At the left hand of each one of us is a thousand of them, and at the right hand, ten thousand.' In *b.*

³²⁰This and the following translations of the Babylonian Talmud are from the Soncino edition unless otherwise noted.

³²¹Cf. *b. Ber.* 60a; *b. Ket.* 8b; *b. Git.* 52a.

³²²This reading is similar to that of *Jub.* 48.2, noted above.

Shabb. 109a demons are responsible for ailments. These lines are not always so clear, however, as angelic, satanic, and demonic forces can all be considered agents of testing. For example, *b. Ber.* 50b–51a describes both ‘a company of demons’ and ‘a band of destroying angels’ that lie in wait for a man to test him.

Whereas R. Simeon concluded that Satan was the divine agent in *b. Ned.* 32a above, R. Judah comes to a different conclusion. A further exposition on *b. Ned.* 32a continues:

Expounded R. Judah bar Bizna, ‘When our lord, Moses, neglected the rite of circumcision, anger and wrath came and swallowed him up, leaving only his legs sticking out. Forthwith: “Then Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son and cast it at his feet and said, Surely a blood groom you are to me (Exod 4:25). Forthwith, he left him alone. At that moment Moses wanted to kill them: ‘Cease from wrath and anger’ (Ps 37:8). Some say that he did slay wrath: ‘I have no wrath’ (Isa 27:4). But isn’t it written, ‘For I was afraid of wrath and anger’ (Deut 9:19)?

R. Judah proceeds to examine whether the angel of the Lord was in fact Satan, and concludes (against R. Simeon) that the agents were actually anthropological impulses, ‘anger and wrath’. Throughout the rabbinic literature we find a similar debate on whether evil is a satanic or an anthropological force. This ambiguity is made explicit in *b. B. Bat.* 15–16, where an extended debate takes place on the roles of cosmic and anthropological agents. In *b. B. Bat.* 16a R. Simeon b. Laqish argues that ‘Satan, the evil *yetzer*, and the angel of death are one and the same.’³²³ The biblical proof at *b. B. Bat.* 15–16 is provided by an assimilation of Job and Genesis: that ‘Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord’ (Job 2:7); that

³²³Rashi’s commentary on this passage in the Talmud explains this passage to mean that the adversary of humans fulfils three tasks. 1. The evil inclination creates confusion in the minds of people to cause them to transgress the will of God. 2. Then Satan prosecutes the violators before the heavenly court. 3. Then the angel of death executes the judgment by delivering harm or death to the accused. Cf. *b. Qidd.* 81a–b on Satan and the evil *yetzer* as agents of temptation.

‘every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually’ (Gen 6:5), and that the angel of death had the power to take Job’s life (Job 2:6). A similar reading occurs in a homily at *Gen. Rab.* 89:1 (ed. Theodor-Albeck, 1086). The homily begins with the statement by R. Laqish (= *b. B. Bat.* 16a) that ‘Satan is the *yetzer hara* is the angel of death’. The remainder of the homily focuses on the Satan of the Job narratives. R. Laqish identifies Satan as a demonic being, but R. Johanan and others defend Satan as God’s messenger: R. Johanan said: ‘[Satan was] like a man who is incited by others’; R. Isaac said: ‘Satan’s grief was stronger than Job’s’; R. Levi said: ‘Satan was acting for the sake of Heaven.’³²⁴ This elevation of the human *yetzer* to a demonic, adversarial role occurs throughout the rabbinic literature, and it is to this anthropological conception of evil to which we now turn.

8.3. *The Evil Yetzer in Rabbinic Anthropology*

The focus of rabbinic anthropology is on the *yetzer*, a concept found throughout the various rabbinic strata but with varying descriptions. In a few rabbinic traditions this *yetzer* appears similar to that of Ben Sira, closely aligned with the biblical model, portraying a single *yetzer* as the created seat of free will within a person. A majority of rabbinic sources, however, portray this single *yetzer* as fundamentally evil, a reified, pseudo-demonic phenomenon that both resides within the human and yet attempts to kill it. Finally, a few sources ascribe to the human two *yetzarim*, one good and one evil that war against each other within the human heart.³²⁵

³²⁴ Cf. Mack 2005, 25.

³²⁵ Cf. Rosen-Zvi 2011, and extensively in what follows.

8.3.1. *The Single Yetzer and the School of R. Akiva*

On the one hand, the Tannaitic school of R. Akiva interprets the *yetzer* with general restraint, adhering closer to the limited biblical model of a single human impulse embedded within the person. Akiva's school comments on the *yetzer* in only three places: *Sifra Kedoshim* 3:9 (ed. Weiss 90b) on Lev 19:2, a homily in the *Mek. de-R. Shimon bar Yohai* on Exod 34:24, and in *Sifre Deut.* 222 (ed. Finkelstein, 255).³²⁶ In these places the *yetzer* indicates nothing more than the normal human tendency toward self-interest. There is no mention of a good or evil *yetzer*, only a general reference to the neutral biblical entity with a special emphasis on human choice.

8.3.2. *The Single Yetzer and the School of R. Ishmael*

In contrast to the Akivan tradition, the Tannaitic school of R. Ishmael portrays the *yetzer* as a reified, self-aware entity that actively battles against human religious duty. For example, both *b. Ber.* 61a and *b. Erub.* 18a state in the name of the third-century Palestinian sage Rabbi Simon:

‘What is *vayyitzer* “and the Lord formed?” (Gen 2:7)?’ Rabbi Shimon b. Pazzi said: “Woe unto me from my creator (*yozri*) and woe unto me from my *yetzer*”.

Similarly in *Ruth Rab.* 82:

This man, as long as he lives he is a slave of two masters; a slave of his creator (*yotzer*) and a slave of his *yetzer*. When he does the will of his *yotzer* he makes his *yetzer* angry and when he does the will of his *yetzer* he makes his *yotzer* angry.³²⁷

³²⁶Rosen-Zvi 2011, 16.

³²⁷Safrai and Flusser have argued that these sources are different versions of the same early homily, which they posited as the basis of Jesus' saying: ‘No servant can be a slave of two masters’ (Matt 6:24; Luke

Furthermore, this *yetzer* begins to usurp classical satanic roles as the principal provocateur of human sinfulness. This now-evil *yetzer* is no longer a natural disposition or a simple embodiment of human desires, but a reified entity residing within humans and enticing them against Torah. One example of R. Ishmael's perspective on human interiority under trial takes shape in several homilies that present the *yetzer* as a cunning, pseudo-demonic enemy that attempts to deceive through faulty appeal to halahkic law. A tannaitic homily on Ruth 3:6–15 in *Sifre Num.* 88 (ed. Horowitz) reworks the famously ambiguous erotic story from the Biblical narrative as a dialogue, not as between Boaz and Ruth, but between Boaz and his evil *yetzer*:

As the Lord lives! Lie down until morning (Ruth 3:13)— [Boaz's] evil *yetzer* sat and importuned (ימנערי) him the entire night. The evil yetzer said to him: 'You are unmarried and you want a wife, and she is unmarried and she wants a husband' (teaching that a wife is acquired by sexual intercourse). 'So go and have intercourse with her, and she will be your wife.' He took an oath against his evil *yetzer*: 'As the Lord lives!—I shall not touch her'; and to the woman he said: 'Lie down until morning.'

The homily is based on Boaz's parting words from Ruth: 'If he will act as a redeemer, good! Let him redeem. But if he does not want to act as a redeemer for you, I will do so myself, as the Lord lives! Lie down until morning' (Ruth 3:13). However, in *Sifre Num.* the vow is taken to bind Boaz' own *yetzer*. In this text,³²⁸ the *yetzer ha-ra* approaches as an

16:13). They then connected this statement to the dualistic war tradition seen in Qumran and related texts (esp. 2 Cor 6:14–15), in which a battle is waged between God and Belial or between the Prince of Light and the Prince of Darkness. So Safrai 1988, 169–72.

³²⁸Parallels to this homily appear in *Sifre Deut.* 33 (ed. Finkelstein, 59–60) and *Sifre Deut.* 43 (ed. Finkelstein, 96). For the attribution of *Sifre Deut.* 31–36, 41–47 (on Deut 6 and 11) to the school of R. Ishmael, see Goldberg 1983, 14; Kahana 1987, 30–31.

external power and sits beside Boaz to entice him the entire night. The *yetzer* does not simply entice Boaz to sin; rather, it speaks in the voice of a learned Torah scholar and sets forth a halakhic claim. After describing the legal facts cogently ('you are unmarried... and she is unmarried'), it then draws the logical and persuasive legal argument (possibly drawn from *m. Qidd.* 1:1) that intercourse provided a viable alternative to the redemption drama at the city gate the next morning.³²⁹ The evil *yetzer* here is no base passion, but an enticer who uses sly halakhic arguments. Indeed, so greatly does this argument importune Boaz that he is incapable of contending against his *yetzer* and must bind himself using the vow 'as the Lord lives'.³³⁰

The reason that the *yetzer* is so dangerous is that it uses arguments representing legitimate problems in both the legal (halakhic) and nonlegal (aggadic) texts. The *yetzer* proves capable of provoking its host by creating 'pretexts of permission' (אמיתות היתר) based on rabbinic doctrines.³³¹ In *Sifre Deut.* 33 (ed. Finkelstein, 59–60), a number of similar borderline cases of forbidden acts are attributed to the *yetzer*, including Abraham in Gen 14:22, Boaz again in Ruth 3:13; David in 1 Sam 26:10, and Elisha in 2 Kgs 5:16. All of these stories speak of borderline forbidden acts which could be justified through legal argumentation, but which the biblical heroes avoid by binding their *yetzer*.³³² As in *Sifre*

³²⁹Indeed, later rabbis would have to refute similar argumentation in their own students. In the Babylonian Talmud, Rav, a third century Babylonian sage, is said in *b. Yebam.* 52a and *b. Qidd.* 12b to have flogged disciples who betrothed wives using intercourse.

³³⁰On the danger of engaging with the *yetzer* cf. Rosen-Zvi 2008, 9–12, who notes the teaching that one should not engage in dialogue with one's *yetzer* is found throughout the rabbinic literature.

³³¹The *yetzer* as legal arguer is discussed extensively in Rosen-Zvi 2009b, 121.

³³²Note the consistent abjuration of the *yetzer*, by Abraham in Gen 14:22: 'I lift up my hand to the Lord'; by Boaz in Ruth 3:13: 'As the Lord lives! Lie down until morning'; by David in 1 Sam 26:10: 'As the Lord lives, the Lord Himself will strike him down'; and by Elisha in 2 Kings 5:16: 'As the Lord lives, whom I serve, I will not take anything'. The pretext of permission in these legal cases includes Boaz's relationship with the unmarried Ruth, Abraham's rightful share in the spoils of war, David's opportunity to kill Saul in self-

Num., these struggles with the evil *yetzer* can be remedied by taking an oath in the name of the Lord. In all of these tests the *yetzer* attempts to deceive the person through sophisticated argumentation. Rather than a base passion or inclination, the *yetzer* becomes an active agent of deception who administers the test.

Moving from the Tannaitic to the Amoraic generations, R. Ishmael's school has apparently won the 'debate' with R. Akiva. In the Palestinian literature such as the Jerusalem Talmud, *Gen. Rab.*, and *Lev. Rab.*, the *yetzer* becomes even more central to rabbinic anthropology.³³³ The *yetzer* becomes an active thief, a trickster stronger than man (*Gen. Rab.* 54:1), actively tasked with dragging humans to sin such as murder (*Gen. Rab.* 20:7), idolatry (*t. Abot Zar.* 6:17; *y. Ned.* 9:1 [41b]), and other vices. The vast majority of occurrences of the *yetzer* in the Amoraic literature describes a single *yetzer* rather than the two-*yetzarim* model.³³⁴ In the Babylonian literature we find a similar pattern, but with a few modifications. There is a greater positivism on the human ability to gain control over one's *yetzer*,³³⁵ as well as a more pronounced emphasis on the sexual aspects of the *yetzer*.³³⁶ Even in the Bavli, however, only four of the eighty sources that mention the *yetzer* describe two *yetzarim*: *b. Ber.* 5a, 61a; *b. Shabb.* 63b; *b. Ned.* 32b.

defence, and Elisha's right to collect wages for healing Naaman. Cf. *Lev. Rab.* 23:11, *Num. Rab.* 15:16, where Joseph, Boaz, and David are mentioned again as adjuring the *yetzer*.

³³³For example *Gen. Rab.* alone contains twenty-five homilies on the *yetzer*, more than in the entire tannaitic corpus.

³³⁴3 out of 55 sources in Palestinian literature cite a dual-*yetzer*, as counted by Rosen-Zvi 2008, 21. A notable exception occurs in *Gen. Rab.* 9:7 (attributed to R. Samuel), where the evil *yetzer* becomes quite good.

³³⁵For example, the prayers for protection against the *yetzer* in *y. Ber.* 4:2, 7b and *b. Ber.* 16b are virtually identical with the exception of the Yerushalmi's comment: 'you know we have no power to resist it.' In contrast, the Bavli allows for the complete domination of the *yetzer* (e.g., 'when [Israel] is engaged in Torah and good deeds, they are handed their *yetzer* not handed to their *yetzer*' [*b. Ab. Zar.* 5b]; 'rulers are those are those who rule the evil *yetzer*' [*b. B. Mesia.* 32b]).

³³⁶Cf. Satlow 1995, 158; Rosen-Zvi 2009b, 264–281.

The Amoraic period also extends the *yetzer*'s cosmic function. Within especially the Babylonian literature the *yetzer* is held responsible for not only personal sin but also as a general source for cosmic evil: 'As long as the evil *yetzer* is in this world, [there is] darkness and gloom in this world' (*Gen. Rab.* 89:1, ed. Theodor-Albeck 1086). It is here that we find the *yetzer* identified with a demonic role, as Resh Laqish claims that 'Satan is the *yetzer hara* is the angel of death'.

8.3.3. *The Double Yetzer*

Adjacent to the majority perspective of a single *yetzer* in the rabbis, there exists, famously, a minority position that cites a double *yetzer*.³³⁷ In Tannaitic literature this position appears in *m. Ber.* 9:5 (and its parallels in *t. Ber.* 6:7, *Sifre Deut.* 32 [ed. Finkelstein, 55]), as well as in *Sifra, Shemini* 1 (ed. Weiss, 43d). The Mishna passage reads Deut 6:5 'You shall love the Lord your God with all (בכל) your heart' as referring to 'both your *yetzarim*, the good *yetzer* and the evil *yetzer*'. This multiplicity within the heart must be united in service to God. A similar situation is discussed in *Sifra Shemini* 1 (ed. Weiss 46a), part of R. Ishmael's *Mek. Demiluim*.³³⁸ The *Sifra* passage comments on Lev 9:6 'This is what the Lord has commanded that you do', commenting: 'remove that evil inclination from your hearts, so that all of you will be as one in awe and of one mind in service to the Omnipresent. Just as He is singular (יחיד) in the world, so let your service be singular (מיוחדת) before Him. For

³³⁷Scholars often point to double-lettered words (לכבך in Deut 5:5 or ייצר in Gen 2:7) as indicating a doubleness within the internal constitution. However, homilies expounding the 'double bet' in לכב appear rarely and from the later amoraic generations and in the stammain, e.g., *y. Ber.* 9:5 [14b], *Gen. Rab.* 48 (ed. Theodor-Albeck, 489). Similarly on the double yod in ייצר cf. *Gen. Rab.* 14:4 (ed. Theodor-Albeck, 128). Despite the limited evidence, this late and infrequent usage forms the core description in almost all scholarly discussions of the *yetzer* whether Second Temple or rabbinic, e.g., Porter 1901, 110; Moore 1924, 483; Schechter 1961, 243; Thompson 1977, 51; Cohen Stuart 1984a, 10.

³³⁸On the context of this passage, cf. Shammah 2008, 114–15.

it is said: “Cut away, therefore, the thickening about your hearts and stiffen your necks no more” (Deut 10:16). Here, as in *m. Ber.*, the *yetzer* creates a duality in the human condition and prevents the singularity necessary for proper service (probably drawing on language from the *Shema*).³³⁹ Though both the Mishna and the *Mek. Demiluim* tractates attempt to resolve the problem of a perceived duality caused by the *yetzer*, their solutions are different. The Mishna recommends mobilizing the evil *yetzer* in the service of God. In contrast, the *Mek. Demiluim* identifies the evil *yetzer* as a stumbling block for worship which must be destroyed, not through self-reconciliation, but rather by excision from the heart.³⁴⁰

Excursus 1

The Development of the Rabbinic Yetzer

Various explanations have been offered as to the diversity of opinion within the rabbinic schools and their development from within post-biblical thought. Daniel Boyarin suggests two competing models in rabbinic literature: a dualistic model of two *yetzarim* inherited from Second Temple influences such as the Community Rule, 1QS, and the *Testament of Asher*; the second a dialectic model containing a single *yetzer*, neither good nor bad but base and potentially dangerous that rose from within Akiva’s school against R. Ishmael’s school.³⁴¹ Rosen-Zvi modifies Boyarin,

³³⁹On the ideal of ‘singleness of heart’ in ancient Jewish literature, see Kee 1978, 265; Winston 1979, 101; Flusser 1988, 486. A similar idea appears in Matt 5:48: ‘Be perfect (τέλειοι), therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect (τέλειος).’ The Greek τέλειος, used in LXX to translate the Hebrew word תמיים (so Beare 1981, 163) may show a close association with the rabbinic statements about the desired unity of the heart. Cf. *y. Ber.* 4:2, ‘that you vanquish the *yetzer* from before us and subdue it, so that we may make Your will as our own will with a whole heart’ (בלבב שלם).

³⁴⁰Cf. Rosen-Zvi 2011, 27, 86.

³⁴¹Cf. Boyarin 1995, 63. Against Boyarin, cf. van der Horst 2006, 64.

arguing that R. Akiva's homilies are not in reactionary opposition to R. Ishmael, but rather that these two schools adhered to two previous lines of thought. R. Akiva continues the simpler biblical concept, similar to that found in Sirach. In contrast, R. Ishmael's school follows a model closer to Qumran, while rejecting both Sirach's theories of free will and also the dualistic and deterministic explanations of sin seen in Qumran. While Akiva's homilies left the biblical *yetzer* relatively intact, Ishmael's school made the *yetzer* the center point of its anthropology, developing and reifying it as an active agent beyond simple human free will. Ishmael's school could therefore explain the human tendency to sin without compromising human agency.³⁴² In the Amoriac and especially Babylonian sources Rosen-Zvi sees a greater amount of commonality with the cosmic roles of pre-rabbinic sources. Compare, for example, the role of 4 *Ezra*'s 'evil heart' (*cor malum*) as the source of both the cosmic and national war against Israel while simultaneously residing inside the human body (on which see further in Excursus 2 below). Rosen-Zvi argues that these cosmic roles attributed to the *yetzer* are evidence not of apocalyptic themes finding late traction within the Amoraic period, but rather of a conscious rejection of such themes by the earlier tannaitic sources in an attempt at emphasising the effects of the *yetzer* on the individual rather than on the cosmic, collective, or national levels as had been argued at Qumran.³⁴³ In Rosen-Zvi's argument, only once the *yetzer* had been accepted as an anthropologically centralised, reified, and pseudo-demonic entity does the *yetzer*'s cosmic role reappear within the rabbinic tradition in a manner that echoes the roles of Beliar, Mastema, and Satan for both cosmic and personal sins, though without returning to a purely external supernatural answer for the source of evil. As the outlier, the double *yetzarim* in *m. Ber.* can be explained as both providing a dualistic model of the good and bad *yetzarim*, but also a dialectic approach in which the *yetzer* can be enlisted into God's service. The internalised, double *yetzer* in the Mishna results from uniting the external cosmic dualism of evil as seen in Qumran with the internal

³⁴²So Rosen-Zvi 2011, 63; on R. Ishmael's school with Qumran, see Yadin 2003a, 130–49

³⁴³*Pace* Longenecker 1991, 271–93.

anthropological *yetzer*.³⁴⁴

Finally, where Rosen-Zvi sees the development of R. Ishmael's rabbinic *yetzer* as an unprecedented reaction against Qumranic cosmology, Menachem Kister argues that precedent for all of the various parts of the rabbinic *yetzer* (pseudo-demonic, causer of evil, defeated by Torah, the seat of demonic influence, etc.) can be found scattered through *Jubilees*, Ben Sira, and Qumran.³⁴⁵ While Kister acknowledges that no single Second Temple source provides a complete parallel to the Talmudic *yetzer*, he points out that well before the Rabbis we can trace an 'energetic to-and-fro between an external-demonic perception of desires and evil and an internal perception.'³⁴⁶ Whether the *yetzer* functions as the actual bodily focus of demonic activity (so *Jubilees*) or only as the rhetoric of demonology to signify human volunteerism (so Ben Sira), by the 2nd century BC this external/internal debate is in full swing, and by the period of the rabbis we have a full spectrum of opinions within Judaism capable of addressing this relationship between the external-demonic and the internal-psychological. The key difference between Kister and Rosen-Zvi is whether or not the rabbinic term developed in the context of conflict. Where Rosen-Zvi sees the development of a pseudo-demonic anthropological entity as due to a rejection of the Qumranic model of cosmic dualism, Kister sees all of the various dynamics that contributed to the creation of the rabbinic *yetzer* recorded over the hundreds of years of post-biblical Jewish literature, not simply limited as a response to Qumranic dualism.³⁴⁷

³⁴⁴Further on this question, treating the other appearances of the *yetzer* in the Mishna, cf. Rosen-Zvi 2007; Rosen-Zvi 2009a, 28–49. Other passages that present the dual *yetzer* include *Gen. Rab.* 9:7 (ed. Theodor Albeck, 72), presenting a dualistic model of two *yetzarim* alongside a dialectic one in which the evil *yetzer* can be nonetheless designated as 'very good' due to its positive effects.

³⁴⁵Kister 2010a.

³⁴⁶Kister 2010a, 268.

³⁴⁷Kister 2010a, 268–9.

8.3.4. *The Yetzer as Cosmic Enemy*

With this variegated picture of rabbinic cosmology in view, we are more equipped to describe the various roles and responsibilities of rabbinic probation. Within rabbinic cosmology, God rules in the heavenly court, acting through a variety of agents. External cosmic agents are prolific, from the angelic court, to the Satanic prosecutor, to the demonic forces, with various perspectives as to how these supernatural forces interconnect.

What seems to be clear, however, is that while Satan assumes the prosecutorial role before the divine court, the *yetzer* assumes many of the cosmic powers elsewhere attributed to Satan in Second Temple literature. This dynamic is especially the case when the *yetzer* assumes the role of enemy to Torah observance and religious faithfulness. This is apparent in the homily on Deut 11:16 in *Sifre Deut.* 43 (ed. Finkelstein, 96) which changes the biblically passive language ('take heed to yourself, lest your heart *be lured away* [יפתה לבבכם]) into the agency of the evil *yetzer* ('take care, lest the evil *yetzer* *deceive* [יטעה] you). While the canonical passage warns that the heart might go astray, the midrash changes the cosmic agent: the heart is no longer to blame, for it is being deceived by the *yetzer* that resides therein.³⁴⁸ The *yetzer*, from its perch on the human heart, becomes the master of the body and its various organs. Thus a midrash in *ARN* reads 'the evil *yetzer* dwells on the opening of the heart. When he wants to perform a sin, he compels/bends all the organs that he is lord over.'³⁴⁹ It is therefore not the body itself that leads to sin, but sin working in man through the body as the *yetzer* rules over its organs. Kister argues here that the rabbis, by linking the body but separating the actual members from sin, are able to exempt bodily existence itself

³⁴⁸ Cf. Rosen-Zvi 2009b, 124.

³⁴⁹ *ARN* version B, ch. 17 (ed. Schechter 36).

from evil.³⁵⁰

With the *yetzer* functioning in the role of private and public enemy number one, how does one defeat something that resides within the heart? Through all branches of rabbinic thought, the answer to this question was the power of the Torah. As the image of the *yetzer* developed, so did the protective techniques against it. Tannaitic literature mentions three main techniques: adjuration in the name of God (as in the example of Boaz above), prayer (especially of the apotropaic sort), and, most commonly, the study of Torah. The Torah was to be inscribed upon the heart, where its presence functions as a talisman to negate the presence of the *yetzer*.³⁵¹ Thus, R. Ishmael taught regarding the *yetzer*: ‘if this repulsive one assails you, then drag him to the study hall’.³⁵² In *Gen. Rab.* 22:6, R. Hanina b. Papa and R. Simon ‘weaponise’ the Torah against the *yetzer*: ‘If your *yetzer* tries to drive you to frivolity, throw the words of Torah at it like a spear. R. Simon says: If your *yetzer* tries to drive you to frivolity, gladden it with words of Torah [as it says] gladden the *yetzer* (Isa 26:3)’.³⁵³ Compare *b. Qidd.* 30b, which presents the evil *yetzer* as a wound which must be ‘bandaged’ with Torah study. Thus in *b. B. Bat.* 16a in the context of Job’s trials: ‘If God created the evil *yetzer*, He also created the Torah as its antidote’. Finally, an Aramaic poem from the Byzantine period presents Boaz as a sage who overpowers the *yetzer* through the study of Torah during his night with Ruth:

The righteous one put on his clothing
And conquered his evil *yetzer*

³⁵⁰Cf. Kister 2010a, 271 and the various passages cited there.

³⁵¹See Rosen-Zvi 2011, 142 n. 27.

³⁵²In *b. Qidd.* 30b; also in *b. Suk.* 52b.

³⁵³Ed. Theodor-Albeck 210, in the context of a midrash on Gen 4:7.

And imprisoned it until the morning
And occupied himself with the Torah, sweeter than honey.³⁵⁴

Due to the notion of the embedded *yetzer* causing divisions in Torah faithfulness, the concern that the heart be 'unified' appears throughout the rabbinic sources. As *Sifra Shemini* I (ed. Weiss 43d) states, 'Remove that evil *yetzer* from your hearts, so that all of you will be as one in awe and of one mind to serve God. Just as He is singular in the world, so let your service be singular before Him.' This concept of both internal and external unity is also seen in *Sifre Deut.* 32 (ed. Finkelstein 53) in which Jacob's sons tell him: 'Just as your heart is not divided, so is our heart not divided . . . but the Lord is our God, the Lord is one' (Deut 6:4). The theological unity found in statements such as 'just as He is singular' and 'the Lord is one' provides the basis for internal and external unity within the community.³⁵⁵ What should be recognised and emphasised here and in what has proceeded is that the *yetzer* itself does not operate within a duality, but rather creates a double loyalty within the heart. It is *this* (biblical) duality, and not the double *yetzer* which must be guarded against, with a unified heart the result of vanquishing the evil *yetzer*.³⁵⁶

8.4. Rabbinic Hermeneutics of Probation

As is clear from the preceding section, rabbinic cosmology is deeply dependent on a particular hermeneutical model, and *vice versa*. The cosmic order is addressed throughout the rabbinic corpus, but I will focus the following section on two examples: the *kivyakhol* texts, and the intertextual hermeneutic that assimilated the Job and Abraham probationary

³⁵⁴From Sokoloff 1999, 106–7.

³⁵⁵For the theme of singleness of heart in Ancient Judaism, see Rosen-Zvi 2006a, 65–94.

³⁵⁶Or, rarely as in *m. Ber.* 9.5, the result of turning the evil *yetzer* to good.

narratives.

8.4.1. *Kivyakhol* Texts and Divine Intermediation

Michael Fishbane in his volume *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking* has explored how the *kivyakhol* citations explicate or clarify potentially rabbinic doctrines.³⁵⁷ The expression *kivyakhol* is inserted to signal a rereading of particular texts with potentially negative theological connotations. Often, the rereading involves an appeal to the divine court.

For example, in *Gen. Rab.* 12:1 R. Huna discusses the limited nature of human knowledge about God. R. Huna turns to the Genesis protology for his proof-text, and in the process rereads the common phrase ‘he made him’ as ‘they made him’.³⁵⁸

Even that which has already been done (asuhu). It is not written here ‘he made him’ but ‘they made him’— *kivyakhol*: the Supreme King of kings, (the Holy One, blessed be He), and His court, who are appointed over every one of your limbs, and set you upon your created form: ‘He made you and established you’ (Deut 32: 6).

Here the *kivyakhol* expression is used to interject a clarification: rather than God himself creating humankind, R. Huna interposes that ‘the king and his court’ made them.³⁵⁹ A similar reading in *Exod. Rab.* 4:3 clarifies the roles in the heavenly court and limits divine participation in evil.

³⁵⁷Fishbane 2003, 330–336.

³⁵⁸For this and the following paragraphs on the *kivyakhol* texts I follow closely the discussion in Fishbane 2003, 330–336.

³⁵⁹A similar argument can be seen behind Philo’s intermediaries in chapter six above. Against R. Huna’s answer, however, other rabbis apparently saw in this reading a potentially heretical dualism, and in *Ecc. Rab.* 2.12 this solution is raised in a different reading of Deut 32:6 but expanded, to clarify that join creational acts is possible within a valid theological framework; so Fishbane 2003, 332.

R. Eleazar says: ‘Va-YHWH is a God of truth’ (Jer. 10:10). R. Eleazar says: ‘Wherever Va-YHWH is said—(this means) *kivyakhbol*: He and His court. And the paradigm case (*binyan ‘ab*) for all others such as this is “Ve-YHWH spoke evil against you” (1 Kings 22: 23).

Exodus Rabba uses the *vav* before the divine name to assert the actions of God and his court, and then applies this to cases when God appears to participate in evil.³⁶⁰ This same interpretive principle is applied to Abraham’s trial in Gen 22 in *Gen. Rab.* 55:4, where R. Lazar cites Gen 22: 1: ‘*Ve-ha-Elohim*’ to read that the divine court was involved in the testing of Abraham.³⁶¹ This also explains the cosmology of Job 1:21 (‘*Ve-YHWH* has taken away’) in *Lev. Rab.* 24.2.

As Fishbane explains, the term *kivyakhbol* functions as an indication that a traditional reading is to be imparted, though one not perhaps indicated directly in Scripture. The teaching to be imparted above is that of the rabbinic theological cosmology, in which the *vav* functions as a midrashic sign to signal the co-involvement of the heavenly court with God.³⁶²

8.4.2. *The Probations of Job and Abraham*

The rabbinic cosmology is on full display when discussing the prominent narratives of Abraham and Job. Similar to *Jubilees* and other rewritten narratives from the Second Temple period, the rabbis combine Abraham’s and Job’s tests to limit divine involvement, inject mitigating supernatural agents into the mix, and elevate the best anthropological

³⁶⁰The same reading appears in *Num. Rab.* 3:4.

³⁶¹Similarly, cf. *Gen. Rab.* 51.2 on Gen 19: 24 and the destruction of Sodom.

³⁶²Fishbane 2003, 330–336.

aspects of each primary character. What differentiates these reworked narratives from the earlier genre are the shifts that occur within rabbinic cosmology, especially the evil *yetzer* as it conspires with Satan to entice the tested person.

8.4.2.1. The *Yetzer* in the *Aqedah*

The Jerusalem Talmud applies its *yetzer*-oriented cosmology to Abraham's trial in Gen 22. R. Bibi Abba says in the name of R. Yohanan:

Abraham said before the Holy One, blessed be he: 'Lord of the worlds! You know that when you told me to offer up Isaac my son I had a good answer to give you: Yesterday you told me "through Isaac shall your descendants be named" (Gen 12:21). Now you tell me to offer him there as a burnt offering (Gen 22:2). But I did not [give you that answer], but overcame my *yetzer* and did your will.'³⁶³

Abraham plays an interesting game of courtroom politics. God's request that Abraham sacrifice Isaac is obviously against his previous promise that 'through Isaac shall your descendants be named'. In the following passage, however, Abraham will ask that God 'be the advocate' of his descendants, and so he leverages his previous silence under trial. As Abraham stood silent in defence of divine integrity (despite the efforts of his *yetzer*), now God should stand as Israel's advocate as well.³⁶⁴

³⁶³Y. *Taan.* 9:1[65d]; compare *Gen. Rab.* 56:10; *Lev. Rab.* 29:9; *Pesiq. de-R. Kahana* 23:9 (ed. Mandelbaum, 342).

³⁶⁴A similar argument is made in *Tg. Neof.* on Gen 22:14; cf. *Frg. Tg.* 22:

I beseech by the mercy that is before you, O Lord. All things are manifest before you: that there was no division in my heart (בלבי פלג) the first time that you said to me to sacrifice my son Isaac And now when his sons are in the hour of affliction, remember the binding of their father Isaac and listen to the voice of their supplication and hear them and deliver them from all tribulation.

8.4.2.2. The Assimilated Probations of Job and Abraham

Rabbinic literature from the Mishnah through the later midrashim and targums builds on biblical comparisons between Abraham and Job and then openly debates which man was greater. This debate was often couched in a discussion of Abraham's love vs. Job's fear of God. The close connections between these two man and their narratives extended as well to how one should read their probations.

For some, Job's appellation as a 'God-fearer' (Job 1:8-9; 4:6) signalled Job's inferiority to Abraham, who was traditionally considered a 'lover of God'.³⁶⁵ *Mishna Sota* 5:5, building from a debate on Job's righteousness, inserts Abraham as a more appropriate example of someone who loved God. A debate arises between Yochanan b. Zakkai and R. Joshua on whether Job was a sinner.

R. Joshua b. Hyrcanos expounded as follows: 'Job served the Holy One, blessed be He, only out of love' since it is said, "Though he slay me, yet will I wait for him" (Job 13:15). The matter still is in doubt, [for it is unclear whether the text reads] "I will wait for him" or "I will not wait for him". Scripture states, "Until I die I will not put away mine integrity from me" (Job 27:5). This teaches that he acted out of love.' R. Joshua said, 'Who will remove the dirt from your eyes, Rabban Johanan b. Zakkai? For you used to expound for your entire life that Job served the Omnipresent only out of fear (אלה מיראה), since it is said, "The man was perfect and upright and one who feared God and avoided evil" (Job 1:8). And now does not Joshua [b. Hananiah], the disciple of your disciple, teach that he did what he did out of love? (מאהבה)'

This text, embedded within a section of the Mishna that is dedicated to Akivan authority, discusses a previous teaching that is under review and in the process of being supplanted by a new tradition.³⁶⁶ J. Weinberg argues that the issue at stake is whether Job's

³⁶⁵This despite Abraham's similar appellation of 'God-fearer' in Gen 22:12.

³⁶⁶So Neusner 1970, 49.

worship of God was motivated by love or fear.³⁶⁷ This debate appears to be an old one, as indicated by a similar modification of canonical Job's 'fear' (cf. Job 1:1, 8–9; 2:3; and then throughout the poetic sections) to a 'love' for God, as in the earlier *T. Job* 1:27 'I shall *from love* endure until death all that will come upon me'. This positive reading of Job's love for God in the Mishna initiates a rabbinic debate on Abraham's and Job's love and fear that can be traced diachronically across the rabbinic corpus.³⁶⁸ This 'promotion' of Job's status from a 'fearer' to a 'lover' in the Mishna is confirmed in corresponding passages in the Tosefta (*t. Sota* 6:1) and in the Palestinian Talmud (*y. Sota* 5, 20d). However, elsewhere in the Palestinian Talmud Job is referred to as the example of the Pharisee who acts out of fear.³⁶⁹ This apparent exegetical debate continues in the Babylonian Talmud (*b. B. Bat.* 15b-16a), and revolves around whether Job loved or feared God.

The debate on Job's love extended to whether Job's speech was righteous before God. For example, *Tg. Job* 2:10 states (against *Tg. Job* 1:22): 'in all this Job did not sin with his lips, but in his mind he thought on words.'³⁷⁰ Similarly, in *b. B. Bat.* 16a Raba claims that Job 'did not sin with his lips, but he did sin with his heart'. More strongly still, some claimed that Job sinned in an unforgivable manner. Akiva in *m. 'Ed.* 2:10 condemns Job by comparing him to the generations of the Great Flood who inherited neither this world nor the world to come. *Tg. Job* accepts the negative *qere* reading of canonical Job 13:5 'I have no hope in him' rather

³⁶⁷Further on the debate in *m. Sota* cf. Weinberg 1994, 289.

³⁶⁸This debate appears in *m. 'Ed.* 2:10; *t. Shabb.* 13:2; *t. Semahot* 8; *b. Sota* 31a; *y. Sota* 20d; *Sifre Deut.* 32; *Midr. Ps.* 26:2; *Mek. de-R. Ishmael, ba-Hodesh* 10; *b. B. Bat.* 15b–16a; *Sifre Num* 112; *Tg. Ps.-Jon.* on Gen 15:6. See the discussions in Buchler 1967, 122–211; Urbach 1987, 406–419; Ehrlich 1994, 49; Weinberg 1994, 288; Glatzer 1979.

³⁶⁹Cf. *y. Sota* 5,5; *y. Ber.* 8, 14b.

³⁷⁰N.B. that this is the rabbinic Targum of Job, and not the Job Targum discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls, 11QtgJob.

than the more positive *ketiv* 'I will hope in him', a problem text noted in *m. Sota* 5:5. As the *qere* reading was typically regarded as blasphemous, the choice of this reading shows a negative evaluation among the rabbis.³⁷¹

These evaluations of Job placed him directly in contrast with Abraham, the other great example of tested faith. The debate between Abraham and Job, especially as relates to their individual trials, could be portrayed as occurring on the cosmic level. *B. B. Bat.* 15–16 provides the most extensive comparison between Abraham and Job. In 15a the dialogue of Job 1:7 is transformed into a debate on whether Job or Abraham was the most righteous. In this reworked narrative Satan approaches the heavenly throne and states:

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came. And the Lord said to Satan, from where do you come? And Satan answered (Job 1:6–7): He addressed the Holy One, blessed be He, thus: Sovereign of the Universe, I have traversed the whole world and found none so faithful as your servant Abraham. For you said to him, 'Arise, walk through the land to the length and the breadth of it, for I will give it to you', and even so, when he was unable to find any place in which to bury Sarah until he bought one for four hundred shekels of silver, he did not complain against your ways. Then the Lord said to Satan, have thou considered my servant Job? for 'there is none like him in the earth' (Job 1:8).

When Satan identifies his champion as Abraham, God responds by naming Job as his champion. In response, R. Levi defends Abraham against God's preference for Job, noting that 'both Satan and Peninah had a pious purpose [in acting as adversaries]: Satan, when he saw God inclined to favour Job said, "Far be it that God should forget the love of

³⁷¹Both *m. Sota* 5:5 and *Tg. Job* imply with this reading that Job acted out of his own wisdom and not in the wisdom of God, associating his false knowledge with that desired by Adam and Eve (see *Tg. Job* 15:7–8; 28:5–8). For a modern scholar reading Job in light of this interpretation, see Zink 1965.

Abraham”’. In line with this divine preference for Job and against R. Levi, R. Yochanan (in contradiction of his attributed statement in *m. Sota* 5:5) names Job the superior to Abraham stating: ‘greater praise is accorded to Job than to Abraham, for of Abraham it is written “for now I know that thou fear God” (Gen 22:12), whereas of Job it is written, “that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil” (Job 1:1)’. Yochanan’s preference is further supported by Job having feared God from the beginning of his trial, while Abraham only feared after the tenth trial of the *Aqedah*. Also, Job was called four different names: Pious, Righteous, Devout, and Turning from Evil, whereas Gen 22:1 only calls Abraham righteous, and therefore naming Job the greater of the two.

Not only are Job and Abraham compared in *b. B. Bat.* 15a–b, but their individual tests are read within an assimilating hermeneutic.³⁷² Both Abraham and Job’s trials are integrated into a single, heavenly account, demonstrating a remarkable and obvious integration of the two testing narratives. Abraham’s final test is extended from the *Aqedah* to the burial of Sarah (as in *Jub.* 19), and Abraham’s patience is highlighted. The death of Job’s sons and daughters are linked with the capture of Abraham’s family by the Chaldeans (*b. B. Bat.* 16a). The test shifts from a trial of the righteous person to a heavenly contest between God and Satan, each with his own champion. This debate between God and Satan in heaven initiates the trials of the two men on earth.³⁷³

³⁷²Kister 1994 has traced the following assimilated reading previously seen in *Jubilees*, 4Q225 and *LAB* into rabbinic interpretation. Many of the details found in those earlier texts are closely paralleled in *Gen. Rab.* 55, *b. Sanh.* 89b, *b. B. Bat.* 15a–b, and elsewhere.

³⁷³Similarly, in *Num. Rab.* 17:2, at the end of the *Aqedah* Abraham pleads that God never again afflict him with trials like ‘those very ones that came upon Job’. Like in *Jubilees* and *LAB*, *Gen. Rab.* 54:7 reworks the *Aqedah* into a demonstration of Abraham’s character, but now integrating the recast demonstration of Abraham’s righteousness with the tradition of Abraham’s love: ‘Now I have made known to all that you love me’. Similarly, *ARN* (A) 33 explains that Abraham’s ten trials are so the ‘nations of the world may know that Abraham is worthy of receiving his reward’. These parallels noted in Saldarini 1975, 95; Jacobs

A final tractate that exhibits an extended assimilation between Abraham and Job's tests is that of *b. Sanh.* 89b. After an extended discussion of the words of human and angelic intermediaries, R. Yochanan declares in the name of R. Yose ben Zimra that the 'words' of Satan (דבריו של שתן) had instigated the testing of Abraham in Gen 22. So begins a discussion of how to interpret the *Aqedah* that extends through the remainder of the tractate. According to R. Simeon b. Abba, Abraham's test should be read not as a trial of Abraham by God, but rather as an appeal by God to Abraham for aid: 'for My sake is this trial, that men may not say there was no reality in the earlier [tests]'. As we have seen previously, here the emphasis shifts to a probation of divine integrity.

Here, the Job narrative is used extensively and openly to reshape the *Aqedah*. The journey to Moriah becomes a dialogue between Abraham and Satan, in which R. Yose places verses from Job 4:2-6, 12, 7 directly in the mouths of both Abraham and Satan.³⁷⁴ The text builds on a number of lexical and conceptual parallels between Job 4 and Gen 22: 'If we assay to commune (הנסה) with thee' (Job 4:2) combines with 'and God put Abraham to the test' (והאלהים נסה את אברהם). The hookword 'innocent' in Job 4:7, 'remember, whoever perished, being innocent?' is read as referring to Isaac, who, being innocent, did not in fact perish. Ps 26:11 'I will walk [אלך] in my integrity' evokes the theme of 'walking' that occurs four times in Gen 22 (vv. 2, 5, 6, 8). The homily interweaves Gen 22 with Ps 26 and Job 4 to integrate the two testing narratives.³⁷⁵ In this strongly intertextual manner, the cosmological framework of Job is transferred to the Abraham narrative, reworking the role of ὁ πειράζων as

1975, 459; Kessler 2005, 38 n. 7.

³⁷⁴Cf. *Gen. Rab.* 56:4.

³⁷⁵In a similar homily in *Gen. Rab.* 56:4 (ed. Theodor-Albeck, 598–99) Abraham answers all of Satan's arguments with the same token: 'Nonetheless' (or 'in spite of all this'), eventually causing Satan to desist from his temptation.

a satanic rather than a divine office.

8.5. Conclusions to the Rabbinic Literature

The rabbis combine a supernatural worldview with an elevated human *yetzer* as the primary agent of probation. This results in a hermeneutic similar to that seen in the Rewritten Bibles, where the rabbis read across the Hebrew Bible to explain difficult texts and clarify the various roles within the cosmic drama of probation. The stories of Abraham and Job feature prominently in the rabbinic interpretation of probation, where Job's cosmic narrative combines with Abraham's exalted anthropology to exemplify an idealised cosmic and human explanation of probation.

Excursus 2

Additional Diversity within Jewish Thought

In the preceding section I selected an intentionally diverse body of literature that spans a wide spectrum of historical contexts and literary genres. Each body of literature was selected for its unique perspective(s) on the cosmic drama and its hermeneutic of probation. However, beyond these works there exist many other examples of Jewish literature which may provide interesting voices to the chorus of ancient Jewish perspectives. *4 Ezra* and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* offer particularly intriguing parallels to James. However, limits of space do not allow as complete an analysis of these works as what has preceded. Nevertheless, a brief description of each work will prove useful for reference in Part 3.³⁷⁶

4 Ezra and Internal Jewish Debates

The Apocalypse of *4 Ezra* (c. A.D. 100) responds to the theological turmoil that arose within the Diaspora communities after the destruction of the Second Temple.³⁷⁷ Here the challenges to religious faith are not ‘normal’, natural, or everyday occurrences, but rather tribulations of national and cosmic scale following the destruction of a religious way of life. As Thompson puts it, the context is the ‘crisis of faith that ensues when God’s care falls short of expectations.’³⁷⁸ These trials are the ‘threshing’ of eschatological judgement, the first of the ‘messianic birth-pangs’ (4:36–40), and the ‘paths of death and perdition’, created by Israel’s corporate sin (7:3–14). There is some hope that

³⁷⁶Fascinating and diverse perspectives on these questions of theological cosmology and hermeneutic can be traced into Origen, Augustine, Maximus the Confessor, and indeed any number of church fathers, not to mention the broader New Testament literature. As explained in Part 1, however, comparisons with these works will need to wait for further investigation.

³⁷⁷Cf. *4 Ezra* 14:33. Though the apocalypse portrays itself as a response to the destruction of the first Temple in 586 B.C., most scholars see here a response to the destruction of the Second Temple; so Stone 1990.

³⁷⁸Thompson 1977, 1.

the righteous, whose faith is compared to gold and silver and precious stones (7:58), will endure these trials bravely (10:14–16, 24) and receive as a reward of their ‘faith and works’ (13:23–24). Despite such an eschatological hope, however, Israel’s current forlorn state is cause for meditation on the national tragedy and on the human responsibility for the downfall.

God on Trial in 4 Ezra

M. Kensky sees in *4 Ezra* one of the most prominent examples of the use of the divine courtroom in the context of theodicy and discussion of God’s justice. This work is dominated by the question of God’s justice in light of the fall of Jerusalem.³⁷⁹ Ezra places God under cross-examination, indicting him for the fall of Zion in 3:28–36 and challenging God for proof of a just ruling against Israel (3:31). Similarly, Karina Hogan reads the lament of 3:4–36 as a parody of the covenant *riv* form: the history of Israel from the creation of Adam to the fall of Jerusalem is summoned as a witness against God, rather than Israel.³⁸⁰ This tone of indictment sets the tone for the entire book.³⁸¹ As Brandenburger points out, at times Ezra sounds almost heretical in his skepticism on the justice of divine judgement.³⁸²

The Anthropological Source of Tribulation in 4 Ezra

Though God is on trial for the evil that has come on Israel, the evil human heart (*cor malignum*) is the focus of the discourse. This evil heart serves to explain the origin of the power of evil, not just in humankind, but also more universally to the nation of Israel and even to the wider cosmos. Accordingly, many scholars have seen the evil heart in *4 Ezra* as a reference to the evil *yetzer*.

³⁷⁹So Kensky 2010, 146.

³⁸⁰Hogan 2008, 103.

³⁸¹See here Stone 1988, 132–142. Parallels to the Job narrative are found throughout *4 Ezra* (e.g., 5:35; 6:49–52), and like Job the dialogue on divine righteousness continues throughout the book.

³⁸²So Brandenburger 1962; cf. Harnisch 1969, 167–245 with an extended discussion on Ezra’s anthropology.

In 3:20–26 the author turns to Gen 3 and the story of Adam as the origin of evil within the human heart:

You did not take away from them the evil heart (*cor malignum*), that your Law might bring forth fruit in them. For the first Adam bearing a wicked heart transgressed, and was overcome; and so all who were born of him. And the infirmity was made permanent. The law was with the heart of the people together with the evil root; thus the good (law) departed away, and the evil abode still. . . . And in all things all of Adam's generations did even as Adam did, for they also had a wicked heart.

Something happened in the human heart, even in Adam, and this evil heart dominated the good God created. In 4:30 the 'grain of the evil seed' (*granum seminis mali*) was sown in the heart of Adam from the beginning, and its 'fruit of ungodliness' has continued to ripen, now culminating in an eschatological threshing. This evil heart has spread to all of Adam's descendants.³⁸⁴ This evil heart brought with it death into the world, e.g., 7:48:

The evil heart has grown up in us, which has estranged us from God, and brought us into destruction; and has made known unto us the ways of death, and showed us

³⁸³Thompson 1977, 377 argues that the 'evil root' is the equivalent of the inborn power of evil present since the creation, and uses the term *yetzer* and 'evil inclination' to translate accordingly'; cf. Stone 1990, 63. Cohen Stuart 1984a, 114 demurs, noting the difference between the *yetzer* that lives in the heart, and the evil heart itself, though the evil seed in the heart may be closer to the *yetzer*. On a semantic level, several scholars have noted that *plasmatum cogitamentum malum* in 7:92 appears to be a wooden translation of the *yetzer*. So Licht 1968, 48; cf. Porter 1901; Hogan 2008, 114, Koch 1978, 60–61, n. 10. Thompson 1977, 377 has noted the purely negative role of this evil heart, with no internal offsetting force such as a *yetzer tov*. Following this observation, Koch 1978, 60–61 argues that the evil heart is different than the Rabbi's evil inclination; however, Rosen-Zvi 2011, 81f sees a single *yetzer* as generally in agreement with rabbinic anthropology, though he rejects a direct correspondence on the basis of the inconsistent terminology in describing the 'evil heart', the 'evil seed' (4:28–32, 8:6, 9:31), the 'evil root' (3:22, 8:53), and even 'evil thought' (7:92) as opposed to the fairly static evil *yetzer* that resides within the heart. See further Harnisch 1969, 44–51; Brandenburger 1981, 169–76.

³⁸⁴Cf. 4 Ezra 3:21, 26; 4:30; also Stone 1990, 64; Levison 1988, 113–27; Hogan 2008, 114.

the paths of perdition, and removed us far from life; and that not a few only, but also almost all that have been created.

The primary exegetical source text for Israel's choice of life or death seems to be Deut 30:5.³⁸⁵ The trials of God's people incited by the evil heart include the 'path of death and perdition'. As this evil heart grew into maturity, it brought with it corruption and 'the way of death', separating humanity from the blessing of the commandments (4:45). Consequently, humanity now engages in an endless conflict with its evil heart (7:127), between the choice of good and evil, with the 'crown of life' for victory and the judgement of death for failure. Personal sin, national shame, and cosmic evil will cease from the world only when the evil heart is fully removed from humankind and replaced with a new heart (6:26–27) at a future restoration (8:6, 53).³⁸⁶

4 *Ezra's* view of the evil heart proves to be particularly pessimistic. Ezra and the angel Uriel debate whether even Torah itself could remove the evil heart (3:20–26): Uriel echoes commonly held wisdom that God's revelation and commandments were sufficient to avoid sin (7:71–72), but Ezra protests that the even the giving of the Law had proven insufficient to prevent sin in Israel (3:20–22, notably against the common sentiment found in later rabbinic thought). Without a remedy, Ezra argues, the burden on the human heart had become permanent.³⁸⁷ In Ezra's argument, if even the Torah proved incapable of removing the evil heart, then in fact Israel is being judged according to an unjust legal standard. This petition to divine justice provides the crux of an argument that runs throughout the book on the nature of determinism, human choice, and divine righteousness.

³⁸⁵ Similarly, 4 *Ezra* 7:21; so Stone 1990, 200.

³⁸⁶ Cf. Rosen-Zvi 2011, 81.

³⁸⁷ Cf. Stone 1990, 74; Hogan 2008, 114, *pace* Collins 1997a, 82–83.

Free Will Versus Determinism in 4 Ezra

Most scholars have noticed the presence of competing arguments that appear within the work, primarily on the question of personal freedom and divine responsibility. As the angel Uriel and Ezra provide the two obvious dialogue partners, scholars have positioned the debate between these two figures. Various scholars have read the duelling perspectives in the book as indicative of a divided mind on the part of the author. This literary-psychological approach takes the conflict as an internal debate in which man is torn apart by conflicting beliefs about God.³⁸⁸

Against this theory of conflicted psychology, other scholars have read Ezra as indicative of a live debate between two competing theological stances. Bruce Longenecker has argued that the debate between Uriel and Ezra is that of Jewish universalism and particularism.³⁸⁹

A third position is that of Karen Hogan, who has recently argued that neither Uriel nor Ezra represent the author's view, but rather that the book presents an ongoing debate on a variety of topics under discussion within the early post-Temple sage community.³⁹⁰ The character Ezra represents one camp of the sages, affirming in his visions and the speeches of 12:46–49 and 14:28–36 a belief in God's mercy to Israel. Hogan argues that Ezra's theological framework is a fusion of the old wisdom traditions such as Proverbs and a covenant theology from Deuteronomy.³⁹¹ Ezra demands on this basis of this covenant system that all people should be able to follow the commandments.³⁹² In contrast, Hogan labels the theology of Uriel as similar to the deterministic literature at Qumran such as 4QInstruction, the *Book of Mysteries*, and the *Treatise of the Two Spirits*, where revealed wisdom is made known only to the elect within the community. Hogan identifies a third, apocalyptic theology, espoused by the author, in which the solution lies in divine intervention

³⁸⁸So Gunkel 1900, who was critiqued by Hayman 1976 for 'splitting the author's personality'. In basic agreement with Gunkel's conclusions, but with more nuance, see Stone 1983.

³⁸⁹Longenecker 1991; *contra* Thompson 1977.

³⁹⁰Hogan 2008, 36.

³⁹¹Hogan 2008, 37.

³⁹²E.g., Sir 15; 4 *Ezra* 5:4–7.

as the only possible means for correcting the evil heart. This is to say that neither the ‘covenantal wisdom tradition’ of the prophet nor the ‘eschatological wisdom tradition’ of Uriel are adequate in their response. As both of those schools provide only inconclusive answers to what amounts to an intractable theological problem, *4 Ezra* as a whole aims to persuade the wise to move beyond the failed attempts of rational wisdom theology and to accept the revealed knowledge of ‘apocalyptic theology’.³⁹³

Conclusion to 4 Ezra’s Anthropology

The book of *4 Ezra* does not exhibit the concern for probation, *per se*, as seen in the preceding literature. Neither does it focus on supernatural agents of testing. However, *4 Ezra* does provide us with additional insight into the ongoing debates within Judaism on the human condition. The evil human heart takes centre stage in the debate. Far from a merely benign desire, the evil heart has caused calamity since the time of Adam, culminating in the destruction of the Jewish Temple and the dispersion of the Jewish nation.

Whether we accept Gunkel’s explanation of the author’s divided mind or Hogan’s theory of warring schools of Jewish wisdom, *4 Ezra* provides evidence of the debate within antiquity on the roles of the Divine Judge and on tested humanity. Following Hogan, unlike either the wisdom of Sirach or the wisdom of Qumran, neither human ability nor divine law offer a solution to human perdition. There remains only the hope in divine intervention for salvation.

The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and the Battle for the Soul

The *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* bear witness to a literary and theological heritage in transition. The work’s provenance remains an open question: does it bear the stamp of Second Temple Judaism, early Christianity, or is it even possible to distinguish between the two? Despite

³⁹³Hogan 2008, 39.

content that is clearly Jewish in heritage, as well as the discovery of apparently related and antecedent documents at Qumran (the Aramaic *Testament of Levi* and Hebrew *Testament of Naphtali* [4Q215]), at several points the text is late and often labeled Christian.³⁹⁴ Thus, the *Testaments of the Twelve* provide a glimpse into literature that operated from within a deeply Jewish heritage and relied on a largely biblical framework to form its theological and exegetical traditions.

Cosmic Dualism and Enslaved Anthropology

The *Testaments of the Twelve* convey a strongly dualistic cosmology in which a battle is waged between God and Belial or between the Prince of Light and the Prince of Darkness. Within this cosmology there are Two Masters, God and Satan, and a choice between these two powers runs throughout the *Testaments*, a choice especially linked with the notion of being ‘double faced.’³⁹⁵ The precise relationship between this dualistic cosmic framework and divided anthropology has been widely debated.

The *Testaments* address the topic of anthropology extensively, and the occurrence of terms such as διαβούλιον [often + τῆς ψυχῆς] (20x), διπρόσωπον (12x), ἀπλότης (15x), and the contrast between two indwelling spirits (e.g., *T. Reu.* 2; *T. Jud.* 20:1–5; *T. Naph.* 2; *T. Ash.* 1:2–9) has attracted a great deal of scholarly interest.³⁹⁶ In contrast to the multiplicity of choice available to the natural man, the *Testaments* urge internal simplicity and single-mindedness. The term ἀπλοτης occurs 15 times throughout the *Testaments*, and is used to imply unswerving moral rectitude of spirit and of body.³⁹⁷ In *T. Iss.*, singleness of heart excludes desire and provides an antidote against the

³⁹⁴E.g., *T. Ben.* 9:3. Despite the Jewish/Christian debates in VanderKam 2001, 100–101, de Jonge 1975b, 554, de Jonge 1985, 73–74, de Jonge 2003b, and Davila 2005b, 5, the *Testaments of the Twelve* is a good example of the increasing doubt on whether arguments for Jesus’ Messianic status *ipso facto* requires an identification separate from Jewish boundaries acceptable within the Second Temple period; so, e.g. Skarsaune 2007b; Carleton Paget 2010b.

³⁹⁵Cf. Rosen-Zvi 2011, 171 n. 85.

³⁹⁶Cf. Hollander 1985a; Kloppenborg 2010; Wilson 2002; Marcus 1982; Cohen Stuart 1984a.

³⁹⁷So Kloppenborg 2010, 43–44.

spirits of deceit, envy, malice and perversion (4.2–6). *T. Iss.* 3:2 and 4:3 extend singleness of mind as the epitome of integrity. In *T. Ash.* 1:3–9 and 3:1–2 there appears a strong contrast between good and evil, lust vs. self control, and the good *yetzer* vs. the bad *yetzer*. The evil lies not only in sinful actions but in the two inclinations of the person. Such internal duality is contrasted with the call for ἀπλότης in such places as *T. Iss.* 6:1–2, where to reject personal ‘unity’ is to declare loyalty to one’s ‘wicked impulse’ (πονηρὸν διαβούλιον).

T. Ash. 3, probably the most commonly cited source for the anthropology of the *Testaments*, begins with what appears to be a starkly dualistic picture of the human condition.³⁹⁸

‘God has given two ways (δύο ὁδοὺς) to the sons of men, and two inclinations (δύο διαβουλία), and two kinds of action, and two modes of living, and two ends (δύο τέλη). Therefore all things are by twos, one over against the other. For there are two ways of good and evil, and with them are the two inclinations in our breast discriminating them (δύο διαβουλία ἐν στέρνοις ἡμῶν διακρίνοντα αὐτάς). Therefore if the soul (ψυχή) takes pleasure in the good, all its actions are in righteousness; and if it sins it repents immediately. . . . But if the inclination prefers evil (ἐν πονηρῷ κλίνει τὸ διαβούλιον), all its actions are in wickedness, and rejecting good it undertakes to do evil, and is ruled by Beliar. . . . [The] treasure of the inclination is filled with the poison of an evil spirit. (*T. Ash.* 1:3–9)

The two inclinations (διαβουλία) here have been widely understood to represent the ‘two *yetzarim*’, both the good and the bad.³⁹⁹ Charles argues that *T. Ash.* 1:3 provides the ‘oldest reference to the *yetzer hatov*’.⁴⁰⁰ Furthermore, *T. Ash.* 3:1–2 has provided a crucial point in the discussions of the *Testaments*’ cosmology and anthropology:

But do not, my children, do not be of two faces (διπρόσωποι) like them, one of goodness another of wickedness, but cleave to goodness only, for God rests in it and men wish it. But flee from wickedness, destroying [the inclination

³⁹⁸ Cf. *T. Jud.* 20:1.

³⁹⁹ Cf. Davies 1955, 21; Delcor 1962, 51; Hughes 1916, 160; Hyatt 1955, 280; Maier 1971, 337; Marcus 1982, 615–619.

⁴⁰⁰ Similarly Charles 1976, 162, 343 claims that the Greek translator of the *Testaments* rendered *yetzer* either with the preferred διαβούλιον, or else with three other available alternatives: πλάσμα in *T. Naph.* 2:5, ἐνθύμησις in *T. Jud.* 13:2, and προαίρεσις in *T. Jos.* 17:3.

(διαβούλιον)]/[the devil (τὸν διάβολον)] by your good works; for they that are double faced (διπρόσωποι) serve not God but their own desires (ἐπιθυμίας) so that they may please Beliar and men like themselves.

Depending on whether one reads διαβούλιον or διάβολον, this text balances between placing the responsibility on the human inclination and on external sources of evil. De Jonge reads διάβολον, ‘the Devil’, while Marcus reads διαβούλιον ‘inclination’, though noting that the textual divergency stems from the overlap of the concepts of the *yetzer* and Satan. Accordingly, Marcus reads this text to emphasise the role of ἐπιθυμία and the metaphorical duality of the ‘two-faced person’ (12x in the *Testaments*).

Kloppenborg argues from this text that the *Testaments* exhibit concerns from the broader Hellenistic milieu with regard to the health of the unified mind, for example in the ‘pure mind’ (διάνοια καθαρὰ) of *T. Ben.* that ‘perceives all rightly’ (πάντα βλέπει ὀρθῶς at 3.2) and so acts virtuously. The opposite of the pure mind—the darkened mind—is not one that acts in a uniformly evil way but instead one which acts in a contradictory or double way, a sure sign of instability and mental disturbance.⁴⁰¹ For Kloppenborg, this evil διαβούλιον provides an anthropological source for evil,⁴⁰² arousing passions such as ἡδονία and ἐπιθυμία that destroy piety (*T. Dan* 5:2) and become enflamed through envy or greed (e.g., *T. Gad* 7:2–5).⁴⁰³ Wilson accordingly understands the *yetzer* in the *Twelve* as a divinely-created urge that is not intrinsically evil but is able to effect evil when its desires are untethered. The διαβούλιον/*yetzer* becomes a ‘psychic tempter’, a force that tests human freedom by converting external opportunities for transgression into internal struggles with temptation.⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰¹So Kloppenborg 2010, 43–44, citing Hommel 1958; Vischer 1965, 10–22.

⁴⁰²Cf. *T. Rev.* 4:9; *T. Jud.* 13:2 and the διαβούλιον τῆς καρδίας, 18:3 and the διαβούλιον τῆς ψυχῆς; *T. Iss.* 6:2; *T. Gad* 5:1–9 where righteousness through humility is compared with salvation brought to the διαβούλιον; *T. Gad* 7:2–5 where envy is exchanged for the knowledge that God gives good and profitable things to all people, thus annulling the envy of the rest and allowing the διαβούλιον to remain at rest.

⁴⁰³Note the general conflation here of the ἐπιθυμία and the διαβούλιον as both providing a reference point to the *yetzer*; e.g., Marcus 1982, 617.

⁴⁰⁴Wilson 2002, 162.

Other scholars have critiqued such a notion of a hellenistic anthropological dualism in the *Testaments*. Hollander and de Jonge stress that the author, in mentioning two διαβούλιον, did not intend to suggest that there are ‘zwei Seelen in einer Brust’. Rather, the emphasis of the principle passage in *T. Ash.* is that every person has two choices, and depending on the choice, the διαβούλιον will be either good or bad.⁴⁰⁵ Rosen-Zvi argues directly against a Stoic framework for the *Twelve*. Similarly, Cohen Stuart reads the text to say that ‘man has two possibilities in his life and he makes a choice, according to his fundamental will’.⁴⁰⁶ The διαβούλιον that desires the good produces righteous actions, but the διαβούλιον that desires evil produces only evil. With Cohen Stuart, Rosen-Zvi argues that the *Testaments*, with their appeal to a natural *yetzer* with its own sinful proclivities, share similar perspectives with Ben Sira and the Amoraic school of R. Akiva.⁴⁰⁷ Both Cohen Stuart and Rosen-Zvi agree that *Testaments* are dualistic only in the sense that a person is capable of either good or evil, virtue or vice, depending on the inclination of the person’s heart. As Cohen Stuart argues, the διαβούλιον ‘is not a determining factor but it is the determined factor’.⁴⁰⁸ There is only one ‘treasure of the διαβούλιον’ (*T. Ash.* 1:9) which the poisonous influence of an evil spirit will fill up in those who choose to do evil. The διαβούλιον is thus free to choose who will be its master, either good or evil spirits. Accordingly to this view, any dualism in the *Testaments* is limited to the conflicting natures of these controlling spirits.

In this reading, then, the *Testaments* externalise the source of good and evil away from inner psychological dualism or personifications of inner passions and toward supernatural forces which includes evil spirits, Beliar, the angel of the Lord and Satan.⁴⁰⁹ These spirits, while external, are nevertheless intrinsically linked to the natural senses (*T. Reu.* 3:3), and rely on the natural faculties of

⁴⁰⁵ Hollander 1985a, 339; cf. earlier Hadot 1970, 60; also Kloppenborg 2010.

⁴⁰⁶ Rosen-Zvi 2006b, 90; Cohen Stuart 1984a, 156.

⁴⁰⁷ Cf. Rosen-Zvi 2006a, 85-90.

⁴⁰⁸ Cohen Stuart 1984a, 157.

⁴⁰⁹ So Hollander 1985b, 339.

the soul, the eyes, and especially the procreative organs for the outworking of demonic desires.

Sinfulness is produced only when the internal disposition and the external faculties are united under supernatural guidance.⁴¹⁰

This cosmological framework in which demonic forces exert their influence upon the human διαβούλιον can be exemplified in *T. Dan* 1:5–8:

I was glad in my heart to kill Joseph... for the spirit of jealousy and haughtiness said to me: 'you, too, are his son like him'. And one of the spirits of Belial awakened me, saying: 'take the sword and kill Joseph with it, so your father love you by his death', and this was the spirit of jealousy which incited me to kill Joseph.

Here, the spirits of Belial operate upon the διαβούλιον of the person. In other places in the *Testaments* we find spirits as internal beings residing in humans.⁴¹¹ However, the διαβούλιον that is dedicated to God is untouchable by Belial's spirits. For example, in *T. Benjamin*:

Fear Yahweh and love the friend. And if the spirits of Belial demand that you do any evil or trouble, they will not rule you (*T. Benj.* 3.3).

The διαβούλιον of the good man is not in the hands of the spirit of Belial, for an angel of peace leads his soul (*T. Benj.* 6:1)

This perspective seen in *T. Benj.* does not seem to imply a dualistic anthropology, but rather a dualistic cosmology in which the two powers work upon the single human διαβούλιον and claim it as their own.

⁴¹⁰Cf. Macky 1969, 81; Rosen-Zvi 2006b, 90.

⁴¹¹*T. Reuben* 2:1; 3:2–7; 4:11.

An Anthropology of Testing

While much has been made of the broader anthropological concerns within the *Twelve*, less has been written on its application to the theme of probation. However, *T. Jos.* 2:6–7 provides a natural application of the author’s anthropological notions to his concerns about trials. In this text the protagonist Joseph must show himself approved (δόκιμος) by enduring various tribulations (θλίψεις) and trials (πειρασμοίς), especially the seduction of Potiphar’s wife. In what likely comprises a substitution for Abraham’s traditional tests, ‘by ten trials’ the inclination of Joseph’s soul (τῆς ψυχῆς διαβούλιον) is tested. The next ten chapters of the *Testament* recount in detail these trials and Joseph’s faithful response. Potiphar’s wife attempts a number of clever enticements, each chosen to prove a different aspect of Joseph’s character. In *T. Jos.* 4:5, for example, Potiphar’s wife uses an argument laced with piety: if he would but sleep with her, she and Potiphar would cease from idolatry and become faithful to God’s law. Such attempts are identified by Joseph in 6:2 as a ‘deception of the soul’ (ἀποπλάνησιν ψυχῆς), and he concludes that even giving a receptive ear to her ‘evil desire’ (ἐπιθυμία πονηρά), even if intended for good (ἀγαθόν), would result only in the arousal of one’s own ἐπιθυμία πονηρά. As a solution to the internal battle Joseph appeals to the powerful remedies of endurance (μακροθύμια) and patience (ὑπομονή), along with the pious disciplines of fasting and prayer (4:8; 10:1). The combination of personal endurance and pious works serves to rescue Joseph’s soul from the dangers of the trial.⁴¹²

At the end of *T. Jos.* the patriarch’s example provides an ethical model for the the readers, who are to emulate Joseph’s patience in 10:2. ‘So you too, if you follow after chastity and purity with patience and prayer, with fasting in humility of heart, the Lord will dwell among you, because He loves chastity.’⁴¹³

⁴¹²The reward for patient response to such trials as Joseph faced are seen more clearly in *T. Ben.* 4:1, which reads, ‘do you see, therefore, my children, the end (τέλος) of the good man. Be followers of his compassion, therefore, with a good mind (ἐν ἀγαθῇ διανοίᾳ), that you may also wear crowns of glory (στεφάνους δόξης), a reward for those who choose the correct path’ (cf. *T. Ash.* 1:3).

⁴¹³On Joseph’s ethical example, cf. Hollander 1981, 29–31, 39–41.

This reading of Joseph's trials draws heavily on the parallel narrative of Joseph's forefather Abraham. The ten trials are a common motif of Abraham's trials,⁴¹⁴ as is the emphasis on endurance and patience (e.g., *T. Ab.* below; *Jubilees* 19 above) and the rejection of idolatry. Joseph's tribulations are thus retold through the lens of Abraham's trials, filling out the picture of Joseph as an exemplar of patience and humility.

In summary, the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* exhibit a distinct cosmic framework in which external forces guide the internal choices of the person. Rather than portraying two διαβόλῃα or *yetzarim* that control the actions of the person, the *Testaments* typically contain a single διαβόλιον, which depending on the person's choice of mastery will be guided by either an evil or a good spirit.

⁴¹⁴So Sir 44:20-21; 1 Macc 2:52; *Jub.* 17:17-18, 19:8; Philo *Abr.* 176; Jdt 8:25-7; *Pirke Abot* 5:3; *Lev. Rab.* 31:4; *Tg. Neofiti* 22:1.

Summary of Part 2

Convergence and Divergence in Jewish Theological Cosmologies

In the preceding section I presented an extended study on cosmic roles and biblical hermeneutics in ancient Judaism, revealing a wide spectrum of available thought. From early examples of Rewritten Bible to the later rabbinic traditions, Jewish literature of the hellenistic period across the mediterranean world exhibits diversity, flexibility, and creativity in the *dramatis personae* that populate their cosmic dramas. These works demonstrated a concern to detail the divine, supernatural, and human roles of probation, often using the language and imagery of the heavenly court to do so. Some of these sources (e.g., *Jubilees*, Qumran, the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*, and the rabbinic literature) share a strongly demonological framework dependent on the cosmic drama portrayed in Job 1–3. Other works purposefully internalise the cosmic sources of evil (e.g., Ben Sira and Philo), preferring to elevate the human condition as an explanation of challenges to religious faithfulness. As these works often interact with biblical probation narratives, the characters of those biblical stories help populate the various cosmic dramas.

As I turn now in Part 3 to the Epistle of James, we are now aware of a wide-ranging concern, on both popular and learned levels in antiquity, to detail these questions of cosmic roles and biblical hermeneutics. I will examine ways in which James converges on or diverges from these Jewish perspectives, and how the Epistle provides us with a final Jewish instantiation of the cosmic drama and biblical hermeneutic of testing.

PART III

A Hermeneutic of Testing in the Epistle of James

CHAPTER 9

A Theology of Probation in the Epistle of James

In Part 2 I established a spectrum of ways the cosmic drama and corresponding biblical hermeneutic could be instantiated in ancient Judaism. These works, likely all written by circumcised, Torah-observant Jewish authors, demonstrated a consistent concern to defend the integrity of the God of Israel. Beyond this central point of agreement, however, I uncovered a wide range of perspectives on the roles and responsibilities for probation. In Part 3 that follows, I will position the Epistle of James within this spectrum of Jewish perspectives. Sections 9.1., 9.2., and 9.3. examine how James portrays the divine, satanic/demonic, and human roles, respectively. This will then be followed by a final chapter examining how James' *dramatis personae* of probation populate its reading of biblical probation narratives.

9.1. James and Divine Agency

One of the constant themes noted in the broader literature has been the attempt to mitigate divine agency. This was frequently couched within the cosmic context of the divine court. M. Kensky's recent work on the heavenly courtroom and the divine trial has been especially helpful in seeing how the courtroom theodicy underlies a great deal of ancient Jewish literature. In these courtroom narratives, the trial of God's people become an indictment of God Himself. With God now in the defendant seat, the person assumes the role of judge, and the author becomes the defence council. As I turn to evaluate the Epistle

of James, a similar cosmic dynamic can be traced.⁴¹⁵

9.1.1. *The Law Court with Human and Divine Judges*

The court is implicitly present throughout James.⁴¹⁶ Legal language is applied to humans illegitimately judging others (Jas 2:1–2; 4:11), to humans judging God and his actions (e.g., Jas 1:6, 13), and to God as the only true judge within the divine economy (Jas 4:11–12; 5:9).

In Jas 2:1–9 the author warns his readers against ‘making distinctions’ in their judgements based on differences of wealth or social position.

My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favouritism (προσωποληψίας). For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, “You sit here in a good place,” and you say to the poor man, “You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool,” have you not cast a judgement of distinction (διακρίθητε) among yourselves, and become judges (κριταί) with evil motives?⁴¹⁷

This passage applies the widespread concern for improper judges who make distinctions based on bribes, wealth, or social position to James’ community.⁴¹⁸ R.B. Ward has argued that Jas 2:1–7 depicts a synagogue court, based on similar judicial concerns found in rabbinic texts such as *Deut. Rab.* 5:6.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁵The cosmological study of Lockett 2008 focuses primarily on the God/world antithesis explicit in Jas 4:4. He leaves our focus here unaddressed: the relationship between God, supernatural forces, and anthropology.

⁴¹⁶Cf. Laws 1980, 7, though in passing.

⁴¹⁷Translations from the NASB, unless otherwise noted.

⁴¹⁸See this common refrain in the broader biblical and Jewish literature as noted in section 3.1. above.

⁴¹⁹So Ward 1966; Ward 1969.

R. Judah b. Ilai said: I have heard that if the judge wishes the litigants to be seated, he may have them seated: but what is not permissible? For the one to be seated and the other to remain standing. For R. Ishmael said: if before a judge two men appear for judgment, one rich and the other poor, the judge should say [to the rich], ‘either dress in the same manner as he is dressed, or clothe him as you are clothed.’⁴²⁰

Ward argues from these rabbinic texts that James has a similar concern to enforce righteous judgements within the ecclesial synagogue. Leaders are not to favour the rich over the poor, and not to judge ‘with favouritism.’⁴²¹

Building from the illegitimate courtroom in 2:1–7, Jas 2:8–13 follows by reverting to the appropriate order of the divine court where God passes judgement on illegitimate judges:

If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law (νόμον) according to the Scripture, ‘you shall love your neighbour as yourself; you are doing well. But if you show partiality (προσωπολημπτεῖτε), you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors (ἐλεγχόμενοι ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου ὡς παραβάται). For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty (ἔνοχος) of all. For He who said, ‘do not commit adultery,’ also said ‘do not commit murder.’ Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law (παραβάτης νόμου). So speak and so act as those who are to be judged (κρίνεσθαι) by the law of liberty. For judgment (κρίσις) will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment (κρίσεως).

⁴²⁰Cf. *t. Sanh.* 6:2 (where Lev 19:15 is cited as proof that in court one should not make one stand and another sit); *Sifra* Lev. 200 (you must not let one stand and another sit); *b. Seb.* 30a, 31a (‘how do you know that, if two come to court, one clothed in rags and the other in fine raiment worth a hundred manehs, they should say to him “either dress like him or else dress him like you?”’).

⁴²¹This reading is defended by Davids 1982, 109; Martin 1988, 57–59 and, as Allison 2000, 163 has pointed out, by commentators from the 1600’s and 1700’s, notably Thomas Manton (1620–1677) and Matthew Henry (1662–1714). The appeal to the ecclesial courtroom is defended as early as Whitby 1727, 588, who notes the language of προσωποληψία in the judicial context, possibly drawing on Lev 19:15 ‘You shall not render an unjust judgment; you shall not show partiality (λήμψη / πρόσωπον) to the poor or defer to the great; with justice you shall judge your neighbour.’ 2:4 uses the language of the court when it refers to judgement (κρίται; διεκρίθητε); 2:9 uses the phrase ‘if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as a transgressor’, referring to the biblical mandates banning partiality in court (e.g., Lev 19:15; Deut 1:17).

Here, the terms νόμος, προσωπολήπτω, ἐλέγχω, παραβάτη, ἐνοχος, and κρίσις set the discourse firmly within the context of the law-court, but now with God as the governing authority. This metaphor possibly continues past 2:13 to govern the language of judgement (κρίμα) and justice (δικαιοσύνη) through Jas 3:1.

9.1.2. *Distinctions of Religious Loyalty*

The illegitimate role of human judgement appears in Jas 1:6, but here the illegitimate judge makes distinctions of religious loyalty based on circumstance:

But let him ask in faith (ἐν πίστει) without any making distinctions (μηδὲν διακρινόμενος). For the one who does so is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the waves.

The intended semantics of διακρίνω in 1:6 are debated. Spitaler 2007 has argued vigorously for a meaning of ‘taking issue with, disputing, creating distinctions’, based on the paucity of evidence for the meaning ‘to doubt’ in classical and patristic Greek. Against Spitaler, Allison has recently provided ample evidence that the meaning of ‘doubt’, that is, a psychological lack of confidence opposed to existential religious ‘trust’, was known and used by the first or second century.⁴²² There does seem to be some connection, however, between the religious division in chapter 1 and the divisions within the community at 2:1–9 where some ‘make distinctions’ (διεκρίθητε at 2:4) based on personal favouritism. Following Spitaler, James could be read here in 1:6 to similarly implicate those who declare their religious loyalty during the good times (especially wealth, e.g., Jas 1:9–11) but divide their

⁴²²Cf. Allison 2013, 179–181. Further on this point see section 9.3.1.1. below.

loyalties during times of need (e.g., lack of wisdom, 1:5; lack of wealth, 1:9). In this reading, by making such judgments on divine care the person places himself in the seat of judgement to decide whether God is worthy of religious loyalty. This usurpation of the seat of judgement is then followed in 1:13–15, where the forensic language is more direct.

9.1.3. *Humans Judging God's Character*

Kensky's model of cosmic role-reversal has significant capital for reading James 1. In Jas 1:13 the author describes a direct indictment of divine character: those who claim 'God πειράζει' are in fact placing God under trial. As noted in part 2 above, such indictments of divine character and their refutation are common fare. In the interlocutor's statement in Jas 1:13, God the judge is now God the judged, as the man on trial now tries God's integrity. The author of James both recognises the potential weight of such a statement and makes an explicit defence against the charge.

While scholars have generally noted the indictment 'God is the Tester' present in the phrase μηδεὶς πειραζόμενος λεγέτω ὅτι ἀπὸ θεοῦ πειράζομαι, they have generally overlooked the implicit reversion of the courtroom roles in Jas 1:13b. As described in Part 1 above, the decision to allow a semantic shift from 'test' to 'temptation' in Jas 1:13a is typically allowed to carry the conceptual weight into Jas 1:13b as well: the sense of ἀπειραστος becomes typically that of 'God cannot be solicited to evil/God is untemptable'.⁴²³ In favour of a continued courtroom scenario, however, Davids 1978 has made the argument that the semantic field and literary background of the entire passage should be that of Israel's tests in the wilderness. As the wilderness generation underwent various trials of loyalty to

⁴²³So Allison 2013, 242–3, preferring a sense of separation between God and evil stemming from hellenistic notions of the divine essence, with Klein 1995a, 86–88.

monotheism, so also Davids sees the statement ‘God ought not to be tested’ as stemming from a misunderstanding of the divine role as ὁ πειράζων, possibly due to a misunderstanding of the Lord’s prayer that resulted in the conclusion that God does indeed place His people under indictment.⁴²⁴ Davids argues that a biblically literate Jew would have been cautious in asserting that it is impossible for God to be tempted or tested, for Israel did test God in the wilderness. Rather, ἀπειραστος in Jas 1:13b should be understood as in the *Acts of John* 57:

Now I know that God dwells in you, blessed John! How happy is the man who has not tempted God in you (οὐκ ἐπείρασεν ἐν σοὶ τὸν θεόν); for the man who tempts you tempts the one who ought not to be tempted' (ὁ γὰρ σὲ πειράζων τὸν ἀπείραστος πειράζει).

The author of the *Acts of John* does not wish to convey the idea that one *cannot* test God, for this is clearly in view, but rather that one *ought not* to test God. Similarly, *Pseudo-Ignatius to the Philippians* 11 declares: ‘If, therefore, you [Satan] are trampled under the feet of the Lord, how do you test him that should not be tested (πῶς πειράζεις τὸν ἀπειραστον), forgetting the precept of the lawgiver, “Thou shalt not test (ἐκπειράσεις) the Lord thy God”?’ Here, Satan attempted to do what Deut 6:16 proscribed against, that is, to place God to the test.

Read in this light, the interlocutor in Jas 1:13a is doing precisely what Scripture prohibits: Whereas the exemplars of Abraham and Job passed their tests, like Israel this person fails the test by turning and placing God himself under trial.⁴²⁵

⁴²⁴See here DeLuca 2006a and previously Windisch 1951.

⁴²⁵Cf. e.g., ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah’ (Exod 15:25; 16:4; 17:2, 7; Num 14:22, with a parallel to the ‘ten failures’ of Israel; Deut 6:16; 8:32; 8:16; 9:22; 13:3); cf. Isa 7:2; Judith 8:12; Wisdom 1:2.

9.1.3. *Divine Acquittal*

After articulating the indictment against God, the author of James openly displays his agenda to defend divine integrity and to establish him as the legitimate and righteous judge. This includes a statement on divine beneficence (Jas 1:17–18, on which see further in section 10.1 below), and a statement on appropriate roles, in 4:11–12 and 5:9.

Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbour? (Jas 4:11–12)

Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door. (Jas 5:9)

Throughout James, then, the divine role and divine character is a constant point of concern.⁴²⁶ James 1:5 highlights the monotheistic singleness of God, as does 2:19. The defence of divine integrity in Jas 1:17 emphasises divine constancy in perpetually granting good and perfect gifts. James 4:11–12 and 5:9 establish the correct hierarchy within cosmic judgement.

9.1.4. *Conclusion to James' Theology of Probation*

Given the widespread literary rebuttals against those who identify God as ὁ πειράζων, it is not difficult to imagine that this notion would be available to the author of

⁴²⁶Cf. Wenger 2011 for a comprehensive study on the portrayal of the character of God throughout James.

James. In 1:13–15 the author rebuts the indictment, flatly denies the premise, and urges that God is not to be placed in the role of the defendant (i.e., placed under trial). The operative metaphor throughout is that of the divine law court, complete with the reversal of judge/defendant roles.

9.2. *James and External Cosmic Agents*

Having established The Epistle's concern for the divine role in probation, let us now turn to James' conception of external cosmic agency. The Epistle of James contains a demonology common to much of the Jewish literature, including both demonic forces and a personified evil figure 'the devil'.

James 2:19 presents the argument 'You believe "God is one"'. You do well, for the demons also believe, and shudder'. Here, James' demonology is framed within the words of the *Shema*, a liturgical refrain from Deut 6:5 that had by the first century become a declaration for monotheistic loyalty.⁴²⁷ The simple formula εἰς θεός and its variants εἰς θεὸς βοήθει, εἰς θεὸς ὁ βοηθῶν and the like frequently occur in Jewish inscriptions from Palestine.⁴²⁸ The inscriptional and manuscript evidence from fourth century A.D. Syria shows that the εἰς θεός formula continued its frequent use within Christian contexts as well, as further demonstrated by the incorporation of the formula into the Nicene Creed.⁴²⁹ By the rabbinic period, and possibly earlier, the refrain had become part of the morning prayers.⁴³⁰ Given how James places the εἰς ὁ θεός formula within a demonic context, it is

⁴²⁷Cf. Philo *Spec. Leg.* 1.30; *Ps.-Phoc* 54; Josephus *Ant.* 3.91; Herm. *Mand.* 1:1; Ps-Clem. *Hom.* 3.59.2; 16.7.9.

⁴²⁸See the seminal work by Peterson 1926.

⁴²⁹Di Segni 1994, 94, arguing that the evidence shows a progressive Christianisation of the εἰς θεός formula in Syria.

⁴³⁰Cf. *m. Ber.* 1–4; *m. Tamid* 5.1; *b. Ber.* 21b; on the morning prayers in James see below in chapter

instructive to note that this phrase had become common in household phylacteries, while the formula from Deut 6:4 had by the first century begun to be used in *mezuzot* with apparent apotropaic significance.⁴³¹ If such an apotropaic usage of the phrase were available to James, it may explain why Jas 2:19 combines the phrase with the statement that ‘the demons also believe, and tremble (φρίσσω)’.⁴³²

Furthermore, James describes demonic forces as external agents of evil in 3:15:

This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic (ἐπίγειος, ψυχική, δαιμονιώδης).

The ‘demonic wisdom’ appears to be a statement on the origins of wisdom: God provides true wisdom, but demons bring false wisdom. This function aligns with the standard role of demons seen in the Enochic interpretation of Gen 6:1–4.⁴³³

A satanic adversary is further explicated in Jas 4:7, ‘submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.’ This phrase describes the adversary as something to be ‘resisted’, and with sufficient personhood that this devil can ‘flee’. The notion of resisting the devil using martial imagery and of the devil fleeing were widely received in the broader

10.1.

⁴³¹On the use in phylacteries, cf. the Nash papyrus, generally thought to be from c. 150 B.C. Egypt, which combines the ten commandments and the *Shema*; also 4QPhyl-b which contained Deut 5:1–6:9. On the use in *mezuzot*, cf. 4QMez B-D. Peterson 1926, 276–95 had previously argued from the phylacteries that the phrase had taken on an exorcistic function by the first century (commenting on Jas 2:19 in pp. 295–99); though see Di Segni 1994.

⁴³²Along these lines, Twelftree reads Jas 2:19 as reflecting exorcistic practices; so Twelftree 2007, 179–180 noting parallels to the exorcistic use of the divine name e.g. in the *Papyri Graecae Magicae* IV: 3014–3019, ‘Write this phylactery upon a sheet of tin and hang it on the patient. It is for every demon a thing to be trembled (φρίκον) at, as he fears it’. A similar idea may be in view in Jas 5:14, where the sick are healed ‘in the name of the Lord’.

⁴³³So 1 *Enoch* 6:2–7:5, 99 on the spread of corrupt knowledge including astronomy, spells, and ‘eternal secrets’; 4Q201 on the demonic teaching of incantations and wizardry; cf. *Jub.* 5:1–5; 7:21–25.

Jewish literature.⁴³⁴ The διάβολος acts in enmity here, as he is placed in close parallel to ‘friendship with the world’ as opposed to ‘friendship to God’ (4:4) and ‘drawing near to God’ (4:8). However, Allison goes beyond the evidence in describing Satan here as necessarily a ‘wholly evil, demonic figure’, as opposed to the ‘accuser of the heavenly court who incites the deity to test people’, citing the development of the Satanic figure in ‘NT times’.⁴³⁵

As described above in Part 2 above, there existed within Judaism a wide array of possible descriptions for the figure of Satan. This includes Satan as the inciter of trials in 1 Chr 21:1, Job 1–3; Zech 3:1–10 and in some strata of the *Testament of Job*, to the fully demonic figure found throughout the cosmic dualism of Qumran, and then again to the more limited portrayal of Satan found in the rabbinic literature.⁴³⁶ James reveals both a knowledge of ‘demonic’ forces, and also of a personified ‘prosecutor’. As I will argue below, this cosmic vision likely arises from James’ dependence on the dominant cosmology of the Job stories. Whether these supernatural figures remain separate or have merged into a single entity remains to be seen. However, we have sufficient data to say with confidence that

⁴³⁴See Allison 2013, 625 for a listing of comparative literature, as well as a further parallel in *Test. Job* 27:6 where Satan is defeated by Jobab and departs in shame.

⁴³⁵So Allison 2013, 626, whose cosmic framework influences his semantic choices in translating πειρασμός in Jas 1:13–14:

‘Typically in early Christianity, God “tries” or “tests” (πειράζω or δοκιμάζω), with hope of a good outcome (1 Thess 2:4; 1 Tim 3:10; Heb 11:17; Wis 3.5; 11.9–10). The devil, on the other hand, “tempts” (πειράζω) with nothing save an evil end in view. (Matt 4:1; Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2; 1 Cor 7:5; Rev 2:10). One might urge that the two things cannot always be clearly distinguished [as in Job or the Testament of Job or in Jesus’ temptation]. Yet all this does not obliterate the distinction, probably implicit in James, between a demonic trial and a divine test, for even when both God and Satan are involved, the intention of the one party cannot be that of the other’.

⁴³⁶On the push and pull between the various powers, roles, and responsibilities afforded to Satan in the Jewish and Christian literature from the post-exilic period through the rabbinic and patristic literature, cf. Rosen-Zvi 2011, 64.

James' depiction of the cosmic drama allows for the presence of external supernatural agents active in their work against the human patient.

9.3. *James and Anthropology*

The role of humans under probation provides the most debated point in James' cosmic drama. Scholars have brought to bear the full spectrum of ancient Jewish conceptions of human interiority in order to evaluate James' portrayal of the human ἐπιθυμία in 1:14, the concept of δειψυχία in 1:8 and 4:8, and the perfectionistic ideals of 1:4, 2:22, and 3:2. The primary dividing line in James scholarship lies between those who see at work an OT demand for single-hearted monotheistic loyalty or else hellenistic concepts of human psychagogy and *askesis*.⁴³⁷

James' portrayal of the cosmic actors of God and Satan/demons has implications for its anthropology. As we have seen, a dialectic relationship often exists between the cosmic and human roles, where the mitigation of the divine, satanic, or human roles within the divine court affects the portrayal of the remaining actors. In James, the inner-workings of the human heart directly relate to the question of probation: each person is placed under probation (πειράζεται) when baited and captured 'by (or by means of) his own ἐπιθυμία' (1:14). This statement follows directly on the mitigation of divine agency from the role of ὁ πειράζων. At question is whether the divine role of agent shifts to demonic powers or to the human nature.

For some scholars, the heightened anthropological emphasis in Jas 1:14 and elsewhere has the ring of psychagogic concerns found in popular hellenistic philosophies

⁴³⁷Whether these two concepts are necessarily binary is itself in question, on which see below.

focused on the cultivation of the person and the control of the ἐπιθυμία. For these scholars, James, like Philo and Ben Sira, likewise internalises the role of ὁ πειράζων into the base human condition that must be managed through discipline and pedagogy.

However, Philo explicitly rejects a satanic agent, relegating external supernatural factors to the intermediary agency of the Logos or other subservient intermediaries. Similarly, Ben Sira intentionally undermines external sources for evil. In contrast, James maintains a central place for active demonic and satanic interference. While James at times links his anthropology with demonic agency (e.g., Jas 3:15; 4:8), nevertheless this cosmic vision is markedly different than the internalising impulse of Philo and Ben Sira's anthropological volunteerism. In what follows, I will argue that the combination of a divided heart and demonic agency in James fits better within the spectrum of popular supernaturalism of *Jubilees*, Qumran, the *Testament of the Twelve*, and rabbinic midrash.

9.3.1. Primary Anthropological Passages in James

My anthropological reading of James is drawn primarily from Jas 1:8; 4:5, 8 and Jas 1:14. After surveying the scholarly readings of these passages I will evaluate James' anthropology as a whole.

9.3.1.1. James 1:8 and the Loyalties of the Heart

From its opening verses the Epistle points to the inner man as the location where faithfulness and endurance is cultivated. In verse 2, probation produces endurance (ὑπομονή), resulting in internal maturity and moral wholeness (that is, the ἀνὴρ τέλειος καὶ ὁλόκληρος). Those who respond to probation in the appropriate manner will therefore lack nothing (ἐν μηδενὶ λειπόμενοι). This theme of perfection is continued in v. 12, where

endurance (ὑπομένειν) results in the blessing (μακάριος) and a crown of life (στέφανος τῆς ζωῆς). Some scholars see this theme of perfection as the ultimate goal of the author.⁴³⁸ The adjectival form (τέλειος) is repeated five times in James: ‘perfect work’ and ‘you be perfect’ in 1:4a, b; ‘perfect gift’ of 1:17; ‘perfect law’ in 1:25 and ‘perfect man’ in 3:2. The verb form occurs in 2:8 ‘fulfil (τελείετε) the royal law’ and in 2:22 faith is ‘brought to completion’ (ἐτελειώθη). The noun appears in 5:11 ‘the end goal (τέλος) of the Lord’. The word of truth, law of liberty, and wisdom are all ‘perfect gifts’ given to those who love the Lord with a ‘whole heart’ (1:17).⁴³⁹ Hartin 1991, 17–39 sees as fundamental to the concept of anthropological perfection the notion of faithfulness and undivided loyalty to God, likely connected to Torah obedience and couched in the terms of loving God and humanity. For Cheung, the concept of *imitatio Dei* based on Lev 19:2 lies behind the exhortation: to be perfect is to be holy, righteous, and faithful as God is holy, righteous, and faithful.⁴⁴⁰

James envisions a process where probation works to produce a beneficial anthropological outcome. As Allison argues, the author does not see suffering as beneficial in itself, but rather as a means of producing virtue.⁴⁴¹ Probation happens, as per 1:4, ἵνα ᾗτε τέλειοι. Here, τέλειος probably reflects the biblical Hebrew concept of שלם or תמים signifying ‘unblemished’, ‘undivided’, or ‘whole’ as in an ‘undivided heart’; as Deut 18:13 demanded ‘you must be perfect תמים/τέλειος before the Lord your God.’⁴⁴² In Gen 6:9, Deut

⁴³⁸The importance of the perfection/wholeness theme in James has been better articulated in German scholarship than in English scholarship. Cf. Hoppe 1977; Zmijewski 1980; Frankemölle 1985; Frankemölle 1989, Frankemölle 1990, Frankemölle 1994; Popkes 1986, 45–46; Klein 1995b; Tsuji 1997, 53–54, 100–4; Konrad 1998, 267–86; however, cf. Hartin 2003.

⁴³⁹Cf. Cheung 2003, 162–69.

⁴⁴⁰Cheung 2003, 181.

⁴⁴¹Allison 2013, 153; so also Klein 1995b, 54–56.

⁴⁴²Cf. 1 Kings 8:61; 11:4, 10; 15:3, 14; 1 Chr 28:9; *T. Judah* 23:5.

18:13; 2 Sam 22:26 and Sir 44:17 the term refers specifically to undivided loyalty to God.⁴⁴³

This ‘wholehearted’ feature of the biblical tradition echos James’ intention that his readers be ‘lacking in nothing’, where the context is that of wholeness or completeness rather than ‘sinlessness’.⁴⁴⁴ Similar ideas appear in Qumran (1QS 1.8; 2.2; 4.22; 5.24; 8.10, 26; 9.2; 1QM 14.7; 4Q418 172 4; 4Q510).⁴⁴⁵

This human unity stands in contrast with the term δΐψυχος in 1:7–8.⁴⁴⁶ This term functions as a description of the internal divided loyalties that present a major barrier to James’ desired anthropological unity.⁴⁴⁷ Should the readers find themselves internally lacking (v. 5, here specifically lacking σοφ(α)s), they are to ask in prayer, appealing to God’s character as one who gives ‘simply’ and ‘without holding back’ (ἀπλῶς καὶ μὴ ὀνειδίζοντος).⁴⁴⁸ The posture of this request, however, must be that of faithfulness (ἐν πίστει) rather than with an attitude that disputes (διακρινόμενος) the beneficence of God.⁴⁴⁹ Those who dispute God’s

⁴⁴³This is the reading taken by *Tg. Neof.* on Gen 22:6, 8, 14 that Abraham had both a perfect heart (בלבבה שלמה) and an ‘undivided heart’ (בלבי פלני).

⁴⁴⁴Allison 2013, 155 translates the concept here as ‘undivided loyalty’.

⁴⁴⁵Beyond the biblical calls for wholeheartedness, many scholars see parallels with hellenistic discussions on moral perfection, e.g., Kloppenborg 2010; Klein 1995b, 56–65. Stoic thought is commonly in view: Kloppenborg cites Plutarch *Mor.* 1046 and Stobaeus *Ecl.* 2.7.11G. More commonly, scholars cite Philo’s desire to rid oneself of anger, being peaceable, uniting word and deed, removing anger from the soul and rendering it gentle and submissive to face every demand in both act and word (*Leg.* 3.150), or as in *Abr.* 34 where ‘Noah became perfect’ in that he acquired not one virtue but all of them. Less directly, but still with Hellenistic notions in view, *4 Macc.* 6:30 and Wisdom 10:5 emphasise the educational features of trials. In this vein, some scholars see in James’ probation the educational means of attaining perfection; so Allison 2013, 149, citing Herodotus 1.207; Seneca *Prov.* 1.5–6 (‘God tests man, hardens him, and fits him for his own service’), 2.5–6 (‘God says to good men: Let them be harassed by toil, by suffering, by losses, in order that they may gather true strength’); Epictetus *Diatr.* 1.24.1–3 (‘It is difficulties that show what men are’). Such ‘educational’ aspect of trials leading to beneficial results are considered by Popkes 1997, 96 as core to the Epistle.

⁴⁴⁶So Moo 1985, 63; Moo 2000, 59.

⁴⁴⁷Cf. Popkes 1986, 45–47, 130–31, 191–94.

⁴⁴⁸Though ἀπλῶς may signify ‘generously’ (e.g., Ropes 1916b, 139–40), most commentators favour the sense of ‘simply’ or ‘without mental reservation’ (e.g., Davids 1982, 72–73; Johnson 1995, 179; McKnight 2011, 88).

⁴⁴⁹As noted above, the majority has read διακρινόμενος as describing a ‘doubter’, that is, one whose

goodness in times of trouble are ἀκατάστατος (unstable, fickle) and διψυχος (two-souled), terms that stand in contrast to the earlier description of divine singleness and unity.⁴⁵⁰ James' use of the term διψυχος probably derives from the Old Testament concept of the 'double-hearted person' and its antithetical links with the *Shema*.⁴⁵¹

In sum, the ἀνὴρ διψυχος is someone whose allegiance to God is less than total, whose devotion is not characterised by ἀπλότης, and who does not love the Lord with all his heart.⁴⁵² This sentiment continues in Jas 4:5–8.

faith vacillates in the presence of trials; so Martin 1988, 20 relates διακρινόμενος to the term διψυχος as an indicator of doubt, the plague of indecision, or the wavering of faith. Against this reading of διακρινόμενος, Spitaler has made a compelling case for reading the term as 'one who disputes or makes distinctions', here against God, and in 2:14 against members of the community; so Spitaler 2006; Spitaler 2007. Following Kraft 1963, 112, Spitaler has pointed out that the common translation of διακρίνεσθαι in Matt 21:21; Mark 11:23; Acts 10:20; Rom 4:20; 14:23; Jas 1:6 and Jude 9, 23 as 'to doubt' conflicts with the 'utter lack of such a sense in either Classical or Hellenistic Greek, as well as the patristic authors', who preferred verbs such as διαπορεύω, ἐνδοιμάζω, διστάζω, διψυχέω to express 'doubt'. In Spitaler's reading, the sin of διακρινόμενος in James is not that of a weakened psychological state where a hint of doubt creeps into the mind; rather, it describes a posture of the heart which, provoked by trial, disputes divine integrity and goodness. This reading may illuminate the Epistle's closing appeal to the example of Job in Jas 5:11, given the poignant use of the term in LXX Job 9:14; 12:11; 15:1; 21:22; 23:10, where it is only God who has the right to make such judgements and not man. Allison 2013, 179–181 is unconvinced on the semantic level, though his anthropological conclusions are essentially the same. Allison 2013, 189 sees the διψυχος as likely related to the Hebrew שתי לבבות or לב ולב (single heart), or כל לב (whole heart), citing 2 Chron 30:12; Jer 32:39; Ezek 11:19; 4Q183 1 2.4; 4Q214a 1 2.8; *b Ber.* 57a; also Ps 86:11 'unify my heart'; Deut 6:5; 2 Kings 23:3; Ps 119:2, 34, 145; Zeph 3:14; Eccl 7:27; CD 15:9, 12; 1QS 5:8–9, 1QH 6:26; *Test. Levi* 13:1.

⁴⁵⁰On the relationship of 1:8 to 1:5 where God is unswervingly a giver of good things, cf. McKnight 2011, 88; Martin 1988, 18, 21; Davids 1982, 73, who read the humanly capricious διψυχος in contrast to the divinely consistent ἀπλώς.

⁴⁵¹On the origin of the term διψυχος, see the studies of Marshall 1973; Seitz 1944; Seitz 1947; Seitz 1958; Porter 1996; and Cheung 2003, 196–122; on the Shepherd of Hermas sharing the lost source of Eldad and Modad, cf. Allison 2011. On a possible OT provenance of the term, cf. Richardson 1997, citing the semitic 'two-person person' of Ps 12:2; 1 Chr. 12:33; 1 Kings 18:21. Also McKnight 2011, 91 and the כָּל־לֵב לַיהוָה of Deut 6:5–6; 13:3, 18:13; Ps 101:2, 4, 6; Hos 10:2.; cf. Davids 1982, 74. On the links in James to the Shema and the appeal to religious consistency, cf. Schlatter 1932, 116; McKnight 2011, 92.

⁴⁵²A similar sentiment is expressed by R. Tanchuma in *Midr. Tanh.* 23b on Deut 6:5 and 26:16–17: 'Let not those who wish to pray to God have two hearts, one directed to Him and one to something else.'

9.3.1.2. James and the Implanted Spirit

The δῆψυχος of 1:8 returns in 4:8, but now in a more explicit relationship to the impure heart.⁴⁵³ The readers are presented with a choice between friendship with God and friendship with the world.⁴⁵⁴ The symptoms of this cosmic struggle are internalized: quarrels and conflicts within the community stem from the cravings and desires that battle ‘within the body’ (τῶν ἡδονῶν ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ὑμῶν), a theme addressed previously by the author at 3:2–12 with a special emphasis on the tongue.⁴⁵⁵

The author makes a difficult statement regarding the ‘spirit that is made to dwell inside of us’ in 4:5. This verse contains several issues of lexeme and syntax, as a survey of modern translations demonstrates:

NASB: Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: ‘He jealously desires the Spirit which he has made to dwell in us?’

RSV: Or do you suppose it is in vain that the scripture says, ‘He yearns jealously over the spirit which he made to dwell⁴⁵⁶ in us’.

NIV: Or do you think Scripture says without reason ‘The Spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely?’⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵³ Pace Porter 1996, who sees here a different theme.

⁴⁵⁴ Note the possible connection to the Jesus tradition proposed by Kloppenborg 2010 and MacArthur 1998 on the connection between serving two gods as in Matt 6:24.

⁴⁵⁵ Though note McKnight 2011, 324, who argues that μέλεσιν represent the members of the ecclesial community, rather than body parts.

⁴⁵⁶ The Byzantine text and a few other MSS (e.g., P33, M) have the intransitive κατώκησεν here, making τὸ πνεῦμα the subject of the verb: ‘The spirit which lives within us.’ The older witnesses (P⁷⁴ B Ψ 049 1241 1739 al) have the causative verb κατώκισεν implying a different subject and τὸ πνεῦμα as the object: ‘The spirit that *he causes* to live within us’.

⁴⁵⁷ Though note the margin: ‘God jealously longs for the spirit that he made to live in us’; or ‘the Spirit he caused to live in us longs jealously’.

A number of questions make this passage difficult. (1) the source of the ‘scriptural’ citation is unclear, as the standard biblical corpus contains no such quote.⁴⁵⁸ Furthermore, (2) the syntax of the citation is ambiguous, as *πρὸς φθόνον* could modify either *λέγει* or *ἐπιποθεῖ* (‘the Scripture speaks in vain’ vs. ‘in vain the spirit jealously desires us’). (3) the noun *τὸ πνεῦμα* could function either as the subject (nominative) or object (accusative) of the verb *ἐπιποθεῖ*. Finally, (4) the spirit in view could either be the divine spirit, or a human spirit implanted at creation. Points 2–4 have implications for the Epistle’s anthropology.

Martin has argued that 4:5a should be translated as ‘the Holy Spirit opposes envy’, the argument being that God has placed within his people his Spirit which opposes envy within the community. In this case, the jealousy (*ἐπιποθεῖ*) would be God’s, with 4:6 ensuring God’s adequacy to fulfil the demands for unity he places on his people given that God’s ‘greater grace’ overcomes the envy of human nature.⁴⁵⁹ However, others read *τὸ πνεῦμα* as the human spirit as seen in 2:26.⁴⁶⁰ Rather than yearning after God, this base spirit craves personal pleasure (*ἡδονή*) and other desires (4:1–3). Following this reading, one could translate ‘the spirit which God created to dwell within us is one of jealousy’, acknowledging the envious tendencies of the natural human inclination.⁴⁶¹

While the implications of Jas 4:5 for James’ anthropology are obscured by these syntactical difficulties, the following verses reveal a number of anthropological features

⁴⁵⁸For James’ appropriation of the term from the lost source of Eldad and Modad, cf. Allison 2011.

⁴⁵⁹So Martin 1988, 150–151, arguing that context is not that of the author returning to the human nature of 4:1–3, but rather in turning to God’s displeasure with sinful behaviour of 4:1–4; similarly Moo 2000, 146.

⁴⁶⁰Cf. McKnight 2011, 339–40, arguing primarily from parallels in Herm. *Mand.* 3:1–2, while reading parallels from Gen 2:7; 6:17; 7:15; Is 2:22; Job 27:3; 33:4; 34:14–15; also Wis 12:1 and 1QS 3:18–4:26.

⁴⁶¹So Coppieters 1915, 53, who appeals to LXX Ecclesiastes, in particular 4:4; cf. Richardson 1997, 180. On the parallels to Hermas, cf. Allison 2011.

which throw 4:5 into relief. The verses that follow are clearly anthropological in focus. The ἐπιθυμία and ἡδονή within the human heart (4:2–3) can be supplanted only by God’s supernaturally intervening greater grace (μεῖζονα χάριν) in 4:6. The requirements for access to this greater grace include humility (4:6 ταπεινός; cf. 1:9), reconciliation that stems from submission to God (4:6a, 7a), and active resistance of the devil.⁴⁶² In order to realign the human spirit with divine friendship, the author requires specific actions, specifically that the ἁμαρτωλοὶ καθαρίσατε χεῖρας and that the δίψυχοι ἀγνίσατε καρδίας (4:8). Here, the ‘sinners’ are to ‘cleansing their hands’ and the ‘double-souled’ are to ‘purify their hearts.’ The mention of both the heart and the soul evokes the *Shema* and its call to single-heartedness, and as in 1:8 above rejects a double loyalty that vacillates between two masters.⁴⁶³

However one translates Jas 4:5–7, this much seems clear: the author is deeply concerned with both internal human and external supernatural interference to single-hearted religious faithfulness. In both 1:8 and 4:8 these dual agents seem to stand responsible for producing within the person a rebellion against divine loyalty.

9.3.1.3. James 1:14 and Ἐπιθυμία

Whereas Jas 1:8 and 4:5–8 provide us with somewhat indirect information regarding probation, Jas 1:13–15 addresses the question directly. Responding to the claim that God shares responsibility for human trials, James reorients this responsibility toward

⁴⁶²Kloppenborg 2010, 48 labels this reference to Satan a ‘mythologization’ of James’ psychology. Despite the oft-noted absence of a malevolent agent in the ἐπιθυμία of 1:14–15, here in 4:5–8 James’ anthropology stands in close relation with the command to resist the devil in 4:7. The common dialectic between human and supernatural roles in broader Jewish literature should temper exaggerated claims on James’ lack of demonic framework both in 4:5–8 and in 1:13–15.

⁴⁶³On the two friendships in Jas 4:4, cf. Jeremias 1959; Johnson 1983; Laws 1973; von Lips 1990b; Michl 1963; Carpenter 2000.

the human interior: οὐδεὶς πειράζεται ἀπὸ θεοῦ;⁴⁶⁴ rather, ἕκαστος πειράζεται when lured ὑπὸ τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας. The solicitation to succumb to probation finds its source, not in God, but rather in the desire that resides universally within the human heart. The questions that concern us here are twofold: (1) does ἐπιθυμία function as a purely malignant source of sin or as a neutral seat of human desire; (2) does the author portray ἐπιθυμία as the semantic agent that instigates the probation or as a semantic instrument or means by which probation takes place?

Most scholars assume that James operates with a definition of ἐπιθυμία that includes a generally pessimistic anthropology, one in which human desire has a natural inclination toward evil things.⁴⁶⁵ A sexual colouring may be present in the ἐπιθυμία of Jas 1:14, given the imagery of conception and birth that follow, but we should take care not to allow the combination of πειράζειν and ἐπιθυμία to evoke purely sexual connotations.⁴⁶⁶ Certainly the majority of scholars have argued that ἐπιθυμία operates as the agent of testing which stands in juxtaposition to God's non-involvement in 1:13. In this reading ἐπιθυμία operates as the personified force that lures the person to sin.⁴⁶⁷ The common argument is that James traces the πειρασμός of 1:13–14 not to God, nor even to Satan, but rather to the seductive force of the powerful ἐπιθυμία. Commentators often go so far as to claim that the absence of a supernatural agent in the passage is indicative of the author's intention to focus the discourse entirely on human responsibility.⁴⁶⁸ Here, James would exclude or at least strategically ignore

⁴⁶⁴Or possible ὑπὸ θεοῦ, so **8** etc.

⁴⁶⁵So Dibelius 1976, 123. Martin 1988, 31 perhaps stretches the definition by identifying ἐπιθυμία as an 'arrogant desire to achieve its ambition independently of God'.

⁴⁶⁶Against Davids 1982, 84; with Allison 2013.

⁴⁶⁷Cf. Martin 1988, 36 on the fishing imagery.

⁴⁶⁸Cf. Klein 1995b, 82–91, 116 who argues for an absence of the metaphysical in James' anthropology, but rather a 'two-way' ethic of human response and responsibility.

the Tempter without, in order to emphasise the Tempter within.⁴⁶⁹ Martin sees here an implicit rejection by the author of fatalism and a dualistic worldview that placed responsibility for sin at the feet of either God or Satan. Rather, ‘the author traces the genealogy of sin no further than to the person himself’.⁴⁷⁰ James would in this reading internalise evil by positioning the ἐπιθυμία in each human heart as the source of trial, enticement, deception, and finally death-producing sin (1:15–16).

I remain, however, somewhat skeptical against the majority opinion. As demonstrated above, the devil stands prominently in Jas 4:7 as an active agent who works in concert with the impure heart of the διψυχία and must therefor be resisted. Furthermore, the syntactical ambiguity of 1:14 leaves the semantic waters somewhat muddled. The key phrase ‘each one is tested when he is dragged away and lured by his own desire’ is ambiguous both grammatically and in relation to the preceding clause against which it is juxtaposed. Since the passive phrase ἕκαστος δὲ πειράζεται (‘each one is tested’) stands in contrast to the preceding claim ἀπὸ θεοῦ πειράζομαι (‘I am tested’), we would expect a natural parallelism. However, in 1:14 ἐπιθυμία does not function in a grammatical relationship with the passive πειράζομαι (that is, we cannot read πειράζεται ὑπὸ τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας) but rather with the participles ἐξελκόμενος and δελεαζόμενος. In other words, rather than stating simply ἕκαστος δὲ πειράζεται ὑπὸ τῆς ἐπιθυμίας followed by two feminine genitive participles with ἐπιθυμία as their head-noun to describe the method of desire’s test (i.e., ἐξελκόμενη, δελεαζόμενη), the author inserts a certain ambiguity into the clause through the use of the masculine passive

⁴⁶⁹So Cadoux 1944, 87; in this vein, parallels to Ben Sira’s anthropology are made in abundance in Frankemölle 1985; Frankemölle 1989.

⁴⁷⁰Martin 1988, 30, 42. Cf. Richardson 1997, 81, who contrasts 1 Peter’s ‘devil like a roaring lion’ to James’ believer, whose ‘own desire is like a marauding beast that would consume him.’ In both readings of James the human soul, not an external Satan, is man’s own worse enemy.

participles ἐξελκόμενος and δελεαζόμενος with ἕκαστος as their head-noun.

This construction could indicate that ‘one is tested not by God, but rather by ἐπιθυμία’, as is typically read. However, one could likewise read the author to emphasise *how* or *by what means* each one is tested: that is, through the universal human emotion of desire.⁴⁷¹ Adopting the fishing metaphor of the verse, we should ask whether ἐπιθυμία functions here as the fisherman or as the bait. The agent, ὁ πειράζων as it were, is left ambiguous.

The debate on ἐπιθυμία’s role in James serves as an important comparison with broader ancient Jewish and Christian descriptions of anthropology. Is the human inclination the reified or at least personified agent of testing, or is it the location from which cosmic forces act? What is clear in James is that the ἐπιθυμία functions as a key factor in the unfolding process of testing, sin, and death. In sections 9.3.3.–9.3.2. I will return to this question of human or satanic agency in probation in a more comprehensive analysis.

9.3.1.4. Jas 3:2–13 and the Tongue

In chapter 3, the tongue is linked to both compromised and perfected anthropology: ‘If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man (τέλειος ἀνὴρ), able to bridle the whole body as well’ (3:5). The tongue, while a small body part, is ‘set among the members as that which defiles the whole body’ (3:6). Though part of the

⁴⁷¹ While the use of ὑπό with the genitive after a passive verb is primarily an indicator of agency, the use of ὑπό as instrument, means, or secondary agent is by no means uncommon: cf. e.g., Ezek 34:19 τὸ τεταραγμένον ὕδωρ ὑπὸ τῶν ποδῶν ὑμῶν ἔπινον; Josephus *Antiq.* 8:225 δελεασθὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ ναοῦ καὶ τῆς θρησκείας τῆς ἐν αὐτῷ τοῦ θεοῦ; Eusebius 6.42.2 ὑπὸ λιμοῦ καὶ δίψης καὶ κρύους, καὶ νόσων καὶ ληστῶν καὶ θηρίων διεφθαρμένων; Eusebius 6.18.1 Ἀμβρόσιος . . . πρὸς τῆς ὑπὸ Ὠριγένους πρεσβευομένης ἀληθείας ἐλεγχθεὶς, καὶ ὡς ἂν ὑπὸ φωτὸς καταυγασθεὶς τὴν διάνοιαν; Athanagoris *Plea* 1 διδαχθήσεσθε δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου ἄτερ δίκης καὶ παρὰ πάντα νόμον καὶ λόγον πάσχοντας ἡμᾶς. Cf. LSJ s.v. ὑπό.

body, the tongue in James takes on various quasi-demonic features. It is ‘set on fire by hell’ (φλογιζομένη ὑπὸ τῆς γέεννης). It a ‘restless evil’ (ἀκατάστατον κακόν), ‘full of deadly poison’ (3:8). The tongue manifests the divided loyalties addressed in chapter 1 and 4, now couched in terms of statements of loyalty to God (‘we bless our Lord and Father’) in contrast to curses against one’s fellow man (3:9).⁴⁷² This division between religious practice and community ethic may echo the contrast made by James between chapters 1 and 2.⁴⁷³

Given Part 2 above, there is precedence for seeing the tongue as linked intrinsically with demonic forces; either rhetorically (e.g., Ben Sira), or ontologically (as in the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* or the rabbinic literature). Compare the apotropaic prayers of Sir 22:27–23:2 and the Genizah prayer cited above:

Sir 22:27 Who will put a guard on my mouth and on my lips a wise seal, lest I fall by them and my tongue will destroy me? 23:1 My father’s God and the lord of my life, do not abandon me to their counsel and do not allow me to fall by them. 23:2 Who will put a scourge on my *yetzer* (מִי יִתֵּן עַל יִצְרִי), and on my heart a rod of castigation.

Yahweh, save my soul . . . give full justice and redeem me and save me from all the evil spirits which rule the *yetzer* of a person’s heart and distance from me the evil *yetzer* and the evil tongue and evil man and all that your soul hated.⁴⁷⁴

In both instances the tongue is linked with the *yetzer* within the context of an apotropaic prayer; where Ben Sira weaponises this prayer against the human will, the Genizah document, similar to *Aramaic Levi* and *Jubilees*, links the human bodily condition

⁴⁷²On the possible creedal connotations of this blessing, see below in section 10.1.1.

⁴⁷³See further below in section 10.2.

⁴⁷⁴Translated from Margaliot 1973, 139.

with supernatural powers. Given James' penchant for appealing to demonic powers elsewhere, I will argue in what follows that the Epistle approximates an anthropology more akin to the Genizah document and the anthropology found in the Rewritten Bible.

9.3.2 *James' Anthropology: Scholarly Models*

Jas 1:8; 1:13–14; 4:5–8 provide us with important anthropological material from the Epistle. How have scholars evaluated the Epistle's anthropology as a whole? In comparison with the copious literature produced, for example, on Pauline anthropology,⁴⁷⁵ to my knowledge there have been no monograph-length works and only a spattering of articles dedicated to James' anthropology.⁴⁷⁶ The majority of discussions occur in commentaries that address the topic in passing,⁴⁷⁷ Discussions tend to analyse James through one of two models. Typically, James' anthropology is compared (whether sympathetically or critically) to a Jewish 'doctrine of the *yetzer*' with heavy reliance on a supposed anthropological dualism drawn from rabbinic sources. Others have argued that James participates within the broadly hellenistic concerns for psychagogy and cultivation of the soul through *ἄσκησις* as can be traced in certain philosophical schools, hellenistic Judaism, and later Christian literature.

⁴⁷⁵. Among which, see especially the classic study of Jewett 1971, and more recently Scornaienchi 2008.

⁴⁷⁶. For example Kloppenborg 2010; Marcus 1982; Wilson 2002.

⁴⁷⁷. Though some commentaries do provide fairly extensive excursions on the topic, e.g., Davids 1982, 35–38.

9.3.2.1. Hellenistic Ασκήσις and the Cultivation of the Soul

In a 2010 article John Kloppenborg argues that James' interest in human interiority primarily relates to a wider concern for the cultivation of the soul through ascetic practises or *ἀσκήσις* as found in various strains of Hellenistic philosophy of the early Roman period.⁴⁷⁸ Kloppenborg starts by reading the relevant anthropological passages introduced above as a reworking of the Jesus traditions from Matt 21:21 and Mark 11:23 that casts Jesus' invective against serving two masters within the broader Hellenistic virtue of internal 'singleness' of personhood.⁴⁷⁹ Kloppenborg explains the contrast between the divine consistency in Jas 1:5 (*ἀπλῶς*) and 1:17 (*οὐκ ἐνι παραλλαγῇ ἢ τροπῇ ἀποσκίασμα*) and the wavering human *δίψυχος* (1:8, 4:8) as an 'amalgam of Platonism and Stoicism mediated through Hellenistic Judaism'. Kloppenborg sees this combination operating in literature as diverse as Sirach, Philo, and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*.⁴⁸⁰ Potentially dualistic language in the Epistle is read according to the philosophically informed virtues and vices within the human 'self'. Obstacles to virtuous behaviour are simply the natural 'enticement of pleasure and desire'.⁴⁸¹ The human problem resides in a miscomprehension of the divine character exacerbated by the influence of base human *ἐπιθυμίαι* and *ἡδοναί* as they interfere with the development of higher spiritual knowledge.

According to Kloppenborg's model, the Epistle of James attempts to instruct the readers in the cultivation of a single-mindedness that provides the salve for natural human weakness. Trials provide a training ground for developing moral perfection and personal

⁴⁷⁸Kloppenborg 2010.

⁴⁷⁹By Kloppenborg's reckoning Q 11:9–13, 6:22–23 and their list of internal challenges, which James then recasts as *ποικίλιος πειρασμοίς*.

⁴⁸⁰Kloppenborg 2010, 43.

⁴⁸¹Kloppenborg 2010, 46.

virtue. By this process, the psychosis of the ‘divided self’ is unified into a singleness that reflects the divine unity. In this view, Jas 1:13–14 argues that God is not the author of temptation, for in fact temptations arise from desire itself. The human non-rational emotion becomes the dividing agent in the human experience. However, since these trials arise naturally from within, they should be embraced as an opportunity for the growth of the soul.⁴⁸²

Walter Wilson makes a similar argument for James’ integration within the philosophical schools, though with more attention given to James’ use of classical biblical language of personal integration.⁴⁸³ Wilson sees a depiction of the *ἐπιθυμία* as a quasi-personal entity based on biblical imagery (sin, flesh, and desire) that becomes associated with supernatural evil, and that this internal struggle is in fact a victory over evil conceived in apocalyptic terms.⁴⁸⁴ Wilson argues that Jas 1:12–15 ‘highlights how the human choice, made one way or the other, sets in motion a chain of events that determines one’s final destiny The decision that confronts the human self in its experience of evil, then, is presented as a decision between endurance and desire.’ Wilson rejects close parallels between James and Philo, for whom the soul is divided into the rational and irrational parts, preferring an appeal to Stoic psychology. Here, the self is not directly subject to irrational

⁴⁸²Here Kloppenborg relies heavily on Philo *Spec. Leg.* 4.79–81, as well as on a number of Stoic parallels. Other Jewish parallels are seen especially in the *Testaments of the Twelve*. On parallel concerns within the philosophical schools, cf. Gill 2006, 75–76. Kloppenborg’s argument, in the form of a journal article, is necessarily limited in its scope, and as such he neglects to mention similar calls for personal integration of the heart that appeared within classical Judaism such as the use of the *Shema* to require ‘whole-hearted’ devotion to God. These concerns for the health of the internal life do not appear bound to Hellenistic philosophy. Indeed, the *Shema* seems to be in view in the ‘One God’ of Jas 2:19, as well as the love command of 2:8–10. One would expect a more complete defence in Kloppenborg’s forthcoming commentary on the Epistle of James in the Hermeneia series.

⁴⁸³Cf. Wilson 2002.

⁴⁸⁴Wilson 2002, 147.

passions, but rather ‘reason intervenes as the craftsman of impulse.’⁴⁸⁵

But is the appeal to the philosophical schools legitimate, or does James reflect an anthropology (in correspondence with a demonology) beyond the scope of philosophical psychagogy?

9.3.2.2. *Ἐπιθυμία* as the Jewish Double-*Yetzer*

More common than an appeal to the philosophical schools is the tendency to see within the double loyalties of *διδυμία* a parallel to the Jewish *yetzer ra* and *yetzer tov*. Rather than James espousing a specific philosophical concern for the unification of base desires, this reading describes James’ anthropology as an internal battle against human sinfulness.⁴⁸⁶

The dependence on a Jewish ‘*yetzer* theology’ in the Epistle of James has been advanced most widely by two scholarly works. In a seminal 1982 article Joel Marcus attempted to assess James’ anthropology in light of the Jewish evil inclination.⁴⁸⁷ Marcus draws upon a diverse sampling of Jewish literature including Sirach, Philo, Qumran, the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, Hermas, and to a lesser extent later rabbinic literature, and attempts to portray a ‘doctrine of the evil inclination’ within Jewish thought. Building on Porter’s 1901 argument for the *yetzer* as a widely received anthropological model from Sirach to the rabbis, Marcus traces this ‘doctrine of the *yetzer*’ from the biblical texts of Gen

⁴⁸⁵So Diogenes Laertius 7.86. Similar arguments have been made by Dibelius 1976, 111; Mussner 1964, 71 n. 6; *TDNT* II, 925.

⁴⁸⁶Parallels are commonly cited from the ‘double face’ of *T. Ash.*, the ‘two tongued’ and ‘double hearted’ Sir 5:9; 1:28; the double heart (בלב ולב) of Ps 11:3; so Martin 1988, 20, 154; Davids 1982, 74; Cheung 2003, 201; *TDNT* s.v. Διδυμία.

⁴⁸⁷Marcus 1982. However, previously Mussner 1964 had stated that ‘James in his opinion about the *ἐπιθυμία* has been guided by the Jewish doctrine of the evil inclination, in accordance with which it has been created by God Himself and lives as a foreign God in the body, more precisely in the “heart” of the man; but it is man himself who makes the inclination to the “evil inclination”’.

6:5 and 8:21 through Deut 31:21, 1 Chr 28:9, Isa 26:3, and Ps 103:14 and their reception in the Second Temple literature and beyond.⁴⁸⁸

In the same year that Marcus' article was published, Peter Davids' commentary on James drew similar conclusions. Both Davids and Marcus describe the *yetzer* as a base, natural force placed by God within each human since creation, a natural impulse of desire that becomes evil when devoid of the divine presence.⁴⁸⁹ Now in the form of lust, the evil *yetzer* bears the responsibility for sin, and provides the internal source of evil.⁴⁹⁰ The necessary remedy for this *yetzer* is found in a 'counterforce' for good with the ability to overcome the evil *yetzer*, a force variously described as the Law, the good *yetzer*, or the Holy Spirit.⁴⁹¹

In this reading, the *yetzer hara* is specifically identified with the ἐπιθυμία of 1:14–15 and the πνεῦμα of 4:5. So, in 1:14–15 it is the ἐπιθυμία that leads people to sin.⁴⁹² The *yetzer* serves as an agent of probation, tempting people to blame God like Israel did in the

⁴⁸⁸On the *yetzer* as a traceable 'doctrine', see Marcus 1982, 607, relying on Porter 1901.

⁴⁸⁹Davids 1982, 36.

⁴⁹⁰Marcus 1982, 610, citing Sir 15:1.

⁴⁹¹Davids 1982, 36.

⁴⁹²Davids 1982, 83–84, citing ARN 20, *Gen. Rab.* 9:7, *b. Yom.* 69b, *b. Ber.* 5a as his primary sources. Similarly, Martin 1988, 20 calls the 'rabbinic doctrine of the *yetzer*' a 'source for this teaching'. Note also Windisch 1951, 8; Cantinat 1973, 86–87, who considers the ἐπιθυμία here to be the clearest instance in the NT of '*yetzer* theology'. The ἐπιθυμία is not infrequently positioned as the agent or means for evil in the wider Jewish literature. In Philo, *Spec* 4.83–90 ἐπιθυμία is the root of evil: 'just like the creeping sickness... does not stand still in one place but moves about and courses round and round... it imitates the force of fire working on an abundance of fuel' The use of ἐπιθυμία in Hermas seems to be especially close to James' usage. See Cohen Stuart 1984b, 146–153. Allison 2013, 246–247 sees a similar idea in the ἐπιθυμία πονηρά of Herm. *Vis.* 1.1.8; 1.2.4; 3.7.3; 3.8.4; *Mand.* 12.1.1–3; also in Pauline literature, e.g., Col 3:5's ἐπιθυμίαν κακήν. Allison sees within the development of the *yetzer hara* and *yetzer hatov* concept a 'likely' influence of the Hellenistic philosophical schools where 'desire' becomes the chief source of human problems, with Klein 1995b, 91. As Klein 1995b, 116 summarises, ἐπιθυμία as human desire 'leads the person into the trial (1:14), awakens in the person longing for the evil things of the world, especially possession and wealth (4:1–2), and entices the person to such an extent that, once the person has surrendered, it produces sinful behaviour . . . that leads to death' (1:15; 5:20), my translation.

wilderness. Failure to endure such trials of faithfulness is due to the ἐπιθυμία inside, not to God's failure.⁴⁹³ According to Davids, this indwelling *yetzer* of Jas 4:5 has been embedded within the human heart from creation. Similar to the 'spirit' of CD 3:2, the lustful πνεῦμα (in Davids' view another term for the *yetzer*) wars against the things of God, and indeed only God's grace can prevail against it. An entirely negative state of διψυχία results when the *yetzer*/ἡδονή/ἐπιθυμία divide the loyalties of the heart.⁴⁹⁴

According to this scholarly reading of James' anthropology, the battle between the two *yetzarim* is won when the person endures the fiery testings that arouse the *yetzer*, producing in the person a maturity of heart.⁴⁹⁵ Marcus concludes that James, like Sirach, names the wise person as one who observes the law faithfully in the time of testing and in doing so overcomes the *yetzer*.⁴⁹⁶

Both Marcus and to a lesser extent Davids exercised significant influence on subsequent descriptions of James' anthropology and the process of probation and sin.⁴⁹⁷ In this view, the πειρασμός in 1:2; 4:12–13 results from the arousal of the evil inclination, which the person will either endure (thereby gaining maturity, blessing, and life in 1:2–4, 12), or else yield to and suffer the effects of sin and death (1:13–15).⁴⁹⁸ *Yetzer*-mastery requires humility, wisdom, and the 'implanted word' (1:21), whereas the greedy person is ruled by his inclination (1:10–11). James' ideal person is therefore 'the wise man, the one

⁴⁹³ Davids 1982, 83–84.

⁴⁹⁴ Davids 1982, 36, citing *b. Taan.* 23b on Deut 26:16: 'When you make your prayer to God, do not have two hearts, one for God and one for something else'; cf. also Martin 1988, 20.

⁴⁹⁵ Davids 1982, 36, citing Sir 27:5–6; 1QS 2:11–18; 5:4–5; 1QH 4:13–14, 10:22–23; CD 2:14–16. Here, parallels with Philo's anthropology are also mentioned as indicative of the *yetzer*, so Wolfson 1947, 289 n. 39 who links *phantasia* (e.g., *De praem.* 11.63) with the ἐπιθυμία, and from there identifies the *yetzer*.

⁴⁹⁶ Marcus 1982, 620, citing the work of Luck 1971 on Ben Sira.

⁴⁹⁷ Cf. Clock 1985; Tsuji 1997, 84–86; Wall 1997, 203.

⁴⁹⁸ Marcus 1982, 610.

who observes the law, the one who overcomes his *yetzer*, and is blessed.⁴⁹⁹

The view that James functions within the model of a double *yetzer* is unsurprising, as such follows the common view of a Jewish anthropology that had been heavily influenced by hellenistic anthropology.⁵⁰⁰ However, this same double-*yetzer* model has likewise caused a number of scholars to entirely reject the notion that James refers to the *yetzer*, due to the apparent absence of an equivalent to the *yetzer tov*.⁵⁰¹ For example, McKnight, arguing against Marcus, has noted the striking absence of the *yetzer hatov* in James as the anthropological alternative for good that wars against the evil inclination.⁵⁰² As McKnight states, 'Jewish anthropology . . . frequently understands the human heart as twofold, containing a good impulse (*yetzer hatov*) and a bad impulse (*yetzer hara*).'⁵⁰³ McKnight concludes that James' anthropology lacks any such dualism, finding only one spirit, given by God (4:5–8), and though guilty of envy and lust this spirit is saved not by a *yetzer tov* but by God's intervening grace.

Given the extended discussion in chapters 3.2. and throughout part 2 above, I would argue that McKnight has overestimated the unification of any such 'Jewish anthropology', which then leads him to reject the presence of *yetzer* in James. However, McKnight's overall observations in James are correct: there appears to be no *yetzer hatov* operating in James' cosmology. However, this fits the large majority of Jewish anthropologies from the Second Temple period and beyond.

⁴⁹⁹As summarised in Marcus 1982, 621.

⁵⁰⁰See chapter 3.2. above.

⁵⁰¹E.g., Ropes 1916a, 156; also Richardson 1997, 81; Johnson 1995, 94, 281; Popkes 1994, 106.

⁵⁰²McKnight 2011, 118; Marcus 1982, 621 had previously noted this absence, suggesting that it may be a rhetorical device serving James' unwillingness to ascribe to human beings an inherent tendency for good. Even here, however, Marcus betrays an expectation for two *yetzarim*.

⁵⁰³McKnight 2011, 120.

9.3.3. *Reevaluating James' Anthropology*

Scholarly descriptions of James' anthropology as parallel to a 'dualistic rabbinicism' have been misguided. Claims of a homogenised 'doctrine of the Jewish *yetzer*' appearing across Jewish literature and transposed onto the Epistle of James are no longer tenable. As Cohen Stuart has argued, scholars have often anachronistically retrojected rabbinic concepts of the *yetzer* into the Second Temple period and misapplied this reading of the Jewish documents to the New Testament. Ishay Rosen-Zvi subsequently argued against a universally accepted model of a dualistic *yetzer*, as well as against the influence of hellenistic psychagogy as a dominant aspect of the development of Second Temple and rabbinic anthropology. As these arguments call into question many of the standard descriptions of James' anthropology they should be integrated into the scholarly discussion.

As demonstrated in part 2 above, there existed any number of 'doctrines of the *yetzer*' in ancient Judaism, to the point where *yetzer* functions more as a universal trope for the human condition than as any unified doctrine. Furthermore, these anthropological models universally function in a dialectical relationship with their descriptions of the other cosmic *dramatis personae*. As it would have been ill-conceived to describe the anthropologies of *Jubilees*, at Qumran, or in Philo while ignoring the other cosmic roles, so too James' anthropology should be analysed and compared in light of its broader cosmology. It will simply not do to pick out easy similarities between anthropologies, while ignoring glaring differences in theological cosmologies. In what follows, I will attempt to detail the dialectical relationship of these supernatural and human actors.

9.3.3.1. Cosmic Drama in the Epistle of James

In comparing James' portrayal of the cosmic drama with the available spectrum of thought in ancient Judaism, a brief working summary of each role in James will be helpful. God sits in the divine council, operating as the true judge (4:12). He shows mercy on those who show mercy and judges the merciless harshly (2:13) and imminently (5:9). However, God does not play the prosecutorial role of ὁ πειράζων, as such a role would impinge on divine justice.⁵⁰⁴ Within James' cosmic system, an external satanic figure operates in a directly combative role against humankind (4:7), along with demonic forces that extend illicit knowledge in opposition to divine wisdom (3:15). The human interior is exposed to cosmic interference, most clearly through the ἐπιθυμία, but also potentially through the body parts such as the tongue. Using these human points of weakness, external cosmic agents impinge directly upon the human being to provoke a division of loyalty (διψυχία) within the person (4:8). While humans who come under probation may misunderstand this cosmic order and, in a reversal of roles, illegitimately place God under trial (1:2, 12–14), they misconstrue the role of cosmic actors, including God, the devil, and the person's own compromised nature (ἐπιθυμία). The question remains how this portrayal of the cosmic drama compares to the broader Jewish literature.

9.3.3.2. *James, Wisdom, and Philosophy*

As noted above, the distancing of ὁ Πειράζων from divine agency, combined with a particular heightening of James' anthropological emphasis, has for many scholars resonated with the psychagogic concerns of popular hellenistic philosophies that focused on the

⁵⁰⁴Following Kensky 2010, this may be related to the need to define roles within James' monotheistic system.

cultivation of the person and the control of the (particularly male, sexual) passions. Indeed, when reading Jas 1:13–15 most James scholars turn to Philo or more commonly Ben Sira to explain that James likewise internalises the role of ὁ πειράζων within the human condition. However, we should likewise consider how James compares to these works' broader supernatural cosmologies.

In the case of Philo, I noted a strongly developed philosophical answer to the question of divine roles that minimised God's direct contact with evil or the nonrational parts of creation through the use of divine intermediaries. External supernatural factors are relegated to the realm of intermediary agency such as the Logos or angelic figures at the moment of creation. Notably, however, Philo rejects the dualistic cosmologies entailed by a satanic or demonic figure. Similarly, Ben Sira promotes a cosmology that explicitly rejects satanic interference. Though Ben Sira at times takes anthropological concepts and clothes them in demonic language, he rejects external cosmic agency and embeds the responsibility for sin within human nature. The *yetzer* appears in Ben Sira, but functions primarily as the mechanism for legitimate human choices. The burden for choice is placed on the person's free will, to the exclusion of external cosmic interference.

When we compare Philo and Ben Sira with the Epistle of James, neither the anti-dualistic philosophical notions of Philo nor the cosmic demythologisation and resulting voluntarism of Ben Sira should be overlooked when comparing James' acceptance of active demonic and satanic interference. Though James' description of demonic and satanic interference in 3:15 and 4:7 is linked to James' concept of anthropology, nevertheless this cosmic vision is rather different from the anthropological voluntarism of Ben Sira. James' portrayal of satanic or demonic agents does not appear to be rhetorical, and attempts to

force a similar demythologisation in Jas 1:13–14 are illegitimate and unnecessary. In view of James' overall portrayal of the *dramatis personae* of probation, I suspect that James does not share Ben Sira's reluctance to assign responsibility for human failure to demonic forces.

Neither does James use the cosmic intermedianism of Philo's Middle-Platonism to negate divine indictment. In James' cosmic drama, there is a real potential for God to act as agent of probation, in contrast to the metaphysical barriers devised by Philo.

Philo, Ben Sira, and James share deeply in a concern for personal wholeness. All three note the role of Torah as the available remedy for divided loyalty. However, whereas Philo's creation myth injected a metaphysical problem for the human ascent to the knowledge of God, and Ben Sira saw a universal choice available since the time of Adam, the author of James sees the division of religious loyalties stemming from a combination of human vulnerability and demonic interference.

9.3.3.3. James and a Satanically Influenced Cosmology

This combination of a mitigated divine role, demonic agency, and a compromised human condition resulting in a divided heart fits more naturally within the spectrum of ancient voices operating within the common, often Palestinian supernaturalism of *Jubilees*, Qumran, the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, and the rabbinic traditions.⁵⁰⁵ These works emphasise external cosmic agents, ranging from subordinate divine servants to fully dualistic divine enemies. We find in these sources also a strong anthropological emphasis, though one focused on various, even competing versions of a human *yetzer*. Given James' external cosmic agents, the inner human desire in Jas 1:14 falls somewhere along this spectrum: from the

⁵⁰⁵One wonders whether class and education may play a role here: Philo, Ben Sira, and to some extent the Apostle Paul turn to the human condition rather than demonic agency as an explanation for sin.

yetzer as a compromised anthropological target for satanic or demonic attack (akin to *Jubilees*, Qumran sectarian literature, and the *Testaments of the Twelve*) to the more developed quasi-demonic anthropology that resides in an antagonistic position on the human heart, co-operating with satanic forces to destroy its host (so the majority voices within the Tannaitic and Amoraic rabbis). Though the lack of additional information from James makes further distinctions more difficult, it may be possible to position James' instantiation of these cosmic roles more exactly along this spectrum.

9.3.3.3.1. *James and the Dualistic Cosmology of Qumran*

While Qumran sectarian literature shares with James a pessimistic view of anthropology, the need for divine intervention, and a role for external demonic interference, the dualism at Qumran may go beyond or even conflict with what we find in James. There is no indication that the devil in James acts with the dualistic enmity towards divine will as is seen in the Qumranic sources. The primary dualism between divine and demonic agents is in the source of wisdom seen in Jas 3:15–17, where the division of wisdoms may reflect more of the enochic Watcher tradition than a Qumranic dualism. Furthermore, James shows a more positive view of the ability to resist demonic attack than we find at Qumran, as in the assumption of an ability to 'resist the devil' in 4:7 (where this may be tied to the language of ritual purification). Whether this ability for resistance is available on demand, or whether it requires the use of apotropaic prayer (perhaps seen at 2:19; 5:14) or additional divine intervention is less than clear.

9.3.3.3.2. *James and Subordinate Dualism*

Rather than Qumranic dualism, however, Satan may function for James as both the leader of the hostile demonic forces and as the prosecutorial member of the divine court.

This cosmic model can be seen with some variation in *Jubilees*, in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, at various strata of the *Testament of Job*, in the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*, and the limited role of the satanic prosecutor in the rabbis.

Jubilees and the *Testaments of the Twelve* present the *yetzer*/διαβόλιον as the compromised anthropological mechanism on which demonic (and, in the case of the *Testaments of the Twelve*, divine) forces operate. In neither of these sources do we have a ‘double anthropology’, but rather various spirits working within the human condition.⁵⁰⁶ In *Jubilees*, Satan functions both as the ruler of the demonic forces and as a subordinate member of the divine court where he fills a prosecutorial role for the probation of human beings. James may reflect a similar relationship, where the ἐπιθυμία becomes the means by which the satanic prosecutor and his demonic forces implement false wisdom and instigate division of loyalty.⁵⁰⁷ A similar subordinate relationship between God and Satan is also found in the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*, though here Satan’s role is expanded into novellistic fantasy.⁵⁰⁸

The rabbinic literature shows an especially marked rejection of the cosmic dualism

⁵⁰⁶ Pace Allison 2013, 247 n. 204, who compares James’ anthropology to a supposed double-*yetzer* or ‘two inclinations’ in *T. Ash.* As per Excursus 2 above, even in *T. Asher* 3.2 the statement that those who serve their ἐπιθυμίας are ‘double-faced’ does not imply a double inclination. Rather, the two spirits (divine and demonic) operate upon the single διαβόλιον throughout the *Twelve* to create a double loyalty within the person. Allison is correct in seeing a parallel anthropology to James, but misunderstands the nature of the parallel.

⁵⁰⁷ On this reading of the satanic role as a source of false wisdom on a protological level, see 10.1.1 below.

⁵⁰⁸ However, the demonic influence over the body in the *Homilies*, so Kelley 2007, may possibly demonstrate some similarities with the evil tongue in Jas 3:2–12.

seen in Qumran. Here, Satan is frequently diminished to a subordinate role within the divine council and operates under divine authority. The influence of the single, evil *yetzer* in the majority of the rabbinic sources benefited from the rabbinic impulse to internalise the supernatural agent. As a result, the *yetzer* generally is portrayed as a single, reified, pseudo-demonic agent that operates alongside Satan's prosecutorial role to destroy its host. The person contends with the *yetzer* as a being that, though residing on the heart, is both inside the person, part of him, and yet separate from him. Notably, this *yetzer* operates as a single entity: the solution to the problem of the evil *yetzer* is not a good *yetzer*, but rather prayer, divine intervention, and the healing effects of Torah. The *yetzer* is not something to be controlled or tamed, but rather something to be overcome, excised, and destroyed. Anthropological dualism is a division of loyalty caused by the *yetzer*, not a basic feature of anthropology itself.

In light of these sources, does the ἐπιθυμία in Jas 1:13–14 function as a similar pseudo-demonic agent of evil within the human condition? The ἐπιθυμία of Jas 1:14 might appear to function in such a role as the active agent of probation, as is typical of the rabbinic literature. There would still be a place for a satanic prosecutorial agent, which cooperates with the *yetzer* in the probation and destruction of its host. Perhaps James, like the rabbis, is reacting against a cosmology like that of Qumran to internalise cosmic enmity, while still retaining a role for the prosecutorial Satan as ὁ πειράζων within the divine court to mitigate God's agency.⁵⁰⁹ However, while a pre-rabbinic, pseudo-demonic *yetzer* can not be rejected in James out of hand, I wonder whether a pseudo-demonic *yetzer* does not over-state the nefarious role of the ἐπιθυμία, given its possible semantic instrumentality rather than

⁵⁰⁹If such a development is a step too far, perhaps James is closer to the less-developed *yetzer* of Akiva.

semantic agency in Jas 1:14.

In sum, James's cosmic drama is one of many within ancient Judaism that dwell on both the cosmic and human actors in probation. I have argued that James recognises a divine role within the heavenly court, but mitigates the divine role as *ὁ πειράζων* through a combination of an elevated anthropology and heightened demonology. In the final section of this chapter, I will offer a more comprehensive portrait of probation in James that draws together these various features.

9.3.4. Human Desire as the Target of Satanic Attack

In a cosmic model that combines divine rule, demonic interference, satanic prosecution, and compromised anthropology, James' *ἐπιθυμία* functions as the seat of supernatural interference by which the person is lured into Satanic deception. Rather than something to be controlled and integrated, the 'desire' must be overcome, and the symptom of *διδυχία* healed with the help of Torah.⁵¹⁰ Demonic or satanic interference occurs when the person is baited and captured *ὑπὸ τῆς ἐπιθυμίας*. Taking the author's fishing metaphor seriously, it is entirely plausible to conceive of the bait of desire being cast out by a satanic agent: the person is baited by the *yetzer's* desire into a death-producing division of the heart, or *διδυχία*.

This anthropological model clarifies a number of the terms in James. The single *ἐπιθυμία* functions as the satanic instrument to divide the loyalties of the heart. Much has been made of the *διδυχος* in 1:8; 4:8, which commonly forms the crux of the debate on whether a Jewish 'double-*yetzer* theology' is at work in James. Given the lack of evidence for

⁵¹⁰Cf. Schlatter 1932, 126; Martin 1988, 31.

any mention of a double-*yetzer* in the Second Temple Period and its infrequent use even in rabbinic traditions, the δὲ ψυχὸς likely does not refer to the presence of a dualing *yetzer ra* and *yetzer tov*. Rather, the term matches a common refrain in the literature that calls for a ‘unity of the heart’, an appeal for religious loyalty that finds its source in the biblical *Shema*.

In the wider literature the divine provision of Torah frequently function as the tool for defeating the *yetzer* and uniting the heart. This same remedy for the compromised human heart may be in view in Jas 1:21:

Therefore, removing all impurity (ἀποθέμενοι πᾶσαν ῥυπαρίαν) and evil excess (περισεΐαν κακίας) in humility receive the implanted word (τὸν ἐμφυτον λόγον), which is able to σώσαι τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν.

This last phrase has typically been understood through the grid of a Pauline soteriology. Moo finds it ‘obvious’ that this paragraph addresses eschatological salvation.⁵¹¹ McKnight sees here either an eschatological reward, physical healing, or else simply ‘staying alive by avoiding violence and volatility.’⁵¹² Davids acknowledges that the call to receive the word of the gospel which they have already implanted in them sounds contradictory, but is a simple truism of the saving power of the gospel.⁵¹³

However, σώζειν elsewhere in James has a therapeutic or possibly apotropaic sense, as in the prayer that heals sickness and saves from death (5:15; 20). Furthermore, the λόγος in 1:21 likely corresponds in some sense to the Torah, as it does in 1:18 and 1:22–25. McKnight acknowledges here that James conceives of Torah ‘embedded in one’s soul’ (e.g.,

⁵¹¹Moo 2000, 88

⁵¹²McKnight 2011, 143.

⁵¹³Davids 1982, 96.

Deut 30:1, 11-14 and Jer 31:33).⁵¹⁴ The ‘implanted word’ in 1:21 seems to correspond to the ‘word of truth’ (1:18), the ‘the perfect law’, the ‘law of liberty’ (1:25), and the ‘royal law’ (2:8).⁵¹⁵ Furthermore, both 1:21 and 4:8 discuss the ψυχή in the context of purification. In 4:8 the sinners are to clean their hands (καθαρίσατε χεῖρας, ἁμαρτωλοί), and the δέψυχοι are to purify their hearts (ἀγνίσατε καρδίας). In 1:21 the readers are to ‘put away all impurity’ (ἀποθέμενοι πᾶσαν ῥυπαρίαν) and to remove the ‘evil excess’ (περισσεῖαν κακίας).⁵¹⁶ Read in this light, James’ exhortation is that, by turning to Torah, the cosmic agent might be defeated, the vulnerable human instrument might be controlled, and the resulting symptom of divided religious loyalty might be healed.

9.4. *The Cosmic Drama of Probation*

If James’ cosmic drama of probation approximates that of various Rewritten Bible traditions and rabbinic literature, as we have argued, how might this literature also inform our understanding of James’ biblical hermeneutic? In 1:14–15, many James scholars automatically begin the task of parsing out the various meanings of πειράζειν and πειρασμός into an acceptable theological framework. In doing so, the scholar has shouldered the burden of mitigating the theological and exegetical tensions in James.

But what if the metaphor of the divine court, embedded with all of the tensions of

⁵¹⁴So McKnight 2011, 143

⁵¹⁵Accordingly, Martin 1988, 49 thinks ‘doers of the word’ corresponds to the rabbinic phrase עשה תורה ‘to practice Torah’ (e.g., *m. Abot* 1.17).

⁵¹⁶While often read as a clothing metaphor, perhaps a better reading of the περισσεῖαν is that of circumcision. Note the parallel in 1 Peter 3:21, ‘not as putting off (ἀποθεσις) the filth (ῥύπου) of flesh’; cf. Dalton 1989. Allison 2000 notes the popularity of this interpretation in older commentators, who equated the term περισσεῖαν with ערלה and the *praeputium*. Gill comments that ‘there seems to be an allusion to the removing of the superfluous foreskin of the flesh, spoken of in Jer. 4:4, which the Targum in that places calls רשע לבבון *the wickedness of your hearts* to be removed’. Cited from Gill’s *Expositions*, vol. 6 pp. 783–784.

agents and patients known to the broader Jewish literature, is allowed to stand? As we turn to James' reading of biblical probation narratives, how does this tension manifest in James' biblical hermeneutic?⁵¹⁷ The presence of the two OT probation narratives of Abraham and Job should give us pause, for as we have seen in brief above, there is long history of reading Abraham and Job as paired exemplars explicating the nature of probation. In fact, a striking feature of the rewritten scripture genre from *Jubilees* through the rabbis is the particular emphasis placed on these two figures.

⁵¹⁷As Allison 2013, 238 n. 151 argues, *contra* McKnight 2011, 115, one must be careful, as 'our straightforward reading of texts can be no guide as to how all ancients read them, especially when those texts could be taken to contradict others'. Though one wonders whether 'our own readings' are as straightforward as Allison would presuppose.

CHAPTER 10

The Epistle of James and a Hermeneutic of Testing

In the previous chapter I argued that James describes the divine, supernatural, and human *dramatis personae* of probation within the dominant metaphor of the lawcourt. How does this legal drama manifest in the author's reading of the stories of Adam, Abraham, and Job? In what follows I will first examine how James 1:13–18 nests the language of probation within the creation story. While the first sin could be used to indict God's beneficence and power as Creator, the author uses this narrative as the foundation for God's good intentions for his creatures while illuminating the cosmic and human responsibilities for sin and death. Secondly, I argue that James' reading of Abraham as God's tested friend (2:21–24) shares features with other Jewish works that assimilate details from the Job narratives into Abraham's trial. Likewise, Job's perfect, patient endurance (Jas 5:9–11) is a recasting of Abraham's patience into Job's more ambivalent response. By means of this 'assimilating hermeneutic' common to broader Jewish exegetical discourses, the author of James defends divine integrity from indictment, exemplifies an idealised anthropology, and clarifies the cosmic source of deception that entices humankind away from loyal service to the One God.

10.1. The First Temptation: The Creation in James 1:14–18

James' first reading of an OT probation narrative is also the most allusive. In 1:14–18 the author uses language in 1:14–18 that draws from the creation of the cosmos in Gen 1–2 and the ensuing demonic deception, human sin and death found in some readings of

Gen 3. James appropriates this narrative as a defence against the indictment that God cannot be trusted. In fact, James claims, God is good and consistently so, from the first creation to the final redemption. The challenges that fracture the human heart do not come from God, but rather stem from supernatural deception to distrust and condemn the One God.

10.1.1. Exegesis of James 1:13–18

In 1:13 James rejects divine agency in probation based on the ontological nature of divine character. In this first section I will focus on James' reading of the creation story in 1:13–18. The creation account is most clearly visible in 1:17–18, so we will start there, with the author's proclamation of divine goodness, before turning to vv. 13–16 and arguing for a similar creation background to the description of deception, sin and death.

The argument of 1:13–18 builds from the rejection of divine agency in v. 13, relocates probation and its consequences to a location within the human heart in vv. 14–15, and then concludes with a proclamation of God's beneficence in vv. 17–18. Most scholars agree that in vv. 17–18 the author utilises semantic and conceptual parallels to the biblical creation account. For example, Martin reads Gen 1–2 on the 'subsurface' of this pericope, noting especially the phrases 'the father of lights' (1:17), 'the first fruits of His creatures' (1:18), and more broadly 'created in the likeness of God' (3:9).⁵¹⁸

⁵¹⁸Cf. Martin 1988, 39, noting both similarities and differences to Paul's orientation in Romans 7; cf. Johnson 1995, 196 on Gen 1:3, 14–17; Ng 2003, 43–48; Davids 1982, 87; Elliott-Binns 1956, 154–155; McKnight 2011, 127. In the phrase 'the first fruits of His creatures' some scholars see (a) the creation of humanity as the peak of God's creative acts, (b) the current redeemed state of messianic believers as the first of God's redeeming creation, or (c) the future eschatological renewal of creation. On the first, see Elliott-Binns 1956; Windisch 1951, 9–10; Hort 1909, 32; Spitta 1896a, 45–47; Cadoux 1944, 21–23; for various combinations of the second and third, see Dibelius 1976, 104–105; Mussner 1964, 94–95; Adamson 1989, 76–77. Laws 1980, 78 allows that both creation and redemption are in view.

Every good and perfect gift is from above (ἄνωθεν), coming down from the Father of lights (τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν φώτων), with whom there is no change or shifting shadow (παραλλαγή ἢ τροπῆς ἀποσκίασμα)

The author claims the divine, heavenly source ‘from above’ for all good things, elsewhere described as ‘wisdom’ (1:5, notably in a contrast with ‘earthly’ and ‘demonic’ wisdom in 3:16), life (1:12), and nature’s bounty (5:7, 17–18). God’s goodness is constant and unchanging (ἀπλῶς in 1:5; παραλλαγή in 1:17), a constancy that serves as the exhortation to human constancy within the mature believer vis-à-vis *imitatio Dei*.⁵¹⁹

The trustworthiness of God is extended throughout time with the phrase ‘Father of Lights’ in 1:17, almost certainly an allusion to Gen 1:3 where God created either light or else the heavenly luminaries ‘through his word.’⁵²⁰ Martin argues the expression ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν φώτων unites two Jewish theological traditions: the God of the forces (e.g., Job 38:28) and the Father of the universe (e.g., Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 1.96: τῷ τοῦ κόσμου πατρί; *De Ebr.* 81, πατέρα τῶν ὀλῶν), in which the divine sovereignty is manifest through the creation and control of the heavenly luminaries. Similar phrases also appear in *T. Ab.* 7:6: πατὴρ τοῦ φωτός; CD 5.17–18: ‘he is the Prince of Lights’; 1QS 3.20: ‘all the children of righteousness are ruled by the Prince of Light.’⁵²¹

⁵¹⁹C.f., Mussner 1964, 58–59, 422–23; Cheung 2003, 162–69.

⁵²⁰Cf. Ps 33:6; Is 55:1; Wis 18:15; Sir 43:26; Philo uses similar language in *Abr.* 8; *Leg. All.* 3.31, 51.

⁵²¹Martin 1988, 38; cf. Davids 1982, 87, both citing Gen 1 and Ps 136[135]:7; Jer 4. Also in Philo, e.g., *Spec. Leg.* 1.96; *Somn.* 1.75, to name God as ‘the first light,’ and ‘the archetype of every other light.’ The exact phrase ‘father of lights’ is found, perhaps surprisingly, only in the Armenian version of the *Apocalypse of*

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The effect of this creation language is to extend the divine constancy of ‘the God of old’ to the difficulties experienced by the worshipping community. The language is not only mythic, but deeply religious and creedal in its composition. Donald Verseput has argued that the phrase ‘father of lights’ and surrounding language in James is an intentional appeal to familiar creation motifs recalled on a daily basis within the traditional Jewish morning prayers. As James’ addressees were almost certainly practicing Jews, it is possible that these traditional prayers were in use within the community on a daily basis, forming a natural reference point for James’ declarations of divine beneficence. The morning prayers, composed around the daily recitation of the *Shema*, meditate on the heavenly luminaries as both the epitome of God’s good gifts and a portent of the coming eschatological re-creation.⁵²² The first of these morning benedictions, recited before the *Shema* was spoken, offers praises to God for the daily renewal of light and compares this act to the initial creation. The opening formula glorifies God as the one who ‘forms light and creates darkness’ (יוצר אור ובורא חושך) and closes with a eulogy to God as ‘Creator of the Luminaries’ (יוצר המאורות). Additionally, at the close of the recitation of the *Shema* a different benediction was spoken that concludes with the blessing designated אמת ויציב (‘[The LORD is] True and Certain’), followed in some sources with the addition of נואל ישראל (‘the Redeemer of Israel’).⁵²³ By the Amoraic period of the rabbis (c. 200 C.E.) these benedictions bracketing the recitation of the *Shema* had been forged into cohesive units that moved from an acknowledgement of God as Creator to the themes of divine elective love

Moses 36, 38 to describe God as the source and creator of light. Charles 1976, 150 sees this as a parallel to James, though see Verseput 1997a.

⁵²²Cf. Verseput 1997a, 178 for what follows.

⁵²³Such is found in *m. Tamid* 5:1; *m. Ber.* 2:2; *t. Ber.* 2:1; *b. Ber.* 21a; *y. Ber.* 1.1.2d; *b. Pes.* 117b.

and redemption.⁵²⁴ Similar prayer-forms can be traced in earlier, Second Temple and Tannaitic sources, for example at Qumran (e.g., 1QS 10:1–3; 11QPsa 26.9–15; 4Q503), in early Christian liturgical documents (e.g., *Apostolic Constitutions* 7.35.1–10; 8.12.6–27),⁵²⁵ and in the Mishnah.⁵²⁶ Already in the Mishnah (e.g., *m. Ber.* 1:4–5; 2:2) we find in the first of the morning *berakhot* an emphasis on the ‘God of lights’, the association of the sunrise with creation and renewal, and the astrological cycles as indicative of God’s eternal lovingkindness for his people Israel. From the ‘God of lights’ of 4Q503 to the ‘Creator of the luminaries’ of the later rabbis, the theme of praise to God for his loving provisions at creation provided a theme for Jewish and Christian creedal worship offered with the first rays of the rising sun.⁵²⁷

Can an early form of the morning prayers be defended as undergirding James’ defence of divine beneficence? Scholars have long understood James to meditate extensively on the *Shema* as the basis for religious consistency.⁵²⁸ If the recitation of the *Shema* operates in James’ thought as a symbol for ‘proper religion’ (for Verseput especially emphasised in the formal practices of the synagogue), the author may have turned to the liturgically associated language of the morning prayers as a natural place in which to orient his argument for God’s benefaction as the creator and preserver of the messianic community. Just as the election of Israel was prefaced in the traditional rabbinic prayer by a benediction to the ‘Creator of the

⁵²⁴E.g., *b. Ber.* 11b–12a; *y. Ber.* 1.8.

⁵²⁵On possible exegetical parallels between the Morning Prayers and the *Apostolic Constitutions*, cf. Kister 2008.

⁵²⁶Cf. Hammer 1991, 305–24.

⁵²⁷The presence of a similar prayer-form in 4Q503 has led Schiffman 1987, 3 to accept that some version of the blessing on the heavenly lights must have been in use in Qumran.

⁵²⁸See Jas 2:21–24, below; the appeal to the *Shema* as summarised by love for God and love for neighbour has been read as both a teaching stemming from Jesus’ earthly teachings by McKnight 2011, and as a common teaching operative with various sects of Second Temple and rabbinic Judaism by Ruzer 2013.

luminaries', and a pronouncement of peace upon Israel was prefaced by praise to the 'God of lights' in 4Q503, so too James may preface his passage on divine beneficence by pointing to the lovingkindness of the 'Father of lights' in whom there is no variation nor shadow of change. The God whose faithfulness began at Creation and had been renewed every morning since would surely fulfil his promises of life to those whom he is 'bringing forth' with his word of truth.⁵²⁹

Whether or not James' language of creation draws from a liturgical context, the next phrase 'in whom there is no change or shifting shadow' (*παρ' ᾧ οὐκ ἔνι παραλλαγή ἢ τροπῆς ἀποσκίασμα*) continues to build on the divine acts of creation. The ever-changing position of the heavenly luminaries stand in contrast to divine constancy. McKnight sees the earlier language of divine singleness (*ἀπλῶς*) from 1:5 building to this point: in contrast to the human vacillation of 1:6–8, God's faithfulness is constant. The messianic community can either trust God's goodness, or mirror the constant fluctuations of the stars.⁵³⁰ Verseput comments here,

God remains unchanged relative to his activity of providing good and perfect gifts, confirming what is asserted in vv. 13–15, viz., that he does not tempt his creatures in a manner leading to their death. Thus, it is God's lovingkindness which elicits James' most conspicuous comment regarding divine invariability.⁵³¹

In James' logic, if God was the author of good things at the moment of creation, and

⁵²⁹Naturally, Verseput's reading depends on the extent to which James' community still considered itself to be part of the religious life of Israel through participation in the customary prayer service of first-century Judaism.

⁵³⁰McKnight 2011, 128.

⁵³¹Verseput 1997a, 178.

does not change, he cannot now desire to entrap people with evil. Against the claims of 1:13–15 God does not subject his people to trials, but blesses them with only good things. This leads into the logic of the next verse, which concerns the divine intention for his people.

By exercising his will (βουληθεῖς) he gave birth to us by his word of truth (λόγῳ ἀληθείας) so that we might be a kind of first fruits of his creation (ἀπαρχήν τῶν αὐτοῦ κτισμάτων).

The creative acts of the past, still visible in the sky's luminaries, are matched to a new set of creational acts that carry implications for God's current redemptive intentions. In contrast to the birthing language of sin and death in v. 15 (ἐπιθυμία . . . τίκτει ἁμαρτίαν; ἁμαρτία . . . ἀποκύει θάνατον), in v. 18 God gives birth (ἀπεκύησεν ἡμᾶς) to his people.⁵³² The rhetorical contrast between vv. 14–15 and v. 18 are striking, as noted by Martin: the 'sorry chain of consequences whereby desire leads to sin which in turn leads to death' stands in contrast to the God who births us 'by his gift of life.'⁵³³ As at the first creation, God's word (λόγῳ ἀληθείας) once again becomes the effective instrument for expressing and executing the divine will.⁵³⁴ These new children are the 'first-fruits of His creation,'⁵³⁵ the result of

⁵³²This against the suggestion that this phrase merely indicates a first wave of Christian believers, e.g., Baumgarten 1987; Duddington 1959; Palmer 1957.

⁵³³In 1:12 the phrase τὸν στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς is best translated in an exegetical sense: God promises 'the crown that is life' to those who endure trials. Cf. Martin 1988, 33, 39.

⁵³⁴On the creative acts of the divine word, cf. Martin 1988, 40; Klein 1995a, 129–34; Cheung 2003, 86–92; Gen 1:3; Ps 33:6; 107:20; 147:15; Isa 55:11; Wisd 18:15; Sir 43:26; Deut 22:20; Ps 119:43; Prov 22:21; and Jer 23:28.

⁵³⁵Whether referencing the rule of the first humans over nature (e.g., Rendall 1927, 64; Elliott-Binns 1956; Hort 1898) or the eschatological order of redeemed humanity, (e.g., Mussner 1964, 96).

God's creational acts that stand in contrast to the deadly fruits of desire in v. 15.⁵³⁶ *Κτίσμα* forms a natural and well-known reference point for God's creation (e.g., Wis 9:2; 13:5; 14:11; Sir 36:20; 38:34). In this case, however, God's people are not only the heirs of God's original creative acts but also the prelude to the re-creation of the cosmos.⁵³⁷ As the representative beginning of the renewal of the world, these first fruits reveal God's final intention for the redemption of his creatures.

In sum, scholars have widely and correctly regarded the Jewish creation narrative to undergird James' language in 1:17–18. However, as noted in Part 2 above (e.g., Sir 15:11–12; *QG* 1.45; *Conf.* 179–182; *Homily* 3.39) Jewish writers did not always read the Gen 1–3 account in an unambiguously positive light. The Genesis narrative left open the possibility of critiquing divine goodness, sovereignty, and omniscience. God could be indicted for creating evil, provoking the fall of humanity and their eventual death. In what follows, I will extend the author's allusion to argue that the creation account forms the basis for the author's descriptions of probation, desire, deception, sin, and death in 1:13–16. I will summarise the argument of Jas 1:13–16, offer a brief overview of perspectives on the pericope's connection to what proceeds and follows, and then turn to an extended exegesis of the text in light of the creation narrative. I will conclude by proposing that the protological narrative provides James with both an entry point to the problem of divine probation and also a theological baseline by which the author will read other stories of biblical testing.

⁵³⁶On the streams of Jewish tradition referring to God bearing his people or the world, cf. LXX Deut 32:18a (θεὸν τὸν γεννήσαντά σε); also Ps 22:9; 90:2; Num 11:12; 1QH 9:35–36; Philo *Ebr.* 30; also *Spec. Leg* 4.180 where Philo speaks of Israel as 'a kind of firstfruits to the Maker and Father'.

⁵³⁷A concept mirrored by Paul in 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15; Eph 2:10, 4:24 as argued by Cheung 2003, 246.

10.1.2. *James 1:13–16 and its Surrounding Context*

Given the disputed status of the literary coherence of the Letter of James, it is unsurprising that scholars have debated the relationship between the author's descriptions of probation in 1:2–3, 12, his declaration of divine impeccability in 1:13 and human/demonic culpability, and his final appeal to the creation narrative.⁵³⁸ However, despite the scholarly differences on structure, the majority acknowledge that 1:2–4 introduces a thematic current of diaspora troubles that will flow into vv. 12–18. Within these *πειρασμοίς*, whether trials, tests, or temptations, the painful life of dispersed Israel required a steadfast trust in God's ultimately good intentions for His people. In 1:2–4 the author sees an opportunity for joy in the knowledge that the *πειρασμοί* of diaspora existence will ultimately benefit his readers. The troubled circumstances of 1:9–11 build directly to the macarism of 1:12 (*μακάριος ἀνὴρ ὃς ὑπομένει πειρασμόν*) where the humble brother or sister, holding fast to the hope of divine deliverance, ultimately receives the blessed crown of life.⁵³⁹

If the appropriate response to trials in 1:2–12 is therefore to endure *πειρασμός* with joy, the issue on the author's mind in 1:13ff continues to be that of perseverance under *πειρασμός*, whatever the specific semantic targets available to that term. The statement *μηδεὶς πειραζόμενος λεγέτω* thematically binds the subsequent unit to the preceding macarism in 1:12 with an implicit (and perhaps commonly stated) question: while God may reward persons who endure probation, do these challenges nevertheless call into question divine integrity and beneficence? While the divine promise of 1:12 anticipates with certainty a reward for those who endure in their love for God, the positive response to trial also

⁵³⁸On the various view on the relationship between 1:2–3, 12–18, see chapter 1 above.

⁵³⁹Verseput 1998, 703–705.

anticipates a possible negative response: someone could appeal to divine sovereignty as the unavoidable cause of human failure and so mutter, ‘from God comes my trial’.⁵⁴⁰ To such a response the author links human desire (ἐπιθυμία 1:15) and demonic deception (πλανᾶω 1:16) and sees this response leading to sin and death (1:13–15). Having anticipated this response to his preceding statements, the author must then clarify the true source of probation and its implication for divine character. If 1:2–12 unapologetically reflects on the benefits of trials, 1:13–18 defends God’s character, desire, and actions.

Despite the historic scholarly difficulty of determining James’ structure in 1:2–18, then, 1:13–19 as a unit reflects on the cosmic and human roles in πειρασμός, especially the consequences of human choice and the implications for divine character.⁵⁴¹ The πειρασμός in 1:2, 12, and 13–15 serves as the primary structural reference point for the challenging conditions which the diaspora community faces.⁵⁴² I see the basic argument between 1:2–12; 13; 14–18 as follows.

Probation that Leads to Life (1:2–12)

- (A1) 1:2–4 the proper response to probation of faith (πειρασμοῖς, δοκίμιον τῆς πίστεως)
- (B1) 1:5–8 probation through wisdom (λείπεται σοφίας)
- (B2) 1:9–11 probation through materialism
- (A2) 1:12 return to the proper response to probation (ὑπομένει πειρασμόν), now with macarism.⁵⁴³

⁵⁴⁰So Verseput 1998, 703–705; Davids 1988, 86, who details the debate on whether v. 14 introduces the new paragraph (with Schlatter 1932, Dibelius 1976, Laws 1980, Adamson 1989, and Mitton 1966); for v. 14 as a conclusion of the preceding paragraph cf. Cantinat 1973, Windisch 1951.

⁵⁴¹See here Johnson 1995, 183; Taylor 2004, 86–115.

⁵⁴²McKnight 2011, 106.

⁵⁴³Williams 2002, 183 sees an *inclusio* between v. 4 and v. 12 where the macarism of v. 12 is ‘better understood as the conclusion of the first sub-unit rather than the introduction to the second’.

Probation that Leads to Death (1:13–15)

(C) 1:13 the improper response to probation is to indict God. The author's theodicy includes:

- (i) God should not be placed on trial
- (ii) God Himself does not test anyone

(D) 1:14–15 the author offers an alternative means or agent for probation.

- (i) Probation occurs through personal desire (ἐπιθυμία).
- (ii) Desire (ἐπιθυμία) conceives sin (ἁμαρτία)
- (iii) Sin (ἁμαρτία) produces death (θάνατος)

The Protological Basis for Divine Faithfulness (1:16–18)

(E) The readers are exhorted into true belief and action:

- (i) Exhortation to avoid deception (1:16)
- (ii) Hymn on the Father's beneficence (1:17–18)
 - (a) As Creator, God the Father's intentions and gifts are only good for his creatures
 - (b) Divine consistency and 'simplicity' contrasted against human capriciousness.

10.1.3. Jas 1:13–16 and the Protological Testing Narratives

We can now return to the question of James' reading of Gen 3 in 1:13–16. While the language of creation has generally been acknowledge as lying behind such phrases as τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν φώτων, ἀπεκύησεν ἡμᾶς λόγῳ ἀληθείας, and ἀπαρχὴν τινὰ τῶν αὐτοῦ κτισμάτων in 1:17–18, the language of probation (πειράζειν), deception (πλανᾶν), desire (ἐπιθυμία), sin (ἁμαρτία) and death (θάνατος) in 1:13–16 has received less attention and has been left disconnected from the verses that follow. In what follows, I argue that the author undergirds his description of the consequences for faithlessness with language dependent on the account of Gen 3 and the probation, deception, sin, and death of the first humans.

10.1.3.1. Genesis 3 and Demonic Enticement

At the opening of Gen 3, the serpent calls into question both divine beneficence and divine integrity with regard to His warning of death on eating the forbidden fruit:

And the serpent said to the woman, ‘You surely shall not die (לֹא־מוֹת תָּמוּתוֹן/ Οὐ θανάτῳ ἀποθανεῖσθε). For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’ . . . The woman saw that the tree was desirable to make one wise (וְנָחֵמְדָה עֵץ לְהַשְׂכִּיל) (Gen 3:4–5, 6b)

The serpent portrays God as unkind, unfairly restrictive, and a liar. As Gowan describes, the Genesis text ‘already describes the first temptation as basic suspicion of whether God truly has good intentions for his people.’⁵⁴⁴ With the sparks of distrust already embedded within the woman’s heart, the serpent extends to the woman the forbidden fruit, which was ‘desirable to make one wise,’⁵⁴⁵ and fans the ember of desire for illicit knowledge into a flame. The woman begins to distrust: ‘would a good and beneficent God withhold wisdom and leave his people in ignorance?’ The stakes are high: the promise of life, or the threat of death, depending on the choice that follows.

In a similar vein the opening lines of James describe God as consistently willing to provide wisdom to those who ask (1:5).⁵⁴⁶ However, while God’s gifts are ‘from above’ (1:17; 3:15, 17), there exists a different wisdom available to human ambition, one that is ‘not from above,’ ‘earthly’ and ‘demonic.’ The contrast is brought out fully in Jas 3:16–17:

This wisdom (ἡ σοφία) is not that which comes down from above (ἄνωθεν), but is earthly (ἐπίγειος), natural (ψυχικὴ), demonic (δαμονιώδης). For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom

⁵⁴⁴Gowan 1988, 53.

⁵⁴⁵With Wenham 1998, 75; see further below on the links with James and human desire.

⁵⁴⁶On the frequent link between God’s intentions for human wisdom and his acts at creation, cf. e.g. Wis 9:1–6: ‘even if one is perfect, (τέλειος) among the sons of men, yet without the wisdom that comes from you, he will be regarded as nothing.’ Here humankind is created ἐν λόγῳ σου (9:1) and having ‘dominion over the creatures’ (κτισμάτων) (9:2).

from above (ἡ ἄνωθεν σοφία) is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering (ἀδιάκριτος), without hypocrisy.

Reading Jas 1:2–4 with 3:13–17, James seeks to realign the wayward desires and ambitions of the human heart: ‘those who lack wisdom are to ask of God, not casting judgement on divine integrity, and not turning to other, demonic alternatives. Those who divide their loyalties are like the wind-blown foam of the sea.’ James’ readers are to unwaveringly reach upward for the wisdom that descends from the hand of God. They are to reject the easy skepticism of divine indictment that rises as the froth of deficient wisdom, a wisdom churned up by the ever-shifting, ever-pressing waves of demonic deception.⁵⁴⁷

Beyond the language of wisdom and divine indictment, the language of desire may also have its basis in Gen 3. Much has been made of the term ἐπιθυμία in Jas 1:14, as has been described in chapter 9. Indeed, I have argued that the term provides insight into the author’s anthropology of probation. In this passage it functions to orient blame away from God and towards human internality, whether that be a base human desire or a pseudo-demonic *yetzer*. However the author of James perceives the internal human condition, he may utilise a common tradition in which desire fomented the deception in the Garden.⁵⁴⁸ Gen 3:6 relies heavily on the language of human desire, as seen in the woman’s response to the fruit of the tree:

when the woman saw that the tree was good for food (טוב העץ למאכל), and that it was a delight to the eyes (תאוה-הוא לעינים), and that the tree was desirable to make one wise (ונחמד העץ להשכיל), she took from its fruit and ate.

⁵⁴⁷Cf. 1:16, and what follows below.

⁵⁴⁸See especially Anderson 1992; Anderson 2001.

The term חמד is commonly found in contexts of illicit desire, lust, or covetousness.

For example, the term is used in Exod 20:17 (Deut 5:21), as well as Exod 34:24, to describe the prohibition against coveting. Here, and elsewhere, the term is translated into Greek Scripture as ἐπιθυμεῖν and cognates:

Exod 20:17 (Deut 5:21) לא תחמד בית רעך לא תחמד אשת רעך

οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις τὴν γυναῖκα τοῦ πλησίον σου. οὐκ
ἐπιθυμήσεις τὴν οἰκίαν τοῦ πλησίον σου

Exod 34:24

ולא יחמד איש את ארצו

οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσει οὐδεὶς τῆς γῆς σου

This rendering of חמד with ἐπιθυμία in Greek translations of the OT is not uncommon.⁵⁴⁹ Later authors would expand the role of lust in Gen 3:6 into a central tenet of the first temptation.⁵⁵⁰ Building within this tradition, if a post-biblical author wanted to allude to Eve's 'desire' for wisdom in Gen 3:6 it is at least possible that he would have chosen ἐπιθυμία to do so. In what follows I will argue that James' language of temptation, conception, lust, sin and death includes an appeal to this Jewish traditional interpretation on

⁵⁴⁹Cf. Deut 7:25; Isa 27:2; Isa 32:12; Isa 44:9; Jer 12:10; Ezek 26:12; Hos 13:15; Amos 5:11; Micah 2:2; Nahum 2:10; 2 Chron 32:27; 2 Chron 36:10; Ps 19:11; Ps 106:24; Job 20:20; Prov 1:22; Prov 6:25; Prov 12:12; Dan 11:37.

⁵⁵⁰Early Jewish literature recognised lust in the transgression of Adam and Eve. Levison 1988, 168 notes how Eve in *L.A.B.* experiences sensual allure in her 'desire'. Similarly, Anderson 1989, 128–139 in rabbinic literature, noting *Gen. Rab.* 2.24–41 on the sexual union of Adam and Eve and the sexual lust of the serpent. Similarly, *b. Shabb.* 146a on sexual misconduct between Eve and the serpent as the act that led to the birth of the *yetzer*. Kitchen 2003, §11 has noted similar themes in the writings of the eastern church fathers. On potential links between Edenic sexuality and the ἐπιθυμία in James, cf. Johnson 1995, 195; Wilson 2002, 168.

the first sin.⁵⁵¹

10.1.3.2. The Mortal Consequences of Untamed Desire

Genesis 3 narrates how the combination of a distrust in divine beneficence and a desire for illicit wisdom, sparked within the human heart by external supernatural interference, led to the choice of disobedience, the rise of sin, and the entrance of death into the human race. Adam and Eve were given a choice by God: eat from the tree of life and live, or eat from the tree of knowledge and die (Gen 2:17).

James picks up on this chain of events in Genesis, and creates from it a choice for his own readers. God gave Adam and Eve ‘every good gift’ (Jas 1:17, cf. Gen 1:29; 31) and provided access to life (Jas 1:12, cf. Gen 3:22). Created immortal, participating in the image of God (Jas 3:9, cf. Gen 1:26), they shared in the divine life and enjoyed dominion over all creation (Jas 3:7–8, cf. Gen 1:26–7). However, they were enticed to pursue a wisdom not from God (Jas 1:5; 3:15, cf. Gen 3:5). Whereas a faithful response would have produced eternal life (ζήσεται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα Gen 2:17), human disobedience resulted in death (θανάτῳ ἀποθανεῖσθε Jas 1:15, cf. Gen 2:17; 3:4). In contrast to God who gives birth to man and all good things (Jas 1:18), the seed of lust gives birth to sin (Jas 1:15). In contrast to faithful and mature (τέλειον) endurance (Jas 1:4) that produces the blessing of life (Jas 1:12), sin when it reaches maturity (ἁμαρτία ἀποτελεσθεῖσα) produces only the curse of death (Jas 1:15). The chain ἐπιθυμία–ἁμαρτία–θάνατος forms a stark contrast to πειρασμός–δόκιμος/ὑπομονή–ζωή in 1:12. Resonating with the Two Ways language of broader Jewish literature,

⁵⁵¹A protological myth is proposed here by Spitta 1896a, citing *Test. Ben.* 7 and *Test. Reub.* 2; 4 Macc. 18:7ff; *Apoc. Mos.* 19:3. Against Spitta, cf. Dibelius 1976, 99. Edsman 1939, 11–44 has argued that the reference here is to a gnostic creation myth, against which see Davids 1982, 84–85, 89, who too quickly dismisses a role for Satan or demonic interference.

James offers a similar choice: endure and live, or indict God and die. The contrast between these two responses to the test leads to the final argument in 1:16, where James lays bare the deception that God is unjust or evil.

10.1.3.3. Resisting Satanic Deception

With the phrase *μὴ πλανᾶσθε, ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί* the author turns from the falsehoods leveled against the divine character to reveal the true picture of divine constancy and goodness.⁵⁵² Here again the protology lies in the background. As Eve declared in the Garden, *הַנָּחָשׁ הִשְׁיִאֲנִי* / *ὁ ὄφις ἡπάτησέν με*, ‘the serpent deceived me!’ With the serpent’s statements about God’s character finally revealed as false and the promise of illicit knowledge shown to be an illusion, in her doom the woman recognises the deception that now leads to her death.

James’ readers face the same deceptive pretense to indict God as Eve. McKnight reconstructs the false indictments against God as threefold: God had been indicted as responsible for evil (1:3), his goodness had been questioned (1:15), and his consistency was in doubt (1:17).⁵⁵³ In refuting the deception, James sees within the human heart the same weakness, susceptible to the same Tempter, and facing the same consequences as the first parents.

⁵⁵²Whether the injunction should be read as the final appeal of 1:12–15 (so Windisch 1951), or as the start of 1:17–18 (as in Davids 1982) is irrelevant when we recognise that both sections are correcting a misplaced view of divine character. The readers are in acute danger of serious error, which the author seeks to correct.

⁵⁵³McKnight 2011, 121.

10.1.4. Conclusion to the Protological Temptation

In conclusion, James perceives a danger of indicting God as capricious and untrustworthy with his gifts. In response, James turns to the first biblical temptation narrative in Gen 1–3. The Genesis testing narrative serves two major functions for the author's broader discourse: (1) it provides a mythic framework for the overarching realities of testing, and (2) positions James' hermeneutical lens for reading other testing narratives.

10.1.4.1. Edenic Temptation as Mythic and National History

Probation appears as a constant source of trouble throughout the literary history of God's people, from Adam to the Patriarchs to the nation Israel. Along with trials comes the opportunity to blame God for human failure, and like other Jews in the hellenistic period, James' community faced the choice of whether to remain steadfast in their religious loyalties. James recognises that this is not a new choice, appealing to the protology to argue that human transgression had followed a similar pattern of choice and consequence extending from Adam to the present.⁵⁵⁴ As demonstrated in chapter 2 above, the widespread debate on divine integrity commonly referenced Gen 1–3.

One such example examined previously was Sir 15:11–20. Here, Ben Sira responds to the accusation that the Creator God stands responsible for human sin by rewriting the first few lines of Genesis to fit his theological cosmology: 'from the beginning God created man (ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐποίησεν ἄνθρωπον / מִבְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא הָאֱלֹהִים) and placed him in the hand of his inclination (διαβουλίου/יָצַר)'. That is, 'until this very day' *all* persons possess the will to 'keep the commandments' (συντηρήσεις ἐντολὰς) to choose between 'life and death' (ἡ ζωὴ καὶ ὁ

⁵⁵⁴Cf. Laws 1980, 70.

θάνατος), ‘fire and water’ (πῦρ καὶ ὕδωρ), and to receive according to their choice (15:17).

Ben Sira concludes, against *his* interlocutor, that while God observes sin, he refuses to give permission for it (vv. 18-20), thus vindicating the divine integrity. As argued above, Ben Sira’s reading of the Genesis account likewise extended the implications of the narrative to his readers, but does so in a manner that fits his theological vision of the divine role, his anthropology of volunteerism, and his rejection of external cosmic interference.

Like Ben Sira and other Jewish authors, James extended the Genesis temptation to his own community both with its negative implications and also as a hope for future cosmic redemption.⁵⁵⁵ Though Gen 2–3 did not provide clear requirements for the restoration of fallen humanity, many later interpreters postulated that, since humankind’s initial transgression was a disobedient response to God’s commandment, the remedy should correspond accordingly. Some authors looked to Sinai, where obedience to Moses’ law fulfilled the condition for renewed life.⁵⁵⁶ For example, Ben Sira 17:12–14 blends Eden into a historical and theological continuum with the Sinai narrative of Exod 32 where God gave his people commandments (17:14) and provided access to the ‘law of life’ (17:11).⁵⁵⁷ In a similar manner, James moves in 1:21 from the language of creation to an extended reflection on the life-giving capabilities of the law (1:21, 25; 2:8–12). However, where previous interpreters saw renewed life streaming from Sinai, James saw life in a new commandment. Within this new creation order God would break the cycle of death, shatter the power of

⁵⁵⁵Collins 2005, 33 notes in these narratives a certain fluidity, in which authors made ‘subtle interpretive moves’ in creating multiple portraits of the creation stories as a mythic predecessor to their own contexts. Cf. Anderson 2000, 47; Levison 1988, 13–23 who cautions that each Jewish author employs and adapts the Adam narratives according to his own needs, resulting in multiple portraits of Adam rather than a single ‘Adam myth’.

⁵⁵⁶E.g., Prov 3:18, ‘[The Torah is] a tree of life for them that lay hold of her’ (Prov 3:18).

⁵⁵⁷See here Di Lella 1987, 282; Kaminsky 2000, 14–43.

evil residing within human hearts, and provide new life to those who love him. This climax of James' benediction allows no room for the charges levelled against divine integrity and only a response of worship.

10.1.4.2. Edenic Temptation as a Hermeneutical Framework

The creation narrative also provides James the opportunity to articulate the theological foundations for his hermeneutic of testing. With regard to the divine role, James quickly indicates that foremost on the author's mind is a resounding defense of divine integrity. The exhortations of v. 13 (μηδεὶς πειραζόμενος λεγέτω ὅτι ἀπὸ θεοῦ πειράζομαι) and of v. 16 (μὴ πλανᾶσθε) warn that life and not death has been God's intention from the very beginning. Unlike Eve, who doubted God's integrity, God's people are to look at the record of divine faithfulness since the creation and to trust that God provides wholly good gifts to his creatures. God is considered the source of good from whom nothing evil can proceed, echoing the biblical declaration that everything God created was 'indeed very good' (Gen 1:31).

As such, the Genesis account reveals the early foundations for James' cosmology of testing. The ambiguous notion of a supernatural entity that provokes humankind to traitorous thoughts appears in James' reading of the first trial. The old serpent becomes a prosecutorial figure who, while powerful and deceptive (3:15), will nevertheless flee when resisted (4:7). His power lies in the vulnerability of human duplicity. The first temptation provided for James a template of universal human transgression in which faithful obedience to the divine commandment stood in contrast to human deception, sin, and death. The first human hearts, divided in their loyalties by internal desire, were led astray by none other than

this cosmic deceiver, and this very serpent rises from the protology to become for James the satanic, demonic source of faulty information about divine character. Within this cosmic framework, then, James views diaspora trials as ultimately stemming from improper human conceptions about God and His character. These misconceptions are not merely natural doubts that form within the human heart but rather demonically inspired deceptions that percolate and then rot away loyalty for one's creator. As endurance gives way to a divided heart, heavenly wisdom is replaced with demonic and earthly knowledge, perfect faith with maturing sin, and life with death.

10.1.4.3. The Witnesses to Divine Faithfulness

However, as witness against these satanic lies stand the glories of the cosmos: the heavenly luminaries testifying to God's consistence and perfection. On the foundations of these perfect acts of creation stands the story of Israel's election and redemption. As the redemptive continuation of Israel's national history, God's people appear as the first fruits of God's final act of cosmic redemption.⁵⁵⁸ James reminds this community to look backwards, for between them and Eden other stories of trial and endurance stood as visible reminders. These examples of faith had faced comparable trials, sojourners in strange lands, defenders of the monotheistic faith in God and pious overseers of orphans and widows. Their narratives would provide even further opportunities for James to reflect on the blessings of divine constancy and the proper human response of unswerving loyalty. These witnesses include Tested Abraham, and Patient Job.

⁵⁵⁸Cf. McKnight 2011, 132.

10.2. Tested Abraham

In Jas 2:17–23 the author makes a second appeal to a biblical testing narrative.

Was not Abraham our father declared a righteous person by his works when he lifted up Isaac his son on the altar? You see that faith joined efforts with his works and by his works faith was perfected, resulting in this Scripture's fulfillment: 'now Abraham believed God and this was considered as righteousness for him', and he was called a 'Friend of God'.

In Jas 2:21–23 the author appeals to Abraham's test at the *Aqedah*, the famous binding of Isaac, as an example of a 'work' that combined with his 'faith' in demonstration of Abraham's righteousness and his friendship with God. The author builds this argument from the preceding ethical imperative that community care be extended impartially to the poor and the needy within the messianic community (Jas 1:27–2:13).⁵⁵⁹

Following on the hymn to the divine character, in 1:22 James turns to the corresponding actions necessary for 'mature religion'. His readers are to be 'doers' of the word (1:22), practicing pure religion through acts of charity and piety (1:27). James can therefore exhort: 'speak (οὕτως λαλεῖτε) and act (οὕτως ποιεῖτε), as accords to the requirements of this law' (2:12). In light of the ethical requirements of Torah's definition of righteousness, traditional creedal declarations of monotheistic religion (namely the *Shema's* εἰς ἑστὶν ὁ θεός and other religious worship such as the Morning Prayers of Jas 1:17–18),

⁵⁵⁹ The question of how Jas 2:14–26 relates to the surrounding context has been long debated. On the structural relationship between this passage and what proceeds it, Dibelius 1976, 184 has influentially denied that this passage has anything to do with what proceeds in chapter 2, much less in chapter 1. Burchard 2000, 27 argues that the context goes back to 2:1; Laws 1980, 93 argues that the context extends to the end of chapter 1 based on the theme of perfection; similarly Davids 1982 on the basis of a general exhortation to ethical action in 1:22. Verseput 1997b, 100–103 has to my mind most persuasively argued that the call to pure religion in chapter 1 and 2 is heavily influenced by the widely available concept of 'spiritual sacrifice', that unifies the ritual proclamations of loyalty to the divine with corresponding works of piety.

while of great value, are to be considered dead, empty, and worthless when disconnected from pious actions.⁵⁶⁰ While both ‘religious rites’ (Jas 1:16–18) and ‘pious works’ (1:22–27; 2:1–17) are necessary and valuable, the presence of the one is not sufficient to justify an absence of the other: ‘true and good religion’ requires both, as per the demand that to keep the ‘whole law’ requires both love for God and love for one’s neighbour (2:8–13).⁵⁶¹ As I have argued above in section 9.1., the dominant metaphor of the law court appears in both 1:12–14 and then again in 2:4–13. This metaphor continues to operate in 2:13 as the author turns to the language of social justice (δικαιοσύνη) and judgment (κρίμα) in 2:23–3:1.

The author appeals to Abraham’s Binding of Isaac as the proof text for this argument. Abraham, as has been seen to be the case in a number of ancient sources, provides a traditional example for such pious monotheism, with his religious ‘faith’ from Gen 15:6 uniting with his ethical ‘work’ in Gen 22.⁵⁶²

This latter text, however, proves problematic to James’ previous statements on probation. Genesis 22 famously begins with the phrase καὶ ἐγένετο μετὰ τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα ὁ θεὸς ἐπειράζειν τὸν Ἀβραάμ/וַיִּבְחֹן אֱלֹהִים אֶת־אֲבִרָהָם. On both a lexical and conceptual level, the author’s previous energies spent in mitigating divine participation

⁵⁶⁰Such religious practice is νεκρά in 2:17; ἀργή/κενά, νεκρά in 2:20 (with ms variation); μάταιος in 1:26.

⁵⁶¹For a defense of this reading of ‘faith’ as describing primarily religious *θησεία* and ‘works’ as public acts of charity, a reading that moves well beyond the standard comparisons with Pauline thought, cf. Versepunt 1997b and more recently Ruzer 2013, 82–96 on this teaching as a contemporary Jewish tradition for interpreting the Law of Moses.

⁵⁶²The majority of scholarship reads this passage in comparison with Pauline soteriology; see the survey of scholarship in Kamell 2010. The ablest defender of this position remains Dibelius 1984, 174–80. In contrast, others, e.g., Ruzer 2013 have argued that Jas 2:21–24 operates within the normal pace of Jewish interpretive thought on Abraham’s works, and exhibits none of the Pauline polemic reflected in Romans and Galatians. Rather than Paul’s polemical consideration of Genesis 15/Genesis 17 treating faith and circumcision, James elaborates on a Genesis 15/Genesis 22 continuity of religious practice and public piety. Unlike Paul’s gentile conundrum, James addresses the indigenous topic of the core principles of Torah and the specific actions required by them.

in probation are now matched with a strong and potentially conflicting biblical proof-text. Is this allusion to the *Aqedah* intentionally connected to James' preceding section, or is it merely an unhappy coincidence that James stumbles over the OT narrative that would most famously undermine his theological claims?

In what follows, I will argue that James' appeal to the *Aqedah* corresponds with common Jewish retellings of Abraham's story, most notably the intertextual interpretation of Gen 15 and Gen 22, the works of Abraham, Abraham as God's friend, and Abraham's patience. Numerous details from James' discourse reveal dependence on extra-canonical, exegetical influences.⁵⁶³ These details in turn point us to a recasting of Abraham's story similar to that of the Rewritten Bible literature detailed in part 2 above. While promoting Abraham as an exemplary figure of his theological discourse,⁵⁶⁴ the author relies heavily and intentionally on a reconceptualisation of Abraham's trial that accords with his own instantiation of the cosmic drama. As I argue below, the cosmic roles of this drama are populated primarily by the influence of the Job narratives.

10.2.1. *Genesis 15 and Genesis 22*

In order to highlight both the religious (monotheistic) and pious (ethical) characteristics of Abraham, James integrates two passages from Genesis. On the one hand the phrase ἐπίστευσεν δὲ Ἀβραὰμ τῷ θεῷ (Gen 15:6) provides the biblical basis that

⁵⁶³Ideally, many of these exegetical details would have been addressed above in part 2. However, for the sake of space and to shorten what was already a long section, I have compiled the various exegetical readings of Abraham and Job's stories below. The reader is advised to remember the exegetical context of the various Jewish works as described above.

⁵⁶⁴In this vein, Instone-Brewer 2004 has argued that the entire epistle was structured as a sermon on the various trials of Abraham; cf. Martin 1988, 91; Davids 1993, 229-230; Bauckham 1988, 307; Soards 1987, 18.

Abraham's justness was through his monotheistic 'faith' for God. Abraham's faith-act in Gen 15 is matched, however, with James' declaration καὶ ἐπληρώθη ἡ γραφή: 'this Scripture' (i.e. Gen 15:6) 'was fulfilled' only when Abraham's 'faith' joined forces with 'work'. Within James' example, Abraham's belief could only be called perfect (ἐτελειώθη) after becoming effectualised in the the act of offering Isaac on the altar.⁵⁶⁵

The exegetical move here is subtle, but key to James' argument. Rather than treating Gen 15:6 as a self-contained narrative, the author links God's declaration of Abraham's faith-based righteousness with Abraham's actions in Gen 22.⁵⁶⁶ The initial act of 'monotheistic faith' in Gen 15 is for James' purposes cooperative with the probation of this faith in Gen 22.⁵⁶⁷ In this manner, James can conclude that the great narrative of Abraham's monotheism is also a story of righteous piety under trial.

Similar assimilations of Gen 15 and 22 as statements of Abraham's faithfulness and piety are common in broader Jewish literature.⁵⁶⁸ Already in Neh 9:8 God had 'found Abraham's heart faithful'. 1 Macc 2:52 appends Gen 15:6 to Gen 22:18 with the statement: 'was not Abraham found faithful under trial (πειρασμῶ), and it was accounted to him as righteousness'? Similarly, as seen above, Sir 44:30 combines the two ideas where Abraham

⁵⁶⁵Swetnam 1981, 81 n. 468 suggests that the aorist participle ἀνεγκας, 'offered' derives from LXX Gen 22:2, 9 and suggests that the sacrifice was considered fully completed in a figurative sense: i.e., Abraham fulfilled the divine command by his intentions. In some traditions Abraham did literally sacrifice Isaac (cf. *LAB* 18.5; *Mek. de-R. Ishmael* 1.57; *b. Ber.* 16b).

⁵⁶⁶Johnson 1995, 243 describes the tone here as a prophetic statement and its corresponding fulfilment; cf. Davids 1982, 192; note Hahn 1971, 90-107 on the influence of Gen 15 in the NT.

⁵⁶⁷Rakestraw 1986, 50 perhaps goes too far in suggesting that James does not endow Abraham's faith with any particular virtuousness or righteous in itself, but rather claims that in the obedience of the *Aqedah* faith reaches its true purposes; similarly Beale 2007, 1004; Nelson 1983, 258-63; Baird 1998, 378-379. However, the co-equal requirements of *both* 'love for God' and 'love for neighbour' in the preceding context should not be overlooked.

⁵⁶⁸Here see Bauckham 1988, 307; Soards 1987, 18.

‘was found faithful in a test’ (וּבְנִיּוֹתָיִם נִמְצָא נֶאֱמָן / καὶ ἐν πειρασμῷ εὗρέθη πιστός).⁵⁶⁹ Philo in *Abr.* 192 inserted Abraham’s faithfulness at Gen 15 into the *Aqedah* as a launching point for his ‘spiritual’ reading.⁵⁷⁰ Within the rabbinic midrash *Mek. de-R. Ishmael* tractate *Beshallah* 7 where the sage ponders Israel’s monotheistic belief at the Song of the Sea (Exod 15), Abraham becomes a pinnacle example of how such ‘faith’ completes the Torah. If a person fulfils even a single commandment ‘in faith’ (בְּאֵמֶנָה, line 135 in the Lauterbach edition) he is worthy to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit; even more so, unwaveringly obedient faith like demonstrated by Abraham at the *Aqedah* inherits both this world and the world to come.⁵⁷¹

This common exegetical practice of interrelating Gen 15:6 and Gen 22 has been described by Levenson as a traditional method for describing ‘perfect religion’. According to Levinson, the popular reception and interpretation of these two passages in the first and second centuries B.C. began to emphasise Abraham’s righteousness and faithfulness in a manner that was unmentioned in either Gen 15 or Gen 22 independently.⁵⁷² While the combination of Abraham’s faith and action cannot be found in any single Torah passage, the intermingling of the two narratives became a popular sounding board for religious piety as early as Neh 9.

⁵⁶⁹ Similarly, Sir 2:10.

⁵⁷⁰ ‘Faithfulness’ as a general Abrahamic characteristic appears in Philo *Leg. All.* 3.228; *Mut. Nom.* 177. Similar statements appear as early as *Jub.* 23:10; as late as *b. Meg.* 11a.

⁵⁷¹ Cf. also in *Mek. de-R. Shimon b. Yochai* 14.

⁵⁷² Cf. Levenson 1993, 175; cf. Jacobs 1975, 462.

10.2.2. *The Piety of Abraham in Other Jewish Exegetical Discourses*

Beyond the intertextual nature of James' reading of Abraham's faith, various scholars have observed how James' Abraham shares a number of additional similarities with portrayals in broader post-biblical sources. Davids concludes, 'it is obvious that James knows a somewhat different version of the Abraham narrative from that in Genesis.' Theories about James' dependence on 'traditional legends' about Abraham have been published by I. Jacobs, M. Soards, D. Instone-Brewer, and D. Versepunt, among others.⁵⁷³ These scholars observe that salient points include common description of Abraham's defence of monotheism, his hospitality and general care for the poor, his intercessory roles, his appellation as a 'lover of God', his multiple trials as 'works', and his anthropological perfection.

10.2.2.1. Abraham as Defender of Monotheism

James' appeal to *πίστις* in 2:21 as an Abrahamic characteristic unfolds from the author's previous allusion to the monotheistic faith of the *Shema* (as in 2:19) for which Abraham was famous in the wider traditions. In the wider literature, the patriarch is commonly described as a wise astronomer and profound philosopher who defended monotheism in the face of idolatry.⁵⁷⁴ While immersed in Chaldean idolatry Abraham came to believe in the one and only God, thus pioneering and exemplifying Israel's religious monotheism.⁵⁷⁵ Abraham famously faced monotheistic doubt (e.g., *Jub.* 11:16–17 and 12:1–5; *Apoc Abr.* 3, 4; also Josephus *Ant.* 1.154–6 and Philo *Abr.* 70), his actions, specifically in the burning of the temple and idols of his false gods (e.g., *Jub.* 12:12; *Apoc.*

⁵⁷³Cf. Davids 1993, 228; Jacobs 1975; Soards 1987; Versepunt 1997b; Instone-Brewer 2004.

⁵⁷⁴Noted in James scholarship by Baird 1998, 369; Mayer 1972; Bauckham 1988, 306.

⁵⁷⁵Legends and expansions in this vein appear in *Jub.* 12:1–21; *Apoc. Abr.* 1–8; Josephus *Ant.* 1.154–157; Philo *Virt.* 212–216; *Tg. Neof.* to Gen 49:1–2.

Abr. 5:6–17) portray Abraham as a monotheistic warrior. This appeal to the monotheistic Abraham provides a natural example for James' own requirements of monotheistic loyalty.⁵⁷⁶

10.2.2.2. The Works of Abraham

If Abraham's 'faith' provides James with an example of monotheistic loyalty, what then of Abraham's works? The example that James extends in 2:21 is clearly that of the near-sacrifice of Isaac, but many scholars have noted that James refers to a plural (ἔργων in 2:21 and ἔργοις in 2:22) set of 'works'.⁵⁷⁷ What were these works?

Some scholars have argued that these 'works' recall Abraham's traditional Ten Trials which reached their high point at the *Aqedah*.⁵⁷⁸ Though James names only the *Aqedah*, traditionally Abraham was faithful through a whole series of tests. A large, diverse, and influential tradition of 'Abraham the Tested' developed in the Second Temple period.⁵⁷⁹ The Ten Trials are given special emphasis by *Jub.* 19:8; similarly in the later rabbinic *Tanh. Va-Yishlah* 8 Eliphaz says to Job 'Are your deeds like those of Abraham? He was tried ten times and stood up to them all . . . while you faced one trial only'.⁵⁸⁰ Typically, the *Aqedah* was read as Abraham's greatest trial, as in Philo's *Abr.* 176 where he describes Abraham's test as 'unprecedented' and 'Abraham's greatest action', surpassing all previous actions that had won God's favour.⁵⁸¹ At times the *Aqedah* is named as a code for the ten tests by which Abraham

⁵⁷⁶E.g., the requirement of loyalty in 1:2–18; the creedal/ethical implications in 2:14, etc.

⁵⁷⁷The parallels here to broader notions of 'works of the law' as seen in 4QMMT and Rom 3:20 are striking.

⁵⁷⁸Dauids 1993, 229.

⁵⁷⁹For an overview cf. Kugel 1998, 297. Examples include Sir 44:20–21; 1 Macc 2:52; *Jub.* 17:17–18, 19:8; Philo *Abr.* 176; Jdt 8:25–7; *Lev. Rab.* 31:4; *Tg. Neof.* 22:1.

⁵⁸⁰Cf., *m. Abot* 5:3, *Pirke Abot* 5:3, and the *ARN* (A) 33; *Lev. Rab.* 31:4.

⁵⁸¹Cf. Feldman 2002, 86; Calduch-Benages 1997a, 148. Similarly, Swetnam 1981, 82 argues for the *Aqedah* as the example of mature faith in the culmination of Abraham's trials; cf. *Gen. Rab.* 56:11. The *Aqedah* was at times explicitly the last trial, so Martínez 2002, 90 citing *Num. Rab.* 17:2; however, *Jub.* 19 presents

was proven righteous.⁵⁸²

Other scholars have read Abraham's plural 'works' in Jas 2:21–22 to signify not only the *Aqedah* or other tests but also his other acts of righteousness such as his hospitality (paralleled by Rahab in Jas 2:25), intercession (paralleled by Elijah in 5:17) and general piety (exemplifying James' concerns for orphans and widows in 1:27).⁵⁸³ This plurality of works finds precedent in the broader retellings of Abraham's life in the broader Second-Temple and subsequent literature that elevated Abraham as an example of anthropological perfection.

The canonical OT accounts present Abraham as hospitable, especially in his offer of food and shelter to the angelic visitors (Gen 18) and in contrast to the hospitality of the residents of Sodom in what follows. Later interpreters build from this story in creating various hagiographic legends. In *Abr.* 167 Philo reads the *Aqedah* and the theme of hospitality together, moving from Abraham's hospitality in Gen 18 directly to the sacrifice of Isaac. Elsewhere (*de Sob.* 56) Philo connects the title 'friend of God' (cf. Jas 2:23, below), with Abraham's hospitality in Gen 18. *1 Clem.* 12.2 portrays Abraham as an example of hospitality. After quoting Gen 15:6 in *1 Clem.* 10:6, the author mentions Abraham's πίστις καὶ φιλοξενία (10:7a) and then turns to the sacrifice of Isaac (10:7b). Two chapters later this language of hospitality used for Abraham is correlated to Rahab: as Abraham received his son διὰ πίστιν καὶ φιλοξενίαν, so Rahab was saved διὰ πίστιν καὶ φιλοξενίαν (12:1).⁵⁸⁴ In

death of Sarah as the final test.

⁵⁸²So *m. Qidd.* 4:14, *b. Meg.* 11a.

⁵⁸³Emphatically, Ward 1968, 287; also in Moo 1985, 114; Dibelius 1976, 170; Ward 1968, 287; Montefiore 1938, 1172, Chadwick 1961, 281–85; Bauckham 1988, 307.

⁵⁸⁴In a similar manner James' appeal to Abraham's hospitality in light of his monotheistic faith sheds light on his immediate transition to Rahab in Jas 2:25. James reflects on the narrative of Joshua 2 where Rahab's piety, shown in her hospitality to the two spies, stems from her declaration of monotheistic belief

rabbinic literature, hospitality is specifically named among the merits that shielded Abraham from killing Isaac.⁵⁸⁵ In *ARN* (A) 1.7 Abraham seeks wayfarers and builds inns for all to come in, surpassing even Job in showing hospitality to the poor.⁵⁸⁶ In *Tanh. Lekh Lekha* 12 ‘sowing righteousness’ (Prov 11: 18) is applied to Abraham because he fed the travelers of Gen 18:4–8.⁵⁸⁷ Many of the themes of community care in Jas 2:14–16 (the provision of food, clothing, etc.) leading up to James’ Abrahamic exemplar are evoked by the language of *Yashar Va-Yera* 42b:

If one was hungry, and he came to Abraham he would give him what he needed, so that he might eat and drink and be satisfied; and if one was naked, and he came to Abraham he would clothe him with the garments of the poor man’s choice, and give him silver and gold, and make known to him the Lord, who had created him and set him on earth.

Similar to his hospitality, Abraham’s intercessory role is mentioned throughout the literary record. Much is made of Abraham’s intercession in conjunction to its parallels with the intercessory ministry of traditional Job. Further to this point, see below on the interrelationship between Job and Abraham in James.⁵⁸⁸

In sum, whether James reads Abraham’s works as Ten Trials, or reflecting his broader

(Josh 2:11 ‘for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath’). That was effective to ‘save [Rahab’s] soul from death’ (Josh 2:13 καὶ ἐξελείσθη τὴν ψυχὴν μου ἐκ θανάτου), a possible source for the phrase σώσει ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἐκ θανάτου in Jas 5:20.

⁵⁸⁵ Cf. *Gen. Rab.* 60:4; 61:5.

⁵⁸⁶ Similarly, the much earlier *T. Ab.* 15:14–15 names Abraham the ‘friend of God’ specifically due to his hospitality (chapter 1 in the long recension; chapter 4 in the short recension).

⁵⁸⁷ This theme becomes common in the rabbinic period; cf. *Gen. Rab.* 49:4; *Midr. Ps.* 37:1.

⁵⁸⁸ Later Judaism often related Abraham’s intercessory ministry to the priestly ministry of the protological narratives. Hayward 1981, 134 has argued that the rabbinic literature and the Targums demonstrate a biblical continuum from the traditional priestly altar of Adam, through Noah, and to Abraham and Isaac (cf. *Tg. Ps-J.* on Gen 2:7–25; 22:9; also R. Eliezar ben Jacob in *Ber. Rab.* 34.9.)

life of piety, most scholars agree that James relies on information from Abraham's life that goes beyond the strictly canonical sources.

10.2.2.3. Abraham as God's Friend

James interprets the combination of Abraham's *πίστις* in Gen 15 and its fulfillment in the *ἔργα* of Gen 22 to result in Abraham's 'friendship with God'. The wider literature made much of this non-biblical appellation, which would become a sort of title for Abraham.

Abraham is styled as a friend of God as early as 2 Chr 20:7, an appellation followed by Theodotian's Greek text of Daniel 3:25. In 2 Chronicles the adjective used is **אֹהֶב**, though elsewhere in post-biblical Hebrew literature the adjective **יָדִיד** is typically employed. Corresponding to this description, the title *φίλος θεοῦ* appears throughout Greek pseudepigraphical literature applied to Abraham, often following the *Aqedah*. Whereas the angel in Gen 22:12 declares Abraham a **יִרְאָה אֱלֹהִים**, that is, a 'God-fearer', this designation was modified to 'God lover' in many of the traditional retellings. This title appears in relationship to various other characteristics of Abraham, for example his humility (1 *Clem.* 17:2), his faithfulness (*Jub.* 19: 9), and his obedience and hospitality (CD 3:2).⁵⁸⁹ We have seen this title applied with exegetical significance in *Jubilees* 17:16, 18 where it was the basis for the *Aqedah*;⁵⁹⁰ in Philo's description of Abraham's 'exceedingly great love for God' (*ἔρωτι θεῷ*) and his 'divine affection' (*θεοφιλὲς*) over his love for Isaac in *Abr.* 170–200; in the rabbinic preference to exchange Abraham's fear for God with a demonstration of his love for God.⁵⁹¹ Elsewhere, CD 3:2-3 records that Abraham was deemed a 'lover (**אֹהֶב**) of God'

⁵⁸⁹Noted in Ward 1968, 290.

⁵⁹⁰Cf. *Jub.* 18:15–16; 23:10; 24:11; though Jacobs 1975, 458 n. 2 notes the change of emphasis in *Jubilees* to Sarah's death in *Jub.* 19:9 rather than the *Aqedah*.

⁵⁹¹This early tradition is reflected in *m. Abot* 5:3, which combines Abraham's trial and his love for

because he kept the commandments.⁵⁹² The *Sibyll. Oracles* 2.245 record Abraham as the ‘great friend of God’, and the *Test. Abraham* (A) uses the title consistently throughout, including calling Abraham ‘my beloved friend’ (τὸν ἡγαπημένον μου φίλον, 1:6), ‘genuine friend’ (φίλου αὐτοῦ γνήσιου, 2:6), and ‘the righteous soul, the true friend of the Most high’ (δικαία ψυχή, φίλε γνήσιε τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου, 16:9).⁵⁹³ Christian literature also continues to use this description. *1 Clement* 10:1 (in possible dependence on James) twice gives Abraham the title ‘friend of God’ (10:1 ὁ φίλος προσαγορευθεὶς and 17:2 φίλος προσηγορεύθη τοῦ Θεοῦ).⁵⁹⁴

In James, this preference for the phrase ‘friend of God’ in the context of the *Aqedah* fits a number of points in James’ discourse. Not only does the preference for ‘love’ over ‘fear’ elevate the hagiographic retelling of Abraham’s life of faith and piety, but it ties Abraham into James’ previous argument that God blesses those who endure probation and ‘love God’ (Jas 1:12; 2:23). As the capstone statement of the author’s appeal to Abraham, Jas 2:23 identifies friendship with God as the reward for Abraham’s fealty and piety. Given the previous treatment of Deut 6:4–5 and the command in Jas 1:12, 2:10 to ‘love the Lord your

God: ‘with ten trials was Abraham our father tested, and he stood steadfast in them all, to demonstrate how great was the love of Abraham our father’. Thus in the *Mek. de-R. Ishmael* tractate *Massekhta Bahodesh*, 4 the sages can expound the phrase ‘of them that love me and keep my commandments’ (Exod 20:6; Deut 5:10) as referring to the Patriarch Abraham. Elsewhere the pure and perfect worship of God is motivated by, and performed with love. In *y. Ber.* 14b Abraham symbolizes ‘the Pharisee from love, the most beloved of them all’. R. Meir observes in *b. Sota* 31a that the term ‘a God-fearing man’ when applied to Abraham was generally understood to mean that he feared ‘out of love’. Cf. *y. Ber.* 9:14b; *y. Sota* 5.20c; *Gen. Rab.* 61; *b. Sota* 31a; *b. Menab.* 53b; *t. Ber.* 7.13 (cf. the *t. Menab.* 53b and *b. Shabb.* 137b); *Sifre Num.* 115 and *Sifre Deut.* 352; *ARN* (B) 43, 121. The title ‘Friend of God’ would also influence the Koran (e.g., 4.124), where it is applied exclusively to Abraham.

⁵⁹² Cf. *The Prayer of Azariah* 12.

⁵⁹³ Cf. 8:2, 4; 9:7; 15:12, 13; 16:5; 20:14.

⁵⁹⁴ Similar descriptions appear in Clement of Alexandria, *Instructor* 3:2; *Stromata* 2:5; also Irenaeus *Her.* 5:3 and 7:2.

God with all your heart, Abraham's fulfilment of the requirements of the law by his work is rewarded accordingly and he is named God's Friend.⁵⁹⁵ This shift from a God-fearer to a God-lover shows James' participation within a common exegetical discourse on Abraham's faith, works, and love.

10.2.2.4. Abraham as Patient

We have noted in *Jubilees* how Abraham could be presented as an example of patience under trial, both in *Jubilees* 17 and in *Jubilees* 19. In these texts Abraham's response to testing is described as 'patience', 'faithfulness' and proper speech to God. Because of Abraham's response to these trials, at his death *Jubilees* describes him as 'perfect in all his deeds with the Lord, and well-pleasing in righteousness all the days of his life' (*Jub.* 23:10). The theme of 'patience under trial' occurs throughout the Epistle of James (both in 1:3, 4, 12, and in 5:9–11). I will detail below how Abraham's patience becomes important for James' discourse as a whole as it relates to the author's description of anthropological perfection.⁵⁹⁶

10.2.2.5. Abraham as Perfected Anthropology

For some interpreters, Abraham's tests were intended to stimulate spiritual perfection. We have noted how Abraham provides for Sirach the example of anthropological

⁵⁹⁵On the cause-effect relationship of the *Aqedah* and divine friendship in James, cf. Jacobs 1975, 458, Eaton 1957, 44; Sidebottom 1967, 45. More broadly, note Sir 44.20-1; *L.A.B.* 18.5; 32.5; 1 Macc 2.52; Josephus *Ant.* 234; and Philo *Abr.* 273.

⁵⁹⁶On Abraham's traditional silence, cf. *Pesiq. Rab.* 47 'Do you consider yourself greater than Adam and Abraham and others, who were tried and punished and who remained silent, thus demonstrating their love for God?' Though silence under trial is not a feature in James 1–3, note the extended discussion of the tongue throughout James 3, and specifically the command against cursing under trial (Jas 3:9, 10; 4:11; 5:12), as well as the non-resistance of the suffering righteous person (Jas 5:6).

perfection. As Abraham was patient, constant, and perfect under trial (Sir 44:20), so too must Sirach's disciple prove his worth through probation. This link between Abraham and anthropological perfection is widespread. In *Jub.* 23:10 'Abraham was perfect in all of his works with the Lord, and was pleasing through righteousness all the days of his life.'⁵⁹⁷ Here, Abraham's tests involved both faith ('he *believed* that he would have seed'), and faith's verification ('he *was tested* as to whether he would do this command'), concluding with the summative statement that Abraham was 'perfect in all his works'. Philo *Abr.* 198 states similarly 'thus we see that Abraham did not incline partly to [Isaac] and partly to piety, but devoted his *whole soul*, entire and undivided (ὅλην τὴν ψυχὴν δι' ὅλων ὁσιότητι) to holiness'. In *Abr.* 177 Abraham's actions were 'perfect and complete' (ὁλόκληρος καὶ παντελής). Several later rabbinic texts similarly focus on the internal 'perfection' in the actions of Abraham and Isaac, and emphasise Abraham's control over the evil *yetzer*. Hayward has noted the combination of the *Shema*, the *Aqedah*, and the control of the *yetzer* in various readings of the *Aqedah*.⁵⁹⁸

James' statement that Abraham's faith 'was perfected' (ἐτελειώθη) by his 'works' (ἐκ τῶν ἔργων) returns to an anthropological theme that I highlighted in the preceding chapters. As Patrick Hartin has argued, human perfection in James points to the notion of faithfulness and undivided loyalty to God, a complete obedience to the teachings of Torah as traditionally encapsulated in the commands to love God and one's neighbour.⁵⁹⁹ This

⁵⁹⁷ A summary of Abraham's life similar to that seen in Gen 26:5.

⁵⁹⁸ Cf. Hayward 1981, 137, citing *L.A.B.* 32:4; *Gen. Rab.* 56:8; *b. Shabb.* 54a. Hayward likewise notes how the Palestinian Targums (both W and G) apply the concept of maturity or perfection to Abraham and Isaac as men who were 'at one with God'. Abraham's prayer in *FT(W)*, *FT(G)*, and also in the *Tg. Neof.* Gen 22:14 provides the climax of the *Aqedah*, where he asks that there 'be no division in my heart at the time when you ordered me to sacrifice Isaac my son'; cf. Jas 1:8 and the ἀνὴρ διψυχός above.

⁵⁹⁹ Hartin 1991, 17–39 where this is a teaching of Jesus; cf. Ruzer 2013 where this is a common and

theme of ‘anthropological wholeness’ finds its root in the first chapter, where the readers are directed to allow tested patience (ὑπομονή) to achieve its ‘perfect work’ (ἔργου τέλειον) in 1:2–4, followed by the ‘perfect gift’ of 1:17; the ‘perfect law’ of 1:25, and the ‘perfect man’ of 3:2. The concept immediately precedes the Abraham pericope, where Jas 2:8 describes how one may ‘perfectly fulfil’ the requirements of the law through the love command, followed by the ‘perfection of Abraham’s faith’ in 2:22.⁶⁰⁰ The traditional Abraham’s unified anthropological perfection galvanised by faith under trial provides for James an example of the perfect man.

10.2.2.6. Conclusion: Abraham’s Anthropological Perfection

The portrait of Abraham in the Epistle of James goes necessarily beyond the canonical portrayal. James’ interpretive strategies in reading Abraham as an exemplar of his broader exhortations fit similar readings of Abraham found in a wide range of contemporary Jewish literature.⁶⁰¹ James’ Abraham is a defender of monotheistic faith who manifests works of hospitality, piety, intercession, and patient endurance under trial. These trials serve to demonstrate Abraham as the perfect man, and after his final trial he is declared God’s friend.

10.2.3 *Traditional Problems with Abraham and the Aqedah*

While Abraham provides James with an example of anthropological perfection, there remain significant problems with Abraham’s canonical narrative. The traditional *anthropological* enhancements to the Abraham stories are rarely apologetic. That is, they do

early Jewish exegetical tendency.

⁶⁰⁰Cf. Cheung 2003, 162–69 who argues that the *imitatio Dei* of Lev 19:2 provides the exegetical motivation: ἄγιοι ἔσεσθε, ὅτι ἐγὼ ἅγιος.

⁶⁰¹So Ruzer 2013, who argues that these exegetical motifs provide evidence for certain general trajectories in the development of Jewish exegesis on Abraham.

not correct potential problems in the canonical narrative, but rather build on positive features already present in the text. However, as we have seen in a number of other exegetical sources discussing Abraham's trial, the *Aqedah* provoked widespread exegetical attempts to clarify, adjust, or suppress the *cosmic* implications of Abraham's great test. For the broader literature surveyed above, the reworkings of the *Aqedah* not only enhanced the patriarch's character, but also mitigated potentially damaging theological implications of the testing narrative.

A 'plain' reading of the canonical Abraham account reveals a point of tension, both with James' statement in 1:13 and with the cosmic roles that operate throughout the Epistle. How does the author defend the theological axiom πειράζει δὲ [θεὸς] αὐτὸς οὐδέν in Jas 1:12, when Gen 22:1 states so famously and controversially καὶ ἐγένετο μετὰ τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα ὁ θεὸς ἐπειράζειν τὸν Ἀβραάμ? As we have seen, James was not alone in wrestling with the cosmic implications of Gen 22 for divine involvement in trials.

The broader exegetical discourses on Abraham's cosmology raised a number of questions. First of all why would an omniscient God need to test Abraham in the first place? Similarly, why would God say 'now I know that you fear the Lord' (Gen 22:14), which implies previous ignorance? Finally, how could a perfect God be directly involved with something as morally compromised as child sacrifice?⁶⁰²

We have seen how *Jubilees* addresses this question directly by inserting an interpretive pericope drawn from the Job narrative to clarify cosmic roles and divine knowledge. In 17:16–18, Prince Mastema arrives and incites the trial, based on the question of Abraham's love for God vs. his love for Isaac. The narrator is quick to note that 'the Lord

⁶⁰²Which God in fact decries in other OT texts.

knew that Abraham was faithful in all his afflictions'. Before the trial, the narrator affirms preemptively that 'the Lord knew that Abraham was faithful', and then when Abraham raises the knife, the Lord affirms that 'now I have *made known*' the results of the trial. This reading, shared by *Jub.* 18:11, 4Q225, *L.A.B.* 32:1–2, *Gen. Rab.* 54:7/*b. Sanh.* 89b, and elsewhere, is justified by a simple repointing of the verb 'to know'.⁶⁰³

We have likewise seen how Philo is sensitive to the issue of divine knowledge and probation, as in *QG* 1.45. We noted Philo's use of a very different philosophical and exegetical toolkit in discussing the potential questions raised by the *Aqedah* and other narratives of probation. Philo rejected a demonological explanation for human actions, preferring to explain questions of divine transcendence and immanence through a combination of philosophical intermediation and allegorical interpretation.

Finally, in the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*, Scriptures that declare God to have participated in the probation of Adam, Abraham, David or Job are condemned as satanically inspired 'false pericopes', added to Scripture to 'test faith' (πειράν πιστεως, so 2.23; 3.3–5). In *Homily* 3:55 and elsewhere Simon Peter fights to counteract the popular claims that texts such as the *Aqedah* could legitimately call into question divine omniscience, foreknowledge, and beneficence.

The common thread in all of these exegetical discourses is a general recognition that the probation of Abraham, while useful for describing a robust, exemplary anthropology in the midst of trials, contained potentially damaging implications when questions turned to divine agency. Various hermeneutical approaches were utilised to mitigate the damaging implication that God was directly responsible for probation. Philo appeals to a fully

⁶⁰³Cf. Kister 1994, 26 n. 38 and above in chapter 4.1.5.2.

subordinate cosmology in his allegorical hermeneutic; the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* resort to a hermeneutic of rejection. But what of the Epistle of James?

As the broadly contemporaneous literature could not ignore the cosmic implications of the *Aqedah*, neither does James.⁶⁰⁴ The tensions between the cosmic drama of the canonical account of Gen 22 and the *dramatis personae* of James' cosmic drama seriously undermine the author's statements on divine non-involvement in probation. This incompatibility requires a significant clarification, expansion, or reworking of the *Aqedah* in order to alleviate its suspect cosmology.

One of the prominent hermeneutical features in texts such as *Jubilees*, *L.A.B.*, at Qumran, and in the rabbis that broadly resemble James' portrayal of the cosmic roles is an appeal to an assimilating intertextual hermeneutic within which these various demonic and even dualistic cosmologies could be implemented. In these works, the story of Job provided a robust and theologically satisfactory perspective on divine and satanic roles in trials. In both the Rewritten Bible genre and the rabbinic midrash, Job's story becomes intertwined with Abraham's narrative, and indeed in some discourses becomes inseparable. In what follows, I will argue that the cosmic drama of the Job stories provide the narrative framework for James' reconceptualisation of Abraham's trial. Before making this argument, however, I will analyse James' use of the Job narrative in Jas 5:11. I will argue that within James' emphasis on patience under trial, the Job narrative suffered from an opposite deficiency to that of the Abraham narrative. Whereas the canonical Abraham narrative

⁶⁰⁴On whether James knows the LXX of Gen 22 or not, Laws 1973 has argued that James knows the LXX and cites it exactly, contra Davids 1982, 10, who argues that James never diverges identifiably from the MT. A mental point of reference to תַּעֲבֹד rather than περιρῥῆν does not alleviate the theological tension, though it does lessen the grating semantic tension with James' statement in 1:12.

contains a dangerously deficient portrayal of cosmic agency, canonical Job exemplifies a compromised anthropology. I will conclude by arguing that James resolves both these anthropological and cosmological tensions with a mutually assimilated reading of these two narratives.

10.3. *Patient Job*

Jas 5:10–11 exhorts the readers to consider the patience (μακροθυμία) amid suffering (κακοπαθία) of the prophets, and the endurance (ύπομονή) of Job, who was called blessed (μακαρίζειν) due to his endurance. The command to ‘take as an example’ provides the capstone exhortation in a series of exhortations for patience beginning in 5:7.

5:7 Μακροθυμήσατε οὖν, ἀδελφοί, ἕως τῆς παρουσίας τοῦ κυρίου

5:8 μακροθυμήσατε . . . ὅτι ἡ παρουσία τοῦ κυρίου ἤγγικεν.

5:9 μὴ στενάζετε, ἀδελφοί

5:10 ὑπόδειγμα λάβετε . . . τῆς μακροθυμίας τοῦ προφήτου.

5:11a μακαρίζομεν τοὺς ὑπομείναντας· τὴν ὑπομονὴν Ἰωβ ἠκούσατε

5:11b τὸ τέλος κυρίου εἶδετε ὅτι πολὺσπλαγχνός ἐστιν ὁ κύριος καὶ οἰκτίρμων

The operative term in this passage is μακροθυμία, which unifies the context as an appeal to fortitude, steadfastness, and patience in the context of stress, trial, and suffering.⁶⁰⁵

The impending παρουσία of the Lord serves as the basis for the readers’ endurance. The intervening exhortation for proper speech in 5:9 (‘do not grumble’) provides the example of a failure to endure these difficult circumstances. The final imperative ‘take as an example’ extends the examples of the prophets and Job, who were called ‘blessed’ through their

⁶⁰⁵Cf. McKnight 2011, 404; on whether μακροθυμία and ὑπομονή here refer to the same thing, see the favourable arguments in Moo 2000, 221–22.

endurance. The passage then proceeds to address further hardship within the community (κακοπαθεῖ in 5:13), while exhorting that the members not respond with improper speech such as swearing or oathtaking.

In 5:11 James makes the NT's only mention of Job by name. The author portrays Job as an ὑπόδειγμα, a person to imitate, especially in light of the preceding context of proper speech under hardship.⁶⁰⁶ In Jas 5:11 the readers had heard (ἠκούσατε) of Job's steadfastness and have seen (εἶδετε) the purpose of the Lord, and they are to emulate his actions. This statement perhaps recalls Job 42:5: 'My ears have heard (ἤκουόν) of you, but now my eyes have seen (έόρακέν) you', and they are to emulate his actions. While Job is not explicitly mentioned elsewhere in James, some scholars have argued that the author of James implicitly has Job in mind throughout the entirety of the epistle.⁶⁰⁷

Depending on how one reads the structure of James, it is possible to see formal links here with the exhortations of chapter 1. The statement of 5:11 μακαρίζομεν τοὺς ὑπομείναντας recalls 1:12 μακάριος ἄνθρωπος ὃς ὑπομένει πειρασμόν. The apologetic transition from 1:12 to 1:13–18 and its defence of divine integrity is mirrored here in 5:11b, where the author argues that such endurance is in view of the 'Lord's purposes', who is 'compassionate and merciful'. Furthermore, the author has signalled a concern for proper speech throughout his letter, starting with Jas 1:19 ('be slow to speak and slow to anger'), followed with an extended exhortation on the use of the tongue and proper speaking in 3:1–12, and then at 4:11 and here in 5:9, 12. Job seems to function as the example of a righteous wealthy person who must learn to 'rejoice in his debasement' (1:10) with endurance (1:3). James' emphasis

⁶⁰⁶On Job as exemplar, cf. Bauckham 1999, 56–57.

⁶⁰⁷Cf. Richardson 2006, 220–221, Hainthaler 1988, 319. Js 5:2 may also contain an allusion to Job 13:28 with the phrase 'moth-eaten clothes'.

for care of the weak and hospitality for those in need in chapter 1–2 parallels closely Job’s self description in Job 29:1-17:

when the friendship⁶⁰⁸ of God was upon my tent . . . I delivered the poor who cried, and the orphan who had no helper, the blessing of the wretched came upon me, and I caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me... I was a father to the needy, and I championed the cause of the stranger.

Job exemplifies for the Epistle patience (μακροθυμία, 5:8, 10; ὑπομονήν, 5:11) and blessedness (μακαρίζομεν, 5:11; cf. 1:12), and encourages a similar endurance by implying that believers who endure suffering will likewise be blessed and honoured by the Lord.⁶⁰⁹ As Abraham stands out as the example of faithfulness in Jas 2, Job stands out as an example of endurance.⁶¹⁰

10.3.1. *James, Job, and the Contemporary Exegetical Discourse*

Of special interest for this study is author’s appeal to Job as an example of someone who endured (ὑπομένειν) without grumbling (στενάζειν) or other improper speech (ὀμνύειν). The problem with James’ appeal to Job is that the canonical account of a Patient Job hardly matches James’ description, and neither does it match the Job described by various broader contemporary exegetical discourses. While Job may have been selected because of his close connection to suffering, satanic enticement, and endurance, he is hardly a passive or patient figure. More commonly, he was described as a rebel.

The term ὑπομονή appears only once in the Septuagint of Job and then not of Job

⁶⁰⁸ Hebrew רִיבּוֹנִי, but with no LXX parallel; cf. Gentry 1995.

⁶⁰⁹ Cf. Hainthaler 1988, 319.

⁶¹⁰ Cheung 2003, 268; Richardson 2006.

himself (14:19).⁶¹¹ Rather, descriptions such as ‘vocally combative’ and ‘self-righteous’ come to mind. Job bitterly complained to God because of his terrible circumstance (7:11–16; 10:18; 23:2; 30:20–23). The term στενάζειν, used negatively by James in 5:9, in fact could have been a more defining term for Job.⁶¹² For this reason, many scholars have suggested that James’ appeal to a Patient Job is hardly expected in light of the long exegetical tradition of chastising Job for his lack of patience and specifically his ‘speaking of words to God.’⁶¹³ The elevation of Job’s piety and patience has led many scholars to accept that James assumes a traditional extra-canonical portrayal of a patient Job.⁶¹⁴

Dauids, in addressing James’ statement in 5:11 that the readers have ‘heard of the patient enduring of Job’, proposes that ‘the manner in which they heard’ was through the popular Jewish haggadic work *Testament of Job* in which Job’s ὑπομονή receives strong emphasis (e.g., 1:5; 4:6; 5:1; 27:4, 7).⁶¹⁵ Popkes more cautiously argues that James’ formulation of ὑπομονή indicates a general and secondary knowledge of such a Job rather than directly from a written source.⁶¹⁶ In what follows I will provide a sampling of the

⁶¹¹Though see Aquila, who translates ὑπομονή in 4:6; 6:8; 17:15; also the verbal form ὑπομένειν which occurs 14x in the LXX (3:9; 6:11; 7:3; 9:4; 14:14; 15:31; 17:13; 20:26; 22:21; 32:4; 32:16; 33:5; 41:3). A minority of scholars have therefore argued for a purely canonical Job: cf. Richardson 2006, 226; Fine 1955, 30; Barclay 2003, 145. Such later reworkings of Job may, however, prove the point, that translators were eager to construct a more sympathetic portrait of Job.

⁶¹²Στενάζειν is used in the Greek OT as a human response of grumbling against God and other persons in the context of suffering; so Sir 36:25; Ezek 21:6-7; and Lam 1:8, 21, and Job 24:12, though not describing Job himself.

⁶¹³Cf. Martin 1988, 194: ‘Job was anything but an example of a godly person who was patient in the midst of adversity’. Moo 2000, 228 describes Job as ‘self-righteous’, ‘insistent on an explanation for his unjust suffering’.

⁶¹⁴Cf. Spitta 1907, 170; Zink 1965, 147-152; Ward 1968, 288; Martin 1988, 194; Popkes 1999, 227; Davids 1993, 232 goes so far to conclude that ‘without the pseudepigraphal traditions we would not be able to explain James’ use of Job as an example of patience’.

⁶¹⁵Davids 1993, 231; cf. Davids 1978. Rahnenführer 1971, 87 notes lexical parallels between Jas 1:12 and *T. Job* 4.

⁶¹⁶Popkes 1999, 227.

recorded stories about Job found in the wider literature. I will then provide a possible solution for James' appeal to Job.

10.3.2. *The Extra-Canonical Stories of Job*

The primary literature on Job varies substantially in the available portrayals of Job, offering an even more diverse range of opinions than seen in the Abraham traditions. A large percentage of the descriptions portray Job as at best an ambiguous figure, possessing both positive characteristics worthy of emulation and negative traits that disqualified him from comparisons with the more celebrated Patriarchs.

One stream of interpretation held that Job was continually righteous throughout his ordeal. This positive evaluation begins as early as Ezekiel 14:12–20, where the righteousness of Job places him alongside the similarly celebrated figures Noah and Daniel.⁶¹⁷ In this version of the Job story, the protagonist is portrayed as an example of patience, a defender of monotheism, an example of silence under trial, a paragon of hospitality and priestly intercession.

Haas' study on the *Testament of Job* shows that 'perseverance' (ὑπομονεῖν, μακροθυμεῖν and καρτερεῖν) under trial becomes Job's most outstanding character quality in that work, to the point where Job's self-description as a model of patience (1:5) should be probably be read as special pleading.⁶¹⁸ Job's ordeal and actions provide an example to his children, who must likewise 'be patient in everything that happens to you' (*T. Job* 27:6-7). Job's patience manifests primarily in his heroic defence of monotheism against satanic idolatry. Despite knowing beforehand that he would suffer the consequences, Job declares

⁶¹⁷Cf. Schreiner 1992, 159.

⁶¹⁸Haas 1989, 117.

war on Satan by destroying his temple (*T. Job* 3). He will wrestle with Satan as an athlete in the arena (ἀθλητής in 4:10 and 27:3) and suffer the blows of his satanic opponent. Because of Job's great perseverance, he receives as the victor a crown (τὸν στέφανον; 4:10; 40:30; 18:5). Job's perseverance is especially notable in his manner of speech. In contrast to the harsh speech of canonical Job, the *Testament of Job* emphasises that after 48 years of suffering (22:1; 26:1; 28:1), Job did not utter a single improper word against God (13:5; 15:4). This question of Job's 'words' becomes a key point in the later analysis of Job's trial. He 'made a hedge about his words' so that God declared that 'Job did not sin once with his mouth.'⁶¹⁹

As described above in chapter 8, similar hagiographic parallels occur in later rabbinic discourses that emphasise Job's charity and hospitality. Job 'fed and sustained others' (*Gen. Rab.* 31:9), his 'doors stood wide open' bringing 'comfort to sufferers' (*Gen. Rab.* 66:1). He was 'generous with money' (*b. B. Bat.* 15a; cf. *b. Meg.* 28a), 'helped widows and orphans' (*b. B. Bat.* 16b), brought comfort to the blind, deaf and lame (*Tanh.* [Buber] *Va-Yishlah* 8), and justice to the poor (*Pesiq. Rab.* 32). His 'prayers were pure' (*Exod. Rab.* 12:4), and he is one of four who 'by themselves learned to know God' along with Abraham, King Hezekiah and the Messiah (*Num. Rab.* 14:2). Job exemplified the person who withstands testing without rebellion (*Exod. Rab.* 31:3). Job's example could also be applied to the broader community: *Echa Rabbati* (seventh-century midrash on Lamentations) broadens Job 3:1 ('I am the man who has known affliction') to an example for all Israel by stating, 'The community of Israel said to the Holy One . . . "I am the man, I am Job" for it is written in Job 34:1, "Who is the man like Job who drinks mockery like water"? That which

⁶¹⁹See a complete examination of Job's 'words' in Saldarini 1975, 30; further on the hermeneutic employed by *T. Job*, cf. section 10.4.3.1 below.

you brought upon Job, You have wanted to bring upon me'.⁶²⁰ In Job's modelling of human struggles, the rabbis found an important and popular example of the tested righteous person.⁶²¹

Despite such attempts to rehabilitate Job, the majority of the reception of the Job narrative highlights the impatience and rebellion of Job, debates his piety, and displays a marked tension in how to apply Job to their audience.⁶²² These tensions include an understanding that perhaps Job should be considered a rebel who spoke 'words' against God. Explicit rabbinic debates on Job's status appear as early as *m. Sota* 5:5's discussion on the quality of Job's piety. As described above in chapter 8, this debate often centred on whether Job obeyed God as a lover or fearer of God and on whether Job's speech was righteous before God.

What becomes clear from these portrayals of Job, both extensively in the rabbinic literature and to a lesser extent in the Second Temple literature, is that Job was a highly ambiguous figure. Job could be extended as both villain and exemplar.⁶²³ This diversity of opinion demonstrates, furthermore, that a vibrant and living tradition on Job flourished within Second Temple and rabbinic Judaism, and that a conversation was taking place on

⁶²⁰Buber 1899, 123. Similarly, Job provides a parallel for Israel's suffering: the phrase 'I am the Man' of Lam 3:1 becomes Israel's cry 'I am Job; what thou hast brought upon Job thou hast brought upon myself', a midrash found in both *Lam. Rab.* 3:1 and *Pesiq. de-R. Kahana* 16.

⁶²¹Cf. Adánez 1991, 238; Sanders 1955. In popular literature, Nahum of Gimzo (a play on words from *gam zo a tovah* 'also this is for good'), a 1st century Tanna whose feet and hands became paralyzed and whose body was covered with painful boils, shares many of legendary Job's characteristics, especially his patience. As told by Rabbi Nissim (b. 900, d. 1062) in *Hibbur Yafeh* 28 this figure illuminates how Job's plight became embedded into the popular traditions. Cf. Berdichevsky 1990, 88–89.

⁶²²On the wider traditions of Job in general, cf. Mangan 1994, 272–279; Urbach 1987, 409 n. 11; Glatzer 1973, 179–220.

⁶²³So Weinberg 1994, 281.

the significance of Job's role as a haggadic example of testing.⁶²⁴ Both the polemicists and the apologists reveal an awareness of Job's potentially compromised anthropology. The positive retellings of the Job narrative attempt to shore up this weakness by expounding on Job's love for God, his sinless lips, his flawless hospitality, and his patience. One wonders, however, whether works such as the *Testament of Job* seem to protest too much: their overly enhanced anthropology only whitewashes the fact that canonical Job was open for criticism as a fearer rather than a lover of God, one who sinned in speaking words against God, one who was impatient under cosmic trial.

James, in his appeal to Job as an exemplar of patience under trial, reflects on a portrayal that closely resembles the rehabilitated Job of broader exegetical discourses. But how does James arrive at this Job with his rehabilitated anthropology? Some have argued that James simply relies unimaginatively on a traditional Job from legend, ignoring or ignorant of the problematic nature of the canonical figure. I will argue in what follows, however, that in both James and in the broadly Jewish literature Job's elevated anthropology is constructed through an intertextual hermeneutic that draws heavily on traditional Abraham. Just as Abraham's narratives required modification to match a particular cosmology, so the Job narrative required an anthropological intervention.

10.4. Abraham and Job as Interwoven Narratives

Up to this point I have argued that James' recounting of the stories of Abraham and Job as self-standing biblical narratives shares a great deal in common with other broadly contemporary Jewish discourses. If we press further into these exegetical discourses,

⁶²⁴So Gordis 1965, 224.

however, it becomes apparent that authors frequently read Job and Abraham in tandem. Writers imagined Abraham and Job as parallel, even contemporary figures who faced similar problems and therefore stood open for literary, theological, and exegetical comparison. In what follows, I will detail the attention given to Job and Abraham as linked individuals. I will describe the widespread debate on their comparative righteousness. I will further show that the hermeneutical assimilation of these two figures into an anthropologically and cosmologically idealised 'Jobraham' narrative provided a biblical example of both appropriate human responses to trials as well as a theologically acceptable cosmic drama which neither narrative could offer in isolation. Finally, in returning to the Epistle of James, I will propose that this hermeneutical solution fits with the theological sensibilities of James, providing an inter-canonical solution to the cosmic concerns raised by Abraham's trial and the anthropological details of Job's ordeal.

10.4.1. Job and Abraham as Parallel Figures

The similarities between Job and Abraham in both canonical and extra-canonical literature have received extensive scholarly attention. Canonical Abraham and Job were both wealthy foreigners, prayerful intercessors, hospitable hosts who were tested through their children. As a result of their tests they were declared blessed and categorized as 'God-fearers'.⁶²⁵

However, certain noteworthy differences stand in high contrast. The satanic figure, so prominent in the opening scene of Job, has no place within the canonical Abraham narratives. This difference between the narratives' cosmologies creates starkly different

⁶²⁵Comparisons have been made by von Rad 1971, 24; Wenham 1994, 110; Japhet 1994; Michel 2001, 75-76; Veijola 2002; van Ruiten 2002, 66; Huizenga 2002; Ehrlich 1994.

supernatural roles. God alone tests Abraham in Gen 22, whereas the heavenly court and Satan in particular plays a central role in Job 1–3. Whereas Job remains largely unaware of the satanic and divine manoeuvring of his fate, Abraham engages directly with the divine summoner. The primary question in canonical Job is at least partly dedicated to a God vs. Satan debate in which God's declaration of Job's righteousness contrasts against Satan's claim that Job obeys merely as a calculated effort to gain divine blessing.⁶²⁶ While the narrative tension in Job is whether Satan or God will stand vindicated, the tension of the Abraham narrative concerns Abraham's obedience of the divine command, and perhaps primarily whether God will faithfully fulfil the promise of a seed to Abraham.⁶²⁷

Even within these differences, however, later Jewish interpreters saw room for connections and comparison. Where the biblical narratives left gaps in historical, literary, or theological detail, later expansions supplied additional narrative features to both amplify and attenuate these differences depending on the purposes of the later interpreter.⁶²⁸ For example, Jewish sources often emphasise that Abraham and Job lived parallel, even contemporary lives. Both *L.A.B* 8:8 and *T. Job* 1:6 describe Job as in the family of Esau, a wealthy foreigner from the east who married Dinah, Jacob's daughter.⁶²⁹ Following a similar tradition, the rabbi Simeon b. Lakish declared in the name of Bar Kappara in *Pesiq. Rab.*

⁶²⁶The cosmological differences are noted especially by van Ruiten 2002, 70 as a key tension point between the two narratives and are highlighted by a number of the post-biblical accounts such as *Jubilees* and 4Q225 above.

⁶²⁷So Japhet 1994, 161–163.

⁶²⁸So Glatzer 1969, 16–24.

⁶²⁹R. Netler in Charlesworth 1983, 839 sees this 'genealogical nexus' in the pseudepigrapha as a legitimisation of Job's position in the patriarchal line. Gordis 1965, 216 argues that the writing of the Job material at Qumran in paleo-Hebrew script (the only such text outside the Pentateuch found at Qumran) implies an understanding within the sectarian community that Job was written by Moses; similarly, Gordis argues that the Peshitta's placement of Job directly after the pentateuchal material flags Job as part of the patriarchal traditions.

that Job lived during the time of ‘our father Abraham’.⁶³⁰

A strongly supernatural, generally satanic emphasis is often amplified in both Abraham and Job’s lives. Both men were said to have fought against Satan and prevailed: Abraham, when he burned down his father’s idols while in Ur and as a result was thrown into the fiery furnace (*Jub.* 12:12-15), and Job when he initiated war with Satan by burning down the pagan temple and idols (*T. Job* 5:2). Accordingly, both men were polytheists who famously converted to monotheism.⁶³¹ Both were said to have been kings.⁶³² Both were given new names by God.⁶³³ Both were remembered as paragons of philanthropy. Both are compared through their suffering, often described as ‘ten trials’.⁶³⁴

A great deal of attention focused on the way each man spoke at the moment of trial. In *Jub.* 19:3–8 Abraham passed the tenth test (here the death of Sarah) when he was declared ‘faithful, controlled of spirit, and speaking not a single word against God’ despite his need to purchase land for Sarah’s grave due to the delay in God’s promised inheritance. Similarly, *Tg. Ps.-J.* to Gen 15:6 integrates Abraham’s speech with his righteousness: ‘and he

⁶³⁰So also *Gen. Rab.* 47:4; 57:4; 61:4; *y. Sota* 20c; *b. B. Bat.* 15a; *b. Sanh.* 106a; *Exod. Rab.* 1:9; *b. Sota* 11a; *Targum Job* 2:9; 20:19; *b. Sota* 5:20. A possible parallel of this tradition may appear in Origen’s commentary on Job (PG 17: 371-522), where he comments that Moses wrote or translated the book of Job in Egypt. See further Weinberg 1994, 287; Braude 2002, 212.

⁶³¹So the *T. Job*, where Job is presented as a converted gentile; also *Num. Rab.* 4.2 where Abraham and Job came to their knowledge of the true God unaided. Cf. Jacobs 1975, 4-5.

⁶³²For Abraham as king, see LXX Gen 23:6; Philo, *Abr.* 261; *Virt.* 216; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.159 (quoting Nicolaus of Damascus); *Gen. Rab.* 43.5. For Job as king see LXX Job 42:17; Aristeas the Exegete via Eusebius *Praep. Ev.* 9.25.3; *T. Job* 28.7; 29.3-4; 31.1.

⁶³³Abram as Abraham; Job was once, according to *T. Job* 2.1, Jobab, before God changed his name (paralleled in the marginalia of LXX Job 42.17); similarly, cf. Aristeas the Exegete via Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9.25.3.

⁶³⁴Cf. *Jubilees* 17; *Tanh. B Num.*, *Shelah* 27; Didymus the Blind, *Commentary on Job* in Henrichs 1968, 40. The term *πειράζειν* used of Abraham in LXX Gen 22:1 is reflected in Aristeas the Exegete via Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9.25.3; of Job in Olympiodorus of Alexandria, *Job Hypothesis* 1.7 (ed. Hagedorn, 4, 17); the traditional ‘ten trials’ of both figures may be drawn from Job 19.3: ‘These ten times you have cast reproach upon me.’

had faith in the Word of the Lord, and it was accounted to him for merit, because he did not reproach God with words'. In a like manner, proper speech forms a central point of argument in the Job stories, specifically addressing whether Job defied or glorified God with his words. *Gen. Rab.* 49.9 states that both Abraham and Job 'say the same words,' citing as proof Gen 18:25 ('Far be it from you to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked') and Job 9:22 ('he destroys both the blameless and the wicked').⁶³⁵

Certain early Church Fathers also present Abraham and Job as united in their piety and their righteousness: *1 Clement* 17:2 notes that Abraham 'was called the friend of God' (καὶ φίλος προσηγορεύθη τοῦ Θεοῦ), and then in the next verse declares that 'Job was righteous and blameless, one that was true and honoured God and abstained from all evil' (Ἰὼβ δὲ ἦν δίκαιος καὶ ἄμεμπτος, ἀληθινός, θεοσεβής, ἀπεχόμενος ἀπὸ παντὸς κακοῦ). Clement of Alexandria in *Strom.* 4.17 unites Job and Abraham by noting that 'for Abraham's faith he was called "the friend of God", but was not elated by glory, but modestly said, "I am dust and ashes" (Gen 18:27; cf. Job 30:19; 42:6). And of Job it is written "Job was just and blameless, true and pious, abstaining from all evil"'.⁶³⁶ The Alexandrian's exegetical move here mirrors Jewish exegetical discourses, as the statement by Abraham is placed in Job's mouth in the *Tg. Job* 30:19, 'They have made me like a man who was formed from clay, and I have become like Abraham who was made like dust and ashes'.⁶³⁷

⁶³⁵Cf. Hainthaler 1988, 323–329.

⁶³⁶Similar comparisons can be found in Origen, *Hom. in Gen.* 8.10; Chrysostom, *Exp. in Job* on 1.3; Olympiodorus of Alexandria, *Job* on 42.11 and 17b.

⁶³⁷Cf. Gen 18.27.

10.4.2. Was Job or Abraham the Greater Patriarch?

While the broader literature drew parallels between the two men, N.H. Glatzer has argued that the similarities raised a problem: were the two men of equal stature, or was one subordinate to the other?⁶³⁸ Literature from the Second Temple through the rabbinic period would address this question with varying solutions. The *Testament of Abraham* and the *Apocalypse of Abraham* on the one hand, and the *Testament of Job* on the other, presented their case for the ancient heroes: both as righteous and blameless tested exemplars.⁶³⁹ *T. Ab.* (A) 15:14–15 explicitly names Abraham superior to Job. The archangel declares to God: 'I refrained from touching [Abraham] because . . . he was your friend . . . And there is no man like him on earth, not even Job, the wondrous man' (15:14–15).⁶⁴⁰ According to Weinberg *T. Ab.* intentionally reduces Job in its task of elevating Abraham, perhaps an indication that some influential traditions (e.g., *T. Job*) had elevated Job over Abraham. Job, as 'wondrous' as he was, could not be allowed to surpass Abraham, the prime patriarch and progenitor of the Jewish people.⁶⁴¹ As this debate became increasingly explicit in later literature it only further served to link the two by their hospitality, intercession, patient endurance, words spoken under trial and their love or fear for God.

In the rabbinic literature, the comparison between Abraham and Job became an extensive evaluation of their respective responses to trial.⁶⁴² According to R. Yochanan in

⁶³⁸Cf. Glatzer 1979, 48; also Urbach 1987, 400–419; Veijola 2002, 127–128.

⁶³⁹On whether these works were consciously aware of a competing discourse between Job and Abraham, cf. Weinberg 1994, 282.

⁶⁴⁰According to van Ruiten 2002, 58 this is the first time in the Jewish literature that Abraham is explicitly exalted above Job. However, note the textual variant 'not even Jacob the wondrous man'.

⁶⁴¹Cf. Weinberg 1994, 291; Delcor 1973, 76; Glatzer 1979, 50–51; however, note Allison 2001, who aptly notes that the accepted exalted status of Job by these Testaments in itself enhances the status of Abraham.

⁶⁴²See section 8.4.2. above.

Deut. Rab. 11:3 (compare with *m. Sota* 5:5), whereas Abraham responded well to trials, Job ‘could not but address God with reproaches.’⁶⁴³ In *Midr. Ps.* 26.2 ‘when God smote Job he rebelled, but when God smote Abraham he laughed’. As late as the *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 15:6, Job’s words are implicit in the statement that ‘[Abraham] had faith . . . and He counted it to him for merit that he did not cast reproaches against Him’. Finally, *Pesiq. Rab.* 47:3 (190a) claims via R. Hanina bar Papa, in the name of R. Yochanan: ‘Had he not raised a cry, even as now we say in the Tefilla “the God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob” we would also be saying “and the God of Job”’. As a result of Job’s ‘words’ under trial, whereas Abraham was commonly rewritten as a ‘lover of God’ rather than a ‘fearer’, Job was typically treated with less dignity than Abraham. For some, Abraham’s trials exceeded those of Job in difficulty, as in *Tanh. Wa-Yishlah* 8, where Eliphaz says to Job ‘Are your deeds like those of Abraham? He was tried ten time and stood up to them all . . . while you faced one trial only’. When Job challenged God by pointing to his own good deeds (Job 31:17, 20), God replies to Job in *ARN* (A) 7 ‘you have not yet reached half the measure of Abraham.’⁶⁴⁴ Similarly in *ARN* (A) 7 Abraham surpasses Job in showing hospitality to the poor. With respect to their love for God, a *baraita* in *y. Ber.* 14b, while enumerating the various types of Pharisees, claims that ‘a God-fearing Pharisee is exemplified by Job, a God-loving Pharisee is exemplified by Abraham; the noblest of them all is the God-loving pharisee like Abraham’.

This broad, diachronic, and influential debate on the status of Abraham and Job,

⁶⁴³cf. *Gen. Rab.* 19:2; 49:17.

⁶⁴⁴Cf. Braude 1968, 189–190. Not all evaluations of Abraham’s life, however, were entirely positive. Some texts implicitly criticise Abraham, as in 4Q225 and *L.A.B* 32 where the test of Abraham was due to his failure to offer proper sacrifices to God (paralleled much later in *Tanh. Lech Lecha* 10, 13). Abraham was consistently disobedient in the *T. Ab.* Abraham had ‘misgivings’ (cf. *Gen. Rab.* 55:4, expanded in *b. Sanh.* 89b) about his tests, and could be portrayed not as a model of faith and obedience, but as a model of reluctance and hesitation. Cf. Mann 1940, 306–7.

resting as it does on primarily rabbinic sources, is unable to demonstrate clear points of trajectory from the Second Temple periods, or even to isolate consistent rabbinic opinions within particular schools. However, I would argue that this later conversation contributes to the much earlier portrayal, noted especially in the Rewritten Bible literature, of the biblical narratives of Job and Abraham as exegetically linked. This inter-canonical connection between the two figures is important in establishing the exegetical reasoning behind the intertextual assimilation of these two figures, to which I now turn.

10.4.3. Abraham and Job within Exegetically Assimilated Narratives

Beyond the debates and comparisons between Job and Abraham's respective righteousness, the close relationship between these two men led authors to assimilate language and key features of both narratives within exegetical discourses on both Job and Abraham. In what has preceded I have detailed examples from Second Temple and later literature of this hermeneutical intrusion, primarily in what has commonly been labeled the genre of 'Rewritten Bible'. In these reworked stories, narrative and literary elements such as character and plot intertwine to create an idealised portrait of divine and human righteousness.⁶⁴⁵ This literary intrusion could occur in both directions: by the Second Temple period Job 1–3 had begun exerting influence on retellings of Gen 22 and the *Aqedah*, effectively reshaping the narrative structure of Abraham's test to match the theological cosmology of the Job narrative. Similarly, the outstanding anthropological characteristics of traditional Abraham suppressed certain less salutary traits of Job's response to suffering. This bi-directional narrative influence was widely available and led to the

⁶⁴⁵On narrative assimilation within the Hebrew Bible, cf. Zakovitch 1985, and specifically on Abraham and Job cf. Ehrlich 1994; Michel 2001, 74–75.

literary composition of a number of such 'Jobraham' narratives.⁶⁴⁶

With regard to the Abraham narratives, the radically expanded cosmic drama of the *Aqedah* retold from *Jubilees* through the rabbinic literature lies in its highly dependent reading of the opening chapters of Job. This dependence has been noted by a number of scholars.⁶⁴⁷ In these reworked narratives the differences in cosmic roles between Job's test and Abraham's trial are substantially diminished. The trial moves before the heavenly council. Challenges to divine foreknowledge are either mitigated or else transferred to the satanic voice (a voice that generally corresponds to the implied heretical interlocutor as well). The test shifts to a cosmic contest between God and the satanic figure rather than as a verification of Abraham's faith.⁶⁴⁸ Levenson notes in this shift a 'transformation of inestimable significance' capable of mitigating many of the difficult questions related to the divine test.⁶⁴⁹ By the time of the rabbinic accounts the influence of Job was made explicit, with both Abraham and Job's trials resulting from the same cosmic dialogue.⁶⁵⁰ The literature surveyed above in part 2, especially in *Jubilees*, Qumran, *L.A.B.*, and the rabbinic literature demonstrate a well-known, influential, and persistent tradition that integrated the cosmology of Job into Abraham's trial. Intra-textual links between the Abraham and Job narratives include the extensive use of a 'word/things' interplay where the *ῥήματα*/דברים of Gen 22 provide an entry point to Job's 'words in heaven' where Satan or the angels debate

⁶⁴⁶ A number of scholars have argued that Gen 22 shaped the composition of canonical Job 1–3; cf. van Ruiten 2002; Berges 1995; VanderKam 1997, 241–262; Veijola 1988; Veijola 2002, 128; Michel 2001; Oblath 1999, 200.

⁶⁴⁷ So Moltz 2001, 67; VanderKam 1997, 249; Kister 1994, 1–34; Haas 1989, 148; Levenson 1993, 178; van Ruiten 2002, 63; Veijola 1988, 151.

⁶⁴⁸ Cf. Huizenga 2002, 39.

⁶⁴⁹ Levenson 1993, 176; cf. Moltz 2001, 60; Kugel 1997, 171–74.

⁶⁵⁰ Cf. chapter 8.4.2.2. above.

with God. By inserting the heavenly court and a prosecutorial figure, these ‘Jobraham’ narratives mitigate a lack of divine foreknowledge and exchange a divine agent of testing for a satanic agent.⁶⁵¹ For these Jewish works, including the Epistle of James, the dominant biblical narrative that guided conceptions of the cosmic drama of probation across the biblical literature was that of Job, though a Job reworked and reconceptualised in various ways.⁶⁵²

10.4.3.1. Two Examples of the ‘Jobraham’ Hermeneutic in Second Temple Literature

Whereas the literature in the preceding section focuses on the influence that the cosmic drama of the Job narratives exerted on the retelling of the *Aqedah*, the assimilation of Job and Abraham can also be found beyond the interpretation of Gen 22. Furthermore, the textual interference is not unidirectional from Job to Abraham: exegetical discourses dedicated to Job could likewise rely on heavy influence from Abraham’s stories. To complete this picture of the mutual interferences within the ‘Jobraham’ narratives, I will briefly examine two further test cases in detail, the *Testament of Job* and the *Testament of Abraham*, before turning to the hermeneutical question of *why* this tradition of assimilation takes such a prevalent role in the later expansions and exegetical discourses on both Abraham and Job.

10.4.3.2. *The Testament of Abraham*

The Testament of Abraham recounts a Jewish legendary account of Abraham’s death, written loosely around A.D. 100 and of unknown provenance.⁶⁵³ In *T. Ab.*, Michael the

⁶⁵¹This exegetical impulse is of course found as early as 1 Chr 21:1, which reworks 2 Sam 24:1 to avoid the conclusion that Yahweh tempted David; cf. Swetnam 1981, 38.

⁶⁵²It is notable, therefore, that Jewish works that reject external agents of evil such as Philo have little or no mention of the Job story.

⁶⁵³Cf. E.P. Sanders in Charlesworth 1983, 872–874.

archangel is charged with bringing the spirit of Abraham to heaven, but the ‘righteous friend of God’ was unwilling to relinquish his soul to death. The novella which unfolds provides an opportunity to reflect on Abraham’s righteousness.⁶⁵⁴

D. Allison has argued that *T. Ab.* is greatly indebted to the Job stories, with the effect of creating a Job typology for Abraham’s death.⁶⁵⁵ Job is mentioned by name only once (15:15 [A]):

The archangel said, ‘Lord Almighty, thus [Abraham] speaks, and I refrain from touching him because from the beginning he has been your friend and he did everything which is pleasing before you. And there is no man like unto him on earth, not even Job, the wondrous man. And for this reason I refrain from touching him.’

Despite the single appeal to Job, as N. Glatzer and J. Weinberg have argued this appeal recalls the wider debates on which man was the more righteous, and interjects an extended comparison with Job throughout the discourse. Characteristics of the two men and their narratives are interwoven throughout the content and structure of the *Testament of Abraham*. As Allison has argued, *T. Ab.* does not denigrate Job, for the elevation of Abraham depends precisely on the expectation of Job’s likewise exalted status.⁶⁵⁶

Statements about Abraham are embellished by allusions to the Job narrative throughout *T. Ab.* Many of these relate to common themes found in the broader exegetical

⁶⁵⁴According to Kensky 2010, 155 *T. Ab.* provides the most extensive divine courtroom scene in the literature from Greek Judaism. Both extant recensions have an extensive courtroom scene, showing significant concern with the question of God’s justice, principally in terms of the relationship between justice and mercy, and how much mercy tips the balance. *T. Ab.* 14:4–14 in particular examines the weighing of souls and the process of certifying (δοκιμάζειν) the righteousness of individuals.

⁶⁵⁵Allison 2001, 131.

⁶⁵⁶Cf. Allison 2001, 136.

discourses surveyed above. *T. Ab.* (A) presents the hero as the ‘beloved friend of God’ (1:6; 2:3; 4:7; 8:2, 4; 9:7; 15:12-14; 16:9; 20:14), the ‘friend of strangers’ (1:2; 2:2); ‘hospitable and loving until the end of his life’ (1:5–6). Some statements recast Abraham using language drawn directly from Job. For example, the statement by Michael to God in 15:14–15 ‘there is no man like him on earth’ draws directly from the text of LXX Job 1:8 and 2:3.⁶⁵⁷

<i>T. Ab.</i> 15.15	Οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος ὅμοιος αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς
LXX Job 1.8 A	Οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος ὅμοιος αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς
LXX Job 2.3 A	Οὐκ ἔστιν καθ’ αὐτὸν τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ἄνθρωπος ὅμοιος αὐτῷ.

Similar lexical parallels include the description of Abraham in *T. Ab.* 4:6 as ‘the righteous man,’ ‘not... a person on the earth,’ ‘just and trustworthy,’ ‘Godfearing,’ and ‘abstaining from evil’ all of which borrow language from Job 1:1, 8 and 2:3.

While Abraham’s celebrated anthropology is enhanced by these references to Job, the cosmic drama of *T. Ab.* is deeply indebted and indeed overturned by the heavenly vision of the Job narrative. This is primarily accomplished by applying the Satan/God dialogue in Job 1–3 to the dialogue between God and Michael the Archangel. *T. Ab.* 15:15 (A) describes Michael’s hesitation to ‘touch’ Abraham. Here, ἅπτειν is dependent on a similar description in LXX Job 1:11–12 used to describe the afflicting of Job by Satan.⁶⁵⁸ Satan’s

⁶⁵⁷ Also 1:8 in mss B, S. These lexical parallels that follow are taken from Allison 2001.

⁶⁵⁸ The term is used of Satan’s interaction with Job throughout, so 1:11 ἀλλὰ ἀπόστειλον τὴν χεῖρά σου καὶ ἅψαι πάντων; 1:12 τότε εἶπεν ὁ κύριος τῷ διαβόλῳ Ἴδου πάντα, ὅσα ἔστιν αὐτῷ, δίδωμι ἐν τῇ χειρὶ σου, ἀλλὰ αὐτοῦ μὴ ἅψῃ; 1:19 ξαίφνης πνεῦμα μέγα ἐπῆλθεν ἐκ τῆς ἐρήμου καὶ ἤψατο τῶν τεσσάρων γωνιῶν τῆς οἰκίας, καὶ ἔπεσεν ἡ οἰκία ἐπὶ τὰ παῖδιά σου; 2:5 δὲ ἀλλὰ ἀποστείλας τὴν χεῖρά σου ἅψαι τῶν ὀστέων αὐτοῦ καὶ τῶν σαρκῶν

role is therefore usurped by Michael. Likewise, in *T. Ab.* 4:6 the ascent of Satan from earth to the heavenly court in Job 1 is adopted by Michael's ascent to God:

and Michael ascended into heaven in the twinkling of an eye and stood before God and said to him: 'Master, Lord, let your might know that I cannot announce the mention of death to that righteous man (ἄνδρα ἐκεῖνον τὸν δίκαιον), because I have not seen upon earth a man like him (οὐκ εἶδον ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἄνθρωπον ὅμοιον αὐτοῦ)—merciful, hospitable, righteous, truthful, God-fearing (ἀληθινόν, θεοσεβῆ), refraining from every evil deed (ἀπεχόμενον ἀπὸ παντὸς πονηροῦ πράγματος). And so now know, Lord, that I cannot announce the mention of death'.

Here as well the lexical links with LXX Job 1–2 are striking:

T. Ab. 4:6	τὸν δίκαιον
LXX Job 1:1	δίκαιος
T. Ab. 4:6	ἄδρα ἐκεῖνον
LXX Job 1:1	ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνος
T. Ab. 4:6	οὐκ εἶδον ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἄνθρωπον ὅμοιον αὐτοῦ.
LXX Job 1:8 (A)	οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος ὅμοιος αὐτῷ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς
LXX Job 2:3 (A)	οὐκ ἔστιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς . . . ἄνθρωπος ὅμοιος αὐτοῦ
T. Ab. 4:6	ἀληθινόν, θεοσεβῆ
LXX Job 1:1, 8; 2:3	ἀληθινός . . . θεοσεβής
T. Ab. 4:6	ἀπεχόμενον ἀπὸ παντὸς πονηροῦ πράγματος
LXX Job 1:1, 8; (2:3)	ἀπεχόμενος ἀπὸ παντὸς πονηροῦ πράγματος (κακοῦ)

Allison observes that these phrases in *T. Ab.* 4:6 are used extensively to describe summary descriptions of Job in later Jewish and Christian literature.⁶⁵⁹ Like Job 1:8 and 2:3

αὐτοῦ; 4:5 νῦν δὲ ἥκει ἐπὶ σὲ πόνος καὶ ἡ ψατό σου; 5:19 ἐξάκις ἐξ ἀναγκῶν σε ἐξελεῖται, ἐν δὲ τῷ ἐβδόμῳ οὐ μὴ ἄψηταί σου κακόν; 19:21 χεὶρ γὰρ κυρίου ἡ ἀψαμένη μου ἐστίν.

⁶⁵⁹1 *Clem* 17.3; Clement of Alexandria *Strom.* 4.17; 7.13; Cyprian *Mort.* 10; Eusebius, *Praep. Ev.* 7.8; Chrysostom, *Hom.* 1–67 in *Gen* 23.12 (PG 53.202); *m. Sot.* 5:5; *ARNA* 2; *b. B. Bat.* 15b; *Exod. Rab.* 21.7; *Num. Rab.* 22.1.

the *T. Ab.* 6 is set in the heavenly realms, recording a conversation between God and Michael regarding Abraham's righteousness. Allison has argued from this that the structure and plot of *T. Ab.* is imitative, recapitulating much of Job 1–2.⁶⁶⁰ While Satan's role is transferred to Michael, who is unable to 'touch' Abraham, in a somewhat ironic twist God must order Death to accomplish the task (*T. Ab.* 16–20) in contrast to God's orders to Satan in Job 1–2 to 'touch' Job, but not to kill him.

In sum, in *T. Ab.* we can observe a number of appeals to the event, protagonist, antagonist, and narrative structure of Job. On the anthropological level, Abraham's exalted status is further elevated by a close association with Job. With the statement that 'there was no person like Abraham, not even Job the wondrous man' (15:15), the text recognises Job as a person of exalted status, and to be greater than Job is to be great indeed. However, the dominant cosmic features of Job modify the cosmic structure of *T. Ab.*, despite ignoring the *Aqedah* altogether. Rather than Mastema or Satan as the supernatural agents that appear in much of the wider literature, now the supernatural messengers are Michael and Death.

10.4.3.1. *The Testament of Job*

A final example of a 'Jobraham' narrative is that of the *Testament of Job*, a reworking of the Job narrative of uncertain provenance.⁶⁶¹ The relationship between *T. Job* and canonical Job has been examined by C.T. Begg, who describes the work as an attempt to

⁶⁶⁰ A similar cosmic drama is applied to the *Apocalypse of Abraham* 13 where Abraham has access to the very throne of God, and when he is tested by Azazel at the *Aqedah* this 'seducer of mankind' is told to 'leave this man alone, for you cannot lead him astray, you cannot tempt the righteous'; cf. van Ruiten 2002, 5.

⁶⁶¹ On the provenance of *T. Job*, cf. Rahnenführer 1971, 88 for an origin in the late first century B.C. as a Jewish-Hellenistic missionary letter; Delcor 1973 argues for a specific date of 40 B.C. in Palestine; Philonenko 1958 sees an Egyptian origin within the Therapeutae. Cf. Spitta 1907, 139–206; Ehrlich 1994, 50; Spittler 1989.

‘retell Job’s story (and that of his fellow characters) in a way that . . . provides a resolution for many of the source’s problems and puzzlements.’⁶⁶² While *T. Job* clearly presupposes the existence of canonical Job for its narrative framework (e.g., LXX Job 1; 2; 42:7–17), it only rarely relies on the main body of the canonical book.⁶⁶³

Scholars have noted that the *T. Job* contains an enhanced cosmology, where the conflict in heaven saturates the entire narrative rather than merely in the opening and closing chapters as in canonical Job. In his early life the Jobab of *T. Job*, similar to the legends of Abraham, lives near an idolatrous temple (cf. *Jub.* 12; *Apoc. Abr.* 1–8; *Gen. Rab.* 38:13). On converting to monotheism, however, Job burns down Satan’s temple (*T. Job* 3–5). This act initiates open warfare between Job and Satan in which, unlike the canonical account where Job is unaware of the supernatural conflict, Job is actively aware of the ongoing battle.⁶⁶⁴ Ultimately, when Job defeats Satan by resisting him and remains steadfast under the test, Satan flees from Job in shame (*T. Job* 27:6; 47:10).

This modification of the narrative to reflect a pervasive supernatural battle throughout the story causes some literary unevenness. Haas has argued that the *T. Job* contains two competing cosmic visions, one stemming from the canonical account and the other part of the reworked narrative transferring the weight of responsibility for temptation to Satan’s shoulders. Chapters 2–7 depict Satan as an enemy of God, battling Job on his own authority without speaking to God. God only knows beforehand what Satan will do to Job and discloses it to him through his angel (*T. Job* 4:3). The cosmic perspective in these

⁶⁶²Begg 1994, 438.

⁶⁶³E.g. canonical Job is similar with regard to his wealth, piety and generosity in *T. Job* 9–16; canonical Job 29–31. Schaller 1980, 306 has however argued that *T. Job* makes more extensive use of the Greek version of canonical Job.

⁶⁶⁴Noted in Haas 1989, 125.

sections is strongly dualistic in flavour. In contrast, chapters 8 and 16 reflect a more canonical account. Satan ascends to heaven in order to request permission to destroy Job (8:3). Rather than an enemy, Satan becomes a divine servant, acting not out of revenge for Job's burning of idols but as a prosecutorial agent of the divine court. Haas argues that this bifurcated image of Satan reveals the *Testament's* fissures between source and redaction, especially a theological concern to deflect divine responsibility for Job's tests while respecting the canonical text when used directly.⁶⁶⁵ This apologetic language extends to the purpose for the test; it was 'to make known Job's righteousness' to all humankind rather than for God to discover Job's righteousness (so *T. Job* 4:6–7; 9:10; note the parallels of 'knowing' vs. 'making known to the world' found throughout much of the literature that has proceeded). To confirm this apologetic tone, at the end of his ordeal Job is assured that 'the Lord is impartial [ἀπροσωπὸληπτος], rendering good things to each one who obeys him' rather than petty or lacking in beneficence (*T. Job* 4:8).

While the cosmological framework for the *T. Job* can be read as primarily *enhancing* canonical Job and creating an enhanced dualistic vision of the cosmic battle, the primary *transformation* in the *T. Job* is the complete rehabilitation of its main protagonist. Both Allison and Begg suggest that the radical reworking of Job from rebellious servant to a patient, quiet sufferer borrows from Abraham.⁶⁶⁶ These renovated characteristics often coincide with Job's speech, his piety, his hospitality, and his patience. Rather than Job the Rebel found in much of the literature, in the *Testament* Job never speaks words against God, but rather endures all things with patience 'out of true love for God.'⁶⁶⁷ Rahnenführer argues

⁶⁶⁵So Haas 1989, 120–126.

⁶⁶⁶Allison 2001, 143; Begg 1994, 438 n. 10; cf. Jacobs 1975; Spittler 1989, 840.

⁶⁶⁷Cf. 5:1 in MS V.

that Job's perseverance under Satanic persecution becomes the main theme in chapters 1–27, and Job's most characteristic quality.⁶⁶⁸ Due to this emphasis the *T. Job* overflows with commendations of Job's patience, not only ὑπομονή, but also καρτερία, καρτερέω, μακροθυμία, μακρόθυμος, and μακροθυμέω denote Job's virtue (4:6–10; 5:1; 21:4; 26:4–5; 27:4–7). Job 'stands firm' in battle against Satan and does not retreat a step; his stubbornness and patience is described as that of an athlete in the gymnasium, wrestling as an athlete against Satan, and once victorious receiving the athletic wreath (στέφανον in 4:9). While Satan's aim is to deceive Job's heart, patience provides the antidote to any such weakness of the heart (25:10) as the hero waits for the mercy of the Lord (26:5).⁶⁶⁹ Satan's purpose is explicitly to convince Job to abandon singleness of heart. As Job describes to his wife in 26:6:

Do you then not see the devil standing behind you and troubling your thoughts, that me might also deceive me (ἀπατήσῃ)? For he plans to exhibit you as one of the senseless women who lead astray the simplicity (ἀπλότητα) of their own husbands.'

Amid the 'wind and waves' of suffering that toss about Job's ship of piety (18:6), Job as the helmsman sets a straight course through the seas of passions. This version of Job refuses to speak any 'words against the Lord'. While his wife urges him to 'speak certain words (ῥῆμα) against the Lord and die' (26:2), instead he is 'unable to speak against God', unable to 'utter a sound'. Job is an 'athlete who is silenced by his mouth filled with sand' (27:3). As 38:1 declares:

⁶⁶⁸Rahmenführer 1971, 87

⁶⁶⁹Σατανᾶ ἐν ᾧ ἀπατηθήσονται οἱ ἄνθρωποι [3:3, 6]; ὁ Σατανᾶς . . . πλαγιάζων τὴν καρδίαν [23:11]).

And I said: 'Advise me concerning these matters, if you have your wits about you! But I have my wits about me, and there is understanding in my heart; why then should I not talk about the great things of the Lord? Should my mouth completely blunder respecting the master? — May it never be!'

We see that throughout *T. Job* the protagonist refuses to utter blasphemy against God and instead glorifies him (16:7). Job's words in response to the trial become the words of Abraham: when heaven addresses Job in 3:1–2 with the double vocative 'Jobab, Jobab!' Job's answer is simply 'Here I am' (ἰδοὺ, ἐγώ), echoing the call and response of God's dialogue with Abraham.⁶⁷⁰ The entire 'call vision' of Job resembles the vision of Abraham in Gen 15 and especially *Apoc. Abr.* 8.1–2.⁶⁷¹ The resulting promise in *T. Job* 4:6 is an echo of the promise made to Abraham: God will 'make your name famous to all generations of the earth, to the end of the age'.⁶⁷²

In sum, the constant appeals to the Abraham narratives provide Job's piety through the Testament with a particularly Abrahamic flavour. Louis Ginzberg declares that 'the descriptions of Job's hospitality and benevolence in *T. Job* are only a duplicate of the Abraham legend'.⁶⁷³ Beyond the obvious duplication of Job's name change (2:1) and his conversion from idolatry to a defender of monotheism (2:2, etc.), Job's righteousness is described as stemming from his care of orphans, widows, and the poor (*T. Job* 9:3, 5, 6; 10:2, 6, 7; 13:4; 14:2; 44:4; 45:1–4; 53:1–5). Job's hospitality is extended to all who visit (11:1–3; 9:7–8) especially strangers (10:10). Job is a paragon of wealthy virtue and honest treatment

⁶⁷⁰So LXX Gen 22:1, 11; *Jub.* 18:1; *Apoc. Abr.* 8.1–2; 9.1; 19.1; 20.1–2; cf. 12.7; 14.1, 9; *Jub.* 18:1, 10; Philo *Somm.* 1.195; Chrysostom *Hom.* 1–67 in Genesis (PG 54.429).

⁶⁷¹So Haas 1989, 121.

⁶⁷²So Gen 12:2.

⁶⁷³Ginzberg 1968, vol. 2, p. 383, n. 10.

of his workers (11:9–12) where he is ‘patient’ (μακροθύμησον) with failed servants and debtors.⁶⁷⁴ Haas’ study on the T. Job is particularly convincing in showing that ‘perseverance’ (ὑπομονεῖν, μακροθυμεῖν and καρτερεῖν) under pressure become Job’s most outstanding character quality in that work, to the point where Job calls himself a model of ὑπομονή (1:5).⁶⁷⁵ Whereas the canonical account opens up possibilities for critique, in the *Testament* descriptions of Abraham common within the broader exegetical discourses loom in the background, filling in the gaps and answering any potential criticisms of Job’s response to trials.

10.5. Constructing ‘Jobraham’

The preceding section has detailed the various manifestations of Job and Abraham within the broader exegetical discourses on testing, trials and temptation. Rather than simply applying the generic label of ‘traditional’ to explain the commonalities of these exegetical discourses, we may be able to identify the hermeneutical motivation behind the development of such ‘Jobraham’ narratives. The trials of Abraham and Job revealed within their respective canonical accounts a number of not insignificant problems that needed to be addressed and clarified in accordance to the ‘theological sensibilities’ of the later authors. As would be expected, given the variety of cosmologies and literary genres available to these authors, their responses took a variety of forms.

For some interpreters, especially represented within the rabbinic accounts, the response was in the form of a debate: some saw Abraham as the paragon of patient

⁶⁷⁴In 12:4 Job specifically would not ‘allow the wage of the wage-earner (μισθὸν μισθωτοῦ) to remain in the house’. Compare, e.g., to Jas 5:4 ‘Behold, the pay of the labourers (ὁ μισθὸς τῶν ἐργατῶν) who mowed your fields, and which has been withheld by you, cries out against you.’

⁶⁷⁵Haas 1989, 117.

righteousness, and Job as a 'speaker of words'; others preferred the single obedience of Job over the ten trials necessary for Abraham's divine friendship. However, a different answer, found in both rabbinic literature and in the earlier genre of Rewritten Bible, preferred a hermeneutic of assimilation. The preferred parts of each Patriarch's narratives were combined to produce an idealised, exculpating portrait of righteous man and justified God.

While Abraham's testing narratives provided a consistent typology of patient righteousness, the canonical portrayal of their cosmology was suspect: if God was responsible for testing, both his goodness and his foreknowledge could be called into question. As a result, from *Jubilees* through the rabbinic literature we observed interference from Job's cosmology that 'minded the cosmic gaps' created by the Abraham narrative. The role of Divine Tester was transferred to Mastema, angelic intermediaries, and even to the internalised pseudo-demonic *yetzer*; the purpose of the test shifted from a proof to God of Abraham's faithfulness to a demonstration of God's righteous judgements about Abraham. However, Job's narrative was likewise open for critique. Job could be interpreted as a 'speaker of words', an impatient, impious rebel. As a result, expansions such as *T. Job* drew on the famous patience of Abraham to rebuild Job's character into an exemplary righteous defender of monotheistic loyalty. The intertextual associations between these two narratives allowed for mutual, intra-canonical interference and resulted in the construction of 'Jobraham' narratives of various flavours and emphases. In contrast to the debates on the perfect example of righteousness which selected their particular hero, the assimilated readings do not require one perfect, canonical exemplar of a righteous testing God and a righteous tested man. Rather, stories of Job and Abraham, when read intra-canonically, allowed these writers do justice to their theological convictions of a just God and his righteous servants.

10.6. *'Jobraham' and the Hermeneutic of James*

In what has preceded I have demonstrated a number of diachronic exegetical discourses centred on the Job and Abraham narratives that bridge divisions of literary genre and religious sect. I have identified the hermeneutical motivation for such appeals as both a defence of divine righteousness within a robust instantiation of the cosmic drama of probation and as a biblical framework for anthropological perfection under trial. The question remains whether the author of James reads the Job and Abraham narratives to similar effect. The Abraham narrative is mentioned explicitly in Jas 2; the Job narrative is mentioned in Jas 5. Neither narrative is placed explicitly within the context of probation as occurs within the explicitly prominent range of the terms *πειρασμός* and *δοκίμιον* Jas 1:2–18. Given the ambiguous structure of James I would be hard-pressed to argue for a clear argument flow between 1:2–18, 2:21, and 5:9–11.⁶⁷⁶ Is it therefore possible to read these narratives intertextually in determining James' hermeneutic for trials? I will argue that such a hermeneutic fits the author's cosmic drama of probation and explains his appeal to the three aforementioned testing narratives.

10.6.1. *James and Abraham*

Firstly, we return to Abraham's test at the *Aqedah* in Jas 2:21–24. The scholarly debate on the structural relationship between chapters 1 and 2 allows at least some logical relationship between the author's description of the 'religious faith' of creedal Jewish-Christian practice described in chapter 1 and the author's demand for corresponding pious

⁶⁷⁶This is not to say that these findings could not be subsequently used in that structural debate, however. Nevertheless, for the present purposes I will keep the structural cart behind the exegetical horse.

works of social justice in chapter 2. As argued above, Abraham's life provides a compelling example for the author's call to 'love God' and 'love one's neighbour', completing the requirements of Torah as dictated by a number of Jewish religious leaders including Jesus of Nazareth.⁶⁷⁷ The operative metaphor of the courtroom flows throughout the first two chapters: the discourse moves from the human 'trial' of 1:2, 13 to the illegitimate 'divine trial' of 1:13, to the divine law of 1:25–26, to the unjust courtroom of the community in 2:1–7, and finally to the reassertion of righteous divine judgment based on community ethic in 2:8–13. This metaphor continues to operate in the expression of social justice displayed in 2:14–26. As the exemplar of this combination of religious piety and social justice, Abraham provides the example of the loyal, pious monotheist who is declared 'God's friend' through his faithfulness under trial.

James' account of tested Abraham demonstrates deviations and expansions from the canonical account that are shared by other exegetical discourses on this narrative. These include Abraham's appellation as 'Friend of God'; his defence of pious monotheism, the reading of Gen 22 within the context of Gen 15, the demonstration of 'faithfulness' in Abraham's test, and the author's appeal to multiple 'works of Abraham' including his hospitality, intercession. Similar proposals that James' Abraham is dependent on a 'legendary' account such as those found in *Jubilees*, Pseudo-Philo, and the rabbinic literature are not novel within NT scholarship.⁶⁷⁸

⁶⁷⁷Cf. Hartin 1991; Ruzer 2013.

⁶⁷⁸A 'Jewish legend' has been previously suggested by Dibelius 1984, 207: 'die Behandlung des Abraham . . . nicht aus dem Wortlaut des Alten Testaments oder der LXX erklärt werden kann, daß sie vielmehr von der exegetischen Tradition des Judentums abhängig ist'; also by Davids 1993, 230: 'what this evidence does prove is that James knows a form of the Abraham narratives that *Jubilees* also knows'; similarly Instone-Brewer 2004: 'the author and recipients were familiar with the re-tellings of biblical stories as preserved in *Jubilees* and related Jewish Hellenistic literature'.

What my study has suggested, however, is that these various literary expansions are based not on a single source text or legend, but rather that they share a general desire both to heighten Abraham's anthropological characteristics and to defend divine beneficence and omniscience from the charges of an unmediated cosmology. This 'suppression' of Abraham's canonical cosmology in the wider literature is accomplished through a common reliance on Job's narrative, rather than a necessarily literary relationship between particular sources.

10.6.2. *James and Cosmic Drama*

A similar cosmic drama, dependent on the Job stories, informs the apologetic foundations for Jas 2:14–24. As argued in chapter 9 above, the Epistle of James evinces a robust cosmological framework. Satanic or demonic interference is active in the compromised human heart and clarifies the role of ὁ πειράζων. God is positioned as righteous judge within the cosmic court, removed entirely from the role of prosecutor. James' appeal to Gen 1–3 provides a biblical framework for the author's defence of divine beneficence: God is the all-providing, ever-good, never-shifting Creator, whose good intention brought about the First Man and now births a New Creation. The fault for enticement, sin and death lies with the demonic deception that incites disloyalty within the fractured human heart. The Job narrative provides the framework for this cosmic drama, serving as the *de facto* touchstone for Jewish literature that meditated on supernatural activity and the cosmic roles of God, Satan, and demonic beings.

It could be argued that the introduction of Job into James' discourse does not explicitly overturn Abraham's cosmology in Jas 2:21–24 as it does in *Jubilees* and other examples of Rewritten Bible. However, this cosmic framework is at least possible for James

and should be considered. The courtroom metaphor and its cosmic *dramatis personae* established in 1:14 continue to inform the courtroom roles of judge, prosecutor and defendant through the remainder of chapter 1–2. The statement of divine judgment in 2:13 that follows on the heels of a judgment based on ethical action *and* religious piety (2:8–12) informs us of the standards by which the judge and prosecutor enforce the legal mandate. Jas 2:14–17 then offers a practical example of the dual requirement of religious piety and social justice by which the defendant will be judged. Abraham stands as the example *par excellence*, where the dual witnesses of Abraham’s pious faith and ethical works return a verdict of Abraham’s justness.

With God standing as righteous judge, we can propose Jobraham’s cosmic prosecutor. The affirmation that Abraham is indeed a Friend of God may recall the satanic prosecutor’s claim that Abraham loved Isaac more than God (e.g., *Jub.* 17:16–18; *Abr.* 170–200; *m. Abot* 5:3). It should also be noted that a demonic context is on the face of this discourse, in the possible apotropaic use of the εἰς θεός formula and demonic trembling in 2:19. Within the cosmic framework of the Jobraham narratives, the satanic prosecutor leads the religious devotee into divided loyalties.

In defence of this reading, James’ exegetical discourse adopts a number of expansions on Abraham’s trials found primarily within other ‘Jobraham’ narratives. This well-known hermeneutic effectively explains both the author’s appeal to an exegetical problem in Jas 1:13–14 and the author’s solution to recast the biblical roles of probation to fit with the author’s cosmology. The hermeneutical movement that allows Job’s narrative to explain Abraham’s trial matches the broader cosmic sensibilities of the Epistle as a whole and supplies a theological coherence to a discourse that has otherwise been read as theologically

incoherent due to genre or authorial incompetence.

10.6.3. *James and Job*

Secondly, we return to Job's patience under trial in Jas 5:9–11. James' Patient Job reflects a common retelling that mitigated the patriarch's less salutary responses, especially his words directed to God. I have argued that a number of exegetical discourses on Job such as the *Testament of Job*, various rabbinic and targumic sources, and patristic writers were highly dependent on Abrahamic anthropology to enhance Job's piety and replace his rebellious 'words' with patient love for God.

The question remains whether the passing reference to blessed and patient Job in Jas 5:9–11 provides sufficient data to argue that James likewise assimilates Abraham's characteristics into his exemplar Job. I have argued above that features from the Abrahamic legends occur throughout the book of James. From the Epistle's opening topic on 'trials' (1:2–4) to the topics of piety (1:27), wealth (1:10; 2:2–5), love of God (1:12; 2:23), impartial hospitality (2:1–4; 2:14–16) the control of the tongue (1:19, 26; 3:8–12; 4:11–16), and especially patient endurance in all things (1:3–4; 5:7–11), the Epistle touches on themes exemplified by Abraham's most celebrated characteristics. Abraham, especially in his actions under trial, provides the perfect anthropological example of someone who was 'quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to an anger that does not match God's righteousness' (Jas 1:19). Similarly, the strong exhortations in chapter 3 (self control in speech, 3:1–12; cf. 1:19–21), wisdom and humility (3:13–4:10; cf. 1:5–12), and favouritism and wealth (4:11–5:6; cf. 2:1–4) parallel much of the earlier descriptions of pure religion. In sum, widely recognised characteristics of Abraham overshadow the entire Epistle of James.

When we come to Jas 5:9–11, then, with its heavy emphasis on the ‘blessing’ for the ‘patient person,’ who ‘does not complain,’ and who ‘endures suffering,’ James’ final appeal to the ‘endurance of Job’ reinforces his desire for the anthropological singleness and loyalty present throughout the Epistle. Only now, the example is no longer Patient Abraham, but rather Patient Job.

D. Instone-Brewer has argued that the transition from ‘Patient Abraham’ to ‘Patient Job’ reveals the ‘text’ of James’ formal Jewish ‘proem’ on Abraham.⁶⁷⁹ In this reading, Abraham’s life provides the main body of James’ sermon, and Job provides the ‘text.’ I would argue, however, that this ‘text’ is not a canonical text, but rather an assimilated reconstruction of Job’s life within the framework of Abrahamic piety. The pious, patient, intercessory examples of Jas 5 continue to rely heavily on an idealised anthropology. This anthropology, when applied to Job, reflects the same Abrahamic characteristics that are on display throughout the wider literature, and serve to mitigate, clarify, or even suppress a reading of Job’s exemplary actions that could undermine the author’s call to simple loyalty.

10.6.4. James and ‘Jobraham’

James’ use of the ‘Jobraham’ narrative provides a solution to two undesirable readings of the author’s exemplars. Job’s robust cosmology suppresses a negative (though straightforward) reading of Abraham’s cosmology in which God stands responsible for trials. However, James’ need for an perfect tested exemplar in his exhortation of 5:9–11 requires more than canonical Job could provide; Abraham’s patient response filled this anthropological gap. These twinned narratives serve James’ exegetical and exemplary needs

⁶⁷⁹While this proem/text sermon form is preserved only in later haggadic literature (see the introduction to Mann 1940), Instone-Brewer 2004 argues that its form can be uncovered in NT literature.

only when read together. The mutual insufficiencies of both Abraham and Job reveal that neither canonical narrative can provide the starting point for James' theological framework. Rather, these two narratives are summoned in defence of a broader creation theology drawn explicitly from Gen 1–3. James roots his theological, supernatural, and anthropological sensibilities in this narrative. Job and Abraham have their place, but only when read in light of a historical-redemptive narrative that began in Eden and ends at the arrival of the coming Lord and Judge.

10.6.5. Additional Considerations from Broader Exegetical Discourses

A few additional hermeneutical questions remain from our broader study. Firstly, does James consciously construct a 'Jobraham' reading of probation narratives, or is his reading subconsciously governed by the literary influence of texts such as *Jubilees* and the *Testament of Job*?

Peter Davids has emphasised a literary dependence between James and the wider exegetical discourses:

What this evidence does prove is that James knows a form of the Abraham narratives that Jubilees also knows (possibly because he knows Jubilees itself) and that he assumes this so completely that he apparently does not imagine that his readers might not know this tradition. It has become for him an overlay grid through which OT Scripture is to be understood. So much is this the case that when James writes *πειράζει δὲ αὐτὸς [θεὸς] οὐδέναι* ('God tests no one'), he apparently feels no tension between this and Gen 22.1.⁶⁸⁰

While Davids' appeal to the traditional literature was insightful, explaining James'

⁶⁸⁰Davids 1993, 230.

hermeneutic via pure literary dependence is nevertheless overly simplistic. The comparisons between James and the wider literature become more productive as we deduce the theological and exegetical motivations that drove these various reworkings of the Abraham and Job narratives. I have argued that these rewritten or expanded discourses like *Jubilees* were driven specifically by the need to clarify or suppress potentially theologically compromised readings of Job and Abraham. James explicitly states such an intention in chapter 1. The author is motivated to defend divine integrity in the context of probation and to chastise human charges to the contrary (Jas 1:13–18). Furthermore, from the opening verses the Epistle urges human perseverance and patience under trial in pursuit of anthropological perfection (so Jas 1:2–5; 5:9–11).

Modern scholarship on James has tended to undervalue how these theological tensions were latent within the broader Jewish and Christian discourses. Such a tendency can be seen in Davids’ suggestion above that ‘James would never see a tension between his statement *πειράζει δὲ [ὁ θεὸς] αὐτὸς οὐδέν*α and the *Aqedah*’. Similarly, the logic that ‘it is not possible to deny that God “tests” in scriptural Judaism’ as proof that James imagined two different understandings of *πειρασμός* in 1:2–15, one a ‘divine test’ in 1:2–12 and the other ‘non-divine temptations’ in 1:13–15⁶⁸¹ is to miss altogether the ancient theological tension known by James and his broadly contemporary interpreters. Many Jewish authors denied precisely God’s actual or immediate participation in *πειρασμός* in these key narrative junctures of the OT, whether through a hermeneutic of allegory (so Philo) or through a hermeneutic of rejection (so the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*) or through a hermeneutic of assimilation (so *Jubilees* or *L.A.B.*). These authors engage in a range of hermeneutical

⁶⁸¹So McKnight 2011, 115, citing Gen 22, Job, and the Israelite wilderness narratives.

responses to the theological tensions embedded within the testing narratives. The assimilated reading of Job and Abraham as I have argued appears in James stems from a conscious exegetical response to the biblical problem.

10.6.5.1. 'Jobraham' and the Reader's Response

The hermeneutical task on the part of the author also relies to a great extent on the readers' expectations. When James leads with the theological declaration that *πειράζει δὲ [θεὸς] αὐτὸς οὐδένα*, it produces a latent theological and biblical tension within the reader. Jewish and Christian literature provided numerous examples where God did indeed *πειράζει*, from the stories of early Israel to the widely received prayer of Jesus *καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν*. To diminish the tension by semantic gamemanship of 'test' vs 'temptation' as is commonly done in Jas 1 is to beg the theological question and to diminish the historical attention applied to the exegetical problem. Writing to a Jewish community within this theological milieu, James' theological declaration required an exegetical defence. When James recalls Gen 3, Gen 22, and Job 1–3, the author's hermeneutic provides both an opportunity to test his theological sensibilities and also an intra-canonical solution recognisable by the letter's recipients. Given the general familiarity of this question of divine participation in trials within the Ancient Jewish literary history, the least likely option, in my opinion, is that both author and recipients would overlook the theological and hermeneutical implications of the theological statement in 1:13 and his biblical exemplars in 2:21 and 5:11.

10.6.5.2. James and the 'Jobraham' Debate: Abraham or Job?

We can also consider whether James shares in the common 'debate' between Abraham and Job. That is, does James demonstrate a particular preference for Job's 'single trial' over Abraham's commonly cited 'many trials,' or a preference for Abraham's 'silence' over and against Job's 'words'? Various ancient sources demonstrate a sort of 'hermeneutical hierarchy' on these accounts, giving preference for one story over the other. While Abraham's anthropology seems to provide an overarching exemplar for the Epistle as a whole, when the question shifts from an anthropological problem to a cosmic problem the direction of hermeneutical priority likewise shifts: the previously 'clear' text of Abraham now becomes the 'unclear' text, and must be interpreted, in this case through the freshly polished lens of Job. The direction of hermeneutical preference is thus assigned relative to the questions being posed to the biblical text. This hermeneutical relativism within the text indicates the presence of a third, external point of reference outside either text. I argued above that this theological anchor is grounded in the creedal declarations drawn from the creation narratives.

CONCLUSION

Having explored James' theological sensibilities and his hermeneutical adventures, a concise statement to James' theology of probation is appropriate. In sum, James aims to construct a perfect, tested man who remains unswerving in religious loyalties despite common, demonically inspired indictments against the perfect, tested God.

James and Anthropology: The Perfect Tested Man

James' Perfect Man appropriates the 'Jobraham' anthropology to demonstrate religious loyalty in response to challenges of faith. Specifically, such loyalty entails a human heart wholly unified in patience and long-suffering commitment to the One God (Jas 1:2–4) despite the ongoing barrage of various difficulties from the natural world (1:7–11; 2:1–16), the fallen human state (1:14–15), and supernatural interference (1:14, 4:7). As has been the case since the first humans (1:14–18), James' recipients face a decision: the unified heart (ᾤον) that loves God will endure the birthpangs of cosmic trial and be birthed, according to God's intention, into a new creation (1:12, 18). In contrast, when these same trials provoke a division within the human heart (διψυχος), the supernatural deception leads to an indictment of God's beneficent intention (1:6–8, 13; 4:8). Rather than a glorious rebirth into perfection, when the divided heart indicts God and turns elsewhere to satisfy its desires it confronts the consequences of all such fallen creation: the human desire that was demonically inseminated within the tested heart grows into sin, and the birthpangs deliver

only the twisted, stillborn product of a fallen creation (1:15; 5:20).

James' appeal, therefore, is that his readers unify their heart in religious loyalty. The effective means of healing the divided human heart is none other than the divine law, that 'implanted word that is able to heal the heart (σῶσαι τὰς ψυχὰς)' in Jas 1:21. The author's understanding of the implanted word may follow the creedal call of the *Shema*, which in various strands of Judaism as well as the school of Jesus was interpreted as teaching that the 'love of God' is to be matched with a 'love of neighbour' in order to fulfil the Perfect Law (Jas 2:11). Accordingly, the 'united heart' pursues righteous acts of charity within the community along with religious loyalty (1:27; 2:1–5, 14–16) as its spiritual sacrifice of true worship (Jas 1:27).

James and Cosmology: The Perfect Tested God

Along with the Perfected Tested Man, the Perfect Righteous God stands in cosmic judgement. From God's rightful place as judge, however, James imagines God transferred to the chair of the accused within this cosmic courtroom drama, now on the defence against human charges of malevolent intentions or faulty omniscience. Against this indictment of God as ὁ πειράζων, James' God is unswerving and single-minded, providing all good things without distinction. Rather than roaming the world in order to prosecute true faith or deceiving out of malevolent capriciousness, God participates within the cosmic constrictions and birthpangs of trials only in loving support of His people. God is not to be indicted, and stands acquitted of any evil intent or flawed in character.

James' theology therefore contains an exegetically aware biblical support for divine goodness and human loyalty. Though cosmic trials are the wind and waves that 'drive and

toss' the human heart (1:6), God remains the stable rock, giving generously as required by the needs of his children (1:5). James' theology can be compared to that of Basil of Seleucia, who envisions Abraham as the able helmsman steering his ship safely through stormy seas in order that his actions might become known in the world. God's oversight and care is present even in the tempest that 'drives the ship about so that you might be amazed by the skill of the helmsman'. The crashing waves are to produce awe, 'that you might be amazed that the hull is unmoved'.⁶⁸² Similarly, using a remarkable worldplay to similar effect, *Gen. Rab.* 55:1 sees in Abraham's endurance of the trial (נסה) a banner or sail (נס) of a ship that signals Abraham's actions and God's faithfulness throughout the whole world. God provides his bannerman Abraham with a 'banner (נס) to those who fear You so that it might be displayed because of the truth (Ps 60:6)'. In recalling the Psalm, *Gen. Rab.* 55:1 declares the 'wonders that God has done, that God's thoughts are towards us, that none compare to Thee, whose wonders are too numerous to declare or speak or count'. Every trial reveals the righteousness of God's people, a righteousness that is itself a testament to God's redemptive acts and the greatness of his mercy. The Epistle of James shares this vision of a perfect, righteous God who stands acquitted by the exaltation of his perfect, righteous children.

James and the Semantics of Probation

Finally, in Part 1 of this study I critiqued scholarly approaches to James that attempt to interpret the Epistle's semantics of probation before engaging with its theological cosmology and hermeneutic. Having come full circle through James' cosmic drama and its

⁶⁸²Basil of Seleucia, *Orat.* 7; see similar nautical imagery in Pseudo-Ephrem's depiction of Abraham and the *Aqedah* in *Sermo. in Ab.*

biblical hermeneutic, I will suggest a final brief word on semantics and translation.

What has become clear in this study is that the language of probation is directly and inextricably related to authors' conceptual universe of probation. I framed these universes in terms of the *dramatis personae* of a cosmic drama. I have argued that the semantics of probation for any particular work should match the various instantiations of these roles in ancient Judaism.

When James is translated, then, the resulting semantic map must match James' conceptual universe. While my comparison of James and ancient Jewish literature was unable to identify clear post-biblical literary influences that contributed directly to James' conceptual universe, I was able to identify within various other exegetical discourses one particularly strong metaphor, namely that of the divine courtroom. Within this cosmic drama, while God often appears as the righteous judge, and at times even as the defence council, the Jewish authors are reticent to name God as ὁ πειράζων where such entails an active prosecutorial role. This role is left to the human interior or to a satanic agent. This latter paradigm fits well within James' discourse. With this in mind, the lexical terms of the law court may provide useful English translation equivalents for Jas 1:2–14 that communicate the semantic nuances necessary to map the author's theological framework.

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