Justification and Variegated Nomism

Volume I
The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism

Edited by
D. A. CARSON, PETER T. O'BRIEN,
and MARK A. SEIFRID

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Preface

This is the first of a two-volume set. The subtitle of the second will be *The Paradoxes of Paul*. The idea was conceived when Peter O'Brien spent a sabbatical year at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He and I enjoyed many hours talking over recent publications variously connected with the "new perspective" on Paul. In due course Mark Seifrid joined the discussions. Despite the fact that we were approaching the subject from various angles, we soon reached agreement that what was needed was a fresh exploration of the literature of Second Temple Judaism, followed by a fresh treatment of Paul that took into account the findings of the first exploration. In our view, the theses of E. P. Sanders regarding covenantal nomism, articulated in his seminal work on *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (1977) and in subsequent publications, though they obviously provided valuable correctives, needed further examination. It was not as if nothing had been done. Hundreds of reviews and articles, and not a few monographs, have been published on the views of Sanders and on the constellation of fairly diverse reconstructions that make up the "new perspective," but nothing had been published of which we were aware that looked afresh at virtually all the literature of Second Temple Judaism, aiming simultaneously for comprehensiveness and depth, before turning again to Paul.

These goals meant that we soon abandoned the hope of achieving our purpose in one fat volume. Hence this two-volume set. At one point we briefly toyed with the idea of attempting a straight-line chronological study; indeed, one or two distinguished scholars urged us to take this route. But eventually we settled on the outline reflected here. A straight-line chronological study is very difficult in any case, owing to protracted debates about the dates of many of the sources. More importantly, however, we were concerned not to lose the interpretive gains that depended on being sensitive to distinguishable literary genres. One of the criticisms raised against the category "covenantal nomism" is that it is suspect precisely because it paints with such a broad brush, or (to change the metaphor) because it is such a powerful vortex that it sucks in diverse literary genres without much historical and literary sensitivity.

The result was that we divided up the literature of Second Temple Judaism and invited distinguished specialists to look at it afresh, asking fundamental questions about the pattern of the relationships between God and human beings, about righteousness and salvation and eschatology and grace and

works and faith and law. We tried to make the categories broad enough that each scholar could "tweak" the approach – the questions asked and the categories for the results – according to the literature. Several of the contributors decided to follow a roughly chronological schema within the corpus of literature being studied.

Inevitably, this approach led to a bit of overlap: both Philip R. Davies and Donald E. Gowan, for instance, treat 4 Maccabees; despite some specific assignment of sources, there is a little overlap between the treatment of apocalyptic (Richard Bauckham) and of the Dead Sea Scrolls (Markus Bockmuehl). In our view, however, this has proved beneficial: we did not attempt to impose an artificial uniformity on the findings, and the small degree of diversity that resulted has probably enhanced the project's credibility. On two fronts, we decided to commission essays of a topical nature (which of course ensured a bit more overlap with the other essays): Mark A. Seifrid wrote an essay on the "righteousness" words of the Hebrew Bible and of Second Temple Judaism, while Roland Deines embarked on a major study of Pharisaism. The most serious lacuna in the present volume is the absence of a separate treatment of the LXX. We intend to include something on that subject in the second volume, in an essay dealing with Greek "righteousness" words.

As the first draft of each essay was received, it was circulated to the other contributors to the first volume, who were invited to offer their suggestions and criticisms. About half of them did so. Essays were then revised and edited. I must make special mention of the written responses of Markus Bockmuehl, who (apart from the editors, of course) offered the most detailed and penetrating comments. Though they are now unseen by those who read these pages, his critical suggestions have probably made almost as great a contribution to this volume as his own essay.

Within the limits of reasonable uniformity of presentation, I have tried in final editing to allow some diversity of stylistic preferences. For instance, individual authors could choose for themselves between B.C.E./C.E. and B.C./A.D.

I want to record my thanks to those who have contributed to this project, some of them very substantially. First of all, I am grateful to the writers, whose erudition has been matched by consistent courtesy and efficiency as suggestions have been followed up, proofs read, questions answered. Prof. Martin Hengel and Georg Siebeck have been unflagging in their support of this project, even when there were some painful delays occasioned by the ordinary but always unexpected vicissitudes of life. Several scholars contributed to the translation of the essay by Roland Deines: their names are in the first footnote of that piece. The co-editors have been wonderfully rapid and insightful in their suggestions. My graduate assistant, Sigurd Grindheim,

prepared the indexes with his customary attention to detail; my indefatigable secretary, Judy Tetour, prepared the camera-ready copy. Trinity Evangelical Divinity School has an enviable track record of encouraging scholarship, and in this instance provided funds to offset various expenses. To all of them I owe a great deal, and extend my heartfelt thanks.

Soli Deo gloria.

Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, April 2001

D. A. Carson

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Abbreviations

With only rare exceptions (such as in the use of roman font for Targums), these essays have followed the abbreviations set out in Patrick H. Alexander et al., ed., *The SBL Handbook of Style* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999). In addition, the following abbreviations, not found in the *Handbook*, have been used:

CSCT	Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition
DSSSE	*Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition* (ed. F. García Martínez)
EnAC	Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique
EOS	Eos. Commentarii Societatis Philologae Polonarum
GAP	Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplement
JudChr	Judaica et Christiana
NBL	*Neues Bibel-Lexikon*
NEB.EAT	Neue Echter Bibel. Ergänzungsband zum Alten Testament
SFSHJ	South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism
SSAW.PH	Sitzungsberichte der sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaft zu Leipzig: Philologisch-historische Klasse
T&T	Texts and Translations
WdF	Wege der Forschung

1. Introduction

by

D. A. CARSON

The "new perspective" on Paul is in some respects not new, and in any case cannot be reduced to a single perspective. Rather, it is a bundle of interpretive approaches to Paul, some of which are mere differences in emphasis, and others of which compete rather antagonistically. Taken together, however, they belong to the "new perspective" in that they share certain things in common, not least a more-or-less common reading of the documents of Second Temple Judaism, and a conviction that earlier readings of Paul, not least from the Protestant camp, and especially from the German Lutheran camp, with lines going back to the Reformation, are at least partly mistaken, and perhaps profoundly mistaken. The sometimes mutually reinforcing, sometimes mutually competing, interpretive grids share enough in common that together they have generated a reigning paradigm that to some extent controls contemporary discussion on Paul, the genesis of early Christianity, justification, grace, the identity and boundaries of the people of God, Torah, and a host of related themes. This new perspective (for so we shall continue to call it) is now so strong, especially in the world of English-language biblical scholarship, that only the rare major work on Paul does not interact with it, whether primarily by agreement, qualification, or disagreement.

Perhaps it is true that the origins of this new perspective, at least insofar as this new perspective became a reigning paradigm, lie with the 1977 volume by E. P. Sanders.[1] Arguably, however, some of the elements in the debate stretch back centuries. Within the twentieth century, some of Sanders's views on Second Temple Judaism were anticipated by C. Montefiore,[2] G. F. Moore,[3] and K. Stendahl,[4] among others.[5] In 1963, the last-named scholar wrote a

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[1] *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977).

[2] *Judaism and St. Paul* (London: Goschen, 1914).

[3] "Christian Writers on Judaism," *HTR* 14 (1921): 197–254; ibid., *Judaism*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard, 1927–30).

[4] *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976).

[5] For a useful overview of Jewish thought regarding Paul, see D. A. Hagner, "Paul in Modern Jewish Thought," in *Pauline Studies* (ed. D. A. Hagner and M. J. Harris; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 143–65.

seminal essay of extraordinary influence,[6] in which he argued that Luther's position on justification reflected rather more his own internal struggles than the teaching of the Pauline letters. In Stendahl's view, Luther's influence was continuing to make difficult an historically accurate reading of Paul. Several years before his 1977 volume, E. P. Sanders anticipated his own book in one of his articles.[7] The title of the article and the subtitle of the book are significant: Sanders was looking for "patterns of religion," essentially an approach that borrows from the sociology of religion rather more than from theology. Over against a focus on "reduced essences" (e.g. faith vs. works, liberty vs. law, and the like) or of "individual motifs" (e.g. one starts with Pauline motifs and looks for their origin in Judaism), Sanders deploys a "holistic comparison of patterns of religion," in which the function and context of individual motifs are traced within the "whole," within a "more or less homogeneous entity."[8] "A pattern of religion, defined positively, is the description of how a religion is perceived by its adherents to *function* – how getting in and staying in are understood."[9]

Despite the title of his book, Sanders's focus was on some of the literature of Second Temple Judaism, not on Paul. Almost four hundred pages were devoted to the former, a mere ninety-two to the latter. That scarcely mattered, for it was his treatment of Palestinian Judaism that proved broadly convincing to many. In the forms of Judaism that he treated, Sanders found a common pattern that he labelled "covenantal nomism." This pattern Sanders summarized as follows:

> The "pattern" or "structure" of covenantal nomism is this (1) God has chosen Israel and (2) given the law. The law implies both (3) God's promise to maintain the election and (4) the requirement to obey. (5) God rewards obedience and punishes transgression. (6) The law provides for means of atonement, and atonement results in (7) maintenance or re-establishment of the covenantal relationship. (8) All those who are maintained in the covenant by obedience, atonement and God's mercy belong to the group which will be saved. An important interpretation of the first and last points is that election and ultimately salvation are considered to be by God's mercy rather than human achievement.[10]

More simply put, the "pattern of religion" in Second Temple Judaism, according to Sanders, is that "getting" in is by God's mercy, while "staying in" is a function of obedience. Despite the many branches or emphases in first-century Judaism, this "covenantal nomism" is the common pattern. Sanders

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[6] Krister Stendahl, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," *HTR* 56 (1963): 199–215.

[7] E. P Sanders, "Patterns of Religion in Paul and Rabbinic Judaism," *HTR* 66 (1973): 455–78.

[8] Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 16.

[9] Sanders, ibid., 17 (emphasis his).

[10] Ibid., 422.

acknowledges, of course, that some documents are notably "defective" (Sanders thinks in particular of 1 Enoch),[11] but the pattern, he insists, is pervasive.

To determine just how pervasive this pattern is, is one of the purposes of this volume. Whatever the results, the implications of this reading of Second Temple Judaism are certainly pervasive. For a start, it means that the theory that apocalypticism and legalism constitute substantially different religious streams within Second Temple Judaism of the period is profoundly misguided. More importantly for our purposes, the Protestant (and especially Lutheran) reading of Paul, which pits Paul's theology of grace against an ostensible Judaism of legalism, cannot (on this view) withstand close scrutiny of the primary texts. The Protestant reading of Paul is grounded not only on a terribly anachronistic reading of late texts – after all, apart from other evidence a fifth-century talmudic source is as relevant to Paul as mid-twentieth-century existentialism is for the evaluation of Shakespeare – but also on a chronic failure to discern the *pattern* of religion that Sanders believes he has uncovered. Paul's primary problem with the Judaism of his day, according to Sanders, has little to do with merit theology. His primary complaint is that it is not Christianity. Otherwise put, the most significant dividing line between Paul and his Jewish opponents was not merit theology but Christ. Of course, once Paul had come to accept that Jesus was the Messiah, he had to work out the theology of that position, and sometimes that drove him to theological constructions that emphasized differences between himself and unconverted Jews – sometimes even caricaturizing his opponents, rather than dealing with them fairly. Moreover, one must distinguish (Sanders says) between the way that Paul arrived at his conclusion, and the theological construction he later developed to support it. Thus, the relationship between Romans 1:18–3:20 and Romans 3:21–6 may be that of plight and solution, but that is surely after the fact: as Paul actually experienced things, he came to accept Jesus as the Messiah, and then worked out the theology: he moved from solution to plight.

Even now, almost two and a half decades later, reading the initial reviews of Sanders's work is a profitable exercise,[12] not only for their intrinsic value

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[11] Ibid., 423.

[12] These include: C. Scobie, *SR* 4 (1978): 461–3; J. Murphy-O'Connor, *RB* 85 (1978): 122–6; G. B. Caird, *JTS* 29 (1978): 538–43; J. Neusner, *HR* 18 (1978): 177–91; Bruce J. Malina, *BTB* 8 (1978): 190–91; C. Bernas, *TS* 39 (1978): 340–41; J. C. Beker, *ThTo* 35 (1978): 108–111; J. Drury, *Theology* 81 (1978): 235–6; J. T. Pawlikowski, *ChrCent* 95 (May 10, 1978): 511–12; D. E. Aune, *ChrToday* 22 (Apr. 21, 1978): 34; S. S. Smalley, *Chm* 92 (1978): 71–2; R. Smith, *CurTM* 6 (1979): 33–4; M. McNamara, *JSNT* 5 (1979): 67–73; G. Brooke, *JJS* 30 (1979): 247–50; A. J. Saldarini, *JBL* 98 (1979): 299–303; W. Baird, *PSTJ* 32 (1979): 39–40; G. Nickelsburg, *CBQ* 41 (1979): 171–5; D. J. Lull, *QR* 1 (1980): 81–7; N. King, *Bib* 61 (1980): 141–4; B. R. Gaventa, *BTB* 10 (1980): 37–44; E. Best, *SJT* 33 (1980): 191–2; J. F. Collange,

but also to discover how prescient (or otherwise!) they were. At the risk of generalization, most of them thought that Sanders's views on Paul needed a good deal more work, while his portrait of post-biblical Judaism received generally favorable notice. A. J. Saldarini (in *JBL*) was one of several exceptions: he protested that the pattern of "covenantal nomism" could not be sustained in pre-70 Judaism. Although many reviewers predicted that the book would prove important, few signalled that they thought it would bear the influence it has in fact enjoyed.

What has happened is that, for a sizable proportion of the New Testament guild, "covenantal nomism" has become the shibboleth for understanding Second Temple Judaism, and the necessary background for understanding Paul. So influential has this proportion become that few serious students of Paul say much about his writings without interacting with the "new perspective," whether as supporters or as detractors (or some mix of both).[13]

To track these developments here would be inappropriate, not least because the lead essay in the second volume of this two-volume set attempts just such an exercise. But it would surely not be inappropriate to mention the work of two scholars in particular. In 1983, James D. G. Dunn gave a highly positive assessment of the work of Sanders,[14] and this was eventually followed up by major commentaries on Romans[15] and Galatians[16], not to mention a bevy of articles and books aimed at re-constructing parts of first-century Christianity, especially in Pauline circles. Dunn and his students have repeatedly insisted that the "works of the law" that draw the focus of interest in our literature have little to do with merit theology, and much influence as "boundary markers": Sabbath observance, the importance of kosher food, and circumcision have to do with preserving Jewish identity. Paul's insistence on breaking down these barriers has less to do with his opposition to some sort of ostensible legalism, than with his opposition to cultural elitism. Meanwhile, the growing corpus of N. T. Wright argues, among other things, that for Paul justification does not so much mark the entrance point into the Christian way, as that justification is God's righteous declaration that someone actually belongs to the covenant. Inevitably, Sanders, Dunn, and Wright all disagree with one another in various ways, even though they are among the leading lights of the new perspective. What all sides would agree upon, I think, is that Sanders's "covenantal nomism" has been a shaping feature of the new

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RHPR 61 (1981): 196–7; N. Hyldahl, *DTT* 46 (1983): 223–4.

[13] The exceptions stand out: e.g. Joseph A. Fitmyer's commentary on *Romans* (AB 33; New York: Doubleday, 1993), for the most part, simply ignores the new perspective on Paul, which tends to make his commentary on Romans simultaneously refreshing and obsolete.

[14] "The New Perspective on Paul," *BJRL* 65 (1983): 95–122.

[15] *Romans* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1986).

[16] *Galatians* (BNTC; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1993).

perspective on Paul, even though there are other elements of Second Temple Judaism that some parties within this trajectory judge to be no less significant (e.g. Wright's insistence that for most first-century Jews the exile was viewed as still not over).

This means that the place to begin is with the literature of Second Temple Judaism, and the questions to be asked have to do with whether or not "covenantal nomism" serves us well as a label for an overarching pattern of religion. The scholars who have contributed the chapters of this book are not in perfect agreement on this point. The disagreement may spring in part from legitimate scholarly independence, but it springs even more (as the following chapters show) from the variations within the literature: the literature of Second Temple Judaism reflects patterns of belief and religion too diverse to subsume under one label. The results are messy. But if they are allowed to stand, they may in turn prepare us for a more flexible approach to Paul. It is not that the new perspective has not taught us anything helpful or enduring. Rather, the straitjacket imposed on the apostle Paul by appealing to a highly unified vision of what the first-century "pattern of religion" was really like will begin to find itself unbuckled.

The bearing of these matters on Paul must await the second volume. For the moment, it is enough to attempt a fresh evaluation of the literature of Second Temple Judaism.

2. Psalms and Prayers

by

DANIEL FALK

1. Introduction

As expressions of the heart poured out before God, prayers and religious poetry potentially offer richer insights into the affective theology of a group than theoretical speculation or admonition. This is especially the case with topics such as salvation and atonement for sin which are regular concerns in Jewish prayer. The large corpus of Jewish prayers and psalms from the Second Temple period,[1] however, brings its own problems. Only part of this diverse literature is found in collections; much is scattered throughout all kinds of genres as embedded texts, and consequently the corpus has so far received remarkably little systematic treatment. Furthermore, because of the generic nature of the language of prayer it is notoriously difficult to determine the date, provenance, and *Sitz im Leben*, let alone whether we are dealing with "real" prayer or a literary construct for some other purpose.[2] It must also be acknowledged that the language of prayer is to a great extent conventional. Because of this constraint, a straightforward reading of a prayer text cannot always be assumed to represent accurately the pray-er's theology.

A comprehensive study of the entire corpus is not feasible here.[3] Instead, I will examine a few select examples of psalms and prayers. First, I will survey briefly various penitential prayers, all definitely pre-Christian, with separate treatments of *Words of the Luminaries*, *Communal Confession*,

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[1] See J. H. Charlesworth, "Jewish Hymns, Odes, and Prayers (ca. 167 B.C.E.–135 C.E.)," *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters* (The Bible and its Modern Interpreters; ed. R. A. Kraft and G. W. E. Nickelsburg; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 411–36.

[2] E. Schuller, "Prayer, Hymnic and Liturgical Texts from Qumran," *The Community of the Renewed Covenant: The Notre Dame Symposium on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 153–71.

[3] For surveys, see: R. S. Sarason, "On the Use of Method in the Modern Study of Jewish Liturgy," *Approaches to Ancient Judaism 1: Theory and Practice* (BJS 1; ed. W. S. Green; Missoula: Scholars, 1978), 97–172; R. S. Sarason, "Recent Developments in the Study of Jewish Liturgy," *The Study of Ancient Judaism 1: Mishnah, Midrash, Siddur* (ed. J. Neusner; New York: KTAV, 1981), 180–87; J. H. Charlesworth, "A Prolegomenon to a New Study of the Jewish Background of the Hymns and Prayers in the New Testament," *JJS* 33 (1982): 265–85; J. H. Charlesworth, "Jewish Hymns, Odes, and Prayers (ca. 167 B.C.E.–135 C.E.)"; D. Flusser, "Psalms,

Psalm 154, *Psalm 155*, *Plea for Deliverance*, and *Prayer of Manasseh*. Such prayers flourished during the Second Temple period and provide an important background for understanding motifs that were becoming stereotyped in prayer. This is followed by a discussion of various series of petitions that appear in the late Second Temple period and seem to have been drawn upon by the formulators of the statutory synagogue prayer known as the *Amidah* (Eighteen Benedictions). Two of the later texts to be considered – book 7 of the *Apostolic Constitutions* and pap. Egerton 5 – supply information of Jewish prayers in a Diaspora context. I will then consider at greater length three large collections. The *Hodayot* from Qumran (second century B.C.) and the *Psalms of Solomon* (first century B.C.) have featured prominently in studies of early Jewish soteriology because of their preponderance of relevant terminology and motifs. They are thus worthy of special attention here, even though the *Hodayot* are treated comparatively in M. Bockmuehl's chapter on the *Rule of the Community* from Qumran. The *Odes of Solomon* is also considered as an extended collection of prayers from a different context, that of Jewish-Christianity probably around the end of the first century A.D.

2. Penitential Supplications

Penitential prayers became prominent in the reconstruction piety of the Second Temple period, prompted especially by reflection on the covenantal warnings such as Lev 26:40–45: "but if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their ancestors . . . if then their uncircumcised heart is humbled and they make amends for their iniquity, then I will remember my covenant . . ." (cf. Deut 30:1–10; 1 Kgs 8:22–53; Jer 3:12–13; 14:20–21; Ezek 30:10–20).[4] These prayers are predominantly characterized by four elements, in slightly varying orders: (1) confession of sins, usually in the form of a historical recollection; (2) confession that God's judgment is just; (3) recital of God's mercies in the past; (4) petition for mercy.[5] The focal point of the

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Hymns and Prayers," *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period. Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus* (CRINT 2.2; ed. M. E. Stone; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1984), 551–77; M. Harding, "The Lord's Prayer and Other Prayer Texts of the Greco-Roman Era: A Bibliography," *The Lord's Prayer and Other Prayer Texts from the Greco-Roman Era* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth; Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press, 1994), 103–274; M. Kiley et al., ed., *Prayer from Alexander to Constantine: A Critical Anthology* (London: Routledge, 1997).

[4] R. A. Werline, *Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism: The Development of a Religious Institution* (SBL Early Judaism and its Literature 13; Atlanta: Scholars, 1998). Biblical citations will be according to the NRSV unless otherwise indicated.

[5] E.g., Neh 9:6–37; Ezra 9:6–15; Dan 9:4–19; Pr Azar 1:3–22; Bar 1:15–3:8; *Words of the Luminaries* 4Q504 1–2 v–vii (prayer for Friday); *Communal Confession* 4Q393. See further the

prayer is the petition for mercy (sometimes implied rather than verbalized), even if the content is dominated by the confession of sin and God's justice.[6] The latter elements, along with the recital of God's past mercies, are conventional and support an appeal for God's mercy in the present.

So, for example, in the prayer in Neh 9:6–37 there is no explicit petition for mercy, but the prayer drives unmistakably toward its unstated object, ending "and we are in great distress" (Neh 9:36–37). The most conventional of the elements is the confession that God's judgments are just, for example: "You have been just in all that has come upon us, for you have dealt faithfully and we have acted wickedly" (Neh 9:33); "O Lord, God of Israel, you are just . . . here we are before you in our guilt, though no one can face you because of this" (Ezra 9:15); "righteousness is on your side, O Lord, but open shame, as at this day, falls on us, the people of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and all Israel . . . because of the treachery that they have committed against you. Open shame, O Lord, falls on us, our kings, our officials, and our ancestors, because we have sinned against you" (Dan 9:7–8; very similarly Bar 1:15; 2:6); "for you are just in all you have done; all your works are true and your ways right, and all your judgments are true. You have executed true judgments in all you have brought upon us . . . by a true judgment you have brought all this upon us because of our sins . . . and now we cannot open our mouths" (Pr Azar 1:4–10).

Accompanying the declaration that God is righteous in his judgment are also expressions to the effect that the petitioners can speak nothing in their defense ("shame is on us," etc.), which along with the confessions of sin are not uncommonly in apparent tension with expressions of piety/righteousness: in Prayer of Azariah, the petitioners who confess their sins and cannot open their mouths are also those "with a contrite heart and a humble spirit," who "trust" in God, "follow" God with all their heart, "fear" God and "seek" his presence (1:16–19); in Bar 1:15–3:8, those who confess their sins are also those who fear God, call on his name, and have "put away from our hearts all the iniquity of our ancestors who sinned against you" (3:7). The tension is only apparent, however. The pious suffer because of the sins of the nation/ancestors, and suffering is regarded as atoning for sin. In Pr Azar 1:15–19, it is requested that God in his mercy will accept penitence as atonement in the place of sacrifice. In Baruch and *Words of the Luminaries*, there can be no basis for appeal to merit, because the desire to repent itself is a gift of God (Bar 3:7; for *Words of the Luminaries*, see below).

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references cited in D. K. Falk, "4Q393: A Communal Confession," *JJS* 45 (1994): 199–207.

[6] The one exception is 1QS 1:18–2:4, where the prayer form is significantly modified. See D. K. Falk, *Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 71, 222.

The conventional nature of much of the language is easily apparent; that is, this is how one petitions when the situation of distress is perceived to be a result of sin, even the sins of ancestors. One humbly accepts God's judgment and appeals on the basis of election, the covenant and God's mercy,[7] even if one's own congregation is pious. An explanation is not hard to find: this body of penitential prayers seems to be a product of taking the covenantal warnings (Lev 26:40–45, etc.) as a prescription for restoration.

The language of much subsequent Jewish prayer is marked with a strong imprint from such penitential supplications. To ignore this is to risk misinterpreting stereotyped motifs such as God's righteousness. This becomes particularly important in considering the *Psalms of Solomon* below, since the degree to which they are steeped in the language of the penitential prayer tradition has not often been appreciated.[8] In order to give due weight to this body of penitential prayers and the range of soteriological perspectives within it, then, I will consider a few specific examples.

2.1. Words of the Luminaries

A collection of prayers for each day of the week found in Qumran Cave 4 (4Q504, 4Q506),[9] entitled דברי המאורות (*Words of the Luminaries*), is the earliest known example of penitential supplications used in a daily liturgy. The two fragmentary copies date around the middle of the second century B.C. and the middle of the first century A.D. Although they were likely used at Qumran, they were composed prior to the sectarian settlement at Qumran and probably outside the *Yaḥad* community.[10] They appear to be the product of professional literary composition, but for liturgical purposes.[11]

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[7] E.g., Dan 9:18, "we do not present our supplication before you on the ground of our righteousness, but on the ground of your great mercies"; Pr Azar 1:11–13, 19–20; Bar 2:19, 27; 3:2. Appeal is also made to God's reputation and his deeds in the past.

[8] But see Werline, *Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism: The Development of a Religious Institution*, 188.

[9] Edition: M. Baillet, "Paroles des Luminaires," *Qumrân grotte 4, III (4Q482–4Q520)* (DJD 7; Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), 137–75; reconstruction and commentary: E. G. Chazon, "A Liturgical Document from Qumran and Its Implications: 'Words of the Luminaries' (4QDibHam)"[Hebrew], Ph.D. dissertation, Hebrew University, 1991); translation: E. G. Chazon, "Prayers from Qumran: Issues and Methods," *SBL 1993 Seminar Papers* (ed. E. H. Lovering; Atlanta: Scholars, 1993), 758–72; F. García Martínez and E. J. C. Tigchelaar, ed., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1997–1998), 2.1008–10; discussion: Falk, *Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers*, 59–94. Translations used here are my own.

[10] E. G. Chazon, "Is *Divrei Ha-Me'orot* a Sectarian Prayer?" *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Forty Years of Research. Papers Read at a Symposium Sponsored by Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi at the University of Haifa and at Tel Aviv University March 20–24, 1988* (ed. D. Dimant and U. Rappaport; Leiden: Brill, 1992), 3–17.

[11] E. G. Chazon, "4QDibHam: Liturgy or Literature?" *RevQ* 15 (1992): 447–55.

The supplications for each week day[12] evince a profound sense of sinfulness. Current situations of distress are understood as God's chastening discipline for their sin. There is no basis for appeal to one's own behavior. They are without excuse for their sin because Adam was created with "understanding and knowledge," and God "established for him not to stray" (4Q504 8 recto 5–8). Likewise, Israel was created and chosen to be distinct from the nations, and given knowledge so that they would not sin. But they rebelled anyway, and it can be said to be because of Israel's election that God disciplined them. God's justice is thus his punishment of their sin. Moreover, God called them in their sin, gave them his holy spirit so that they might repent and turn to God, and implanted Torah in their heart that they might not stray from his commands. Thus, even when they repent, atone for their sin (רצינו את עוונינו), and obey (4Q504 1–2.vi.2–9), this cannot be claimed as merit, but comes by God's grace.

> You were gracious toward your people Israel in all [the] lands to which you banished them, to cause them to turn their heart(s) to return to you and to obey your voice [according] to all you commanded by the hand of Moses your servant. [Fo]r you poured out your holy spirit on us [to br]ing your blessings to us, so that (we) might seek you in our distress [and so that (we) might mu]rmur (prayers) in the distress of your correction. (4Q504 1–2.v.11–17)

They can appeal only to God's mercy and love, God's election and covenant with Israel, and God's reputation (4Q504 1–2.ii.7–11; 1–2.v.6–9). Not only does the community pray for deliverance, but also for forgiveness and spiritual help to obey:

> But you, ransom us and forgive, [*please*], our sin and [our] of[fence. . . . the law which [you] com[manded] by the hand of Mos[es] . . . Circumcise the foreskin [of our heart . . .] Strengthen our heart to do [. . . to] walk in your ways [. . . Blessed] be the Lord, who has made [us] to kn[ow . . .] (4Q504 4:7–14).

The praying community identifies itself with Israel, as is evident from the close interchange of Israel and "us" with regard to events such as the Exodus, the Mosaic covenant, and the exile. It is unlikely that there is a sense here of a limited Israel, although there are possible hints that may be obscured by the fragmentary nature of the remains. For example, immediately after pleading that God restore dispersed Israel, there occurs the phrase "everyone who is written in the book of life [. . .]" (1–2.vi.14). It is not clear how this phrase relates to the context, or whether the "book of life" terminology here has to do with inclusion versus exclusion as in Ps 69:29. Toward the end of the prayer for Sunday, the community asks that God "not re]ckon to us the sins of the former ones in all their wick[ed] dealings . . . but you, ransom us and forgive, [please], our iniquity and [our] s[in]" (4:6–7). It is possible that the

[12] Sabbath has instead a hymn of praise.

community here distances itself from the fathers who sinned, and that forgiveness should be extended to the community *in contrast to* the previous sinners. In the light of the identification with the sins of Israel elsewhere, however, this is unlikely.

The language of such a classic presentation of penitential supplication corresponds very well to the covenantal nomism pattern described by E. P. Sanders,[13] since a sense of corporate solidarity as the covenant people is at the forefront. God punishes sin and assists with repentance and keeping Torah because these are his chosen people. Keeping of Torah is not the means of repairing relationship with God, but rather the goal. Sin is atoned by submitting to God's discipline and by means of the penitential prayer itself (4Q504 1–2.v.4–8) which is provided for in Torah (cf. Lev 26:40–45; Deut 4:29–31; 30:1–10).

It is not the case, however, that even in such a stereotyped genre the language will be consistently used. Two further examples illustrate wide differences in the perception of the nature of human sinfulness and the need for divine grace.

2.2. Communal Confession (4Q393)

A fragmentary manuscript found in Qumran Cave 4 contains a communal prayer of confession probably dated no later than about the latter half of the first century B.C.[14] There is no compelling reason to conclude that this prayer is a product of the *Yaḥad*.

In literary terms, the prayer is an expansion of Moses' prayer in Deut 9:26–29 along the lines of *Jub* 1:4–25, generously adapting language from Ps 51 and Neh 9. God's just judgment is contrasted with the people's guilt: "and what is evil [in your eyes] I have [done,] so that you are just in your sentence, you are pu[re . . . when] you [jud]ge. Behold, in our sins w[e] were founded, [we] were [br]ought forth [ ] in imp[urity of . . .] and in st]iffness of neck." (4Q393 1–2.ii.2–4). Supplication is made to God for forgiveness and help in obedience, appealing to God's compassion ("your people have fainted on account of [your gr]eat ang[er]. Continually they [have relied] upon [your] forg[iveness]," 1–2.ii.8), God's reputation ("Nations and kingdoms will sa[y]," 1–2.ii.9), and the election and covenant ("do not abandon your people

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[13] E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 422-3.

[14] Falk, "4Q393"; D. K. Falk, "Biblical Adaptation in 4Q392 *Works of God* and 4Q393 *Communal Confession*," *The Provo International Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls: Technological Innovations, New Texts, and Reformulated Issues* (STDJ 30; ed. D. W. Parry and E. Ulrich; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 126–46; D. K. Falk, "4Q Communal Confession," *Poetical and Liturgical Texts, Part 2* (DJD 29; ed. M. Broshi et al.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1999), 45-61. Translations are my own.

[and] your [in]heritance," 3:3; "You are the YHWH who chose our fathers from ancient times. May you confirm us as a remnant for them to give to us (that which) you established with Abraham (and) Israel," 3:6–7).

Although the profound sense of sinfulness and guilt is adapted from Psa 51:7, it is particularly striking here because the context of communal confession lends the language an implication of universal guilt. Even more striking is the modification of Psa 51:11–15, whereby the community apparently speaks of itself as the sinners and transgressors who need to be returned to God and taught his ways (4Q393 1–2.ii.4–8).

2.3. Prayer of Manasseh

Prayer of Manasseh is a penitential prayer of an individual. It was composed as a narrative production by a Jew probably between the second century B.C. and the first century A.D., self-consciously attempting to supply the penitential prayer of Manasseh mentioned in 2 Chronicles 33:12–13, 18–19 by echoing phrases from the narrative. Still, it reflects to a certain degree actual patterns of Jewish penitential prayers, and at least by the third century it was used liturgically by Christians.[15] Scholars are divided as to the original language (Greek or semitic) and provenance.

Prayer of Manasseh begins with (1) an invocation (vv. 1–5) which praises God as the God of the patriarchs, creator of all, and fearsome. The complaint is hinted at: God is the God of the righteous and none can endure God's wrath against sinners. (2) The individual then expresses confidence in God's mercy (vv. 6–8), appealing to his character in terms particularly reminiscent of the biblical lists of God's attributes but especially Joel 2:12–13 (LXX; see also

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[15] See J. H. Charlesworth, "Prayer of Manasseh," *OTP*, 2.627-8. The earliest manuscripts are in Syriac (*Didascalia*, third century A.D.) and in Greek (*Apostolic Constitutions*, fourth century A.D.; from the fifth century codex Alexandrinus included among the Odes attached to the Psalter). Greek edition: A. Rahlfs, ed., "Προσευχὴ Μανασση," *Septuaginta: Id Est Vetus Testamentum Graece Iuxta LXX Interpretes* (Duo volumina in uno; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979), 180–81; Syriac: W. Baars and H. Schneider, "Prayer of Manasseh," *The Old Testament in Syriac According to the Peshitta Version* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), i–vii, 1–9. Translations and notes: H. E. Ryle, "The Prayer of Manasses," *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English* (2 vols.; ed. R. H. Charles; Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), 1.612–24; E. Osswald, *Das Gebet Manasses* (Jüdische Schriften aus Hellenistisch-Römischer Zeit 4,1; Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1974), 1–27; J. H. Charlesworth, "Prayer of Manasseh." Introductions: J. B. Frey, "Apocryphes de l'A.T., 13. La Prière de Manassé," *Dictionnaire de la Bible, Supplément* 1 (1928), 442–5; A.-M. Denis, "La Prière de Manassé," *Introduction aux Pseudépigraphes grecs d'Ancient Testament* (Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha 1; Leiden: Brill, 1970), 177–81; E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ. A New English Edition* (3 vols. in 4 parts; revised and edited by G. Vermes, F. Millar, M. Black and M. Goodman; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1973–1987), 3.2:730–3; J. H. Charlesworth, *The Pseudepigrapha and Modern Research with a Supplement* (Septuagint and Cognate Studies 7s; Chico, CA: Scholars, 1981) 156–9, 296.

Exod 34:6; Ps 103:8): God has great compassion, is long-suffering, and abundant in mercy, and "repents concerning the evils of men." The latter phrase probably means that God has pity on the people suffering as punishment for sin and is willing to relent.[16] God's mercy is part of his promise, which assures forgiveness for those who repent of their sins. Thus, God appointed repentance to sinners for their salvation.[17] Here the psalmist anticipates the answer to his problem: God is the God of the righteous, such as the patriarchs who did not sin and for whom God did not appoint repentance ("grace" in the Syriac), but his concern for sinners is evident in appointing repentance for them. (3) Next, the individual confesses his sin, the justice of the suffering he is experiencing,[18] and his unworthiness to see heaven (vv. 9–10). (4) Now the petitioner pours out a moving plea for forgiveness (vv. 11–13). The depiction of repentance is graphic – "and now I bend the knees of my heart before you, beseeching your kindness" – and the tone urgent – "I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned . . . forgive me, O Lord, forgive me." He ends the petition with an expression of hope: "for you, Lord, are the God of those who repent." Thus, God is not only the God of the righteous who do not sin, but he is also the God of sinners who repent. (5) This leads to a confession of confidence that God will forgive and deliver (v. 14): "and in me you will show your goodness, for although I am unworthy you will save me according to the abundance of your mercy." The prayer concludes with (6) a vow (v. 15a) to praise God continually, and (7) a doxology (v. 15b).

In contrast to the universality of guilt assumed in *Communal Confession*, *Prayer of Manasseh* raises the prospect of sinlessness.[19] The patriarchs did not sin, and their true offspring are the righteous. These apparently do not need repentance, or as in the Syriac, God's grace (v. 8). In contrast to the righteous are the sinners. These are not hopelessly lost, because God out of his mercy promised repentance for sinners as the means to forgiveness and salvation. Both the righteous – those who do not sin – and the sinners who repent enjoy God's covenant. It is implied that those excluded from the covenant are sinners who refuse to repent.

The overarching presupposition of the prayer is God's covenant with the patriarchs and his unlimited grace and unmerited mercy. To this extent,

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[16] Ryle, "Prayer of Manasses," 621.

[17] Verse 7b is found in the Syriac and Latin manuscripts, and – somewhat differently – in only some Greek manuscripts. It is likely original, however, as argued by Ryle, "Prayer of Manasses," 621.

[18] The verse "and now, O Lord, I am justly afflicted, and as I deserve I am harrassed; for already I am ensnared" (Charlesworth, "Prayer of Manasseh," 636, verse 9b) is absent from the Greek. It is likely original, however, as argued by Ryle, "Prayer of Manasses," 622.

[19] For a few other texts that seem to countenance the possibility of sinlessness see the references in Charlesworth, "Prayer of Manasseh," 629, n. 52.

Sanders's model of "covenantal nomism" might be seen to apply in general terms. But the language is suggestive of a double track to enjoyment of God's covenant. Those who do not sin and never need repentance are the true offspring of the patriarchs, and repentance may be read as a concession for those who fail. If the repentant sinner considers himself undeserving of God's goodness due to his sins (vv. 10, 14), does this imply that the righteous person is deserving of God's goodness because of righteous conduct? It must be kept in mind that the perspective of the prayer is limited: it is specifically the sin of idolatry that is in view,[20] and this is to be the prayer of a notorious sinner. Perhaps this should be read merely as the humble response of the sinner: at first reluctant to compare himself with the heroes of the faith or even consider himself among the righteous because of his many sins, he nonetheless comes to recognize that God is his God because God provides repentance for sinners. The brevity of the prayer and the limited viewpoint do not allow for a clear answer. Nevertheless, the language does set this prayer apart as making a distinction within the covenant.

2.4. The Qumran Covenant Ceremony

The penitential prayer form we have been considering was modified in a distinctive way in the exclusivistic covenant ceremony in the sectarian texts from Qumran (*Rule of the Community* 1QS 1:18–2:18; *Damascus Document* CD B 2:27–30).[21] In the ceremony, the people (1) ascribe praise to God, (2) recount God's merciful acts, and (3) confess the sins of the fathers and their own sin, and confess that God's judgments are just. So far, this corresponds to the typical pattern of communal penitential prayers. However, there is no petition for mercy. Instead, (4) the priests and Levites pronounce blessings on the community, and curses on the men of Belial's lot and apostates. The meaning of confession of sin is thus significantly modified by the eschatological and sectarian setting: it functions as an affirmation of one's position in the covenant, since God's elect are those who confess sins (cf. CD B 2:27–30). The scope of the covenant, moreover, is limited to the community.[22] Repentance no longer serves merely to repair and maintain relationship with God in the covenant with Israel, but serves as a formulaic part of an exclusivistic rite of passage into the sectarian community.

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[20] Ryle, "Prayer of Manasses," 615.

[21] On the *Rule of the Community* generally, see the chapter by M. Bockmuehl in this volume. On the adaptation of the penitential prayer form in the covenant ceremony, see further Falk, *Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers*, 219–36.

[22] On the modification of soteriological categories in apocalyptic Judaism, see M. A. Seifrid, *Justification by Faith: The Origin and Development of a Central Pauline Theme* (NovTSup 68; Leiden: Brill, 1992), 78–99.

2.5. Summary

The genre of penitential petitions grew out of reflection on classic covenantal texts to understand and remedy the travails of the exile.[23] It should come as no surprise that many of these prayers – and numerous other texts influenced by them – exhibit motifs that find resonance in the pattern of covenantal nomism described by Sanders. This is not to say, however, that all such texts fully correspond to the notion of covenantal nomism. The language is constrained by convention, but is used with very different meanings in different contexts, particularly with regard to how inclusive or exclusive the covenant is conceived and the means of attaining God's mercy. It cannot be ruled out that in some instances the penitential prayer itself may become a pious activity that merits God's favor. This of course is virtually impossible to track, but certainly in the sectarian covenant ceremony the penitential prayer is transformed into a formulaic part of a ritual to reinforce the boundaries between those under God's favor and those excluded in the last days.

God's righteousness is an important motif in the penitential prayers. Predominantly in these prayers it has to do with declaring God just in his judgments in contrast to the people's guilt. When the prayers speak of God's forgiveness in the face of the people's guilt, the language is usually of his mercy. It has been argued that God's righteousness in the penitential prayers is also God's help and forgiveness to which the supplicant appeals.[24] This is demonstrable in some instances (e.g., Psa 51:16; *Plea for Deliverance* 11QPs[a] 19:4b–5a, 11), but it can be overestimated. For example, one of the cases where God's righteousness most clearly seems to be his forgiveness in the face of the people's guilt is in the *Words of the Luminaries*: "you [remov]ed fr[o]m us all ou[r] transgressions, and you [p]urified us from our sin for you sake. To you, yes, you, O Lord, (belongs) righteousness! For you have done all these things" (4Q504 1–2.vi.2–3, prayer for Friday). However, one needs to ask what is meant by removing transgressions and purifying from sin. It is not simple forgiveness despite sinfulness. Rather, there are two circles of action involved in the context. On God's part, he has sent severe distress as correction on the people ("tests and blows," 4Q504 1–2.vi.7), and poured out his holy spirit on them so that they might pray to him "in the distress of your correction" (4Q504 1–2.v.15–17). On the people's part, they have submitted to God's discipline and humbled their hearts, and in so doing "we have atoned for our iniquity and the iniquity of our fathers" (4Q504 1–2.vi.4–9). That is, God is declared righteousness for accepting the people's

[23] Werline, *Penitential Prayer*, 191–2.

[24] P. Stuhlmacher, "The New Righteousness in the Proclamation of Jesus," *Reconciliation, Law, and Righteousness. Essays in Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 34.

repentance and submission to his purifying discipline. In this, the emphasis is probably on God's response as just or consistent rather than specifically lenient. The opposite would be God acting out of caprice. When leniency is in view, the language is almost always of God's grace and mercy (4Q504 4:5 cf. 4Q506 131+132:11; 4Q504 1–2.v.11). It is possible that even in Daniel 9:16 – "O Lord, in view of all your righteous acts, let your anger and wrath, we pray, turn away" – the righteous acts spoken of are especially his discipline for which God was declared "just" in 9:14 (but cf. Dan 9:18). In many of the prominent examples of this genre (e.g., Ezra 9:6–15; Neh 9:9–37; Bar 1:15–3:8; Pr Azar) God's righteousness is consistently his justice or right action. Key to this usage in the penitential prayers is the idea that the people have experienced God's discipline and repented. God is then seen as acting in accordance to his promise in Lev 26:40–45.

3. *The* Amidah *and Series of Petitions*

One of the two central liturgical elements of the synagogue service is a prayer known as the *Amidah*, also called the Eighteen Benedictions because it comprises a series of short benedictions (now nineteen). Although it is impossible to speak of a particular authoritative text of the *Amidah* prior to the geonic period (8th–11th c. A.D.), it is important to consider for the present study because the prayer was apparently constructed out of ancient series of petitions with traditional thematic structures and forms dating back to the Second Temple period.[25]

For our purposes, then, it will be useful first merely to summarize the essential substance of the benedictions as known on the basis of some of the earliest explicit evidence for the *Amidah*.[26] Secondly, we will examine several examples of the earliest series of petitions that bear an apparent relationship

[25] J. Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud: Forms and Patterns* (SJ 9; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1977), 37, 219–29; L. A. Hoffman, *The Canonization of the Synagogue Service* (University of Notre Dame Center for the Study of Judaism and Christianity in Antiquity; Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1979), 1–9.

[26] I base the following discussion primarily on the Palestinian version of the *Amidah* in a medieval manuscript from the Cairo Genizah that preserves the original number of eighteen benedictions (text reprinted in J. J. Petuchowski, ed., *Contributions to the Scientific Study of Jewish Liturgy* [New York: KTAV, 1970], 373–8, 379–448, especially 375–8 and 405–10; translation in J. Heinemann and J. J. Petuchowski, *Literature of the Synagogue* [Library of Jewish Studies; New York: Behrman House, 1975], 33–6). Also taken into account are the earliest known prayer-book (Babylonian, 9th c.), by R. Amram Gaon (D. Hedegård, *Seder R. Amram Gaon. Part I. Hebrew Text with Critical Apparatus, Translation with Notes and Introduction* [Lund: A.-B. Ph. Lindstedts Universitets-Bokhandel, 1951], 83–98), and the two versions of an abbreviated form of the middle petitions (known as *Habinenu*) cited in the Palestinian and Babylonian talmuds (*y. Ber.* 4:3,8*a* and *b. Ber.* 29*a*).

to what became the *Amidah* and consider what meaning the petitions had in those contexts.

The *Amidah* begins with three ascriptions of praise to God:[27]

1. as God and protector of the patriarchs
2. as the God of power
3. as unique and holy

Then follows a series of petitions:

4. for knowledge of Torah
5. for perfecting/acceptance of repentance[28]
6. for forgiveness
7. for redemption/deliverance
8. for healing
9. for fruitfulness of the land
10. for the gathering of the dispersed
11. for judgment of the wicked[29]/restoration of judges
12. for the destruction of the wicked
13. for blessing of the righteous
14. for restoration of Jerusalem, the temple, and Davidic monarchy[30]
15. for the acceptance of prayer

The *Amidah* concludes with three prayers that originally were probably related to the temple service:[31]

16. petition for the acceptance/restoration of the temple service
17. thanksgiving for God's mercies
18. petition for peace

The middle petitions may be regarded as addressing spiritual concerns (4–6), material concerns (7–9), and national concerns (10–15), giving the whole a very structured progression, but this does not necessarily reflect on the genesis of the petitions or their original meaning. On the basis of formal

[27] I follow here the numbering of the text from the Cairo Geniza, which preserves the original number of eighteen benedictions.

[28] Assistance with keeping Torah seems to have been the original emphasis of this petition. Cf. "circumcise our hearts to fear you" in the *Habinenu* (*b. Ber.* 29*a*) and "bring us back in perfect repentance" in *Seder R. Amram*; also some of the prayers to be discussed below: the Prayer of Levi (verses 6–7, 10; M. E. Stone and J. C. Greenfield, "The Prayer of Levi," *JBL* 112 [1993]: 259); *Words of the Luminaries* (4Q504 4:11); 2 Macc 1:3–4; *Plea for Deliverance* (11QPs[a] 19:14–16); *Psalm 155* (11QPs[a] 24:12–13).

[29] See Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud*, 223.

[30] In the prayer books the petition concerning David is a separate benediction (#15, so that the total is 19), but most scholars agree that this was originally a single benediction as in the Cairo Geniza manuscript.

[31] E. Bickerman, "The Civic Prayer for Jerusalem," *HTR* 55 (1962): 167–8.

features, E. Bickerman isolated different clusters of benedictions that he believed at one point were independent units of prayer, and argued that the *Amidah* formed around the nucleus of a "civic prayer for Jerusalem": invocation of God of the Fathers (*Amidah* #1), prayer for health (*Amidah* #8), prosperous harvest (*Amidah* #9), peace for Jerusalem (*Amidah* #14), and concluding with an appeal for God to heed the prayer (*Amidah* #15).[32] Another cluster consists of the prayers for knowledge, repentance, and forgiveness (*Amidah* #4–6), concluding with petition for mercy/deliverance (*Amidah* #7).

Although specific developmental models are difficult to prove, many early petitionary prayers fall into two broad patterns corresponding in a general way to these two prayer clusters. On the one hand are prayers whose focus is appeal for physical and community needs on the basis of God's character and special relationship with his people.

The prayer in Sirach 36:1–17 (first quarter of the second century B.C., Palestine)[33] falls into three parts. Verses 1–9 – the greatest part – petitions God to save "us" and to destroy foreign oppressors (evidently Seleucid rulers). It is an extended and nationalistic expression of petition *Amidah* #12.[34] Verses 10–15 ask for God's blessings on Israel, closely corresponding to the themes of four of the *Amidah* petitions: "gather all the tribes of Jacob" (cf. *Amidah* #12), compassion on Israel (cf. *Amidah* #7), compassion on and God's glory in Jerusalem and the temple (cf. *Amidah* #14), and reward to those who hope in God (cf. *Amidah* #13). Verses 16–17 express confidence that God will hear the prayer (cf. *Amidah* #15). The nationalistic tone is unmistakable. There is no confession of sin or petition for repentance or forgiveness, but nor is there appeal to righteous behavior. Rather, God is asked to deliver and bless the nation for the sake of his reputation and character, especially his holiness and power (cf. *Amidah* #3 and *Amidah* #2), to fulfill prophecies, and on the basis of his special relationship with his people: "called by your name," "your city," "your temple," "those who hope in you," "according to your favor[35] toward your people." Although the term is not used, the covenant is the assumed basis of God's gracious dealings with Israel.[36]

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[32] Bickerman, "The Civic Prayer for Jerusalem," 173–4. Bickerman found support in parallel petitions for health, prosperity, and peace in Greek prayers for the *polis*.

[33] The Hebrew text of the prayer is extant in the fragments from the Cairo Geniza. See I. Lévi, *The Hebrew Text of the Book of Ecclesiasticus* (Semitic Study Series. 3; reprint; Leiden: Brill, 1951); M. H. Segal, *Sēper Ben-Sîrā' Ha-Šālôm* (Jerusalem: Bialik, 1972); P. W. Skehan and A. A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1987).

[34] Compare "shake your hand against the foreigners" (Sir 36:2) with the twelfth petition in the *Habinenu* "shake your hand against the wicked" (*b. Ber.* 29*a*).

[35] Following the Hebrew כרצונך, supported by the Syriac.

[36] The psalm following Sir 51:12 in the Hebrew text from the Cairo Geniza also bears strong

The prayer in 2 Maccabees 1:24–29 may well belong to a fictitious letter, but "the author gives the words of the prayer because he wishes the Jews of Egypt to use them in observing the Feast of Purification."[37] Thus, this prayer attests an attempt by a Palestinian author near the end of the second century or beginning of the first century B.C. to establish a custom of public prayer for Hanukkah, and probably reflects a prayer custom associated with the celebration of Booths which serves as the model (cf. 2 Macc 10:6–7). Although the prayer is strongly dependent on biblical language, the prayer juxtaposes in a way unprecedented in the Hebrew Bible themes and phrases corresponding to benedictions of the *Amidah*. The style and the prayer themes – although not the order – are remarkably similar to the prayer in Sirach 36:1–17. These two prayers, then, assume the existence of a tradition of series of petitions with customary themes similar to the *Amidah*.[38] The prayer in 2 Macc 1:24–29 begins with an invocation to God as creator, awesome and strong (cf. *Amidah* #1), just and merciful king (cf. *Amidah* #11), provider (cf. *Amidah* #9), just and almighty and eternal (cf. *Amidah* #2), who rescues Israel from every evil (cf. *Amidah* #7), and who chose and consecrated the patriarchs (cf. *Amidah* #1 but especially the Sanctification of the Day in the *Amidah* for festivals).[39] The prayer then petitions God to "accept this sacrifice on behalf of all your people Israel and preserve and make holy your portion" (cf. *Amidah* #16), "gather together our dispersed and set free those enslaved among the gentiles" (cf. *Amidah* #10), "look upon the rejected and despised" (cf. *Amidah* #8), "make known to the gentiles that you are our God" (cf. *Amidah* #3), "afflict the oppressors and arrogant" (cf. *Amidah* #12), and "plant your people in your holy place, as Moses said" (cf. *Amidah* #14). Once again, the prayer is nationalistic, there is no confession of sin or petition for forgiveness, nor appeal to righteous behavior. Appeal is made to God's character but above all to the relationship between God and the nation: "all your people Israel." The essence of the prayer is the plea that God accept the sacrifice and fulfill promises of the covenant, which is assumed. Although Israel is God's people, the language of election is not appropriated for the contemporary nation, but rather for the patriarchs alone. It is acknowledged that God chose and sanctified the patriarchs, but the prayer asks that God sanctify Israel. Goldstein is probably correct that the prayer envisages the nation currently in the Age of Wrath prior to fulfillment of prophecies that God will again choose and sanctify his people (e.g., Isa 14:1; Ezek 37).[40]

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similarities to the *Amidah* benedictions (*Amidah* #2?, 7, 10, 14, 15, 1, 17, 11?).

[37] J. A. Goldstein, *II Maccabees* (AB; Garden City: Doubleday, 1983), 177.

[38] See Falk, *Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers*, 199–201 and the literature cited there.

[39] The Sanctification of the Day in the festival *Amidah* reads in the prayer-book "you have chosen us . . . and been pleased with us . . . and sanctified us by your commandments."

[40] See Goldstein, *II Maccabees*, 179.

On the other hand are prayers where spiritual needs are in the foreground. The festal letter attached to the beginning of 2 Maccabees – probably genuinely from Jewish leaders in Jerusalem to Jews in Egypt to urge observance of Hanukkah – includes a short prayer for the well-being of the recipients (2 Macc 1:2–6). After invoking God's covenant with the patriarchs, it asks that God strengthen them to worship him and do his will, open their heart to his law and commandments, hear their prayers and forgive them, and not forsake them in time of evil. This is effectively an abbreviated form of a cluster of petitions corresponding to the *Amidah* benedictions concerning knowledge, repentance/perfecting,[41] and forgiveness, concluding with a plea for deliverance, and prefaced with an invocation of God of the patriarchs. The order is only slightly different – *Amidah* #1, 5, 4, 6, 7 – and highlights the key matter: proper worship. In the context of the festal letter, the prayer implies that the Egyptian community has sinned by maintaining a schismatic temple at Leontopolis and is in need of repentance, which should involve demonstrating their commitment to the Jerusalem temple by observing the feast of Dedication (Hanukkah).[42] Thus, this is not an abstract prayer for spiritual assistance, but is pointed toward concrete sin. Nevertheless, the addressees are regarded as kindred Jews (τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς τοῖς κατ' Αἴγυπτον Ἰουδαίοις) belonging to the covenant made with the patriarchs.

Such prayers for spiritual needs were not confined to cases of concrete sin. As Weinfeld noted, prayers for knowledge, repentance, and forgiveness (hence corresponding to the themes of *Amidah* #4, 5, 6) became a stereotyped cluster in the Second Temple period, as attested by numerous examples including especially two non-canonical psalms,[43] several Qumran hymns,[44] a narrative prayer attributed to Levi,[45] and a collection of daily prayers found at Qumran.[46] Almost always these petitions were combined with explicit or implicit petition for deliverance (cf. *Amidah* #7.)[47] In the regularizing of such

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[41] The petition "may he give you all a heart to worship him and to do his will with a strong heart and a willing spirit" (NRSV) thematically corresponds to the petition for repentance of the *Amidah* (#5), for which the abbreviated form in the Babylonian talmud (*b. Ber.* 29a) reads "circumcise our hearts to fear you." See n. 28 above.

[42] Goldstein, *II Maccabees*, 138–9.

[43] *Psalm 155* (11QPs[a] 24:3–17 and Syriac Psalm 3); *Plea for Deliverance* (11QPs[a] 19:1–18).

[44] *Hodayot*, especially 1QH[a] 8(=16):8–20.

[45] *4QAramaic Levi*[b] (4Q213a) 1 i–ii; see Stone and Greenfield, "The Prayer of Levi." The preceding examples, as well as an early Christian catechetical prayer (*Apostolic Constitutions* 8.6.5–7) were noticed and discussed by M. Weinfeld, "The Prayers for Knowledge, Repentance and Forgiveness in the 'Eighteen Benedictions' – Qumran Parallels, Biblical Antecedents, and Basic Characteristics (Hebrew)," *Tarbiz* 48 (1979): 186–200.

[46] *Words of the Luminaries*, especially the prayers for Sunday (4Q504:4 4–14) and Thursday (4Q504 1–2.ii.7–17). Chazon, "Liturgical Document," 13 (English abstract), 104–5.

[47] Falk, *Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers*, 69–71, 77–8. Cf. Bickerman, "The Civic Prayer for Jerusalem," 172.

prayer, repentance comes to the fore not only as reparation but also for maintaining relationship with God. But repentance is not presented as a purely human action by which one gains God's favor. Rather, knowledge of Torah is a prerequisite for repentance and is sought as God's gift.[48] The petitioner also acknowledges the need for divine assistance with repentance and with keeping God's Torah.[49] Forgiveness is sought on the basis of God's mercy and his special relationship with the people, specifically the covenant, although there is relatively less emphasis on any national distinction than with the previous pattern.[50] Two examples will serve here.[51]

Plea for Deliverance (11QPs[a] 19:1–18) is an individual lament that petitions God for deliverance from some threat. The nature of the danger is unknown since both the beginning and end are lost, but it is apparently perceived as life-threatening (probably illness, see 11QPs[a] 19:15). The psalmist considers himself among the pious (הסידים) who love God's name and to whom God shows mercy (11QPs[a] 19:5–7), but he does not appeal to any righteous behavior or qualities of his own. Rather, he acknowledges his sinfulness but argues that even "those whose feet stumble" are of more value than the dead because they can praise God when shown God's mercy and righteousness (11QPs[a] 19:1–3). He throws himself on God's mercy (11QPs[a] 19:4–5), recalling that previously his life had been in jeopardy because of his sins and God had saved him (11QPs[a] 19:9–11). This remembrance gives him confidence in his present danger (11QPs[a] 19:11–13). He pleads for God to forgive his sin and also to give him spiritual assistance to avoid sin in the future: a faithful spirit, knowledge, and protection from the rule of Satan or the evil inclination (11QPs[a] 19:13–16).

The thought and language are biblical.[52] Forgiveness of sins and God's saving action are grounded solely in God's character: his goodness, mercy, righteousness, faithfulness, lovingkindness, and grace. Here, God's righteousness is interchangeable with his mercy (11QPs[a] 19:4b–5a, 11). Neither the covenant nor Israel are mentioned; although the petitioner is part of a community, the focus is predominantly individual.

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[48] Cf. the Palestinian *Amidah* from the Cairo Geniza: "Graciously favor us, our Father, with understanding from thee. . . ."

[49] See n. 41 above.

[50] E.g., *Words of the Luminaries* 4Q504 1–2.ii.7–9 (prayer for Thursday) and *Plea for Deliverance* 11QPs[a] 19:4–6.

[51] See also the discussion of *Words of the Luminaries* above, pp. 10–12.

[52] J. A. Sanders, "Non-Masoretic Psalms (4Q88=4QPs[f], 11Q5=11QPs[a], 11Q6=11QPs[b])" (with J. H. Charlesworth and H. W. L. Rietz), *The Dead Sea Scrolls. Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations 4A: Pseudepigraphic and Non-Masoretic Psalms and Prayers* (The Princeton Theological Seminary Dead Sea Scrolls Project; ed. J. H. Charlesworth and H. W. L. Rietz; with P. W. Flint et al.; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1997), 193.

Psalm 155 (11QPs[a] 24:3–17 = Syriac Psalm III) is an individual thanksgiving song thanking God for delivering the psalmist from wicked accusers. The core of the psalm (Syriac 3–14; 11QPs[a] 24:4b–13a) is the lament.[53] Thoroughly biblical language and tone pervade the psalm, and there is no hint of an exclusivistic perspective. The assumed scenario seems to be similar to that in Job: the psalmist has been struck with illness[54] which his accusers interpret as divine judgment for his sins. In his despair, the psalmist cries out for God not to abandon him before the wicked, and as the true judge to deliver him from his illness ("recompense of evil," "the evil scourge"; Syriac 7, 13; 11QPs[a] 24:6, 12) that appears as a divine judgment. He does not claim to be sinless, but appeals for God not to judge him according to his sins, "for no one living is righteous before you" (Syriac 8; 11QPs[a] 24:7). He petitions God for spiritual assistance: for instruction in Torah, for safeguarding from what is too difficult, for the forgiveness of his sins. The psalmist offers no personal qualifications to elicit God's help, but appeals only to God's reputation, his simple trust, and God's election of Israel/Jacob (Syriac 10, 17, 21; 11QPs[a] 24:9, 15).

In all of the prayers reviewed in this section, God is able and willing to answer the prayers of his people, who appeal to him on the basis of his mercy and usually also his covenant. On the surface at least, both those prayers which focus on physical and/or community needs and those which focus on spiritual needs correspond in a general way to the "covenantal nomism" described by Sanders. Nevertheless, to apply a broad theological banner over all these prayers would obscure somewhat the significantly different emphases with regard to how the people are related to God. In the first group of prayers the preoccupation is national, so that evil is centered in the "other." The trouble from which Israel needs deliverance is external, especially foreign oppressors. Harm comes because one belongs to Israel: either as punishment for sins of the nation or persecution. Israel also is the realm of God's saving action. In the second group of prayers, we are still dealing with Israel as the covenant people, but the real trouble from which they need deliverance is not external to the people but internal, individual and spiritual: community and personal sin, and in some cases, demonic threat.[55] The keeping of Torah is a spiritual problem for which divine assistance is necessary, particularly when demonic attack is in view as in *Plea for Deliverance* and the Prayer of Levi. Sinfulness is endemic and so the concern

[53] M. Noth, "Die fünf syrisch überlieferten apokryphen Psalmen," *ZAW* 7 (1930): 15.

[54] Noth, "Psalmen," 15.

[55] On the petitions for protection from demons, see D. Flusser, "Qumrân and Jewish 'Apotropaic' Prayers," *IEJ* 16 (1966): 194–205 and Stone and Greenfield, "The Prayer of Levi," 262–3.

of harm has to do with one's humanness. The realm of saving activity is more that of the individual than of the nation.

Furthermore, it must be acknowledged that these have become conventional patterns of prayer with stereotyped language, and for the most part we can know little of their significance to petitioners in a life setting. For example, in apotropaic prayers – of which *Plea for Deliverance* and Prayer of Levi are examples – the language may be formalized as incantation.[56] In drawing conclusions about soteriology from traditional prayers, then, one must distinguish between the language of the prayer and the practical appropriation of the prayer which often remains unclear.

For comparison it will be useful to consider two later expressions of the *Amidah* in the Diaspora, still well before a standardized text. Book Seven of the *Apostolic Constitutions* (33–38) contains an extended Christian adaptation of the Jewish Seven Benedictions of the *Amidah* for Sabbaths that probably originated in Jewish Greek synagogues in Syria sometime between 150–300 A.D.[57] The Seven Benedictions for the Sabbath correspond to the first and last three benedictions of the *Amidah* with a special sanctification of the Sabbath in between. Apart from the lack of the final benediction, the Greek Syrian version[58] behind the *Apos. Con.* 7.33–38 corresponds very closely in themes, phrasing, and order. God is powerful (*Apos. Con.* 7.34, cf. *Amidah* #2) and holy (*Apos. Con.* 7.35, cf. *Amidah* #3) and the people are inadequate to give God due praise (*Apos. Con.* 7.38, cf. *Amidah* #18). Yet the prayer begins with the base of approach to God: his special relationship to the people (God of our fathers) and his mercy. Both of these motifs are sounded repeatedly throughout the prayer. Israel is the assembly chosen out of the nations on earth to worship God in conjunction with the angels (*Apos. Con.* 7.35, cf. *Amidah* #3). They are the special people that God redeemed and to whom God gave the Torah and the Sabbath (*Apos. Con.* 7.36, cf. Sanctification of the Sabbath). The sole petition of the prayer is for God to fulfill promises of the prophets for national restoration: Zion, Jerusalem and the Davidic kingdom. This prayer reflects the first pattern described above: its focus is primarily national and there is no petition concerning repentance or forgiveness.

An ancient Jewish Greek version of the *Amidah* from Egypt has been recognized in a papyrus (pap. Egerton 5) dated to the end of the fourth or the

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[56] Compare the use of the Aaronic blessing as an amulet. It is possible that the purification ritual preceding the Prayer of Levi belongs to the context of the prayer. See Stone and Greenfield, "The Prayer of Levi," 249–50.

[57] D. A. Fiensy, *Prayers Alleged to Be Jewish: An Examination of the Constitutiones Apostolorum* (BJS 65; Chico: Scholars, 1985); see pp. 215–28 for his discussion of provenance.

[58] For a reconstruction of the Jewish prayer minus the Christian redaction, see Fiensy, *Prayers Alleged to Be Jewish*, 198–201. Reference is to Fiensy's translation of his proposed reconstruction.

beginning of the fifth century A.D.[59] What is extant of the prayer contains reflections of at least a dozen of the *Amidah* benedictions,[60] mixing spiritual, physical, and communal needs. Spiritual needs, however, are at the root. In addition to petitions for knowledge (line 4), perfecting (line 5),[61] and forgiveness (lines 14–19a), the request for healing is spiritualized: "of our sick soul you are the only doctor." Wickedness is "a product of our thoughts" (lines 25–26). As typical, appeal is made to both God's special relationship with the people whom he has redeemed and chosen (lines 5b–12a), and to his mercy (lines 33b–35). Although the covenant people are thus assumed, there are no explicit national elements: no reference to the patriarchs, Israel, Jerusalem, or David/Messiah.[62] Thus, this prayer aligns with the second pattern described above.

It certainly cannot be assumed that the two patterns of prayer explored here represent mutually exclusive soteriologies. Nevertheless, the different orientations are significant. The individualism of the second pattern and its focus on the problem of human sinfulness may lead more naturally – although not necessarily – to a strict bifurcation between righteous and sinners within Israel, since within the covenant individuals struggle against evil/Satan. In a heightened apocalyptic and sectarian context such as in the *Yaḥad* the primary distinction becomes the sons of Belial versus the sons of Light. This latter perspective comes to expression in the *Hodayot* from Qumran.

4. Hodayot

The basic features of the soteriology of the Qumran *Hodayot* (frequently called *Thanksgiving Hymns*) have been touched on in Markus Bockmuehl's chapter on the *Rule of the Community* from Qumran. Because of their importance to the debate and much new information to be gathered from recent scholarship,[63] it is appropriate to give separate treatment to the message of the *Hodayot* hymns on their own terms and in relationship to their function.

The *Hodayot* are a collection of songs named for a stereotypical formula frequently found in them: "I give you thanks, O Lord," or "I praise you, O

[59] P. W. van der Horst, "Neglected Greek Evidence for Early Jewish Liturgical Prayer," *JSJ* 29 (1998): 278–96. As van der Horst notes, it may in fact be parts of two separate prayers (p. 279). Quotations are from his translation (pp. 283–94).

[60] Fiensy, *Prayers Alleged to Be Jewish*, 289.

[61] It does not seem previously to have been recognized that "make perfect" (line 5) corresponds to the theme of the "repentance" benediction of the *Amidah*. See n. 41 above.

[62] van der Horst, "Neglected Greek Evidence for Early Jewish Liturgical Prayer," 292–3.

[63] E.g., Sanders's treatment of the *Hodayot* was based on the hymns in the faulty order in which they were known prior to the publication of Puech's reconstruction. Sanders, *Paul and*

Lord." The collection is not homogeneous, and since the 1960s there has been a virtual consensus that the songs are of two main types distinguished by form, style, vocabulary, and theology, although more recent research has shown that these are not strictly exclusive.[64] On the one hand are individual songs of thanksgiving in which a very distinct personality – usually identified with the Teacher of Righteousness, and hence these songs are often called Hymns of the Teacher – speaks of his distress and divine deliverance from persecution and betrayal.[65] On the other hand are hymnic songs of confession in which the "I" that speaks generically represents the collective community (sometimes as the Maskil or "Instructor") – hence these are commonly called Hymns of the Community. These latter are characterized by confession of God's acts of salvation in juxtaposition with reflection on the desperate human condition.

Different settings are probable for the two types of songs. The Hymns of the Community are more liturgical in tone and point to a cultic context in connection with the annual covenant ceremony, where confession of sin and God's faithfulness were stereotyped elements (cp. 1QS 1:18–2:4).[66] The rhetoric of these songs, then, is to express commitment to the covenant of the community in the form of humble praise to God. The Hymns of the Teacher are so specifically individualized that they carry a didactic quality when included in a collection of songs. Newsom has convincingly suggested that the rhetorical function of these songs in the collection is to discourage

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Palestinian Judaism, 239–323; E. Puech, "Quelques aspects de la restauration du Rouleau des Hymnes (1QH)," *JJS* 39 (1988): 38–55; E. Puech, "Un hymne essénien en partie retrouvé et les Béatitudes, 1QH V 12–VI 18 (=col. XIII–XIV 7) et 4QBéat," *RevQ* 13 (1988): 59–88.

[64] S. Holm-Nielsen, *Hodayot, Psalms from Qumran* (Acta Theologica Danica 2; Aarhus: Universitetsforlaget i Aarhus, 1960), 316–48; G. Morawe, *Aufbau und Abgrenzung der Loblieder von Qumrân. Studien zur gattungsgeschichtlichen Einordnung der Hodajôth* (Theologische Arbeiten 16; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1961), 107; more precisely G. Jeremias, *Der Lehrer der Gerechtigkeit* (SUNT 2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), 171; J. Becker, *Das Heil Gottes* (SUNT 3; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964), 50–6. For a summary see J. Murphy-O'Connor, "The Judean Desert," *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters* (ed. R. A. Kraft and G. W. E. Nickelsburg; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 130–32. On "hybrid" songs, see E. Schuller, "A Thanksgiving Hymn from *4QHodayot^b (4Q428 7)*," *RevQ* 16 (1995): 538–9.

[65] The debate about whether these hymns were actually composed by the Teacher is important, but not of critical concern here, since in the collection they functioned as the spiritual expression of an authoritative leader of the community. For convenience, I will speak of the Teacher as the author.

[66] More general use of these hymns (as suggested by some of the introductions restored by E. Puech (see n. 63), still would recall the solemn ceremony of entering the covenant. See H.-W. Kuhn, *Enderwartung und gegenwärtiges Heil: Untersuchungen zu den Gemeindeliedern von Qumran* (SUNT 4; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1966), 29–33; Falk, *Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers*, 100–103.

disaffection from the community by framing it as betrayal of the now deceased Teacher.[67]

There is some evidence that the two types of songs originated at different times and circulated in different collections.[68] Paleographic dates for the eight surviving manuscripts (two from Qumran Cave 1–1QH^a, 1QH^b – and six from Cave 4 – 4QH$^{a\text{-}f}$) extend throughout most of the first century B.C.[69] Only the latest – 1QH^a – is extensive. At least the core of the Hymns of the Teacher apparently go back to his lifetime around the middle of the second century B.C., whereas some of the Hymns of the Community could be even earlier. As a collection, they bear the imprint of the Qumran community in terms of theological outlook, institutions, and history.

These data need to be taken into consideration when discussing the theology of the *Hodayot*. As with other of the Qumran texts, one needs to take into account heterogeneity within a text in relation to different functions and the probability of different stages of theological development.[70] Furthermore, we should not expect in hymns such as these a theology systematically or comprehensively worked out.

4.1. God and Humans

The dominant tone in the *Hodayot* is praise of God as creator of all, and gratitude for his undeserved mercy. In contrast to God, depictions of the human condition appear remarkably pessimistic. God alone is righteous and humans are utterly frail in their dust and water mortality. Morally frail as well and without spiritual insight, all humans are sinful and incapable of comprehending God or their condition.[71] The universality of human

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[67] C. A. Newsom, "Kenneth Burke Meets the Teacher of Righteousness: Rhetorical Strategies in the Hodayot and the Serek Ha-Yahad," *Of Scribes and Scrolls: Studies on the Hebrew Bible, Intertestamental Judaism, and Christian Origins Presented to John Strugnell on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday* (College Theology Society Resources in Religion 5; ed. H. W. Attridge, J. J. Collins and T. H. Tobin; Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990), 121–31.

[68] E. Schuller, "The Cave Four Hodayot Manuscripts: A Preliminary Description," *JQR* 85 (1994): 141, 144, 148–9. 1QH^a (the latest and most complete manuscript) contains the Hymns of the Teacher (roughly columns 10–17 [=2–9]) in a block surrounded by Hymns of the Community. 4QH^c (late Hasmonean-early Herodian) may have contained only the Hymns of the Teacher. 4QH^a (late Hasmonean-early Herodian) may have contained only Hymns of the Community.

[69] Starcky, "Quatre étapes," 483 n. 8, refers to Strugnell's judgment that the oldest manuscript (4QH^b) dates around 80 B.C.; Starcky himself dates it around 100 B.C.

[70] See the appropriate cautions in S. Holm-Nielsen, *Hodayot*, 273–4.

[71] 1QH^a 7(=15):15–16, 24; 9(=1):21–23, 25–27; 22(=fragment 1):4, 8. J. P. Hyatt, "The View of Man in the Qumran 'Hodayot'," *NTS* 2 (1956): 276–84; S. Holm-Nielsen, *Hodayot*, 274–7; E. H. Merrill, *Qumran and Predestination. A Theological Study of the Thanksgiving Hymns* (STDJ 8; Leiden: Brill, 1975), 25–9; H. Lichtenberger, *Studien zum Menschenbild in Texten der Qumrangemeinde* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980), 76–87, 92–3. Unless otherwise

sinfulness is all the more accented by the self-analysis of the speaker in the hymns of the Teacher.

> What is flesh compared to this? What is a creature of clay to do great wonders? He is in iniquity from the womb, and until old age in guilt of unfaithfulness. But I know that to man does not belong righteousness nor to a son of Adam perfection of way. (1QH^a 12(=4):29–31; cf. 1QS 11:9–10)

This inclines in the direction of a doctrine of original sin, but in the *Hodayot* there is no speculation about the origin of the human sinful nature.[72] Rather, the point of such statements in hymnic contexts is to stress human nothingness before God.

Nevertheless, the *Hodayot* mark a fundamental bifurcation of humanity, between those whose ultimate destiny is salvation and those who will be destroyed in God's judgment.[73] Various expressions designate the opposing groups in this soteriological dualism, for example the good and the evil (1QH^a 6[=14]:11–12); the righteous (and the perfect of way, 1QH^a 9[=1]:36) and the wicked (1QH^a 12[=4]:38; 15[=7]:12); sons of truth and sons of wickedness/guilt (1QH^a 14[=6]:29–30); those in communion with the congregation of the sons of heaven (1QH^a 11[=3]:22) and the congregation of Belial (1QH^a 10[=2]:22); those who have knowledge and walk in God's ways and those who do not (1QH^a 7[=15]:18, 21; 12[=4]:17–18, 21, 24); the elect of God and those excluded from God's covenant (1QH^a 6[=14]:15, 21–22; cf. 7[=15]:26–8).[74]

4.2. Salvation

Salvation in these hymns means deliverance from the wicked, release from the guilt of sin and the weakness of humanity, and participation in the heavenly community (1QH^a 7[=15]:19–20; 10[=2]:31–36; 11[=3]:19–23; 19[=11]:9–14). In comparison with those destined for destruction there is room for a certain confidence – even if it is always expressed in terms of God's gracious election – because of a strong emphasis on the present realization of salvation, especially in terms of forgiveness, purification from sin, spiritual strengthening, knowledge of divine mysteries, and communion with the angelic community.[75] There is still a future expectation to salvation,

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noted, translations will be mine and references from the *Hodayot* will be that of García Martínez and Tigchelaar, *DSSSE*. The column number of the Sukenik edition (E. L. Sukenik, ed., *The Dead Sea Scrolls of the Hebrew University* [Jerusalem: Magnes, 1955]) will be provided in square brackets. Line numbers often differ, and will be different again in the official edition yet to be published (DJD).

[72] J. Licht, "The Doctrine of the Thanksgiving Scroll," *IEJ* 6 (1956): 11.

[73] 1QH^a 7(=15):17–20; 12(=4):24–27; 14(=6):29–33.

[74] See S. Holm-Nielsen, *Hodayot*, 290–93 for a more complete discussion of terms.

[75] See the references above. The hymn recovered in 4QH^a (4Q427) 7 i–ii speaks in the

however: only in the eschaton will the wicked be destroyed, a remnant be restored and purified, and the elect ultimately freed from human frailty.[76]

On the surface, salvation has to do with traditional categories: belonging to the covenant and the people God has graciously chosen. But the distinctive features of the theology of the *Hodayot* become apparent when one asks who specifically is elect. The division of humanity is not Israel versus the nations. In fact, "Israel" is not once mentioned and the nation as such never comes into view, except perhaps implicitly as a remnant in the future.[77] Rather, in *Hodayot* the contrast is with non-sectarian Jews – and apostates[78] – who are excluded from the covenant.

4.3. Covenant and Law

Any notion of covenant membership by birth is displaced by a fundamental individualism. One enters the covenant only by individual choice, and apparently can choose to abandon the covenant. Expressions of human free will are prominent. Accordingly the dualism is largely expressed in terms of ethical behavior (e.g., good, righteous, perfect of way) and passages speak of judgment on the basis of actions (1QH^a 9[=1]:9; cf. 7[=15]:20–23; 12[=4]:18–22; 14[=6]:8–9).[79] In comparison with other humans, one can acknowledge different levels of innocence and knowledge (17[=9]:15–16; 18[=10]:27–28). In consideration of human standing before God, however, the individual can take no credit and there can be no room for merit. On the contrary, the individual confesses utter dependence on God's mercy (1QH^a 7[=15]:16–26; 9[=1]:28–33; 11[=3+frg. 25]:19–22; 12[=4]:29–31, 36–7; 15[=7]:28–31; 17[=9]:14–16, 33–34; 19[=11]:8–14). Thus, as expected for hymnic material (cf. also 1QS 10–11) the stress is on God's activity, and hence predestination.[80] Here again, however, it is predestination of the

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strongest manner of exaltation to the ranks of the angels and the abolition of sickness and sin, but it is uncertain whether this is intended as rejoicing in the proleptic experience of eschatological blessings or as a prophetic hymn by an eschatological figure. E. Schuller, "A Hymn from a Cave Four *Hodayot* Manuscript: 4Q*427* 7i+ii," *JBL* 112 (1993): 605–28; J. J. Collins, "A Thrice-Told Hymn: A Response to Eileen Schuller," *JQR* 85 (1994): 151–5.

[76] 1QH^a 6(=14):15–16; 7(=15):17–20; 14(=6):7–8, 29–30; on these passages, see the discussion by Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 250, 280–81.

[77] See the interpretation of 1QH^a 14(=6):7–8 by Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 250. It is far from clear whether this passage refers to the eschatological remnant of Israel or the establishment of the Teacher's community.

[78] On the problem of whether the *Hodayot* truly address apostasy, see Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 256–7.

[79] On ethical dualism in the scrolls, see J. H. Charlesworth, "Qumran, John and the Odes of Solomon," *Critical Reflections on the Odes of Solomon. Volume 1: Literary Setting, Textual Studies, Gnosticism, the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Gospel of John* (JSPSup 22; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 201–2.

[80] Merrill, *Qumran and Predestination*; P. Garnet, *Salvation and Atonement in the Qumran*

individual. Humans are distinguished according to their "spirits,"[81] either good or evil (1QH[a] 6[=14]:11–12) and their ultimate destiny has been determined since creation (1QH[a] 7[=15]:15–22; 9[=1]:7–8, 19–20, 23–24; 11[=3]:22–23; 12[=4]:38). The dual motifs of predestination and free will coexist throughout Qumran literature in unresolved but seemingly untroubled tension (e.g., 1QH[a] 7[=15]:20–21; 14[=6]:5–10). Holm-Nielsen is probably correct that we are concerned with theoretical speculation on the one hand versus practical observation on the other.[82]

The severely restricted nature of the election is apparent above all in the observation that God's covenant comes effectively to be equated with those who follow the Teacher of Righteousness and belong to his community ("those who walk on the path of your heart have listened to me," 1QH[a] 12[=4]:24; cf. 6[=14]:21–22; 13[=5]:8–9, 23; 15[=7]:12, 19–23). To belong to God's covenant is effectively to join the *Yaḥad*. Those excluded from God's covenant are the enemies of the Teacher and the community (1QH[a] 12[=4]:7–20; 15[=7]:12). Bockmuehl cautions in the light of the larger Qumran corpus that this sort of language is not likely an ultimate rejection of the nation as replaced by the sectarian community, but rather has to do with how the community understood its representative role in the restoration of the last days.[83] Nevertheless, the critical point is that salvation is conceived as available only in connection with the Teacher and his community. Hope for the eschatological restoration of Israel[84] is not envisaged in any way other than submission to the "new covenant" of the Teacher's community (see e.g., 1QH[a] 15[=7]:12).

Salvation in the *Hodayot* involves a transfer from outside the sectarian community to inside.[85] As is natural for hymns of praise, the process of this transfer is described most prominently in terms of God's actions:

> for you have instructed them in the secret of your truth and enlightened them in your wonderful mysteries. For the sake of your glory you have purified man from sin, so that he can sanctify himself for you from all impure abominations and guilt of unfaithfulness, so that he can be united wi[th] the sons of your truth and in the lot with your holy ones . . . and so that he can take his stand in the assembly before you with the eternal host and the spirits . . . (1QH[a] 19[=11]:9–13; cf. 11[=3]:21–22; 15[=7]:29–31).

That is, God grants knowledge, God purifies from sin, God unites the individual with the holy community (earthly and heavenly, i.e., "to make them stand in your presence, forever and ever," 1QH[a] 15[=7]:31). But the

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Scrolls (WUNT 2:3; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1977), 59; Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 266–7, 292.

[81] See Licht, "The Doctrine of the Thanksgiving Scroll," 91.

[82] S. Holm-Nielsen, *Hodayot*, 279–84.

[83] Pp. 389–90.

[84] Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 250.

[85] Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 283.

human element is also essential. Individuals must repent, and dedicate themselves to observe the law according to sectarian interpretation:[86] "there is hope for those who repent of offence and abandon sin . . . to walk on the path of your heart, without injustice" (1QH^a 14[=6]:6; cf. 6[=14]:23–24; 10[=2]:9–10).

Life in the covenant requires continued commitment to observe the law, to resist sin by God's help, and to atone for sins committed (e.g., 1QH^a 4[=12]:21–24; 6[=14]:9, 17–18; 8[=16]:18–19, 23). However, Sanders overstates the significance of such passages when he argues that what distinguishes the two categories of humanity is not that the elect are saved from being "in sin" – that is, a transfer out of the sphere of human frailty – but rather that God pardons the elect from acts of sin – that is, transgressions of the covenant – and does not pardon the non-elect.[87] He is correct that there is not a totally realized eschatology and that those who are saved continue to confess their human nothingness,[88] but a number of passages in the *Hodayot* make clear that the community already experiences a significant release from the problem of human frailty through the impartation of divine knowledge to enjoy communion with the heavenly congregation (1QH^a 19[=11]:10–14; 9[=1]:31–33; 11[=3]:19–22; 14[=6]:7–8; 15[=8]:19–20). "For the sake of your glory you have purified man (אנוש) from sin . . ." (1QH^a 11[=3]:10–14) does not merely mean the pardoning of particular acts of sin but cleansing of impurity associated with being human (cf. 1QS 11:14–15). It is not possible to dismiss all such passages as concerning eschatological redemption,[89] because these are often in the context of asserting the union with the heavenly congregation that is an important part of the community's present experience.[90]

Furthermore, we may inquire as to the basis on which God pardons some and not others. From one perspective, membership in the covenant is purely by God's grace, since all human action requires God's prior action and empowering. Thus, even repentance is possible only because God enlightens the individual (4QH^b 7:1–10; 1QH^a 18[=10]:27; cf. 6[=14]:8–16, 25).[91] Although the wicked are judged for their sinful works, the elect are judged not according to their deeds but according to God's mercy (13[=5]:5–6; cf.

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[86] "Volunteers"(המתנדבים, הנדבים) is a stereotypical designator of the sectarians in the *Rule of the Community* especially. The term appears certainly only once in the *Hodayot* (frg. 47 2), but the idea of individual choice to live by the (sectarian) covenant is well attested.

[87] Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 272–84.

[88] Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 280–81.

[89] Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 279–80.

[90] See also Newsom's comments on the function of the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*. C. Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, a Critical Edition* (HSS 27; Atlanta: Scholars, 1985), 71–72.

[91] Merrill, *Qumran and Predestination*, 58.

5[=13]:22–23; 12[=4]:35–36; 15[=7]:29–31).[92] On the other hand, however – and often in the same context – are statements that God will purify individuals of sin because of their obedience, and in relation to special divine knowledge granted to them. For example,

> You will purify them to cleanse them from guilt for all their deeds are in your truth, and in your mercies you will judge them with a wealth of compassion and abundant forgiveness, and according to your mouth you teach them . . . (1QH[a] 14[=6]:8–9)
>
> Those who are in harmony with you, will stand in your presence always; those who walk on the path of your heart will be established permanently. (1QH[a] 12[=4]:21–22; trans. García Martínez and Tigchelaar; *DSSSE*, 1.161)
>
> In your goodness is abundance of forgiveness and your mercies for all the sons of your favor, for you have made them know the counsel of your truth and you have enlightened them in your wonderful mysteries. (1QH[a] 19[=11]:9–10)

Such statements do not imply the thought that one "earns" salvation by obedience.[93] Nevertheless, it is not completely true that obedience to law is merely "the *consequence* of being in the covenant and the *requirement for remaining* in the covenant" as Sanders argues.[94] This overemphasizes a disjunction between repentance, entry into the community, and obedience to law. Practically speaking, repentance involves commitment to the law of the community (1QH[a] 12[=4]:24; 6[=14]:21–22).[95] The prior enlightening is special knowledge, effectively the secret teaching of the community (e.g., 1QH[a] 19[=11]:8–10). Human righteousness – impossible without God – is, as Sanders pointed out, perfection in Torah observance, but this is specifically adherence to the precepts of the *Yaḥad*. No one is admitted to the community apart from evidence that one is elect (1QH[a] 6[=14]:21–22), and this can only be adherence to sectarian law (1QH[a] 12[=4]:24–5). Thus, although one can agree with Sanders that observance of the law cannot be said to be the means of election in a theological sense, it is the sign that one is elect. Practically speaking, observance of law (according to sectarian interpretation) is not just the consequence of election as Sanders maintains ("once in the covenant, members took upon themselves to obey its regulations").[96] Instead, taking upon themselves to obey the covenant regulations was an essential element in the process of entering the covenant; it was the requisite evidence for admittance to the community apart from which there

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[92] See Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 293.

[93] Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 293, 295–6.

[94] Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 320, cf. 296.

[95] According to the *Rule of the Community* and the *Damascus Document*, the sins which one rejects at entry include transgression of the "hidden things," that is, sectarian interpretation of Torah.

[96] Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 320.

is no salvation or atonement.[97] This point is clearest in texts of an admonitory nature like 1QS 1–4 and CD 1–8, but even on the basis of the *Hodayot* alone it is not possible to imagine the declaration of God's grace to an individual not living according to the community's laws (e.g., 1QH^a 6[=14]:8–22).

4.4. Function of the Hodayot

Along with these observations we must consider the nature of the *Hodayot*. Although confession of human sinfulness is prominent, and repentance from sin is a central topic, these hymns include no actual direct petitions for the forgiveness of sin. The closest we find are descriptions of penitence (1QH^a 6[=14]:24; 8[=16]:14–15, 18–20) and petitions to protect from sin (1QH^a 8[=16]:23). Nitzan has highlighted this point starkly in contrast to the overall prominence of penitence and petition for forgiveness in prayers of the Second Temple period, including numerous other prayers found at Qumran.[98] Her explanation that the *Hodayot* are theoretical reflections of the individual in contrast to the public prayers of the sect is no longer satisfactory, however. Several introductory formulas restored by Puech for the Hymns of the Community suggest a liturgical as well as didactic function,[99] and the hymn in 1QH^a 26 largely recovered by Schuller with the help of fragments from Cave 4 seems to assume the context of public worship.[100] Furthermore, the public prayers from Qumran that Nitzan had in mind are for the most part generally considered to be of non-sectarian origin.[101] That is, of the considerable corpus of prayers now known from Qumran, direct petitions for forgiveness are common in those prayers not likely – or at least without evidence – of origin in the *Yaḥad*, although many of these were undoubtedly used by the sect.[102] Those clearly of sectarian origin commonly contain confession of sins and the justice of God's judgment, and malediction against sinners, but generally lack direct petition for forgiveness.[103] This is most

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[97] Cf. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 275.

[98] B. Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer and Religious Poetry* (STDJ 12; trans. J. Chipman; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 333–43.

[99] See n. 66 above.

[100] Schuller, "A Hymn from a Cave Four *Hodayot* Manuscript." Alternating with descriptions of communion with angels, eschatological blessings, and God's grace to frail humans are plural imperatives to praise with liturgical directions ("proclaim and say," "they are to say").

[101] See e.g., C. A. Newsom, "'Sectually Explicit' Literature from Qumran," *The Hebrew Bible and Its Interpreters* (ed. W. Propp, B. Halpern and D. N. Freedman; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 167–87; E. G. Chazon, "Sectarian Prayer."

[102] E.g., *Words of the Luminaries* 4Q504 4:7; 1–2.ii.11; *Communal Confession* 4Q393 1–2.ii.4–5; *Plea for Deliverance* 11QPs^a 19:13–16.

[103] Note that even in the purification liturgies (4Q414; 4Q512), purification is linked with atonement from sins and the individual blesses God for forgiving and purifying sin, but there is no direct petition for forgiveness.

strikingly seen in the liturgy for the covenant ceremony described above,[104] which passes from confession of sin to blessing and cursing of the covenant members and outsiders/apostates respectively – without a petition for forgiveness and mercy. I have argued that this phenomenon is to be explained by the unique self-understanding of the sect: they are those who have repented and are thus God's elect and under God's blessing.[105] Confession of sin and submission to God's judgment have atoning value.[106] The liturgy itself functions primarily to confirm one's place in the covenant and to reinforce the boundaries between insider and outsider. It is a fundamentally sectarian liturgy.

These considerations are relevant for the present study because the sect's covenant ceremony appears to have influenced their liturgical life very broadly, and it is likely that the *Hodayot* were used in connection with the covenant ceremony and/or served to bolster commitment to the covenant. It is consistent with this that despite the emphasis on human nothingness and sinfulness in contrast with God these hymns are thanksgiving for mercy received and not direct petitions for mercy. Overall these hymns maintain a predominantly confident tone as the speaker glories in God's gracious actions toward them as the elect. They serve primarily not the need for penitence, but the need to express and reinforce one's standing in the covenant, marking the boundaries of the community as those who repent (שבי פשע, 1QH^a 6[=14]:24; 10[=2]:9; 14[=6]:6).

4.5. Summary

It is important to recognize both that the *Hodayot* serve sectarian purposes, and that they do not give an accurate picture of the overall piety of the sect. Whether repentance was really open to anyone as Sanders maintains is a purely theoretical question.[107] What defines the distinctive quality of the practice of religion glimpsed in the *Hodayot* is its sectarian context, above all that one is a member of the covenant only by individual transfer into the community of the Teacher and by submission to its authority and laws. It is meaningless in this context to make a theoretical separation between adherence to sectarian law and entrance to the community. Even if many motifs are held in common, the category of covenantal nomism is not satisfactory for the *Hodayot* to take into account the fundamental individualism of these hymns and their focus on the problem of sin endemic to human nature more than deliverance of Israel as such.

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[104] See p. 28.

[105] Falk, *Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers*, 222–5.

[106] E.g., 1QS 8:1–10; 9:4–5.

[107] Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 267.

5. Psalms of Solomon

The *Psalms of Solomon* comprise a collection of 18 non-canonical psalms currently extant in Greek and Syriac,[108] but probably originally composed in Hebrew.[109] They are the product of a Jewish community – not likely a single author – in Palestine, and probably Jerusalem because of the preponderance of focus on the city.[110] There is no evidence of Christian redaction.[111]

Two interrelated concerns dominate the content.[112] On the one hand national peril from foreign invasion is blamed on the sins of Jewish leaders, and there is longing for national restoration under a Davidic messiah. Historical allusions in psalms 2, 8, and 17 are generally agreed to refer to Pompey's invasion of Jerusalem in 63 B.C., and psalm 2:26–27 refers to Pompey's death in Egypt in 48 B.C. Consequently, these psalms – together with the lack of any likely allusion to Herod – suggest a dating around the

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[108] Greek text: A. Rahlfs, ed., *Septuaginta* (two volumes in one; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979), 2: 471–89 (convenient presentation of von Gephardt's classic critical edition). Syriac text: W. Baars, *The Old Testament in Syriac According to the Peshitta Version 4, fasc. 6: Psalms of Solomon* (1972). Translations and notes: H. E. Ryle and M. R. James, *Ψαλμοὶ Σολομῶντος: Psalms of the Pharisees, Commonly Called the Psalms of Solomon. The Text Newly Revised from All the MSS, Edited, with Introduction, English Translation, Notes, Appendix, and Indices* (Cambridge: University Press, 1891); G. B. Gray, "The Psalms of Solomon," *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English* (2 vols.; ed. R. H. Charles; Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), 2.625–52; R. B. Wright, "Psalms of Solomon," *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols.; ed. J. H. Charlesworth; Garden City: Doubleday, 1985), 2.639–70; J. Viteau and F. Martin, *Les Psaumes de Salomon: Introduction, texte Grec et traduction. Avec les principales variantes de la version Syriaque* (Documents pour l'étude de la Bible; Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1911); S. Holm-Nielsen, *Die Psalmen Salomos* (Jüdische Schriften aus Hellenistisch-Römischer Zeit 4,2; Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1977), 51–112; J. L. Trafton, *The Syriac Version of the Psalms of Solomon: A Critical Evaluation* (SBLSDS 11; Atlanta: Scholars, 1985). See the bibliography in J. H. Charlesworth, "Psalms of Solomon," *The Pseudepigrapha and Modern Research with a Supplement* (Septuagint and Cognate Studies 7; Chico: Scholars, 1981), 195–7, 303–4 and J. L. Trafton, "The *Psalms of Solomon* in Recent Research," *JSP* 12 (1994): 3–19.

[109] Most scholars agree that the Greek was translated from an original Hebrew (e.g., Viteau and Martin, *Les Psaumes de Salomon: Introduction, texte Grec et traduction. Avec les principales variantes de la version Syriaque*, 105–25), but although many believe that the Syriac was translated from the Greek, an argument that the Syriac derives primarily from the Hebrew has recently been reasserted (J. L. Trafton, *The Syriac Version of the Psalms of Solomon: A Critical Evaluation*). In any case, Trafton has shown that the Syriac preserves important readings.

[110] Viteau and Martin, *Les Psaumes de Salomon*, 92–94; Wright, "Psalms of Solomon," 641.

[111] Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, 3.1:195.

[112] These do not distinguish genres or types of psalms as attempted by G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 204, 209–10. See S. Holm-Nielsen, "Erwägungen zu dem Verhältnis zwischen den Hodajot und den Psalmen Salamos," *Bibel und Qumran: Beiträge zur Erforschung der Beziehungen zwischen Bibel- und Qumranwissenschaft* (*Festschrift* H. Bardtke; ed. S. Wagner; Berlin: Evangelische Haupt-Bibelgesellschaft, 1968), 128, and Seifrid, *Justification*, 115.

middle of the first century B.C., and a setting of harsh opposition to the Hasmonean dynasty. The other dominant concern of the psalms is with matters of personal piety, particularly conflict and contrast between "sinners" and "righteous" within Israel. It is unlikely that all of the content belongs to the same circumstances as the allusions to Pompey's invasion.[113] The collection as a whole must have been completed after 48 B.C., and Wellhausen's range of 80–40 B.C. for the psalms is useful as a general estimate.[114]

In comparison with the genres of biblical psalms the *Psalms of Solomon* evidence mixed forms, including community and individual lament, hymn, song of thanksgiving, and didactic poems.[115] The psalms contain eschatological motifs, especially concerning messianic redemption.[116] Although it is often repeated that the *Psalms of Solomon* were composed for liturgical use in the synagogue,[117] there is slender concrete support for this.[118] The psalms lack the web of indicators of liturgical use that mark numerous prayers and psalms found at Qumran,[119] and historical references are more specific than is typical of liturgy.[120] References to the "synagogues of the pious" (*Pss. Sol.* 17:16) and "the synagogues of Israel" (*Pss. Sol.* 10:7) are not evidence for the use of these psalms because there is as yet no certain evidence that there was a regular and substantial prayer liturgy in synagogues by this time. In any case, the strong anti-Hasmonean polemic signals that these psalms cannot have been for any general and public use, but must rather have functioned in the context of a specific and private group(s). Regardless of the specific format of their use, the frequently observed didactic and edifying character of these psalms[121] as well as their polemical content leave little doubt that an

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[113] See S. Holm-Nielsen, "Erwägungen zu dem Verhältnis zwischen den Hodajot und den Psalmen Salamos," 119, and J. Schüpphaus, *Die Psalmen Salomos. Ein Zeugnis Jerusalemer Theologie und Frömmigkeit in der Mitte des vorchristlichen Jahrhunderts* (ALGHJ 7; Leiden: Brill, 1977), 76–8.

[114] J. Wellhausen, *Die Pharisäer und die Sadducäer* (Greisswald: L. Bamberg, 1874), 112; cf. Viteau and Martin, *Les Psaumes de Salomon*, 38–45; Wright, "Psalms of Solomon," 641.

[115] O. Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (trans. P. R. Ackroyd; Oxford: Blackwells, 1965), 611.

[116] M. Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous. A Comparative Study of the Psalms of Solomon and Paul's Letters* (ConBNT 26; Stockholm: Almquist & Wiksell, 1995), 17–8.

[117] Holm-Nielsen, *Die Psalmen Salomos*, 59–60; Schüpphaus, *Psalmen Salomos*, 155–6; Seifrid, *Justification*, 113, 117; Winninge, *Sinners*, 18–19.

[118] Flusser, "Psalms, Hymns and Prayers," 573; Wright, "Psalms of Solomon," 646.

[119] Falk, *Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers*, 16–17. The occurrence of διάψαλμα in *Pss. Sol.* 17:29 and 18:9 may owe only to biblical literary convention.

[120] Wright, "Psalms of Solomon," 646.

[121] H. L. Jansen, *Die spätjüdische Psalmendichtung, ihr Enstehungskreis und ihr "Sitz im Leben": Eine literaturgeschichtlich-soziologische Untersuchung* (Oslo: Dybwad, 1937), 100–119; Flusser, "Psalms, Hymns and Prayers," 573.

intended function was to encourage and admonish a particular community that felt threatened within Israel.[122]

In treating these psalms, then, we must distinguish between the surface level of the language of prayer and piety directed toward God and the rhetorical function directed toward the community. The extended denouncements of enemies (e.g., *Pss. Sol.* 4), threats of punishment (e.g., *Pss. Sol.* 3:9–12; 15:6–13), and frequent parading of correct conduct (e.g., *Pss. Sol.* 3:3–8; 5:5–7) are self-consciously meant to be overheard, not by those denounced, but by the community.[123] The concern is not to persuade the "sinners" but to reinforce group boundaries and to prevent disaffection in the context of external pressure.[124]

Interpretations of the soteriology assumed in the *Psalms of Solomon* are surprisingly polarized. On the one hand some scholars find in the *Psalms of Solomon* a clear example of righteousness attained by works. Wellhausen argues that God's mercy is viewed as a reward for obedience to law.[125] Braun notes that mercy is a key term in the *Psalms of Solomon*, but argues that it is not received merely as an unmerited free gift from God. Rather, the righteous are entitled to God's mercy because of their righteousness, attained through their conduct.[126] Seifrid has recently presented a more nuanced view.[127] Because of the apocalyptic eschatology of the *Psalms of Solomon*, the motifs of God's righteousness and mercy, Israel and covenant are redefined in terms of the opposing categories pious/sinners rather than Israel/Gentiles. Consequently, individual choice and behavior are determinative for one's destiny.

On the other hand are scholars who find in the *Psalms of Solomon* a sincere piety that depends solely on God's unmerited mercy, refuting any thought of righteousness attained by works. Büchler argues that the confidence of the pious rested not in their righteous deeds, but solely in God's mercy, which was not regarded in any way as a reward.[128] Schüpphaus emphasizes the wisdom overtones of the dichotomy pious/sinner, and that in the *Psalms of Solomon* the opposition has to do with one's basic relationship

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[122] Seifrid, *Justification*, 61–2, 113–14.

[123] *Pss. Sol.* 4:1 addresses the "profaner" who is "sitting in the council of the devout," but this is rhetorical, as indicated by the immediate switch to the third person.

[124] See similarly with regard to the *Hodayot* Newsom, "Kenneth Burke Meets the Teacher of Righteousness."

[125] J. Wellhausen, *Die Pharisäer und die Sadducäer*, 118–9.

[126] H. Braun, "Vom Erbarmen Gottes über den Gerechten: Zur Theologie der Psalmen Salomos," *ZNW* (1950–1951): 1–54.

[127] Seifrid, *Justification*, 109–33.

[128] A. Büchler, *Types of Jewish Palestinian Piety from 70 B.C.E. to 70 C.E.* (New York: Ktav, 1922), 130.

to God rather than specific qualities.[129] Sanders maintains that *Psalms of Solomon* is a classic representation of the "covenantal nomism" pattern of religion that he expounds throughout his book *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*.[130] God's judgment and mercy to the sinners and righteous flow out of God's election and covenant with Israel. Winninge follows Sanders in understanding Israel in an inclusive rather than severely limited sense.[131]

On both sides, there is a tendency to reduce the message of *Psalms of Solomon* to a single voice. Braun, for example, finds a contrast between God's mercy to Israel as grace freely bestowed to the covenant nation on the basis of God's election, and mercy to the pious as earned, bestowed on those who display the prerequisite works of righteousness.[132] In the end, he finds the authentic voice in an emphasis on righteousness achieved by one's conduct; the apparently opposing perspective is illusory.

Sanders on the other hand also recognizes the two perspectives, highlighted in the contrast between statements that the pious live by the law (*Pss. Sol.* 14:1–3) and by God's mercy (*Pss. Sol.* 15:12–13). He argues, however, that these statements are not truly in conflict. The opposite of God showing mercy to the righteous would be God rewarding "the righteous *for their merits*."[133]

> The 'free grace' passages (God's mercy to Israel) have to do with the *election and preservation of Israel*. They show . . . that all Israel is elect and as such is 'saved'. The passages dealing with *God's mercy to the righteous* have to do with their *relative protection from temporal harm*. The wicked are considered to be those who have transgressed the covenant so severely that they are treated as Gentiles; that is, they have forfeited their place in the free, unmerited grace bestowed by God in electing and preserving Israel, and consequently are destroyed.[134]

In the end, he finds essentially the same pattern of religion he has found elsewhere: mercy is to all Israel on the basis of the covenant, and the emphasis on mercy to the righteous is a rejection of the idea of merit.[135]

The problem, then, is to determine what language – that about God's mercy or about religious conduct – to take more seriously. Sanders is certainly correct to find a partial answer to these two types of statements in their different contexts as pious language. Concerning God's treatment of humans, one wants to avoid any implication of caprice, and therefore one emphasizes that mercy and judgment are according to conduct. When the focus is why some receive God's mercy, "*particularly in the form of prayer*

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[129] Schüpphaus, *Psalmen Salomos*, 95.
[130] Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 387–409.
[131] Winninge, *Sinners*, 181–212.
[132] Braun, "Erbarmen," 35.
[133] Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 395 (italics his).
[134] Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 396 (italics his).
[135] Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 389, 395.

to God, one would hesitate to attribute good treatment by God to one's own merit."[136] On the other hand, Seifrid is correct to point to the polemical tone of the *Psalms of Solomon* as indication of intense conflict with other Jews over the relationship of Torah obedience and mercy to election and belonging to the covenant people.

To put it another way, modern scholars seem to divide in their interpretations of the *Psalms of Solomon* as to whether they focus on the intent of the language as prayer and expressions of piety, or whether they focus on reading the polemic between the lines. In order to move the discussion forward, it will be helpful to be more explicit about the two levels at which *Psalms of Solomon* operates: the surface level of the language of prayer and piety, and the level of the rhetorical function of the prayers to exhort and maintain boundaries. In this way, we can better take account of the genuine insights from both ends of the debate and at the same time clarify some of the misrepresentations. We will consider four constellations of language in the *Psalms of Solomon*, the first two of which predominate: God's justice and mercy, sinners and righteous, sin and atonement, covenant and law. To anticipate the ensuing discussion, and to use just two representatives of the current debate, we can say in response to Seifrid that whatever the rhetorical function of the psalms, the language itself belongs to prayer forms, and must be understood first on that level. Thus, we should be cautious about using the specific language itself against the psalmist, as it were, since much of it is conventional. In response to Sanders we can say that regardless of the language of prayer, these psalms have a group-specific rhetorical function that cannot be ignored.

5.1. God's Justice and Mercy

It is widely recognized that the language of God's righteousness in the *Psalms of Solomon* is not concerned with his saving activity, but almost exclusively associated with his judgment.[137] That is, God's judgments are "just" or "right" (δίκαιος), and thus in his judgment he displays his "righteousness" (δικαιοσύνη).[138] The verb of the δικ- root (translating the Hebrew צדק root) is used only of the community declaring God's judgments just. For example, "I shall declare you just (δικαιώσω), O God, in upright-

[136] Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 395 (italics his).

[137] Braun, "Erbarmen," 25–6; Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 407; Seifrid, *Justification*, 119.

[138] *Pss. Sol.* 2:10, 18, 32; 4:24; 5:1; 9:5; 10:5; 17:29; 18:7; cf. 8:32, 34. References to the *Psalms of Solomon* will be given according to the verse numbers of Wright's translation. Unless otherwise noted, I will cite his translation.

ness of heart; for in your judgments is your righteousness (τοῖς κρίμασίν σου ἡ δικαιοσύνη σου), O God."[139]

There is, however, a tension in the statements about God's justice. Although it is "impartial" (*Pss. Sol.* 2:18) and meted out "according to the individual and the household" (*Pss. Sol.* 9:5), there is a fundamental group distinction. Towards "sinners," God is proved right when he judges on the basis of behavior (*Pss. Sol.* 2:16; 17:8–10) leading to expulsion from the "righteous" and ultimate destruction.[140] Toward the "righteous," however, God is proved right when he responds to their sins instead with corrective discipline, leading to restoration.[141] Furthermore, God's mercy applies only to the righteous who are disciplined, and stands in stark contrast to the destruction of sinners in judgment.[142] In fact, God's discipline of the righteous is an act of his mercy, since it rescues them from the fate of the sinners (*Pss. Sol.* 16:3, 6). Statements about the discipline of Israel (*Pss. Sol.* 9:2) and God's mercy toward Israel (*Pss. Sol.* 11:1, 7–9; 17:45; 18:1–5) are found where Israel represents the covenant nation generally or the purified nation of the Messianic age.

As noted above, how scholars deal with this apparent conflict largely determines their interpretation of the soteriology in the *Psalms of Solomon*. It is critical, then, to determine the proper relative position of the motifs of God's justice and his mercy, and to understand the use of the language in the context of prayer forms. In this regard, it is important to recognize that the *Psalms of Solomon* show influence from the type of penitential supplications that came to flourish in the Second Temple period. Key examples of these were considered above (section 2). It is sufficient to note here that these prayers are at their root petitions for divine mercy and help, but under the strong influence of covenantal warnings – especially Lev 26:40–45 and Deut 30:1–5 – they dedicate a large portion of the content to confession of sin and the acceptance of God's judgment as "right." It certainly cannot be said that the *Psalms of Solomon* is a collection of this type of penitential prayers, but the influence of the language of these prayers on the *Psalms of Solomon* – whether deliberate or unconscious – is unmistakable. The same thematic network pervades the *Psalms of Solomon*, often with very similar language. Especially significant for our purposes is the language about God's justice. Despite the high frequency of this language, the *Psalms of Solomon* are not primarily concerned with a theological exposition of God's righteousness. It frequently functions as a conventional prayer motif. Rather, there is more

[139] *Pss. Sol.* 2:15; my translation; also 3:3, 5; 4:8; 8:7, 23, 26; 9:2.

[140] *Pss. Sol.* 2:15; 4:8, 24; 8:7–8; concerning Gentiles, 8:23; 17:29.

[141] *Pss. Sol.* 3:5; 10:5; 18:7.

[142] Discipline: *Pss. Sol.* 9:6–8; 10:2–4, 6–7; 16:15; cf. 7:5, 8; 8:27–28; 13:12; 14:1, 9; 16:3, 6, 15; destruction: 13:7–11; 14:9; 15:13; 17:3.

immediate concern with God's mercy in various situations of crisis, either national (war) or personal (disaster).[143] Whether or not the *Psalms of Solomon* had a particular liturgical application, they functioned to encourage a community in the midst of such crisis: ultimately things will turn out well for the pious who maintain their relationship with God. In each case, the ultimate cause of distress is perceived to be sin, either hidden sins of national leaders or unintentional sins of the righteous. Influence from penitential petitions should not be surprising. The main difference is the heightened note of confidence in the *Psalms of Solomon*, which may reflect the sapiential application of the prayer motifs.[144]

Against the backdrop of the penitential petitions, a very important and often misunderstood psalm also gains new clarity. *Psalms of Solomon* 9 is frequently looked to as the clearest example of God's mercy earned by conduct, and Sanders on the other hand specifically expounds this psalm as exemplifying the "covenantal nomism" pattern of religion.

> For none that do unrighteous deeds shall be concealed from your knowledge, and the righteousness of your pious ones is before you, Lord. Where will one hide from your knowledge, O God? [4] Our works are in the choosing and power of our souls, to do right and wrong in the works of our hands, and in your righteousness you oversee human beings. [5] The one who does what is right saves up life for himself with the Lord, and the one who does what is wrong causes his own life to be destroyed; for the Lord's righteous judgments are according to the individual and the household. (*Pss. Sol.* 9:3–5; translation mine)

At first glance, verse 3 could imply that one's "righteousness" – which in the context is Torah observance – is what determines one's standing before God, and verses 4–5 could seem like an explicit statement that God's favor is earned by one's conduct. Ryle and James read verses 4–5 as a statement that "every man makes his own fate": life for those who do righteousness and death for those who sin. Verses 6–7 would then be a concession: the sinner may be able to attain pardon if he repents, although the righteous does not need to repent.[145] Seifrid finds in these verses clear evidence that "the destiny of the individual can be said to be contingent upon behavior."[146]

Leaving aside for the moment the question as to whether or not such confidence in one's behavior may be read between the lines, it is necessary first to render to the author of this psalm the same courtesy Seifrid pleads for Paul – one must seek to understand the aims of the author in his use of language before passing judgment.[147] On the basis of formal considerations

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[143] Some scholars have expressed a similar point by noting that the *Psalms of Solomon* are about theodicy; e.g., Schüpphaus, *Psalmen Salomos*, 30.

[144] I.e., they are not penitential prayers themselves.

[145] Ryle and James, *Psalms of Solomon*, 89.

[146] Seifrid, *Justification*, 120.

[147] *Ibid.*, 3.

I argue that the interpretations cited above run completely counter to the psalmist's intent in his use of language. The psalm reflects the formal pattern of the penitential supplications discussed earlier: confession of sin (vv. 1–2a); the justice of God's judgment (vv. 2b–7); recollection of God's mercies (vv. 9–10); petition for mercy (vv. 8, 11). Thus, in this psalm, the community as Israel appeals for mercy from God in the face of threat from Gentiles. It begins by recounting the causes for the exile: the people neglected the Lord who had redeemed them, and God was just in his judgment. Next, the community confesses that the sin was inexcusable and that the people bear full responsibility, for "our works (are) in the choosing and power of our souls." Nevertheless, coming to God repentant as a sinner is only to be in a position able to receive God's mercy: "whose sins will he forgive except those who have sinned? . . . your goodness is upon those that sin, when they repent." Finally, the community appeals for help on the basis of God's kindness, mercy, loving choice of Israel, and his covenant with Abraham.

Verse 3 is not, then, about the mechanics of God's evaluation of persons, but the universal fact that no one can hide from God: God sees the evil deeds done in secret as well as the righteous deeds of the pious. Verses 4–5 reflect familiar motifs (e.g., Deuteronomy 30:11–20): the law is do-able and a source of life, and God punishes sin. In the context, these verses express the idea of culpability – the people are without excuse before God. That this is the point is made clear in verse 6c, "so that for all these things the shame is on us." This language of shame is merely that common in the penitential supplications.[148] These verses, therefore, are not a statement of confidence in one's righteous deeds. The one who finds God's favor is the one who confesses his sin (v. 6b). This presupposes that all have sinned, including the righteous: "and whose sins will he forgive except those who have sinned? You bless the righteous, and do not accuse them for what they sinned. And your goodness is upon those that sin, when they repent" (v. 7). One cannot appeal to one's own righteousness, but only to God's kindness, mercy, loving choice of Israel, and his covenant with Abraham (vv. 8–11). The righteous are not those who by their effort have avoided sin, but those who confess their sins and seek God's mercy.

Another psalm further illustrates the point. *Pss. Sol.* 3 contrasts the way of life of the righteous and the sinner, and their different destinies. As Schüpphaus noted, the psalm is best understood primarily as instruction intended to encourage a religious community (the diction alternates between the singular – the individual representing the community – and the plural) wearied by trouble: to see the trouble as God's discipline, to adopt a proper

[148] E.g., "righteousness is on your side, O Lord, but open shame, as at this day, falls on us . . . because we have sinned against you" (Dan 9:7–8); cf. Ezra 9:6, 15; Pr Azar 1:10.

response, and to praise anew God's righteousness.[149] The righteous and the sinner are distinguished by their differing response to God's judgment. "The righteous does not lightly esteem discipline from the Lord" (v. 4). When the righteous experiences misfortune,[150] understood as God's discipline for his sins, he declares God's judgments right (v. 5). What defines the sinner is that he does not recognize such misfortune as God's discipline, but curses his life (v. 9). The pious behavior described of the righteous – he is vigilant to remove unintentional sins from his household and to atone for sins of ignorance (v. 7–8) – is not raised as a basis for the mercy he receives from God. Rather, in the context of the psalm it is an expression of his proper response to God's discipline, in contrast to the sinner who continues to sin (v. 10). That is, the psalmist does not mention pious behavior to indicate that the righteous has earned God's favor. The confidence of the righteous is not in their piety, but comes "from God their savior" (v. 6).

In the light of the preceding, to cite language from the *Psalms of Solomon* about pious behavior as expressions of meriting God's mercy is to misunderstand the context and contradict the psalmist's use of his language. At this level, then, Sanders does more justice to the psalms than many of his critics. On the other hand, for Sanders to claim that these psalms are perfect examples of "covenantal nomism" is to ignore the rhetorical function of these psalms to reinforce sharp group boundaries. In this regard, Seifrid and others are correct to perceive that behind the language are sharp group distinctions. We will take up this matter in the following section on sinners and righteous, but for now a brief consideration of a further psalm can illustrate the situation well.

In *Pss. Sol.* 16, the psalmist expresses his gratitude to God for drawing him back from dangerous sin (seemingly sexual) by means of discipline. Were it not for this, he would have perished along with the sinners. The psalm undercuts any notion that the righteous can appeal to qualities of their own to commend them as the "righteous" in contrast to the "sinners." The psalmist portrays himself as helpless in the grips of sin ("when my soul slumbered . . . I sank into sleep, far from God," v. 1), rescued only by God ("thus my soul was drawn away from the Lord God of Israel, unless the Lord had come to my aid with his everlasting mercy," v. 3). Indeed, he was "near the gates of Hades with the sinner" (v. 2) and had no ability to perceive or resist his sin on his own (vv. 3–4). Nevertheless, although the psalm excludes the possibility of appealing to anything other than God's mercy, Seifrid is correct to note that God acted graciously toward the psalmist because he

[149] Schüpphaus, *Psalmen Salomos*, 31.

[150] "Stumble" (προσέκοψεν) in 3:5 and 3:9 cannot mean moral failure, but the sense is similar to Prov 24:16–18. Ryle and James, *Psalms of Solomon*, 33; Schüpphaus, *Psalmen Salomos*, 32; Winninge, *Sinners*, 39.

belonged to the righteous (and not the sinners): God "did not count me with the sinners for (my) destruction" (v. 5).[151] We need to inquire as to the basis of this group distinction. Is Sanders correct to equate the righteous in *Psalms of Solomon* with Israel of the covenant and the sinners as those who through flagrant transgression have exempted themselves from the covenant?

5.2. Sinners and Righteous

Throughout the *Psalms of Solomon*, God's treatment of humans falls strictly along a fundamental distinction between the "sinners" and the "righteous." God separates between the righteous and the sinner (*Pss. Sol.* 2:34), sending retribution on the sinners for their oppression of the righteous and bestowing mercy on the righteous (*Pss. Sol.* 2:34–35). God's judgment on the sinners is for their destruction, but on the righteous it is discipline for their restoration.[152] This opposition between the "sinners" and the "righteous" dominates the content of the psalms. Does it reflect a soteriology based on behavior, that is, a salvation earned by righteous deeds? The identification of the sinners and righteous, and more importantly on what basis they are distinguished, is therefore critical to our task.

Throughout the *Psalms of Solomon* there are three main groups in view. The psalmist and the community represented by him identify themselves with (1) the "righteous" and the "pious" in Israel. Israel is threatened by (2) foreign oppressors, who are called "sinners" (ἁμαρτωλοί) and "enemies."[153] These are "arrogant," hate Israel without cause, and ruthlessly attack Jerusalem, trampling and defiling the sanctuary.[154] An underlying theme throughout the *Psalms of Solomon* is the concern to encourage the community in the midst of this suffering, which is blamed on (3) Jewish "sinners" (ἁμαρτωλοί).[155] These must be sinning in secret, and exceeding the Gentiles in their sins: like them, they are "arrogant," "sinners," and have defiled the sanctuary.[156] Thus, the gentile attackers are God's instrument of judgment on Israel for her sins, but although this will mean destruction for the Jewish sinners, it will be purifying discipline for the righteous.

It is seldom disputed that the gentile attackers predominantly in view are the Romans led by Pompey.[157] This provides a general context in which to

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[151] Seifrid, *Justification*, 131 n. 249.

[152] See p. 40 above.

[153] "Lawless nation" (*Pss. Sol.* 17:24); the gentile leader is called "one alien to our race," (17:7); "heart alien to God," (17:13); sinners: 1:1; 2:1; 17:23 (the latter passage may also include Jewish sinners); enemies: 17:13, 45.

[154] *Pss. Sol.* 1:1; 2:1–2, 19, 22–30; 4:24; 7:1–2; 17:13, 22.

[155] *Pss. Sol.* 1:1-8; 2:3-21; 4:1-25; 17:5-9, 15.

[156] *Pss. Sol.* 1:5–8; 2:3, 9, 12; 4:5; 8:9, 12–13, 22; 17:6, 15.

[157] E.g., Ryle and James, *Psalms of Solomon*, xl–xliv.

understand the conflict between the "righteous" and Jewish "sinners." Since Wellhausen, this has commonly been understood as the conflict between Pharisees and Sadducees,[158] especially since allusion to Hyrcanus and Aristobulus can be found in *Pss. Sol.* 8. On the other hand, the specific evidence for identifying the *Psalms of Solomon* with the Pharisees is equivocal,[159] and comparable arguments can be made in favor of other Jewish groups.[160] Furthermore, there is no evidence to indicate that the opponents are specifically Sadducees. The polemic against the Jewish "sinners" is stereotypical, and where the language becomes more specific, opposition is to the Hasmonean rulers rather than the Sadducees.[161] Especially telling is that disdain is expressed equally for Hyrcanus and Aristobulus. There is no evidence, then, that the distinction between righteous and sinners is along clear lines of religious parties, and in the end this is unlikely.[162] According to *Pss. Sol.* 4, separation between the righteous and the sinners is not yet effected but is hoped for.[163] It is not certain that the "council of the devout" in this psalm is the Jerusalem Sanhedrin, but the important observation for our purposes is that like the tares among the wheat, the two groups may not readily be distinguished from the outside.

Nevertheless, there is still a strong group distinction. This becomes apparent when one considers that there are other Jews lurking in the shadows apart from the righteous and the sinners. A distinction is made between the "sinners" who are the primary object of scorn and a generic class of "sinners" who are victims of the hypocritical severity of the former (*Pss. Sol.* 4:1–3, 8). Similarly, although the righteous are part of ideal Israel, the blurring is seldom complete. In the present, the righteous seem to stand apart as a group. Only in the Messianic age do the two merge so that Israel and the righteous are coterminous.[164] The question of the identity of Israel is important and will

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[158] Wellhausen, *Pharisäer*, 112.

[159] J. O'Dell, "The Religious Background of the Psalms of Solomon," *RevQ* 3 (1961): 241–57; R. B. Wright, "The Psalms of Solomon, the Pharisees and the Essenes," *1972 Proceedings: International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies and the Society of Biblical Literature Pseudepigrapha Seminar* (SBLSCS 2; ed. R. A. Kraft; Missoula: Society of Biblical Literature, 1972), 136–54.

[160] Qumran, or Essenes in general: A. Dupont-Sommer, *The Essene Writings from Qumran* (trans. G. Vermes; Oxford: Blackwell, 1961), 296, 337; Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction*, 613; R. R. Hann, "The Community of the Pious: The Social Setting of the Psalms of Solomon," *Studies in Religion/Sciences religieuses* 17 (1988): 169–89. *Hasidim* (broadly defined): O'Dell, "The Religious Background of the Psalms of Solomon"; Wright, "The Psalms of Solomon, the Pharisees and the Essenes"; Wright, "Psalms of Solomon," 642. Impossible to define to one specific group: J. H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha and Modern Research*, 195.

[161] J. L. Trafton, "Solomon, Psalms of," *ABD* 6.116.

[162] Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 403–14.

[163] Schüpphaus, *Psalmen Salomos*, 33.

[164] See pp. 50–51 below.

be taken up below, but it is crucial to recognize that this ambivalence in the use of terms is because of the rhetorical function of these psalms: they serve a religious community that regarded itself as the righteous – oppressed and thus the "poor" – and they demonize opponents as a group as "sinners." In the face of opposition they encourage strict adherence to Torah and reinforce group boundaries. There is little concern to identify the place of other Jews.

On what basis do the psalms themselves distinguish between the two groups? The distinction is primarily drawn on the basis of contrasting stance toward God. "The righteous" (οἱ δίκαιοι, probably = הצדיקים) and "the pious" (οἱ ὅσιοι, probably = חסידים)[165] are "those who fear God" and "those who love God."[166] They praise and give thanks to God readily[167] and are humble (*Pss. Sol.* 5:12). When in need they remember God, call upon him, and hope in him.[168] The Jewish sinners, on the other hand, are "godless" (ἀσεβής, *Pss. Sol.* 13:5), they do not fear God, listen to him, or remember him (*Pss. Sol.* 2:8; 4:21; 14:7), but they anger God (*Pss. Sol.* 4:21) and are arrogant (*Pss. Sol.* 1:5–6; 17:6).

It is not the absence of sinning that defines the righteous. The psalmist readily confesses that they sin, using some of the same terminology as for the sinners.[169] Nevertheless, the language applied to the righteous is only that of failure and lapse (ἁμαρτίαι παραπώμα). They are never called "sinners" (ἁμαρτωλοί) or accused of being unrighteous or lawless.[170] Rather, their sins are unintentional and out of ignorance, and when they sin they willingly submit to God's discipline, atone for their sins, and are vigilant to root out sins from their household.[171] They know and confess that God's judgments

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[165] "Righteous": *Pss. Sol.* 2:34, 35; 3:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11; 4:8; 9:7; 10:3; 13:6, 7, 8, 9, 11; 14:9; 15:3, 6, 7; 16:15; 17:32. "Pious": *Pss. Sol.* 2:36; 3:8; 4:1, 8; 8:34; 9:3; 10:6; 12:4, 6; 13:10, 12; 14:3, 10; 15:3, 7; 17:16.

[166] Fear: *Pss. Sol.* 2:33; 3:12; 4:23; 5:18; 6:5; 12:4; 13:12; 15:13; love: Sol. 4:25; 6:6; 10:3; 14:1.

[167] *Pss. Sol.* 5:1; 6:4; 10:6; 15:2; 16:5.

[168] *Pss. Sol.* 2:36; 3:3; 5:5, 8; 6:1, 6; 7:7; 8:31; 9:10; 15:2; 17:3.

[169] *Pss. Sol.* 3:5; 9:7; 16:11. Of the righteous: ἁμαρτίαι (9:7; 10:1; 16:7; 17:5), παραπτώματα (13:10). Of the sinners: ἁμαρτίαι (1:7; 2:7; 4:3; 8:8, 13; 14:6; 15:11; 16:7, 8; 17:20), παραπτώματα (13:5).

[170] For "sinners" see n. 155 above. Also: the "unrighteous" (ἀδικοι 15:4), the "lawless" (παράνομοι 4:19; 12:1, 3, 4; 14:6; cf. 16:8; ἀνόμοι 17:18), the "wicked" (πονηρός, 12:1, 2; 16:7), "slanderers" (ψιθύποι, 12:4), the "profaner" (βέβηλε, 4:1), the "godless" (ἀσεβής, 13:5[the common emendation to x is unsupported in the manuscripts, unnecessary, and unlikely; see Wright, "Psalms of Solomon" 663, n. 13c]). Only the sinners are accused of ἀδικία (2:12, 4:24; 9:4, 5), ἀνομίαι (1:8; 2:3, 12; 15:8, 10), παρανομία (4:1, 12; 8:9; 17:20).

[171] *Pss. Sol.* 3:4, 6–8; 6:5; 7:3, 9; 10:2; 13:7; 14:1; 16:15; 18:4. With regard to 3:6–8, Wright notes that "the devout eliminate all possible sins: repeated sins (vs. 6), accidental sins (vs. 7), and unknown sins (vs. 8)." Wright, "Psalms of Solomon," 655.

are just.[172] The "sinners" sin habitually (*Pss. Sol.* 14:6) and do not recognize God's discipline but curse and sin all the more (*Pss. Sol.* 3:9–10).

It is undeniable that there is a behavior component to the contrast between the two groups. The designations "righteous" and "pious" imply behavior – doing what is right – and this is made explicit in several passages. "The one who does righteousness stores up life for himself with the Lord" and is contrasted with "the one who does unrighteousness" (*Pss. Sol.* 9:5; translation mine). The pious are "those who walk in the righteousness of his commands, in the law, which he commanded us for our life; the devout live in it forever" (*Pss. Sol.* 14:2–3; translation mine). Do these passages indicate that the standing of righteous is gained by one's behavior? With regard to *Pss. Sol.* 9:3–7,[173] I have already argued that such a reading runs counter to the psalmist's intent in using such language in the context of a prayer form. Similarly, with regard to *Pss. Sol.* 14:2–3, δικαιοσύνη προσταγμάτων is not "the state of holiness produced by the observance of the commandments."[174] Rather, "in the righteousness of his commandments" (ἐν δικαιοσύνη προσταγμάτων) is parallel "in the law, which he commanded us for our life" (ἐν νόμῳ ᾧ ἐντείλατο ἡμῖν εἰς ζωὴν ἡ-μῶν). Thus, the phrase seems to be functionally equivalent to living according to God's righteous commandments. That is, "righteousness" pertains to the commandments, rather than being a qualification attained by the individual on the basis of Torah observance. We could paraphrase that the devout are those "who walk in the righteousness – that is the law – that he has commanded as the way of life for us." The passage as a whole is a loose paraphrase of Ps 1:2–3: those who base their lives on God's law will flourish and be secure (image of tree), as opposed to sinners who will perish.

Furthermore, throughout the *Psalms of Solomon* the righteous display confidence in the face of their sin and God's discipline, but it is not expressed as confidence in their behavior. Rather, the righteous appeal to God's mercy on the basis of the election of Israel and God's covenant with their forefathers (*Pss. Sol.* 9:8–11; 10:4). Although sinners are said to be rewarded/judged according to their deeds/sins,[175] there is no comparable statement concerning the righteous. God's treatment of the righteous according to his mercy stands in contrast to God repaying the sinners according to their works. For example,

> the Lord's mercy is upon those who fear him with judgment, to separate between the righteous and the sinner, to pay back sinners forever *according to their works* and to

[172] *Pss. Sol.* 5:1; see also the references in n. 138.

[173] See pp. 41–43.

[174] Viteau and Martin, *Les Psaumes de Salomon*, 325; similarly Ryle and James, *Psalms of Solomon*, 111.

[175] *Pss. Sol.* 2:15–18, 34–36; 17:8–10.

> show mercy to the righteous . . . for the Lord is good to those who steadfastly call upon him, to do to his devout *according to his mercy* (*Pss. Sol.* 2:33–36; translation and emphasis mine).

It must also be recalled that according to *Pss. Sol.* 16, God showed mercy to the devout person when he was helpless in sin and when his behavior was leading him to the fate of the sinners.[176] The psalmist confesses his inability to add anything to his case before God.

> For you are good and merciful, the shelter of the poor. When I cry out to you, do not ignore me. For no one takes plunder away from a strong man, so who is going to take (anything) from all that you have done, unless you give (it)? For an individual and his fate (are) on the scales before you; he cannot add any increase contrary to your judgment, O God. (*Pss. Sol.* 5:2–4)

In fact, the *Psalms of Solomon* show the unreliability of religious conduct as grounds for righteousness in parodies on their opponents. Indeed, the sinners "sit in the council of the pious" (κάθησαι ἐν συνεδρίῳ ὁσίων, *Pss. Sol.* 4:1),[177] they quote the law and do works – which in the context are presumably works of Torah – in order to impress people, and the psalmist gives the impression that they are generally successful (*Pss. Sol.* 4:7–8). Yet God is not impressed by appearances (*Pss. Sol.* 2:18) and the psalmist pronounces the judgment that they are hypocrites and that their works are all deceit.

While this polemic should caution us against finding expressions of confidence in works of Torah in the surface language of the psalms, it does betray an anxiety on the part of the psalmist to distinguish his community from their opponents. A sense of frustration emerges in several psalms that the sinners seem to share the same public image and authority as the righteous. This is particularly apparent in the wish that God "expose" the sinners and separate them from the righteous (*Pss. Sol.* 2:17–18; 4:6–8). Although the former might appear righteous (*Pss. Sol.* 1:2–3; 8:6) the psalmist insists that they must be sinning "secretly" (*Pss. Sol.* 1:7; 4:5; 8:9) and accuses them of a stereotypical list of generic sins.[178] That is, the distinction between the two groups apparently is not on the basis of observable flagrant transgression of Torah. How could it be said with Sanders, then, that the righteous are essentially coterminous with Israel, and that they include – besides the especially scrupulous – all who fear and love

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[176] See pp. 43–44 above.

[177] It is a group in view throughout this psalm; the individual "profaner," etc., functions as a representative of the group. Schüpphaus, *Psalmen Salomos*, 33.

[178] The three cardinal sins of which they are accused are sexual sins (*Pss. Sol.* 2:11, 13; 4:5; 8:9–10), defilement of the sanctuary (1:8; 2:3; 8:12, 22), and illegal wealth (8:11; cf. 1:6; 4:9–13, 20, 22); cf. the three "nets of Belial" in CD 4:14ff. Other traditional sins include: arrogance (1:5–6; 17:6), intemperance (4:3), lust (4:4), lying (4:4; 12:1), deceit (4:8, 10, 11; 12:1), covetousness (4:9).

God, excluding only those who exclude themselves by "insolently and heinously" transgressing God's will?[179]

The investigation so far suggests that there is no convincing evidence that the *Psalms of Solomon* intend to communicate confidence in one's righteous deeds before God, or that the various actions of the righteous towards God are "pious qualities which provide the presupposition for the bestowal of God's mercy."[180] The matter is played out at the deeper level of the rhetorical function of the psalms to reinforce community boundaries. The distinction between righteous and sinners must be considered further below under the heading law and covenant, after a brief consideration of sin and atonement.

5.3. Sin and Atonement

The sins of the righteous are described as unintentional (e.g., 3:8); intentional sins are associated with the sinners who are judged. Even the potentially mortal sins of the righteous in *Pss. Sol.* 16 are possibly to be regarded as unintentional – the righteous man needs to be wakened. Do the *Psalms of Solomon* envisage that only unintentional sins can be forgiven, then? This may be the case, but caution is in order. The psalms serve to encourage a pious community in trouble blamed on sinners. A complete catalogue of sin would not be appropriate.[181]

Given the emphasis on righteousness and the righteous versus sin and sinners throughout the *Psalms of Solomon*, it might at first seem surprising that forgiveness of sins is explicitly mentioned only once, "and whose sins will he forgive except those who have sinned?" (*Pss. Sol.* 9:7). It is also alluded to in 9:6, "He will cleanse from sins the soul in confessing, in restoring," and 13:10, "he will wipe away their mistakes with discipline." On the whole, however, forgiveness of sin in the *Psalms of Solomon* is subsumed under the exercise of God's righteousness: God disciplines the righteous when they sin. The righteous atone for their sins by submitting to God's discipline (*Pss. Sol.* 7:9; 10:1; 13:10) and repenting ("fasting and humbling his soul," *Pss. Sol.* 3:8; "confessing," 9:6). The lack of reference to sacrifice as atoning is curious in light of the psalmist's high regard for the temple and concern for the purity of its cult, but it probably is due to the function of the psalms rather than to a rejection of sacrifice as atonement.[182] On the one hand, the Jewish "sinners" also made sacrifices (since they are accused of defiling them, *Pss. Sol.* 1:8; 2:3–5; 8:12); what distinguished the "righteous" was their humble submission to God. More importantly, on the other hand,

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[179] Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 389, 405.

[180] W. L. Lane, "Paul's Legacy from Pharisaism: Light from the Psalms of Solomon," *Concordia Journal* 8 (1982): 133.

[181] Seifrid, *Justification*, 123.

[182] Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 398. Cf. Büchler, *Piety*, 170–74.

it probably highlights the influence of penitential prayer based on covenantal warnings. For example, Lev 26:40–45 and Deut 30:1–5, which seem to have served as important theological bases for the penitential prayers that flourished during the Second Temple period, prescribe the route to restoration after punishment for breaking the covenant: sacrifice is not mentioned, but rather repentance and humbling oneself. The community represented by *Psalms of Solomon* interpreted the woes of Israel in light of the covenantal warnings and believed that they as a community were responding to the covenant prescription for restoration.

5.4. Covenant and Law

Now we can return to consideration of the self-perception of the righteous in *Psalms of Solomon*. Although covenant is rarely explicitly mentioned,[183] God's covenant with Israel is unmistakably an underlying presupposition of this community's self-perception. The theodicy of *Psalms of Solomon* assumes a covenant theology: the hardship experienced by the people at the hands of foreigners is from God as in the covenantal warnings of the Bible (Lev 26; Deut 28) and it is intended to turn the people back to God. The righteous are those who, when they become conscious of sin, diligently follow the prescription in Lev 26:40–45 and Deut 30:1–5 for restoring the covenant: they humble themselves under God's discipline and repent. Sinners on the other hand are those who spurn God's covenant discipline and arrogantly neglect repentance. That is, God responds to human behavior on the basis of the covenant.

However, it is not covenant Israel but the psalmist's community that is of primary concern, in keeping with the rhetorical function of the psalms. Furthermore, Israel is not coterminous with the devout in *Psalms of Solomon*. The devout are in Israel, but Israel also contains sinners who will be judged by the standards of the covenant and excluded from the eschatological blessings. In psalm 8, for example, although the psalmist blames Pompey's attack on Jews who were deliberately sinning in secret, and distinguishes from these "the devout of God," the main contrast is between Israel and the Gentiles. Only in the messianic future envisioned in *Pss. Sol.* 17–18 is Israel simply coterminous with the pious. The wish "may God cleanse Israel for the day of mercy in blessing, for the appointed day when his Messiah will reign" (*Pss. Sol.* 18:5) implies that up to the messianic age Israel includes sinners who must be purged (cf. *Pss. Sol.* 17:15–18). In the end, then, the language is not used consistently. From one perspective, their Jewish enemies may be regarded as non-Israel, but from another perspective, they are still Israel in

[183] *Pss. Sol.* 9:8–11; 10:4; 17:15; cf. 11:7; 17:4–5, 23; Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah*, 210.