

THE EMERGENCE OF APOCALYPTICISM IN
ANCIENT ISRAEL/JUDAISM AND THE
RETHINKING OF THE DEFINITION OF
APOCALYPSE IN *SEMEIA* 14 AND
SEMEIA 36: A HISTORIOGRAPHIC
ANALYSIS

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Abstract

The emergence of apocalypticism continues to be a debate among scholars. The definition of apocalypse as a genre by *Semeia* 14 and *Semeia* 36 seems to continue to influence scholars in reconstructing the origin of apocalypticism. Using historiography as a method, the study sought to rethink the definition of apocalypse produced by *Semeia* 14 and *Semeia* 36 and primarily, to unveil at what point in ancient Israel apocalypticism/apocalyptic (worldview) emerged. Consequently, the study showed that *Semeia* 14 and *Semeia* 36 cannot be used to identify all apocalypses because “content”, “form”, and “function” will always be presented in light of the authors and (or) their audience’s circumstances—though the messages might remain the same over time. As such, the study showed that the central and constant feature of apocalypticism is: *The promise, by YHWH, of an imminent deliverance of the people of God from their enemies—be it terrestrial or cosmic*. It also showed that apocalypticism emerged gradually in Israel’s history, and for the first time in their history, it is represented in a comprehensive manner in the book of Daniel (mediated through dreams and visions) which was written in the late sixth century BCE.

Keywords: apocalypse, apocalypticism, *Semeia*, Prophetic literature

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INTRODUCTION

The canonical books of Daniel and Revelation are labeled as apocalypses.¹ These books are so revered that one of the fastest growing denominations in the twenty-first century, namely, Seventh-day Adventists, has found their roots (Dan 8:14; 9:24–27; Rev 10), their identity (Rev 12:17), subsequently their mission (Rev 14:6–12) and ultimately their destiny (Rev 21; 22) within the pages of these inspired books. As such, their authenticity and historicity are equally important not just for Seventh-day Adventists but for all who hold these books as θεόπνευστος (God-breathed).

The 1970s mark the beginning of comprehensive discussions on the topic of apocalypse as a genre; notwithstanding, the sub-genres such as, “historical apocalypse,” “apocalyptic eschatology,” and “proto apocalypse.” The committee which began these discussions was called, “Apocalypse Group of the Society of Biblical Literature’s Genre Project” which was chaired by John J. Collins—consequently it proposed a definition for the genre of apocalypse² that was later published in *Semeia* 14.³

About a year after the committee became passive, a colloquium was held at Upsala University in August 1979. At this meeting, papers were presented, and critiques were done on the proposal(s)

¹ Frederick J. Murphy, *Apocalypticism in the Bible and Its World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012) 4–5; Larry R. Helyer, “Apocalypticism,” in *The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*, ed. Joel B. Green and Lee M. McDonald (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 252–63 (252).

² The distinguishable mark of apocalypse as a genre centered on: the revelatory aspects, mediation of an otherworldly beings (usually an angel), eschatology, and dualism. John J. Collins, *Daniel*, FOTL 20 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984) 3–4; John J. Collins, *Seers, Sybils and Sages in Hellenistic Roman Judaism*, JSJSup 54 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 27, 8; Helyer, “Apocalypticism,” 256–60.

³ John J. Collins, ed., *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre*, *Semeia* 14 (1979). *Semeia* is the name of the journal and the number 14 is the volume number. *Semeia* is the name of a journal published by the Society of Biblical Literature before 2002. Since 2002, it has been replaced with *Semeia Studies*.

unearthed by the Apocalypse's committee and subsequently published in *Semeia* 36.⁴

The debate over apocalypse⁵ and apocalypticism/apocalyptic⁶ continues to be of interest to modern-day scholars. Apocalyptic is the adjective,⁷ Apocalypticism is the noun (both constitute the worldview of particular thinking), and apocalypse is the genre.⁸

Harry Helyer, in regards to apocalypticism, writing in 2013, states: "Debate still continues concerning its origin, social location, and significance for the NT."⁹ The origin of apocalypticism is no

⁴ Adela Y. Collins, ed., *Early Christian Apocalypticism: Genre and Social Setting*, *Semeia* 36 (1986).

⁵ John J. Collins, *Daniel*, 2–3.

⁶ See Helyer, "Apocalypticism," 252–53; Larry R. Helyer, *Exploring Jewish Literature of the Second Temple Period* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 1.

⁷ It sometime used as an adjective to refer to the genre. However, here it refers only to a particular worldview. See Michael A. Knibb, "Prophecy and the Emergence of the Jewish Apocalypses," in *Israel's Prophetic Tradition: Essays in Honour of Peter R. Ackroyd*, ed. R. J. Coggins, Anthony Phillips, and Michael A. Knibb (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 155–80 (150).

⁸ Murphy adds other features to "apocalyptic" including "worldview" for the purpose of his study. Murphy, *Apocalypticism in the Bible and Its World*, 5; Paul Hanson notes that apocalypse is the genre, apocalyptic eschatology is the "religious perspective," and apocalypticism is the "religio-social movement." Paul D. Hanson, "Introduction," in *Visionaries and Their Apocalypses*, ed. Paul D. Hanson, *Issues in Religion and Theology* 2 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 1–15; Klaus Koch defines apocalyptic as a defined speculation about the future of the world and human. Klaus Koch, "What Is Apocalyptic?" in Hanson, *Visionaries and Their Apocalypses*, 18; however, in this study both apocalyptic and apocalypticism denote "worldview."

⁹ Helyer, "Apocalypticism", 252; Christopher Rowland states, "There can be no disputing the fact that the prophetic oracles concerning the future had a central role to play in the formation of the various Jewish eschatologies which existed during the period of the Second Temple. The contribution of prophecy to the idea of apocalyptic, therefore, was very extensive and cannot be denied. Although there are many differences between prophecy and apocalyptic, not least the total view of history in apocalyptic, it cannot be established that apocalyptic had abandoned, or was in the process of abandoning, the conviction that the divine promises would be fulfilled in history. Of all the common elements in prophecy and apocalyptic, it is the shared conviction that knowledge of God comes through inspira-

easy task to identify. Hence, John Collins commenting on the volume of work done on the origin of apocalypticism remarks,

Much study has been devoted to this issue in the intervening years, but the lacuna has not been definitively filled. Instead, expanding research on apocalyptic literature has shown that the issue is even more complex than had been thought and that any theory of “the origins of apocalyptic” necessarily involves some over-simplification and confusion.¹⁰

This difficulty is shown in the various historical and literary directions scholars have pointed to. Some have pointed to the OT prophecy as the origin.¹¹ Christopher Rowland sees connections in Isa 24–27 which he says, “cannot be denied.”¹² Nevertheless, similarities for Rowland do not indicate origin. He argues that the book of Daniel lacks the future dimension which is evident in Isa 24–27 and the book of Joel. Also, “the total view of history” and “the extensive legends about the seer” are evident in the book of Daniel but lacking in Joel and Isa 24–27.¹³ On this basis, he posits that even though the Prophetic literature contributes to the development of later Jewish theology, “on which the writers of the apocalypses inevitably drew,” these are not reasons to postulate the origin of the movement of apocalypticism.¹⁴ John Collins admits the similarities between these two bodies of literature but argues that apocalypse goes beyond the Prophetic literature.¹⁵

tion which is the most important contribution of the former to the latter.” Christopher Rowland, *The Open Heaven* (London: SPCK, 1982), 245.

¹⁰ John J. Collins, *Seers, Sybils and Sages in Hellenistic Roman Judaism*, 39.

¹¹ See Helyer, “Apocalypticism”, 255; Michael E. Stone claims that OT material that have common features with that of apocalypses (except Daniel) should be labeled as “proto-apocalyptic.” Michael E. Stone, “Enoch and Apocalyptic Origins,” in Hanson, *Visionaries and Their Apocalypses*, 99.

¹² Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 196.

¹³ Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 197.

¹⁴ Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 198.

¹⁵ John J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls, The Literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: Routledge, 1997), 6.

Others have pointed to the Wisdom tradition of the OT,¹⁶ but still, it has not convinced the majority.¹⁷ Some went beyond the Prophetic and Wisdom literature to the ancient past to a creation legend known as the *Enuma elish*. The combat element in this myth is said to feature in apocalypticism.¹⁸ However, others have cited the exile as the starting point (Persian Apocalypse);¹⁹ and still, others have come later to the Maccabean period and postulated that apocalypticism came out of the crisis which the Jews faced during this

¹⁶ Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 2:308. Von Rad notes, "Once it is realised, however, that knowledge is thus the nerve-centre of apocalyptic literature, knowledge based on a universal Jahwism, surprisingly divorced from saving history, it should not be difficult to determine the real matrix from which apocalyptic literature originates. This is wisdom, in which ... exactly the same characteristics appear." Gerhard Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 2:306.

¹⁷ See Walter Schmithals, *The Apocalyptic Movement: Introduction and Interpretation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975), 112–13.

¹⁸ Richard F. Clifford, "The Roots of Apocalypticism in Near Eastern Myth," in *The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity*, vol. 1 of *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, ed. ed. John J. Collins (New York: Continuum, 1999), 3–127 (7).

¹⁹ Some postulate that the Iranian religion, particularly, is the form that is adopted by Zarathustra, a Greek Priest in the sixth century BCE. When the mythological sources come together, an apocalyptic picture is portrayed in which good spirit and evil spirit (*Ahura Mazda* and *Angra Mainyu*) clashed together. The evil spirit prevailed against the good. Nevertheless, the arrival of Zarathustra began the inauguration of a good world. However, the world continued to struggle to reach a total cleansing which will be realized in the distant future by a redeemer sent by Ahura Mazda—the end of the world will also be achieved. As good as this portrait looks, the sources are from the third century BCE written by Plutarch and Theopompus. Also, Schmithals has rejected this picture as the origin of apocalyptic(ism). He notes that apocalyptic comprehension of existence is considerably different from that of Zarathustra. Schmithals, *The Apocalyptic Movement*, 116.

period.²⁰ Last but not least, Walter Schmithals agrees with Rudolf Otto by claiming that apocalyptic “has its roots within itself.”²¹

The difficulty to find the emergence of apocalypticism in ancient Israel stems from the approach which scholars have taken. The greater part of the debate is over the definition of the genre of apocalyptic literature. These debates have led John Collins to write: “One of the problems that has beset the quest for the ‘origin of apocalyptic’ is that the apocalypses are not simply uniform but contain diverse subgenres and motifs that may be traced to different sources.”²² On the enigma of the genre, Adela Y. Collins, in regards to finding a definition of the genre of apocalypse, purports that the difficulty is to identify the community of these texts by using the Prophetic literature and at the same time showing how they are different from it.²³

From these arguments, it can be deduced that it is difficult to have one line of thought in the same form and content in more than one literature written by more than one author, in more than one geographical *topos*, influenced by different circumstances in more than one historical era. As such, it becomes difficult to identify the emergence of apocalypticism by defining first apocalypse (genre) in such a way that all apocalypses fit the given definition. In effect, the research seeks to rethink the definition of apocalypse given by *Semeia* 14 and *Semeia* 36; and primarily, to answer this

²⁰ Hanson purports that the apocalyptic worldview came to be expressed in times of crisis. Hanson, “Introduction,” 1; Hong P. Ha, “The Emergence of Proto-Apocalyptic World Views in the Neo-Babylonian Period: An Analysis of Selected Passages from Ezekiel and Isaiah 40–55” (PhD diss., Drew University, 2009), 292; Helyer, *Exploring Jewish Literature of the Second Temple Period*.

²¹ Schmithals, *The Apocalyptic Movement*, 150.

²² Helyer, *Exploring Jewish Literature of the Second Temple Period*, 40.

²³ Adela Y. Collins, “Introduction: Early Christian Apocalypticism,” *Semeia* 36 (1986): 5; this challenge seems to be based partly on the assumption that apocalypse emerged in the third century BCE. See Helyer, “Apocalypticism,” 254.

question: At what point in ancient Israel did apocalypticism/apocalyptic (worldview) emerged?

HISTORIOGRAPHY: THE WAY FORWARD

This research acknowledges the importance of methodology, more so, a methodology that is able to investigate and evaluate the literature and circumstances that undergird this quest—insofar as to allow a meticulous evaluation in order to unearth presumably the best conclusion that is based on the literature available. As such, historiography will be the vehicle through which an investigation is carried out. John Van Seters, on the historiography of ancient Israel, notes: “History writing is part of the literary tradition and plays a significant role in the corporate tradition of the people.”²⁴ John H. Walton observes that historiography should be comprehended on the “literary conventions common to the author and his audience.”²⁵ Israel’s historiography is more centered on how Israel’s God is operating within the fabric of events and not so much on what exactly took place in every detail.²⁶

The concept of “history” traveled through time with various shades of meaning. *Herodotus*, in his work on the Persian war,

²⁴ John Van Seters, *In Search of History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 5.

²⁵ John H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 227.

²⁶ Walton recounts a list of historiographical writing: (1) *epic history*—centered on the artistic recalling of past events; (2) *didactic history*—centered on lessons to be comprehended which is taken from an interpretation of collected events placed together in a sequence; (3) *legitimation history*—centered on a superior person in which events and their outcomes are used to justify claims being made about the person; (4) *theological history*—centered on deities’ role in a events regarding the their expressions of attributes; (5) *foundational history*—centered on origins of things, world, people, etc.; (6) *polemic history*—centered on the need for people to reexamine a worldview or belief; (7) *journalism history*—centered on eyewitnesses accounts and events not outcomes; (8) *academic history*—centered on the past from a critical vantage point that bases its evaluation on the conventions of the academy. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, 231.

refers to it as ἱστορίας.²⁷ As a noun, it designates “inquiries,” “investigation,” or “researches.”²⁸ It was adopted into Latin as *historia* meaning, “story,” or “narrative” of past events.²⁹

However, the use of historiography in this research is hinged on, what is known through texts, and can be known through synthesis rather than what actually happened in the past.³⁰ This classification is chosen based on the idea that the question the research is asking regarding apocalypticism is not an ancient question but a modern one. The research, therefore, presupposes that the biblical and non-biblical texts do not seem to have asked such a question; neither do they set out to give such an answer.

Therefore, the research will proceed this way: It (1) will present the definition of apocalypse in *Semeia* 14 and *Semeia* 36, and identify workable key features of apocalypticism; (2) it will seek to reconstruct the emergence of apocalypticism by surveying the earliest tenets of what might be identified as apocalyptic features and make a case for the emergence of apocalypticism in ancient Israel; after which, (3) it will rethink the definition of apocalypse found in *Semeia* 14 and *Semeia* 36—showing how difficult it is to construct a definition that fits all apocalypse and thus become problematic as a (the) basis in reconstructing the emergence of apocalypticism, and finally (4) a conclusion will summarize the findings.

DEFINITION OF APOCALYPSE AND KEY FEATURES OF APOCALYPTICISM

The term genre used in literature is used to designate a particular type of composition that is distinguishable at the literary level. John Collins defines it this way, “a group of texts marked by dis-

²⁷ Herodotus, *Herodotus*, trans. A. D. Godley, 4 vols., LCL 117 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981–82), 2.

²⁸ Robert E. Frykenberg, *History and Belief* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 22.

²⁹ Frykenberg, *History and Belief*, 23.

³⁰ Frykenberg, *History and Belief*, 5.

tinctive recurring characteristics which constitute a recognizable and coherent type of writing.”³¹ Therefore, in simple terms, whatever is used to define apocalypse as a genre should be able to distinguish it from other literary works.

Apocalypse as a Genre

The term Ἀποκάλυψις means “unveiling” or “revealing”.³² However, the body of literature designated as apocalypses was not so identified categorically by the ancient authors or the communities that produced them—even though John began his book with the word, Ἀποκάλυψις.³³ Nevertheless, it was the “publication of the Ethiopic text of 1 Enoch in 1821 by Richard Laurence”,³⁴ and subsequently the works of Friedrich Lucke, a German scholar, who recognized 1 Enoch and other Jewish writings as essential to the understanding of the book of Revelation. This realization began the process of distinguishing this body of material as a genre.

In recent scholarship, it is purported that apocalypse ought to be defined as a “reaction to persecution”; but this idea is not true of all apocalypses. Consequently, this idea has emerged from the reading of Revelation and Daniel. However, there are apocalypses that are not concerned with persecution. John Collins correctly remarks that the book of “The Watchers” in the book of 1 Enoch was written before Antiochus’s persecution and does not contain any idea of persecution or interest for that matter. On the contrary, 4 Ezra and 3 Baruch which were written after Jerusalem’s fall do

³¹ John J. Collins, “The Genre Apocalypse Reconsidered,” *ZAC* 20.1 (2016): 24, doi:10.1515/zac-2016-0001.

³² Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 2nd ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2009), 53–54; this idea is taken up again under “Rethinking of *Semeia* 14 and *Semeia* 36” section below.

³³ Stefanovic notes that it is the title of the book (“the revelation of Jesus Christ”), Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 56.

³⁴ John J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 2; John J. Collins, *Daniel*, 2–3.

show a reaction to persecution.³⁵ Therefore, a definition that is able to fit all apocalypse is problematic.

The “Apocalypse Group of the Society of Biblical Literature’s Genre Project” converged from 1975 to 1978 in which a comprehensive investigation was summoned for a definition of what constitutes apocalypse. Papers were presented and subsequently, the results have been published in *Semeia* 14.³⁶ Topics contained in *Semeia* 14 are “Jewish apocalypses”, “Early Christian apocalypses”, “Gnostic apocalypses”, “Latin apocalypses,” and “Rabbinical apocalypses”. Interestingly, considerable attention was not given to OT passages containing apocalyptic features.

Therefore, on the basis of the discussions and presentations, a definition of apocalypse was hatched:

*“Apocalypse” is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.*³⁷

The genre has two parts: (1) form—it is a revealing of something to a human being from a being of another world; and (2) content—it uncovers salvation that is in the future in light of another world different from the human’s world.

This definition has been adopted by many scholars. Carolyn Osiek, having done a comprehensive study on the genre of apocalypse on the book *The Shepherd of Hermas*, concludes that *Semeia* 14’s definition fits well with the genre of *Hermas*.³⁸ David Aune

³⁵ John J. Collins, *Daniel*, 22.

³⁶ See John J. Collins, ed., *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre*.

³⁷ John J. Collins, “Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre,” *Semeia* 14 (1979): 9, emphasis original.

³⁸ Carolyn Osiek, “The Genre and Function of the Shepherd of Hermas,” *Semeia* 36 (1986): 118.

says that this definition is “probably the most complete.”³⁹ However, David Hellholm has given a comprehensive study on the genre of apocalypse using Text-linguistic analysis. In his study, he concludes that the definition by *Semeia* 14 is indeed comprehensive and usable but lacks function. As such, he states, “I would be willing to accept the definition quoted above [*Semeia* 14] provided the following addition on the same level of abstraction: ‘intended for a group in crisis with the purpose of exhortation and/or consolation by means of divine authority’.”⁴⁰ This addition has been rejected by Aune;⁴¹ and has been dismissed by John Collins, the main person behind the *Semeia* 14’s definition. He states, “while a complete study of a genre must consult function and social setting, neither of these factors can determine the definition.”⁴² His reasoning is hinged on the uncertainty of the circumstances under which an ancient text was written down. In addition, he states, “the only firm basis which can be found is the identification of recurring elements which are explicitly present in the texts.”⁴³

Nevertheless, John Collins has accepted an addition to the *Semeia* 14 provided by *Semeia* 36. *Semeia* 36 is “intended to continue”⁴⁴ *Semeia* 14 on what constitutes an apocalypse or genre of apocalypse. The addition to *Semeia* 14’s definition is as follows, “intended to interpret present, earthly circumstances in light of a supernatural world and of the future, and to influence both the understanding and the

³⁹ David Aune, “The Apocalypse of John and the Problem of Genre,” *Semeia* 36 (1986): 68.

⁴⁰ David Hellholm, “The Problem of Apocalyptic Genre and the Apocalypse of John,” *Semeia* 36 (1986): 27, emphasis original. He quotes scholars such as Sanders, Hartman, Olsson and Gunkel to show that he is in harmony with these scholars. See Collins, “Early Christian Apocalypticism,” 27. Hellholm believes that the definition should be constructed using all three categories, function, form and content. Hellholm, “The Problem of Apocalyptic Genre and the Apocalypse of John”.

⁴¹ Aune, “The Apocalypse of John and the Problem of Genre” 91.

⁴² John J. Collins, “Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre,” 1.

⁴³ John J. Collins, “Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre,” 2.

⁴⁴ See Adela Y. Collins, “Introduction: Early Christian Apocalypticism,” 1.

behavior of the audience by means of divine authority."⁴⁵ John Collins's response to this definition, "I would now accept the amendment to the definition of the genre offered in *Semeia* 36."⁴⁶

However, the amendment is in the area of function; and as such, it dismisses John Collins's rejection of the function cited above. Though the concept "function" in a definition of a genre for a body of literature written in different time periods is difficult to ascertain, the "function" of a body of literature helps to uncover its purpose and its message.

Therefore, the combined definition by *Semeia* 14 and *Semeia* 36 which take into consideration form, content, and function is as follows:

"Apocalypse" is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world⁴⁷ intended to interpret present, earthly circumstances in light of a supernatural world and of the future, and to influence both the understanding and the behavior of the audience by means of divine authority.⁴⁸

Apocalypticism as a Worldview

Just as how scholars have found a working definition for apocalypses, it is possible to agree on a particular set of characteristics

⁴⁵ Adela Y. Collins, "Introduction: Early Christian Apocalypticism," 7, emphasis original.

⁴⁶ John J. Collins, *Seers, Sybils and Sages in Hellenistic Roman Judaism*, 33; *Semeia* 36 was chaired by the wife of John Collins, Adela Collins.

⁴⁷ John J. Collins, "Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre," 9, emphasis original.

⁴⁸ Adela Y. Collins, "Introduction: Early Christian Apocalypticism," 7, emphasis original. She has combined the definition in *Semeia* 14 and the addition in *Semeia* 36; see Adela Y. Collins, *Cosmology and Eschatology in Jewish and Christian Apocalypticism*, JSJSup 50 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 7.

sufficient enough to fit apocalypticism in Israel/Judaism; hence, Apocalypticism is said to be:

The acute expectation of the fulfillment of divine promises; cosmic catastrophe; a relationship between the time of the end and preceding human and cosmic history; angelology and demonology; salvation beyond catastrophe; salvation proceeding from God; a future savior figure with royal characteristics; a future state characterized by the catchword 'glory'.⁴⁹

Such a definition is very wordy in its presentation even though it has some workable features. John Collins, under the topic, "What is Apocalypticism?" says that it is a worldview in which the present life is impacted by a dualistic force, whether on the one hand, for good or, on the other hand, for evil; though the future is already been determined, one can still choose which side he or she is on because the reward of the righteous and the wicked is at the final judgment when every person will be judged, even the dead.⁵⁰ In a more concise way, Anders Hultgard posits, "by apocalypticism I here understand primarily ideas of the end and renewal of the world set in a framework of cosmic history, often transmitted in a revelatory context and particularly actualized in crisis situations."⁵¹

D. Brent Sandy gives six features under which to account for apocalypticism: (1) the present wickedness is without hope and as such needs to be totally destroyed; (2) the authors' audiences are desperate for God to intervene and do away with this evil; (3) a call for those remaining to keep steadfast in the faith; (4) God will show up sometime in the future and make an end to all this evil;

⁴⁹ Stone paraphrased this definition from Koch, *Rediscovery*, 19–30; see Michael E. Stone, "Apocalyptic Literature" in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*, vol. 2 of *The Literature of the Jewish People in the Period of the Second Temple and the Talmud*, CRINT (Assen: Van Gorcum; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 393.

⁵⁰ Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 7.

⁵¹ See Anders Hultgard, "Persian Apocalypticism," in Collins, *The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity*, 40; Anders Hultgard, "Persian Apocalypticism," *Seneia* 14 (1979).

(5) The message is garbed in visions and dreams and mystery; (6) the focus is on the future and how God will eradicate this evil and ensure there be no more evil forever.⁵²

Therefore, based on the features/definitions given above, we can identify key features of apocalypticism as *a worldview that depicts an evil force and a good force within the present world that impacts humans whether for evil or good (dualism); yet evil has become incurable in this present age (no earthly solution), thus God is expected to intervene soon and brings an end to this evil by destroying this present world along with all evil humans (transcended and the eschaton) and create a world for those who would have chosen to remain faithful despite the evil they had faced (reward and punishment).*

SORTING OUT THE ORIGIN

Having accessed a definition of apocalypse and key features of apocalypticism, the research will now focus its attention on what might be the earliest stage in the history of ancient Israel/ Judaism, apocalypticism became present. As such, texts of, Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Vedic Indians, and OT, and their dates of compositions will be examined in order for a conclusion to be reached. However, the so-called “Persian Apocalypse”, Jewish apocalypses (the third century BCE and beyond), and Christian apocalypses of the first century CE and beyond will not be considered in the discussion because (1) space will not be able to accommodate them; and (2) they are too late.⁵³

⁵² See D. B. Sandy, *Plowshares and Pruning Hooks* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 107. However, it is noted that the eschatological end is different in some apocalypses; “for some, the future was essentially a restoration of the Davidic Dynasty in restored kingdom of Israel.” However, for others this present age was too wicked and as such cannot be reverse here on earth without a total destruction of this earth. See Helyer, *Exploring Jewish Literature of the Second Temple Period*, 119.

⁵³ The Persian’s apocalypse will not be considered in this study because they were written down about 200 BCE to 200 CE. The Pahlavic literature carries the “most

Apocalypticism in the Ancient Near East?

The ANE cultural and religious environment is often scanned for direct and indirect nexus in the aid of the development of Apocalypticism. Nevertheless, Richard Clifford notes that apocalyptic literature is not found in the literature of the third to the mid-first millennium BCE—a conclusion reached by many scholars.⁵⁴

Mesopotamia. The idea that is cited as the probable genesis for apocalypticism is what scholars classified as the “combat myth” genre. This classification identifies works that deal with war, particularly with gods against gods, demons against gods, and kingdoms against kingdoms. Clifford states,

One of the most long-lived genres in ancient literature was the so-called combat myth. It lasted as a live genre into the period of full-blown apocalyptic works and had an enormous influence on them. In fact, the genre provided ancient poets with a conceptual framework for reflecting on divine power and human kingship, and on the rise and fall of nations.⁵⁵

The gods in Mesopotamia were to keep the order of the cosmos. By keeping the order of the cosmos, the earth would not fall back into a disordered state.⁵⁶ As such, the constant fights against demons and other gods were necessary to ensure a safe haven for its inhabitants. *Murduk* in *Enuma elish* myth fights *Tiamat*, a goddess, and wins. After his victory, the corpse of *Tiamat* is used to bring order to the cosmos.⁵⁷ Aside from the gods, the kings were

important” apocalypses in Persian corpus. See John Collins for a more detail discussion: John Collins, “Persian Apocalypses,” *Semeia* 14 (1979): 207–14; Anders Hultgard, “Persian Apocalypticism”; Schmithals, *The Apocalyptic Movement*.

⁵⁴ Clifford, “The Roots of Apocalypticism in Near Eastern Myth,” 3.

⁵⁵ Clifford, “The Roots of Apocalypticism in Near Eastern Myth,” 7.

⁵⁶ Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, 97.

⁵⁷ The *Enuma elish* tells how chaos was defeated, how the ordered world was inaugurated, and how the king was enthroned to keep the order for his subjects. See Norman Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos, and the World to Come* (New Haven: Yale University

also a part of this combat. Winning battles against other nations were demonstrations of keeping order.⁵⁸

Combat myth is not the only link that is cited but the way they buried their dead. The Babylonians' dead were never viewed as being totally extinct because they were buried with utensils, food, and drinks. The descendants of the deceased would constantly furnish the grave with supplies for their dead.⁵⁹ As such, the afterlife was not a developed ideology in the Babylonians' minds, but they had some thoughts leading to that reality. In light of this, Clifford sees some connections with apocalypticism on the ideas of "cosmic threat and new creation."⁶⁰ Nevertheless, there is no resurrection of the dead, future salvation, future/ ultimate judgment by a divine, and future new earth and new heaven⁶¹ present in the theology of the Babylonians.

Egypt. The concern in Egypt during the aforementioned period was essentially the same as in Old Babylon in regards to order. Order was embraced by everyone—from the gods down to the common people. The farmers knew that disasters such as floods could have a negative impact on their crops—with lasting effects on the order of their own lives. With the river Nile being the main source of water, it was important that the god of the Nile keeps the order of the Nile.⁶²

The state of Egypt with its increasing number of immigrants forced the administration to inculcate rules so that the order could be maintained. They developed what is called, *ma'at*. At the onset

Press, 2001), 48–56, doi:10.2307/j.ctt1npzfk.

⁵⁸ See Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos, and the World to Come*, 45; building a temple was another way to keep the order of the cosmos.

⁵⁹ See Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos, and the World to Come*, 45.

⁶⁰ The Baal cycle is an example of the combat myths. See Clifford, "The Roots of Apocalypticism in Near Eastern Myth," 19–20.

⁶¹ Though the body of the goddess *Tiamat* was split into two which form the heaven and the earth, this was not the promise of a new earth and new heaven.

⁶² See Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos, and the World to Come*, 3–4.

of this word, it meant “base,” on which the legal system was developed. However, it later took on a deeper meaning, “justice.” *Ma’at* was believed to have been present from the creation of the cosmos. As such, *Amun-Ra* announces, “I have put *ma’at* in its place.”⁶³

Counter to *ma’at* is the Egyptian word, *isfet*. This can be translated as “falsehood” or injustice.” However, it can also mean, “whatever ran counter to the rightness of the world, and it was a force to be reckoned with.”⁶⁴ As such, victories over Egyptians’ enemies were certain to combat *isfet*; because they did not believe that “primordial chaos” had ceased after the creation of order.⁶⁵

The afterlife in Egyptian thinking and practice was far more advanced than Babylon’s. The dead Pharaohs were believed to have taken residence in the sky and lived among the “circumpolar stars.”⁶⁶ These stars are always visible. Nevertheless, there is no promised future salvation for humans, no future judgment, or even the resurrection of those who were not royals. Jan Assmann, an Egyptologist, notes,

If we ask for the origins of this division of the hereafter into a realm of the dead and an Elysium, we meet with concepts and structures that belong to political theology: the institution of pharaonic kingship. During the Old Kingdom, the Elysian world was reserved for the king; he alone was able, after death, to fly up to heaven and to join his father, the sun god, and the other gods, whereas ordinary mortals, as we read in the texts, had to “hide” in the earth. Resurrection was an exclusively royal privilege and the distantiating of the royal hereafter from the destiny of non-royal beings.⁶⁷

⁶³ Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos, and the World to Come*, 14.

⁶⁴ Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos, and the World to Come*, 21.

⁶⁵ Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos, and the World to Come*, 21.

⁶⁶ These are stars that are always visible at nights. See Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos, and the World to Come* for an elaborate discussion on Egyptian in light of chaos, order and cosmos; also, see John H. Walton, *Ancient Israelite Literature in Its Cultural Context*, 2nd ed., Library of Biblical Interpretation (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990).

⁶⁷ Jan Assmann, “Resurrection in Ancient Egypt,” in *Resurrection: Theological and Sci-*

Apocalypticism in Vedic Indians Texts?

In the second half of the third millennium BCE, on the expanse of open steppes in southern Russia, a group of people existed known as “Proto-Indo-Iranian tribes.” However, about 2000 BCE, the group was split into two, forming “the Indo-Aryans” and the “Iranians.” The Indo-Aryans moved through Central Asia and Afghanistan, across the Hindu Kush, and down into the Hindu Valley where they came to settle because the land was fertilized and the water in the valley was easy to handle like that of Egypt’s Nile.⁶⁸

It was in this valley that the Aryans continued to develop their beliefs about the world. The *Rig Veda*⁶⁹ is the only source of information that is available to modern readers. This work is religious in nature; hence, the term *Veda* means, “knowledge of the supernatural powers that are active in the world, and of the way to influence them.”⁷⁰ This knowledge was believed by the Aryans to have been there forever.⁷¹

Some of their beliefs that concern this research are, (1) the ordered world is unchanged; (2) the cosmos was created by their most exalted god, *Indra*;⁷² (3) the order of the cosmos; (4) demons

entific Assessments, ed. Ted Peters, Robert J. Russell, and Michael Welker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 124–35, 126.

⁶⁸ Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos, and the World to Come*, 58.

⁶⁹ It records prayers and praise to the gods. The earliest extant copy dated to the twelfth century AD, though it is believed that a thousand hymns of the *Rig Veda* was written down about 600 BCE in Sanskrit (ancient Indo-European language). Nevertheless, the theology and worldview of the Indo-Aryans were much older than 600 BCE. See Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos, and the World to Come*, 59.

⁷⁰ Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos, and the World to Come*, 59.

⁷¹ Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos, and the World to Come*, 59.

⁷² He is called Aindri or Inda in Buddhism; in ancient Persian mythology he was minor deity. He is symbolized by a bull and owl which indicate power and might. He is the supreme deity of the Aryans. He is also a storm god who is susceptible to *soma* (a drink used in ancient India). See Charles R. Coulter and Patricia Turner,

continue to force changes in the cosmos; and as such, the god *Indra* needs to fight to keep the order; (5) demons change into animals and bring sickness on people; (6) each human's spirit, after death, goes to heaven where they received a new body again;⁷³ (7) life in heaven is freed from pain, suffering, and illness; (8) there is no end to the world.⁷⁴

Though the matters of "dualism, "heaven," and the "afterlife" are evident, it is not clear whether these ideas were adopted into the Aryan tribe early or late (after the sixth century BCE)—given that the only source we have is the *Rig Veda* with the earliest extant copy dated to the twelfth century AD.⁷⁵ On the other hand, there is no indication of the promise of imminent deliverance by a divine, and punishment as the climax—two key features in apocalypticism.

Apocalypse and Apocalypticism in OT Prophetic Books?

The debate continues to wage over whether apocalyptic and apocalypse can be identified with the so-called Prophetic books in the OT. It is noted that there are similarities and differences between the two corpora. John Collins notes that OT prophetic eschatology is concerned with the life of the nation, while apocalyptic eschatology is concerned with the "heavenly sphere;" that is, it goes beyond mortality.⁷⁶ This distinction is evident but does not mean that apocalypse and apocalypticism are not contained in prophetic literature. Nevertheless, John Collins, following Hanson, notes that there is continuity with OT prophetic literature and apocalyptic literature.⁷⁷ Hanson notes that the transfer of apoca-

Encyclopedia of Ancient Deities (2000; repr., London: Routledge, 2012), s.v. "Indra."

⁷³ This happens only if the body was not torn apart by animals.

⁷⁴ See Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos, and the World to Come*, 60, 76.

⁷⁵ Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos, and the World to Come*, 59.

⁷⁶ John J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 84, 97.

⁷⁷ John J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 73.

lypse from prophecy is based on the political situation faced by the Jews:

The results of studying the origin of apocalyptic eschatology as an unbroken development out of classical prophecy are very different from the results reached by the various modifications of the traditional approach: (1) the sources of apocalyptic eschatology lie solidly within the prophetic tradition of Israel; (2) the period of origin is in the sixth to the fifth centuries; (3) the essential nature of apocalyptic is found in the abandonment of the prophetic task of translating the vision of the divine council into historical terms; (4) the historical and sociological matrix of apocalyptic is found in an inner-community struggle in the period of the Second Temple between visionary and hierocratic elements.⁷⁸

He notes that apocalyptic came out of a community that struggled with what he identifies later in his work as “realism” and “visionary.”⁷⁹ He argues that realism has to do with the very day-to-day life of the Israelites (carrying out their daily religious rites etc.) and the visionary has to do with the future of the world. As such, these two elements constituted a battle in which apocalyptic emerged.⁸⁰ However, Hanson is speculating as to how apocalyptic comes about rather than allowing the texts to speak for themselves. Rowland observes connections with OT prophets and apocalyptic: “The contribution of prophecy to the idea of apocalyptic, therefore, was very extensive and cannot be denied.”⁸¹

Hong Pyo Ha cites OT prophecy as a connection to proto-apocalyptic⁸² but argues that proto-apocalyptic came out of “alienation” and crises. His basis is that the Judeans were taken from their homeland to neo-Babylonian exile and as a result, they felt alienated and abandoned. In response to this psychological feeling, they

⁷⁸ Paul D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 29.

⁷⁹ Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 20.

⁸⁰ Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 30.

⁸¹ Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 246.

⁸² Proto-apocalyptic denotes the initial development of apocalyptic.

sought to give an alternative possibility to what they were facing. This kind of experience, Ha called Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome.⁸³ Donald Riddle also advances psychological arguments but instead says that apocalyptic borne out of “emotional seizure” results in “fear, sorrow, and pain.”⁸⁴ However, these views are advanced based on a lack of belief in the supernatural.

Therefore, the majority of scholars do not deny connections with OT prophecy. Rather, most of them *deny* that genuine apocalypses and apocalypticism can be found in the fifth and sixth centuries BCE. Nevertheless, the study moves to apply the definition of apocalypse found in *Semeia* 14 and *Semeia* 36, and [the] key features of apocalypticism etched above, to selected OT pericopes along with the dates for each composition.

Ezekiel 40–48. The book of Ezekiel is etched for the most part in the first-person narrative. God’s word is the springboard on which Ezekiel carries out the mission of his God. The book is said to have been written no later than 571 BCE, somewhere around April 26 according to Ezek 29:17. This date, according to Walther Zimmerli, is based on the active ministry of Ezekiel, between 593 and 571 BCE.⁸⁵

Chapters 40–48 narrate a visionary scene whereby Ezekiel is transported to Jerusalem where he sees a man whose appearance is like bronze and in his hand is a measuring reed:

1 The hand of the Lord was upon me, and he brought me to the city. 2 In visions of God [*Elohim*]⁸⁶ he brought me to the land of Is-

⁸³ Ha, “The Emergence of Proto-Apocalyptic World Views in the Neo-Babylonian Period,” 292. Ha pulls the pre-exilic apocalyptic texts to make them fit in the exilic period in order to advance his PTSS.

⁸⁴ Donald W. Riddle, “The Physical Basis of Apocalypticism,” *JR* 4.2 (1924): 174.

⁸⁵ Walther Zimmerli, *A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979); Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19*, WBC 28 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018). Jenson notes that he prophesied around June 593 BCE. Robert W. Jenson, *Ezekiel*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2009), 20.

⁸⁶ This is supplied by me. The word *Elohim* is sometimes translated in the HB as

rael, and set me down on a very high mountain, on which was a structure like a city to the south. 3 When he brought me there, behold, there was a man whose appearance was like bronze, with a linen cord and a measuring reed in his hand. And he was standing in the gateway. 4 And the man said to me, “Son of man, look with your eyes, and hear with your ears, and set your heart upon all that I shall show you, for you were brought here in order that I might show it to you. Declare all that you see to the house of Israel (40:1–4).

The visionary scene does not capture the full definition of apocalypse given by *Semeia* 14 and *Semeia* 36 in its fullness, but it does carry the form and part of the content. In regards to form, it highlights the visionary scene in which a being from another world mediated a message to Ezekiel by transporting him to Jerusalem. In verse 3 of chapter 40, the word וַיִּבְרַח is used in the *Hiphil* consecutive imperfect which indicates that the otherworldly being (YHWH) is the one who is doing the action—YHWH brings Ezekiel to the city.⁸⁷

In regards to content, Ezek 43–48 depicts the returning of the glory of the Lord to the temple and the restoration of Israel in service to God. This picture portrays not just restoration but salvation for Israel—although they have defiled the temple and have been driven into exile, YHWH promises salvation for them:

4 As the glory of the Lord entered the temple by the gate facing east, 5 the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the Lord filled the temple. 6 While the man was standing beside me, I heard one speaking to me out of the temple, 7 and he said to me, Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the people of Israel forever. And the house of Israel shall no more defile my holy name (43:4–7).

In Ezek 10:18–19, the glory of the Lord left the temple because

angels.

⁸⁷ Also, it is argued that YHWH speaks to Ezekiel through his guide. See Horace D. Hummel, *Ezekiel*, ConcC (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2007), 1168.

of the abomination of desecration by Israel in the temple (8, 9); but in Ezek 43:7 YHWH says, אֲשַׁכֵּן שָׁם בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעוֹלָם. Here the imperfect (אֲשַׁכֵּן) is used to denote the future promise of salvation for Israel. YHWH will once again take permanent (לְעוֹלָם) residence in Israel's midst.⁸⁸ Hummel purports that this promise "anticipates something superior and permanent"⁸⁹ from that of the first temple. Hummel goes on to connect this promise with the return of Christ who will give people ultimate salvation.⁹⁰

On the other hand, apocalypticism's key features are almost absent in Ezek 40–48. What seems to be emphasized, however, is the idea of imminent future deliverance/salvation for Israel. Once again, YHWH will deliver his people and restore them to Jerusalem.

Isaiah 24–27; 66. The book of Isaiah narrates the history of Judah and Israel and God's dealings with them throughout three centuries. Amidst the challenging situations about to be faced by the people, YHWH will bring about an end to evil and inaugurate a new home for his people.⁹¹ The book is said to have been written not just by an eighth-century BCE prophet, Isaiah, but by two other authors. Consequently, some scholars divide the book into three parts: chapters 1–39 are related to 739–700 BCE; chapters 40–55 are related to 545–535 BCE; and chapters 56–66 are related to 520–500 BCE.⁹²

Nevertheless, it is noted by John Oswalt that the major reason for the proposition above is based on the lack of faith and acceptance by critical scholars to hold to predictive prophecy as authentic. However, it has been established that Isa 40–55 is based on

⁸⁸ Hummel, *Ezekiel*, 1239.

⁸⁹ Hummel, *Ezekiel*, 1239.

⁹⁰ Hummel, *Ezekiel*, 1239.

⁹¹ John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, WBC 24 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), xxiii-xiv.

⁹² John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 3.

Isa 1–39, and Isa 56–66 is based on Isa 40–55. The book as a whole is cohesive in its theology. R. R. Lessing purports, “Isaiah 56–66, therefore, needs to be read as a theological reflection on Isaiah 1–35 and not as a historical address to Israelites in Persian Yehud.”⁹³ Therefore, we take the book of Isaiah to be a cohesive work in which the date of composition is etched between 750 and 700 BCE.⁹⁴

While Ezek 40–48 is more concerned with apocalypse, Isaiah⁹⁵ is concerned with apocalypticism; hence it is tagged as ‘proto-apocalyptic’ because its concern is more with eschatology.⁹⁶ *De facto*, in this chapter, we find Isaiah saying that the whole earth will be in the judgment of the Lord: “For by fire will the Lord enter into judgment, and by his sword, with *all* [כָּל־] flesh.”⁹⁷ Isaiah envisions a judgment that is in the future where all flesh on the earth will be a part. Not only that, but he sees a new heaven and new earth⁹⁸ about to be inaugurated in the future: “For as the new heavens and the new earth that I make shall remain before me, says the Lord, so shall your offspring and your name remain.” This judgment is already envisioned in chapters 24–27 where God is going to destroy the wicked and save the righteous.

Isaiah 24–27 and 66 are not apocalypses, but they do bear some form of apocalyptic worldview in that they envision an eschatological end where the wicked will be punished (24; 66:15–16), and the righteous will be rewarded (27:6; 66:18–19); the people of God will have a new heaven and new earth (66:22). A new ordered system

⁹³ R. R. Lessing, *Isaiah 56–66*, ConcC (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2014), 24.

⁹⁴ Lessing, *Isaiah 56–66*, 20–21.

⁹⁵ Isaiah 24–27 spends considerable time in showing how God is going to bring judgment on the entire earth.

⁹⁶ John J. Collins, *Daniel*, 20.

⁹⁷ God will judge the whole world with a sword. Sword is one of God’s weapon (Isa 65:12); see Shalom M. Paul, *Isaiah 40–66*, ECC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 624.

⁹⁸ In Mesopotamia literature the merism “heaven and earth” speaks to “eternal durability”; Paul, *Isaiah 40–66*, 630.

will be inaugurated for the peace of the people of God, and all flesh will come to worship YHWH (66:23).

Zechariah 1–3. The book of Zechariah is said to be an enigmatic book. About Zech 6:9, Jerome writes, “*Ab obscuris ad obscuriora transimus.*”⁹⁹ Nevertheless, the book’s basic message is that God will bring deliverance sometime in the future.

“There is little debate over the dating of ... Zechariah 1–8 with most scholars placing the completion of these sections soon after the dates identified in the superscriptions; that is, the second year of Darius (520 BC.; Zech. 1:1,7) and the fourth year of Darius (518 BC; Zech. 7:1).”¹⁰⁰ However, the dates between 521 and 486 BCE, during the reign of Darius I are held by Al Wolters.¹⁰¹

Applying the definition of *Semeia* 14 and *Semeia* 36 in Zechariah will show that it does not stand up to the test in every detail, but it does give a starting point to begin the discussion of the genre of apocalypse. Beginning in 1:7, 8, the author describes a visionary experience that comes to him on a particular night; and in verse 9, an angel talks with Zechariah as he prepares him to explain to him the mystery of what he sees in verse 8 (form).¹⁰² Not only do we find form in chapters 1–3 but we find partial content; in that, Zechariah sees a temporal reality envisioning eschatological salvation where the people of God will have peace and a guiltless life: “and I will remove the iniquity of that land one day. In that day, says the Lord of host everyone will invite his neighbor under his vine and under

⁹⁹ Taken from Al Wolters, *Zechariah*, HCOT (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 1.

¹⁰⁰ Mark J. Boda, *Haggai, Zechariah*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 30.

¹⁰¹ Some scholars believe that editorial work has been done between the visions of chapters 1 and 6. It is noted that to hold such position is to distort the literary context of the periscope. See Wolters, *Zechariah* 4, 12.

¹⁰² John Collins sees Zechariah as a link between prophecy and apocalypse. This link according to him is a “transitional link” from prophecy to apocalypse. He does not deny the apocalypse’s features in Zechariah; however, it does not portray a full apocalypse according to him. See John J. Collins, *Daniel*, 20.

his fig tree" (3:9, 10).¹⁰³ In function, it does highlight the divine authority of God to change a person's behavior. This is evident in chapter 3 where God not only changes the life of Joshua, the high priest, but his behavior (his submission to God).

The apocalyptic view of the world is not cosmic as is slightly the case in Isaiah 66 (heaven and earth) but introduces the Satan¹⁰⁴ as an accuser of Joshua (ch. 3). This scene seems to be a heavenly council¹⁰⁵ where God is presiding over a case that involves Joshua,¹⁰⁶ metaphorically, standing before God in the council while the accuser accuses; consequently, the accuser is rebuked by God. This shows somewhat a cosmic dualism; in that, God is against the accuser, the Satan. Furthermore, it shows an eschatological end in ch. 14 known as the "Day of YHWH"; a time designated for the future of ancient Israel when God would bring about peace and restoration for his people forever.

Daniel. The book of Daniel continues to be a constant debate concerning its dating among critical and non-critical scholars. Critical scholars place the date in the second century BCE because it is believed that the visions in Dan 7–11 reflect the time of the Maccabean period. However, Rowland shows that the seventy weeks

¹⁰³ Walter Kaiser Jr. concurs with this by saying, "the fourth vision concludes in verse 10 with a picture of tranquility and rest, since sin has been pardoned and removed. This domestic scene of everyone sitting under his own vine and fig tree is the epitome of contentment and happiness (cf. 1 Kings 4:25; 2 Kings 18:31; Mic. 4:4). See Walter C. Kaiser, *Michah–Malachi*, The Communicator's Commentary (Dallas: Word, 1992), 329.

¹⁰⁴ Satan here carries the article and as such probably should be rendered not as a proper name but rather a description of an officer who functions as an accuser. See Wolter, *Zechariah*, 91; cf. Kenneth G. Hoglund and John Walton, "Zechariah," in *The Minor Prophets, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, vol. 5 of *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*, ed. John H. Walton (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 211–12.

¹⁰⁵ See Job 1:6–7; 38:4–7; Pss 29:1; 82:6–7; 89:6–7.

¹⁰⁶ Joshua served with Zerubbabel who was governor in Israel under Persian rule. His family lineage can be seen in 2 Kgs 25:18–21 and Ezra 7:1.

in Dan 9 would not have been the way an author in the second century BCE would have written it to reflect a time period from the Exile to the desecration of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanies. As such, he notes,

It is sufficient to point out the way in which Scripture, and in particular a puzzling aspect of it, has provided the basis for the angelic disclosure concerning the true meaning of the text. The result of this reflection on Scripture is not just one possible interpretation but the authentic interpretation of the divine oracle. This is guaranteed by the fact that it is the result of revelation, in this case mediated by an angel. Whether the reference to the angel is merely a literary device, or as seems preferable to suppose, reflects the belief of the apocalypticist concerning the means of the divine disclosure, one thing is not in doubt: the writer thought that the meaning of the passage which he was considering was that which God himself intended it to mean.¹⁰⁷

The internal evidence for the dating of the book does not seem to support a second-century dating. The Aramaic portion of Daniel is not the same as Qumran but of such that it can be dated to the sixth century BCE. Though they support a second century BCE for the writing of Dan 7, Hartman and Di Lella state, "it is simply impossible on the basis of the evidence currently available to pinpoint with any accuracy when and by whom these narratives were originally composed, and when they were edited in their present form."¹⁰⁸ The dating of the book of Daniel in the second century BCE is based mostly on reading the prophecies as *ex eventu* (written after the events). Andrew Steinmann cites 530 BCE as the latest date that can be given to the book of Daniel. His argument is based on the last vision in the book of Daniel (536 BCE).¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 215.

¹⁰⁸ Louis F. Hartman and Alexander A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, AB 23 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 13; Alexander says that the whole book was written first in Aramaic and then translated into Hebrew in order to gain canonicity. Hartman and Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, 14.

¹⁰⁹ Andrew E. Steinmann, *Daniel*, ConcC (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2008), 3.

The book of Daniel in the Prophetic section of the Old Testament canon and in the Writings of the Hebrew canon is regarded as an apocalyptic book by the majority of scholars. The apocalypse is labeled as a “historical apocalypse”¹¹⁰ in that it gives a review of history (chapters 1–6). The book is divided into three visionary scenes (chapters 7; 8 and 10); notwithstanding the prayer in chapter 9, and the explanation of the vision in the same chapter (2300 days prophecy).

In form, Daniel receives his visions mediated by an angel¹¹¹ whom he identifies as Gabriel: “Gabriel, whom I had seen in the *vision at the first*, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice. 22 He made me understand” (9:21–22).

In content, Daniel is told of a coming judgment when God will ultimately set up his kingdom. In Dan 7:27: “And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; *his kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom*,¹¹² and all dominions shall serve and obey him.” The content is spatial because it involves another world. This is evident in the judgment scene in Dan 7:9–14 which takes place in heaven in which the Ancient of Days comes to preside over an earthly scenario that affects not just the people of God but reaches up to heaven.

In function, the judgment scene in Dan 7 shows how an earthly reality is being interpreted in light of a supernatural world. Daniel, in vision, witnesses God taking his seat in the court and the slaying of the earthly beast. He sees one like the Son of Man, being given an everlasting dominion that will not be destroyed. He also receives a kingdom that the saints will inherit (vv. 14, 22). However, the possession of this kingdom is at the end of the *eschaton* and as

¹¹⁰ See John J. Collins, *Daniel*, 6.

¹¹¹ See John J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 30–31; 12–15 where he discusses Daniel in light of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

¹¹² Emphasis supplied.

such, Daniel is instructed to “shut up the book until the time of the end” because “knowledge will increase.”

The apocalyptic view in Daniel brings together not just the eschatological end but it shows that even those who died will be resurrected, a reality that is not found in the prophets. Hence, “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt” (12:2). Dualism is also a part of its presentation.¹¹³ Throughout the book, it presents forces in the forms of kingdoms (political and religious) that are in opposition to God. Chapter 7:25 speaks of the “little horn” (a kingdom/system) who utters words against the Most High and even thinks to change the laws of God. Clearly, this act on the part of the beast is a direct challenge to God.

The book shows that these forces are no match for humans; as such, it will take a divine act to destroy them. Persecution of the saints is not for a short time, but it reaches the end when God will bring about an eschatological judgment. As such, there will be a time of trouble that is greater than any time of trouble in the past or present eras (12:1). Nevertheless, the people of God are assured that Michael, the Archangel, will stand up for them (12:1).

RETHINKING SEMEIA 14 AND SEMEIA 36—GENRE

Apocalypse as a genre is a complex literary and ideological stratum to explicate a definition or to be characterized insofar as to make that definition or those characteristics fit all that is recognized to be apocalypses. The long debate over what constitutes apocalypse is evident in the assumptions of complexity and diversity.¹¹⁴

John Collins, in his 2016 article, some thirty-five years later after the *Semeia* 14 was published, says: “Classification is something de-

¹¹³ Sandy, *Plowshares and Pruning Hooks*, 109.

¹¹⁴ John J. Collins, *Seers, Sybils and Sages in Hellenistic Roman Judaism*, 40.

vised by critics for their purpose.”¹¹⁵ It can be deduced that the classification of apocalypses is not the ancient authors’ creation or concern, but the readers’. Alastair Fowler argues that genre is not absolute or fixed. The diachronic elements will change over time but the mutual elements are essential for classification.¹¹⁶ As such, it is correct to illustrate that the Jewish/Christian apocalypses were not labeled as apocalypses nor were they classified by the ancient authors to belong to a specific group of composition. Michael Knibb concurs:

A major difficulty in the study of Jewish apocalyptic writings consists in the fact that those works that are commonly so described do not seem to have been called apocalypses by their authors, and it is thus open to question whether there really is such a thing as an apocalyptic genre.¹¹⁷

The Apocalypse of John (Christian apocalypse) known as the book of Revelation, did not set out to classify its composition by using the word, Ἀποκάλυψις. Instead, the word is used in both the objective genitive, indicating that Jesus is the one revealing to John a message for his people, and the subjective genitive, indicating that the revelation is about Jesus.¹¹⁸ John’s point is to get his readers to take seriously what is written in the book because it is a revelation from and about Jesus—the crucified lamb and savior of the faithful people.

Classifying the apocalypse is not a bad thing in and of itself. However, it becomes problematic when one dismisses a similar work because it does not carry all the criteria of the classified work. A case in point is Zechariah. John Collins notes, “it is quite possible to define a genre on purely formal grounds.”¹¹⁹ On the basis of this

¹¹⁵ John J. Collins, “The Genre Apocalypse Reconsidered”, 27.

¹¹⁶ See Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 255.

¹¹⁷ Knibb, “Prophecy and the Emergence of the Jewish Apocalypses”, 156.

¹¹⁸ Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 54.

¹¹⁹ John J. Collins, *Daniel*, 4, states the possibility of having the genre at a “higher lev-

statement, he added that if the definition in *Semeia* 14 had stopped at “human recipient” then Zechariah would be classified among the apocalypses.¹²⁰ It means that modern categorization is the determinant for the historical classification of apocalypse and by extension apocalypticism.

The second lurking problem with classifying a body of literature is to do so without noting its developments; realizing that “genres evolve and are constantly changing.”¹²¹ Based on Stone’s work, Knibb states, “apocalypticism is ... to be found in works that do not belong to this [apocalypse] literary genre.”¹²² Therefore, in general, the writing of a literary work, though in the case of Scripture is inspired, is often influenced by the social, political, and religious situations of the author and (or) his present audience.¹²³ Circumstances change over time, and so, people perceive reality in different ways, whether it is political, religious, or social.

Considering these perceived problems, it becomes important to reconstruct the *Sitz im Leben* of Zechariah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. Without being elaborate, Zechariah’s concern is for the temple in Jerusalem to be rebuilt and for the people to remain faithful to God. He emphasizes the messianic hope that will put all political upheaval in Israel’s life to rest.¹²⁴ Daniel, on the other hand, is concerned not with the rebuilding of Jerusalem’s temple, but rather with a cosmic eschatological end that will bring deliverance to God’s people forever. This kind of ending is pictured in the Prophetic books not as a cosmic end but as an everlasting end to suffering, pain, and alienation, known as the Day of YHWH.

el of generality.”

¹²⁰ John J. Collins, *Daniel*, 4.

¹²¹ John J. Collins, “The Genre Apocalypse Reconsidered,” 35.

¹²² Knibb, “Prophecy and the Emergence of the Jewish Apocalypses,” 160.

¹²³ In some cases (Daniel, Revelation etc.), future audiences as well.

¹²⁴ Kaiser, *Michah–Malachi*, 289; Wolters, *Zechariah*, 6–7.

Daniel's emphasis is that God is sovereign over nations and so his people can trust that all is going to be well at the end.¹²⁵

For Ezekiel, he focuses on the Lord's judgment that will bring salvation for the people and enable the nations to know that YHWH is God (5:13; 12:20; 20:42).¹²⁶ Furthermore, he emphasizes the return of the exiles to their homeland where they will be fruitful and spiritually transformed—a "new heart" awaits them.¹²⁷ Isaiah's emphasis is that "God is with us." Even though he is with us, there are two sides: he is just, and he is merciful. As such, there is a coming judgment in which he will judge the world and deliver the faithful (ch. 66).¹²⁸

What is to be noted is that the basic message of Zechariah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Isaiah is not foreign to one another but rather holds true for all. This message is that God is going to give deliverance to his faithful people, whether it is cosmic as in the book of Daniel, or terrestrial as in the books of Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Zechariah. It means, therefore, that form, function, and content of a book are largely based on the authors' current situation along with the revelatory experiences the authors received from God. As such, the central and constant feature of apocalypticism derived here is *the promise, by YHWH, of an imminent deliverance of the people of God from their enemies—be it terrestrial or cosmic.*

The visionary experiences found in these books are recorded as real experiences and not a literary device as critical scholars often postulate.¹²⁹ Daniel, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah all give the spe-

¹²⁵ Edward E. Hindson and Gary E. Yates, *The Essence of the Old Testament* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2012), 362.

¹²⁶ For further references: Ezek 37:13, 28; 39:28.

¹²⁷ See Hindson and Yates, *The Essence of the Old Testament*, 350.

¹²⁸ Hindson and Yates, *The Essence of the Old Testament*, 310.

¹²⁹ Stone says: "It is impossible to know whether in a given case (visionary experiences) this is merely a literary description or whether it reflects actual praxis and experience of the author." Even though this maybe the case, modern critics do not take this into consideration but instead treat it as merely literary devices. Stone,

cific time when they received their visions. For Daniel, his first vision is in the “first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon” (7:1); his second vision is in the “third year of the reign of king Belshazzar” (8:1) and his third vision is in the “third year of Cyrus the king of Persia” (10:1). For Isaiah, his vision is in the “year that king Uzziah died” (6:1–2). For Ezekiel, it is “in the twenty-fifth year of our exile” (40:1). And for Zechariah, it is “in the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month of Shebat, in the second year of Darius” (1:7).

CONCLUSION

Apocalypticism is not the result of a deprived and abandoned people as some scholars have asserted. Neither did it come out of a group struggling for a better life, or drawn from pagan religious thoughts. Instead, apocalypticism occurs through a process of development in Israel’s history. The development is shaped by a growing understanding of God and his relationship to humanity and the world. This understanding was mediated through dreams, and visions by heavenly beings.

Though dualism and afterlife to some degree are evident in the religions of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Aryan tribe, they do not account for the full view of apocalypticism based on the key features constructed in this study. Only when we get to the Prophetic books do we begin to see the emergence of Apocalypticism in full view.

In the prophetic books of the OT, four books were examined: Ezekiel, Isaiah, Zechariah, and Daniel. In Ezekiel and Zechariah, we found both books with apocalypse elements evident in the *Semeia* 14 and *Semeia* 36. However, even though Zechariah resembles the definition of apocalypse (*Semeia* 14 and *Semeia* 36), it falls short of the content section and the full characteristics of apocalypticism.

“Apocalyptic Literature,” 430.

There is no evidence in Zechariah or Ezekiel 40-48 to support a cosmic eschatology by which the people of God will be delivered, and a new world will be created.

Isaiah 24–27, 66 pictures an eschatological end that God is about to inaugurate. Part of this eschatology is a new heaven and a new earth. It highlights that the current world will be renewed but it does not speak of a cosmic deliverance or the resurrection of the dead. Nevertheless, in the book of Daniel, the apocalyptic view brings together not just the eschatological end, but it shows that even those who died will be resurrected, a reality that is not found in the rest of the OT.

Throughout the book, it presents forces in the forms of kingdoms (political and religious) that are in opposition to God (*dualism*¹³⁰). The book shows that these forces are no match for humans; as such, it will take a divine act to destroy them (*no earthly solution*). Nevertheless, the people of God are assured that Michael, the Archangel, will soon stand up for them (*transcended and the eschaton*), and those who died in the faith of God will be delivered at the end while others will not (*reward and punishment*).

What is to be noted is that the basic message of Zechariah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Isaiah is not foreign to one another but rather holds true for all. This message is that God is going to give deliverance to his faithful people, whether it is cosmic as in the book of Daniel, or terrestrial as in the books of Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Zechariah. As such, the central and constant feature of apocalypticism is: *The promise, by YHWH, of an imminent deliverance of the people of God from their enemies—be it terrestrial or cosmic.*

It means, however, that form, function, and content, as expressed by *Semeia* 14 and *Semeia* 36, of a genre/writing is largely based on the authors' current situation along with the revelatory experiences the authors have with God. Therefore, in dating the

¹³⁰Sandy, *Plowshares and Pruning Hooks*, 109.

emergence of apocalypticism, it is plausible to point out that partially, apocalypticism was evident in the eighth century BCE as in the book of Isaiah—based on reading Isaiah as a predictive prophecy which is the claim in this research. Nevertheless, it is not until the late sixth century BCE that we have a complete thrust of apocalyptic worldview—having argued for a sixth century BCE date for the book of Daniel.