



# THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

This thesis has been submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for a postgraduate degree (e.g. PhD, MPhil, DClinPsychol) at the University of Edinburgh. Please note the following terms and conditions of use:

- This work is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights, which are retained by the thesis author, unless otherwise stated.
- A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge.
- This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the author.
- The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author.
- When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given.

**The Emergence of the Concept of Heresy in Early  
Christianity: The Context of Internal Social Conflict in  
First-century Christianity and Late Second Temple  
Sectarianism**

Troy A. Miller

Doctor of Philosophy  
The University of Edinburgh  
2002



## Abstract

The present thesis endeavors to identify the context out of which the conceptual category of heresy initially emerged within early Christianity. As such, it will not focus on any single heresy or heresiological issue, but rather on the emergence of the notion of heresy itself. The context proposed from which the Christian idea of heresy first emerged is not the institutionalization of orthodoxy within the second-century church, but rather, the dynamics of internal social conflict, which is visible in situations of internal deviance within first-century Christianity and in at least one strand of the sectarianism of Second Temple Judaism.

In Part I, which is a single chapter (two), I appeal to the social sciences to help articulate a social understanding of the concept of heresy, not in an effort to replace the ecclesiastical understanding, which holds heresy to be a belief or teaching that stands in opposition to or deviates from an orthodox norm/doctrine and which dominates scholarly perception on the topic, but as a complement to it. The aim of the chapter is to identify a set of characteristics that mark heresy as a unique social phenomenon.

In Part II, I turn to Galatians (chapter three) and parts of Revelation 2-3 (chapter four), as test cases for the viability of locating the phenomenological characteristics noted in chapter two within these two first-century contexts of internal social conflict. After surveying the settings of conflict and the given author's responses to them, I conclude that though heresy (in the ecclesiastical sense) is not demarcated in these contexts, they are a likely context out of which the early Christian conceptual category of heresy initially emerged.

Part III reflects an effort to see whether there may be earlier settings of internal social conflict that are analogous to these first-century contexts. Based on the argument that the exclusiveness inherent to these first-century situations of internal conflict, as well as the notion of heresy, requires a monotheistic religious framework, I turn solely to Second Temple Judaism. Relying upon a phenomenological characterization of religious sects, I (in chapter five) highlight the emerging sectarian markings evident in groups around the beginning of the second Jewish commonwealth. Chapter six, then, reflects an attempt to gauge the extremes of sectarian commitments and expression in late Second Temple Judaism by noting the sectarian features of groups behind the *Habakkuk Peshar* and the *Psalms of Solomon*. Ultimately, I conclude that these two settings of sectarian conflict bear a phenomenological resemblance to the first-century Christian situations of internal social conflict previously surveyed.

Part IV, which is a single chapter (seven), reflects an effort to track when and how the early Christian notion of heresy emerged from these settings of internal social conflict, primarily through a study of the New Testament evidence of ἄρρεσις. As the term moves from possessing a neutral to a pejorative to a defamatory meaning, I appeal to linguistic theory, namely semantics and sociolinguistics, in an effort to (1) characterize the type of shift in meaning that occurred in ἄρρεσις and (2) begin to locate any forces or factors that may have been influential in this linguistic transformation. Ultimately, I combine this analysis of ἄρρεσις with the previous work on the dynamic of internal social conflict in the first-century and the late Second Temple period to construct a diachronic presentation of how the concept of heresy initially came into early Christian thought and writing.

Chapter eight brings the thesis to a close by briefly revisiting the main conclusions of the study and identifying the primary contributions that it makes to various areas of Christian Origins research.

# Contents

<i>Abbreviations</i>	vi
----------------------	----

1.	<b>Introduction</b>	1
	•A Review of Scholarship on Heresy in Early Christianity	5
	•A Brief Outline of Chapters	18

## **PART I: METHODOLOGY: HERESY AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES**

2.	<b>Towards a Social Understanding of Heresy</b>	21
	•An Interactionist Approach to Deviance	27
	•Deviance as a Social Product	31
	•The Deviantizing Process	35
	•Heresy and Deviance	42
	•A Social Interactionist Approach to Heresy	43
	•Peter Berger's Understanding of Heresy within His Framework of World-Construction and World-Maintenance	51
	•Berger's Theory of World-Construction	52
	•Berger's Theory of World-Maintenance	56
	•A Description of the Social Phenomenon of Heresy	59

## **PART II: FIRST-CENTURY CHRISTIAN CONTEXTS OF INTERNAL DEVIANCE**

3.	<b>The Dynamics of Social Conflict within Galatians</b>	61
	•The Situation of Social Conflict	62
	•Paul's Response to the Situation in Galatia	71
	•The Dynamics of Conflict in Galatia and the Social Context for the Emergence of Early Christian Heresy	94
4.	<b>The Dynamics of Social Conflict within the Apocalypse (Rev 2-3)</b>	96
	•The Situations of Social Conflict	98
	•John's Responses to the Situations in Ephesus, Pergamum, and Thyatira	121
	•The Dynamics of Conflict in Revelation 2-3 and the Social Context for the Emergence of Early Christian Heresy	139

**PART III: SECTARIAN IDENTITY AND EXPRESSION  
IN THE SECOND TEMPLE PERIOD**

5.	<b>The Sectarian Markings of Early Second Temple Judaism</b>	143
	•An Excursus on Procedure	144
	•A Brief Historical Overview of the Late Babylonian and Early Persian Periods	149
	•Some Sectarian Markings within Judaism of the Persian Period	155
6.	<b>The Development of Sectarianism in Late Second Temple Judaism</b>	169
	•The Proliferation of Sects in the Hasmonean Era	171
	•The Hardening of Sectarianism	178
	•The <i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	179
	•The <i>Habakkuk Peshet</i>	199
	•Conclusion	229

**PART IV: COMPLETING THE PICTURE**

7.	<b>Αἵρεσις and the Emergence of the Conceptual Category of Heresy in Early Christianity</b>	232
	•The New Testament Evidence of Αἵρεσις	234
	•Αἵρεσις in Acts	237
	•Αἵρεσις in Galatians	243
	•Αἵρεσις in 1 Corinthians	248
	•Αἵρεσις in Titus	252
	•Αἵρεσις in 2 Peter	256
	•Αἵρεσις and Semantic Change	263
	•The New Testament Evidence of Αἵρεσις and the Emergence of the Early Christian Concept of Heresy	271
8.	<b>Retrospect and Prospect</b>	287
	<i>Bibliography</i>	292

## Abbreviations

With the exception of the three items listed below, all of which are abbreviations of journals from the social-sciences, the abbreviations utilized in the notes of this thesis can be found in Patrick H. Alexander, *et. al.*, eds., *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999).

AJS	<i>American Journal of Sociology</i>
SA	<i>Sociological Analysis</i>
SocProb	<i>Social Problems</i>

# Chapter One

## Introduction

The work that follows is driven by the following contention or thesis statement:

the context out of which the conceptual category of heresy initially emerged within early Christianity was not the institutionalization of orthodoxy within the second-century church, but rather, the dynamics of internal social conflict, which is visible in situations of internal deviance within first-century Christianity and in at least one strand of the sectarianism of Second Temple Judaism.

Before attempting to lay out a rationale for this assertion, though, I first will situate the thesis within a number of parameters in an effort to define with greater clarity the intentions, procedure, and scope of the project.

From the outset, I wish to declare precisely how I am using the term and/or idea of “heresy,” as it is vital to the thesis as a whole. As implied within the title of the thesis, I am attempting to track the emergence of the idea or conceptual category of heresy. As a result (and with this aim in mind), I am not concerned here with any single heresy or heresiological issue. For example, I will not attempt to identify the origins of Gnosticism, Arianism, or any other individual heresy/heretical movement. Such groups already have received ample attention in previous scholarship. Furthermore, I will not concentrate on any single issue that became prominent within one or more of these heretical groups, such as the nature of Christ. These topics also have not gone unnoticed in the scholarly study of heresy. Instead, I will focus my attention almost exclusively on the emergence of the conceptual category of heresy itself. I intend to answer questions such as: how did the category or idea of heresy come into Christian thinking and writing in the first place? Or, even, since no

conceptual category emerges in a vacuum, out of what context(s) did the notion of heresy first emerge? Again, this thesis will focus on the emergence of a conceptual category (i.e., heresy) and not on how that notion became evident in any given historical group or setting.<sup>1</sup>

Second, it also is necessary that the reader understand that I (often) am using the term/idea of “heresy” in a manner that differs from the conception commonly held by scholars. The common, or at least most prominent, scholarly conception, which I term the “ecclesiastical” or “traditional” understanding and which we see manifest c. 150 C.E. and beyond, is that heresy is a belief/teaching that stands in opposition to or deviates from an orthodox norm/doctrine. This conception of heresy necessitates the presence of an orthodoxy as a standard by which to judge the acceptability or unacceptability of the belief or teaching in question. Therefore, heresy (in this conception) is contingent upon and can be demarcated only when an orthodoxy can be identified, hence the common notion that heresy emerges from within the institutionalization of orthodoxy in the second-century (or later) church.

In the following chapter, I introduce a different understanding of the idea of heresy; one that does not attempt to obliterate the ecclesiastical understanding, but which accentuates a characterization of it that relatively has gone unexplored. In chapter two, I appeal to various studies from the social sciences in an effort to identify the social dimensions of heresy. There I attempt to locate heresy as a social

---

<sup>1</sup> I would contend that a study of the emergence of the conceptual category of heresy is a necessary precursor to any study of a single heretical group or teaching/belief. The question of when and how the conceptual category came into existence within early Christianity largely has been set aside (or ignored) in favor of focusing on groups or beliefs that were deemed to be heretical. Thus, I offer the present study as a return to a neglected factor in the study of early Christian heresy.

phenomenon, in variation from the theological or doctrinal characterization that it assumes in the traditional understanding of the term/idea. To preview briefly this chapter on method, I attempt to identify a set of phenomenological characteristics that identify heresy as a unique social phenomenon. The justification for this exploration is based primarily on the recognition that “heresy” is by definition a social phenomenon (i.e., one founded within inner group conflict) and, as such, calls for (if not compels us to give) some attention to its social dimensions. Again, I am not denying that “heresy” is a legitimate theological and doctrinal concept. Rather, I am arguing that it is not *only* a theological and doctrinal concept. It has social dimensions that, I would contend, have been overlooked and that are foundational to identifying the context for the emergence of the notion of heresy in early Christianity. Ultimately, the thesis is based upon the understanding of heresy as a social phenomenon at many points and, thus, calls the reader’s attention to this variation from the common usage of the term/idea.

As an addendum to this note, the reader also should be aware that I do not attempt to argue that the term “heresy” should be used prior to the second-century C.E. Rather, I am utilizing these methodological observations and developments (concerning the social dimensions of heresy) as a basis for identifying certain phenomenological characteristics within first-century Christianity, and, in turn, to identify the initial context out of which the concept of heresy emerged. Though heresy itself may not be able to be located in its fully formed sense until the later rise of established orthodox norms, it is not necessarily the case that heresy had its conceptual origins in that same context. By identifying social features that are

distinctive of this phenomenological understanding of “heresy,” it might well be possible to identify the emerging conceptual category of heresy in contexts prior to its later formalization. These phenomenological features do not constitute heresy in the ecclesiastical sense. Yet, they do highlight its social conception, which I contend precedes the traditional understanding of the idea of heresy.

Finally, one additional note is necessary. I am concerned in the thesis with the emergence of the notion of heresy specifically within early Christianity. Though I think that the present work is heuristically valuable for the study of the emergence of the notion of heresy within Judaism (and possibly within other religious movements or traditions), which interestingly emerges in close chronological proximity to its appearance in Christianity, I will not explore such connections here. I will delimit the scope of my research to the emergence of heresy within the early Christian movement.

Now, I will move into a review of the scholarly literature on the topic of early Christian heresy. Since the present thesis diverges from much of the past literature on the topic, based on the nature of my inquiry and the method employed, the review will focus on the broader contours, in addition to various other issues/questions, that have guided the approach(es) to the past scholarly study of heresy. In doing so, I hope to situate the thesis within the larger scholarly environment, as well as highlight additional parameters of the study.

## A Review of Scholarship on Heresy in Early Christianity

The study of heresy in early Christianity has been dominated for many decades by Walter Bauer's *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*.<sup>2</sup> His thesis is well known. Based on second and third-century evidence from various geographical locations, Bauer contended that the proponents of (what later comes to be known as) Christian orthodoxy were not the original or dominant force within early Christianity.<sup>3</sup> Orthodoxy, according to Bauer, did not stand at the beginning of early Christian development; rather, it was the fortuitous victor at the end of an early period of competing, but equally acceptable, trajectories within Christianity.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, he contended that in many regions of the ancient world those traditionally

---

<sup>2</sup> Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* [*Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum*, BHT 10], second English edition, ed. and supp. Georg Strecker, trans. and supp. Robert Kraft and Gerhard Krodel (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971). Bauer's book, which originally was published in German in 1934, is the watershed in the study of early Christian heresy. Bart D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford U. Press, 1993) 7 boldly (but rightly) puts forth the contention that Bauer's work is "possibly the most significant book in early Christianity written in modern times." It stands as a prime point of demarcation for any study of early Christian heresy. Yet, as noted below, I will not confine my questions to those laid out by Bauer. I will work at a level that necessarily precedes his questions and concerns.

<sup>3</sup> A number of scholars note that the work of the history-of-religions school informed and, in some ways, made preparation for Bauer's effort to break down the distinction between orthodoxy and heresy. Kurt Rudolph, "Heresy: An Overview," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade, vol. 6 (New York: MacMillan, 1987) 270-271 notes that "toward the end of the nineteenth century, the work of the *religionsgeschichtliche Schule* paved the way for a still more penetrating historical view of heresy and orthodoxy, not only because early Christianity came to be understood and interpreted in the context of its environment, but also because the barrier raised by the canon (considered to be the New Testament) was dismantled, and the New Testament was increasingly recognized as presenting only some of the many theological concepts and ideas of early Christianity. It became increasingly difficult to make a distinction between heresy and orthodoxy." On the connections between the history-of-religions school and Bauer's work on orthodoxy, see also Thomas A. Robinson, *The Bauer Thesis Examined: The Geography of Heresy in the Early Christian Church*, *Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity* 11 (Lewiston: Mellen, 1988) 15-21; Hans Dieter Betz, "Orthodoxy and Heresy in Primitive Christianity: Some Critical Remarks on Georg Strecker's Republication of Walter Bauer's *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum*," *Int* 19 (1965) 299; and Michel Desjardins, "Bauer and Beyond: On Recent Scholarly Discussions of ὀρθόδοξος in the Early Christian Era," *SecCent* 8 (1991) 67-68.

<sup>4</sup> See Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, xxi. As will be known to many, Bauer attributed much of the success of this orthodox brand of Christianity to the ability of the Roman church to extend and/or impose its brand of Christianity on others.

regarded as heretics were the first Christians to form communities, become the majority, and possess “correct” belief. Bauer states:

Perhaps—I repeat, *perhaps*—certain manifestations of Christian life that the authors of the church renounce as “heresies” originally had not been such at all, but, at least here and there, were the only form of the new religion—that is, for those regions they were simply “Christianity.” The possibility also exists that their adherents constituted the majority, and that they looked down with hatred and scorn on the orthodox, who for them were the false believers.<sup>5</sup>

In this regard, the heretics (in the ecclesiastical understanding) were actually the orthodox.<sup>6</sup>

Speaking in gross understatement, Bauer’s thesis was an innovation in the study of early Christianity. He did not offer a mere revision to the traditional/ecclesiastical view of the relationship between orthodoxy and heresy.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> See Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, xxii. Though Bauer expressed his position here in understatement (or at least with a note of humility—see the emphasis upon “perhaps”), he rigorously applied this throughout his book. Bauer expressed that, in addition to the felt need to combat the traditional or ecclesiastical view of orthodoxy and heresy, several other aims drove his work, such as (1) the previous non-critical use of the historical-critical method, (2) the lack of a voice for the heretics, (3) the reading of later Christian texts back into earlier periods, and (4) the New Testament as being too “unproductive” and too much “disputed” to serve as a point of departure for an objective analysis of heresy (and orthodoxy).

<sup>6</sup> For restatements of Bauer’s thesis see Desjardins, “Bauer and Beyond,” 68-69; Robinson, *The Bauer Thesis Examined*, 22-26; Betz, “Orthodoxy and Heresy in Primitive Christianity,” 299; Daniel J. Harrington, “The Reception of Walter Bauer’s *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* During the Last Decade,” *HTR* 73 (1980) 289; and Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption*, 7-9.

<sup>7</sup> Bauer’s summary of the “traditional” or “ecclesiastical” position on the relationship between orthodoxy and heresy is as follows: “(1) Jesus reveals the pure doctrine to his apostles, partly before his death, and partly in the forty days before his ascension. (2) After Jesus’ final departure, the apostles apportion the world among themselves, and each takes the unadulterated gospel to the land which has been allotted him. (3) Even after the death of the disciples the gospel branches out further. But now obstacles to it spring up within Christianity itself. The devil cannot resist sowing weeds in the divine wheatfield—and he is successful at it. True Christians blinded by him abandon the pure doctrine. This development takes place in the following sequence: unbelief, right belief, wrong belief.... (4) Of course, right belief is invincible. In spite of all the efforts of Satan and his instruments, it repels unbelief and false belief, and extends its victorious sway ever further.” While Bauer has shaded slightly his rendition of the ecclesiastical position in preparation for his later arguments, his overall representation largely reflects early Christian thought on orthodoxy and heresy (i.e., from Justin Martyr or even as far back as Ignatius of Antioch to Eusebius). For a scholarly presentation and/or comments on the “traditional” position, see Desjardins, “Bauer and Beyond,” 66-67; Harrington, “The Reception of Walter Bauer’s,” 289-290; Shaye J. D. Cohen, “A Virgin Defiled:

Rather, he proposed a completely new alternative; an alternative that turned the traditional view on its head. In short, he was attempting a radical paradigm shift that implicitly, if not explicitly, called for a reconfiguration of the picture of early Christianity.<sup>8</sup> As a result, Bauer's thesis drew much attention.<sup>9</sup>

---

Some Rabbinic and Christian Views on the Origins of Heresy," USQR 36 (1980) 1-2; and Robinson, The Bauer Thesis, 4-8.

<sup>8</sup> On Bauer's shifting of the paradigm, see Robert L. Wilken, "Diversity and Unity in Early Christianity," SecCent 1 (1981) 103.

<sup>9</sup> Harrington, "The Reception of Walter Bauer's," 290 notes that the original (1934) German edition remained in relative obscurity (as compared to the later English edition) due to "the political conditions prevailing in Germany during the late 1930s and the very technical style in which the book was written." Yet, while the initial German edition of Bauer's book did not elicit the same level of interest that later editions would receive, it did not go unnoticed. Multiple reviews and the first book-length reply, H. E. W. Turner's Bampton Lectures, expanded and published as The Pattern of Christian Truth: A Study in the Relations Between Orthodoxy and Heresy in the Early Church (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co., 1954), engaged the first edition. For a list of the reviews of the first edition of Bauer's Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum, see Bauer, Orthodoxy and Heresy, 286-291. Here, in Appendix 2 entitled "The Reception of the Book," Strecker provides an exhaustive list of reviews of the original edition. It is interesting to note that the great majority of these reviews (of the first edition) were published in either German or French and only two in English-language journals. Finally, for a review of Turner's discussion of Bauer, see Bauer, Orthodoxy and Heresy, 297-302; Desjardins, "Bauer and Beyond," 71-72; and Robinson, The Bauer Thesis, 21.

With the translation of his book into English (published in the United States in 1971 and in Great Britain in 1972), the number of reviews and amount of scrutiny increased. See Harrington, "The Reception of Walter Bauer's," 290-292 for a list of English-language reviews. In general, these reviews commended Bauer for the novelty of his thesis and for providing a voice to temper the traditional view. However, he also consistently received criticism concerning methodology, argumentation, and/or his handling of evidence. See Harrington, "The Reception of Walter Bauer's," 292-295 for articles and other works which interact with Bauer on various levels and points (in both contradictory and supportive fashions). The most recent and the most exhaustive treatment of Bauer's research project is Tom Robinson's The Bauer Thesis Examined.

With all this attention, it is little wonder why Bauer was so widely influential. His work can be seen as a foundation upon which many influential works on early Christianity have been built—James Dunn, Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977) and Elaine Pagels, The Gnostic Gospels (New York: Random House, 1979) to name but two. Harrington, "The Reception of Walter Bauer's," 296 notes that "since Bauer touched on almost every aspect of early Christian history and since his book has been influential in scholarly circles during the past forty-five years, practically any contribution to NT and patristic scholarship can be viewed as a development of his theory." While some may think Harrington to have overstated Bauer's influence, the sheer amount of scholarly literature and conversation that has stemmed, either explicitly or implicitly, from Bauer's book bears witness to its landmark status.

The importance of Bauer's work is evident not only in view of the sustained dialogue provoked by his thesis (which is evident even today), but also in the ongoing preoccupation with *his* questions concerning early Christian heresy. Chief amongst Bauer's concerns, with respect to orthodoxy and heresy, are (1) chronological proximity (i.e., investigating whether orthodoxy or heresy was the *original and earliest* manifestation of Christianity in a given region); (2) the theological<sup>10</sup> make-up of these early Christian groups; (3) the respective historical identities of these groups (e.g., Ebionites or Gnostics); and (4) the possible connection(s) between each of these early groups and later Christian orthodoxy. Not only were these concerns the driving force behind Bauer's work but they also have continued to provide the boundaries that have encircled scholarly dialogue and research on early Christian heresy.

Whether scholars have aimed to support, extend, and enhance or rebut, delimit, and reject Bauer's contentions on heresy, the same issues have governed their works—those laid out by Bauer. Thus, the Bauerian concerns on heresy that are picked-up and extended by Georg Strecker,<sup>11</sup> Helmut Koester,<sup>12</sup> and Martin

---

<sup>10</sup> At one level, Bauer seeks to examine which beliefs and/or practices compose the distinct theological make-up of a given group, in a given place and time. Thus, I utilize the term, "theological," here as a composite of a group's known beliefs and practices.

<sup>11</sup> Strecker's role in the re-publication and spread of Bauer's work was critical. After the death of Bauer in 1960, Strecker collected Bauer's personal corrections and annotations to the first edition of his book and later included them in the 1964 edition; see Harrington, "The Reception of Walter Bauer's," 290. Also, Strecker added Appendix I, on the problem of Jewish Christianity, and Appendix II, on the initial reception of Bauer's original German edition, to the second edition of the book. Strecker's contribution, therefore, was not only editorial in nature. He also extended Bauer's thesis into an area that was left unexplored in the first edition. See also his "A Report on the New Edition of Walter Bauer's *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum*," *JBR* 33 (1965) 53-56 and "Walter Bauer: Exeget, Philologe, und Historiker; zum 100 Geburtstag am 8/8/1977," *NovT* 20 (1978) 75-80.

<sup>12</sup> For Koester's works on heresy and his extensions of Bauer's thesis, see his and James M. Robinson's, *Trajectories in Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), especially his essay reprinted in that book entitled "ΓΝΩΜΑΙ ΔΙΑΦΟΡΟΙ: The Origin and Nature of Diversification in the History of Early Christianity." Also, see Koester's "Häretiker im Urchristentum," in *RGG*, vol. III (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1959) 17-21 and "The Theological Aspects of Primitive Christian Heresy,"

Elze,<sup>13</sup> three of Bauer's main proponents, are the same set of issues that elicit strong critique from H. E. W. Turner,<sup>14</sup> Tom Robinson,<sup>15</sup> and Frederick Norris,<sup>16</sup> three of his detractors. It quickly becomes apparent that Bauer largely has defined the scholarly arena in which the battle(s) of early Christian heresy has been and is fought.

While most of the scholarly dialogue on heresy has been governed by (only) Bauer's questions and issues, an additional direction of study emerged that introduced a quite different focus on the topic. Desjardins records that

instead of asking, *à la* Bauer, whether 'heresy' is as primary and authentic as 'orthodoxy' (a question which remains rooted in theological concerns), a few scholars have begun to explore in detail what ἄρρεσις actually meant for first and second-century writers; and, more broadly, whether Christian uses of this term differed from non-Christian uses, both Jewish and non-Jewish.<sup>17</sup>

In other words, while Bauer often was concerned with content and chronology, studies in this "new" direction sought to move the study of heresy back to a more

---

in The Future of Our Religious Past: Essays in Honour of Rudolph Bultmann, ed. James M. Robinson (London: SCM, 1971) 65-83.

<sup>13</sup> See Martin Elze, "Häresie und Einheit der Kirche im 2. Jahrhundert," ZTK 71 (1974) 389-409. Elze attempts to bolster Bauer's position by building further second century evidence to support his claims.

<sup>14</sup> See Turner, The Pattern of Christian Truth. Turner attempts to mediate between two poles: the simple traditional theory on the one hand and Bauer's position on the other. He argues that there are both "fixed" and "flexible" elements in the development of early Christianity, which interact with each other. Turner proceeds by taking up Bauer's points of contention (e.g., early history of the church in Asia Minor, the situation at Philippi, Rome), pointing out his tendency toward oversimplification and challenging his treatment of evidence. Ultimately, he reverts back to the position that the development of early Christianity evolved under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; a position that Desjardins, "Bauer and Beyond," 71 calls "stale."

<sup>15</sup> See Robinson, The Bauer Thesis Examined. Robinson, in a sense, extends some of the work of Turner. However, Robinson is much more rigorous in his methodology and analysis. Essentially, he attempts to re-map the same geographical landscape that Bauer (re-)characterized many decades before. In addition to a number of areas on which he challenges Bauer's reasoning, he wonders, in many instances, if Bauer actually has enough evidence to draw some of his central conclusions.

<sup>16</sup> See Frederick Norris, "Ignatius, Polycarp, and 1 Clement: Walter Bauer Reconsidered," in Orthodoxy, Heresy, and Schism in Early Christianity, Studies in Early Christianity 4 (New York: Garland, 1993) 237-258.

<sup>17</sup> Desjardins, "Bauer and Beyond," 72.

foundational level. It was noted that Bauer's use of the terms/concepts of "orthodoxy" and "heresy" had become quite anachronistic. The same is true for many of those who continued to pursue his questions on orthodoxy and heresy. Bauer was accused of reading his own contemporary characterization back onto the first-century Christian contexts. In an effort to right this methodological wrong, a few scholars began to focus on the historical question of how various early Christian (as well as non-Christian) writers themselves used the Greek term αἵρεσις, since it was the primary term used to demarcate heresy in the second-century and beyond.<sup>18</sup>

The first notable work here is Heinrich Schlier's entry on αἵρεσις in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*.<sup>19</sup> Though Schlier's work really should not be understood as a beginning point for this "new" direction in the study of heresy, as it simply was a commissioned dictionary entry, it stands as one of the foundational analyses of the Greek term. From his examination of αἵρεσις in Hellenism, the LXX and Judaism, the New Testament, and the early Church, he draws two primary conclusions: (1) the first Christian use of αἵρεσις owes its origins to Greek philosophical schools and not the development of an orthodoxy and (2) the basis of the Christian notion of αἵρεσις as heresy stems from the new situation created by the introduction of the Christian ἐκκλησία.<sup>20</sup> As Schlier identifies the occurrences in the book of Acts as the first Christian evidence of the term, his initial contention holds. However, the second contention made by Schlier lacks credibility due to the fact that he never attempts to make a case for why

---

<sup>18</sup> Though the secondary literature in this area is relatively small, I note the following works as valuable contributions to this "new" line of thinking on heresy. I will present the works in chronological order in an effort to gain a picture of how and when this new direction emerged.

<sup>19</sup> Heinrich Schlier, "αἵρεσις," in *TDNT*, vol. 1, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) 180-184.

<sup>20</sup> Schlier, "αἵρεσις," 182-183 contends that αἵρεσις and ἐκκλησία are material opposites; the latter cannot accept the former and the former excludes the latter.

ἄρεσις and ἐκκλησία should (must) be considered material opposites.<sup>21</sup> In all, Schlier's introductory work to the study of ἄρεσις is instructive but his attempt at synthesizing the evidence is too cursory.

The beginnings of this “new” avenue in the study of heresy can be seen more clearly in a work by Marcel Simon.<sup>22</sup> Simon specifically sets out to examine the Greek evidence of ἄρεσις in an effort to explain how the term took on its specific Christian connotation of “heresy.”<sup>23</sup> He proceeds by noting the neutral usage of the term in its pre-Christian evidence, as well as in Acts. Skipping over the remainder of the New Testament evidence and moving on to the second-century and later occurrences, Simon notes that though ἄρεσις most often was used to demarcate heresy, it still was employed (at times) in other ways that reflect earlier interpretive trajectories of the term. After this, he returns to other New Testament and early Christian occurrences of the term and draws the following conclusions: (1) ἄρεσις takes on a pejorative coloring in Paul's usage of the term (Gal 5:20 and 1 Cor 11:19), (2) this pejorative aspect is enhanced further in subsequent occurrences (Tit 3:10; 2 Pet 2:1; *Herm Sim* 9.23.5; *Ign Eph* 6.2; and *Trall* 6.1), (3) ἄρεσις comes to demarcate “heresy” in the writings of Ignatius of Antioch, a meaning which hardens even further via the later production of the massive treatises on heresy, and (4) the pejorative meaning of ἄρεσις as “heresy” does not stem from its previous usage in

---

<sup>21</sup> Schlier received consistent criticism from subsequent writers on this very point; see, especially, Marcel Simon, “From Greek *Hairesis* to Christian Heresy,” in Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition: In Honorem of Robert M. Grant, *Théologie Historique* 54, eds. William R. Schoedel and Robert L. Wilken (Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1979) 106-108.

<sup>22</sup> Simon, “From Greek *Hairesis*,” 101-116.

<sup>23</sup> This is a similar task to the one that I take up in chapter seven. Additionally, it should be noted that though Simon uses Bauer as the entry point into his essay, he does not investigate the same type of questions that Bauer entertains. Historically speaking, the use of Bauer as the entry point into his article was almost unavoidable for any work on heresy published in the 1970s, which was the decade when the English translation of Bauer's book was released.

the Greek philosophical schools but from the association it developed with the term ἑτεροδοξία.

In all, Simon's work on αἵρεσις is commendable in that it was the first to identify some of the contours in the linguistic development of the term in early Christianity, as well as offering a hypothesis on when the term actually came to mean "heresy."<sup>24</sup> However, the strength of his study is diminished by his final point (number four above), since it lacked a firm foundation upon which to stand. His contention that the pejorative meaning taken on by ἑτεροδοξία during this period influenced a similar pejorative shift in meaning of αἵρεσις, offers a linguistic answer to his question. However, he nowhere offers clear evidence of the noted relationship between αἵρεσις and ἑτεροδοξία, let alone how the latter came to have such an influence on the former.<sup>25</sup> In the end, the reader is left with a sense of wonder as the essay ironically concludes not with a discussion of αἵρεσις (which along with heresy is the primary topic of his essay) but with an examination of ἑτεροδοξία.<sup>26</sup>

Roughly contemporaneous with Simon, Shaye Cohen published a work on the topic of heresy.<sup>27</sup> Cohen's study varies from Schlier's and Simon's in that he does not limit his focus solely to the Greek term αἵρεσις. He contributes to this "new" avenue in the study of heresy by attempting to identify how "the ancients themselves, those who came to be known as 'orthodox' or 'normative,' explain the

---

<sup>24</sup> My assessment of when αἵρεσις came to mean "heresy," as well as the identification of the various interpretive trajectories of the term in its NT evidence, can be seen in chapter seven.

<sup>25</sup> In all, Simon identifies some similarities between these two words but fails to show a causative relationship between the two.

<sup>26</sup> Simon's article is cited in many studies on αἵρεσις and heresy; which partially is due to the small amount of secondary literature on the topic. Yet, some cite his work uncritically. In sum, Simon offers a valuable initial contribution to this "new" approach to the study of heresy, but he still leaves some issues and/or texts either unaddressed or underaddressed, highlighting some gaps in his study.

<sup>27</sup> Cohen, "A Virgin Defiled," 1-11.

origin of heresy.”<sup>28</sup> Cohen’s interest is in how both the early Church Fathers and the Rabbis conceptualized the origins of heresy, though he tends to focus more on the latter since it has received much less attention than the former. After noting the commonalities between these two religious movements (i.e., Christianity in the second-century and beyond and Rabbinic Judaism), by noting their monotheistic underpinnings, book-centeredness (i.e., possessing a normative set of scriptures), and the primacy of revelation, he highlights the fact that they share a common response to heresy.

Cohen offers two possible backgrounds to this common response: (1) Hellenistic Jewish polemic against paganism and (2) the historiographical outlook of the Greek philosophical schools.<sup>29</sup> Though Cohen does not attempt to argue for either of these being the exclusive predecessor to early Christian and Rabbinic responses to heresy, he highlights what he deems to be their respective influences by noting:

I have attempted to show that these theories may have been influenced by the Oriental polemic against Hellenism, and by the theories of self-definition and authentication of the philosophical schools. Hence a paradox: at the ideological core of Christianity and Judaism, where truth is distinguished from error and orthodoxy from heresy, we find the influence of paganism. Athens and Jerusalem have much in common.<sup>30</sup>

In sum, Cohen’s study reflects a broader approach to the study of heresy than is seen in the above works. He moves away from the study of ἄρρεσις itself, choosing

---

<sup>28</sup> Cohen, “A Virgin Defiled,” 1.

<sup>29</sup> Cohen, “A Virgin Defiled,” 6-8.

<sup>30</sup> Cohen, “A Virgin Defiled,” 8.

instead to focus on the conceptualization of the origins of heresy in the second-century and beyond.<sup>31</sup>

Heinrich Von Staden, in an additional work on ἄρρεσις, sets forth a more narrow task by aiming

to trace the development of this use of *hairesis* as a group referent in Greek medical literature, and to explore what “group definition” or “group self-definition” might mean when the definiendum is thought of as a *hairesis*.<sup>32</sup>

In his examination of the term in Greek medical literature, he notes the following characteristics: (1) there was some development in efforts at doctrinal distinction within the philosophical schools, (2) polemics were sometimes exchanged in the need for (internal) justification, (3) ἄρρεσις is primarily a group phenomenon, (4) membership within an ἄρρεσις was a voluntary association, but (5) none of these references to ἄρρεσις in this body of literature is intrinsically pejorative. While Von Staden identified constant internal debate, doctrinal disagreements, and shifts in emphasis within these groups (i.e., those within the Greek medical literature), it did “not seem to have advanced the cause of normative self-definition significantly.”<sup>33</sup> In other words, the use of ἄρρεσις to describe certain groups did not result in their exclusion and, thus, the exclusionary sense of the term is absent.

After spending the bulk of his time with the Greek medical literature, he briefly surveys the New Testament evidence. Almost as if he was unaware of Simon’s work, he attempts to track how such a neutral usage of the term in the above

---

<sup>31</sup> It should be noted that, as Cohen is attempting to assess what the Church Fathers and Rabbis thought about the origins of heresy, his study does not move back to a period any earlier than the second-century of the common era.

<sup>32</sup> Heinrich Von Staden, “*Hairesis* and Heresy: The Case of the *haireseis iatrikai*,” in Jewish and Christian Self-Definition: Self Definition in the Graeco-Roman World III, eds. Ben F. Meyer and E. P. Sanders (London: SCM, 1982) 76. The highly stylized or narrow focus of Von Staden’s work is due to the fact that it was designed to fit in the larger McMaster project on self-definition in Judaism, Paganism, and Christianity.

<sup>33</sup> Von Staden, “*Hairesis* and Heresy,” 95-96.

literature could come to identify internal dissent, division, and deviation within Christianity. Yet, he does not contribute anything new in this area. Though his work furthers our understanding of the term in Greek medical literature, it does not advance our understanding of the development of ἄρρεσις or heresy in early Christianity, save that it did not arise directly from the Greek medical literature.

Probably the most important work in the “new” approach to the study of heresy is Allain Le Boulluec’s massive two volume work, La notion d’hérésie dans la littérature grecque II<sup>e</sup>-III<sup>e</sup> siècles.<sup>34</sup> In this work, Le Boulluec attempts to search for the origins of heresiology in a manner that was free from the value judgments and controversy sparked by Bauer and his questions/issues. He does not try to get back to or evaluate the conflicts themselves, but rather attempts to identify and reconstruct the conceptual model of truth and error that patterned the language and thought concerning theological diversity and conflict. In tracing the roots of heresiology, Le Boulluec analyzes the works of Justin Martyr, Hegesippus, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and finally Origen. The single most significant contribution of Le Boulluec’s work is the naming of Justin as the father of heresiology—according to Le Boulluec, Justin is the one who turned ἄρρεσις almost exclusively into heresy.<sup>35</sup> In addition to Le Boulluec’s analysis of such an immense amount of literature and his careful skill used in sifting it, he is to be commended for pushing the study of heresiology back further (i.e., to Justin) than previously had been done by other scholars.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> Allain Le Boulluec, La notion d’hérésie dans la littérature grecque II<sup>e</sup>-III<sup>e</sup> siècles, vols. I-II (Paris: Études Agustinienes, 1985).

<sup>35</sup> Le Boulluec, La notion, 21. Cf. Desjardins, “Bauer and Beyond,” 78.

<sup>36</sup> There are some other works that include a discussion of ἄρρεσις and heresy that also fall into this “new” avenue in the study of heresy, such as Koester, “Häretiker im Urchristentum,” 17-21 and Hans Dieter Betz, “Häresie: New Testament,” in TR, ed. Gerhard Müller, vol. XIV (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1985) 313-318. However, most all of these stem from various dictionaries or other reference works

In line with this “new” approach to the study of heresy, I will not take up the questions initiated by Bauer as primary objects of study. Rather, the questions and issues addressed in this thesis concerning heresy are more akin to those in the “new” avenue. Additionally, even though the thesis will share some similarities with studies in this “new” approach to the study of heresy, there are a unique set of parameters that define it. First, in line with Le Boulluec, and to a lesser degree with Cohen, I will focus here on the emergence of the conceptual category of heresy itself (as previously noted in this chapter). Though a philological analysis of ἄρρεσις plays an important role in the effort to track the emergence of the notion of heresy in early Christianity, the former is not equal to the latter. Therefore, I will not limit myself (*a la* Simon, Von Staden, and Schlier) to only a study of ἄρρεσις. The nature of my study will move beyond philological issues, to include historical, social, and rhetorical lines of inquiry; all with an aim of identifying the context out of which the conceptual category of heresy emerged.

Second, in contrast to Le Boulluec and Cohen, I will not focus on the second-century or beyond in the thesis.<sup>37</sup> In my effort to identify the context out of which the conceptual category of heresy first emerged within early Christianity (i.e., how the notion of heresy emerged within Christianity in the first place), it is necessary to work in a period before the notion (of heresy) had been formalized. Le Boulluec (and others) has highlighted the second-century as the period in which heresy begins to harden in Christian thought and writing (and it does so even more as time goes on

---

and do not really advance any of the contentions noted above. Therefore, I will not include a discussion of these in the primary text of the thesis.

<sup>37</sup> It should be noted that the precise question I am seeking to address differs from Le Boulluec’s and Cohen’s questions. Le Boulluec, ultimately, identifies the origins not of heresy but of heresiology, hence his concentration on nothing earlier than the mid-second century of the common era. Cohen’s question in his essay (i.e., what the Church Fathers and Rabbis thought about the origin of heresy) also dictated that he remained in roughly the same time frame as Le Boulluec. In all, neither of them turns to the first-century (or before) in their studies.

from that century). Therefore, I move to a chronologically earlier period, namely the first-century C.E. and parts of the Second Temple period, in an effort to satisfy the intentions of the thesis.

Third, I will attempt to offer not only an hypothesis for how the conceptual category first emerged, but also evidence to ground such a claim. Various hypotheses, such as the ones offered by Schlier and Simon noted above, have been offered to the question of how ἄρεσις came to assume the distinctive pejorative meaning of heresy. Yet, these (and other) studies remain hypothetical in nature, in that they lack the support necessary to substantiate them. Furthermore, they do not address fully the broader question that I am posing. In contrast, I will cite the social dynamic (since heresy is by definition a social phenomenon) of internal conflict as the primary context out of which the idea of heresy emerged and devote a great deal of space to substantiate such a claim through an analysis of primary literature.<sup>38</sup>

In all, these parameters, along with the ones mentioned in the first few pages of this chapter, highlight the novelty of the thesis. Though I share a similar focus with the “new” approach to the study of heresy noted above, the present thesis possesses its own set of characteristics that frame the work. The most prominent among these are (1) the focus on the emergence of the idea or conceptual category of heresy itself in early Christianity, (2) making the first-century C.E. and the Second Temple period the time frame under scrutiny, and (3) emphasizing the social dimensions of the concept of heresy.

---

<sup>38</sup> I first will endeavor to explicate exactly how heresy can be characterized phenomenologically as a type of internal social conflict (in chapter two). Then, I will give a great deal of space over to the aim of demonstrating how such a dynamic is evident in various situations in first-century Christianity and in at least one strand of late Second Temple Jewish sectarianism. My labors here are designed, in some measure, to avoid offering only a cursory “answer” to the question at hand.

### A Brief Outline of Chapters

The remainder of the thesis will progress in the following manner. In chapter two, I begin to explicate the methodological foundation for characterizing heresy as a social phenomenon. Built upon the notion that the concept of heresy is at its core a social phenomenon, I appeal to the social-sciences for insights on how it (i.e., heresy) might be conceptualized as such. Specifically, I appeal to the sociology of knowledge and an interactionist perspective on deviance in an effort to construct a typology of the social phenomenon of heresy. I undertake this task not in an effort to claim that heresy, in its ecclesiastical understanding, can be identified in a period prior to the second-century. Rather, assuming that the concept of heresy did not arise in a vacuum, I attempt to identify and describe the type of context from which the concept of heresy initially emerged.

In the next two chapters, I turn to two pieces of literature from the first-century, namely Galatians (chapter three) and parts of Revelation 2-3 (chapter four), as test cases for the viability of locating this internal social dynamic (noted as the social phenomenon of heresy in chapter two).<sup>39</sup> Thus, I utilize the typology of heresy formed in chapter two as the tool by which to decipher whether or not these noted dynamics of internal social conflict can be found in these first-century contexts. Ultimately, I conclude that these two settings of internal social conflict illustrate a likely context from which the conceptual category of heresy emerged.

---

<sup>39</sup> Here I have selected documents that represent two distinct time periods within the first-century. Galatians was composed in and reflects the mid first-century and Revelation (2-3) reflects a much later period (i.e., the last quarter or even last decade of the first-century). Furthermore, I have selected these documents as they allow the reader a comparatively fuller picture of the situation of conflict evident behind them. Therefore, while other first-century writings, such as 1 John, Jude, and 2 Peter, could have been included as additional test-cases, I have chosen not to utilize them due to the fact that they bear comparatively less information (concerning the contingent situation of conflict) than do the ones above. Also, space constraints have dictated that I limit the number of texts that I treat, due to the already expansive scope of the thesis.

Once I substantiate these first-century situations of internal social conflict as the context out of which the notion of heresy emerged, I then examine if such an environment is unique to the Christian movement in the first-century or whether there may be analogous settings prior to the first-century C.E. Based on the argument that the exclusiveness inherent to these situations of internal conflict, as well as the notion of heresy, requires a monotheistic religious framework, I turn my focus solely to Second Temple Judaism (since Jews were the only monotheistic religious group in the Roman world).<sup>40</sup> Here, I focus on the internal dynamics of conflict reflected in the sectarianism of the era by utilizing a phenomenological characterization of religious sects (i.e., how these sects can be characterized in phenomenological terms) developed by Bryan Wilson. In chapter five, I turn to the time around the beginning of the second Jewish commonwealth in an effort to highlight the tenor of this initial period of sectarian formation and internal diversification.

Then, in chapter six, I move down into the late Second Temple period in an effort to characterize the sectarianism that is expressed in the era. I do not attempt to characterize all sectarian groups of the time. Rather, I select two writings, namely the *Habakkuk Peshar* and the *Psalms of Solomon*, as examples of sectarian expression particular to the era. I ultimately note that these settings of internal social conflict in late Second Temple sectarianism, though not necessarily expressive of the entirety of the sectarianism of the time, begin to reflect dynamics that are similar to the first-century Christian situations of internal social conflict noted in chapters 3-4.

---

<sup>40</sup> In chapter five, I relate and build upon comments from several scholars who note that monotheistic religious structures are necessary for heresy to exist (in the religious sphere). Since Judaism was the only other religion in the ancient world that shared a monotheistic religious framework, and thus the potential for heresy, I turn to Second Temple Judaism to see if there are any settings of internal social conflict that are analogous to the first-century situations of internal deviance noted in chapters three and four.

In chapter seven, I endeavor to offer a diachronic construction of how the notion of heresy emerged within the first-century. In order to do so, I first undertake a study of the Greek term ἄρπεις. Here, I survey the New Testament evidence of the term in an effort to locate the various stages in its development, which in turn are informative for the development of the notion of heresy itself. As the term moves from possessing a neutral to pejorative to defamatory meaning in the New Testament evidence, I then appeal to aspects of linguistic theory, namely semantics and sociolinguistics, in an effort to (1) characterize the type of shift in meaning that occurred in ἄρπεις and (2) begin to locate any forces or factors that may have been influential in this linguistic transformation. Ultimately, I combine this analysis of ἄρπεις with the previous study of the dynamic of internal social conflict, as seen within the first-century and the late Second Temple period, to articulate a diachronic presentation of how it was that the notion of Christian heresy emerged.

Finally, in chapter eight, I identify the primary contributions made by the thesis to the scholarly study of heresy, as well as to other areas of Christian Origins scholarship.

## Chapter Two

### Towards a Social Understanding of Heresy

As briefly noted in chapter one, the subject of early Christian heresy has drawn much attention over the years. Yet, in the midst of this abundance of scholarship, it is surprising that critical assessments of the notion of heresy itself have been lacking. Most of the works by biblical scholars on early Christian heresy either lack any explicit characterization of the concept of heresy or, somewhat by default, employ a later, doctrinally-based definition (i.e., a significant doctrinal deviance from an established orthodoxy).<sup>1</sup>

The former option here reflects a methodological negligence and, thus, stands self-condemned.<sup>2</sup> The latter choice highlights how the ecclesiastical characterization of heresy has utterly dominated inquiries by biblical scholars on the subject. It

---

<sup>1</sup> An example of this methodological negligence can be seen in Marcel Simon, "From Greek *Hairesis*," 101-116. Bauer, in his Orthodoxy and Heresy, seems to fall into both of these characterizations. First, he shows very little self-conscious awareness of how he is employing the concept of heresy. Bauer, Orthodoxy and Heresy, xxii-xxiii simply states that "in this book, 'orthodoxy' and 'heresy' will refer to what one customarily and usually understands them to mean." David J. Hawkin, "A Reflective Look at the Recent Debate on Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity," Église et Théologie 7 (1976) 369 notes Bauer's lack of attention to his use of "heresy" and contends that "presumably he hoped thus to avoid confusion. In fact his lack of a precise definition has created confusion. Hawkin (370-371) further contends that his lack of a working definition of "orthodoxy" and "heresy" caused his study to "lack the conceptual tools" necessary to deal with the two categories. Even if we grant that Bauer has given some type of minimal characterization of the concept of heresy, it is one that falls squarely in the ecclesiastical definition of "heresy." For others who invoke the ecclesiastical characterization of the term/concept (often uncritically), see Von Staden, "*Hairesis* and Heresy," 76-100; V. Grossi, "Heresy-Heretic," in The Encyclopedia of the Early Church, vol. I, ed. Angelo Di Berardino, trans. Adrian Walford (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 1992) 376; and The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, eds. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone (Oxford: Oxford U. Press, 1997) 758, "Heresy." Finally, a recent work that offers some conscious reflection on the concept of heresy is Gerd Lüdemann, Heretics: The Other Side of Early Christianity, trans. John Bowden (Louisville: WJKP, 1996) 8. Yet, his brief description (i.e., as "deviations from a view of behaviour which is generally declared to be valid") is hardly a sustained reflection on the concept.

<sup>2</sup> With the stated aims of the present study in mind, one very quickly can see the inadequacy of neglecting an assessment of the nature of "heresy." If the nature of the concept of heresy is ignored,

appears as if the pervasiveness of the traditional definition has stifled, or at least not promoted, efforts at searching for the origins of the notion of heresy before the hardening of an orthodoxy in the second-century and beyond. In other words, I would contend that the study of early Christian heresy has suffered from a myopic view of the concept of heresy. The traditional definition has been employed by default, and often uncritically, resulting in the neglect of any other dimensions of the concept.

In this chapter, I will attempt to highlight an aspect of the conceptual category of heresy that has been neglected. I will strive to explicate the social dimensions of the notion of heresy. The justification for this is two-fold. First, heresy, at its most basic level, is connected to an environment of conflict within groups (i.e., social conflict). To preview briefly what is to come in this chapter, “heresy” is a label one group places on (an)other individual(s), including practices and beliefs, when a deviation from the established norms of the group has been perceived. The label is applied to highlight the person(s)/practice(s) as being beyond the pale of the group, even though the individual(s) in question seek(s) to retain “membership” in that group. As the label is successfully affixed to the individual(s), the person(s)/act(s) often becomes more widely-known as being heretical (i.e., beyond the pale of the group) and the norm in question hardens. Though complete records of precisely how a person/belief comes to be known (widely) as heretical are often unavailable (or have been obscured through time), it is rather axiomatic to note

---

little hope remains for discovering from what context the notion of Christian heresy first arises (i.e., it would be akin to searching for something without even knowing what it is that is being sought after).

that social labels do not arise independently from other social factors and forces.<sup>3</sup> The question then becomes: what social forces or factors stood in the background of and helped give life to this social label so often employed in early Christianity, namely “heresy”?

The second reason for turning to the social dimensions of the phenomenon of heresy is that scholars (of heresy) largely have ignored the use of social-scientific tools in their research.<sup>4</sup> Harrington brings this critique to Bauer in noting that “since Bauer was mainly concerned with the interactions between early Christian groups, the failure to invoke the researches of Max Weber and other sociologists as complements to his literary analysis is surprising.”<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, he advises that “those who intend to follow in Bauer’s footsteps must pay more attention to the basic concepts of sociology in working out the relations between ‘orthodoxy’ and ‘heresy.’”<sup>6</sup>

Based upon these observations, I will undertake (in this chapter) a critical examination of the conceptual category of heresy by exploring its social dimensions. Again, I do not contend that such a social characterization of the term/concept should be taken as normative. It should not be held to the exclusion of other dimensions

---

<sup>3</sup> I will return to this idea later on in the chapter when I am relating an interactionist perspective on deviance.

<sup>4</sup> The fact that scholars have not entered into critical examinations of the nature of heresy bears the above implication (i.e., that they too have ignored the use of social-scientific tools in the study of heresy).

<sup>5</sup> Harrington, “The Reception of Walter Bauer’s,” 298. Though Harrington notes the work of Max Weber in his critique of Bauer, I will not appeal specifically to Weber in constructing a social understanding of heresy. Yet, I will use other social-scientific studies for such an endeavor, as I deem them to hold more promise than Weber’s works for the present study.

<sup>6</sup> Harrington, “The Reception of Walter Bauer’s,” 298.

(e.g., theological, doctrinal, or historical) of the notion of heresy. I will explore the social dimensions of the phenomenon of heresy not only because they are foundational to the concept itself and have been neglected in research on the topic but, more importantly, because such a characterization of heresy offers a vehicle by which to get at the primary aim of the thesis. In other words, I will undertake an examination of the social dynamics of heresy because it will aid in the effort to identify the context out of which the Christian notion of heresy first emerged.

### “HERESY” AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

In addition to its neglect in the research of biblical scholars, the nature of heresy also has received very little attention from the social-sciences.<sup>7</sup> In fact, the only two authors who have approached heresy as a social topic both begin their respective works by noting this lack of attention.<sup>8</sup> Lester R. Kurtz observes that “the role of

---

<sup>7</sup> The social-sciences have been employed in NT studies in both quite helpful and unhelpful manners. Yet, due to the large number of works that utilize social-scientific tools, I am unable to address the topic here in full. For valuable resources related to the use of the social-sciences in biblical research, see Stanley Kent Stowers, “The Social Sciences and the Study of Early Christianity,” in Approaches to Ancient Judaism V: Studies in Judaism and Its Greco-Roman Context, ed. William Scott Green, BJS 32 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985) 149-181 and Philip Richter, “Social-Scientific Criticism of the New Testament: An Appraisal and Extended Example,” in Approaches to New Testament Study, eds. Stanley E. Porter and David Tombs, JSNT Sup 120, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 266-309. On the more specific issue of applying general social-scientific theory to historical contexts, see David Horrell, The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: Interests and Ideology from 1 Corinthians to 1 Clement (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996) 26-31 and Jack T. Sanders, “Paul Between Jews and Gentiles in Corinth,” JSNT 65 (1997) 76-77. Also, on social-scientific methodology in general, see Philip F. Esler, Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology, SNTSMS 57 (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1987) 6-12 and *idem.*, Review of The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: Interests and Ideology from 1 Corinthians to 1 Clement, by David G. Horrell, JTS 49 (1998) 253-260. Finally, on the employment of various sociological categories in NT research, see Bengt Holmberg, Sociology and the New Testament: An Appraisal (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990).

<sup>8</sup> Merlin B. Brinkerhoff and Kathryn L. Burke, “Disaffiliation: Some Notes on ‘Falling From the Faith’,” SA 41 (1980) 41-54 uses social-scientific analysis (namely the labeling approach to deviance)

heresy in the formation of orthodoxy is central, and yet heresy is little understood by sociologists.”<sup>9</sup> Likewise, George V. Zito notes that “a discussion of heresy has generally been neglected in the sociological literature.”<sup>10</sup> In short, with such a prominent concept (i.e., heresy), it is surprising to find that it still suffers from neglect in not only biblical scholarship but also the social-sciences.

Though the two above contributions represent important steps toward conceptualizing a social understanding of heresy, they are only an initial thrust; there is much more ground to be covered. Therefore, building upon these studies, I will seek to present a more holistic understanding of the social phenomenon of heresy. In this endeavor, I will appeal to (1) the social interactionist approach to deviance

---

but in a study of apostasy. While these two authors seem to use “apostasy” and “heresy” as interchangeable terms and concepts in their work, it should be noted that they can be distinguished phenomenologically. The key difference between the heretic and the apostate is found in his/her respective responses to the larger group. The apostate loses his/her allegiance to the group and its authority figures, voluntarily placing himself/herself outside the communal boundaries, and recants any commitment to the religion. In contrast, while it is possible that the heretic may lose faith in a particular communal authority, he/she remains firmly committed to the group (or at least its foundational beliefs and/or practices) and often sees himself/herself as preserving the true or pure faith of the group. Cf. Daniel Jeremy Silver, “Heresy,” in *EncJud*, vol. 8 (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1971) col. 358-359. On the further distinction between these two social categories, see George V. Zito, “Toward a Sociology of Heresy,” *SA* 44 (1983) 125 and Jeffrey Burton Russell, “Heresy: Christian Concepts,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade, vol. 6 (New York: MacMillan, 1987) 278.

<sup>9</sup> Lester R. Kurtz, “The Politics of Heresy,” *AJS* 88 (1983) 1085. Kurtz’s article also can be found in a slightly revised form as the first chapter in a later book of his entitle, *The Politics of Heresy: The Modernist Crisis in Roman Catholicism* (Los Angeles: U. of Californian Press, 1986) 1-17.

<sup>10</sup> Zito, “Towards a Sociology,” 123; cf. 130. Zito approaches heresy from the perspective of discourse analysis and, thus, sees heresy as first and foremost a linguistic or semiotic phenomenon. He picks up on a previous movement within the social-sciences that moved away from looking at events and processes and toward how those events and processes are talked about, understood, and discussed within a given speech community. Thus, Zito (129) contends that heresy “exists only in discourse, whatever its social derivatives.” While I commend Zito’s identification of heresy as being grounded as a social phenomenon, I would contend that he has overshot the mark in identifying heresy as only a linguistic or discursive phenomenon. Using Zito’s terms, my work is about investigating the social derivatives of the concept of heresy that underlie its later use in discourse. Ultimately, our works do not stand in opposition to one another, but in fact are complementary. They simply differ on a minor point of method.

(loosely known as “labeling theory”)<sup>11</sup> and (2) Peter Berger’s understanding of heresy from within his model of world-construction and world-maintenance.<sup>12</sup> These

---

<sup>11</sup> The number of scholarly works in biblical studies that have employed (at least some part of) a social interactionist approach to deviance is small but growing. The most prominent include: Michel Desjardins, “The Portrayal of the Dissidents in 2 Peter and Jude: Does it Tell Us More About the ‘Godly’ than the ‘Ungodly’?,” JSNT 30 (1987) 89-102; Bruce J. Malina and Jerome H. Neyrey, Calling Jesus Names: The Social Value of Labels in Matthew (Sonoma: Polebridge, 1988); *idem.*, “Conflict in Luke-Acts: Labelling and Deviance Theory,” in The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation, ed. Jerome H. Neyrey (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991) 97-122; Anthony J. Saldarini, “The Gospel of Matthew and Jewish-Christian Conflict,” in Social History of the Matthean Community: Cross-disciplinary Approaches, ed. David L. Balch (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) 38-61; Gerald Harris, “The Beginnings of Church Discipline: 1 Corinthians 5,” NTS 37 (1991) 1-21; Jack T. Sanders, Schismatics, Sectarians, Dissidents, Deviants, The First One Hundred Years of Jewish-Christian Relations (London: SCM, 1993); Helmut Mödritzer, Stigma und Charisma im Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt. Zur Soziologie des Urchristentums, NTOA 28 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht, 1994); Richter, “Social-Scientific Criticism of the New Testament,” 266-309; John M. G. Barclay, “Deviance and Apostasy: Some Applications of Deviance Theory to First-Century Judaism and Christianity,” in Modelling Early Christianity: Social Scientific Studies of the New Testament in its Context, ed. Philip F. Esler (London: Routledge, 1995) 114-127; *idem.*, “Who Was Considered an Apostate in the Jewish Diaspora?,” in Tolerance and Intolerance in Early Judaism and Christianity, eds. Graham N. Stanton and Guy Stroumsa (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1998) 80-98; Lloyd Pietersen, “Despicable Deviants: Labelling Theory and the Polemic of the Pastorals,” Sociology of Religion 58 (1997) 343-352; Craig Steven de Vos, Church and Community Conflicts: The Relationships of the Thessalonian, Corinthian, and Philippian Churches with Their Wider Civic Communities, SBLDS 168 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999); and Todd D. Still, Conflict at Thessalonica: A Pauline Church and its Neighbours, JSNTSup 183 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999). Only some of these works make an application of an interactionist approach to deviance to the epistolary literature of early Christianity, which is the object of my study in this thesis. Many of these studies focus on the Gospels, Jesus, and/or Acts (i.e., both of Malina and Neyrey’s works, Saldarini’s Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community, Richter’s study, and Mödritzer’s book). Sanders’ book and Saldarini’s essay overlap in the above applications but take the whole of early Jewish-Christian relations/the partings of the ways as their focus. Also, Barclay’s 1998 article stays within the confines of diaspora Judaism. Ultimately, the only works that utilize deviance theory in treating early Christian epistles are Barclay’s brief, but heuristically valuable, look at Paul and 1-2 Corinthians in his “Deviance and Apostasy,” Pietersen’s laudable assessment of the Pastoral Epistles, Still’s critical engagement of the social situation seen in 1 Thessalonians, and Harris’ incisive study of 1 Corinthians 5. In short, these latter four works best represent the methodological thrust of my thesis and, thus, provide the only primary dialogue partners on method. I owe a great debt to these works and their authors in that they, unknowingly, helped me to bring together many of my initial thoughts on heresy (via Barclay’s essays) and extended them to the primary literature that I desired to address (via Pietersen and Harris’ articles and Still’s book). Lastly, the deviance literature from the social-sciences will be reviewed below.

<sup>12</sup> The two books by Berger that I will draw upon are: Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge (New York: Penguin, 1966) and Peter Berger, The Social Reality of Religion [published as The Sacred Canopy in the United States] (Middlesex: Penguin, 1973). Both of these books have been utilized widely in biblical research. A sample of the more prominent works in NT studies that employ some of the concepts from these books are Esler, Community and Gospel; Francis Watson, Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: A Sociological Approach, SNTSMS 56 (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1986); and Margaret Y. MacDonald, The Pauline Churches: A Socio-historical Study of Institutionalization in the Pauline and

two theoretical elements from the social-sciences will help provide a greater understanding of the nature of heresy, as well as highlighting phenomenological markers distinct to it.

### I. An Interactionist Approach to Deviance

The sociology of deviance,<sup>13</sup> at its most basic level, endeavors to study deviations from norms. Thus, the broad, sociological definition of a deviant or deviance is an individual/group or act, respectively, that is deemed to be divergent from (a) given norm(s) of the group. In Kai Erickson's words: "the deviant is a person whose activities have moved outside the margins of the group."<sup>14</sup> While this broad understanding of deviance does not move us a long way toward understanding the specific concerns and questions that the sociologist of deviance entertains, it does provide a heuristic device that identifies two distinct approaches to the sociological study of deviance. As is recognized readily, the above characterization reveals two constituent parts to the sociological study of deviance: (1) the deviant/deviance and

---

Deutero-Pauline Writings, SNTSMS 60 (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1988). Again, I will address further both of Berger's works, as well as some of his critics, below.

<sup>13</sup> It is important to note that the sociological approach to deviance does not exhaust the category. Theoretical approaches to deviance also include the biological and pathological means. Cf. Still, Conflict at Thessalonica, 138. Yet, these latter two approaches to deviance (1) rely heavily on evidence that is gained via the surveying of individuals/groups and, thus, (2) are based primarily on statistical understandings of deviance. Therefore, (3) they are limited in their ability to explain and/or justify the results. For these different definitions that scientists use for deviance, see Howard S. Becker, Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance (New York: The Free Press, 1963) 3-8. Ultimately, since the objects of my study are literary accounts of social conflict in antiquity, and thus are unable to be tested empirically, these latter two options do not aid in my look at deviance. Therefore, I am left with and only will pursue a sociological study of the topic.

<sup>14</sup> Kai T. Erickson, Wayward Puritans: A Study in the Sociology of Deviance (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1966) 11.

(2) the given norms<sup>15</sup> of a group. Each of these two members represents one of the primary avenues by which deviance has been studied. The “traditional”<sup>16</sup> approach analyzes deviance primarily from the standpoint of the deviant/deviance and the “interactionist” approach, primarily from the group and its norms.<sup>17</sup> A highlighting of these two approaches is now in order.

The most common approach to the sociological study of deviance in the first half of the twentieth century (which I have called the “traditional” approach) was through the analysis of the deviant individual or act. The sociologists who approached deviance through this path, either consciously or unwittingly, held deviance to be a quality or characteristic inherent within the given “deviant” individual or act. In corollary, the research that stemmed from this period fell in line with this perspective and

accepted the common-sense premise that there is something inherently deviant (qualitatively distinctive) about acts that break (or seem to break) social rules. It has also accepted the common-sense assumption that the deviant act occurs because some characteristic of the person who commits it makes it necessary or inevitable that he should.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> There is a rich semantic range used to describe what the deviant has transgressed or infringed upon, including “norms,” “boundaries,” “margins,” “limits,” as well as other terms and phrases. These terms will be used rather interchangeably in this study, though not without a measure of caution.

<sup>16</sup> I utilize the term “traditional” to describe the primary understanding of deviance prior to and during some part of the 1950s, even though it was not described as such in the sociological literature on deviance at that time. However, I do not intend to minimize the diversity of thought on deviance theory even during this time period. Furthermore, I do not intend to indicate that the approach to deviance based on the deviant/deviance somehow ended in the 1950s or even 1960s; it continues in some circles even up to today. Ultimately, I simply am utilizing this term in order to identify and describe an understanding of deviance that was prevalent in that era.

<sup>17</sup> Again, I must note that while this distinction may seem to oversimplify the discipline, it greatly aids in making a distinction between two methods of approaching deviance and, ultimately, in understanding the particular aspects and historical context of the interactionist approach to deviance.

<sup>18</sup> Becker, *Outsiders*, 3.

In short, deviance was seen as an objective reality that could be observed within individuals and acts but which still existed apart from them.

As a result, sociologists asked questions such as: what makes a deviant a deviant? What is it about the deviant that leads to his or her deviant behavior? And what commonalities are shared by deviants? However, the “deviant” and the category of “deviance” remained a bit of an anomaly for sociologists. In focusing their analysis solely on the deviant, sociologists had made a critical assumption, namely, that “those who have broken a rule [i.e., deviants] constitute a homogeneous category, because they have committed the same deviant act.”<sup>19</sup> This assumption proved to be problematic for the sociological study of deviance. While there was a sociological category into which these persons could be placed, the category lacked any firm characteristics that bound its members together. Erickson, in 1966, observed that

like people in any field, sociologists find it convenient to assume that the deviant person is somehow ‘different’ from those of his fellows who manage to conform, but years of research into the problem have not yielded any important evidence as to what, if anything, this difference might be. Investigators have studied the character of the deviant’s background, the content of his dreams, the shape of his skull, the substance of his thoughts—yet none of this information has enabled us to draw a clear line between the kind of person who commits deviant acts and the kind of person who does not. Nor can we gain a better perspective on the matter by shifting our attention away from the individual deviant and looking instead at the behavior he enacts.<sup>20</sup>

Erickson concludes that “it soon becomes apparent that there are no objective properties which all deviant acts can be said to share in common—even within the

---

<sup>19</sup> Becker, *Outsiders*, 8.

<sup>20</sup> Erickson, *Wayward Puritans*, 5. Cf. Becker, *Outsiders*, 163.

confines of a given group.”<sup>21</sup> In short, the relative inadequacy of the “traditional” sociological approach to deviance (i.e., via the deviant and/or the deviant act) was exposed. “Deviance is not a simple quality, present in some kinds of behavior and absent in others.”<sup>22</sup> Neither is deviance a characteristic or trait embedded within certain individuals that somehow makes them “deviant.” In light of this, there ultimately was a building realization that another entry point (other than through the deviant/deviance) was needed.<sup>23</sup>

In line with the rise of the social constructionist perspective on social life, which flourished in the 1960s and 1970s, sociologists brought a fresh approach to the study of deviance. Instead of concentrating on the deviant/deviance, as in the “traditional” approach, sociologists now turned their attention toward the social dynamics behind the norms and the group who created and/or maintained them. They began to investigate what role social norms and social audiences played in the creation of deviance.<sup>24</sup> In short, the study of deviance was participating, on a micro-

---

<sup>21</sup> Erickson, Wayward Puritans, 5. Cf. Becker, Outsiders, 9.

<sup>22</sup> Becker, Outsiders, 14.

<sup>23</sup> The length or breadth of this “building realization” is difficult to measure historically. It reflects a significant shift in approach within the sociological study of deviance around the 1960s. Furthermore, my “re-telling” of the past study of deviance is not meant to provide value judgments or a normative assessment as to which approach is “right” or “best.” Rather, it is an attempt to portray a broad, yet significant shift in the sub-discipline. Thus, along with Barclay, “Deviance and Apostasy,” 115, “without making monopolistic claims for its value, I wish here to explore the potential of what has been termed the ‘interactionist’ or ‘societal reaction’ perspective” on deviance. Finally, for valuable works which survey the past study of deviance, see Marshall B. Clinard and Robert F. Meier, Sociology of Deviant Behavior, sixth edition (New York: Rinehart and Winston, 1985); Steven J. Pföhl, Images of Deviance and Social Control: A Sociological History, second edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994); and David Downes and Paul Rock, Understanding Deviance: A Guide to the Sociology of Crime and Rule-breaking (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

<sup>24</sup> Edwin M. Schur, The Politics of Deviance: Stigma Contests and the Uses of Power (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1980) 4 notes a shift in the types of questions that were being asked of deviance. He states that the more interesting and assessable questions for the sociologist are ones such as, “how does a type of behavior or condition come to be viewed and treated as ‘deviant’ in the first place?”

level, in a larger thrust within the sociology of the time by examining the topic as a social product. This “new” approach, which viewed deviance as a phenomenon resulting from the interaction between social groups, became known as the interactionist approach to deviance (and, later, rather loosely as “labeling theory”).<sup>25</sup> This approach can be summarized under the following headings: deviance as a social product and the deviantizing process.

### Deviance as a Social Product

The interactionist understanding of deviance is essentially a reaction against the “traditional” approach.<sup>26</sup> In the interactionist perspective, deviance was no longer seen as a quality or characteristic possessed by a person or act. Rather, it now was seen as a label or status conferred upon an individual or act by the group when the individual or act was perceived to have infringed upon or transgressed a group norm. Therefore, “the critical variable in the study of deviance...is the social audience [i.e., the group membership] rather than the individual actor, since it is the audience which

---

What factors influence the identification of, and reaction to, individual ‘offenders’? How do these reaction processes actually work? What functions do they serve, for the specific reactors or for society at large? What are the social consequences, for the individuals reacted to in this way, of being treated as ‘deviant’?”

<sup>25</sup> The “interactionist” perspective on deviance was the title proposed by Howard S. Becker to describe the above approach. Yet, while Becker was the first major proponent of this approach to deviance, its roots go back further. Today, Edwin M. Lemert, Social Pathology: A Systematic Approach to the Theory of Sociopathic Behavior (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1951) is seen as the chief forerunner of this understanding of deviance. Both Becker and Lemert were critical of “labeling theory,” which they considered to be a later outgrowth from their work. Becker claims that he was not working at the level of theory but merely as a way of looking at a process. For Becker’s response see chapter 10 (entitled “Labeling Theory Reconsidered”) which he included in the 1973 reprinted edition of his Outsiders. For Lemert’s criticism see the second edition of Human Deviance, Social Problems, and Social Control, Prentice-Hall Sociology Series, ed. Neil J. Smelser (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1972) 14, 25.

<sup>26</sup> Barclay, “Deviance and Apostasy,” 115 states that the interactionist perspective “questions whether deviance is an objectively definable entity at all.”

eventually determines whether or not any episode of behavior or any class of episodes is labeled deviant.”<sup>27</sup>

The classic statement that describes this approach to deviance, is made by Becker. He states that

social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance and by applying those rules to particular people and labeling them as outsiders. From this point of view, deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an ‘offender.’ The deviant is one to whom that label has successfully been applied; deviant behavior is behavior that people so label.<sup>28</sup>

Thus, in a very real sense, deviance is contingent wholly upon (1) the group’s perception that a norm of the group, in either an explicit (e.g., written law) or implicit (e.g., common custom, belief, or even opinion) form, has been infringed upon or transgressed and (2) the enforcement of the norm by the group.<sup>29</sup> If either one of

---

<sup>27</sup> Erickson, “Notes on the Sociology of Deviance,” 11.

<sup>28</sup> Becker, Outsiders, 9. Becker’s words can be found in almost any study or survey in the sociology of deviance since his writing of Outsiders.

<sup>29</sup> Lemert, Social Pathology, 31 relates a working definition of “norms” that I will utilize in this study. He states that “norms refer to limits of variation in behavior explicitly or implicitly held and recognized in retrospect by members of a group, community or society.” While many think of written law when the word “norm” is used, the term has a much wider significance. It includes everything as formal as written law, to those informal ideas and/or opinions that are held by most of a given group. In fact, there are many more informal norms than formal. Erickson, “Notes on the Sociology of Deviance,” 14 states that “a social norm is rarely expressed as a firm rule or official code. It is an abstract synthesis of the many separate times a community has stated its sentiments on a given kind of issue. Thus the norm has a history like that of an article of common law: it is an accumulation of decisions made by the community over a long period of time which gradually gathers enough moral eminence to serve as a precedent for future decisions. And like an article of common law, the norm retains its validity only if it is regularly used as a basis for judgment. Each time the group censures some act of deviation, then, it sharpens the authority of the violated norm and declares again where the boundaries of the group are located.” Cf. Erickson, Wayward Puritans, 12. Ultimately, enforcement can be seen as a tool which sharpens a norm and possibly even as a tool which helps “create” or “solidify” norms in the first place. A group may attempt to enforce a “norm” even though it has little, if any, normative status within the group. In this case, certain persons within the group attempt to assign normativity to the thought, belief, or opinion. Whether or not the given item is accepted as normative or not will depend on the relative power of the different sides involved in the struggle. It is at this point where one can see where “injustice” can enter into deviance defining and

these two elements is missing, then, technically speaking, deviance is absent (or at least goes unnoticed as such). Ultimately, then, “whether a given act is deviant or not depends in part on the nature of the act (that is, whether or not it violates some rule) and in part on what other people do about it.”<sup>30</sup>

According to this perspective, “deviance lies in the eyes of the beholders, not the metaphysical nature of things.”<sup>31</sup> The strongly relative and particularist character of this perspective on deviance is quite clear. Deviance is relative to the particular norms of a particular group in the context of a particular set of circumstances.<sup>32</sup> Thus, “the only way an observer can tell whether or not a given style of behavior is deviant, then, is to learn something about the standards of the audience which responds to it,”<sup>33</sup> because it is the perception of the group that ultimately will determine whether an individual/act is considered deviant or not.<sup>34</sup> The norms

---

where power can, and often does, take center stage. The strong (but not monopolistic) influence of relative power levels in deviance defining has been one criticism leveled at the interactionist approach. Yet it should be seen, more appropriately, as a criticism of the politics involved in deviance defining itself, and not of the perspective taken. I will address further how norms are sharpened through their enforcement at a later point in this chapter. Finally, on the development of norms see Lemert, Social Pathology, 31.

<sup>30</sup> Becker, Outsiders, 14. Here we see the combination of the normative and relative aspects of this approach to deviance noted by Still, Conflict at Thessalonica, 154-155.

<sup>31</sup> Malina and Neyrey, “Conflict in Luke-Acts,” 100. Barclay, “Deviance and Apostasy,” 116 also notes that the interactionist perspective on deviance is interested “as much in the labellers (‘Who is judging this activity to be deviant?’) as in the activity so labelled.”

<sup>32</sup> Nachman Ben-Yehuda, Deviance and Moral Boundaries: Witchcraft, the Occult, Science Fiction, Deviant Sciences and Scientists (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1985) helpfully notes that “while ‘deviance’ as a category is universal, a universal content of deviance is nonexistent. Deviance is essentially socially defined and is therefore always culturally relative.”

<sup>33</sup> Erickson, Wayward Puritans, 6.

<sup>34</sup> Schur, The Politics of Deviance, 12 states that “the reference to the ‘perceived’ deviator is important because a person can be reacted to, even ‘processed’ as deviant, regardless of whether he or she actually committed the objectionable act. Here, as in the collective perception of threat, it is the perception that counts. At an extreme, deviance processing can even go beyond ‘false accusation’ of particular individuals for acts that did occur and involve processing for totally imaginary ‘violations.’” Cf. Ben-Yehuda, Deviance and Moral Boundaries, 10. The words of Malina and Neyrey, “Conflict in

created and maintained (i.e., enforced) by the group will be ones that are particular to its own interests. In short, it is not simple enough to say that deviance is defined by a given society's norms or laws, because they are often unevenly enforced. Rather, it is much more of an accurate assessment to state that societies or groups apply their norms based on a number of different circumstances and it is only when a group has chosen to enforce its norms that the individual/act becomes labeled "deviant." Ultimately, "what makes an act socially significant as deviant is not so much that it is *performed*, as that it is *reacted to* as deviant and the actor accordingly labeled."<sup>35</sup>

As seen in the preceding statement, the reaction of a group to enforce a norm often will include the labeling<sup>36</sup> of the individual/act as "deviant."<sup>37</sup> While the initial response of the group to the individual/act deemed to be deviant is enacted by a simple decision, the effective labeling of the deviant/deviance is not always so easily accomplished. Once the initial infringement upon or transgression of the group norm has been perceived and (initially) labeled, sociologists then turn to assess the process of how the group attempts to deviantize the individual/act in an attempt to make the

---

Luke-Acts," 100, on the relationship between perception and deviance, are also instructive: "It is important to keep in mind the relationship of deviance to perception. Deviance intrinsically depends on the perceptions and judgments of others: (a) the social system shared by the members of the group is perceived to be violated; and (b) this violation is perceived precisely by those whose interests in that social system are jeopardized." Ultimately, to say that deviance is based on the "perception" of the given group does not invalidate the charge. Rather, it merely highlights the wholly relative and particular character of deviance, as seen in the interactionist perspective on it.

<sup>35</sup> Barclay, "Deviance and Apostasy," 116.

<sup>36</sup> It is within this later element of the interactionist approach to deviance that labeling theory is positioned.

<sup>37</sup> It is important to note that "deviant" and "deviance" are not the only labels which have the ability to mark an individual/act as deviant. As we will see below, there is a whole range of terminology that can be used to stereotype, reinterpret, and/or defame the individual/act as deviant. And the proper vocabulary for doing so will be entirely contingent upon the meaning of words and symbols within the particular circumstances of the given society. The relative nature of the interactionist perspective on deviance can be seen once again, here in the deviantizing process.

label stick. This is referred to, among other titles, as the “deviantizing process” and will be explicated below.

### The Deviantizing Process

As seen in the interactionist perspective, deviance is not a one-time event that suddenly clarifies right and wrong, deviant and non-deviant. Schur states that “at the heart of the labeling approach is an emphasis on process; deviance is viewed not as a static entity but rather as a continuously shaped and reshaped outcome of dynamic processes of social interaction.”<sup>38</sup> This process is one of ongoing social conflict over the norms of the group.<sup>39</sup> Here, one side attempts to brand the other as “deviant” and the other side attempts to refute and/or nullify the charge and label. While the sparks may be seen to fly only near the end of this conflict, the deviantizing process had begun (long) before that point and, often, will continue well past it.<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> Edwin M. Schur, Labeling Deviant Behavior: Its Sociological Implications (New York: Harper & Row, 1971) 8.

<sup>39</sup> John Lofland, Deviance and Identity (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969) 14 makes the connection between deviance and social conflict. He states that “deviance is the name of the conflict game in which individuals or loosely organized small groups with little power are strongly feared by a well-organized, sizable minority or majority who have a large amount of power.” Yet, while Lofland rightly associates deviance with conflict, he wrongly attributes elements of power and size to its definition. In short, the interactionist approach to deviance does not necessitate that the labelers be of the majority in size and power; nor does it require that those who are labeled be of the minority in these two measures. Schur, Labeling Deviant Behavior, 31 also notes one part of Lofland’s false distinction in saying “it may be more useful to consider power differentials as significant determinants of susceptibility and resistance to labeling processes than to build such differentials directly into a definition of deviance.” The relationship of the deviantizing process to relative power is not as static or simple as Lofland portrays. Schur, The Politics of Deviance, 7 contends that “deviance outcomes...both reflect and determine configurations of power. Indeed, in a sense it is only by observing their success—which we then attribute to the exercise of preexisting power—that we can determine who the powerful really are.” Thus, it is relative (not absolute) levels of power that are determinative for the outcomes of the deviantizing process and these levels of power only can be assessed accurately in retrospect. Cf. Schur, The Politics of Deviance, 8.

<sup>40</sup> It is important to note that scholars distinguish between primary and secondary deviance in this process. Primary deviation is concerned with why groups label an individual/act “deviant” and

The deviantizing process has its formal genesis in a group's initial attempt to label an individual/act as "deviant." Though the basis for the group's initial labeling is often difficult to decipher, the ultimate goal behind the labeling is much more readily observable. Labeling involves "an intricate rite of transition, at once moving the individual out of his ordinary place in society and transferring him into a special deviant position."<sup>41</sup> The general goal behind the deviantizing process is, thus, to transform the individual from a person of relative "normality" to a discredited "deviant." It is

the symbolic recasting of social role and identity so that the individual's 'virtual social identity' is discredited. In its place is substituted a 'master status trait'...that orients the reactions of others to the deviant, and establishes for the deviant a need to adjust to these reactions.<sup>42</sup>

---

secondary deviation involves how the social dynamics function once the deviant has been identified. The charges of the labelers (i.e., primary deviance) and the countercharges of the ones being labeled (i.e., secondary deviance) constitute the primary objects of analysis in the recent study of deviance. Yet, based on the intention of the thesis, as well as the type of literature being examined, I will focus only on primary deviance. In short, I am looking at how early Christian authors utilized the deviantizing process both to degrade the "deviant"/"heretical" individual and secure their own respective norms and power. Therefore, since the aim of my project is to assess only the behavior of the "labelers" (i.e., how and for what ends the early Christian authors utilized the deviantizing process against perceived "heretics"/"heresy"), the perspective of the "deviant"/"heretic" is not vital to my research. Second, the body of literature that will be the object of my research—i.e., various early Christian epistles—is written from the perspective of the labeler. Thus, it does not indicate consistently the responses of the individual(s) labeled "deviant." Therefore, any attempt to assess fully both sides of the deviantizing process in this type of literature would be difficult, if not futile, since the voice of the deviant is being filtered or muted by the labeler. While I will note any evidence that indicates the possible perspective of the "deviant" on the situation, I will proceed cautiously in doing so as not to rely too greatly on the labeler's account.

<sup>41</sup> Erickson, *Wayward Puritans*, 15. Harold Garfinkel, "Conditions of Successful Degradation Ceremonies," *AJS* 61 (1956) 420 calls this change in status a "status degradation ceremony." He defines this ceremony broadly as "any communicative work between persons, whereby the public identity of an actor is transformed into something looked on as lower in the local scheme of social types." Furthermore, Garfinkel notes that these ceremonies can be observed in any given structured society since it is the very structure itself that provides the sufficient conditions for identity degradation to occur.

<sup>42</sup> Charles S. Suchar, *Social Deviance: Perspectives and Prospects* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1978) 195. Cf. Becker, *Outsiders*, 33-34. Some examples of labels that might be used as 'master status traits' today are "alcoholic," "drug addict," "prostitute," "homosexual," and "drop out."

In short, the group attempts to alter or change the status by which the individual was known previously by replacing it with a new normative identity, namely that of a deviant.

Yet, the creation and affixation of a new deviant identity, for one who was not known previously as such, is not so easily achieved. Before this ultimate change in status can be accomplished, the group must effectively discredit the “deviant” individual in the eyes of the group membership.<sup>43</sup> Here, the labelers from the group attempt to obliterate the “old” identity by stigmatizing the individual. Stigmatization is the term used by sociologists to describe “a process attaching visible signs of moral inferiority to persons, such as invidious labels, marks, brands, or publicly disseminated information.”<sup>44</sup> Through the application of stigma, the labelers hope to depersonalize, degrade, and defame the individual, in hopes of convincing the group membership that the person actually is, and possibly always has been, “deviant.”<sup>45</sup> The most prominent sociological categories that are employed in the assigning of

---

<sup>43</sup> Garfinkel, “Conditions of Successful,” 422-423 presents an eight part typology of the elements necessary for a “successful” degradation ceremony. While Garfinkel’s typology presents a very thorough analysis of this type of degradation process, “successful” degradation does not require, necessarily, the satisfaction of all of these elements. Garfinkel has identified a general means by which a person may be degraded in public, but his typology may be too narrow to fit a wide-range of examples. Therefore, I will utilize some of the points made by Garfinkel, concerning successful degradation ceremonies, but will not employ his whole typology. For criticism of Garfinkel’s article and typology, see Schur, Labeling Deviant Behavior, 15-19.

<sup>44</sup> Lemert, Human Deviance, 42. While Lemert restricts the process of stigmatization to the attachment of morally inferior labels, there may be a whole range of bases from which a group will seek to stigmatize an individual. Lemert (44) further relates that stigmatization occurs “when others decide that a person is *non grata*, dangerous, untrustworthy, or morally repugnant.” Finally, on stigma, see the classic work by Erving Goffman, Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity (New York: Penguin, 1963).

<sup>45</sup> Schur, The Politics of Deviance, 147 states that deviance-defining “implies that the individual is nothing but an instance of the discredited category.”

stigma, beyond simple degradation,<sup>46</sup> are the following: stereotyping and retrospective reinterpretation.<sup>47</sup>

Both of these strategies, stereotyping and retrospective interpretation, can be seen as a subset of the process of stigmatization.<sup>48</sup> The means by which each of these strategies accomplishes the task of stigmatization is through the selective interpretation of the individual. In stereotyping, the labeler(s) extract(s) a single (or, possibly, a limited set of) trait from the individual's overall identity and attempts to re-form the person's identity around that particular characteristic. Thus, "stereotyping involves a tendency to jump from a single cue or a small number of cues in actual, suspected, or alleged behavior to a more general picture of 'the kind of person' with whom one is dealing."<sup>49</sup> Ultimately, the labeler hopes that the audience will relate to the "deviant" not as an individual but merely as an example of a social type, thus depersonalizing the "deviant."<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup> While Garfinkel, "Conditions of Successful," 421 dismisses simple degradation as an effective means of stigmatization, I will not omit the category in my later discussion of the deviantizing process. The comparative effectiveness of this strategy of stigmatization may be lower than others but it still retains some potential for degradation.

<sup>47</sup> See Schur, Labeling Deviant Behavior, 37-56 for a discussion of these two categories. Schur also mentions "negotiation" as a category by which deviance is imputed. Yet, since it is based on the active participation of the "deviant," and the voice of the deviant is not heard in the object of my study, I will omit a discussion of this process. Lastly, I do not intend to convey that the strategies of stereotyping and retrospective reinterpretation are the only ones used in stigmatization. Rather, they are two common categories of strategies used in stigmatization.

<sup>48</sup> Along with the deviantizing process itself, both stereotyping and retrospective reinterpretation should be seen as a process aimed at identity alteration.

<sup>49</sup> Schur, Labeling Deviant Behavior, 52. Note again that an individual may be successfully stereotyped regardless of whether the individual has actually committed the act that he/she has been charged with. "Successful" stereotyping occurs when the labeler is able to convince the audience (i.e., group membership) that the individual is merely an example of a larger social type and the audience, then treats the individual as such.

<sup>50</sup> For some of the further social consequences of stereotyping see Schur, Labeling Deviant Behavior, 51.

Likewise, the aim of retrospective reinterpretation also is the recasting of the individual's identity based on the isolation of a single character trait.<sup>51</sup> Yet, retrospective reinterpretation provides a much more holistic reworking of the individual's identity. Here, the trait that has been singled out is used by the labeler not only to transform the present identity of the individual, but also to reinterpret the individual's entire past. Through a re-reading of the character of the perceived deviant, the labeler constructs an entire history of deviance for the individual and, thus, contends that he/she is and always has been a "deviant."<sup>52</sup> Garfinkel notes this most severe form of stigmatization by stating that

the transformation of identities is the destruction of one social object and the constitution of another. The transformation does not involve the substitution of one identity for another, with the terms of the old one loitering about like the overlooked parts of a fresh assembly, any more than the woman we see in the departmentstore window that turns out to be a dummy carries with it the possibilities of a woman. It is not that the old object has been overhauled; rather it is replaced by another....The other person becomes in the eyes of his condemners [and, hopefully, the audience] literally a different and new person....He is reconstituted.<sup>53</sup>

In short, the labeler once again hopes that the audience will relate to the individual based on this entirely reconstituted identity, which serves to depersonalize, defame, and/or degrade the "deviant."

---

<sup>51</sup> On retrospective reinterpretation, see Schur, Labeling Deviant Behavior, 52-56 and Garfinkel, "Conditions of Successful" 420-424.

<sup>52</sup> See Schur, The Politics of Deviance, 13. Schur further notes that "retrospective interpretation is not restricted to official proceedings....It is, rather, a deep-seated tendency built into the deviantizing process at all levels of social interaction." For examples of the use of the category of retrospective reinterpretation in the analysis of societal behavior, see Kitsuse, "Societal Reaction," 95-97, where he analyzes societal reactions to homosexuality, and Lofland, Deviance and Identity, 150-151, where he looks at the media's characterizing of two murderers.

<sup>53</sup> Garfinkel, "Conditions of Successful," 421.

Ultimately, then, the deviantizing process is largely an act of persuasion. The labelers in the group attempt to stigmatize the individual in hopes of persuading the membership that the individual truly is deviant and, thus, that they are in the right. Yet, the “deviant” is not left without recourse. In opposition, the “deviant” individual can appeal to certain strategies of de-stigmatization in an attempt to convince the same audience that the label should not be or has been applied wrongly to him/her.<sup>54</sup>

Once again, we see that the audience (i.e., the membership of the group) is the key variable in the equation. They are ultimately the ones who will adjudicate these “stigma contests.”<sup>55</sup> If the “deviant” individual is able to convince the audience that the labels have been wrongly, inappropriately, or unevenly applied to him/her, then he/she may be able to salvage at least a portion of the previous, non-deviant identity.<sup>56</sup> However, if the group membership largely is persuaded by the

---

<sup>54</sup> The sociological process that describes this activity of the “deviant” is entitled “de-stigmatization.” The strategies of de-stigmatization are numerous and their “success” will depend entirely upon the set of circumstances present in that particular instance. J. W. Rogers and M. D. Buffalo, “Fighting Back: Nine Modes of Adaptation to a Deviant Label,” *SocProb* 22 (1974) 101-118 (106) presents a nine fold typology of responses to a deviant label: (1) acquiescence, (2) repudiation, (3) flight, (4) channelling, (5) evasion, (6) modification, (7) reinterpretation, (8) redefinition, and (9) alteration. Each of these responses involves a combination of individual strategies on behalf of the one labeled “deviant.” For other typologies of responses to stigma, see Carrol A. B. Warren, “Destigmatization of Identity: From Deviant to Charismatic,” *Qualitative Sociology* 3.1 (1980) 59-72 and Gregory C. Elliott, Herbert L. Ziegler, Barbara M. Altman, and Deborah Scott, “Understanding Stigma: Dimensions of Deviance and Coping,” *DB* 3 (1982) 275-300. Cf. Still, *Conflict at Thessalonica*, 162-164 where he has a section entitled, “Responding to Labeling.” Finally, for an application of Rogers and Buffalo’s and Warren’s typologies of de-stigmatization within NT studies see Richter, “Social-Scientific Criticism,” 274-309, where he takes Luke-Acts and the Pauline writings as his objects of analysis.

<sup>55</sup> I have taken this phrase from Schur, *The Politics of Deviance*, 8. He states that “one of the best ways of thinking about the entire area of deviance is in terms of what might be called stigma contests. In these continuing struggles over competing social definitions, it is relative rather than absolute power that counts most.”

<sup>56</sup> Yet, just as the individual who has been acquitted from the charge of murder may never completely be able to shake off that social tag, the one who is labeled “deviant,” even if found not to be “guilty,” may never fully be able to remove that social label.

stigmatization and deviantizing process of the labeler(s), then most likely: (1) the individual will come to be known as deviant within that given group; (2) the prominence of the labeler(s) will be enhanced (at least, temporarily);<sup>57</sup> and (3) the norm being enforced (at least the labeler's version of it) will be sharpened and become more established, often having a unifying or solidifying affect on the group.<sup>58</sup> Ultimately, the outcome(s) of the deviantizing process will have substantial impact upon all parties involved in the situation of social conflict.

In light of the above explication of the interactionist approach to deviance, I now will turn to address the nature of the phenomenon of heresy. Here, I will (1) look at the relationship of heresy to deviance and (2) examine the phenomenon of heresy (as a type of deviance) from the interactionist perspective. In short, I intend to detail an "interactionist understanding of heresy."

---

<sup>57</sup> Schur, The Politics of Deviance, 6 writes, "by the same token, of course, placing some persons in these disvalued categories necessarily implies valued status for others, the so-called conformists. It is their rules that are applied, their standards that are legitimated, their 'respectability' and power that are sustained and reinforced. We can see, then, that the power at stake in deviance-defining directly affects specific individuals and somewhat less directly affects the relative standing of various groups or segments within a society."

<sup>58</sup> Numerous sociologists have observed that deviance, if successfully rebutted, can actually solidify the boundaries of the group and unify the people of the given community. This aspect of deviance was developed by (though not necessarily originated with) Émile Durkheim in the 1930s—see her, The Division of Labor in Society, trans. George Simpson (Glencoe: Free Press, 1964). In the middle of the twentieth century, Kai Erickson (see his Wayward Puritans) and especially Lewis A. Coser (see his, The Functions of Social Conflict (Glencoe: Free Press, 1956) enhanced and applied this outgrowth of deviance studies to various circumstances. More recently, Ben-Yehuda (in his Deviance

## II. Heresy and Deviance

Heresy and deviance share a kinship as social phenomena. Alongside deviance, heresy is socially constructed, socially processed, and has social consequences.<sup>59</sup> Thus, Zito concludes that heresy is “a thing of a distinctly social kind, directly related to social deviance.”<sup>60</sup> The familial relationship shared between these two concepts stems from their common origins. They both emerge from a setting of social conflict. Heresy, like deviance, emerges when “the interests of conflicting parties become attached either to a defense of the alleged heresy or to the refutation of it.”<sup>61</sup> In short, the phenomenon of heresy is well-suited to be examined from a social interactionist perspective. Yet, before taking up this task, I will explicate the precise relationship of heresy to deviance.

While the phenomena of heresy and deviance overlap a great deal as social categories, they are not identical entities. The phenomenon of heresy is a subset of the deviance category, namely internal deviance.<sup>62</sup> Therefore, the social phenomenon of heresy is a form of deviance that occurs within the particular

---

and Moral Boundaries) has re-worked and made further application of this concept. Yet, I will not explore this aspect of deviance analysis at this point.

<sup>59</sup> Kurtz, “The Politics of Heresy,” 1088-1091.

<sup>60</sup> Zito, “Towards a Sociology,” 125.

<sup>61</sup> Kurtz, “The Politics of Heresy,” 1088.

<sup>62</sup> For the necessity of the heresy/heretic being an internal agent, see Kurtz, “The Politics of Heresy,” 1085, 1087; Zito, “Towards a Sociology,” 125; Russell, “Heresy: Christian Concepts,” 276; and G. A. Buckley, “Heresy, Sin of,” in NCE, vol. VI (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967) 1069. The “internal” dimension of heresy, as a type of deviance, is not an unimportant distinction. As is recognized broadly, internal deviance often is seen as the most contested, heated, and bitter form of group conflict. In short, while external deviance brings a varied level of threat to the current identity of the given group, internal deviance brings the possibility of threatening the group’s actual existence or, at least, its unique identity. Therefore, the social dynamics involved in heresy, as opposed to another form of deviance, may differ not only in nature, but also in degree.

confines of a given group.<sup>63</sup> Now, I will attempt to highlight further the kinship shared between the social phenomena of deviance and heresy by examining heresy from a social interactionist perspective.

### A Social Interactionist Approach to Heresy<sup>64</sup>

The relative neglect of the nature of heresy in the literature of the social-sciences prevents one from charting the approaches taken to the topic because there simply are not any approaches to note.<sup>65</sup> Likewise, scholarship on early Christian heresy, which has been preoccupied largely with Bauer's questions, also lacks any explicit approaches taken to the topic. Yet, while these latter studies do not reveal much in the way of a conscious methodological approach to heresy, they do belie an implicit methodological tendency.

Along with being preoccupied with Bauer's questions, scholars involved in the ensuing dialogue on early Christian heresy also largely have followed Bauer by

---

<sup>63</sup> Heresy, as a type of deviance and a social phenomenon, should not be seen as a functional equivalent to other social categories, such as infidelity, apostasy, sect, or schism. Each one of these social concepts possesses its own unique set of phenomenological markers and, thus, can be differentiated from heresy. For more precise distinctions between heresy and these other proximate social phenomena, see Russell, "Heresy: Christian Concepts," 278-279; Kurtz, "The Politics of Heresy," 1085, 1087; Zito, "Towards a Sociology," 125; Alan F. Segal, Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports About Christianity and Gnosticism, SJLA 25, ed. Jacob Neusner (Leiden: Brill, 1977) 5; Silver, "Heresy," col. 358-359; S. L. Greenslade, Schism in the Early Church (London: SCM, 1953) 15-34; and Buckley, "Heresy, Sin of," 1069.

<sup>64</sup> In this interactionist understanding of heresy, I will not relate a complete social-scientific understanding of the topic; such an endeavor would require (justifiably) an entire dissertation in and of itself. Rather, I am attempting to relate a basic understanding of heresy, as a type of deviance, from an interactionist perspective that will aid in the identification and interpretation of early Christian responses to internal deviance.

<sup>65</sup> Though there is no "traditional" method by which to study heresy (which is due to the neglect of the concept in the social sciences and biblical studies), the term can be used to describe a definition of heresy that commonly was accepted by Christian writers from the late second century onward—i.e., heresy as a significant doctrinal deviance from an established orthodoxy.

taking the heresy/heretic as the primary object of their research. Therefore, they put forward questions such as: what is the theological make-up of the heresy? To what historical group is the heretic/heresy most likely connected? And can the development of a given heretical group be tracked and/or located in later Christianity? In short, this entry point (i.e., through the heresy/heretic) has been accepted, either consciously or unconsciously, as the proper methodological vantage point from which to study heresy. Therefore, those in New Testament and early Christian studies have been taught much about the heretics but often very little (if anything) about how the heresies/heretics came to be known as such. In short, issues, such as the standard by which an individual/act is labeled heretical and who it is that is wielding the labels of “heresy” and “heretic,” have been largely ignored. Scholars of early Christian heresy have failed to take account of the social dynamics that create and produce heresies and heretics. They have failed to see heresy from a social interactionist perspective.

Heresy, as a particular type of deviance, lends itself well to a social interactionist approach. In fact, though it may be slightly overstated, heresy is held by some to be a social phenomenon that “can only occur within an interactional framework.”<sup>66</sup> Heresy is birthed, at least initially, in the interactional dynamics of a given social group (i.e., it is socially constructed).<sup>67</sup> Since definitions of “heresy” will vary greatly between and even within groups, there is, necessarily, no objective

---

<sup>66</sup> Zito, “Towards a Sociology,” 125 [emphasis mine].

<sup>67</sup> See Kurtz, “The Politics of Heresy,” 1088.

content to the term/concept.<sup>68</sup> Likewise, in line with the study of deviants, there is no trait or quality present in any given act or individual that somehow makes them inherently heretical.<sup>69</sup> Rather, heresy is a subjectively characterized entity. In line with an interactionist perspective, heresy is a label or status conferred upon an individual/act by a given group. Therefore, heresy is a malleable term/concept, one that is assigned specific contextual meaning based on the subjective wishes of the ones who are wielding it.<sup>70</sup> Thus, the term/concept of heresy is not designed to relate an “accurate” (i.e., objective) description of a given individual/act, but to prescribe a subjectively determined meaning to a person or action. Ultimately, then, heresy like deviance is a label whose (precise) meaning is created and re-created over and over again, by social groups, relative to the particular context of social conflict in which it is utilized.

---

<sup>68</sup> Russell, “Heresy: Christian Concepts,” 276 notes that “what is permissible opinion in one period becomes objectionable heresy in another period.” See Russell, “Heresy: Christian Concepts,” 276-278 for some examples of the changing views on heresy throughout the history of Christianity.

<sup>69</sup> In short, while objective qualities may be assigned to the phenomenon of heresy by a given group, the phenomenon of heresy, itself, lacks any objectivity. All meaning that is possessed by a given instance of the term/concept of heresy is assigned meaning.

<sup>70</sup> Russell, “Heresy: Christian Concepts,” 277 states that “heresy is not a well-defined term, and in fact there can be no such thing as a history of heresy. Heresy is not a subject, for it is not a coherent concept. It has no core, and no borders, only a set of vaguely overlapping phenomena....Heresy, therefore, must always be studied *pari passu* with orthodoxy in terms of the general intellectual, social, and cultural movements of the time.” In Russell’s statement on the concept of heresy and the study of it, three key elements are noted which I have incorporated in my research project. First, heresy must be studied phenomenologically if one desires to pursue the topic both synchronically and diachronically. Second, heresy must be studied alongside an orthodoxy or, as I would term it, the norms or limits of the given group that has wielded the label. The term/concept of heresy informs the outside observer more about the (boundary formation of the) given group, than the individual/act perceived to be “heretical.” Finally, the existing social environment greatly influences any understanding of a particular “heresy” since the concept is so deeply socially grounded.

As mentioned above, the primary location from which heresy emerges is social conflict.<sup>71</sup> Thus, it is created in the “heat of the battle,” which, in the case of heresy, is an internal one. While the precise point at which a given group will label some person or action “heretical” will vary from group to group (based on differing understandings of heresy), the simple birthing of heresy requires only two elements to be present. The creation of heresy, in line with deviance, necessitates (1) the group’s perception that a norm (of the group) has been infringed upon or transgressed and (2) an attempt by the group to enforce the given norm. If either one of these elements is missing, the social phenomenon of heresy has not been created and, therefore, does not exist.

One element necessary for the creation of the social phenomenon of heresy is (at least) the perception that a group norm has been infringed upon or transgressed. When seen from an interactionist perspective, heresy does not even exist if a norm is not (at least) perceived to have been infringed upon.<sup>72</sup> In short, heresy (as a type of deviance) must be deviant based on some standard of measure (what I have identified as a group norm). The standard used to determine if an individual/act is heretical or not, may range from something as formal as a written law or codified doctrine, to an informally accepted belief or commonly held ritual practice. Furthermore, it is even possible that an opinion/belief which has very little (if any) normative status within the group, could become the litmus test for demarcating the heretical.

---

<sup>71</sup> See Kurtz, “The Politics of Heresy,” 1088.

<sup>72</sup> In other words, where there is no perceived infringement upon a group norm, there is no heresy. Here, the perception of the group is as important for characterizing heresy as it is deviance.

Alongside the group's perception of an infringed upon or transgressed norm, a second element necessary for the creation of heresy is a response by the group to the given individual/act.<sup>73</sup> In short, for heresy to be actualized, the group must make an attempt to enforce the norm that has been perceived to be infringed upon or transgressed. If the group decides that it will not attempt to enforce a given norm, even in light of a seeming transgression of it, the normative status of that given communal limit will diminish, if not entirely fade away.<sup>74</sup> Here, the group has conceded "victory" to the opposing individual/act and likely will adjust its system of norms accordingly. Yet, on the other hand, if a norm is enforced successfully by the group then it will be sharpened and, often, rise in prominence within the group. Ultimately, then, heresy is a form of social conflict and deviance that necessitates a response from the group, which will be based on the collective valuing of the given norm.

The two elements necessary for the creation of heresy (i.e., the perception of an infringed upon or transgressed norm and an attempt to enforce it) reveal both the relative and normative aspects of an interactionist understanding of heresy. Heresy is relative to the particular norms of a particular group in a particular context. Therefore, heresy is both diachronically and synchronically, as well as geographically and culturally, relative to a given group's (or even sub-sections

---

<sup>73</sup> Zito, "Towards a Sociology," 126 notes that "what we recognize in a statement as heretical is its ability to produce in the faithful a cry of outraged hostility." He also notes this response of outrage as the difference between simple competing claims and heresy.

<sup>74</sup> As noted in the above discussion of deviance, norms are sharpened and become more prominent when the group attempts to enforce them. Likewise, the converse idea of this statement is also socially accurate. Those norms that do not necessitate enforcement, either because they lie

within a group) understanding of it.<sup>75</sup> It is precisely the differing understandings of heresy, both diachronically and synchronically, that relativize the term/concept.

Yet, ironically, an interactionist understanding of heresy also reflects a “normative” aspect. The persons in the group who bring forth a norm by which to judge the perceived “heresy,” are attempting to make the communal limit normative for, at least, that given situation. They are attempting to establish the normative (or, more accurately, relatively normative) basis of the group limit by means of the charge of heresy. Ultimately, since a given charge of heresy is predicated solely on the perception and reaction of the group membership, heresy lies entirely in the eyes of the beholder. When a group applies the label and charge of heresy to a given individual/act, it is based entirely on its own prerogative and is a reflection of its own interests.

While the creation of heresy is based simply on the perception and response of the group, the “successful” attachment of the label (i.e., heresy) usually is based on a much longer and more complex process; a process in which those who have brought the charge of heresy attempt to persuade the communal membership (i.e., the

---

unprovoked or because the group chooses not to uphold them, will fade into the background or desist entirely.

<sup>75</sup> It would be accepted readily by most that definitions and understandings of heresy will change over time. For some examples of the diachronic changes in Christian definitions of heresy, see Russell, “Heresy: Christian Concepts,” 276-278. Yet, it is also readily apparent that definitions of heresy will vary synchronically, both between and even within groups. It is quite possible and probable that a person who is known as a heretic to some members of a given group, may not be known as such by other members of the same group. One person’s heretic may be another person’s hero. Finally, it should be noted that, within a given group, the relative notion of heresy can take on a more fixed meaning. Russell (276) states that “inherently a relative notion, heresy takes on a more solid, definable form whenever a fixed authority is generally accepted by the community, an authority the community trusts to judge between orthodoxy and heresy.” Yet, though notions of heresy may become more or less fixed within a given community, it is unlikely that every member of the

audience) to follow their interpretation of the situation. As with deviance, the labelers will employ stigmatizing tools, such as simple degradation, stereotyping, and retrospective reinterpretation, to accomplish this end.<sup>76</sup> In opposition, the one that is labeled “heretical” may attempt to counter the charge by persuading the audience that the label should not be or has been applied wrongly to him/her.<sup>77</sup> Again, the membership of the group is the key variable in these stigma contests regarding charges of heresy. If the group membership is not convinced of the given charge of heresy, then the proposed norm will diminish or fade from sight entirely and the authority of the ones who brought the charge will be lacking. Conversely, if the audience successfully is persuaded by the labelers, then the individual/act will come to be known as heretical, the authority and prominence of those bringing the charge most likely will be enhanced, and the proposed norm will be sharpened. Ultimately, then, charges of heresy (as well as deviance) are acts of persuasion that occur not at a single point in time but in a (long) process.

In summary, social interactionism provides an interesting and appropriate, if not necessary, perspective by which to approach the phenomenon of heresy. Here it serves as a “sensitizing concept”<sup>78</sup> that highlights the previously neglected social

---

community would advocate adhering to precisely the same set of norms. Thus, at least a strand of the relative nature of heresy (always) remains intact.

<sup>76</sup> Since heresy is a type of deviance, the tools of persuasion will be similar to those described above.

<sup>77</sup> Likewise, the tools of persuasion used by the one labeled a heretic will be similar to those identified above in the process of destigmatization. Yet, again, since the evidence being scrutinized in this project does not identify the countercharges made by those labeled, I will not undertake an analysis of this portion of the hereticizing process.

<sup>78</sup> The ways in which the interactionist approach to deviance has been utilized in NT studies varies widely; see Still, Conflict at Thessalonica, 136. In this study, I will follow Schur, Labeling Deviant Behavior, 26, 31 and Barclay, “Apostasy and Deviance,” 118 by utilizing the interactionist approach in a limited sense; as a concept which sensitizes us to social aspects that were previously overlooked

dynamics involved in the phenomenon of heresy. Through an interactionist approach, heresy is seen to be an entity which is both a social product and a social process. Heresy is created in the midst of internal social conflict and evolves as a process involving (at least) social labeling, stigmatization, and, if successful, a degradation or reinterpretation of the individual/act. Ultimately, an interactionist perspective makes vivid the social nature of the phenomenon of heresy.<sup>79</sup>

While an interactionist approach to deviance aids greatly an understanding of the social nature of heresy, it does not exhaust the subject. In complement to it, I will appeal to Peter Berger's understanding of heresy, within the framework of world-construction and world-maintenance. Berger's works identify several broad phenomenological markers that will aid in the identification of the social

---

or neglected. Schur, *Labeling Deviant Behavior*, 37 notes that "there is really little in the labeling approach that is strikingly new from the point of view of sociological theory. At the same time, the potential...for renewed attention to some central but neglected sociological concepts and for general adoption of a new 'stance' in addressing problems of deviance and control suggests that the labeling orientation can provide something that other approaches have not adequately provided." Thus, in my study of heresy, I intend to utilize an interactionist approach to highlight various social aspects of the phenomenon of heresy which have been neglected or gone unnoticed in previous research.

<sup>79</sup> Here, I have provided only a brief sketch of the "hereticizing" process, through which charges of heresy are actualized or nullified (or something in between). In existential situations, the "hereticizing" process may be described and developed more fully based on the labels, tools, and strategies actually employed in the particular response to internal deviance or heresy. Therefore, in chapters 3-4, I will explore the "hereticizing" process within early Christianity. More specifically, I intend to explore how the "hereticizing" process may be seen in the responses of various early Christian writers to internal deviance. In line with the interactionist approach noted above, I will attempt to examine how these responses to "internal opponents" created an environment from which the notion of heresy later emerged. Therefore, in line with an interactionist perspective, I will attempt to mark the phenomenon of heresy by identifying the components of the "hereticizing" process in the responses of various early Christian writers to internal deviance. I will attempt to access the phenomenon of heresy not through the heresy/heretic but via the response of the group to the heresy/heretic. Below, I relate a complementary understanding of heresy which will aid in this process.

phenomenon of heresy within a given (literary) account of a situation of internal social conflict.<sup>80</sup>

### III. Peter Berger's Understanding of Heresy within His Framework of World-Construction and World-Maintenance

The sociology of knowledge, as a discipline, endeavors to explore the social dimensions of reality. In more technical jargon, the discipline is dedicated to social constructionism, a composite term sometimes applied to “theories that emphasize the socially created nature of social life.”<sup>81</sup> Much of the work of Peter Berger fits within this type of focus on social life.<sup>82</sup> His contention is that “reality is socially constructed and that the sociology of knowledge must analyze the process in which this occurs.”<sup>83</sup> In specific, he and his co-author, Thomas Luckmann, explore how reality-worlds are socially constructed and maintained. It is precisely this aspect of Berger's work that is of importance for the present thesis. Below I will (1) recount the sociology of knowledge-based model of world-construction and world-maintenance, as presented by Berger and Luckmann and further explicated by Berger

---

<sup>80</sup> Berger's works and a social interactionist approach to deviance complement each other in a characterization of heresy because they both see deviance/heresy as (1) a social entity (i.e., as being socially derived and are social processes), (2) stemming from social conflict, and (3) involving the use of labels. Thus, the two theoretical elements should be seen as complementary understandings of heresy, due to the fact that they share the same approach to social life (including deviance/heresy), namely social constructionism. Furthermore, Berger's understanding of heresy, from within a context of world-construction and world-maintenance, actually further fleshes out the deviantizing or “hereticizing” process described in the interactionist literature on deviance. For a study (in NT scholarship) that combines deviance theory and elements of Berger's analysis of socially constructed worlds, see Harris, “The Beginnings of Church Discipline,” 1-21.

<sup>81</sup> The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, “Social Constructionism,” 484.

<sup>82</sup> Berger often is seen as the one whose works spurred the rise of the sociology of knowledge and social constructionism.

<sup>83</sup> Berger and Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality, 13.



in *The Social Reality of Religion*,<sup>84</sup> and (2) locate the place and function of heresy within it.

### Berger's Theory of World-Construction

"Every human society is an enterprise of world-building."<sup>85</sup> This is Peter Berger's opening assertion in *The Social Reality of Religion*. The justification for this critical comment is based on his understanding of society. Berger understands society to be a dialectical phenomenon. Society is a product of humanity as well as a producer of humanity. He contends that these two assertions are not contradictory but merely reflect the empirical reality of society. In fact, he argues that "only if this character is recognized will society be understood in terms that are adequate to its empirical reality."<sup>86</sup> According to Berger, this fundamentally dialectical process of world-construction consists of three moments or steps: externalization, objectivation, and internalization.<sup>87</sup>

Externalization describes the process by which human beings create the world around them.<sup>88</sup> According to Berger, externalization is an anthropological necessity due to the uniquely unfinished character of humanity.<sup>89</sup> In contrast to most other higher species animals which have their worlds almost wholly programmed from birth, human beings must fashion their own world (i.e., culture) through their

---

<sup>84</sup> Berger, *The Social Reality of Religion*. Here, Berger is engaged in an exercise in sociological theory. He seeks to "apply a general theoretical perspective derived from the sociology of knowledge to the phenomenon of religion."

<sup>85</sup> Berger, *The Social Reality of Religion*, 3.

<sup>86</sup> Berger, *The Social Reality of Religion*, 3.

<sup>87</sup> Berger insists that these three moments or steps must be understood as a unity for an empirically adequate view of society to be maintained.

<sup>88</sup> See Berger, *The Social Reality of Religion*, 4.

<sup>89</sup> See Berger, *The Social Reality of Religion*, 4-6 and Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 65-70.

own activity.<sup>90</sup> Ultimately, Berger contends that the onset of world-creation via externalization is both functionally necessary and biologically inevitable for the human being.

The second step in world-building is what Berger calls “objectivation.”<sup>91</sup> In this second step or moment, the externalized world begins to taken on a reality separate from the source of externalization. “It stands outside the subjectivity of the individual as, indeed, a world. In other words, the humanly produced world attains the character of objective reality.”<sup>92</sup> Society now possesses a coercive power that enables it to confront, direct, sanction, and punish individual human conduct. In fact, Berger contends that “the final test of its [i.e., society’s] objective reality is its capacity to impose itself upon the reluctance of individuals” or “‘bring back into line’ recalcitrant individuals or groups.”<sup>93</sup> Ultimately, objectivation is the stage of world-construction when the objectivity of the world compels the individual to recognize it as real.

The objectivated world, however, remains just that, objective. For a constructed world to endure it must move from objective to subjective reality in the eyes of those who exist in it. This final step in the dialectical process of world-construction is internalization. “Internalization” is

the reabsorption into consciousness of the objectivated world in such a way that the structures of this world come to determine the subjective structures of consciousness itself. That is, society now functions as the formative agency for individual consciousness. Insofar as internalization has taken place, the

---

<sup>90</sup> Berger, The Social Reality of Religion, 6 notes that since culture is a human product, “its structures are, therefore, inherently precarious and predestined to change.”

<sup>91</sup> Berger, The Social Reality of Religion, 4 defines “objectivation” as “the attainment by the products of this activity [i.e., externalization] of a reality that confronts its original producers as a facticity external to and other than themselves.”

<sup>92</sup> Berger, The Social Reality of Religion, 9.

<sup>93</sup> Berger, The Social Reality of Religion, 11-12.

individual now apprehends various elements of the objectivated world as phenomena internal to his consciousness at the same time as he apprehends them as phenomena of external reality.<sup>94</sup>

In short, internalization is not complete in the mere apprehension of the externalized facticity but in the personal connection to it. The means by which internalization occurs is socialization. New generations and members are socialized into the constructed world when individuals identify with and are shaped by the objectivated meanings.<sup>95</sup> While internalization is critical to the continued existence of the constructed world, it must always be seen in connection with the other two moments of this dialectical process. “It is through externalization that society is a human product. It is through objectivation that society becomes a reality *sui generis*. It is through internalization that man is a product of society.”<sup>96</sup> Ultimately, this process is never completed; it simply continues to evolve.

The function of the socially constructed world,<sup>97</sup> above all, is to provide a “nomos” which will order “the discrete experiences and meanings of individuals.”<sup>98</sup> This nomos not only will provide an ordering principle for the future experiences of individuals, but even will retrofit their past experiences into the integrated whole. Ultimately, “to participate in the society is to share its ‘knowledge,’ that is, to co-inhabit its nomos.”<sup>99</sup>

---

<sup>94</sup> Berger, *The Social Reality of Religion*, 15.

<sup>95</sup> See Berger, *The Social Reality of Religion*, 15.

<sup>96</sup> Berger, *The Social Reality of Religion*, 4.

<sup>97</sup> A socially constructed world need not be thought of as a complex society that has many formal organizational markers. Rather, it should be seen to represent the norm-system of any group, however much or little organization it exhibits.

<sup>98</sup> Berger, *The Social Reality of Religion*, 19. For a more in-depth description of the operation of socially constructed worlds, or symbolic universes, see Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 115ff. Finally, Berger utilizes the term “nomos” in a technical sense. Though it is the transliteration of a Greek word meaning “law,” he uses the term in a different (but still similar) sense to represent a system of norms of a given group. I will utilize the term in this technical sense throughout.

<sup>99</sup> Berger, *The Social Reality of Religion*, 21.

However, it must be noted that no particular nomos pervasively orders an entire society. “There will always be individual meanings that remain outside of or marginal [i.e., deviant]<sup>100</sup> to the common nomos.”<sup>101</sup> Deviance, according to Berger, describes those “situations in which he [i.e., the individual] is driven close to or beyond the boundaries of the order that determines his routine, everyday existence.”<sup>102</sup> Thus, deviance is a divergence from, and thus a threat to, the nomos of the constructed world.

While all deviant situations threaten the accepted order, the severity of the threat may vary greatly. Berger describes three basic types or sources of deviance, which increase in the severity of their threat to the nomos of the constructed world. First, members of a society often will have dreams, visions, and/or fantasies that portray a different reality than the current one in which they exist. However, since “such situations...are detached from everyday life,” they pose almost no threat at all to the current nomos.<sup>103</sup> In fact, this possible threat will often go unrecognized as such. A second possible source of deviance can be found in the questions of individual members (e.g., an inquisitive child, an idiosyncratic adult, or even a newly initiated convert), which may identify a perceived flaw in the nomos. While these two possible sources of deviance pose little, if any, actual threat to the constructed world, there is a type that certainly does.

---

<sup>100</sup> Throughout Berger’s two works, he utilizes the term “marginality” to describe the individual/act that threatens a norm(s) of a group. It is apparent that “marginality,” in Berger’s use of it, is a semantic equivalent to “deviance,” as used in the literature on the interactionist/labeling approach to deviance. Therefore, I will substitute “deviance” (or another appropriate form of the term) for “marginality” each time it occurs within my discussion of Berger’s work. Where the term is found in a quotation, I will retain the authors original wording, and simply put the substitute in brackets, as I have done in this instance.

<sup>101</sup> Berger, The Social Reality of Religion, 20.

<sup>102</sup> Berger, The Social Reality of Religion, 23. For further emphasis on what is meant by “marginal situations,” see Berger and Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality, 114, 116, 118-119, 167, 168, and 175.

<sup>103</sup> Berger and Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality, 114.

Berger states that the threat posed by deviance

becomes accentuated if deviant versions of the symbolic universe [i.e., the nomos] come to be shared by groups of ‘inhabitants.’ In that case, for reasons evident in the nature of objectivation, the deviant version congeals into a reality in its own right, which, by its existence within the society, challenges the reality status of the symbolic universe as originally constituted. The group that has objectivated this deviant reality becomes the carrier of an alternative definition of reality.<sup>104</sup>

It is precisely within this most serious type of deviance that Berger places heresy. He accentuates the threat posed by heresy by saying, “it is hardly necessary to belabour the point that such heretical groups posit not only a theoretical threat to the symbolic universe, but a practical one to the institutional order legitimated by the symbolic universe in question.”<sup>105</sup> Thus, according to Berger, heresy is the type of deviance that poses the most serious threat to the nomos of the constructed world (or, at least, to the most critical aspect[s] of the nomos). Therefore, if the current nomos is to endure, then the heretical threat (as well as other less serious ones) must be addressed. Berger groups these types of responses under the heading of “world-maintenance.”

### Berger’s Theory of World-Maintenance

In addition to being socially constructed, Berger contends that societies or reality-worlds are also socially maintained. He notes that “all socially constructed worlds are inherently precarious.”<sup>106</sup> Constructed worlds are constantly open to the threat of

---

<sup>104</sup> Berger and Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality, 124.

<sup>105</sup> Berger and Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality, 124.

<sup>106</sup> Berger, The Social Reality of Religion, 29.

human deviance because they are products of human beings. As seen above, the possible collapse of a constructed world is most real when under the threat of deviance, especially heresy. However, constructed worlds are not at the complete mercy of deviance persons or acts. There are defense mechanisms that adherents of the constructed world can employ in an effort to respond, ward off, or squelch such threats.<sup>107</sup> Berger identifies three such mechanisms involved in world-maintenance: socialization,<sup>108</sup> social control,<sup>109</sup> and legitimation.<sup>110</sup> While socialization and social control, if successful, can serve to mitigate the threat of deviance, they alone are unable to preserve the nomos of the constructed world. Rather, it is the process of legitimation which ultimately undergirds the other two mechanisms and attempts to preserve the current nomos.<sup>111</sup>

---

<sup>107</sup> Berger's description of the responses to threats posed against the norms of the group bear strong similarity to the stigma contests noted in the deviance literature.

<sup>108</sup> Berger, The Social Reality of Religion, 29 notes that the function of "socialization" is "to ensure a continuing consensus concerning the most important features of the social world."

<sup>109</sup> Berger, The Social Reality of Religion, 29 states that the mechanism of social control "seeks to contain individual or group resistances within tolerable limits."

<sup>110</sup> See Berger, The Social Reality of Religion, 29.

<sup>111</sup> The necessity of legitimation(s) in the deviantizing process is markedly absent in the interactionist literature on deviance, as well as heresy. While the interactionist literature has identified that (1) the audience/group membership is the critical variable in the deviantizing process and (2) has noted the tools by which they are persuaded (e.g., stereotyping and retrospective interpretation), it gives little attention to how the labeler enhances/supports his/her own position and authority. This is where legitimation enters into the deviantizing or "hereticizing" process. The labeler affixes the label to the individual/act, attempts to degrade and defame them through various methods, and finally cites support for or legitimizes his/her own authority to condemn publicly the individual/act. In legitimizing his/her position, the labeler will appeal to sources of authority that he/she hopes will be recognized and heeded by the group membership. Thus, legitimation may be the most crucial element in any setting of social deviance because it is the basis upon which the group members will either affirm or reject the stance of the labeler.

Berger defines “legitimation” as “socially objectivated knowledge that serves to explain and justify the social order” in the face of deviance.<sup>112</sup> When the serious threat of deviance appears (e.g., in heresy), the authorities of the constructed world have two groups that must be addressed. First, and most obvious, those involved in the deviance must be convincingly condemned. The authorities of the constructed world will utilize various physical, mental, and/or social means to accomplish this task.<sup>113</sup> Furthermore, the degree to which the threat infringes upon the nomos of the constructed world will be mirrored in the severity of the response.<sup>114</sup> Ultimately, “such legitimations serve both to explain why the resistance cannot be tolerated and to justify the means by which it is to be quelled.”<sup>115</sup>

In addition to its punitive function, legitimation also has a stabilizing role. If, after condemning the deviant ones, the questions/threats introduced by them continue to exist within the membership, the nomos of the constructed world remains in a precarious state. Therefore, an aspect of legitimation must be to explain and justify the nomos (whether it has been altered or remained static) of the constructed world to the membership. In this endeavor, the authorities attempt to provide further

---

<sup>112</sup> Berger, The Social Reality of Religion, 30-31. See further Jurgen Habermas, Legitimation Crisis (London: Heinemann, 1976); Roberto Cipriani, “The Sociology of Legitimation: An Introduction,” Current Sociology 35 (1987) 1-20; Franco Ferrarotti, “Legitimation, Representation and Power,” Current Sociology 35 (1987) 21-27; Alberto Izzo, “Legitimation and Society: A Critical Review,” Current Sociology 35 (1987) 41-56; Thomas Luckmann, “Comments on Legitimation,” Current Sociology 35 (1987) 109-117; Srdjan Vrcan, “A Different Historical Perspective on Legitimation,” Current Sociology 35 (1987) 127-134; and David Beetham, The Legitimation of Power, Issues in Political Theory, eds. Peter Jones and Albert Weale (London: MacMillan, 1991).

<sup>113</sup> Berger does not identify any specific techniques involved in condemning marginality. This seeming omission is due largely to his concentration on the theoretical level of social interaction.

<sup>114</sup> See Berger, The Social Reality of Religion, 31. While Berger never identifies any characteristics of legitimation specific to condemning heresy, it is a corollary of his statement that heresy, being the most severe of marginal threats, would elicit the most condemnatory or severe legitimacy response.

objectivated knowledge to the membership by either (1) showing the threat of deviance to be already encompassed within the ordering of the constructed world's nomos or (2) identifying the threat as being completely foreign to, and thus, outside the order.<sup>116</sup> As with any objectivation, the hope of the authorities is that the membership will not only recognize this legitimated knowledge as true but will internalize it.

#### IV. A Description of the Social Phenomenon of Heresy

When insights from the deviance literature and Berger's work are brought together, a typological description of the social conception of heresy emerges. A social understanding of the notion of heresy includes the following markers: (1) Heresy originates as an internal conflict. (2) Heresy emerges as a type of deviance (at least, in the eyes of the group) that severely threatens the nomos or norms of the given group. In a religious context, it usually concerns a point of practice or belief. (3) Heresy brings about some type of crisis related to the norms of the group. (4) "Heresy" (as well as other terms) is an entirely subjective label applied to the internal deviance by the group (or sub-section of it) when it deems the norms or limits of the group to have been infringed upon or transgressed. These norms/limits already may have been prominent or could have gained prominence during some point in the confrontation. (5) The severity of heresy's threat necessitates acts of legitimation by

---

<sup>115</sup> Berger, The Social Reality of Religion, 31.

<sup>116</sup> In the case of heresy, the latter is the route most likely to be chosen due to the severity of the threat. In other words, since the threat to the constructed world is great, the authorities will be less likely to

the authorities of the community (this assumes that a given community wishes to endure and not collapse) that have the dual social aims of combating the heresy and solidifying the allegiance of the communal membership. These intentions often are implicit in the language and/or tenor of the legitimatory act itself.

In the above phenomenological markers, I hope to have identified several characteristics of the social notion of heresy that are observable within a given literary account of a situation. Yet, as literary accounts vary greatly in their point-of-view, amount of detail, and purpose, any single literary piece may not exhibit all of the above elements. Therefore, as with the employment of any critical methodology, it is up to the author to highlight both the unity and disunity between the method chosen and the given literary account(s). In the case of the present thesis, I now will turn to the first-century C.E. to see if this set of phenomenological characteristics related to heresy is visible in literature from the era. Here, I will utilize Galatians (chapter three) and parts of Revelation 2-3 (chapter four) as test cases for the viability of locating the social dynamic explicated above. Again, I am not attempting to claim that heresy (in its ecclesiastical understanding) can be found in the first-century. Rather, based on the notion of heresy being integrally connected with certain social and phenomenological markers, I endeavor to examine whether or not these markers can be observed within literature from the era. If they can, it still does not prove the existence of heresy in the first-century. Yet, it does highlight a context ripe for the later emergence of the concept of heresy.

---

attempt to integrate it into the whole. Rather, they will most often attempt to identify it as entirely foreign to the *nomos* or order.

## Chapter Three

### The Dynamics of Social Conflict within Galatians

In this chapter I intend to examine the dynamics of the social conflict evident within Paul's letter to the Galatians and, when held up to the social markers of heresy noted in chapter two, to see if it presents a likely context out of which the notion of heresy initially emerged in early Christianity.<sup>1</sup> Although Paul offers responses to situations of internal deviance elsewhere in his epistles, Galatians serves as an appropriate sample for (1) those whom Paul opposes are a singular, internal group (see further below) and (2) it is often regarded as the most polemical of his writings.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, as Galatians is one of Paul's earliest letters (c. 49-53 C.E.), and also

---

<sup>1</sup> Note, again, that I am not attempting to locate heresy (in its ecclesiastical understanding) in Galatia. John Howard Schütz, Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority, SNTSMS 26 (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1975) 3 notes that Paul "was engaged in controversy before the days of formalized institutions of authority, even before the days of 'heresy' and 'orthodoxy.'" Schutz's comment relies upon the traditional understanding of these terms/concepts. Yet, I would note that Paul is still engaged in social conflict (even if the terms "orthodoxy" and "heresy" cannot be found within it), which I contend, contributes toward the later emergence and hardening of the early Christian notion of heresy. Here, though, I simply am surveying and examining the context of social conflict behind the letter to see if it might highlight the social dynamics that characterize the notion of heresy (as seen in chapter two). Methodologically, then, I am undertaking an exercise in social theory, ultimately in an effort to answer a historical question. I am attempting to take theory (i.e., a typology) from the social sciences and test it out on a specific historical context (i.e., the context of conflict in Galatia).

<sup>2</sup> Other texts where Paul is seen to respond to a situation of internal deviance include, 1 Cor 5-6; 11:17-34; 2 Cor 10-13; and Philippians. However, I have not chosen to deal with these texts for a number of reasons. First, and foremost, I contend that Galatians provides a comparatively full description of the situation of internal conflict seen behind the letter. Second, I also have limited this chapter to an analysis of only Galatians based on the intent of the thesis. My aim in the thesis is not to be exhaustive (i.e., I do not intend to identify every occurrence of this contextual environment within early Christianity), but illustrative. I do not need to demonstrate that the phenomenon of heresy can be found within every situation of conflict in early Christianity. Rather, I simply need to identify its presence within, at least, some contexts. Third, I also have delimited the present chapter to only this text based on space. The scope of my thesis is quite expansive as it already stands. If I were to attempt to treat even more texts within the space allotted, the substance of the analysis would dissipate

one of the earliest New Testament documents, it provides a heuristically helpful picture of some of the earliest extant evidence of intra-Christian conflict.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, while my analysis will be limited to Galatians, it (hopefully) will have larger implications for Paul's responses to internal deviance in other contexts.

## GALATIANS<sup>4</sup>

### I. The Situation of Social Conflict.

The situation of social conflict that elicited Paul's letter to the Galatians stems from the confluence of a number of different groups.<sup>5</sup> Involved in the current conflict are (1) the respondent to the situation, Paul, (2) those who introduced the "problem" into

---

and the observations would be cursory, at best. Therefore, I am choosing depth over breadth at this point.

<sup>3</sup> On the dating of Galatians, see C. H. Buck, "The Date of Galatians," *JBL* 70 (1951) 113-122; Robert Jewett, *A Chronology of Paul's Life* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979); Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, WBC 41, eds. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker (Dallas: Word, 1990) lxxii-lxxxviii; and the succinct but helpful discussion in Ben Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998) 8-13.

<sup>4</sup> Before evaluating the situation of social conflict, I will address a few preliminary issues regarding the letter. First, I am beginning with the assumption that those who Paul opposed in the current Galatian conflict are one group. Therefore, contra Wilhelm Lütgert, *Gesetz und Geist: eine Untersuchung zur Vorgeschichte des Galaterbriefes* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1919) and James H. Ropes, *The Singular Problem of the Epistle to the Galatians* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U. Press, 1929) and in line with clear scholarly consensus, I do not envisage two fronts of opposition, only one. However, it should be noted that the precise message of those who Paul opposed may have varied as it became manifested within the given congregations in Galatia. Second, and in corollary to the first presupposition, I hold that Paul's letter to the Galatians is one continuous argument directed toward the Galatian situation. Thus, following John Barclay, *Obeying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians*, *Studies of the New Testament and Its World*, ed. John Riches (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), I regard 5:13-6:10 as an integral part of the unified letter.

<sup>5</sup> I use the terms "group" and "groups" here to identify distinctly those persons involved in the current situation of social conflict, whether they be plural or singular in number.

Galatia, the “agitators,”<sup>6</sup> and (3) those whom Paul perceives to be guilty of the infraction and to whom the letter (primarily) is addressed, the Galatian believers.<sup>7</sup> Scholars widely agree that the logistics behind the current situation of conflict are the following: sometime after Paul founded the congregations in Galatia, some persons (i.e., the agitators) initiated teachings and practices that he deemed to be threatening to the truth of the gospel (as well as his authority).<sup>8</sup> Therefore, Paul writes a responsory letter to the Galatian believers concerning these new found teachings and practices and the agitators who introduced them.<sup>9</sup> The problem or situation of

---

<sup>6</sup> Within this examination of Galatians, I will use the title “agitators,” which is derived from one of his accusations against them (ταρασσοῦντες; 1:7), when referring to those persons who Paul opposes in Galatia (except in citations of secondary literature where other terms are employed). Yet, my use of Paul’s language should not be taken as an indicator that I have accepted as normative his assessment of these persons. I merely am attempting to maintain some consistency in perspective for the sake of coherence.

<sup>7</sup> There are still more groups that can be identified in Paul’s epistle (e.g., those who Paul opposes in Jerusalem, as seen in 2:4-6, and the certain men from James and the circumcision faction in 2:12). Yet, none of these groups appears to be active in the current situation of conflict. Though some scholars have drawn a firmer connection between either (or both) of these latter two groups and the agitators in Galatia, the basis for this association is tenuous at best. These two groups both appear to be distinct from and precede the contingent situation evident in Paul’s letter to the Galatians. Thus, their role within the epistle is a secondary one, as they do not play a part in the current situational context.

<sup>8</sup> In support of this (broad) understanding of the development of the situation in Galatia, see (for example) Hans Dieter Betz, Galatians: A Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Churches in Galatia, Hermenia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) 7; James D. G. Dunn, The Epistle to the Galatians, Black’s New Testament Commentaries, ed. Henry Chadwick (London: A & C Black, 1993) 9; and Robert Jewett, “The Agitators and the Galatian Congregation,” NTS (1971) 201.

<sup>9</sup> The primary audience to whom and for whom Paul writes is the congregations in Galatia; see Betz, Galatians, 5 and Longenecker, Galatians, lxxxix. While this seems to be an obvious and mundane point, it remains vitally instructive for understanding the function of the letter and the contingent situation behind it. In corollary, it is also evident that Paul never directly addresses the agitators; see Witherington, Grace in Galatia, 24 and John M. G. Barclay, “Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test Case,” JSNT 31 (1987) 74. The intended chain of communication in the epistle is the following: Paul is talking to the believers in Galatia about the agitators and some of the problems that have resulted from their teachings and practices.

conflict, therefore, is an internal one. Paul is addressing a problem that has become manifest within the congregations of believers in Galatia.<sup>10</sup>

Yet, the internal dimensions of the conflict extend further. Though the epistle is written primarily for and directed toward the Galatian believers, the audience that actually listened to the letter read aloud (likely) would not have been composed solely of Galatian believers who were free from any influence of the agitators. It is much more likely that (at least) some of the agitators, and certainly some of their adherents, would have been among those who were hearing the letter read aloud. According to Martyn, “Paul knows that the Galatians will listen to his letter with the Teachers’ [i.e., agitators] sermons still ringing in their ears, and almost certainly with the Teachers themselves at their elbows.”<sup>11</sup> Therefore, the continued physical presence of the agitators alongside the believers in Galatia, at least up until the reception and declaration of Paul’s letter, adds an additional internal dimension to the current conflict.

The agitators not only appear to be internal to the current situation in Galatia but, according to Paul, they also are insiders to early Christian belief and practice. This can be seen in two instances where, though Paul is attempting to caricature and

---

<sup>10</sup> On the Galatians being believers, and thus insiders to the faith, see Paul’s description of them in 1:11; 3:2, 3, 15; 4:9, 12, 19, 31; 5:7, 11, 13; 6:1, 10, 18.

<sup>11</sup> J. Louis Martyn, Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary, AB 33A, eds. William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1997) 118. Additionally, Longenecker, Galatians, 16 notes, with respect to 1:6-7, that “the present tense of the verbs and participles points up the fact that these errorists were still in Galatia when Paul was writing this letter, and that he wrote with the intention of stopping them in the very midst of their activities.” Cf. Ernest De Witt Burton, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1921) 24. Finally, the continuing presence of the agitators in Galatia provides an additional impetus for Paul’s highly polemical caricature and/or defamation of them in the letter itself. This aspect of the letter will be addressed further below.

defame the agitators before the Galatians, he incidentally identifies them as believers and, thus, “insiders.” In one case, Paul indicates that the agitators were preaching a “gospel” (εὐαγγέλιον; 1:6). Even though he pejoratively labels their message a “different” or “another” (ἕτερον; 1:6) gospel, and then goes on to claim that there really is no “other” (ἄλλο; 1:7) gospel, Paul’s identification of the message of the agitators as a εὐαγγέλιον distinguishes it as being about the “good news” of Christ.<sup>12</sup> It is implied, then, that the agitators are persons who promulgate a gospel message about Jesus Christ and, thus, can be dubbed “insiders” to the Christian faith.<sup>13</sup>

Paul’s admission that the agitators labor for the “cross of Christ” (τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ χριστοῦ; 6:12), though according to him incorrectly (i.e., “only to not be persecuted” for it), further indicates their Christian identity, as the

---

<sup>12</sup> Even though Paul pejoratively denotes the agitators’ εὐαγγέλιον as ἕτερον, in an attempt to identify it as (in effect) not a gospel at all, he still uses εὐαγγέλιον as the descriptor for their message, which for him was inextricably bound to the good news of Christ. In fact, some would claim that Paul’s use of this term reflects a self-designation of the agitators (i.e., they called their own message a εὐαγγέλιον as they too proclaimed to the Gentiles the presence of the messianic age brought on by Jesus). Cf. Dunn, *Galatians*, 42 and Gerhard Friedrich, “εὐαγγέλιον,” in *TDNT* II, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) 734. On a final note, though many older commentators attempted to make fine distinction between ἕτερον and ἄλλος (i.e., the former designates difference between two and the latter identifies an additional item to a group), that may be too fine a distinction to make. Within Greek literature, and even more prominently in Koine Greek, the two terms often are used interchangeably, which even can be seen in Paul’s own letters (1 Cor 12:8-10; 2 Cor 11:4). Cf. J. K. Elliot, “The Use of ἕτερος in the New Testament,” *ZNW* 60 (1969) 140-141; Friedrich Büchsel, “ἄλλος,” in *TDNT* I, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) 264; and Dunn, *Galatians*, 337. In short, though Paul is attempting to make a distinction between his gospel and that of the agitators, it is not secured by these words alone.

<sup>13</sup> Dunn, *Galatians*, 41 notes that “the fact that Paul uses the Christian technical term for ‘the gospel’ [i.e., εὐαγγέλιον] also is clear indication that those who he was about to attack were also Christian missionaries.”

description hardly would make sense if applied to anyone except Christians.<sup>14</sup> Ultimately, in the midst of these attempts to characterize negatively the message and actions of the agitators, Paul still conveys an important aspect of the current situation of conflict, namely that the agitators are insiders to early Christian practice and belief.

Finally, the agitators' credibility as insiders to the faith can be seen in the fact that their arguments and teachings were having success amongst the Galatian believers (e.g., 1:6; 3:1; 5:7-8), not long after they were founded and established by Paul himself.<sup>15</sup> As seen in 1:6, Paul's astonishment is due not only to the reversal of allegiances by the Galatian churches but, also, the haste with which they had deserted his gospel for that of the agitators.<sup>16</sup> While we are unable to discern the precise

---

<sup>14</sup> See Dunn, *Galatians*, 9-10; Jewett, "The Agitators," 201; and Longenecker, *Galatians*, xcvi, xcix.

<sup>15</sup> I am assuming a South Galatia theory here, though I do not see this contention as being crucial to the thesis.

<sup>16</sup> Though *ταχέως* can denote action done quickly or without delay in a positive sense, here it functions in an unfavorable sense; something that is done too quickly, too easily, and/or hastily (hence the phrase *οὕτως ταχέως*). For other instances where the latter sense of the term is found, see 2 Thess 2:2; 1 Tim 5:22; and Pol. *Phil.* 6.1. Cf. BAGD, 806-807. Additionally, commentators debate exactly what span of time Paul is referring to here with this term. The three most prominent answers have been the following: (1) the time span between Paul's founding of the churches in Galatia and when the Galatians began to follow the ways of the agitators; (2) the time span between Paul's most recent visit to Galatia and when the Galatians began to follow the ways of the agitators; and (3) the time span between the arrival of the agitators in Galatia and when the Galatians began to follow the agitators' ways. The least advocated of these three options is the second. Paul gives no indication that he has in mind his most recent visit to Galatia and, thus, this conjecture finds very little support amongst scholars. Of the remaining two options, scholars are divided. Some, such as R. Alan Cole, *The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians*, Tyndale NT Commentaries, ed. R. V. G. Tasker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965) 38 and Donald Guthrie, *Galatians*, NCB (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973) 61, contend that the term has reference to the rapidity with which the Galatians were deserting Paul's gospel and capitulating to that of the agitators. On the other hand, others, such as Betz, *Galatians*, 48; Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 81-82; and Burton, *Galatians*, 19, hold that Paul's concern lies not, primarily, with the rapidity of the Galatians departure but with the seeming brevity of the interval between his founding of them and their turning from him. I would tend to follow the latter position. Though, it should be noted that these two options are not mutually exclusive. It is reasonable to think that Paul could have been astonished not only at the Galatians departure from his founding of them but also the pace at which the agitators were experiencing such success amongst these believers.

amount of time that had lapsed between Paul's founding of the Galatian churches and this responsory letter to them, it is likely that the span was sufficiently short enough for Paul's teachings still to be (somewhat) current in their minds. In short, since the gospel message of the agitators was acceptable to the ears of the Galatian believers, as seen in their favorable response to it, it is likely that, in many respects, it was similar to the gospel that Paul preached, differing (only?) on what was deemed necessary regarding justification before God.<sup>17</sup> Lastly, though it is probable that the agitators originally came into Galatia from outside the region (e.g., from Jerusalem or Antioch),<sup>18</sup> their current status as "insiders," both to Galatia and early Christian

---

Lastly, Betz, Galatians, 47 wryly notes that *ταχέως* "should not be used too quickly to date the letter."

<sup>17</sup> The question of similarity between Paul's and the agitators' gospels is addressed, at least in part, by Paul's description of their message in 1:6 as *ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον*. Betz, Galatians, 49 observes that "Paul gives the impression that the statement of the cause in v 6 is not adequate." Paul retraces his steps in 1:7 and declares that the agitators are not turning to another gospel because there is no other gospel. The question remains then, how can the agitators be offering a *ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον* if, as Paul claims, there is only one true gospel? In short, they cannot. Taking into account Paul's assessment of the agitators' message as a perversion of the gospel of Christ (1:7), it is likely that Paul deems the agitators to be proffering a distorted version of the gospel, but, at the same time, not a wholly different gospel. As Witherington, Grace in Galatia, 82 observes, "the agitators were not offering a different God or Christ or Spirit, but they were offering a different message."

<sup>18</sup> Dunn, Galatians, 11 notes that "it is very unlikely that the issues and challenges to Paul's gospel in Galatia had arisen purely by spontaneous internal combustion." Rather, he contends that the "problem" has been brought in by some persons from outside the region. The primary evidence generally put forward in support of this assertion is the fact that Paul always refers to the agitators in the third person, while reserving the second person for the Galatian believers. For the third person references to the agitators, both with demonstrative and personal pronouns, see 1:7-9; 4:17; 5:12; 6:12-13. Cf. Barclay, Obeying the Truth, 43 and Witherington, Grace in Galatia, 23. While Paul's rigorous use of pronouns does indicate that he himself envisaged two distinct "groups" in Galatia, this fact alone does not convey anything about the origin or source of the problem, be it internal or external. Furthermore, his non-specific description of the agitators could reflect his lack of knowledge of them, but it (alone) certainly does not mark them as "outsiders." Ultimately, Paul's careful use of pronouns may well be a rhetorical strategy used simply to conceal (i.e., not give publicity to) their actual identity. Cf. Betz, Galatians, 267-268. For a further examination of Paul's careful use of pronouns in description of the agitators, see the section below on the sociological category of simple degradation.

belief and practice, is made explicit in the letter. Therefore, the current conflict evident in Paul's letter to the Galatians is certainly an internal one.

By means of mirror-reading, a larger profile of the agitators and their message can be compiled from Galatians.<sup>19</sup> The clearest and most distinctive markings of the message of the agitators is their promotion of circumcision (5:2-4, 11-12; 6:12-13; cf. 2:3-5; 6:15) and obedience to the law (3:1-10; 4:21; cf. 2:15-21; 3:6-4:11) among the believers in Galatia.<sup>20</sup> For the agitators, the Law stood as the absolute point of departure for their theology and circumcision as the necessary act of obedience for full participation in the people of God. It appears as if the agitators' expectation was that, by undergoing circumcision and observing Torah, the Gentile

---

<sup>19</sup> On the content of the agitator's message, see J. Louis Martyn, "A Law-Observant Mission to Gentiles: The Background of Galatians," *SJT* 38 (1985) 314-317 and Larry W. Hurtado, "The Jerusalem Collection and the Book of Galatians," *JSNT* 5 (1979) 50-51. Also, see Barclay, "Mirror-Reading," 73-93 for a critical examination of the method of mirror-reading with specific application to Galatians. Cf. Longenecker, *Galatians*, lxxxix; Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 37-41; and Betz, *Galatians*, 6. Barclay, "Mirror-Reading," 74 describes the methodology of mirror-reading as an essential but problematic procedure for identifying those who a given writer opposes. It is problematic in that the scholar is privy only to the viewpoint of the given author and, thus, receives an inherently biased account. In short, the rhetorical aims of the author, along with the polemical means by which the author accomplishes these aims, often result in a (gross or more minor) distortion of those being opposed and/or the issues at hand. Yet, even with the problematic aspects of the methodology, it is an essential procedure since the account (however biased) is often the only extant evidence available to the contemporary scholar for examining those being opposed. Furthermore, as Barclay notes, even the most polemical of responses must not be entirely contrived, fabricated, or distorted since the author must gain the adherence of the audience in order to achieve successfully his/her aims. Cf. Sandra Hack Polaski, *Paul and the Discourse of Power*, Gender, Culture, Theory 8, ed. J. Cheryl Exum (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) 20, 34, 87. Finally, I will rely on this essential but problematic methodology of mirror-reading throughout much of this and the next chapter (i.e., chapter four).

<sup>20</sup> Barclay, "Mirror-Reading," 88 locates these two aspects of the agitators' message under the "Certain or Virtually Certain" heading. This is the highest level on his sliding scale that evaluates the level of certainty of results gained from mirror-reading. Descending (in surety) from this category are: "Highly Probable," "Probable," "Possible," "Conceivable," and finally "Incredible." His laudable application of a sliding scale to the perceived results of any mirror-reading helps provide some checks and balances for the methodology. Finally, the prominent position of the promotion of circumcision and observance of Torah, within the agitators' message, is supported by wide scholarly consensus. Cf. Dunn, *Galatians*, 9; Betz, *Galatians*, 6; Jewett, "The Agitators," 207; Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 45-72; and Longenecker, *Galatians*, xciv.

believers of Galatia would become proselytes to (their form of) the gospel message.<sup>21</sup> In light of these aspects of the agitators' message, as well as their use of scriptural arguments, especially those stemming from the Abraham narratives (3:6-29; 4:21-31),<sup>22</sup> it is apparent that they were Jewish Christians. Though we know very little about the geographical origins<sup>23</sup> or precise historical identity<sup>24</sup> of these Christian Jews who Paul opposes, it is enough for the purposes of this study to identify the agitators broadly as Jewish Christians who used scriptural arguments to promote circumcision and observance of the law among the Gentile believers in Galatia in hopes of making proselytes of them.

In Paul's eyes, the arrival of the agitators in Galatia and the dissemination of their teachings posed a threat to "the truth of the gospel," as well as his own

---

<sup>21</sup> It should be noted, though, that questions, such as why the agitators advocated circumcision and how much of the law they thought should be followed, cannot be fully answered via mirror-reading. The basic picture that appears here is a situation of competing or rival missionaries. Cf. Polaski, Paul and the Discourse, 76 and Betz, Galatians, 7.

<sup>22</sup> See Martyn, "A Law-Observant Mission," 317-320; Barclay, "Mirror-Reading," 87; Dunn, Galatians, 9; and Barclay, Obeying, 52-55.

<sup>23</sup> Though the agitators likely had some links with the Jerusalem church, they need not have stemmed directly from there. Any congregation in the region that contained a community of Jewish-Christian believers could have been the geographical origin of the agitators.

<sup>24</sup> For attempts at a more precise delineation of the agitators' identity, see J. B. Tyson, "Paul's Opponents in Galatia," NovT 10 (1968) 241-254; Jewett, "The Agitators," 198-212; Walter Schmithals, "Die Heretiker in Galatien," ZNW 47 (1956) 25-67 [rev. ET "The Heretics in Galatia," in Paul and the Gnostics, trans. John E. Steeley (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971) 13-64]; Robert McL. Wilson, "Gnostics in Galatia?," in Studia Evangelica IV, TU 102, ed. F. L. Cross (Berlin: Akademie, 1968) 358-367; John Gale Hawkins, The Opponents of Paul in Galatia, Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale U., 1971; and Jerry L. Sumney, "Servants of Satan," "False Brothers" and Other Opponents of Paul, JSNTSup 188, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999). See also the overviews by Longenecker, Galatians, lxxxix-xcvi and Bernard Hungerford Brinsmead, Galatians—Dialogical Response to Opponents, SBLDS 65, ed. William Baird (Chico: Scholars Press, 1982) 9-22. Finally, for scholarship on the various "opponents" to Paul, as seen in his letters, see E. Earle Ellis, "Paul and His Opponents: Trends in Research," in Christianity, Judaism, and Other Greco-Roman Cults, FS Morton Smith, ed. Jacob Neusner, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1975) 264-298; John J. Gunther, St. Paul's Opponents and Their Backgrounds: A Study of Apocalyptic and Jewish Sectarian Teachings, NovTSup 35 (Leiden: Brill, 1973); and Jerry L. Sumney, Identifying Paul's Opponents: The Question of Method in 2 Corinthians (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990).

apostleship and authority within the region (e.g., 1:1, 11-12). In specific, his response to the agitators indicates that he took the compulsory adherence to Torah and the mandatory undergoing of circumcision for Gentile converts to be counter to the gospel message of Christ. Therefore, he deemed their message to be a deviant form of the gospel and pejoratively labels it “another gospel” (1:6).

Yet, it is highly likely that the intensity of Paul’s denunciation of the agitators and their message itself is an indicator of the level of influence the latter held amongst the Galatian believers (at least before Paul’s letter arrived). The evident success that the agitators were enjoying in gaining adherents (1:6; 3:1; 5:7-8) highlights the positive reception that their message was receiving. Furthermore, it underscores the threat being posed to Paul’s authority and teachings, as they were losing their prominence amongst (at least some of) these believers in Galatia.<sup>25</sup> In short, his position was being eroded by the presence and message of the agitators.<sup>26</sup> With these shifting allegiances, a public crisis was either building or had already occurred. As a result, a clash of gospel messages (i.e., the agitators’ versus Paul’s) was about to occur as Paul, in his responsory letter, would attempt to renegotiate the

---

<sup>25</sup> As noted above, Paul’s description of the agitators as “perverting” the gospel (1:7) and “confusing,” “bewitching,” or “unsettling” the Galatians (1:7; 3:1; 5:10, 12) should be seen as likely attempts to diminish the success of the agitators amongst the Galatians by affixing pejorative, or even defamatory, descriptors to them and/or their activities. See also Betz, Galatians, 8 and my discussion of these accusations below. Finally, Paul’s comment in 4:20, that he is “puzzled” (ἀποροῦμαι) about the Galatians, further highlights his lack of control in the situation and, likely, the opponents’ success amongst these congregations of believers he had founded.

<sup>26</sup> Paul’s role as founder-figure and, thus, an authority was being challenged. Polaski, Paul and the Discourse, 74-75 and Jerome H. Neyrey, “Bewitched in Galatia: Paul and Cultural Anthropology,” CBQ 50 (1988) 98 highlight this aspect of the situation in Galatia.

power relations in Galatia.<sup>27</sup> He aimed to persuade the Galatian believers to abide by the gospel that he championed and to reject the gospel purported by the agitators.

## II. Paul's Response to the Situation in Galatia.

Forsaking his usual thanksgiving section, following the letter's salutation (1:1-5), Paul launches into a direct and urgent response to the situation in Galatia.<sup>28</sup> In his response, he makes use of a number of different, and often complex, arguments. Most of these can be placed under the rubric of "theological" and/or "ethical" arguments, in that Paul himself is attempting to assert a theological or ethical point before the Galatians. Some of the most prominent arguments Paul makes in the letter are: Jesus' superiority over the Law (2:16-21; 3:19-25), believers in Christ are heirs of God's promise to Abraham (3:6-9, 14, 15-18, 29; 4:1-7, 21-31), and through Christ believers experience freedom (4:30-5:1), which is not to be used for self-indulgence but self-sacrifice (5:13-15; cf. 5:16-6:5). These arguments often

---

<sup>27</sup> See Polaski, *Paul and the Discourse*, 75, 77. It is important to note that this situation of conflict in Galatia is not merely a game of power. There is definite substance to the issues at the heart of the conflict. Yet, as noted previously, the issue of authority is bound up with the substantive conflict and also is something that Paul certainly is vying for.

<sup>28</sup> The fact that Galatians lacks a formal thanksgiving section connotes something rather important about the character of the letter. Paul's movement directly into his confrontation of the Galatians and their behavior identifies not only his seeming indignation over the situation at hand but also the severity of the threat being posed by the agitators. Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 80 writes: "more often than not in an *exordium* [speaking of 1:6] the establishment of contact and rapport with the audience was made by way of praise or flattery or thanksgiving, but if the case was serious or dangerous enough the *exordium* could also begin with blame or rebuke, in short the splash of cold water in the face of the audience to get their attention and wake them up to what their situation really was and to the fact that they needed to take action to correct the situation. Paul chooses the latter approach here." If Witherington is accurate here, Paul followed an aspect of rhetorical protocol that would be appropriate only for a situation where a significant threat is before him (and the Galatians), one so threatening that it needed to be addressed immediately.

incorporate and are based largely upon Paul's seemingly novel exegesis of scripture.<sup>29</sup>

The full response that Paul gives to the Galatians extends beyond the content of and exegesis within his arguments to the accompanying strategies of persuasion that he employs in hopes of further convincing them (i.e., the Galatians) to abide by his message and to forsake and/or denounce the same of the agitators.<sup>30</sup> In line with the previous chapter's discussion of legitimation and stigmatization, I now will attempt to identify and examine Paul's use of legitimatory strategies and stigmatizing tactics within his attempt to respond persuasively to the situation of social conflict in Galatia.

In an effort to substantiate further the arguments he presents to the Galatians, Paul invokes a number of legitimatory strategies, which are designed to bolster his arguments and authority within the eyes of the Galatian believers.<sup>31</sup> The most

---

<sup>29</sup> The core of Paul's main arguments stem from a situation of competing exegesis. Here, both Paul and the agitators are making exegetical appeals to key verses from scripture in an attempt to solidify their respective messages and authority within Galatia. Thus, in comparison to the more traditionally Jewish line of interpretation that the agitators were presenting, Paul's exegesis would appear novel in that it largely lacked precedent. However, as Martyn, "A Law-Observant Mission," 318 notes, Paul's novel or "strange" exegesis would not have been entirely foreign to the Galatians since many of the same texts also were being appealed to by the agitators. On Paul's use of the OT, see Timothy H. Lim, Holy Scripture in the Qumran Commentaries and Pauline Letters (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997) 123-176, and specifically on Paul's hermeneutics, 169-172.

<sup>30</sup> This aspect of Paul's response to the internal deviance in Galatia (as well as his responses to other situations of internal deviance) is an important but comparatively neglected aspect of his letters. Furthermore, since from a sociological perspective it is the tactics of persuasion, more so than the basic content of the arguments, which ultimately decides the outcome of a given situation of conflict, the comparative neglect of this aspect of Paul's response becomes more glaring. On Paul's use of power/authority (within the body of his letters) and its origins, see Polaski, Paul and the Discourse; Bengt Holmberg, Paul and Power: The Structure of Authority in the Primitive Church as Reflected in the Pauline Epistles, CBNT 11 (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1978); Schütz, Paul and the Anatomy; and Elizabeth A. Castelli, Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power, Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation (Louisville: WJKP, 1991).

<sup>31</sup> It should be noted that legitimatory devices need not be strategies of persuasion that are fabricated or invented. The invocation of historical occurrences or factual representations may also be used as a

prominent of these is his citation of the divine origin and certification of his calling/commissioning (1:10, 15-16), apostleship (1:1), gospel (1:12), and ultimately, his authority.<sup>32</sup> In his attempt to legitimate and (re-)establish his authority amongst the Galatian believers, Paul accentuates the connection between himself and the ultimate source of authority in any religious sphere, the divine. As Schütz rightly notes, Paul invariably connects his apostleship to the divine through Christ.<sup>33</sup> Berger notes this type of action as the oldest religious strategy of legitimation, which was to

---

legitimatory device. In fact, when the variable of an intended audience is taken into account, it would be very unlikely that an obviously fabricated or wholly invented legitimatory device would successfully bolster the author's position since those who the author is trying to convince would recognize it as such. On legitimation, see the explanation of the concept in chapter two.

<sup>32</sup> The fact that Paul provides legitimation for his calling/commissioning, apostleship, and gospel does not indicate, necessarily, a specific challenge made by the agitators against Paul. What it does highlight, though, is that Paul perceives the need to bolster his own position and/or message and has chosen to do it through this (and a number of other) means. However, the amount of space and effort that Paul gives over to this issue makes one relatively certain that the agitators were challenging directly his apostleship and authority, as well as his gospel. Contra this position, Witherington, Grace in Galatia, 30; B. Lategan, "Is Paul Defending His Apostleship in Galatians?: The Function of Galatians 1.11-12 and 2.19-20 in the Development of Paul's Argument," NTS 34 (1988) 411-430; and George Lyons, Pauline Autobiography: Toward a New Understanding, SBLDS 73 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985) 173 contend that Paul is not defending his apostolic authority in Galatians but solely the gospel message. In all, I find it very difficult (in Galatians) to separate the gospel message that Paul adheres to from his authority/apostleship. Pace Polaski, Paul and the Discourse, 12, "to receive Paul's gospel is to receive Paul as proclaimer of the gospel; rejection of the messenger, Paul implies, is tantamount to rejection of the message." Paul's gospel and authority seem to be inextricably linked. Cf. David Cook, "The Prescript as Programme in Galatians," JTS 43 (1992) 513; Beverly R. Gaventa, "Galatians 1 and 2: Autobiography as Paradigm," NovT 28 (1986) 309; and G. W. Hansen, "Galatians, Letter to the," in Dictionary of Paul and His Letters, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid (Leicester: IVP, 1993) 330. Therefore, if Paul's version of the gospel message was deemed by the Galatians to be inferior to the gospel of the agitators, then not only would Paul's message likely be discarded, but his authority as an apostle would be lessened or entirely rejected, as well. Thus, I see Paul's defense of his gospel message to be bound up with a defense of his authority/apostleship. Cf. Dunn, Galatians, 17, 18; Barclay, "Mirror-Reading," 87, 88; Longenecker, Galatians, xcv, 4-5; Polaski, Paul and the Discourse, 13, 31, 68; Holmberg, Paul and Power, 15, 23; Schütz, Paul and the Anatomy, 8, 35; Margaret Y. MacDonald, The Pauline Churches: A Socio-historical Study of Institutionalization in the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline Writings, SNTSMS 60, ed. G. N. Stanton (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1988) 48; and Ernest Best, "Paul's Apostolic Authority—?," JSNT 27 (1986) 3-25.

<sup>33</sup> See Schütz, Paul and the Anatomy, 205.

equate the social order with the divine order as microcosm to macrocosm.<sup>34</sup> This connection of human constructions with the divine attempts to hide the human aspect and, thus, equate social reality with divine reality. In Galatians, Paul seems to be tapping into this type of legitimatory strategy. He is attempting to validate his gospel and authority by placing them in the same sphere as the divine.

To refine further this contention, Paul also is careful to emphasize that his message and authority are not of human origin (1:11-12, 16) and, furthermore, do not stem from nor depend upon the Jerusalem authorities (1:17-20; 2:6).<sup>35</sup> After declaring this at some length, however, Paul goes on to recount briefly two visits that he made to Jerusalem (1:18-20; 2:1-10). Yet, again, Paul takes great care to preserve the fact that, though he did make these visits to Jerusalem, the Jerusalem authorities did not help shape his gospel, save remembering the poor, which Paul already claimed to do (2:10).

In reference to the first visit (1:18-20), Paul makes explicit that he “visited” (ἵστορησαί; 1:18)<sup>36</sup> only one of the Jerusalem apostles (Cephas, for only fifteen

---

<sup>34</sup> See Berger, *Social Reality of Religion*, 34.

<sup>35</sup> This same emphasis also is apparent in Paul’s modification of the traditional form of a prescript (1:1). Given the fact that the letter’s salutation matches up so well with Paul’s argumentation in 1:18-2:14, it is logical to conclude that Paul had the defense of himself (i.e., his apostleship) and his message in mind from the very beginning of the letter. On the integral connection between the prescript of Galatians and the remainder of the letter, see Cook, “The Prescript as Programme,” 511-519.

<sup>36</sup> See George D. Kilpatrick, “Galatians 1:18 ἸΣΤΟΡΗΣΑΙ ΚΗΦΑΝ,” in *New Testament Essays: Studies in Memory of T. W. Manson* (Manchester: Manchester University, 1959) 144-149. Though this verb can carry with it the idea of visit where information is sought (i.e., Paul sought something from Peter during his fifteen days in Jerusalem), it does not follow, necessarily, that Peter or Jerusalem dictated Paul’s gospel message to him. Neither does it certify that Paul is currently under their direct authority. Cf. James D. G. Dunn, “The Relationship Between Paul and Jerusalem According to Galatians 1 and 2,” *NTS* 28 (1982) 461-478, especially 463-466, and *idem*, “Once More—Gal 1.18: ἵστορησαί Κηφᾶν In Reply to Otfried Hofius,” *ZNW* 76 (1985) 138-139. In

days) and saw (εἶδον)<sup>37</sup> only one other (James).<sup>38</sup> Likewise, with respect to the second visit (2:1-10), Paul clarifies that he only went to Jerusalem on the basis of a revelation (2:2—again a divine and, thus, non-human source of guidance/authority), that he did not submit to the “false believers” or authorities, even for a moment (2:4-5), and that the authorities approved of their (Paul and his co-workers’) gospel and mission. Ultimately, Paul takes great care in making it crystal clear (to the Galatians) that his gospel and authority are not only not of human origin, but they also have not been handed down from Jerusalem.<sup>39</sup> They are of divine origin.

The dual-edged character of this assertion quickly becomes apparent. Paul not only is attempting to accentuate his own position via the connection of his message/himself to the divine, he also is aiming, implicitly, to discredit the agitators and their message. He positions the gospel messages as polar opposites. The

---

short, the contention of Witherington, Grace in Galatia, 120, that Paul’s seeking of information from Peter runs counter to the claim that he was defending the charge that he was dependent upon the Jerusalem authorities, is a *non sequitur* argument. The former does not dictate, necessarily, the latter. See also the following notes on Paul’s use of temporal designations and their contribution to Paul’s defense of his gospel and authority and Betz, Galatians, 76.

<sup>37</sup> The use of εἶδον (1:19) here should be differentiated from ἵστορησαί (1:18). While Paul consulted with Peter during his time in Jerusalem, he only saw James. Thus, Paul makes yet another effort to clarify that he did not consult with James and, thus, his gospel and authority could not have originated with him. Cf. Dunn, “The Relationship Between,” 466.

<sup>38</sup> Longenecker, Galatians, 37 (contra Witherington, Grace in Galatia, 120) notes that the “‘fifteen days’ with Peter is in contrast to the ‘three years’ absence from Jerusalem, thereby highlighting the comparatively short period of time and suggesting how impossible it is from that to conceive of Paul as a disciple of Peter. Certainly an informal visit with the foremost disciple of Jesus three years after Paul’s dramatic conversion carries no idea of subordination or dependence.” Whether the temporal designation here is understood as three full years or as “in the third year,” the aim that Paul has in mind is to squelch the idea that his apostolic authority was somehow stemming from the authorities in Jerusalem. His declaration of an oath in 1:20 further emphasizes the lengths to which Paul is willing to go to demonstrate the divine aspect of his gospel and authority. On this oath, see Witherington, Grace in Galatia, 122-123.

<sup>39</sup> Paul’s recounting of the Antioch incident (2:11-14) functions contextually in the same fashion as the narration of his visits to Jerusalem. It highlights his authority and message as being distinct from Jerusalem.

agitators' gospel is the invention of human hands, while his own is the only true gospel of Christ, which he proclaims as a faithful servant. Paul has set it up so that if the Galatians reject the message that he is delivering, they also are rejecting Christ.<sup>40</sup> Ultimately, then, he attempts to establish this (perceived) distinction between his and the agitators' gospels in an attempt to legitimate and privilege his message and authority before the Galatian believers.<sup>41</sup>

Another significant legitimacy device that Paul employs in his letter to the Galatians is an appeal to scripture. In a number of instances within the letter, Paul attempts to establish and/or bolster his arguments by exegeting key scriptural passages.<sup>42</sup> His most extensive use of scripture in Galatians comes in the

---

<sup>40</sup> Polaski, Paul and the Discourse, 75-76 astutely observes that in Galatians, most notably in 1:6, Paul at times may leave ambiguous the source of authority that has called and founded the Galatians in Christ. Polaski notes, with respect to 1:6, that "of course it is God who calls, or God in Christ; but it is Paul who calls too. Just for a moment, the work of God and the work of Paul are one and the same. Paul does not belabor the point; but this fleeting identification of the work of God with the work of Paul fits into a pattern by which Paul asserts the nature and scope of his divinely appointed authority." If we see this ambiguity as part of a deliberate strategy by Paul, then an additional aspect of this persuasive device is unveiled, namely if the Galatians oppose Paul in this situation, then they also oppose Christ.

<sup>41</sup> Paul is seen to assume this air of divine legitimacy within his letter to the Galatians when he attempts to demonstrate the authority of his words based simply on the recognition of who he is (5:2; cf. 1 Cor 5:3-5). Also, it is interesting to note that Paul does not make any appeal to other church authorities or figures. However, at this early stage of Christianity this is not surprising since very little, if any, institutionalized authority is evident. Gerd Theissen, The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth, ed. and trans. John H. Schütz (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982) 183 observes, there were only a few legal norms in early Christianity with devices/persons attached to them that could regulate behavior. Cf. MacDonald, The Pauline Churches, 52. Furthermore, as Holmberg, Paul and Power, 159 notes, Paul is the sole authority in his churches and enacts it through his personal presence (whether an actual visit or a promise of one), the sending of other missionaries, and writing of letters. Therefore, we should not expect Paul to appeal to a local authority, as can be seen in the Pastorals and the letters of Ignatius. His exclusive style of charismatic leadership and/or the lack of firmly established and widely recognized local leaders in earliest Christianity would render such an effort counterproductive to his aims. On Paul's unique position as the charismatic leader in his congregations, see Polaski, Paul and the Discourse, 32-33.

<sup>42</sup> On Paul's technique of employing scripture, see E. Earle Ellis, Paul's Use of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981); C.D. Stanley, Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles, SNTSMS 69 (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1992); Lim, Holy Scripture, 123-176; and D. Moody Smith, "The Pauline Literature," in It is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture:

employment of the Abraham narratives (3:6-9, 14, 16, 18, 29; 4:22-26).<sup>43</sup> Yet, it is not limited solely to these accounts. He also weaves texts, such as Habakkuk 2:4 (3:11), Deuteronomy 21:21 (3:13), and Isaiah 54:1 (4:27), into the fabric of his letter. For Paul, scripture proceeded directly from God himself and, thus, enjoyed ultimate authority and had binding force on communal practice and belief.<sup>44</sup> Silva notes that “in polemical contexts he [i.e., Paul] explicitly invokes the OT as the final court of appeal; such is in fact the point of the introductory formulas—to say ‘as it is written’ in effect settles the argument.”<sup>45</sup> Ultimately, then, Paul’s use of scripture can be seen as an additional attempt (by him) to lend credence to the arguments that he places before the Galatian believers. If he can demonstrate that his message is uniquely in accordance with the scriptures, then it likely would go a long way toward gaining or retaining the allegiances of the Galatian believers.<sup>46</sup>

However, as noted above, Paul finds himself in a situation that is characterized by competing scriptural exegesis. The agitators, as well as Paul, would have seen scripture as the authoritative word of God.<sup>47</sup> They both would have made

---

Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars, SSE, eds. D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1988) 265-291.

<sup>43</sup> On this, see G. W. Hansen, Abraham in Galatians: Epistolary and Rhetorical Contexts (Sheffield: JSOT, 1989).

<sup>44</sup> See Smith, “The Pauline Literature,” 281 and Moises Silva, “Old Testament in Paul,” in Dictionary of Paul and His Letters, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid (Leicester: IVP, 1993) 638.

<sup>45</sup> Silva, “Old Testament in Paul,” 638. However, see the following paragraph, where I question whether a simple appeal to scripture by Paul can indicate such absolute authority when there is a situation of competing exegetical claims.

<sup>46</sup> Silva, “Old Testament in Paul,” 640 goes on to note that literary associations, such as Paul’s connection between scripture and his contemporary issues, can be emotionally powerful and “a good writer or speaker will use them as a method of persuasion.”

<sup>47</sup> See Smith, “The Pauline Literature,” 281.

appeals to scripture, implicitly claiming that their own exegesis was the (sole) authoritative interpretation of the given texts.<sup>48</sup> In this type of situation, a simple appeal to scripture by Paul would not necessarily do much to establish further his position, since the agitators likely were appealing to the same scriptures but utilizing different, and probably more traditional, lines of interpretation.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, the simple appeal to or exegesis of scripture alone, by these two competing sides, does not necessarily carry with it any decisive persuasive capacity. Rather, whose exegesis the Galatian believers abide by likely will be based more on the authoritative status and trustworthiness of the one who performs the exegesis. Therefore, Stephen Fowl observes:

one of the functions of the autobiographical comments in chs. 1-2 is to support Paul's exercise of interpretive power in chs. 3-4. This support comes from Paul showing that he is a recognized faithful interpreter of the gospel, one who will exercise interpretive power wisely.<sup>50</sup>

Ultimately, since Paul already has claimed divine legitimation for his calling, apostleship, and gospel, this also would go a long way toward establishing his exegesis over against the same of the agitators, whose authority (according to Paul) stems from a human source.

---

<sup>48</sup> See Martyn, "A Law-Observant Mission," 317-324.

<sup>49</sup> The issue has shifted slightly here. In a situation of competing scriptural exegesis, one must convince one's audience that his/her exegesis represents the proper and authoritative interpretation so as to persuade them of his/her point. I would contend that this is the type of situation or predicament that Paul is in. Though he deems scripture to be the authoritative word of God, he must demonstrate to the Galatians that he (still) is the authoritative interpreter of those scriptures and that the agitators have erred in their interpretation.

<sup>50</sup> Stephen Fowl, "Who Can Read Abraham's Story?: Allegory and Interpretive Power in Galatians," *JSNT* 55 (1994) 79.

A third, but less pervasive, legitimatory device also can be observed in the letter. Yet, instead of appealing to more objective bases of authority (e.g., divine beings or scripture), Paul here calls upon an existential source. He appeals to human experience in an effort to establish his position further.<sup>51</sup> One example of this can be seen when Paul calls upon the Galatians to recall their experience of Christ via the Spirit (3:1-5; cf. 5:7), especially when he was with them (4:12-20).<sup>52</sup> If the Galatian believers would allow their experience of Christ, when under his founding leadership, to regulate and adjudicate the current situation, then (in Paul's mind) they would (re-)adhere themselves to him and his gospel.<sup>53</sup> He assumes that reminding them of their initial encounter with the Spirit would "serve to confirm the reality of his readers' conversion and the validity of his gospel, as being truly from God."<sup>54</sup> If the Galatians accept Paul's assessment of their experience, then it will serve as a further device that legitimates himself and his message.

---

<sup>51</sup> On the role of experience in early Christianity, see Luke Timothy Johnson, Religious Experience in Earliest Christianity: A Missing Dimension in New Testament Studies (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), especially, 99-101 and James D. G. Dunn, Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament, second edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 200.

<sup>52</sup> On 5:7 and Paul's appeal to the former conduct of the Galatians, see Burton, Galatians, 281-282. Paul also uses this type of reminder of the believers' former experience of the spirit in other instances (e.g., 1 Thess 1:4-6 and 1 Cor 2:4-5). Cf. Paul W. Meyer, "The Holy Spirit in the Pauline Letters," Int 33 (1979) 3-18.

<sup>53</sup> On this perspective, see Fowl, "Who Can Read," 83-84, who sees Paul's stance as an act of interpretive power. He notes that "if the Galatians already had seen their experience of the Spirit in this light, then they would never have been in the danger Paul imputes to them." Thus Paul, as one knowledgeable of their (i.e., the Galatians) past spiritual experience, uses this knowledge to his own advantage over the Galatians and against the agitators. Cf. David Lull, The Spirit in Galatia, SBLDS 49 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1980) 103-104.

<sup>54</sup> T. Paige, "Holy Spirit," in Dictionary of Paul and His Letters, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid (Leicester: IVP, 1993) 409.

A similar legitimatory strategy can be seen in Paul's identification of and reliance upon his current experiences of persecution and/or suffering (5:11; 6:17; cf. 6:12).<sup>55</sup> Here, Paul hopes that the demonstrated reality of his sufferings, over against the agitators, who Paul claims seek to avoid persecution for the cross of Christ (6:12), will help substantiate his message.<sup>56</sup> Witherington observes that "rhetorically speaking it was considered somewhat risky and gruesome to display graphic evidence such as wounds [στίγματα (6:17) i.e., physical evidence of persecution] to create an emotional response at the end of a speech."<sup>57</sup> However, since Paul

---

<sup>55</sup> With respect to persecution in Galatia, Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 373 notes that, whether amounting to verbal or physical abuse, it was occurring at the time of Paul's writing. Cf. Colin G. Kruse, "The Price Paid for a Ministry Among Gentiles: Paul's Persecution at the Hands of the Jews," in *Worship, Theology, and Ministry in the Early Church: Essays in Honor of Ralph P. Martin*, eds. Michael J. Wilkins and Terence Paige (Sheffield: JSOT, 1992) 264.

<sup>56</sup> The catalogues of afflictions that Paul recounts in his letters to the Corinthians (1 Cor 4:8-13; 2 Cor 4:7-12; 6:3-10) and Romans (8:35) function in a similar fashion. One of their functions is to characterize Paul as a suffering servant of God, paralleling himself with the righteous suffering servant figure in the OT and, thus, legitimating himself and his message via Jewish tradition. Furthermore, as these types of catalogues are found in Greco-Roman moral and philosophical portraits of the sufferings of sages and Stoics (e.g., Plutarch *Mor.* 326D-333C; 361E-362A; 1057D-E; Epictetus *Diss.* 2.19.12-32; 4.7.13-15; Seneca *Ep. Mor.* 85.26-27), some would claim that Paul's employment of these catalogues indicates his desire to legitimate himself via the background of an ideal sage whose virtue has been shaped through perseverance amidst suffering. In support of the Jewish background to these catalogues, see e.g., K. T. Kleinknecht, *Der leidende Gerechtfertigte. Die alttestamentlich-jüdische Tradition vom 'leidenden Gerechten' und ihre Rezeption bei Paulus*, WUNT II 13 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1984). In opposition, J. T. Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel: An Examination of the Catalogues of Hardships in the Corinthian Correspondence*, SBLDS 99 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988) argues for a Greco-Roman background. Furthermore, note the work of S. R. Garrett, "The God of this World and the Affliction of Paul, 2 Cor 4:1-12," in *Greeks, Romans, and Christians*, FS for A. Malherbe, ed. David L. Balch *et al.* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1990) 99-117 who seeks not to make these two backgrounds mutually exclusive, relying upon them both to sketch the background to Paul's employment of these catalogues of sufferings. Ultimately, whether Paul is appealing to Jewish or Greco-Roman philosophical tradition, his intentions are clear. These lists of sufferings are intended to show himself approved and, I would contend, be analogous in function to Paul's sufferings as recounted by him in Galatians. Cf. L. Gregory Bloomquist, *The Function of Suffering in Philippians*, JSNTSup 78, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Sheffield: JSOT, 1993) 193 where the author claims that Paul uses suffering to endear himself to the Philippians. This legitimatory function of recounting one's sufferings becomes even more established and formalized in later Christianity, especially as seen in the letters of Ignatius and Polycarp.

<sup>57</sup> Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 454.

models his gospel and apostleship after Christ, he understands suffering not as a sign of weakness but a sign of strength and even of victory.<sup>58</sup>

Hence, rather than questioning the legitimacy of his apostleship because of his suffering, Paul considered suffering to be a characteristic mark of his apostolic ministry (Gal 6:1-7; 1 Cor 2:1-5; 2 Cor 11:23-29; Phil 1:30; 2 Tim 1:11-12; 2:9) and as an aspect of his own mortal life concerning which he was content, in which he rejoiced and about which he could appropriately boast (2 Cor 11:30; 12:10; Phil 1:19-26).<sup>59</sup>

In short, Paul understood his own suffering as something that God led him into in order to demonstrate the reality of the cross of Christ in his own life and, ultimately, as a sign that believers could follow Jesus as they imitate him.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, one function behind Paul's citation of some of his own experiences of suffering for the sake of the gospel/Christ is to establish further his message and/or authority before the Galatian believers, who likely would recognize this suffering in a positive light.

In his appeal to experience (both the Galatians' and his own), as well as to the divine and scripture, Paul is making a concerted effort to buttress his "theological" and "ethical" arguments with legitimacy devices that, hopefully, will persuade the Galatian believers to abide by his message and authority, and reject those of the agitators. In short, Paul presents himself as the one who has been sanctioned by God/Christ, the authoritative interpreter of the scriptures, the one who has nurtured

---

<sup>58</sup> Paul sees his calling as being inextricably linked to the fact that he would suffer greatly, which is testified to in Acts (9:15-16) and which can be seen in numerous instances in his own letters (e.g., 1 Cor 15:31; 2 Cor 11:28). Additionally, Polaski, *Paul and the Discourse*, 27 furthers this point by noting that "since the central story of the gospel is a narrative of death and resurrection, the participation of the apostle in the sufferings of the One who died is an intimate connection of the message with the messenger," thus, connecting himself once again with divine authority.

<sup>59</sup> Scott J. Hafemann, "Suffering," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid (Leicester: IVP, 1993) 919.

the Galatians in their early Christian experience, and the one who has suffered (and does suffer) for the gospel. In this presentation of himself, Paul's implicit question for the Galatian believers is: how could you turn from the message of such a person, in favor of another gospel that is being peddled by unreliable people? The implied answer on Paul's lips is that, if they want to follow Christ, the Galatian believers must choose Paul's over the agitators' message.

Coupled with Paul's employment of legitimacy strategies within his overall efforts at persuading the Galatian believers is his use of stigmatizing tactics, which are designed to caricature, discredit, and/or defame the agitators in the eyes of the Galatian believers.<sup>61</sup> In short, Paul co-joins the task of bringing the agitators down (i.e., stigmatization) with that of raising himself up (i.e., legitimation) within his larger effort to persuade the Galatians to give assent to his message and turn from the practices and teachings of the agitators.<sup>62</sup>

As with the strategy of legitimation, stigmatization aims to fulfill two complementary functions. The explicit function of negatively stigmatizing an opponent is to call into question or even bring into disrepute his/her character and/or actions. This is obvious. However, as a companion to this, negatively stigmatizing an opponent also lifts the message, character, and actions of the stigmatizer to a higher level of prominence and authority. Here, a comparative scale is at work.

---

<sup>60</sup> See Hafemann, "Suffering," 919-920 and A. J. Goddard and S. A. Cummins, "Ill or Ill-Treated?: Conflict and Persecution as the Context of Paul's Original Ministry in Galatia (Galatians 4.12-20)," *JSNT* 52 (1993) 93-126, especially the conclusion on 122.

<sup>61</sup> On "stigma," see my discussion in chapter two.

Individuals can raise their prominence and authority by (1) recounting, positively, reasons why they should be followed and/or (2) by casting aspersion on the one being opposed, thus raising their position in comparative, but not necessarily absolute, terms. As can be seen above, Paul certainly employs the former strategy (i.e., legitimation) and, as I will demonstrate below, he invokes the latter strategy (i.e., stigmatization) as well.

The largest concentration of Paul's stigmatizing strategies can be placed under the sociological rubric of simple degradation.<sup>63</sup> Here, Paul employs a number of basic phrases, images, and tactics designed to degrade the agitators in the eyes of the Galatian believers. For example, he contends that the agitators, in their activities amongst the Galatians, are "confusing" (ταράσσω; 1:7; 5:10),<sup>64</sup> "bewitching" (βασκαίνω; 3:1),<sup>65</sup> and are attempting to "compel" (ἀναγκάζω; 6:12; cf. 2:3,

---

<sup>62</sup> With 1:6-7 in view, Betz, *Galatians*, 44-45 observes that "Paul does more than simply present the bare facts. He also discredits his adversaries by using the language of demagoguery." What Betz identifies here as the "language of demagoguery," I will place under the rubric of "stigmatization."

<sup>63</sup> See Schur, *Labeling Deviant Behavior*, 37-56 and Garfinkel, "Conditions of Successful," 421.

<sup>64</sup> When speaking of water, ταράσσω means "to shake together" or "to stir up." However, it has a more specific meaning here in Galatians, as well as other places within the NT (e.g., Matt 2:3; John 14:1; Acts 15:24). Paul's accusation against the agitators is that they are confusing or stirring up the minds of the Galatian believers with their false teachings and practices. Finally, Betz, *Galatians*, 49 notes that the term here in Galatians, as well as Acts 15:24, has reference specifically to the agitation done by "heretics." Cf. BAGD, 805; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 16; and Cole, *Galatians*, 40.

<sup>65</sup> The term occurs only here within the NT. For examples of its use in the wider Greco-Roman world, see Betz, *Galatians*, 131. Within these references, it soon becomes apparent that the term was part of a stock terminology of the day for caricaturing one's opponents, as well as their messages and activities. Therefore, following Burton, *Galatians*, 144 and Betz, *Galatians*, 131, this charge likely should not be taken literally (i.e., that the agitators were somehow involved in mechanical magic) but rather figuratively, as an attempt to stigmatize them negatively as being involved in such activities. Neyrey, "Bewitched in Galatia," 97 identifies this as a "witchcraft accusation" being made by Paul against the agitators. Furthermore, he notes that the primary function of this charge is "to denigrate rivals and pull them down in the competition for leadership. Such accusations, in short, are idioms of social control." Cf. Andrie du Toit, "Vilification as a Pragmatic Device in Early Christian

14)<sup>66</sup> them. The objective accuracy of these charges should be examined due to Paul's rhetorical agenda in the letter. As it is one of Paul's (rhetorical) aims to discredit the agitators before the Galatian believers in order to persuade the Galatians to abide by his message and authority, his descriptions of the agitators' activities and motivations would need to be of the pejorative kind. In short, the use of these terms to describe the activities of the agitators reflects Paul's perspective on the situation and rhetorical emphases. The agitators would not have described their activities as such.

Similarly, in assessing the actual motivation behind the agitators' message, Paul claims that they desire to pervert the gospel of Christ (1:7) and seek to avoid persecution for the cross of Christ (6:12). Betz (contra Jewett) rightly notes of the latter contention, and I would contend of the former as well, that it "may be a Pauline invention and not a contention of the opponents."<sup>67</sup> Again, it is unlikely that the agitators would have assessed their own motivations as Paul does. They likely thought themselves to be acting faithfully, possibly even more faithfully than Paul, to the gospel. Therefore, these descriptions of the agitators should not be taken as objective assessments of them. They reflect the perspective of Paul and his polemical agenda. Barclay reminds us that

---

Epistolography," *Bib* 75 (1994) 407 and Gerhard Delling, "βασκαίνω," in *TDNT* I, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) 594-595.

<sup>66</sup> Though it is possible that the weaker sense of the term is applicable here (i.e., to urge strongly rather than to compel), the motivation behind the agitators advocacy of circumcision amongst the Galatians remains Paul's focus here. Whether they physically are compelling the Galatians to be circumcised (which is unlikely) or urging them strongly to enact this via argumentation and mental and/or verbal coercion, it is the fact that the agitators are attempting to make circumcision a requirement for being in Christ that Paul opposes. Cf. *BAGD*, 52.

<sup>67</sup> Betz, *Galatians*, 6.

we should never underestimate the distorting effects of polemic, particularly in a case like this, where Paul is going out of his way to show up his opponents in the worst possible light, with the hope of weaning the Galatians away from them. We must take into account, then, that Paul is likely to caricature his opponents, especially in describing their motivation: were they really *compelling* the Galatians to be circumcised? And was it really *only* in order to avoid persecution for the cross of Christ (6:12)?<sup>68</sup>

In this light, these charges should be seen as examples of Paul's employment of polemical rhetoric that is designed to stigmatize negatively the agitators before the believers in Galatia, hopefully (that is, for Paul) bringing them into disrepute.

Paul's tactical use of simple degradation broadens in the letter through his employment of various defamatory images. Here, especially in chapter five, Paul invokes a number of negative images and, either implicitly or explicitly, attempts to attach them to the agitators. In one instance, Paul invokes athletic imagery to describe both the way of life of the Galatians and the agitators' (perceived) efforts to thwart them. Paul notes, in 5:7, that the Galatians at one time "were running" (Ἐτρέχετε) well, highlighting the positive aspects of their past responses to the gospel via a common image taken from athletics.<sup>69</sup> Immediately following this commendation, Paul extends the image but, this time, uses it to characterize pejoratively the activities of the agitators. He parallels their actions amongst the

---

<sup>68</sup> Barclay, "Mirror-Reading," 75. Barclay (76) thinks that a number of scholars (e.g., Jewett and Schmithals) have taken these (and other) charges too seriously and literally. However, "this is not to say that Paul could have *wholly* misrepresented his opponents and their message. If he was attempting to persuade the Galatians to abandon the 'other gospel,' what he says about it must have been both recognizable and plausible in their ears. Thus, the letter is likely to reflect fairly accurately what Paul saw to be the main points at issue; but his statements about the character and motivation of his opponents should be taken with a very large pinch of salt."

<sup>69</sup> Paul employs the same verb, also in a figurative sense, in 2:2. Cf. BAGD, 825-826; Otto Bauernfeind, "τρέχω," in TDNT VIII, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) 226-233; and Burton, *Galatians*, 282. For other instances where this metaphor from athletics is employed, see 1 Cor 9:24-27; Phil 3:14; 2 Tim 4:7; and Acts 20:24.

Galatians with one who “cuts in on,” “trips,” or “hinders” (ἐγκόπτω) a runner, thus breaking their stride and impeding their progress.<sup>70</sup> On this type of infraction in ancient athletics, DeVries notes that “if the stride of a competitor is broken because someone has fouled him by cutting in prematurely, the offender is liable to disqualification.”<sup>71</sup> This is the image Paul is attempting to append to the agitators: one that is loaded with overtones of deception, treachery, and deceit, thus reflecting his effort to defame them in the eyes of the Galatian believers.

In another instance, Paul appeals to the familiar image of leaven and dough (5:9). Here, Paul draws upon the feast of unleavened bread and the rules prescribed for it in Exodus 12.<sup>72</sup> However, Paul’s usage of the term has no specific connection with the cultic meal or ritual noted in these texts. He uses the term in a figurative sense.<sup>73</sup> Here in Galatians (5:9), as well as in 1 Corinthians (5:6-8), the cultic

---

<sup>70</sup> On Paul’s use of athletic imagery in this verse see C. E. DeVries, “Paul’s ‘Cutting’ Remarks about a Race: Galatians 5:1-12,” in Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation, FS M. C. Tenney, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 115-120; Longenecker, Galatians, 230; and Witherington, Grace in Galatia, 371.

<sup>71</sup> DeVries, “Paul’s ‘Cutting’ Remarks,” 118-119. On the rules against tripping or interfering with an opponent in foot races within Greek festivals, see E. N. Gardiner, Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955) 146.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Exod 13:6-10; Num 28:16ff; and Deut 16:3-5.

<sup>73</sup> This figurative usage of ζύμη is not found in the OT commandments concerning leavened and unleavened bread or in Josephus’ use of the term (*A.J.* 3.252, 255). Additionally, though Philo uses it in its literal sense on one occasion (*Spec.* 2.182), he predominantly employs it figuratively, in both positive (*Spec.* 2.184) and partially or wholly negative senses (*Congr.* 169; *Spec.* 1.291, 293; *QE* 2.14). In its pejorative figurative employment, he uses it to represent arrogance and/or sensual pleasure. However, it should be noted that Philo nowhere connects the term/idea of “leaven” with persons who he opposes. Yet, within the NT, ζύμη begins to take on this function, namely as a pejorative descriptor of one’s opponents. In the Gospels, the term is utilized in apposition to the teachings (Matt 16:6, 11-12; Mark 8:15) or hypocrisy (Luke 12:1) of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and/or Herod. Jesus warns his hearers of this danger, as their teachings and hypocrisy can contaminate them as leaven can bread intended for consecration. Other figurative uses of this image within early Christianity can be seen in 1 Cor 5:6-8 and Ign. *Magn.* 10.2. In both of these cases, the image also is used in a pejorative sense (within instances of internal deviance) to caricature and defame an

command, regarding the feast of unleavened bread, has been recontextualized and allegorized into a moral injunction.<sup>74</sup> The dough represents humanity or believers; the leaven symbolizes sin; and the new or pure dough denotes conversion and the true body of believers. Thus, for Paul, ζύμη symbolizes all things old, bad, impure, false, and sinful, of which the agitators are a part.<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, by applying the term to the agitators, Paul is implying that their activities amongst the Galatians will contaminate or even ruin the believers, as leaven/yeast does bread intended for use in the festival of the Lord. Therefore, in line with Exodus 12:15, his implicit message in employing the image of leaven and dough is that the agitators should be cut off by the Galatian body of believers in order to preserve themselves. Again, Paul's attempt to defame the agitators before the Galatians is readily apparent here. According to Paul, their teachings and/or activities will (and do) contaminate the Galatians with the stealth and thoroughness that even a small amount of leaven spreads through dough.

A third image, which is quite common to polemical rhetoric found in situations of social conflict, is that of destruction.<sup>76</sup> Paul's assigning of the agitators to destruction can be seen in his confidence that they will have to "pay the penalty"

---

opponent. Ultimately, this Philonic and early Christian evidence testifies to the fact that the image of leaven/yeast was established within early Christian tradition as a pejorative image that could be used to stigmatize negatively an opponent.

<sup>74</sup> See Hans Windisch, "ζύμη," in *TDNT* II, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) 903.

<sup>75</sup> See Windisch, "ζύμη," 904. Cf. Neyrey, "Bewitched in Galatia," 95-96.

<sup>76</sup> The assignment of one's opponents to destruction, whether eschatological or imminent, is found throughout the NT and, thus, appears to be a stock image of polemics. du Toit, "Vilification," 410 observes that "one of the most forceful pragmatic techniques in the vilifying process, and one widely

or “bear the judgment” (βαστάσει τὸ κρίμα 5:10), as well as his calling down ἀνάθεμα (1:8, 9) upon them. Though Paul possesses no capacity to actualize this threat in the present circumstances, and thus it is not an imminent one, the charge of physical destruction at the eschaton is made plain nonetheless. For their teachings and activities, Paul contends that the agitators will receive their just eschatological desserts. Once again, Paul’s invocation of the familiar image of destruction is used to caricature the agitators in a negative and pejorative light.

A final, yet slightly more intricate, use of simple degradation can be seen in Paul’s careful use of pronouns and particles in describing other groups in the letter. Many have observed that Paul, in Galatians, always uses the third person when referring to the agitators and the second person when noting the Galatian believers.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, Paul employs various other indefinite particles, such as τίς (3:1; 5:7) and ὅστις (5:10), when referencing the former, but never the latter.<sup>78</sup> While, on the surface, this use of pronouns and particles simply appears to reflect careful descriptive writing, there may be another, more-calculated strategy behind Paul’s meticulousness.<sup>79</sup>

---

used, was the judgment-threat.” See his category “Prone to judgment” for a further discussion of this topic.

<sup>77</sup> See e.g., Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 43 and Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 23. For the third person references, with both demonstrative and personal pronouns, see 1:7-9; 4:17; 5:12; and 6:12-13.

<sup>78</sup> It is interesting to note that Paul uses τίς not only when referring to his contemporary opponents (i.e., the agitators) but also in describing previous persons who he had opposition with, such as the pillars in Jerusalem (2:6) and some men from James (2:12). Furthermore, he also utilizes the term when referring to an even more vague “opposition,” whether real or perceived (1:9; 3:1; 5:7).

<sup>79</sup> Above, I already have argued against the contention that Paul’s more general references to the agitators indicate that they were “outsiders.” Furthermore, I would question whether this evidence enables us to conclude that Paul did not know the identity of the agitators. Though it is possible that

Andrie du Toit, in his study of strategies of vilification in early Christian epistolography, notes that while the vague, indefinite pronoun/particle may simply be used as a neutral “cover term to designate a limited grouping of persons,” it is also possible that it “may carry a derisive connotation, especially discernible in spoken language by a certain tone of voice. In this case the identity of the referents is intentionally suppressed and the pronoun is used pejoratively.”<sup>80</sup> Martyn bolsters this understanding of Paul’s description of the agitators:

since we may assume that Paul very likely knows the Teachers’ names or at least some of the epithets by which they identify themselves, we can conclude that, instead of using their names and epithets, he employs such colorless expressions as ‘some persons’ in order to indicate disdain.<sup>81</sup>

Thus, Paul’s use of pronouns/particles in Galatians may well reflect not only his careful attention to detail but also a measured strategy aimed at concealing the identity of the agitators, so as not to provide them any free publicity amongst the Galatian believers. If so, Paul’s overall aim here is to caricature the agitators so that the Galatians will come to perceive them not as real and distinct individuals, but as vague, shadowy figures who act only on their own agendas.<sup>82</sup>

---

Paul may not have known the identity of the agitators, this evidence (alone) does not enable us to draw such a conclusion. Ultimately, I will contend below that both of these arguments become less certain since Paul’s careful use of pronouns might well be a socio-rhetorical strategy used to conceal, and even denigrate, the agitators.

<sup>80</sup> du Toit, “Vilification,” 406. The audible character of this strategy of concealment and/or degradation fits well with Galatians, in that the letter likely was intended to be read before the various congregations in Galatia. However, we do not know who read the letters and how (i.e., with what inflection) they were presented. Dunn, *Galatians*, 42 notes that Paul’s cryptic and dismissive labeling of the agitators with *τινές* (1:7) reflects his usual vague manner of referring to his opponents (Rom 3:8; 1 Cor 4:18; 15:12; 2 Cor 3:1; 10:2; Phil 1:15). Cf. Betz, *Galatians*, 49, 267-268 and Polaski, *Paul and the Discourse*, 77.

<sup>81</sup> Martyn, “A Law-Observant Mission,” 313-314.

<sup>82</sup> Again, see du Toit, “Vilification,” 406.

While most of Paul's efforts at stigmatization within Galatians come under the comparatively basic sociological rubric of simple degradation, he also dabbles with another, more complex strategy of stigmatization. In at least two places in the letter, Paul's stigmatizing strategies reflect the sociological category of retrospective reinterpretation.<sup>83</sup> One of these instances can be seen in Paul's recounting of the situations at the Jerusalem conference (2:1-10) and in Antioch (2:11-14). These two events have a number of different functions within the context of the letter.<sup>84</sup> As noted above, one contextual function of these accounts is to legitimize Paul's message and authority by demonstrating that, though he did visit Jerusalem and was in Antioch at the time of the given conflicts, his gospel did not originate and was not added to or changed by the Jerusalem leaders; it came from divine sources.

Yet, an additional function behind the relating of these two situations also is evident. By recounting these two past events within his letter to the Galatians, Paul is aligning the agitators in Galatia with the "opponents" in Jerusalem and Antioch. He "puts his opponents [i.e., the agitators] in a historical perspective. He names as their historical predecessors the dissenting faction at the Jerusalem conference [2:4-5], 'the men from James' [2:12], and the Cephas group at Antioch [2:11-14]."<sup>85</sup> Paul

---

<sup>83</sup> On the stigmatizing strategy of retrospective reinterpretation, refer back to my discussion of it in chapter two. Additionally, the strategy of stereotyping does not seem to appear in Paul's efforts to stigmatize the agitators, therefore it will not be addressed in this chapter.

<sup>84</sup> As a result of their functional intricacies, these passages have received considerable attention from NT and Pauline scholars. However, many of the issues traditionally discussed with respect to these two situations are not of primary concern to me here. My question is: how (if at all) does Paul's recounting of these two incidents fit within his overall aim of persuading (especially via stigmatization) the Galatian believers to abide by his words and authority and to reject the same of the agitators?

<sup>85</sup> Betz, *Galatians*, 7.

specifically aligns the behavior of these three groups as being of the same negative type or kind.<sup>86</sup>

Though the agitators and the opponents in Jerusalem and Antioch likely are not of one and the same historical group, Paul attempts to create a fictitious one to encompass them, based on their perceived deviant-like behavior.<sup>87</sup> He does so by placing them all within the same type of deviant trajectory. Here, Paul is attempting to quash the current identity of the agitators by replacing it with the deviant ones of these other opponents. Ultimately, he hopes that the Galatian believers too will come to see and relate to the agitators solely as recurring examples of those whom Paul opposed in Jerusalem and Antioch: as hypocrites, false believers, and spies who work in stealth to enslave the Galatians.<sup>88</sup> If the Galatians accept this deviant/heretical characterization of the agitators, then they would be more likely to reject the message of the agitators and hold fast to Paul's. However, since it is uncertain whether the opponents in Jerusalem and/or Antioch already were known as

---

<sup>86</sup> Betz, *Galatians*, 90 contends that "Paul talks about the opposition in Jerusalem for the precise purpose of discrediting his present opponents." Furthermore, he goes on to note that Paul "misses no opportunity to discredit the present agitators in the eyes of the Galatian readers. Discrediting is the function of his characterization of their activities."

<sup>87</sup> Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 161-162 observes, "it is not clear whether Paul sees the false brothers, the men from James and the agitators in Galatia as the same persons or not, but rhetorically speaking it does not matter, all he wishes to do is make clear the parallels in their actions and critique each in turn. They, along with the withdrawing Peter, Barnabas, and Jewish Christians provide the negative paradigms in this *narratio* while Paul provides the positive one, as one divinely called and divine graced to bring the truth of the Gospel to Gentiles like the Galatians."

<sup>88</sup> See especially 2:4, 13.

deviants/heretics by the Galatian believers, the relative effectiveness of this specific example of retrospective reinterpretation is uncertain.<sup>89</sup>

An additional example where Paul's stigmatizing tactics reflect the sociological strategy of retrospective reinterpretation is in his allegorization of the Abraham/Sarah/Hagar narrative (4:22-5:1). As with the previous example, Paul's allegorization of this story functions contextually in a number of different ways. Yet, the fact that one of its functions is to characterize various groups involved in the current situation of social conflict in Galatia is quite clear. Here, Paul uses the offspring of Sarah and Hagar as two specific *topoi*.<sup>90</sup> Those in the current Galatian

---

<sup>89</sup> The strategy of retrospective reinterpretation is highly dependent upon the historical heretical or deviant figure being known as such by the audience (e.g., the Galatian believers). The more widely known and more heretical or deviant the figure is known to be by the audience, the easier it is to use that figure as the (historical) basis for retrospective reinterpretation. Therefore, with respect to the situation in Galatia, one wonders if the Galatian believers already knew these opponents in Jerusalem and Antioch as deviants or heretics? It is possible that Paul's highly pejorative characterization of these past opponents was the Galatians first exposure to this perception of them. Additionally, if it was the case that the Galatians already were aware of these opponents' deviant character, how prominent was this identity amongst the people of Galatia? All in all, it is likely that the opponents in Jerusalem and Antioch probably were not (yet) known widely as deviant or heretical figures. If they were, it would seem that Paul could have used a simple comparison of the two, such as a simile or metaphor, rather than a comparison via narrative. The ultimate result of this inquiry is that, comparatively speaking, Paul's attempt to reinterpret retrospectively the agitators in Galatia, via the opponents in Jerusalem and Antioch, lacks comprehensiveness and, therefore, comparative effectiveness due to the lack of a prominent deviant identity of the figures being alluded to.

<sup>90</sup> Though Hagar, as she appears within the HB, often is seen as the despised partner of Abraham (as opposed to Sarah), she nowhere is allegorized as a pejorative character. Likewise, she does not come to serve as a *topos* for negatively stigmatizing an opponent. The allegorical interpretation of Hagar, as a figure and the narrative in which she is found, begins (not surprisingly) with Philo. In the predominance of Philo's employment of Hagar (outside of the few biographical references), she serves as a *topos*, most often representing lower, but necessary, learning (e.g., *Leg.* 3.244; *Cher.* 3, 6, 8; *Congr.* 11, 23-24, 121-122; *Mut.* 255; *Somn.* 1.240). Cf. Peder Borgen, "Some Hebrew and Pagan Features in Philo's and Paul's Interpretation of Hagar and Ishmael," in The New Testament and Hellenistic Judaism, eds. Peder Borgen and Søren Giversen (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997) 153. In opposition, Sarah often appears as perfect virtue (e.g., e.g., *Leg.* 3.217; *Cher.* 5, 7; *Congr.* 1, 2, 6, 23; *Mut.* 255). Yet, though Philo utilizes these figures as two specific *topoi*, he nowhere makes an application of their typological identities to specific persons or groups. Rather, he uses them to categorize personal or mental qualities. Here is where Paul's allegorization of the figures and narrative differs from previous usage of them. He utilizes Hagar, as well Ishmael, in a figurative, typological sense to characterize pejoratively the agitators. On Paul's strategy of interpretation in this pericope, see Patrick G. Barker, "Allegory and Typology in Galatians 4:21-31," St Vladimir's

conflict who are like Isaac (i.e., children of the free woman/Sarah and of the promise; 4:28) and, thus, who are heirs of the true promises of God to Abraham, are the Galatian believers. In counterpart, those who are the children of Hagar (4:24), slavery (4:22-25), and the flesh (4:23, 29) are the agitators, who are to be driven out as they will not share in the inheritance of God's promises to Abraham (4:30).

In the latter case, it is obvious that Paul is aligning the agitators with the son of Hagar (i.e., Ishmael) and the familiar traditions that surround him and her (4:28-31).<sup>91</sup> The agitators "copy the pattern of Hagar, the pagan slave."<sup>92</sup> In short, Paul is attempting to discredit the agitators by reinterpreting their identity by means of Ishmael, the illegitimate son of slavery/Hagar, who is not and will not be an heir of Abraham's blessing for Israel.<sup>93</sup> He superimposes the pejorative identity of Ishmael over the agitators' identity, thereby obliterating the latter and latching onto the former. For Paul, the agitators are of one and the same deviant ilk as Hagar/Ishmael. Once again, his hope is that the Galatians also will see the agitators in the same

---

Theological Quarterly 38 (1994) 193-209; Fowl, "Who Can Read," 77-95; Borgen, "Some Hebrew and Pagan," 151-164; and C. K. Barrett, Essays on Paul (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982) 154-170. Finally, Paul's use of Hagar in this manner is unique. Though John C. O'Neill, "For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia' (Galatians 4.25)," in The Old Testament in the New Testament: Essays in Honour of J. L. North, JSNTSup 189, ed. Steve Moyise (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000) 208-217, contends that Paul is quoting a source here, which he deems to stem from the Essenes, there is no extant evidence that supports such a claim. Therefore, with respect to extant evidence, Paul seems to be the originator of this specific type of interpretation and re-contextualization of the figure and tradition surrounding Hagar.

<sup>91</sup> The fact that Hagar and Ishmael would have been understood as negatively-loaded characters within Jewish tradition would increase the relative effectiveness of Paul's strategy of retrospective reinterpretation here.

<sup>92</sup> Borgen, "Some Hebrew and Pagan," 156.

<sup>93</sup> Fowl, "Who Can Read," 78 rightly notes that since Paul's interpretation of these characters likely goes against the grain of the conventional interpretation of them, he is using his novel exegesis as an act of power, namely rhetorical power. The success or failure of Paul's efforts here, ultimately, will be based upon the type of hearing it receives from the Galatian believers.

depreciatory light and, as a result, will reject them and cleave to Paul, which is the overall aim in his stigmatizing efforts within the letter.

### III. The Dynamics of Conflict in Galatia and the Social Context for the Emergence of Early Christian Heresy.

The situation of conflict in Galatia appears to reflect all the elements in the conceptual typology of heresy described in chapter two. Here, we see an internal conflict between Paul and the agitators over (at least) the necessity or non-necessity of circumcision and obedience to the law for the Galatian believers to remain in Christ. In Paul's eyes, the agitators insistence that the Galatians follow these practices as a prerequisite to remaining in Christ constituted a deviation from the gospel of Christ, the gospel that Paul preaches. Furthermore, the alternative and competing version of the gospel offered by the agitators posed a severe threat to Paul's gospel, as well as (and maybe even primarily) his authority in Galatia. Ultimately, the success (i.e., gaining adherents) that the agitators were enjoying in the promotion of these practices amongst the Galatian believers drew the issue to a head and (at least for Paul) brought about a crisis. Perceiving this severe threat from the agitators, Paul writes a responsory letter in an effort to maintain and/or re-attain the allegiances of the Galatian believers. In support of the specific arguments and exegesis put forth, Paul employs both legitimatory devices and stigmatizing tactics, which are designed to bolster his own authority and cast aspersion on the same of the agitators.

Though we, as modern readers, are not privy to the ultimate outcome of this specific situation of conflict (i.e., we do not know if it was Paul or the agitators who ultimately gained the upper hand), we still are able to assess the particulars of the conflict itself. In Paul's responsory letter, we can see a distinct attempt to demarcate the practices and teachings of the agitators as being outside the bounds of being in Christ. He was attempting to demarcate as deviant (and beyond the norms of the group) the act of making circumcision and/or Torah observance a prerequisite for remaining in Christ, as well as any other like practice save the acceptance of God's grace in Christ. In his response, Paul nowhere employs the labels "heretic" or "heresy" for the agitators or their teachings. Thus, we would not and (with the ecclesiastical understanding of heresy in mind) could not cite this as an instance of heresy. However, what we do see in this context is all of the noted social phenomena representative of heresy (as seen in chapter two), but without the formal label to demarcate it as such. The situation of social conflict in evidence in Paul's letter to the Galatians, then, represents a likely context out of which the early Christian concept of heresy first emerged.

## Chapter Four

### The Dynamics of Social Conflict within the Apocalypse

In line with the analysis of Galatians in the previous chapter, I now will turn to the book of Revelation again to examine the dynamics of social conflict, testing its viability as a context out of which the early Christian idea of heresy first emerged.<sup>1</sup> I submit that the book of Revelation is an appropriate and heuristically helpful text to be included in this thesis for a number of reasons. First, as with Galatians, the Apocalypse is a highly polemical work, which I take to reflect not only heated language but the seriousness of the situation/threat at hand.<sup>2</sup> Second, Revelation was written to address, at least in-part, internal (i.e., intra-Christian) issues. Royalty notes that “the harsh polemic against Babylon/Rome in Revelation can mask the simple fact that it was written by, for, and to Christians.”<sup>3</sup> Finally, the book of Revelation is a heuristically helpful text due to its date. While some scholars hold an early date for the book (c. 68 C.E.), scholarly consensus favors a date c. 95 C.E.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> I again am relying upon the social understanding of the concept of heresy described in chapter two.

<sup>2</sup> On the polemic in the book of Revelation, see Peder Borgen, “Polemic in the Book of Revelation,” in Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity: Issues of Polemic and Faith, eds. Craig A. Evans and Donald A. Hagner (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993) 199-211 and Adela Yarbro Collins, Crisis and Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypse (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984) 145-152.

<sup>3</sup> Robert M. Royalty, The Streets of Heaven: An Ideology of Wealth in the Apocalypse of John (Macon: Mercer U. Press, 1998) 28. Furthermore, Royalty (241) astutely observes that “the actual conflict that precipitated the ‘crisis of the Apocalypse’ was not conflict with the Romans or the Jews. Rather, it was conflict within the Christian churches over the authority of John and his circle of prophets against the authority of other Christian teachers, apostles, and prophets.” The internal dimensions of the situation that is reflected in the book of Revelation will be addressed further below.

<sup>4</sup> Some of those who would hold to this earlier date for the book of Revelation are J. A. T. Robinson, Redating the New Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976) 221-253; A. J. Bell, “The Date of John’s Apocalypse: The Evidence of Some Roman Historians Reconsidered,” NTS 25 (1978) 93-102;

Therefore, just as I have used Galatians as a window onto internal social conflict in the earliest decades of the Christian movement, I now employ the book of Revelation to examine the same phenomenon in the latter part of the first-century.<sup>5</sup> Ultimately, then, I contend that these characteristic features of the book of Revelation commend it as a valuable object of analysis for this thesis.

Yet, as a thesis (especially a more synthetically-focused one) demands an economization of space, I will limit the present analysis of the Apocalypse to the messages to the seven churches (Revelation 2-3). These proclamations often are noted as being integrally connected and even programmatic for the remainder of the book.<sup>6</sup> As Royalty observes,

the messages to the seven churches in Revelation 2-3 are our strongest anchor for a social-historical reading of the visions in chapters 4-22. These seven

---

Christopher Rowland, The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity (New York: Crossroad, 1982) 17; and J. Christian Wilson, "The Problem of the Domitianic Date of Revelation," NTS 39 (1993) 587-605. The later date, during the reign of Domitian, finds support amongst scholars such as, Collins, Crisis and Catharsis, 54-83; Leonard L. Thompson, The Book of Revelation: Apocalypse and Empire (New York: Oxford U. Press, 1990) 13-17; and C. J. Hemer, The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting, JSNTSup 11 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1986) 2-5. Finally, D. E. Aune, Revelation, WBC 52A, eds. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker (Dallas: Word, 1997) lvi-lxx, cv-cxxxiv is notable for his source theory which places the final compilation of the book in the 90s but identifies an earlier stage in the 50s and 60s. Ultimately, I align myself with the majority of scholars who think Revelation to be written c. 95 C.E., even though the analysis below is not contingent upon such a date.

<sup>5</sup> Though I would have liked to treat a text from an even later chronological period within the NT documents, such as 2 Peter, demands of space will not allow such an endeavor in this thesis (yet the letter does not go unnoticed as I treat it in my study of ὄψεις in chapter seven). Furthermore, by this time, heresy already would have been beginning to take on a doctrinal form and character that later (in the later half of the second century and beyond) became part of its normative ecclesiastical definition.

<sup>6</sup> On the literary unity of these seven messages and the rest of the book of Revelation, see Robert H. Mounce, The Book of Revelation, NICNT, ed. F. F. Bruce (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977) 83-85; Leonard Thompson, "The Literary Unity of the Book of Revelation," in Mappings of the Biblical Terrain: The Bible as Text (= Bucknell Review 33/2), ed. V. L. Tollers and J. Maier (Lewisburg: Bucknell U. Press, 1990) 347-363; and Royalty, Streets of Heaven, 154-155. The older view, seen mainly in R. H. Charles, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John, vol. I (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1920) 37, holds that the seven messages were written before the remainder of the book, circulated independently, and only later were brought together by a redactor. Charles' hypothesis does not hold much sway today.

messages contain more discernible references to concrete moral behavior and the social world of the hearers than do the visions in the rest of the Apocalypse.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, though I will be omitting much of the book of Revelation in this analysis, the selection I have elected to treat remains vitally instructive not only for this thesis but for the book of Revelation itself.

## REVELATION 2-3<sup>8</sup>

### I. The Situations of Social Conflict.

Before endeavoring to examine the various situations of social conflict reflected in Revelation 2-3, a bit of clarification is needed with respect to the sources of the given conflicts. First, it should be noted that not every proclamation<sup>9</sup> reflects an actual

---

<sup>7</sup> Royalty, Streets of Heaven, 151.

<sup>8</sup> For the purposes of this study, I have included a treatment of Rev 2-3 due largely to the respository element contained within the messages. I take the author of the book of Revelation to be addressing specific, existential situations that are present in Asia Minor and, thus, I do not see them (i.e., the situations) as mere figurative creations by the author. Additionally, while I realize that debate continues as to whether these situations are local ones located within the noted churches or larger troubles that plague all the churches of Asia Minor, I am satisfied (in this study) with either of these two options. Whether the problems the author responds to are limited to the respective geographical sites or are ones that extend beyond the geographical bounds noted, plaguing the larger church, he (in either case) is attempting to confront an existential situation(s) that he perceives to be threatening. The comment of G. K. Beale, John's Use of the Old Testament in Revelation, JSNTSup 166, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998) 302 seems an appropriate combination of these two options: "although each letter is addressed to the particular situation of a church, it is relevant for the needs of all 'seven' of the churches, and probably, by implication, for the universal church or church 'at large.'" Therefore, in this chapter I will address the situations behind each message in a local sense (i.e., as if the respective situations were unique to the noted cities) for the practical purposes of analysis and overall coherence. Yet, I continue to realize that the given situations may be more pervasive than that; they may extend beyond the given geographical confines noted. Cf. Charles H. H. Scobie, "Local References in the Letters to the Seven Churches," NTS 39 (1993) 623-624 and Steve Moyise, The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation, JSNTSup 115, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 24-44.

<sup>9</sup> The literary form and structure of Rev 2-3 have been the subject of much scholarly debate. For some of the more prominent contributions to this discussion, see D. E. Aune, "The Form and Function of the Proclamations to the Seven Churches (Revelation 2-3)," NTS 36 (1990) 182-204; K. Berger,

situation of social (i.e., group) conflict that is pertinent to this thesis. In the proclamations directed to Sardis (3:1-6) and Laodicea (3:14-22), no specific “opponents” are apparent.<sup>10</sup> Though John<sup>11</sup> marks out two sub-groups within Sardis (i.e., those who are at “the point of death” in 3:2 and those “who have not soiled their clothes” in 3:4), these two groups are not represented by him as being in direct conflict with each other. The former group has not and is not attempting to bring down or corrupt the latter in any explicit fashion. These two groups merely reflect different levels of spiritual devotion present within the churches, as evidenced by their works (or lack thereof). The impetus behind the proclamation to the church at Sardis, then, is not a situation of social conflict but the (seemingly widespread) prevalence of spiritual morbidity.

Likewise, in the proclamation to Laodicea John opposes not a specific subgroup within the congregations, but the churches as a whole, for their lukewarmness (3:16). Though John’s opposition to the Laodiceans’ lack of zeal certainly reveals a type of social conflict, it is not of the same dynamic that is being considered in this thesis. As seen in my analysis of Galatians, I am treating texts that contain a

---

“Apostelbrief und apostolische Rede: Zum Formular frühchristlicher Briefe,” *ZNW* 65 (1974) 190-231; John T. Kirby, “The Rhetorical Situations of Revelation 1-3,” *NTS* 34 (1988) 197-207; and William H. Shea, “The Covenantal Form of the Letters to the Seven Churches,” *AUSS* 21 (1983) 71-84. Cf. Aune, *Revelation*, 119-132; Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Revelation: Vision of a Just World* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991) 46; and Barbara W. Snyder, “Triple-Form and Space/Time Transitions: Literary Structuring Devices in the Apocalypse,” *SBLSP* 30 (1991) 440-450. Ultimately, though it is not a contentious issue for this thesis, I find Aune’s assessment of Rev 2-3 to be most convincing due to his consideration of both form and function when identifying its genre. He contends that these seven proclamations reflect a mixed genre created by the author from a combination of an imperial or royal edict (form) and a paraenetic salvation-judgment oracle (function).

<sup>10</sup> See Scobie, “Local References,” 617.

<sup>11</sup> In this chapter I will identify the author of the book as “John,” stemming from the introduction (1:1), yet my analysis of Rev 2-3 is not contingent upon this or any other specific theory of authorship.

tripartite communicative dynamic, where a given author is writing to and for a specific audience (at least partially) about another group/individual who has initiated and/or perpetuated problematic practices and/or beliefs within the target audience. Ultimately, then, since the proclamation to Laodicea does not depict this sort of group dynamic, in that no third party (i.e., group being opposed) is evident, there is no relevant situation of social conflict of which to take stock here. Thus, this proclamation, as well as the one to Sardis, falls outside the bounds of this thesis and will not be a part of the following analysis of Revelation 2-3.

With respect to the remaining proclamations, scholars have observed that the identity and position of the given persons and groups whom John opposes vary.<sup>12</sup> In two of the proclamations, namely the ones to the churches at Smyrna (2:8-11) and Philadelphia (3:7-13), those opposed by John appear to be Jews, who are external to the Christian congregations.<sup>13</sup> The location of these “opponents” as non-Christian Jews largely hinges upon the interpretation of the phrases, “those who say that they are Jews but are not” and “the synagogue of Satan” (2:9; 3:9), which are found in similar form within both of these proclamations. While some scholars have taken the phrases quite plainly and assumed that those being opposed here are some type of Jewish-Christians, most hold them to be Jews stemming from local Jewish

---

<sup>12</sup> See, especially, Adela Yarbro Collins, “Vilification and Self-Definition in the Book of Revelation,” *HTR* 79 (1986) 308-320, which bears great similarity to her “Insiders and Outsiders in the Book of Revelation and Its Social Context,” in *‘To See Ourselves as Others See Us’: Christians, Jews, ‘Others’ in Late Antiquity*, eds. Jacob Neusner and Ernest S. Frerichs (Chico: Scholars Press, 1985) 203-216.

<sup>13</sup> See Collins, “Vilification,” 308, 310-314; Aune, *Revelation*, 175, 244; Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985) 118; and Borgen, “Polemic,” 200. Borgen (204) further notes that the situations in Smyrna and Philadelphia could be considered “intramural” situations. However, if his assertion is accepted, they would be intramural to Judaism, not late first century Christianity.

communities and synagogues.<sup>14</sup> In light of this, the function of these two proclamations is to encourage the Christian believers in Smyrna and Philadelphia to continue to endure, even under the slanderous persecution from local Jews.<sup>15</sup> Ultimately, since the source of the opposition here is external to these Christian communities, the proclamations to Smyrna and Philadelphia are not principally relevant to the present study of internal deviance and, thus, will not be treated here.

The remaining three proclamations, namely those addressed to Ephesus (2:1-7), Pergamum (2:12-17), and Thyatira (2:18-29), reveal a different source behind the

---

<sup>14</sup> The primary basis of support for scholars who assume those being opposed in Smyrna and Philadelphia are Christians is found in the (contentiously) analogous situations within the letters of Ignatius. Against this, and for them being local Jews, scholars cite the social situation of Jews and Christians living under Roman rule, the internal connotations of the “slander” (βλασφημία; 2:9) that is occurring, and the prediction of being thrown into prison (2:10). Both Collins, “Vilification,” 312-314 and Aune, Revelation, 162-164 contend that this evidence reflects a legal/political situation where Jews, a group possessing some privileges from the Roman government, were bringing legal accusations against Christians in an attempt to oust them from under the name “Jew” and to snatch these privileges away from them. Greg Carey, Elusive Apocalypse: Reading Authority in the Revelation to John, Studies in American Biblical Hermeneutics 15 (Macon: Mercer U. Press, 1999) 21 infers that “with Christians reaching for the limited security available to Jews, it would be perfectly understandable for Jews to identify them as being outsiders to their communities. From a Jewish point of view, such a decision would have seemed a reasonable act of self-preservation. For Christians, it would have implied exposure to public scrutiny. And for John, it was an act of slander, or blasphemy.” If this legal/political setting is a proper interpretation of the evidence, and it seems to be, then these “opponents” hardly could be Jewish-Christians. In the given milieu, it is likely that no Christian group would be willing to take this type of legal action against another Christian group since the Christian accusers, themselves, would be too socially and politically vulnerable to take such a step. However, as local Jews stood on firmer political and legal ground as a religious group within the Greco-Roman world, they could and likely did notify the government that these early Christians were outside the bounds of Judaism. For these reasons (and others), the persons being opposed in Smyrna and Philadelphia likely are not Christians but local Jews, who represent a distinct type of threat to John and his group of followers. Cf. S. Appelbaum, “The Legal Status of the Jewish Communities in the Diaspora,” in The Jewish People in the First Century: Historical Geography, Political History, Social, Cultural, and Religious Life and Institutions I, ed. S. Safrai and M. Stern, CRINT (Assen: Van Gorcum & Comp. B. V., 1974) 420-463; Stephen G. Wilson, Related Strangers: Jews and Christians, 70-170 C.E. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995) 20-33; Collins, “Vilification,” 313; E. Lohse, “Synagogue of Satan and Church of God: Jews and Christians in the Book of Revelation,” SEÅ 58 (1993) 107, 109; and Schüssler Fiorenza, Revelation: Justice and Judgment, 194-195.

<sup>15</sup> It is important to note that the term “Jew” (Ἰουδαίους; 2:9; 3:9) is not a negative or pejorative term for John. It is rather the opposite. John is exhorting the Christian believers to claim this title as he deems them, and not these Jews who thwart them, to be the true heirs of Israel. See Borgen,

situations of conflict. In these three instances, the conflict to which John is addressing his words is an internal one.<sup>16</sup> John has identified various groups within the given Christian communities who he deems to conflict with one another.<sup>17</sup> For example, in the proclamation to Ephesus, John identifies several groups that are internal to the Christian congregation there. In addition to those whom he supports, John also marks out other insider groups to whom he stands in opposition, namely those apostles who he claims are false (2:2) and the Nicolaitans (2:6).<sup>18</sup>

In his attempt to discredit and/or defame these groups before the Ephesian believers, John incidentally has identified them as being internal to the Christian communities. Evidence for this can be seen in his utilization of the title “apostles” (ἀποστόλους; 2:2) for some of them. This title is likely a self-designation utilized

---

“Polemic,” 200; Lohse, “Synagogue of Satan,” 107; Collins, Crisis and Catharsis, 85-87; *idem.*, “Vilification,” 312; and Aune, Revelation, 162.

<sup>16</sup> The recent work of Royalty, Streets of Heaven, especially 28-30 makes a great effort to clarify that the crisis that elicited the writing and sending of the Apocalypse was an internal one, an intra-Christian conflict. Thus, the focus of this chapter is quite akin to his book for this reason and because of the similar methodology employed, which is a combination of sociology/sociology of knowledge and rhetorical criticisms (though we both have our own unique methodological emphases).

<sup>17</sup> See Heikki Räisänen, “The Clash Between Christian Styles of Life in the Book of Revelation,” ST 49 (1995) 151-166; Collins, “Vilification,” 316-318; Scobie, “Local References,” 617; and Schüssler Fiorenza, Revelation: Justice and Judgment, 195. Finally, while the composite of evidence for the conflict being of an internal nature is small, it remains proportionally prominent and significant within the context of Revelation 2-3.

<sup>18</sup> Both of these groups are subsets of John’s more generic label, “evildoers” (2:2), which functions not as a title for an additional group in Ephesus but as an umbrella label for groups that he opposes there. Cf. Aune, Revelation, 143 and G. R. Beasley-Murray, The Book of Revelation, NCB (London: Oliphants, 1974) 74. Additionally, some have assumed that behind these two titles (i.e., “false” “apostles” and “Nicolaitans”) lies one group who John opposes; see e.g., Collins, “Vilification,” 316. However, this assertion is not confirmed, necessarily, by the text of the proclamation. While it remains possible that these titles refer to only one group, such a characterization would be based solely on John’s rhetorical force. Therefore, one must hold open if not hold fast to the option that there are two groups in Ephesus being opposed by John. Ultimately, whether those being opposed stem from one or more than one group, the fact that this opposition poses a serious *internal* threat to John and the Christian group who he supports is quite clear. The substance and severity of this internal threat will be explored later in this chapter.

by these persons, but one which John thinks to be “false” (ψευδεῖς; 2:2).<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, John’s commendation of the Ephesian believers for their testing of these (supposed) apostles, implies that these persons may well have been living and participating in the Christian community there, as migrant prophets.<sup>20</sup> Otherwise, how could the Ephesians actually have been testing their claim to apostleship?<sup>21</sup> Finally, John’s use of “Nicolaitans” here in 2:6 speaks to the insider status of these persons, as does the only other occurrence of the term within the New Testament (Rev 2:15).<sup>22</sup> In short, the proclamation directed at Ephesus contains an abundance of evidence that reveals, quite clearly, that those whom John opposes are other Christians already within the Ephesian congregation.

---

<sup>19</sup> The phrase τοὺς λέγοντας ἑαυτοὺς ἀποστόλους (2:2), being translated as “those calling themselves apostles” or, more pointedly, “the so-called apostles,” reflects (linguistically) John’s employment of a self-proclamation of these persons; for why would John identify them as apostles and, thus, insiders (which would seem to be counterproductive to his aims) if they were not? Thus, John coins of the tag, “false apostles,” which reflects a negative counterpart to the “opponents” claim to apostolic status. Additionally, Aune, *Revelation*, 145 identifies the label “false apostle” (cf. 2 Cor 11:13) as one of a number of pejorative labels that reflect internal conflict. Other similar labels are: “false brother” (Gal 2:4), “false teacher” (2 Pet 2:1; *Did.* 11:1-2; Justin *Dial.* 82.1) and “false prophet” (Matt 7:15; 24:11[=Mark 13:22]; 1 John 4:1; *Hermas Mand.* 11.1-2, 4, 7; *Did.* 11:5-10; 16.3). Cf. du Toit, “Vilification,” 405.

<sup>20</sup> On these self-proclaimed apostles in Ephesus being migrant prophets, see W. Bousset, *Die Offenbarung Johannis*, sixth edition, MeyerK 16 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1906) 204, 206. Cf. David E. Aune, “The Social Matrix of the Apocalypse of John,” *BR* 26 (1981) 28. The situation evident here is that these itinerants have gained entry and some prominence within the Ephesian church and John is attempting to reject them and their message. Ultimately, we see evidence of conflict between competing authorities within these Christian congregations.

<sup>21</sup> Testing persons who claimed an inspired status was not uncommon in the early church, as seen in 1 Thess 5:21; 1 Cor 14:29; and 1 John 4:1. However, Schüssler Fiorenza, *Revelation: Justice and Judgment*, 115 notes that, unlike the Didache (11), the Apocalypse does not reveal any criteria for testing these migrant apostles. The Ephesians simply are praised for rejecting them. Furthermore, Schüssler Fiorenza notes that, about 20 years later, Ignatius also praises the Ephesians for rejecting heretical teachers (Ign. Eph. 9.1; cf. 6.2; 7.1; 8.1). A pattern seemingly had developed regarding the Ephesians consistent rejection of false teachers.

<sup>22</sup> On the Nicolaitans being internal to the Christian congregations in Ephesus, see Borgen, “Polemic,” 200 and Schüssler Fiorenza, *Revelation: Justice and Judgment*, 118.

The insider status of those being opposed in Pergamum and Thyatira also is quite evident. In Pergamum, John accuses the church of having persons in its midst who are holding to the teaching of Balaam (2:14) and to the teaching of the Nicolaitans (2:15).<sup>23</sup> Though John stands in opposition to these persons, their internal location is obvious in that they are noted as already being in the midst of the Christian community there (2:14-15).<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> John intimates within his proclamation to Pergamum that the titles “Balaam” and “the Nicolaitans” do not refer to two different groups. Rather, they both name the same group being opposed by him. This is evident from the fact that the οὕτως, which begins 2:15, coordinates the phrase that it introduces (ἔχεις καὶ σὺ κρατοῦντας τὴν διδαχὴν Νικολαΐτων ὁμοίως) with the statement that immediately precedes (ἔχεις ἐκεῖ κρατοῦντας τὴν διδαχὴν Βαλαάμ...) by way of interpretation or explanation. Thus, John is drawing a direct connection between the activities of the Nicolaitans in Pergamum and those of Balaam in Israel. By following the teaching of Balaam, these persons also and simultaneously (according to John) follow the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Therefore, at least from John’s perspective, they are one and the same group. Cf. Aune, *Revelation*, 188; Schüssler Fiorenza, *Revelation: Vision*, 56; Göran Forkman, *The Limits of the Religious Community: Expulsion from the Religious Community within the Qumran Sect, within Rabbinic Judaism, and within Primitive Christianity* (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1972) 157-158; and George Eldon Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972) 48. In opposition, see W. M. MacKay, “Another Look at the Nicolaitans,” *EvQ* 45 (1973) 111-115.

Additionally, the καὶ σὺ and ὁμοίως in 2:15 further connect the situation in Pergamum to that in Ephesus. As the messages would have been read aloud to the churches in Pergamum (on this, see Aune, “The Form and Function,” 184; Moyise, “Old Testament,” 24; Royalty, *Streets of Heaven*, 127; and Scobie, “Local References,” 606), and in the present order, the believers in Pergamum already would have heard the Nicolaitans mentioned in the proclamation to Ephesus. Therefore the καὶ σὺ (“you also”) would identify Pergamum with Ephesus, in that they both have and/or had Nicolaitans in their midst. It should be noted, though, that the churches in these two cities had different reactions to the Nicolaitans. While the Ephesians are commended by John for hating their works (2:6), the churches at Pergamum are being chastened for having some in their midst (2:15). In short, John clusters those being opposed in Pergamum and the group who the Ephesians hate (2:6) under the same heading, the “Nicolaitans.” Though scholars rightly have recognized John’s tendency or even strategy to lump all those persons who he opposes (Romans, non-Christian Jews, and Christians) into a unitary, diabolical opposition (on this, see especially Royalty, *Streets of Heaven*, 14-15 and Carey, *Elusive Apocalypse*, 135), which serves his own socio-rhetorical aims in the document, I would contend that the above analysis warrants taking these two references in 2:14-15 as the same group.

<sup>24</sup> The declaration of what the risen Christ has against the churches in Pergamum (2:14) begins with the following: ἔχεις ἐκεῖ κρατοῦντας τὴν διδαχὴν Βαλαάμ (“you have there some holding to the teaching of Balaam”). The location of the opponents is indicated primarily by ἐκεῖ, which can be translated as “there” or maybe even more pointedly as “in that place” or “in the midst.” See BAGD, 239. Those who John is opposing are certainly already within the churches of Pergamum.

Likewise, the accusation (by John) that the Thyatiran congregations are and have been “tolerating”<sup>25</sup> the teachings and prophecy<sup>26</sup> of the woman Jezebel (2:20), denotes the presence of rival Christian factions within that church. In fact, the remark that he already had given “Jezebel” time to repent (2:21) implies that the conflict evident within the proclamation is not a recent problem but one that has been ongoing between him and her.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, the mention that this woman actually is teaching within the Christian community in Thyatira indicates that she had access to and some sort of following and authority within the church.<sup>28</sup> In short, “Jezebel’s” activities demarcate her as a currently authoritative figure within the Thyatiran

---

Furthermore, their continued participation within these churches is indicated by the present tense of the verb ἔχεις and the participle κρατοῦντας.

<sup>25</sup> The participle employed by John here, which stems from ἀφίημι, may well imply that he deems them to be guilty not only of a passive tolerance of “Jezebel,” but possibly also of an active permission for her to exist, lead, and prophesy within that city. Cf. BAGD, 126.

<sup>26</sup> Though John’s notation, that the woman Jezebel ἡ λέγουσα ἑαυτὴν προφήτιν (2:20), contains a pejorative connotation embedded within it (i.e., that Jezebel is only a “so-called” prophetess), he is likely making reference to a self-designation utilized by this woman, which he thinks to be false. The language here parallels John’s assessment of those persons in Ephesus who were claiming to be apostles (2:2), as well as his judgment of some non-Christian Jews in Smyrna (2:9) and Philadelphia (3:9). These all fit a pattern where the avenue through which John expresses his disdain for these groups is the reversal of their own self-designation. Ultimately, the fact that “Jezebel” lays claim to the title, “prophetess,” one similar to which John too likely claims (i.e., “prophet”), furthers her profile as a Christian and, thus, an insider to the Christian community. On “Jezebel” being a prophet internal to the Christian community at Thyatira, see Tina Pippin, “‘And I Will Strike Her Children Dead’: Death and the Deconstruction of Social Location,” in Reading From This Place I: Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in the United States, eds. Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995) 194. Cf. Aune, “Social Matrix,” 28 and Forkman, Limits of the Religious Community, 158.

<sup>27</sup> Aune, “Social Matrix,” 27 notes that “this may be regarded as a reference to an earlier oracle directed to Jezebel herself by John, or perhaps by one of the members of his prophetic circle.” Though previous intercourse between John and “Jezebel” may have included the declaration of an oracle, we (as contemporary) readers are not privy to the exact content and character of this prior interaction. At the very least, though, this brief comment highlights the fact that the conflict between the two prophets is not new and, thus, is an on-going conflict. Cf. Collins, “Vilification,” 316; Bousset, Offenbarung, 219; Charles, Revelation, 71; Beasley-Murray, Book of Revelation, 21; and E. Lohmeyer, Die Offenbarung des Johannes, second edition, (Tübingen: Mohr, 1953) 28.

congregation(s) and, thus, an insider to that same group.<sup>29</sup> Ultimately, then, the proclamations directed to Thyatira, Ephesus, and Pergamum all reflect situations of internal social conflict where the above-noted, tripartite communicative dynamic is evident (i.e., John is writing to these congregations in Asia Minor concerning certain practices and/or beliefs that are being promulgated by other Christians). Therefore, they will form the basis for the following analysis of the phenomenon of heresy in Revelation 2-3.<sup>30</sup>

Though the internal dimension of these three situations is readily apparent, the substance of the conflict itself is much more elusive. The texts that contain these proclamations convey very little about the central issue or issues that divide John and these Nicolaitans. The fullest descriptions, out of these three proclamations, are found in those directed to Pergamum and Thyatira. John alleges (directly in the case of Thyatira and indirectly in the case of Pergamum) that those whom he opposes are teaching the Christian believers to (1) practice fornication (πορνεῦσαι; 2:14, 20)

---

<sup>28</sup> See Pippin, "And I Will Strike," 195; Schüssler Fiorenza, *Revelation: Justice and Judgment*, 116; and H. Zimmerman, "Christus und die Kirche in den Sendschreiben der Apokalypse," in *Unio Christianorum: Festschrift Jaeger* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1962) 183-194.

<sup>29</sup> Paul B. Duff, "'I Will Give to Each of You as Your Works Deserve': Witchcraft Accusations and the Fiery-eyed Son of God in Rev 2.18-23," *NTS* 43 (1997) 131 observes, "in short, John selectively blurs the distinctions between insiders and outsiders in the Apocalypse. He maintains that 'Jezebel'—although technically an 'insider' in the Thyatiran church—acts like an outsider." This transposition of "Jezebel" is enacted by John for his own rhetorical purposes, which will be examined further below.

<sup>30</sup> A procedural note is in order at this point. Since the "problematic" behavior that John sees being committed by "Jezebel" is identical to that which the Nicolaitans seem to be "guilty" of (according to John) in Pergamum, and since the situations in Pergamum and Ephesus already have been aligned by him, I will take the Nicolaitans as the primary group who John opposes in these three cities. Again, I am well aware that John may be lumping together all of those who he opposes for his own socio-rhetorical purposes. However, I would contend that there is some textual warrant for seeing a unified opposition.

and (2) eat things (i.e., meat) sacrificed to idols (φαγεῖν εἰδωλόθυστα; 2:14, 20).<sup>31</sup>

Furthermore, since John already has linked the situation and persons being opposed in Ephesus with those in Pergamum (2:15), it is held by many that the problematic issues there (i.e., in Ephesus) are the same or similar to these others and, thus, I will treat them as such.<sup>32</sup>

However, the highly polemical and rhetorically-laden character of these passages warn the reader not to take these accusations, necessarily, at face value.<sup>33</sup>

In fact, most scholars take the charges of πορνεῦσαι as examples of the figurative or metaphorical use of the term.<sup>34</sup> Just as the charge of “adultery” as seen often in Hosea, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel did not demarcate actual physical fornication, but rather behavior that was perceived as idolatry (e.g., the reverence of other gods above YHWH), so John’s usage of the term here likely does not denote an actual practice or teaching of the Nicolaitans.<sup>35</sup> These “opponents” were not practicing

---

<sup>31</sup> These practices are attributed by John to “Jezebel” (2:20), “Balaam” (2:14), and thus contiguously to the Nicolaitans (2:15). Duff, “I Will Give,” 130, notes that these accusations, though directed inwardly here, were ones that Jews and Christians, who were living in the Greco-Roman world, often attributed to persons outside their communities (see e.g., Wisd. Sol. 14.12; Ep. Arist. 152; and T. Reub. 4.6).

<sup>32</sup> Again, it is important to note that I am depending largely upon John’s perspective on the situation in an effort to understand his efforts at persuading the believers in Asia Minor to abide by his message and reject that of the Nicolaitans. Cf. Collins, “Vilification,” 316; Schüssler Fiorenza, Revelation: Justice and Judgment, 195; and *idem.*, Revelation: Vision, 56.

<sup>33</sup> See Luke T. Johnson, “The New Testament’s Anti-Jewish Slander and the Conventions of Ancient Polemic,” JBL 108 (1989) 419-441 and his emphasis on the literary, social, and rhetorical aspects of ancient polemic.

<sup>34</sup> On the figurative use of the term here in Revelation, see Räisänen, “The Clash Between,” 156-158; Royalty, Streets of Heaven, 32-33; Thompson, Book of Revelation, 122; Collins, “Insiders and Outsiders,” 214; and Duff, “I Will Give,” 130.

<sup>35</sup> In the OT, the idolatry of Israel often is noted by the accusation of adultery or sexual immorality; see e.g., Jer 3:2; 13:27; Ezek 16:15-58; 23:1-49; 43:7; Hos 5:4; 6:10. This also occurs quite

fornication in a literal sense; nor were they instructing Christians in these congregations to participate physically in illicit sexual practices.<sup>36</sup> Rather, πορνεῦσαι reflects John's assessment or evaluation of the Nicolaitans' behavior as being idolatrous and, thus, on par with fornication or sexual depravity.

Additionally, as the other charge (i.e., φαγεῖν εἰδωλόθυσια) also identifies the behavior of the Nicolaitans to be in the realm of idolatry, "it is extremely likely that John's pairing of eating food sacrificed to idols with sexual misconduct is actually a case of emphasis by repetition."<sup>37</sup> They both emphasize the same understanding of the Nicolaitans' behavior as idolatry, further highlighting the figurative use of πορνεῦσαι in these contexts. It functions here as a polemical term of disapprobation and not as one of objective description.<sup>38</sup> Thus, actual fornication is not a rampant existential problem in Ephesus, Pergamum, or Thyatira.

The accusation of eating meat sacrificed to idols also carries with it a number of seemingly codified or stereotyped features. For example, there appears to be an established connection between the prohibitions against fornication and the eating of sacrificial meat, which pre-dates John's pairing of them. The Apostolic Decree of

---

frequently in the early Christian usage of the term/concept; see e.g., Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25; Rom 1:23-25; Gal 5:19-21; 1 Cor 6:9-11; Rev 22:15.

<sup>36</sup> As John contends that those who he opposes "follow the teaching of Balaam," Räisänen, "The Clash Between," 156 notes that, Balaam "is portrayed as one who entices to idolatry, not as one who is himself involved in prohibited sex." Likewise, with respect to "Jezebel" in the HB texts, G. B. Caird, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine*, Black's NT Commentary (London: A & C Black, 1966) 39 observes that "nobody ever accused Ahab's wife of harlotry except in a metaphorical sense." In short, it was not actual sexual deviation that was at issue in these contexts; nor is it a problem in these churches of Asia Minor. As will be spelled out below, it was the believers' syncretism with or accommodation of the surrounding pagan culture that elicits John's polemical response. In John's eyes, this behavior was congruent with adultery or fornication.

<sup>37</sup> Carey, *Elusive Apocalypse*, 22.

Acts 15 (15:20), which itself reflects the tradition of the Noachide Laws, connects these two notions, revealing a traditional and, possibly, stereotypical aspect to their companionship.<sup>39</sup> Additionally, the pejorative force of the peculiarly Jewish-Christian term εἰδωλόθυτα (i.e., “things sacrificed to idols”), as differentiated from the more neutral terminology of the pagans, ἱερόθυτον (i.e., “things offered as a sacrifice”), lessens the likelihood that the charge is being used in a purely descriptive sense here.<sup>40</sup> In short, John appears to be magnifying the behavior of the Nicolaitans and those Christians who follow them. Not only are they eating meat that has been offered in sacrifice (i.e., ἱερόθυτον), but according to John, they are eating meat that has been sacrificed specifically to idols. His accusation is that they were participating in an act of idolatry.

---

<sup>38</sup> The defamatory aspect of the charge of fornication will be addressed further below.

<sup>39</sup> On the Apostolic Decree and its connection with these accusations in Revelation 2, see Räisänen, “The Clash Between,” 156. Cf. Marcel Simon, “The Apostolic Decree and Its Setting in the Ancient Church,” *BJRL* 52 (1970) 437-460; M. Bockmuehl, “The Noachide commandments and New Testament Ethics,” *RB* 102 (1995) 72-101; and Aune, *Revelation*, 187.

<sup>40</sup> After surveying its occurrences, Derek Newton, *Deity and Diet: The Dilemma of Sacrificial Food at Corinth*, JSNTSup 169, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998) 179 notes that ἱερόθυτον is “a Greek term used to describe the idea of human sacrificial death, as well as the offering of animal victims in sacrifice. It consistently carries a positive, neutral, factual, and descriptive tone, unless it falls into the hands of apologists.” On the other hand, Newton (183) observes that εἰδωλόθυτα does not occur in pre-Pauline Greek literature, except in the Septuagint in 4 Macc 5:2, which may or may not be pre-Pauline. On this text, see Ben Witherington, “Not So Idle Thoughts About EIDOLOTHUTON,” *TynBul* 44 (1993) 241. Newton continues: the usage of this term “consistently carries the flavor of anti-pagan polemic and is emotive, negative, critical, and decidedly non-neutral. Eating of *eidolothuta* is consistently condemned and with the progression of time in the early centuries CE, so the polemic intensifies in severity, presumably necessitated by the persistence and intransigence of those who perpetuated their involvement with idol food.” Aune, *Revelation*, 186, infers that “the pejorative denotation of the term suggests that it was probably coined in Hellenistic Judaism as a polemical counterpart to the neutral denotation of the Greek word ἱερόθυτον.” However, Newton and Witherington go even further to claim Christian origins of the term. Witherington (238-239) notes that “there is no certain evidence that the term εἰδωλόθυτον was used prior to 1 Corinthians at all,” and conjectures that the Jewish-Christian term likely may have

Yet, even with some codified or stereotypical features lying behind the charge, it cannot be dismissed as only a figurative or metaphorical expression. There simply is not enough prior evidence of its metaphorical usage to warrant only such a reading in these instances. Furthermore, as the consumption of meat offered in a cultic sacrifice was a common practice in the Greco-Roman world, Christians in Asia Minor might come into contact with it in various arenas.<sup>41</sup>

First, as persons under Roman rule, Christians likely would attend various public religious festivals on holy days or feasts, where surplus meat from temple sacrifices may have been distributed and consumed by attendants. Second, Christians would have had occasion to attend cultic meals within Greek temples, where they would witness the sacrifice, in addition to partaking of the meal.<sup>42</sup> Third, some Christians may have been members of civic clubs or organizations that enacted private cultic meals that were not necessarily held in the temple but were patterned after it in some ways. Finally, since not all of the meat from the sacrificial animals was used in the actual ceremonial offering, it usually was sold in the meat market and, thus, some Christians may have bought and consumed such sacrificial meat in this context. Ultimately, then, it becomes rather clear that the issue of the cultic sacrifice

---

been coined by the Christian-Jew, Paul. Ultimately, whether the term stems originally from Jewish or Christian sources, it is loaded with negative force. Cf. “εἰδωλόθυτος,” in BAGD, 221.

<sup>41</sup> Outside of these instances in Revelation, the issue of eating meat previously sacrificed to idols comes up within the NT in Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25; 1 Cor 8:1, 4, 7, 10; 10:19. Cf. 4 Macc 5:2 and Did. 6.3. For the various backgrounds to the practice and range of responses that were given to it by early Christian authors, see Aune, *Revelation*, 186, 192-194; Collins, “Vilification,” 316-317; and Theissen, *The Social Setting*, 127-132. Cf. Peder Borgen, “‘Yes,’ ‘No,’ ‘How Far?’: The Participation of Jews and Christians in Pagan Cults,” in *Paul in His Hellenistic Context*, ed. Troels Engberg-Pedersen (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995) 36.

of animals and their consumption was an existential one for Christians at this time, marginalizing the claim that John's charge against the Nicolaitans is only of metaphorical import.<sup>43</sup>

However, the meaning behind John's charge has yet to be clarified. What exact practice was John opposing? First, it should be noted that John's accusation, that the Nicolaitans teach and lead some Christians of Asia Minor φαγεῖν εἰδωλόθυτα, is not very definitive, and maybe purposefully so. It has been demonstrated by some that John has a penchant for blurring the lines between those whom he opposes, creating a single, unified opposition that fits his own socio-rhetorical purposes.<sup>44</sup> He may be employing a similar type of strategy here as well. John purposefully may be blurring the lines between these similar but distinguishable practices in order to cover all of them in one fell swoop. Thus, his assessment would be that any one and all of these above mentioned practices are equivalent to "eating things sacrificed to idols" or idolatry.<sup>45</sup> While this assessment coheres well with John's overall strategy and purposes in the document, the historian desires to know more; he or she wants a more precise delineation of the situation, if that is possible. Though this, admittedly, is a speculative enterprise, mainly due to the distortive and

---

<sup>42</sup> It is unlikely that Christians would be able to "opt out" of these occasions as they rapidly were losing their right to exemption from attendance at these temples, which they previously enjoyed when under the rubric of Judaism.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Borgen, "'Yes,' 'No,'" 30-59 and Newton, *Dilemma of Sacrificial Food*, 175-257.

<sup>44</sup> See, again, Royalty, *Streets of Heaven*, 14-15; Carey, *Elusive Apocalypse*, 135; and Duff, "I Will Give," 131.

<sup>45</sup> See, e.g., Räisänen, "The Clash Between," 156 and Philip A. Harland, "Honouring the Emperor or Assailing the Beast: Participation in Civic Life Among Associations (Jewish, Christian and Other) in Asia Minor and the Apocalypse of John," *JSNT* 77 (2000) 117.

covert nature of John's polemical rhetoric, one can begin to piece together a plausible scenario for a background to John's charge through an appeal to external evidence.

Most scholars agree that the issue of eating meat sacrificed to idols was not the sum total of the problems that John observed within these churches of Asia Minor. Rather, this matter is seen to be representative of a larger perceived deviance that John rails against. Aune observes that the conflicts between John and the Nicolaitans in Ephesus, Pergamum, and Thyatira were not over fornication and the eating of sacrificial meat alone, "but over the stance toward cultural and religious accommodations which these practices symbolize."<sup>46</sup> In the consumption of meat from an animal that had been sacrificed on a pagan altar, John saw early Christian behavior being blended with or eroded into the syncretistic practices of the surrounding pagan society, which he *perceived* to be a crisis that threatened Christian identity.<sup>47</sup>

The traditional understanding of the crisis behind the Apocalypse, which is based on a reading of various early Christian sources, was one of brutal and widespread physical persecution of Christians by Domitian and the Roman government. However, after reviewing the external textual (as well as non-textual) evidence, Thompson, in a ground-breaking study, concludes that strong evidence for such a widespread and extreme persecution of Christians under Domitian is

---

<sup>46</sup> Aune, "Social Matrix," 28. Carey, *Elusive Apocalypse*, 22 notes that the two charges made by John against the Nicolaitans are "one and the same: to eat food that has been sacrificed to idols is to show complicity with the idolatrous practices that define the Empire and the larger society." Cf. Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis*, 88.

lacking.<sup>48</sup> In short, Thompson's "suspicious" reading of texts, that previously were seen to support such claims, found Domitian to be no more or less brutal than his predecessors, and maybe even gentler than some emperors who succeeded him (e.g., Trajan).

Thompson does note, however, that while there seems to be no systematic program of persecution evident under Domitian, the emperor did have increased demands to be worshipped.<sup>49</sup> Johannes Weiss notes that Domitian's heightened call for worship of himself likely was not enacted by royal decree but more so by the greater frequency and popularity of being called "lord" and "god," which obviously created a crisis for Christians under his rule.<sup>50</sup> Domitian's elevated demands for worship of himself would have put social pressure on Christians to forsake their God in favor of the emperor, or at least make God subservient to Domitian. Carey rightly observes that

persons who refused to participate could be regarded as obstinate, or even subversive. Even if official persecution of Christians did not exist in John's day, conspicuous refusal to participate in the cult would surely bring popular disapproval, perhaps with social and economic consequences or worse.<sup>51</sup>

Therefore, though it would not be incorrect to say that John's perception of a threat to distinct Christian identity was the basis for his responses in these messages, he

<sup>47</sup> The concept of "perceived crisis" is borrowed from the social sciences and was initiated into studies of the Apocalypse by Collins, Crisis and Catharsis, 84-110.

<sup>48</sup> See Thompson, Book of Revelation, 95-116. Cf. Carey, Elusive Apocalypse, 13 and Harland, "Honouring the Emperor," 103-104.

<sup>49</sup> See Thompson, Book of Revelation, 16.

<sup>50</sup> Johannes Weiss, Earliest Christianity: A History of the Period A.D. 30-150 II (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1937) 806-807.

<sup>51</sup> Carey, Elusive Apocalypse, 15.

likely was not the only one who understood it as directly threatening Christian beliefs, practices, and communities.

In this conflict, we see two different perspectives on or approaches to the proper relationship between early Christian practice and cultural participation. John appears to support a distinct separation of Christian practice from its cultural environment (at least in this instance) while the Nicolaitans aim to blend the two together, at least more so than John does.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, “John and the Nicolaitans represent two different types of Christians; they might be termed ‘separationist’ or ‘sectarian’ on the one hand [i.e., John] and ‘latitudinarian’ on the other [i.e., the Nicolaitans].”<sup>53</sup> The difference in these approaches to the surrounding pagan culture, ultimately, becomes the focal point for John’s negative stance toward and polemical accusations against the Nicolaitans.

Now, with this larger, more pervasive threat in mind, one is better equipped to address the background to John’s accusation concerning the eating of meat sacrificed to idols. In my thinking the proper question to be addressed is the following: which one of the four above-mentioned options presents the most likely context where Christian participation in and accommodation of Greco-Roman culture would constitute idolatry and pose the distinct threat that John sees?<sup>54</sup> First, it is

---

<sup>52</sup> Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis*, 127 contends that John likely was advocating social exclusivism rather than physical removal.

<sup>53</sup> Räisänen, “The Clash Between,” 165-166.

<sup>54</sup> Newton, *Deity and Diet*, 256 notes that Christian participation in these events “could have been justified by an emphasis on one or another particular perceived function, to the exclusion or suppression of a feast’s other perceived functions. Hence the contentious and controversial nature of sacrificial food that generated an inevitable web of divided opinion concerning interpretation and involvement.” Thus, I see the issue at hand between John and the Nicolaitans is one of interpretation

unlikely that the charge here refers to the home consumption of sacrificial meat bought at the market. Though John may oppose this practice as well, if it was the singular background to his charge against the Nicolaitans, we might have expected him to use additional modifiers to delineate it further (such as the ἐν μακέλλῳ that Paul employs in 1 Cor 10:25).<sup>55</sup> Additionally, it is hard to see how the home consumption of sacrificial meat bought in the market would have provided the culturally accommodating threat to Christian identity that John perceives. Though John himself could have perceived it to be an act of idolatry, Christians, who would be consuming meat at home and not in the presence of an idol, probably would not have attached such a label to the practice.<sup>56</sup> Lastly, as the regular consumption of meat could be afforded only by the very wealthy of society, most poorer members of the community (including many Christians) would not be purchasing meat from the market anyway.<sup>57</sup> Ultimately, this option does not present itself as a very likely background to John's charge here.

---

not activity. The Nicolaitans and their followers are not unaware of their actions themselves but John holds the significance of their actions as being akin to idolatry.

<sup>55</sup> Räisänen, "The Clash Between," 156 notes that "if it is the Apostolic Decree that constitutes the backdrop of John's criticism, then it is likely that he is not only offended by meals held at pagan temples, but also by the consumption by Christians of meat purchased in the market-place, for 'idol meat' in any form seems to be prohibited by the Decree."

<sup>56</sup> Larry Hurtado, At the Origins of Christian Worship: The Context and Character of Earliest Christ Devotion (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999) 8-10 notes the pervasiveness of religion in the Roman world. He (8-9) observes that "it is in fact difficult to point to any aspect of life in that period that was not explicitly connected with religion. Birth, death, marriage, the domestic sphere, civil and wider political life, work, the military, socialising, entertainment, arts, music—all were imbued with religious significance and associations." The purchasing of meat from the market also would not be without religious significance. The purchaser would be aware that such meat most likely was excess stemming from temple sacrificial offerings. However, as such meat was not being consumed in the presence of an idol, it is difficult to see this practice as an outright act of idolatry and, thus, does not seem to be worthy of the label εἰδωλόθυτα in this context.

<sup>57</sup> See Witherington, "Not so Idle Thoughts," 243-244.

Likewise, it is unlikely that the cultic meals of private associations form the background to John's charge since these were voluntary associations that would have included only a select group of Christians.<sup>58</sup> Though there may well have been social pressure on Christians who were members of these clubs to participate in and partake of the cultic meal (i.e., the religious dimension of the gathering), the voluntary character of these associations seems to diminish the breadth of the threat it might pose to distinct Christian identity. Again, though John may have opposed these private cultic meals as well, they do not seem to fill out (at least by themselves) the background to John's charge of εἰδωλόθυτα.<sup>59</sup>

Of the remaining two options, the participation of Christians in cultic meals within Greek temples, which likely would have included a witnessing of the sacrifice and eating in the presence of a statue of the god, appears to provide the most suitable background to John's charge.<sup>60</sup> For persons residing in the Greco-Roman world, these meals were a common socio-religious occasion for establishing a sacred bond not only with one's fellow citizens, but also with the local deities, who were deemed to be present at the meal.<sup>61</sup> Therefore, Christians (and others) who attended such

---

<sup>58</sup> See Borgen, "'Yes,' 'No,'" 45.

<sup>59</sup> However, if these clubs were holding their meals in the temple precincts, then one can be sure that the meat being consumed was from the cultic sacrifice before the gods and, thus, it rightly would be seen as an act of idolatry. If this is the case, then this option would overlap a great deal with the final option that I will treat below (i.e., Christian participation in cultic meals within temples) and could well be seen as part of the background to John's charge. Harland, "Honouring the Emperor," 99-121 (110-120) presents a case for this option.

<sup>60</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Revelation: Justice and Judgment*, 195 also sees the syncretism that John perceives to be threatening as Christian participation in the imperial cult.

<sup>61</sup> Borgen, "'Yes,' 'No,'" 37 notes that "in Pergamum as in other cities it was difficult to function without being involved in polytheistic cults because such cults were woven together with most aspects of the life of the city."

functions certainly would know that the meat of which they were partaking was sacral, due to their presence at the sacrifice itself.<sup>62</sup> Borgen notes that “in such a cultic dining room [as seen in the “Podium Hall” excavated in Pergamum] it would have been impossible not to be drawn into the sacrificial act itself.”<sup>63</sup>

In corollary, participants also would not be unaware of the purpose of such events. In other words, Christians who attended cultic meals in Greek temples would be aware (at some level) that they were participating in a religious, as well as social, event and thus were accommodating themselves to Hellenistic culture and religion.<sup>64</sup> Though they may not have wanted to admit it at the time, Christians in such a context quite obviously would be engaging not only in a meal, but also in an act of idolatry, which publicly compromised Christian identity.

These same observations cannot be made, at least not to the same degree, concerning Christian participation in religious festivals (i.e., the remaining option). These public festivals were an occasion for the masses to join in the public, religious celebration of a given deity and at which a commoner might have opportunity to consume meat.<sup>65</sup> While participants in these public festivals would consume meat,

---

<sup>62</sup> Though many persons would have witnessed the sacrificial event, Newton, Deity and Diet, 197-198 notes that the responsibility for the act of the sacrifice itself was located in one or two individuals or a small group of appointed people and not all those in attendance. These persons who actually performed the sacrifice partook directly from the altar while the remaining worshippers ate in a subsequent meal. On the enactment of the sacrificial event, see R. M. Ogilvie, The Romans and Their Gods in the Age of Augustus (New York: Norton & Co., 1969) 44ff.

<sup>63</sup> Borgen, “‘Yes,’ ‘No,’” 59.

<sup>64</sup> This significance of the practice presents itself as the basis for John’s charge that the Nicolaitans and their followers are not only eating ἱερόθυτον, “things offered as a sacrifice,” but eating specifically εἰδωλόθυτα, “things offered as a sacrifice to idols.” What the Greeks hold as their gods, John understands as idols.

<sup>65</sup> See Witherington, “Not so Idle Thoughts,” 243-244.

which they knew had stemmed from previous temple sacrifices, they likely would not be witness to the sacrificial act itself. Again, John may well have had reason to oppose Christian involvement in such festivals. Yet, when compared to the previous option of Christian partaking of cultic meals in Greek temples, this option calls less for the label “idolatry,” and seems a less likely fit for John’s charge of εἰδωλόθυτα. Ultimately, then, if I were forced to conjecture only one background to John’s charge against the Nicolaitans and their followers, I would select the cultic meals that occurred in Greek temples based primarily on the fact that Christian participation in them would have (1) constituted a real and public act of idolatry and (2) posed the most significant and real threat (of these four options) to distinct Christian identity in light of the surrounding society.<sup>66</sup>

Whatever the precise background to this charge, in John’s eyes, the practices and teachings of the Nicolaitans posed a severe threat to the limits of the Christian community. John perceives their advocacy of a close connection between Christian practice and Greco-Roman culture to be a distinct danger to the identity of Christians in Asia Minor. Furthermore, the mere presence of these prophets also represents a rigorous threat to John’s perceived or actual authority within the given churches.<sup>67</sup>

Royalty contends that “the core issue in this struggle is who should have authority

---

<sup>66</sup> Ultimately, though I have spent a reasonably large amount of space in an effort to assert a precise historical background for John’s charge, my thesis does not depend directly on this assertion. My analysis of John’s response to these situations of internal deviance within Asia Minor would not be altered significantly if the proper background was one of these other noted options or a combination of them.

<sup>67</sup> Royalty, *Streets of Heaven*, 27-28 notes that the “diversity of teaching, belief, and practice among Christians in Asia was a ‘crisis’ for John and his immediate circle of prophets.” In short, diversity itself (within Christian circles) was a problem for John.

within the Christian communities—John and his prophets, or other prophets, teachers, and officials.”<sup>68</sup> As John himself appears to have been a migrant prophet, the arrival of an alternative prophetic voice might (and evidently did) cause believers to shift their allegiances away from John and his group to those whom he is opposing.<sup>69</sup> Thus, Aune astutely notes that

John’s intense opposition to ‘Jezebel’ and the Nicolaitans appears to have been grounded not only in the pagan practices they encouraged, but also in the prophetic role they played in legitimating their behavior. John’s battle with the Nicolaitans and ‘Jezebel’ was, in a word, a conflict between prophets.<sup>70</sup>

In short, though part of the conflict between John and the Nicolaitans stemmed from their differing approaches to cultural accommodation within the churches, an equally, if not larger, problematic issue was related to authority within these congregations.<sup>71</sup> The prophetic voices of John and the Nicolaitans were already

---

<sup>68</sup> Royalty, Streets of Heaven, 28. Yet, it should be noted that this is the perspective of a third party. If pressed, John likely would have identified the core issue in the struggle in relation to the charges he already made against the Nicolaitans.

<sup>69</sup> In support of John being an itinerant or migrant prophet, see Collins, Crisis and Catharsis, 134-138 and *idem.*, “Vilification,” 317-318. Furthermore, Aune, “Social Matrix,” 18-19, 27 identifies evidence of John’s identity as an itinerant prophet in that (1) though John never designates himself as a prophet, he performs the role of the prophet in the Apocalypse and describes his revelation as a prophecy (1:3; 22:7, 10, 18, 19) and (2) he traveled a restricted circuit to a limited number of Christian congregations.

<sup>70</sup> Aune, “Social Matrix,” 28.

<sup>71</sup> Räisänen, “The Clash Between,” 152-153 (rightly) wonders “to what extent can we think of John as an established and authoritative leader in Asia?” John may, in fact, not represent any type of majority opinion but, rather, a minority perspective in that given region at this time. Cf. Thompson, Book of Revelation, 120, 132 and Harland, “Honouring the Emperor,” 116. Though John makes it appear as if the Nicolaitans are in the minority, this portrayal may simply fit within his overall rhetorical (as well as other) purposes. H-J. Klauck, “Das Sendschreiben nach Pergamon und der Kaiserkult in der Johannesoffenbarung,” Bib 73 (1992) 170 notes that this portrayal of the “opponents” is a caricature based solely on John’s perspective on the situation. Ultimately, we cannot assume that, prior to sending the Apocalypse to the believers of Asia Minor, John stood in the majority or in an authoritative position over against those whom he opposes. Furthermore, we should be wary of reading the later canonical status of the book of Revelation as a direct indicator of John’s position over against the Nicolaitans. These two items may not have any direct causal relationship. Ultimately, the evident success of the Nicolaitans in gaining adherents from the believers in Asia

clashing or about to clash and the allegiances of the believers in (at least) Ephesus, Pergamum, and Thyatira provided the battleground for the contest.

The severity of the deviant threat(s) posed by these persons is manifested in their successful gaining of adherents from the respective churches. In Pergamum, those who had been won over by the Nicolaitans can be seen in the persons who hold the teachings of Balaam and the Nicolaitans (2:14-15). In Thyatira, those whom John opposes also appear to have gained followers. The need for John to make an objection against the spreading of the Nicolaitans' teachings amongst his "servants" indicates that some of the faithful already were following their ways (2:20).<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, as Jezebel's works within Thyatira had been going on for a while (2:21), her gaining of devotees likely had been continuing for some time too. Finally, the proclamation to Ephesus again furnishes very little information about the accomplishments (or lack thereof) of those whom John is opposing. However, the praise that the Ephesians receive for hating the works of the Nicolaitans (2:6) implies a previous presence of the Nicolaitans around or maybe even within the Ephesian churches. John's need to praise them also may well indicate a current danger that he sees the Nicolaitans posing to the Ephesian Christians. Further, John's charge to the Ephesian believers, that "you have abandoned your first love" (2:4), as well as his

---

Minor reveals, at least, a situation where the breadth of John's authority and influence already had been diminished. Cf. Schüssler Fiorenza, *Revelation: Justice and Judgment*, 194.

<sup>72</sup> John's threat against "those who commit fornication with her" (2:22), appears to include not only Jezebel's disciples, but also some who had adhered themselves to her teachings and practices. Cf. Aune, *Revelation*, 205.

reminder to “remember how far you have fallen” (2:5),<sup>73</sup> indicates (in John’s eyes) that they had strayed from the original message and practices that they had received from him (either wholly or in part) in favor of another. With the presence of these Nicolaitans in Ephesus, it is likely that they were the ones who were profiting from the shifting allegiances of the Ephesian believers; they were gaining adherents to their way.<sup>74</sup> Ultimately, then, the success that the Nicolaitans were enjoying in gaining adherents from among the faithful brought the severity of the deviant threat to a head for John; thus, he responded with much vigor and vitality.

## II. John’s Responses to the Situations in Ephesus, Pergamum, and Thyatira.<sup>75</sup>

John’s responses to the situations of internal (as well as external) conflict in Revelation 2-3 are some of the most highly polemical in the New Testament. Further, it is interesting to note that substantive teachings or instructions within the responses is lacking entirely. Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza observes that

the strength of its persuasion for action lies not in the theological reasoning or historical argument of Revelation but in the ‘evocative’ power of its symbols as well as in its hortatory, imaginative, emotional language, and dramatic

---

<sup>73</sup> Aune, “The Form and Function,” 192 notes that “this emphasis on remembering the past constitutes the idealization of the past implying that all perceived forms of slippage including the appearance of dissident views and behaviors are based on a nostalgic conception of the purity of the pristine era.”

<sup>74</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, Revelation: Justice and Judgment, 117 notes that the Nicolaitans were gaining adherents even among the itinerant missionaries and prophetic teachers of Ephesus, as well as Pergamum and Thyatira.

<sup>75</sup> Again, though it is possible that the situations of conflict do not reflect a single group of “opponents,” the highly stylized and strategically similar form of John’s responses to them provides additional warrant for treating them in conjunction with each other.

movement, which engage the hearer (reader) by eliciting reactions, emotions, convictions, and identifications.<sup>76</sup>

In short,

the Apocalypse tries to convince its audience to hold a favorable point of view toward John and his allied prophets and their version of Christianity and to take a negative point of view toward the Roman authorities, the Jews, and Christian teachers, prophets, or functionaries who hold different views from John.<sup>77</sup>

Thus, John's task is to convince the audience that his worldview is correct and that his opponents' worldview is entirely wrong. Ultimately, the persuasive elements in John's responses (within these three proclamations) are found not in the content of his argumentation but, almost entirely, in his employment of legitimacy structures and stigmatizing tactics.<sup>78</sup>

The broadest legitimacy device used by John in Revelation 2-3 is his assumption of the authority of Christ in delivering these proclamations.<sup>79</sup> Instead of

---

<sup>76</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, Revelation: Justice and Judgment, 187. She further notes that John seeks to motivate and persuade by constructing a "symbolic universe," which invites/requires the participation of the hearers. Cf. Thompson, Book of Revelation, 33 and Royalty, Streets of Heaven, 14.

<sup>77</sup> Royalty, Streets of Heaven, 127.

<sup>78</sup> On John's efforts at persuasion specifically through a rhetorical analysis of the Apocalypse, see the recent work by Carey, Elusive Apocalypse, especially 93-164. In this work, Carey (6) considers the "means by which John constructs his ethos, his authority or credibility as a person to whom his audience should listen." Though I wrote most all of this chapter prior to seeing Carey's book, my structuring of this section mirrors his. His chapter four concerns John's self-presentation (which I cite as John's effort to legitimate his message and authority) and his chapter 5 concerns John's representation of his opponents (which I cite as John's effort to stigmatize negatively those who he opposes). Ultimately, while our efforts are quite similar in focus, they differ in scope (I am examining only a part of Revelation 2-3, while Carey addresses the book as a whole) and method (Carey relies on rhetoric, while I turn more to the social sciences).

<sup>79</sup> Christ is indicated in the proclamations through the Christological titles recounted near the beginning of each message. The titles that are employed vary with each proclamation and, thus, should not be read in too particular a manner. Aune, "The Form and Function," 189 notes that these Christological predications provide literary links back to the revelatory vision in 1:9-20. Cf. Beale, John's Use, 300-301 and Birger Gerhardsson, "Die christologischen Aussagen in den Sendschreiben," in Theologie aus dem Norden, ed. A. Fuchs, SNTU A/2 (Linz, Austria: Plöchl, Freistadt, 1977) 142-166. The Christological characterizations in the proclamation to Ephesus (2:1) harken back to 1:16;

appealing to human authority (e.g., personal authority, church leaders, or even to the traditional apocalyptic device of pseudonymity) to legitimate the messages, John appeals to Christ himself. He does so by placing the proclamations directly after the call narrative of 1:9-20, ensuring that they will be heard as divine discourse.<sup>80</sup>

Though John is the prophetic mouthpiece, the ordering of the writing intimates that “the churches are to hear the letters as direct addresses from the risen Christ to their own communities.”<sup>81</sup> As Royalty notes,

the rhetorical strategy of ascribing this apokalypsis to God is part of the overall strategy of cloaking the author’s own moral, ideological, and theological convictions in divine garb. Here, in contrast to every other New Testament text, God and Jesus Christ are ascribed authorship. John, a slave of God, merely receives the revelation.<sup>82</sup>

---

those of Pergamum (2:12) also to 1:16; and the ones to Thyatira (2:18) to 1:14. Aune (190) further notes that “the cumulative effect of these titles and characterizations is to unify the seven proclamations as pronouncements of the exalted Christ who appeared to John in 1.9-20.” Finally, on the topic of “legitimation,” see once again my discussion of it in chapter two.

<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, Aune, “Social Matrix,” 20 observantly notes that “the call narratives in the Apocalypse, then, correlate with other rhetorical features which indicate that one of John’s primary objectives was to secure the complete and unconditional acceptance of his apocalyptic letter as a revelation of Jesus Christ.” On the legitimacy function of the initial call narrative (1:9-20), see Royalty, Streets of Heaven, 132, 146 and Kirby, “The Rhetorical Situations,” 201.

<sup>81</sup> Carey, Elusive Apocalypse, 111. For, Royalty, Streets of Heaven, 132 notes, “if the Apocalypse is to have validity among its intended recipients, the text must successfully convince the audience that John of Patmos has recorded visions received from God through Christ.” Cf. Forkman, Limits of the Religious Community, 156.

<sup>82</sup> Royalty, Streets of Heaven, 135. Royalty, (135-136) notes that John’s identification of himself as a slave of God (e.g., 1:1; 2:20) likely had positive connotations attached to it, since the designation appears in the opening of a number of letters (Rom 1:1; Gal 1:10; Phil 1:1; Tit 1:1; Jas 1:1; 2 Pet 1:1; Jude 1:1). In fact, the readers/hearers of Revelation might even have expected it as a sign that the document being read was from a true servant of God. Thus, John’s use of this well-established phrase not only would portray himself as being wholly subservient to God, the true author of these messages, but also as a faithful fellow servant who can be trusted. Therefore, Carey, Elusive Apocalypse, 125 notes that this image “enhances his ethos by identifying him with his audience even as it locates him as an authoritative person.” Cf. Dale B. Martin, Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity (New Haven: Yale U. Press, 1990) 86-115. Finally, Carey (126) also notes the similar legitimacy functions of the “witness” and “prophet” imagery within the book of Revelation.

Therefore, the authority of John's words would be enhanced (that is, in the eyes of the believers in these cities) because they are from the divine and because he received a divine command to write them (1:11).<sup>83</sup>

Claims of receiving a divine commission, often in a dream, to write down revelatory words and messages were common in both ancient Jewish<sup>84</sup> and Greco-Roman<sup>85</sup> texts. Aune notes that "the many occurrences of this phenomenon suggest that the claim of receiving a divine commission in a dream to write a literary composition had become a stock literary device providing divine legitimation for such compositions."<sup>86</sup> Here in Revelation 2-3, John seems to have tapped into this legitimatory device. His revelatory experience of Christ, including the command he receives to write, functions as a mechanism that heightens the authority of his message for his audience.

Furthermore, John sets it up so that the validity and efficacy of the messages cannot be questioned since they are pronouncements of Christ himself.<sup>87</sup> In corollary, since John is the only servant of God who has received this vision, he

---

<sup>83</sup> This command to write also is reflected in each of the seven proclamations through the use of the aorist imperative γράψον.

<sup>84</sup> See Exod 17:14; 34:27; Isa 8:1; 30:8; Jer 30:2; 36:2, 28; Hab 2:2; Tob 12:20; 4 Ezra 14:5, 22-48, which are taken from Aune, "The Form and Function," 187 n. 17.

<sup>85</sup> For a list of Greco-Roman texts that contain this type of command see Aune, "The Form and Function," 187 n. 18.

<sup>86</sup> Aune, "The Form and Function," 187. Cf. J. B. Stearns, Studies of the Dream as a Technical Device in Latin Epic and Drama (Lancaster: Lancaster Press, 1927) 1-7.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Aune, "Social Matrix," 20-21 and Duff, "The Rhetorical Situations," 202. However, we would do well to remember that we are not privy to how these proclamations were received by its recipients. In short, the persuasive intentions of the author are not necessarily equal to the actual effect his message had on the audience(s). In corollary, John's strenuous efforts at securing divine legitimation for his messages to these churches may well indicate that he thought his audience might be resistant to them. On this, see the discussion in Carey, Elusive Apocalypse, 114, 128.

alone is the possessor of this apocalyptic knowledge. This knowledge differential between John and his audience further asserts John's position of power in the situation.<sup>88</sup> The invocation of the figure and authority of Christ lends credence to the claims to "know"<sup>89</sup> the works (both positive and negative) of the various congregations and provides authoritative backing for the threats against non-compliance and rewards for obedience. Ultimately, by appealing to this device, John has attempted to establish his proclamations amongst the churches of Asia Minor as being co-extensive with the intentions of Christ, in both content and authority.

A similar legitimatory device used by John can be seen in the proclamation formulae that conclude the messages. These formulae consist of a final declaration of the importance of the preceding message and a promise of rewards for victory. Yet, the primary voice being heard here is not that of Christ, but the Spirit; "hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). Therefore, just as John's invocation of Christ offered divine legitimation of and enhanced authority for the proclamations, so his employment of the Spirit calls his audience to heed the words that have been delivered, as stemming not from John but the Spirit. In short, the proclamation formulae function as a "prophetic signature" that not only endorses the message, but also magnifies its importance.<sup>90</sup>

---

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Carey, Elusive Apocalypse, 109-110 and, as mentioned in the previous chapter, Polaski, Paul and the Discourse, 60-61.

<sup>89</sup> Aune, "The Form and Function," 191 notes that the οἶδα clause, which introduces the *narratio* sections of the proclamations, "suggests a kind of divine omniscience mediated by prophets." Furthermore, these clauses make it "clear that the exalted Christ is aware of the conduct of all members and factions of each of the seven congregations." Cf. Royalty, Streets of Heaven, 158.

<sup>90</sup> See Aune, "The Form and Function," 193.

Through the employment of these two legitimatory devices, John intends the believers in Asia Minor to understand his proclamations as being not only co-extensive with the words of the Christ, but also as contiguous with the intentions of the Spirit. The unity that John asserts between the Spirit and the exalted Christ can be seen further in that the prophetic signature of the Spirit (i.e., “Let those who have an ear listen to what the Spirit says to the churches”) is “an aphorism rooted in the Jesus tradition.”<sup>91</sup> Aune notes that

these (probably intentional) allusions to sayings of Jesus presuppose that they had a firm place in the liturgy of the early Christian communities in Anatolia so that their use could authenticate the author’s revelatory encounter with the exalted Jesus.<sup>92</sup>

Ultimately, John’s co-employment of the risen Christ and the Spirit as legitimatory agents provides a broad-based and seemingly effective means by which to uphold and extend the persuasive capacity of the proclamations.

As a companion to his employment of legitimatory devices in the proclamations, John also wields stigmatizing tactics.<sup>93</sup> The overall aim of these tactics is to discredit, defame, or even completely obliterate the trustworthiness of the “opponents” in the eyes of the audience (i.e., the believers in the respective

---

<sup>91</sup> Aune, “The Form and Function,” 194. For the occurrences of this formula, including its variant forms, in the canonical gospel literature, see Mark 4:9, 23; 7:16; Matt 11:15; 13:9, 43; 25:29; Luke 8:8, 15; 12:21; 13:9; 14:35; 21:4. It also occurs in various non-canonical gospels: e.g., *Gos. Thom.* 8, 21, 24, 63, 65, 96 and *Acts of Thomas* 82. Cf. Beale, *John’s Use*, 309 and L. A. Vos, *Synoptic Traditions in the Apocalypse* (Kampen: Kok, 1965) 73-75. Finally, Anne-Marit Enroth, “The Hearing Formula in the Book of Revelation,” *NTS* 36 (1990) 604 notes the dual function of this traditional hearing formula. It is intended as (1) an encouragement for the faithful ones to continue to stand firm in the midst of problems and as (2) a warning against heresy/heretics that calls together the community to defend itself against these teachings/persons.

<sup>92</sup> Aune, “The Form and Function,” 194.

<sup>93</sup> See, especially, Carey, *Elusive Apocalypse*, 135-164. Furthermore, see again the discussion of “stigma” in chapter two.

churches). The simplest of these strategies of stigmatization, namely simple degradation, can be seen in John's labeling of those who he opposes in Ephesus as "evildoers" (κακούς; 2:2).<sup>94</sup> Here, John invokes the blunt image of "evil" or "wickedness" and affixes it to his "opponents" in an attempt to cast aspersion on their character and/or person and deviantize them in the eyes of the believers in Ephesus.<sup>95</sup>

One step more intricate, the stereotyping strategy of stigmatization also can be seen when John labels the Nicolaitans with various images that highlight disparaging character traits. For example, in a number of instances he invokes sexual imagery, namely that of fornication (πορνεία; 2:14, 20, 21), to caricature those who he opposes. Though this accusation can refer to specific actions and emotions relating to sexuality, it likely is not intended to do so here. Royalty notes that

although commentators on Revelation have taken the descriptions of the teaching of 'Jezebel' and Balaam as advocating liberal sexual practices, a more convincing reading is that this language is part of the rhetorical slandering of John's opponents because ample precedent existed for using sexual immorality as a metaphor for idolatrous activity. Such extreme rhetoric is typical of the messages.<sup>96</sup>

---

<sup>94</sup> As noted earlier in this chapter, this term is used as an umbrella title, which covers all those persons/groups who John opposes in Ephesus and, thus, does not signify a distinct group.

<sup>95</sup> Though some would see this label as only an example of foundationless name-calling, when viewed within John's overall program of negative stigmatization of those who he opposes, it can then be seen to be a cog (even if a small one) in his machinery.

<sup>96</sup> Royalty, *Streets of Heaven*, 32-33. Cf. Aune, *Revelation*, 204 who notes that "nearly all the uses of the πορν- cognates in Revelation are figurative rather than literal; the only exceptions are found in three vice lists in 9:21; 21:8; 22:18."

Therefore, the charge of *πορνεῦσαι* is used metaphorically to stereotype the activities and character of the Nicolaitans as being on a par with the sexually depraved.

In the same vein, John invokes the negative character trait of “deceiving” or “beguiling,” which is taken from *πλανῶ* (2:20), and appends it to “Jezebel.” Graham Stanton, in an essay concerning allegations made by Jews against Jesus, argues that the charges of Jesus being a “magician” and a “deceiver,” whether seen together or separately, reflect stock elements of Jewish polemics, that go back even to Jesus’ own lifetime.<sup>97</sup> Furthermore, he notes the following: (1) in light of Deuteronomy 13, the charge, “lead astray,” amounts to the allegation of false prophecy;<sup>98</sup> (2) often coupled with these accusations is “the claim that an opponent was possessed by demons or in some other way closely related to the demonic world”;<sup>99</sup> and, finally, (3) these charges all have a specific social setting in that “they are used to marginalize and undermine the influence of individuals whose claims and behavior are perceived to pose a threat to the stability of the dominant social order.”<sup>100</sup>

When viewed within this framework of Jewish-Christian polemics John’s charge of *πλανῶ* against “Jezebel” is elucidated further. Not only is he charging

---

<sup>97</sup> See Graham N. Stanton, “Jesus of Nazareth: A Magician and a False Prophet Who Deceived God’s People,” in *Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ: Essays on the Historical Jesus and New Testament Christology*, eds. Joel B. Green and Max Turner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994) 164-180.

<sup>98</sup> See Stanton, “Jesus of Nazareth,” 168, 174. Thus, the term has a technical status.

<sup>99</sup> Stanton, “Jesus of Nazareth,” 175.

<sup>100</sup> Stanton, “Jesus of Nazareth,” 166-167. Stanton concludes that “the polemic is a form of social control.”

her with leading others astray, but also with being a false prophetess; an apt polemical charge by John since “Jezebel” herself claims to be a prophetess (2:20). It appears, then, that John is participating in an established line of polemics, though he is utilizing the charge not against outsiders (e.g., Jews) but against insiders (i.e., other Christians). This contention is secured further by John’s association of “Jezebel” with “Satan” (i.e., the demonic realm; 2:24), a charge which will be discussed further below.<sup>101</sup> Ultimately, in line with my above analysis, John sees “Jezebel” as a threat to his order (whether dominant or not) and is attempting to marginalize her by employing a stock image of Jewish polemics. He is attempting to cast her in a negative light by equating her with the type of person who consciously leads persons away from the truth (i.e., a false prophet/prophetess).<sup>102</sup> Such an association would hopefully bring “Jezebel” and her followers into further disrepute amongst many of the believers in Thyatira.

A third example of this strategy can be seen in John’s assessment of a group who he opposes as “apostles” who are “false” (2:2). After labeling those whom he opposes in Ephesus with the more general derogatory title of “evildoers,” he then

---

<sup>101</sup> The connection between “Satan” and *πλανῶ* is established further in that, elsewhere in the book of Revelation, *πλανῶ* often is attributed to the devil or satan (12:9; 20:3, 8, 10). The imperial powers also become designated as such (13:14; 18:23; 19:20). Cf. J. P. M. Sweet, *Revelation*, Westminster Pelican Commentaries (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1979) 94.

<sup>102</sup> See John J. Pilch, “Lying and Deceit in the Letters to the Seven Churches: Perspectives from Cultural Anthropology,” *BTB* 22 (1992) 127 and Duff, “I Will Give,” 130. Pilch, concludes that, since there is a wide-ranging but dense concentration of vocabulary related to deception and lying in the seven proclamations, the social situations reflected involved “a disturbing degree of inauthenticity, misrepresentation, defamation, lies, deceit, denial, delusion and the like.” However, Pilch may have taken the defamatory accusations made by John in too literal a sense. I would contend that John’s use of *πλανῶ*, as well as the other terminology from the lying/deceit semantic field, does not reflect an objective description of the activities of the Nicolaitans within Asia Minor. Rather, they appear to reflect only John’s assessment and caricature of their activities and, thus, cannot be taken, necessarily, at face value.

attempts to discredit them further by appending to them the tag of “false apostles” to them.<sup>103</sup> Here, John invokes an example from the false-figure type. In the New Testament, most of these false figure types have the ψεύδ- prefix. Examples of this form of polemical rhetoric are, ψευδαπόστολοι (2 Cor 11:13), ψευδοπροφήται (Matt 7:15; 24:11, 24; Mark 13:22; Luke 6:26; Acts 13:6; 1 John 4:1; 2 Pet 2:1; Rev 16:13; 19:20; 20:10), ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι (2 Pet 2:1), and ψευδαδέλφους (Gal 2:4).<sup>104</sup> John’s employment of the label “false apostles,” then, should be seen as an additional effort to stereotype the Nicolaitans via the characteristic of falseness. Ultimately, through his employment of these negatively stereotyped images and character traits, John hopes that his audience will understand that those whom he opposes not as individual human beings but as representatives of larger, devious figure-types, that is, as devious, treacherous, and sexually depraved figures who are epitomized by the label ψευδεῖς.

Within the proclamations of Revelation 2-3, John raises his stigmatizing efforts to yet another level. In addition to reflecting the sociological categories of simple degradation and stereotyping, John’s labors at discrediting and defaming the Nicolaitans also emulate the tactic of retrospective reinterpretation. Such a strategy is visible in John’s employment of the figures and traditions surrounding Satan (2:24), Balaam (2:14), and Jezebel (2:20). In line with the rhetorical edge to my

---

<sup>103</sup> Though John does not combine “apostle” and “falseness” into one term here in Rev 2:2, his co-joining of the concepts is quite evident nonetheless. Royalty, *Streets of Heaven*, 30 sees John’s use of the tag “false apostles” as part of his intentionally slanderous polemical rhetoric within the proclamations.

<sup>104</sup> See also the use of ψευδέσις in Rev 21:8. Cf. du Toit, “Vilification,” 405.

above analysis of John's polemics, I take these figures not as objective referents. He is not attempting here to provide a cogent argument for why the current "opponents" reflect these figures; that is not his purpose or method. Rather, John is utilizing these figures as a vehicle by which to (potentially) cast aspersion on the Nicolaitans.<sup>105</sup>

In the case of "Satan" (Σατανᾶ; 2:24), John employs a figure that, strictly speaking, has no concrete history behind it. However, the figure of Satan, including the traditions which surround it, would be well known to early Christian believers. In the Hebrew Bible, "Satan" functions primarily as an opponent of the elect (e.g., 2 Sam 19:23; 1 Kgs 11:14, 23, 25; 2 Chr 21:1; Zech 3:1, 2; Ps 109:6).<sup>106</sup> Furthermore,

---

<sup>105</sup> Though John certainly conceives of the Nicolaitans in pejorative or depreciatory terms, the lack of a background (let alone a deviant one) by which to understand them makes it difficult to place them in the same category as the above three. Who these Nicolaitans actually were or what (if any) group they were connected with in later Christianity is unknown; the evidence is too slim to draw any firm conclusions on these issues. Furthermore, scholars have judged patristic attempts to draw a connection between these Nicolaitans and the Nicolaus of Acts to lack historical grounding; the former was read into the latter during the development of heresiology. Therefore, while "Satan," "Balaam," and "Jezebel" all are figures with notorious backgrounds, which allow John to employ them in his efforts to caricature, defame, and ultimately reinterpret the "opponents" in a disparaging light, "Nicolaitans" lacks such a background and, thus, lacks any recognizable defamatory capacity. Contra Royalty, *Streets of Heaven*, 30, the title "Nicolaitans" does not appear to carry any (currently) recognizable negative connotations within it, outside of an etymological connection that scholars have seen between the names "Balaam" and "Nicolaus" (i.e., "conqueror of the peoples"), which John may be using sarcastically to describe some whom he opposes. Here John redefines what it means to conquer and who will do it. It is the slain lamb that holds the power and authority to conquer and it is not a power-wielding expression of conquering that is being referenced but sacrifice. Furthermore, it is not the Nicolaitans, whose name ironically is a derivation of the idea of conquering, who will be the conquerors in the end, it is those who adhere themselves to the lamb who will be in that position. Yet, the pejorative referent in the passage stems primarily from John's hatred of this group. Therefore, even with John's reworking of what it means to conquer, I will not include the "Nicolaitans" as an example of John's efforts at stigmatizing negatively those who he opposes. For studies on the Nicolaitans, see Duane F. Watson, "Nicolaitans," in *ABD* IV, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 1106-1107; R. Heiligenthal, "Wer waren die 'Nikolaiten'? Ein Beitrag zur Theologiegeschichte des frühen Christentums," *ZNW* 82 (1991) 133-137; Norbert Brox, "Nikolaos und Nikolaiten," *VC* 19 (1965) 23-30; A. Von Harnack, "The Sect of the Nicolaitans and Nicolaus, the Deacon in Jerusalem," *JR* 3 (1923) 413-422; and M. Goguel, "Les Nicolaites," *RHR* 115 (1937) 5-36.

<sup>106</sup> On this topic see Peggy L. Day, *An Adversary in Heaven: Satan in the Hebrew Bible*, HSM 43, ed. Frank Moore Cross (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988); Rivkah Schärf Kluger, *Satan in the Old Testament*, Studies in Jungian Thought, trans. Hildegard Nagel (Evanston: Northwestern U. Press,

in the book of Job (1:6-9, 12; 2:1-4, 6-7), the “satan” acts as an agent of God in its opposition to Job.<sup>107</sup>

Σατανᾶς also appears throughout much of the New Testament literature.<sup>108</sup>

Here, the figure of “Satan” often is presented as the arch-rival of God and possesses distinct power and authority (e.g., Matt 12:26; Mark 3:23, 26; 4:15; Luke 11:18; 13:16; 22:3, 31; John 13:27; Acts 26:18; 1 Cor 5:5; 2 Cor 2:11; 1 Thes 2:18; 1 Tim 5:15). In some instances “Satan” is seen even more as a tempter, often of Jesus (e.g., Matt 4:10; Mark 1:13; 1 Cor 7:5; 2 Cor 12:7).<sup>109</sup> So, as the proclamations were being read in the churches of Asia Minor, the invocation of the figure of Satan likely would conjure up these images, where Satan functioned as the archenemy of God, the accuser, or the tempter. Ultimately, John utilizes the background and traditions surrounding the readily-known, deviant figure of Satan in an attempt to reinterpret the Nicolaitans in Thyatira.<sup>110</sup> He aims to obliterate their present identity and replace

---

1967); and Jeffrey Burton Russell, The Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity (London: Cornell U. Press, 1977) 174-220.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. Kluger, Satan, 118-132 and Day, An Adversary, 69-106.

<sup>108</sup> The term is found 15 times in the synoptic gospels (Matt 4:10; 12:26 (2x); 16:23; Mark 1:13; 3:23 (2x); 3:26; 4:15; 8:33; Luke 10:18; 11:18; 13:16; 22:3; 22:31), some of these are synoptic equivalents), once in the gospel of John (13:27), twice in Acts (5:3; 26:18), nine times in the Paulines (Rom 16:20; 1 Cor 5:5; 7:5; 2 Cor 2:11; 11:14; 12:7; 1 Thes 2:18; 1 Tim 1:20; 5:15), and eight times in the Apocalypse (2:9, 13 (2x), 24; 3:9; 12:9; 20:2, 7). The prevalent employment of the figure by early Christian writers would indicate that “Satan” likely was not only well known to them but also to the audiences to whom they wrote. Cf. BAGD, 744-745; Russell, The Devil, 221-249; and his companion volume, Satan: The Early Christian Tradition, (London: Cornell U. Press, 1981).

<sup>109</sup> For a study of the role of Satan as the tempter of Jesus specifically in Mark, see Susan R. Garrett, The Temptations of Jesus in Mark’s Gospel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 32-35.

<sup>110</sup> Borgen, “Polemic,” 204 notes that the primary function behind the employment of these terms (e.g., “Satan”) was “to distinguish ‘us’ from ‘them’ in a dualistic manner.” Cf. Royalty, Streets of Heaven, 31. If John’s assessment of the Nicolaitans is accepted by the audience, then the wedge between him and these other prophets will be widened in the minds of the believers. Finally, on the function of demonic powers in early Christian and Jewish polemics see J. Z. Smith, “Towards Interpreting Demonic Powers in Hellenistic and Roman Antiquity,” ANRW 2.16.1 (1978) 425-439.

it with that of the figure of Satan, hoping that the believers in Thyatira will come to see them in the same light, namely as rivals to God in the line of Satan.<sup>111</sup>

In two other instances John employs the same overall strategy, but utilizes the historical figures of Balaam and Jezebel, instead of Satan. The basis for his selection of Balaam and Jezebel, within this most intricate level of stigmatization, is obvious in that they each are weighted down by similar, well-known traditions of treachery, deceit, and/or deviancy.<sup>112</sup> In the Hebrew Bible both Balaam and Jezebel are (1) foreigners (i.e., gentiles and, thus, outsiders) who are (2) connected with royal authority and are (3) associated with efforts to assimilate Israel with pagans, specifically with (4) pagan gods and practices.<sup>113</sup>

Balaam, though highlighted as an ideal prophet figure (although a foreigner) in the narrative of Numbers 22-24,<sup>114</sup> becomes reinterpreted negatively in later Jewish tradition.<sup>115</sup> The origin of this negative reinterpretation generally is located in

---

<sup>111</sup> Analogously, see Lee A. Johnson, "Satan Talk in Corinth: The Rhetoric of Conflict," *BTB* 29 (1999) 145-155 and her study of Paul's use of "Satan" in the Corinthian letters. Johnson (154) notes that "the appearances of Satan in the Corinthian correspondence do not tell us much of anything about Satan, his activity or Paul's cosmological view. The references are not really about Satan, but about Paul and his relationship to the Corinthians." Furthermore, she concludes that the "Satan language arises out of Paul's scramble to cajole, threaten and inspire the Corinthians to dissociate themselves with other leaders and to define themselves as his people." I am taking a very similar approach to John's use of "Satan" in the book of Revelation, as his references also are found in a context of internal social conflict. In this same line, Royalty, *Streets of Heaven*, 164 observes that the book of Revelation "attempts to persuade its audience to adopt a negative point of view against all these opponents (i.e., Rome, the Jews, and the Christian teachers) as if they were united under Satan against John."

<sup>112</sup> Kirby, "The Rhetorical Situations," 203 notes that "the OT provenance of these metaphors reinforces their power, by virtue of their familiarity; in their NT context, they gain new forcefulness."

<sup>113</sup> Cf. Carey, *Elusive Apocalypse*, 22, 142.

<sup>114</sup> At the very least, the narrative of Num 22-24 presents a neutral portrayal of Balaam.

<sup>115</sup> On the texts and traditions surrounding Balaam, see Geza Vermes, "The Story of Balaam—The Scriptural Origin of Haggadah," in his *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism*, SPB 4 (Leiden: Brill, 1961) 127-177; John T. Greene, "Balaam: Prophet, Diviner, and Priest in Selected Ancient Israelite and

the priestly tradition of Numbers 31.<sup>116</sup> Here, the priestly redactor appears to be the first to draw a direct, causal connection between Balaam's oracles (from YHWH) to the king, Balak, and the subsequent treacherous activities that occurred between the Israelites and the Moabite women and peoples (Num 31:15-16).<sup>117</sup>

This pejorative understanding of Balaam, then, is picked up and extended in other Old Testament texts (i.e., Deut 23:4-5//HB 23:5-6; Josh 24:9-10; Neh 13:2).<sup>118</sup> Here he is understood to have cursed, not blessed, Israel in his oracles.<sup>119</sup> Later, non-canonical Jewish literature also takes this pejorative portrayal of Balaam as normative.<sup>120</sup> In each appearance within the works of both Philo and Josephus,

---

Hellenistic Jewish Sources," in *SBLSP*, ed. David J. Lull (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989) 57-106; Jo Ann Hackett, "Balaam," in *ABD* I, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 569-572; Aune, *Revelation*, 186-188; and Borgen, "Polemic," 202-203.

<sup>116</sup> Aune, *Revelation*, 188 notes that in the JE narrative of Num 22-24, Balaam comes across as blameless and that it is the priestly writer of Num 31:8, 16 who largely is responsible for Balaam's bad press. Cf. Hackett, "Balaam," 569-570 and Greene, "Balaam: Prophet," 92.

<sup>117</sup> On the priestly writer being the origin of this negative tradition surrounding the figure of Balaam, see Vermes, "Story of Balaam," 169-170, 174-176 and Hackett, "Balaam," 570. Vermes (174) notes that "it must be emphasized that this whole pejorative outlook is presented as resulting from the reading and understanding of Numbers xxii-xxiv."

<sup>118</sup> It should be noted that the reference to Balaam in Mic 6:5 captures the tone of the narrative in Num 22-24 as it mentions him in a positive light or, at least, he functions positively at the behest of YHWH (this is not entirely clear in the passage). Therefore, this text stands apart in tenor from the other HB texts. Balaam also appears in the Deir 'Alla inscriptions, again as an archetypal figure. But, the inscriptions are so fragmentary that they do not tell us much more about the overall context in which they fit. Finally, for treatments of Balaam in these above-noted texts, see Vermes, "Story of Balaam," 171-172 and Greene, "Balaam: Prophet," 92-95.

<sup>119</sup> Again, this aspect of the Balaam story is not readily apparent in the narrative found in Num 22-24 and, thus, appears to be an accretion to the tradition. Cf. Beasley-Murray, "Book of Revelation," 85. Additionally, Vermes, "Story of Balaam," 175 notes that these D sources take an anti-Moabite but not anti-Balaam stance. Though Vermes is accurate on one account, these texts clearly portray an anti-Moabite theme, they implicitly still are anti-Balaam. These texts do not reveal a positive or even neutral portrayal of him. Rather, he is presented negatively, as a prophet who covertly attempts to curse Israel and lead them into accommodation with the Moabite people and gods. Yet, his efforts are turned into blessings for Israel by YHWH.

<sup>120</sup> Vermes, "Story of Balaam," 174 observes that "every word and gesture of Balaam, however apparently innocuous, is interpreted unfavorably by the [Jewish] commentators. Wicked are all the thoughts, aims, words and deeds of Balaam the Villain." Finally, though Ps.-Philo *Bib. Ant.* 18 employs much more of the positive portrayal of Balaam (from Num 22-24), the author still presents an

Balaam functions exclusively as an archetypal example of duplicity, false prophecy, foolishness, and/or madness.<sup>121</sup> Ultimately, in this survey of the figure of Balaam within Jewish literature, two striking observations can be made. First, Balaam was not employed infrequently by Jewish writers; in fact, he was appealed to quite often throughout many different time periods.<sup>122</sup> Second, in every appearance of Balaam in Jewish literature, outside of the narrative of Numbers 22-24 and Micah 6:5, the figure of Balaam invariably is employed in a derogatory sense.<sup>123</sup>

John, the author of Revelation, furthers this tradition, as he too incorporates the pejorative traditions surrounding Balaam within the proclamations (2:14). In fact, John appears not to appeal to one specific text and/or tradition for his understanding of the figure. Rather, he is seen to incorporate elements from various texts and/or traditions in order to recontextualize Balaam for application in the current situation of conflict in Pergamum. John's accentuation of Balaam's connection with sexual immorality or fornication (2:14) is drawn from the priestly

---

overall, though possibly tempered, negative account of Balaam since the author still has Balaam betraying YHWH and Israel in conspiring with Balak.

<sup>121</sup> See Philo *Mut.* 202; *Conf.* 159; *Migr.* 113-115; *Deus* 181; *Cher.* 32-33; *Det.* 71; *Mos.* 1.294-299; and *Jos. A.J.* 4.126-130. In the passage from Josephus, arguments from some contemporary apostates are read into the biblical passages. Cf. Borgen, "'Yes,' 'No,'" 33-34. Additionally, Greene, "Balaam: Prophet," 96 notes that Balaam appears in the scrolls from Qumran (1QM 12:11; 7:19-20; 11:6-7), but "in no form appears to have been important to the Qumran framers of 1QM."

<sup>122</sup> Vermes, "Story of Balaam," 173 notes that "despite all his wrongdoings, Balaam has never ceased as it were to fascinate the Jews." Additionally, Greene, "Balaam: Prophet," 100 concludes that "the Balaam figure loomed larger than life, too large to be (as an outsider) expunged, but not too powerful at the time of various priestly editors to be manipulated" to serve intra-priestly polemics. Also, Greene (103) notes that "Balaam is the only famous outsider in ancient Israelite material who receives such press, although other outsiders were impressive."

<sup>123</sup> Greene, "Balaam: Prophet," 92-93 notes that the P redaction of the Balaam cycle is designed to discredit non-Aaronids. If this is the case, then later, defamatory uses of the figure of Balaam can be seen to be in direct connection with a tradition-history surrounding the use of the figure. Cf. Borgen, "'Yes,' 'No,'" 34.

texts (Num 31:15-16), which provide a novel and overtly negative interpretation of the narrative (Num 25:6-8).

His linking of Balaam and eating food sacrificed to idols, however, stems from the narrative text (Num 25:2), which also is found, in part, in the Psalms (106:28). In this case, the deviancy of the Israelites (i.e., their participation in sacrificial meals) is attributed to Balaam by John, even though the narrative account gives no indication of such a connection, creating another negative association for the figure.

Finally, John draws upon other Old Testament texts by mimicking the manner in which the various authors employ Balaam within their own circumstances. The context surrounding John's employment of Balaam strongly resembles the milieu in which the figure is used in Deuteronomy 23, Joshua 24, and Nehemiah 13. All of these three texts utilize Balaam in

contexts where current fears of pollution from foreigners are clear-cut issues of the author's day: who can enter the sanctuary [Deut 23], whose worship is appropriate [Josh 24], and who is an appropriate marriage partner [Neh 13].<sup>124</sup>

In each of these texts, the given author recontextualizes the figure and/or tradition surrounding Balaam to fit and speak to the current situational issues.

Here in Revelation 2:14, John is doing something quite akin to these Old Testament authors. He, too, is employing Balaam as an anti-type in confronting a current threat.<sup>125</sup> However, instead of combating foreigners, John is having to

---

<sup>124</sup> Hackett, "Balaam," 570. Greene, "Balaam: Prophet," 101 notes that Balaam was used in these and other texts to address the "needs brought on by the challenges of a new age."

<sup>125</sup> Contra Jürgen Roloff, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes*, Zürcher Bibelkommentare NT 18 (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1987) 51-52 and in line with Borgen, "'Yes,' 'No,'" 38 (and others), I see John's application of the figure of Balaam to these "opponents" as an effort to stigmatize them negatively and not as reflecting a self-designation of theirs.

wrangle with pollution that comes from other Christians (i.e., insiders). It is part of John's rhetorical strategy in the book to make these "insiders" look like "outsiders" (thus their comparison to Balaam and later to Jezebel) in an effort to persuade these believers to abide by his message and authority and reject the same of the these "opponents." Furthermore, it is evident that the primary question at issue for John is similar in type to those found in these other texts: whose prophetic authority is to be followed, John's or that of the Nicolaitans'? Ultimately, his use of the figure of Balaam fits directly within Jewish tradition. For John, Balaam is the archetypal false prophet who deceived Balak and led the Israelites astray and who now exemplifies the character and practices of the Nicolaitans.

In line with Balaam, the figure of Jezebel also carries strong negative overtones and traditions.<sup>126</sup> In Jewish texts and tradition, she is a foreigner who is notorious for her influencing of Ahab to worship Canaanite gods (1 Kgs 16:31; *Jos. Ant.* 8.317), her campaign to kill the prophets of YHWH (1 Kgs 18:4, 13; *Jos. Ant.* 8.330, 334; 9.47, 108), her backing of the prophets of Baal and Asherah (1 Kgs 18:19; *Jos. Ant.* 8.330, 334), her effort to kill Elijah (1 Kgs 19:1-2; *Jos. Ant.* 8.347), and her framing of Naboth and contribution to his death (1 Kgs 21:1-16; *Jos. Ant.* 8.355-362).<sup>127</sup> Additionally, her gruesome death (1 Kgs 21:23, 25; 2 Kgs 9; *Jos. Ant.* 9.122-124), which was a fulfillment of Elijah's prophecy, further identifies her as a despicable person in Jewish tradition.

---

<sup>126</sup> On the figure of Jezebel, see Gale A. Yee, "Jezebel," in *ABD* III, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 848-849; Tina Pippin, "Jezebel Re-Vamped," *Semeia* 69/70 (1995) 221-223; and Aune, *Revelation*, 203-206. Furthermore, Pippin, "And I Will," 194 notes that "to call a woman a 'Jezebel' has always translated as a loose, whoring, conniving, evil woman."

John's usage of Jezebel in Revelation 2:20 emphasizes the idolatrous aspect of the tradition surrounding the figure, which likely stems from her support of the prophets of Baal and her efforts to get Israelites to worship her gods. However, in variation from Jewish use of the figure of Balaam, Jezebel is not recontextualized in later situations at all. The information we have about her stems, primarily, from the narrative texts. Therefore, it appears as if John's use of Jezebel is the first effort at recontextualizing the figure for use in a current setting. For John, she functions as an archetypal false prophet/prophetess, idolator, and overall negative figure.<sup>128</sup> The employment of the title "Jezebel" for those whom John opposes, thus, should be seen as intentionally slanderous rhetoric, which was employed by John to persuade his audience to forsake any allegiances to her and, in lieu of this, follow him.<sup>129</sup>

In both of these instances (i.e., with Balaam and Jezebel), John takes these figures and attempts to align the Nicolaitans with them. This strategy of paralleling an opponent with a specific and widely known "heretical" figure is a method of caricature and defamation known as *Ketzergeschichte*. Via *Ketzergeschichte* the author assigns a heretical trajectory to the given contemporary opponents, which not only defames their current position but also disparages their entire past by retrofitting

---

<sup>127</sup> Accounts of Jezebel are found in 1 Kgs 18-21; 2 Kgs 9; and a rewriting in Jos. *Ant.* 8.316-359; 9.47, 108, 122-123.

<sup>128</sup> See Aune, *Revelation*, 194; Pilch, "Lying and Deceit," 126; and Pippin, "And I Will," 195.

<sup>129</sup> Duff, "I Will Give," 133 states that "by subtly portraying 'Jezebel' in the same manner that he depicts the outside forces of evil, he promotes his leadership position by undermining that of his opponent." While the copying and dissemination of the book or Revelation does indicate in part that John's position won out, over against the position of the Nicolaitans, we cannot be sure that the later success of the book was connected directly to an earlier triumph by John in this specific conflict. As Royalty, *Streets of Heaven*, 37 notes, "eventual acceptance of a book into the New Testament canon by no means involves an endorsement of the original message or function of the work."

them into a normative heretical history.<sup>130</sup> As a result, the opponents come to be seen as nothing more than examples of this larger heretical figure type. Through his efforts at reinterpreting the Nicolaitans via Satan, Balaam, and Jezebel, John aims at negatively stigmatizing them. Furthermore, he hopes that the believers in these churches will uphold this caricature of the Nicolaitans and come to relate to them based on his portrayal. Ultimately, John's use of *Ketzergeschichte*, which strongly resembles the sociological category of retrospective reinterpretation, would likely be quite effective in his overall efforts at gaining or retaining the allegiances of the believers due to the fact that the bases for the reinterpretation (i.e., Satan, Balaam, and Jezebel) are firmly established and widely known deviant figures within Jewish and Christian tradition.

### III. The Dynamics of Conflict in Ephesus, Pergamum, and Thyatira and the Social Context for the Emergence of Early Christian Heresy.

The overall situations of conflict in Ephesus, Pergamum, and Thyatira, when held up to the conceptual typology of heresy developed in chapter two, appear to satisfy all the noted phenomenological markers. In these parts of Revelation 2-3, we observe situations of conflict that are internal to the respective Christian congregations. The substance of the conflict between John, along with his followers, and those whom he opposes is located partially within the practice of eating meat sacrificed to idols (likely in cultic meals within Greek temples). However, the larger problem evident in these churches was related to the "proper" level of accommodation or syncretism

---

<sup>130</sup> Carey, *Elusive Apocalypse*, 143-147 observes that John utilizes cities (e.g., Egypt and Babylon), as well as ancient Near Eastern mythology, in a similar fashion to these figures.

that believers should have with the surrounding culture. The Nicolaitans apparently deem the consumption of sacrificial meat to be an appropriate practice for believers, indicating that they supported a higher level of syncretism between the church and culture. However, John proposes that Christians should not be engaged in this practice; that the churches in Asia Minor should be distinctive from their cultural environment, allowing little, if any, syncretism to occur.

The Nicolaitans' advocacy of this practice, along with their mere presence, constitutes a deviant threat based on John's understanding of the limits of early Christian faith and practice. Furthermore, the threat is a severe one because the Nicolaitans are enjoying much success in gaining adherents, many of whom would be converts from the faithful whom John supports in these cities. The crisis that was brought on by this threat forced John to respond to these situations in an effort to halt the teachings and crush the authority of these persons. Here, John employs legitimacy devices and tactics of stigmatization as strategies by which to support his own words/message and cast aspersions on the Nicolaitans. His response is an effort to gain, re-gain, and/or maintain the allegiances of the Christians in Ephesus, Pergamum, and Thyatira, thus keeping them from the Nicolaitans (and other "opponents").

Looking at these historical situations through the lens of an interactionist perspective on deviance, one sees that John is in a situation of competing authorities, probably as one itinerant prophet or teacher amongst others. John is attempting to assert his authority over those whom he opposes and they likely are or will be responding in much the same manner. Therefore, in his response to these internal

opponents, John engages in a strategy that resembles the deviantizing or hereticizing process (as seen in the sociological literature). This can be seen in part through his attempts to stigmatize the Nicolaitans via the wielding and application of defamatory labels. At the level of simple degradation, he invokes the imagery of “evil” as a blunt attempt to degrade them. One step more intricate, John attempts to stereotype the Nicolaitans as being sexually depraved, intentionally deceptive, and entirely false, in an effort to portray them as mere examples of a negative social type. Furthermore, in aligning them with well known, historical and non-historical deviant figures, and in aiming to reconstitute the identity of the former (i.e., the Nicolaitans) in favor of the latter (i.e., Satan, Balaam, and Jezebel), John has engaged in something akin to the sociological strategy of retrospective reinterpretation. Through his broad employment of stigmatizing strategies, John hopes so to discredit the teachings and character of the Nicolaitans that the believers in these cities will not or will no longer give their allegiances to them but to him.

Additionally, through his rejection of the “opponents” and their promotion of eating food sacrificed to idols and cultural accommodation, John has proposed a norm that demarcates (at least for John and his followers) proper and improper Christian practice. For John, the eating of sacrificial meat is an example of the church’s syncretism with the surrounding culture and, thus, stands outside the bounds of proper Christian practice. He has taken a practice that was prevalent in the ancient Greco-Roman world, and which even was acceptable in some Christian circles (e.g., those of the Nicolaitans, as well as certain contexts reflected in Paul’s letters), and branded it as unacceptable based on the norm that he had proposed. Prior to John’s

introduction of this norm, it appears as if the practice of eating meat sacrificed to idols, and the cultural accommodation it exemplifies, were acceptable, or at least tolerated, within the whole of or only certain cities within Asia Minor. Yet, the practice could not be deemed to be “deviant” until John introduced a norm by which it then could be demarcated as such.

Though we do not know if John’s proposed norm on this issue was upheld or rejected by the believers in these churches, his attempt to demarcate this practice of the Nicolaitans as being deviant is apparent nonetheless. Again, we do not yet have heresy here (in the ecclesiastical understanding of the term) since John does not employ a codified label (i.e., ἄρπεις) to demarcate it as such. However, the struggle is no less real or contentious. In short, I would contend that the situations of social conflict (including the responses to them) noted above offer yet another glimpse of the context out of which the notion of heresy first emerged in early Christianity. The observation that all the noted phenomenological markers (as delineated in chapter two) are evident here in Revelation 2-3 affirms the contention that this setting of internal deviance provides a likely context out of which the Christian notion of heresy later emerged.

## Chapter Five

### The Sectarian Markings of Early Second Temple Judaism

In the previous two chapters I have undertaken an analysis of Galatians and the book of Revelation, respectively, to examine how the situations of internal social conflict contained within them can be seen as forerunners to the emergence of the early Christian notion of heresy. While no formal accusations of heresy were made in these instances (i.e., none of the sides branded another with the specific label αἵρεσις, in its meaning as “heresy”), the phenomenological elements evident within these situations of internal conflict, when taken cumulatively, do reflect the nascent social markers characteristic of the social understanding of heresy identified in chapter two. Ultimately, then, this type of context, as seen in Galatians and Revelation 2-3, is that from which the concept of heresy later emerged. In short, they contain conflict that phenomenologically resembles heresy, lacking only the codified label (i.e., αἵρεσις).

My method in these chapters has been of a distinctly social-scientific character (which is based on my work in chapter two). I have shifted the discussion of early Christian heresy away from a primarily theological concept and toward that of a social phenomenon. However, my primary intention in these chapters was to make a historical, and not just a social-scientific, claim. I aimed to demonstrate that forerunners of the later, ecclesiastical understanding of heresy can be observed

within the first century C.E.<sup>1</sup> While I in no way intend to convey that heresy, as seen in its later, ecclesiastical sense, was established fully in the first-century of the Christian movement, I do argue that these first-century situations of internal social conflict stand as the contexts from which the notion of heresy first emerged. In short, it is within these early historical settings that “heresy” was emerging.

This conclusion, however represents only an initial thrust within the thesis. In my attempt to identify the context(s) from which the Christian notion of heresy first emerged, these two chapters have pushed only as far back as the first century C.E. In furtherance of this, I again wish to move chronologically backward in an effort to see if there are any similar contexts that may inform our understanding of the concept of heresy in early Christianity. In other words, if these first-century situations of internal deviance provide the context for the emergence of the idea of heresy, then are there any other like contexts of which to take note for the subject-matter of this thesis? This question is, again, a historical one, and one which I will take up presently.

### An Excursus on Procedure

There are a number of different settings that scholars can and do turn to as contextual environments for the formation of early Christianity; the two most prominent being Greco-Roman and Jewish environments. However, here I will turn only to Jewish texts, sources, and traditions as the context for these first-century Christian situations

---

<sup>1</sup> As noted above and in previous chapters, I have turned to first-century contexts of internal deviance in order to identify the social processes, which necessarily precede formal accusations of heresy, as forerunners to the later, codified sense of the notion.

to internal conflict. Though there is no need these days for a New Testament/Christian origins scholar to justify why he or she would turn to Judaism as a resource for his or her research, a few comments would be helpful and illuminating for why I will take up *only* an examination of Jewish sources.

The primary reason for choosing to pursue only Jewish sources here lies in the nature of the topic and phenomenon that I am investigating. In the previous two chapters, I have examined situations where an early Christian author is attempting to respond to the message of (an) alternative internal authority figure(s), who pose(s) a (severe) threat to the author's own message and leadership. In an effort to quash this threat of internal opposition, the early Christian author attempts to demonstrate and establish his own message and authority as the sole one authorized by God. Furthermore, he (i.e., the early Christian author) contends that the other Christian leaders (i.e., the "opponents") proffer some other message, that is, one that is not sanctioned and undergirded uniquely by the divine. In short, these early Christian authors are attempting to lay claim to divine authorization of their message and leadership from the one God whom they (and the opponents) serve.

The situation, then, is characteristic of a religious tradition and system that is monotheistic in outlook.<sup>2</sup> The conflict between these Christian leaders is not over *which* God should be appealed to in order to decide the outcome. Both sides recognize and are appealing to the same unitary and singular divine power (i.e., the

---

<sup>2</sup> Rudolph, "Heresy: An Overview," 271-272 contends that it is possible to speak of "heresy" only in connection with a certain type of religion, namely, "confessional religions." He characterizes these religions as ones that have (1) a founder figure or succession of figures, (2) their own canonical document, often containing a "revelation," and (3) a normative doctrine or teaching that stems from the founder and/or the canonical document, in which he includes monotheism.

one God of the scriptures and God's son Jesus Christ) and, thus, hold a monotheistic stance on their faith.<sup>3</sup> Rather, the primary question within these conflicts is whose message (including whose interpretation of sacred texts)<sup>4</sup> and leadership is validated and endorsed by that one God?

When one turns to the ancient world and looks for monotheistic religious groups that attempt to make singular religious truth claims, one is left only with Judaism. Judaism was the only religion in the Greco-Roman world that held to a monotheistic religious system.<sup>5</sup> While the Greeks and Romans were able to encompass many if not all gods into their religious system, Jews could not and would not. The monotheistic underpinnings of their religion stood in stark contrast to the surrounding world that was much more syncretistic. Thus, in looking for a contextual environment for these early Christian religious truth claims (i.e., that these early Christian authors possessed or transmitted the authoritative message from the one God) within the surrounding Greco-Roman world of the day, Judaism presents the most probable, if not the only possible, background by which to understand this

---

<sup>3</sup> For an explication of how Christians retained their devotion to one God, while still accommodating Jesus as another divine figure worthy of worship, see Larry W. Hurtado, One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism, second edition (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998) and his analysis of the "binitarian" shape of early Christian monotheistic devotion.

<sup>4</sup> Note, again, Rudolph, "Heresy: An Overview," 271-272 and his emphasis on canonical documents, including the interpretation of them, in formulating "heresy."

<sup>5</sup> Though the term "monotheism" has been employed in description of various religious and philosophical groups in the Greco-Roman world, this should be distinguished from its meaning and expression in Judaism (and Christianity). The use of the term to describe a chief god or divinity (e.g., the *logos*) that stands over many lesser divine beings is markedly different than its reference in Judaism (and Christianity) to highlight the exclusive devotion to one God, which necessitates a rejection of the pantheon of lesser deities revered in various Greco-Roman traditions. Hurtado, One God, One Lord, 6-7, notes that "there is simply no comparable tradition of exclusivist monotheism in the pagan religions of the Greco-Roman period." This exclusive sense of "monotheism" is how the term will be employed here. Cf. Loren T. Stuckenbruck, Angel Veneration

Christian phenomenon and practice. Therefore, in this and the following chapter, I will focus specifically and only on Second Temple Judaism in light of these first-century situations of internal deviance.

The Jewish religious heritage that stands behind early Christianity and the New Testament documents is vast; much too large to treat as a whole. Therefore, I intend to take a closer look at only one aspect of Second Temple Judaism, namely its sectarian markings and character, beginning early on around the Persian period (i.e., just before, contemporaneous with, and following the inauguration of the second Jewish commonwealth). As a preview of subsequent chapters, I am turning to sectarian markings (chapter five) and sectarianism (chapter six) because I contend that the sectarian character of Second Temple Judaism bears a strong phenomenological resemblance to early Christian situations of internal conflict and, ultimately, the phenomenon of early Christian heresy. I understand the practice of exclusivism inherent within the sectarianism of much of Second Temple Judaism to be phenomenologically similar to these first-century contexts of internal conflict. Therefore, an analysis of Second Temple Jewish sectarianism becomes a necessary component in the thesis.

Finally, it is appropriate and important to emphasize that my intention in the remainder of this chapter is to identify only *sectarian markings*, and not specific sects or even the broader phenomenon of sectarianism within Judaism of the Persian period. I concur with others that it is premature to begin talking about established sectarian groups or even deliberate sectarian development within the early Second

Temple period; that must wait until a later point in the era.<sup>6</sup> However, following the lead of other foundational studies, I contend that we can identify several characteristics within Judaism of this period, which are distinctly sectarian.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, I now will turn to look at some of the characteristics of Judaism in the Persian period in an attempt to highlight several of these early sectarian markings.

---

II, vol. 70 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1995) 15-21 for a review of various conceptions of “monotheism.”

<sup>6</sup> See, specifically, Albert I. Baumgarten, The Flourishing of Jewish Sects in the Maccabean Era: An Interpretation, JSJSup 55, eds. John J. Collins and Florentino García Martínez (Leiden: Brill, 1997) 11-28 and his emphasis on the flourishing of Jewish sects in the later Second Temple period. I will turn back to Baumgarten’s very valuable work at a later point in the thesis.

<sup>7</sup> On studies that have attempted to identify some of these sectarian markings, see Joseph Blenkinsopp, “A Jewish Sect of the Persian Period,” CBQ 52 (1990) 5-20; Joseph Blenkinsopp, “Interpretation and the Tendency to Sectarianism: An Aspect of Second Temple History,” in Jewish and Christian Self-Definition II: Aspects of Judaism in the Graeco-Roman Period, eds. E. P. Sanders, A. I. Baumgarten, and Alan Mendelson (London: SCM, 1981) 1-26; Shemaryahu Talmon, “The Emergence of Jewish Sectarianism in the Early Second Temple Period,” in Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross, eds. Patrick D. Miller, Paul D. Hanson, and S. Dean McBride (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 587-614, which can be seen in a revised form in Shemaryahu Talmon, “The Internal Diversification of Judaism in the Early Second Temple Period,” in Jewish Civilization in the Hellenistic-Roman Period, ed. Shemaryahu Talmon, JSPSup 10 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991) 16-42; Alexander Rofé, “Isaiah 66:1-4: Judean Sects in the Persian Period as Viewed by Trito-Isaiah,” in Biblical and Related Studies Presented to Samuel Iwry, eds. Ann Kort and Scott Morschauer (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1985) 205-217; and Alexander Rofé, “The Onset of Sects in Postexilic Judaism: Neglected Evidence from the Septuagint, Trito-Isaiah, Ben Sira, and Malachi,” in The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism: Essays in Tribute to Howard Clark Kee, eds. Jacob Neusner, *et. al.* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988) 39-49. I owe a debt to these works as they already have made much headway into this area. I here hope to collect and expand upon their insights.

A Brief Historical Overview of the Late Babylonian and Early Persian Periods<sup>8</sup>

Before I begin to sift the primary literature of this period for any evidence of these sectarian markings, a brief historical overview is in order. A proper beginning point for this study is near the end of the seventh century B.C.E. At this time the Babylonians, under king Nebuchadnezzar, took control of Judah upon the defeat of the Egyptians at Carchemish (c. 605 B.C.E) and, not long afterward, controlled all of Mesopotamia (c. 600 B.C.E.). After taking physical possession of much of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar and his armies pushed their way to Jerusalem and besieged the city.<sup>9</sup> According to the biblical accounts, the Babylonians held Jerusalem captive for almost two and one-half years (approximately January 588 to July 586 B.C.E.) before they broke through the city wall, executed the sons of Zedekiah, and exiled some of the leading citizens.<sup>10</sup> Babylon's imposition of themselves upon the nation

---

<sup>8</sup> Though I, at times, will employ "exilic," pre-exilic," and "post-exilic" as descriptive labels of definite periods of time, this should not communicate that I am unaware of the larger debate concerning the historicity and/or the importance of "the exile." For a review of the developments in the scholarly understanding of "the exile," see Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, "Reassessing the Historical and Sociological Impact of the Babylonian Exile (597/587-539 BCE)," in Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, & Christian Conceptions, ed. James M. Scott, JSJSup 56, ed. John J. Collins (Leiden: Brill, 1997) 7-36. Additionally, for the seminal work on this period, see Peter R. Ackroyd, Exile and Restoration: A Study on Hebrew Thought in the Sixth Century BC, OTL (London: SCM, 1968).

<sup>9</sup> See 2 Kgs 25:1-2 and Jer 39:1-2.

<sup>10</sup> The accounts from 2 Kings and Jeremiah both mention that some were not exiled (i.e., some were left in the land). Precise numbers, either for those who were deported or those who remained, seem to be beyond our grasp. The relatively large number of exiles reported in the biblical accounts (even the accounts from Jeremiah and Nehemiah do not find agreement) seem to be partially at odds with archaeological and other evidence, which supports a strong number of persons remaining in the land. On the later position, see Robert P. Carroll, "The Myth of the Empty Land," in Ideological Criticism of Biblical Texts, eds. D. Jobling and Tina Pippin, Semeia 59 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992) 72-93 and Hans M. Barstad, The Myth of the Empty Land: A Study in the History and Archaeology of Judah during the 'Exilic' Period, SO 28 (Oslo: Scandinavian U. Press, 1996). In all, though, most would support that contention that *some* persons remained in the land. Furthermore, the ones who remained seem to be poor persons who were left to work the land.

and people was furthered when they destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in response to the rebellion of Zedekiah, the puppet king of Judah who replaced Jehoiachin.<sup>11</sup>

Though it is difficult to do justice to it in a short amount of space, the trauma that the Babylonian invasion caused to the people and structures of Judah cannot be overstated.<sup>12</sup> Although those who were exiled largely remained together during this time, and a number of them achieved some prosperity,<sup>13</sup> their ability to perform and practice their ancestral rites and customs apart from the temple and in the midst of foreign peoples, buildings, and structures, was impaired and they were forced into an entirely different mode of religious practice.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> On the condition of Jerusalem and Judah during the exile, see S. S. Weinberg, "Post-Exilic Palestine: An Archaeological Report," Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities 4 (1971) 78-97 and Gösta Ahlström, The History of Ancient Palestine from the Paleolithic Period to Alexander's Conquest, JSOTSup 146 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1993) 798.

<sup>12</sup> On the importance of the traumatic impact of "exile" upon the Judeans, as well as other peoples, see Daniel L. Smith, The Religion of the Landless: The Sociology of the Babylonian Exile (Bloomington: Meyer-Stone, 1990).

<sup>13</sup> While exilic sentiment often is seen to be expressed in the lament of Psalm 137, it also is evident, based on the instructions of Jeremiah (Jer 29:5-7), that those in exile were not captives but free to move about within the city, as well as build houses, plant gardens, marry, and bear children. In addition to continuing to live in communities, it also is evident that some Jews managed to accumulate wealth (Ezra 1:5-6 and 2:68-69) and possibly even slaves (Ezra 2:65). Oded Bustenay, "Judah and the Exile," in Israelite and Judaeon History, eds. John H. Hayes and J. Maxwell Miller (London: SCM, 1977) 483 notes that "there is not clear and explicit evidence that the Mesopotamian exiles lived under conditions of suppression or were subjected to religious persecution at any time during the years 586-538 BCE, not even in the reign of Nabonidus."

<sup>14</sup> The scant evidence concerning the religious (as well as other aspects of) life of the exiles causes the picture to be quite hazy regarding this aspect of exilic life. Cf. Bob Becking, "Ezra's Re-enactment of the Exile," in Leading Captivity Captive: 'The Exile' as History and Ideology, ed. Lester L. Grabbe, JSOTSup 278 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998) 46. However, several inferences still can be made concerning the "religious life" of the Jewish community in Babylon. In contrast to Elephantine in Egypt, there is no clear evidence for a Jewish temple in Babylon at this time. Furthermore, there is no definitive proof that synagogue worship began in this period either. Therefore, even though we have evidence of them still observing sabbath (Isa 56:2-4; 58:13; Ezek 44-46) and circumcision, the physical structures that garnered religious life and ritual (e.g., the temple) in Judah prior to the exile were non-existent in Babylon. In short, while the exiles undoubtedly took great efforts to preserve their unique identity, the manner in which they went about continuing to practice their rituals and practices most certainly changed with their removal from the land of Judah

Likewise, though some of the persons were allowed to remain in the land, the absence of the Jewish leaders who perpetuated economic, legal, and religious (as well as other aspects of) life left a gaping whole in the fabric of their society.<sup>15</sup> The absence of civilian and military leadership, in addition to the stark reality of a city that was looted, a temple that was destroyed, and a nation that was in disarray, left those still in Judah in a state of economic, political, and national (including religious) depression. On top of all these physical changes, the events surrounding this period “brought about fundamental changes in the people’s thinking, which had been nourished on the belief in the eternity of the house of David and in the invulnerability of the temple in Jerusalem.”<sup>16</sup> In short, Babylon’s annexation of Judah, destruction of the temple, and forced exile of many leading Judeans drastically altered (even this phrase may not be strong enough!) the lives of all those of Judah, the only comparable precedent possibly being the earlier deportation of Israelites at the hands of the Assyrians.

In light of this great despair, the prophets encouraged continued belief in God and the future redemption of God’s people (Jer 23:7ff). This prophetic hope, which often involved the explanation and reinterpretation of difficult national and

---

and, especially, the temple. Finally, on the overall situation in Babylon, see Ackroyd, Exile and Restoration, 31-38.

<sup>15</sup> As those exiled included soldiers, craftsmen, smiths, elders, prophets, and priests (see 2 Kgs 24:14-16; Jer 24:1; 29:1-2), many persons involved in the daily activities of life would no longer be present to fulfill these needs for those who remained in the land. Cf. Ackroyd, Exile and Restoration, 20-31. It should be noted, however, that there is archaeological evidence that points to continued economic activity in Judah, which would be in the interests of the Babylonian regime to encourage.

<sup>16</sup> Bustenay, “Judah and the Exile,” 479. Cf. 2 Sam 7; Jer 7:14 and Walter Brueggemann, Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997) 650-679.

ideological issues that were raised by the massive national calamity,<sup>17</sup> stressed a future return to the land of Judah and the reconstruction of the temple in an effort to counter the current despair.

Not long after, the prophets' message found its historical fulfillment. After they had been in exile for some 50 years, the Persians took over rule of Judah (c. 539 B.C.E.) and established themselves as the major imperial power of the ancient Near East. The onset of Persian rule brought changes not only to the imperial landscape of the ancient world but also to local governance, due to their tolerant attitude and policies toward their conquered subjects.

In contrast to their Assyrian and Babylonian predecessors, the Achaemenid Persians represented themselves to their subject-states as a benevolent power concerned not just with the garnering of taxes but with the maintenance of peace and order throughout the empire.<sup>18</sup>

Their imperial policies included strengthening local governments, improving roads, establishing systems of communication, and, most importantly for the Judeans, encouraging displaced and exiled peoples to return to their ancestral homelands and re-establish local religious and political institutions.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., Jer 44:15-19; Ezek 20:32; 33:10; 37:11; Isa 63:19; and Lam 5:7.

<sup>18</sup> James D. Purvis, "Exile and Return: From the Babylonian Destruction to the Reconstruction of the Jewish State," in Ancient Israel: From Abraham to the Roman Destruction of the Temple, revised and expanded edition, editor Hershel Shanks (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1999) 216. John Bright, A History of Israel, third edition (London: SCM, 1980) 360 further notes that "Persian soldiers were ordered to respect the religious sensibilities of the population and to refrain from terrorizing them. Oppressive conditions were ameliorated. The gods brought to the capital by Nabonidus were restored to their shrines, and the king's objectionable innovations abolished."

<sup>19</sup> Cyrus' edict of restoration for the Jewish community came in his first year of rule in Babylon (c. 538 B.C.E.). Though many took advantage of this offer and returned to Judah in short order, the larger return actually took place over a number of years and in successive waves of returnees. Cf. J. P. Weinberg, The Citizen—Temple Community, JSOTSup 151 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1992) 41; Lester L. Grabbe, Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 126-140; and Philip R. Davies, In Search of 'Ancient Israel', second edition, JSOTSup 148 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1994) 80-82. Also, a number of Jews chose to remain in Babylon. Finally, on the administration of Babylonian rule, see

The complete reversal in imperial policy that was brought on by the Persians not only altered the things of daily life for the Judeans, but it also brought on renewed hope for a return to the land and the continuation of God's covenant with them.<sup>20</sup> Cyrus' further declaration of imperial support (monetary and political) for the rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem also brought renewed hope to the Judeans (Ezra 1:2-4; 6:3-5; 2 Chr 36:23). Ultimately, with the onset of Persian rule, a new age of hope and opportunity had dawned for the Jewish community.

The process of resettlement and rebuilding, however, was not without its own difficulties and problems. On a very basic level, there were questions regarding civil and economic leadership that had to be addressed. Without a governing body of Judeans for so long, who would (or had the right to) lead the people and establish law once again? Furthermore, who would institute proper business and trade practices and regulations now that the structures of the Babylonians were not enforced? Issues of land rights also arose (e.g., Ezek 33:23-29).<sup>21</sup> To perpetuate these problems, who could be nominated or found to adjudicate such matters? These and many other difficult issues would have come with the opportunity to resettle the land.

---

Kenneth G. Hoglund, Achaemenid Imperial Administration in Syria-Palestine and the Missions of Ezra and Nehemiah, SBLDS 125 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992).

<sup>20</sup> It is important to note that Cyrus' efforts at the restoration of peoples with their religious rites and symbols were not limited to the Jewish community. As evidenced by the Cyrus Cylinder, he declared a similar edict for his Babylonian subjects. Cf. Amélie Kuhrt, "The Cyrus Cylinder and Achaemenid Imperial Rule," *JOT* 25 (1983) 83-97; Elias J. Bickerman, "The Edict of Cyrus in Ezra 1," *JBL* 65 (1946) 249-275; Ackroyd, Exile and Restoration, 140-141; J. P. Weinberg, "Demographische Notizen zur Geschichte der nachexilischen Gemeinde in Juda," *Klio* 54 (1972) 45-99; and T. Cuyler Young, "Cyrus," in ABD I, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 1231-1232. However, as I mention below, Jews interpreted this edict as a benevolent act of God and saw Cyrus' as God's messianic agent in this effort to restore them as a people (Isa 44:24, 28).

<sup>21</sup> Purvis, "Exile and Return," 217-218 observes that "the returning exiles found that their hope conflicted with new territorial hegemonies that had come into being during their absence—most particularly in regard to Samaria, which apparently had exercised control over the Judean territory."

Yet, the most difficult and volatile question of them all may well have been, who had the right to leadership in the rebuilding of the temple?<sup>22</sup> Additionally, once the temple was constructed (c. 520 B.C.E.), questions remained regarding the issues of temple leadership and the establishment of communal order. Ultimately, some internal dissension accompanied this newfound hope within the Jewish community. A number of questions and issues that were intramural to the Judeans had to be settled, questions which would help shape Judaism down through the remainder of the Second Temple period.<sup>23</sup>

The intramural and self-definitional character of many of the issues connected with the restoration marks the early Persian period as a potentially fruitful object of research for identifying some sectarian markings within this formative period of Judaism.<sup>24</sup> Here I will utilize some of the general characteristics of

---

<sup>22</sup> On the opposition regarding this issue, see Ackroyd, Exile and Restoration, 149-152.

<sup>23</sup> See Paul D. Hanson, The Dawn of Apocalyptic (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975); Shaye J. D. Cohen, From the Maccabees to the Mishnah, Library of Early Christianity, ed. Wayne A. Meeks (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987) 137-142; and Baumgarten, Flourishing of Jewish Sects, 25.

<sup>24</sup> Several procedural notes are in order at this point. (1) Re-emphasizing a point made above, I do not intend to provide a complete list of sectarian characteristics within early Second Temple Judaism. Rather, I simply desire to highlight several of these sectarian markings in order to “get a feel” for the tenor of the period. (2) For each sectarian marking that I identify, I will provide both secondary sociological literature and primary OT/HB texts in support. For the former, I will rely primarily upon the work of Bryan Wilson on “sect” [see especially his Religious Sects: A Sociological Study (London: World U. Library, 1970)] and his approach to it as a broad and phenomenological entity. Cf. Bryan Wilson, Patterns of Sectarianism: Organization and Ideology in Social and Religious Movements, ed. Bryan R. Wilson (London: Heinemann, 1967) 23-25 and Donald E. Miller, “Sectarianism and Secularization: The Work of Bryan Wilson,” RSR 5 (1970) 161-174, which is a review article of Wilson’s work on sects and sectarianism. Though his primary aim is to develop a general, sociological typology of sects, he still notes the need for balance with historical specificity. For the OT/HB primary literature, I will appeal primarily to the following texts: Haggai, Zechariah 1-8, Isaiah 56-66, Malachi, and the slightly later texts of Ezra and Nehemiah. Finally, (3) as I (admittedly) am pursuing a subject (i.e., sectarian markings) in an era that contains no sects and little sectarian development, the characteristics highlighted also will not be of a fully-developed character. While some traits will be quite prominent and readily identifiable as “sectarian,” others will be more implicit, requiring a bit more effort to tease them out. The prospective nature of this effort, however, is not to such a level that it challenges the integrity of the endeavor.

religious sects, which have been identified and gathered by the noted sociologist Bryan Wilson, to highlight some historical specifics in the Judaism of the Persian period that exemplify them.

### Some Sectarian Markings within Judaism of the Persian Period

1. *Separate and Distinct Identity.* Foundational to any definition or characterization of “sect” is the concept of a separate and distinct identity. As religious sects are “movements of religious protest whose members separate themselves from others in respect of their religious beliefs, practices, and institutions,”<sup>25</sup> the very concept of “sect” implies division and, thus, the formation of an identity as a *separate* group. This can take the form of an “us—them” or “we—they” dichotomy, due to the emphasis on possessing an identity that is not only separate but also *distinct* from those in the surrounding environment. Within the early Persian period, it is the returning exiles who are seen making the effort to establish their own distinct identity, often in contrast to those Judeans that had remained in the land (e.g., Hag 1:2; Zech 6:15; Isa 63:18).<sup>26</sup> These labors to distinguish themselves from the surrounding peoples, most of which were connected to the question of who should have the right to rebuild the temple, began to take on a

---

<sup>25</sup> Wilson, Religious Sects, 7.

<sup>26</sup> Blenkinsopp, “Interpretation and the Tendency,” 24 notes that with the return of exiles in the early Persian period, at least two groups begin to compete for recognition as the legitimate successors of old Israel. The former exiles were the ones who prevailed. Though we know “the people of the land” existed as a “group” at the point when the former exiles returned to Judah, we do not possess any literature from them and, thus, do not know what type of self-perception that they held. Cf. Lester L. Grabbe, “Israel’s Historical Reality after the Exile,” in The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic and Post-Exilic Times, eds. Bob Becking and Marjo C. A. Korpel (Leiden: Brill, 1999) 22.

distinctly dualistic character. The exiles and the people of the land were dichotomized in couplets, such as “my servants”—“you” (Isa 65:13-15), the “righteous”/“devout”—“you” (Isa 57-59), and “those who revered the lord”—“priests who despise my name” (Mal 1:6-2:9; 3:16-18), respectively.<sup>27</sup> These dichotomies were developed even further within Ezra and Nehemiah, where whole sections of text are given over to identifying those who were and were not worthy of building and/or serving in the temple (Ezra 4-5; 6:12-22; 8:35; Neh 10:28) or defending Jerusalem (Neh 4:12).<sup>28</sup> Ultimately, though there is no developed or programmatic statement that declares the precise identity of these Jewish exiles, we still can see (within the texts of that era) their initial efforts to create and/or maintain a separate and distinct identity from other Jews in their surrounding environment.

2. *“Remnant” Mentality.* Religious sects not only regard themselves as people who are set apart from others, but also as an alternative to the “parent body,” or even the sole embodiment of it. Therefore, the members often understand themselves to be the elite, making singular claims to salvation or fullest blessing and requiring exclusive commitment of its members.<sup>29</sup> In short, religious sects possess an elitist mentality where they perceive themselves to be the sole

---

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Talmon, “The Emergence,” 600 and Lawrence H. Schiffman, “Jewish Sectarianism in Second Temple Times,” in *Great Schisms in Jewish History*, eds. Raphael Jospe and Stanley M. Wagner (New York: KTAV, 1981) 9.

<sup>28</sup> Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration*, 149 notes that in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, the returned exiles are pictured as “a separate entity.”

<sup>29</sup> See Wilson, *Religious Sects*, 26-27, 31-32.

receptor and conduit of divine order and blessing.<sup>30</sup> The exiles certainly thought themselves to be an elitist or exclusivist community, specifically in relation to privilege in religious and civil leadership. Furthermore, they also took on a remnant mentality, which can be observed foremost in their language and terminology chosen for self-description. The exiles depict themselves as the “remnant” (שאר; Hag 1:12, 14; 2:2; Zech 8:6, 11, 12; Ezra 9:8), the “golah” (גולה; Ezra 1:11; 9:4; 10:6; cf. 4:1; 8:35; 10:7, 16),<sup>31</sup> the “branch” (צמח; Zech 3:8),<sup>32</sup> God’s “special possession,” (סגולה; Mal 3:17),<sup>33</sup> “priests of the Lord”/“ministers of God” (Isa 61:6), and those who “shake” or “tremble” (חרר; Isa 66:5; Ezra 10:3; cf. Hag 2:6-7, 21; Ezra 10:9).<sup>34</sup> These descriptions, individually and collectively, imply the claim that the exiles are the true preservation of Israel.<sup>35</sup> They are the extension of messianic hope and the ones

---

<sup>30</sup> Wilson, *Religious Sects*, 29.

<sup>31</sup> Blenkinsopp, “Interpretation and the Tendency,” 4-5 notes that this description was used to identify the fact that this Jewish community stood apart from the natives.

<sup>32</sup> The term here is also a Jeremianic motif (Jer 33:15) that helped to give support to the hopes which were focused on Zerubbabel during the early Persian period. Cf. Blenkinsopp, “Interpretation and the Tendency,” 10.

<sup>33</sup> The term that is used here (סגולה) was formerly one that was employed to identify Israel as God’s special possession, in contrast to the nations (Exod 19:5-6; Deut 7:6; 14:2; 26:18-19; Ps 135:4). However, here it is being used in an internal context. One Jewish group is claiming to be God’s special possession, over against other Jews (who might well want to make the same claim). Thus, the claim is one of internal division. Blenkinsopp, “A Jewish Sect,” 16 reads these persons in line with the favored of the Lord in Isaiah 66.

<sup>34</sup> Blenkinsopp, “A Jewish Sect,” 8 notes that the term being used here (חרר) was a way of referring to the devout, especially since it is employed here in a context of internal social conflict and even excommunication.

<sup>35</sup> In fact, Grabbe, 10-13, 22 contends that the efforts of Ezra and Nehemiah to appropriate the name “Israel” for the returned community reflects the importance of the title for the construction of their identity. The importance of “Israel,” as an authoritative title of the past that is now being filled-out by the former exilic community, is further emphasized by the fact that most outsiders referred to these persons not as “Israelites” but “Jews.” On “Israel” in Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah, see H. G. M.

who were preserved by God during the exile. Thus, as the former exiles see it, they (and not the people of the land) are the only ones worthy to renew the covenant with the Lord.<sup>36</sup>

3. *Legitimation.* “No sect arises without ideological justification.”<sup>37</sup> It is not enough for a religious group simply to claim exclusivity as the only true remnant. They also must persuade its membership (and possibly some outsiders) that this assertion is undergirded by sacred authority. Wilson notes that the means by which a group demonstrates its being gifted with sacred authority varies. It may be confirmed in “the superior revelation of a charismatic leader, it may be a re-interpretation of sacred writings, or it may be an idea that revelation will be given to the truly faithful.”<sup>38</sup> Regardless of the means by which sacred authority is demonstrated, the function remains the same: to legitimate the identity of the sectarian group as the chosen remnant of God.

Some activities of the returning exiles reflect a similar legitimating effort, particularly in their acts of reinterpreting texts or prophecy and recounting

---

Williamson, *Israel in the Book of Chronicles* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1977). Additionally, an important addition to this list of remnant names is Isa 62:2, 3-4, 12. Here, Isaiah prophesies that God will call “you” (i.e., the former Jewish exiles) by a “new name” (62:2) and goes on to recount these names that God will give to them: “crown of beauty” and “royal diadem” (62:3); no longer termed “forsaken” or “desolate,” but “my delight is in her” and the land will be called “married” (62:4); and “holy people,” “the redeemed of the Lord,” and “sought out, a city not forsaken” (62:12). Within this elaborate set of name changes is reflected an elitist mentality, which highlights the claim that these persons are the (unique) conduit of God’s favor. Cf. Blenkinsopp, “A Jewish Sect,” 10-11.

<sup>36</sup> Again, these titles (i.e., the ones that reflect the remnant mentality of this Jewish community) alone do not demarcate them as a sect. They simply are indicators of a sectarian characteristic in its infancy.

<sup>37</sup> Wilson, *Religious Sects*, 34.

<sup>38</sup> Wilson, *Religious Sects*, 28. Cf. Wilson, *Religious Sects*, 26.

salvation-history.<sup>39</sup> The primary (human) character that the exiles invoked to legitimate their authority and teachings was Moses. Here, God's promises and leading of Moses, as seen especially in the exodus (Hag 2:5-9; cf. Zech 8:8) and the giving of the Law at Sinai (Mal 4:4; cf. Ezra 3:2; Neh 8:1, 8), are used by the prophets and scribes not only as an avenue by which to express divine intention, but also as a means by which to articulate divine legitimation of themselves and their messages.<sup>40</sup> God's covenant with Levi (Mal 2:4-7, 8-9) and Jeremiah's prophecy concerning the 70 year reign of Babylon over a destroyed Jerusalem (Zech 1:12-16) function in a similar fashion. These previous divine covenants and prophetic utterances have been invoked and reinterpreted or recontextualized by these writers in order to speak to and illuminate God's purposes within the present circumstances of the returned exiles.

This act of legitimacy re-interpretation also is visible in Nehemiah's recounting of and addition to salvation-history (Neh 9:6-38). In attempting to express God's unique purposes with and intentions for the restored Jewish community, Nehemiah appends the contemporary setting and circumstances of the former exiles directly to the end of a lengthy recounting of God's purposes in

---

<sup>39</sup> The essay by Blenkinsopp, "Interpretation and the Tendency," 1-26 (1) is dedicated solely to looking at "how the interpretation or re-interpretation of tradition expressed in texts determined the self-understanding and self-definition of Judaism in Palestine, and the different groups which arose within it, during the period indicated [i.e., the Second Temple period down to the Hasmonean principate]."

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Neh 1:8-10, 13. Here, Moses is invoked in a similar fashion and for a similar purpose. However, the actual promise that Nehemiah claims God made to Moses is nowhere to be found in the Pentateuch that we possess today.

and securing of salvation-history.<sup>41</sup> The glaring message for the former exiles, which stems from Nehemiah's interpretive act, is the following: God is still active amongst God's people (i.e., the former exiles) and has their salvation secure, just as God has preserved the salvation of God's people down through history. Ultimately, it is evident that these past promises, figures, prophecy, and events are invoked and, then, reinterpreted or recontextualized by the biblical prophets and scribes in an effort to express divine legitimation for their current position, instruction, and structures in hope of consolidating the allegiances of the former exilic community.<sup>42</sup>

4. *Rites of Entrance.* Being exclusivist or elitist groups, sects often have some initial tests of allegiance for gaining "membership."<sup>43</sup> The tests of merit that sectarian groups impose on persons seeking membership can vary widely, from the taking of an oath, to an act of purification, or even to the complete separation from other persons and/or worldly goods. These measurements of allegiance, even if not formally codified, provide the group a basis not only for accepting those "worthy" of membership, but also for rejecting those who are in some way "unworthy" of being in the group.

---

<sup>41</sup> Blenkinsopp, "Interpretation and the Tendency," 10 identifies a shift in the mode of inspired discourse with the onset of Ezra and Nehemiah. He contends that a movement from inspired prophecy to inspired interpretation (i.e., from the office of the prophet to that of the scribe), which formalizes later in the Second Temple period, has begun. In support of this claim, he notes that the office of the scribe was involved intimately in the re-establishment of the Jewish commonwealth via the reinterpretation of texts that, in turn, legitimated the unique status and existence of the community.

<sup>42</sup> Blenkinsopp, "Interpretation and the Tendency," 7 contends that the divisions that were emerging in Judaism at this time "cannot be understood apart from the adoption and interpretation of such legal stipulations."

<sup>43</sup> See Wilson, Religious Sects, 30-31.

As the exiles attempted to (re-)establish themselves upon their return from exile, they too emphasized actions that resemble entry rites (even though the exilic community was not truly a fully-formed “group” at that point). The initial tests of merit for “membership” took the form of acts of purification, which can be seen quite vividly in the Lord’s choosing of Joshua as priest and his demand that Joshua exchange his dirty clothes for clean ones (Zech 3:3-5).<sup>44</sup> In more concrete actions, the people were called to purify their religious acts and to cease offering impure sacrifices (Isa 66:3-4, 17; Mal 1:7-8)<sup>45</sup> and withholding tithes (Mal 3:8-10) as necessary steps toward communal purification. Those who continued to persist in these and other unacceptable acts were to be cut off or rejected (Zech 5:3) by the community, again, in an effort to purify both civil and cultic life.

By the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, some of these entry or purity requirements had become more formalized. They included the need to renounce and forsake any marriage to persons outside the former exilic community (Mal 2:10-16; Ezra 9:1-4, 12, 14; Neh 13:23-27) and the necessity of demonstrating a genealogical connection to the community that was led into captivity by the

---

<sup>44</sup> Though this, likely, is only a symbolic act, the implication for the purity of the community is made clear. The community of former exiles is one that is to be pure or “clean” before the Lord.

<sup>45</sup> Blenkinsopp, “A Jewish Sect,” 9-10 contends that the Isa 66:3-4 text does not indicate outright rejection of the sacrificial cult or the Jerusalem temple by these Jews. Rather, they are setting themselves in direct opposition to the abominations of impure sacrificial offerings (i.e., the sacrifice of unclean animals, such as dogs and pigs). Blenkinsopp (10) concludes that we have here some group which (1) has severed ties with the parent body and (2) is making exclusive claim to salvation, which “may on any showing be recognized as sectarian traits.” On this text, see also Rofé, “Isaiah 66:1-4: Judean Sects,” 207-216.

Babylonians (Ezra 2:1-63; 8:1-14; Neh 7:5-65).<sup>46</sup> In fact, this overall emphasis upon purification is made clear at the end of the book of Nehemiah, where he declares that he had cleansed the people of everything foreign (Neh 13:30).<sup>47</sup> Ultimately, these acts represent not only the ethical demands that the former exiles placed on the community. They also served as “tests” of merit when identifying those worthy of membership.

5. *Imposition of Order.* The “tests of allegiance” set up by sects often do not subside once membership is gained; there usually is a set of standards or an order that the group imposes on the individuals as a requirement for continued membership. Wilson notes that, “such groups have a very carefully ordered structure of social relationships and clearly established patterns of social behavior and control.”<sup>48</sup> In short, the individual member “is expected to live the life of a good sectarian,”<sup>49</sup> which is defined by the norms set up by the group. When someone fails to keep the order of the sect, then that same collection of regulations becomes the basis for the expulsion of the given person. Therefore, the order has both consolidating (i.e., the promotion of proper behavior amongst its membership) and exclusionary (i.e., the removal of those who fail to maintain the norms of the sect) functions.

---

<sup>46</sup> These lists are dedicated mainly to identifying those who possessed a genealogical connection. However, some of them also note those who did not demonstrate such ties (Ezra 2:59-63; Neh 7:61-65) and, thus, were rejected by the covenant community. Cf. Schiffman, “Jewish Sectarianism,” 10.

<sup>47</sup> This statement emphatically highlights the emphasis of the former exilic community on removing all the “foreign” elements from its midst in an effort to purify and reconstitute itself as the people of the Lord.

<sup>48</sup> Wilson, *Religious Sects*, 22.

Turning to Judaism in the early Persian period, the set of regulations that governed communal behavior was very germinal in character, due primarily to the fact that the returned exiles were not a fully developed sectarian group. However, this is not to say that they lacked any regulatory norms. In addition to the necessity of recognizing and accepting the divinely appointed civil and temple leadership (Hag 2:23; Zech 4:6-7, 14; Ezra 3:8; 7:25-26; Neh 8:9-18), members were expected to observe the sabbath in a proper fashion (Isa 56:2-8; Neh 10:31; 13:15-22) and maintain marriages that were composed solely of members of the former exilic community (Mal 2:10-16; Ezra 10:2-3, 18-44; Neh 10:30; 13:23-27). Failure to abide by these ordinances left the individual in jeopardy of being expelled from the community. Therefore, these norms appeared to have been used not only as tests for the initial entry into membership, but also as guides for the maintenance of that membership.<sup>50</sup>

6. *Eschatological Hope.* Though it is not always a definitive characteristic of a sectarian entity, many sectarian groups maintain some form of an eschatological outlook. Wilson notes that sects sometimes latch onto a tradition of eschatology that was held by the “parent body” from which they have separated.<sup>51</sup> In addition to furthering the claim of being the true remnant, an eschatological focus enables the sect to understand the current injustices or wrongs being experienced by its

---

<sup>49</sup> Wilson, *Religious Sects*, 27.

<sup>50</sup> Smith-Christopher, “Reassessing,” 35 notes that “it is clear that the exilic, and particularly post-exilic, community reveals the typical behavior patterns of a minority community that has closed ranks tightly to maintain identity and faith.”

<sup>51</sup> Wilson, *Religious Sects*, 31.

membership to be only a temporary state of events, which will be righted with God's eschatological intervention into human affairs.

An eschatological focus was held by at least some of the former exilic Jewish community. They understood that God one day would reverse the woes and injustices experienced by them, even bringing judgement upon the earth and their foes (Zech 2:11; 6:1-8; Mal 3:1-5, 17-18; 4:1-3). This perspective is related quite clearly in the "my servants"—"you" couplets of Isaiah 65:13-14. In the day of God's redemption, Isaiah prophesies that "my servants" (i.e., God's chosen people) will eat, drink, rejoice, and sing for gladness of heart, while "you" (i.e., not God's people) will be hungry, thirsty, put to shame, and shall cry out for pain of heart and wail for anguish of spirit. Isaiah's prophecy regarding the eschatological ordering of peoples and blessings is a reversal of the contemporary ordering.<sup>52</sup> Though the distinction between the reprobates and the devout is already established in principle, it "will be manifested for all to see on judgment day."<sup>53</sup> On that day, God once and for all will set things aright.

While no single one of these above markings demarcates the former exilic community of the early Persian period as a "sect," when taken cumulatively, they highlight an emerging sectarian character. On this, Blenkinsopp notes that

---

<sup>52</sup> Blenkinsopp, "A Jewish Sect," 10-11 notes that the theme of eschatological reversal "presupposes the existence of a prophetic-eschatological entity which sees itself as the true elect to be revealed at the parousia." Furthermore (16), this principle of eschatological discrimination and reversal "draws a line through the community, separating the true Israel from those who are Israel only in name." See also Isa 66:5 where the fate of the opponents is identical with those in 65:13-16.

<sup>53</sup> Blenkinsopp, "A Jewish Sect," 16 (regarding the eschatological outlook seen in Mal 3:13-21).

while this collectively can hardly be described as sectarian, we must agree with Talmon that it established a sectarian pattern manifested in its exclusivity, its strict social control of its membership and of recruitment, and the nature of the claims which it advanced.<sup>54</sup>

In short, though sectarianism was not yet fully developed, “we can at least conclude that the conditions favoring the emergence of sectarianism were present from the beginning of the Second Commonwealth.”<sup>55</sup>

Talmon, in a re-examination of part of the work of Max Weber, offers an explanation as to why these sectarian markings arose during this period and context of Jewish history. In his search for sectarian origins within the Second Temple period, Talmon turns to the setting of the exilic and restored Jewish communities. Here, he focuses specifically on the transition from Monarchic Israel to early Second Temple Judaism and highlights two socio-religious features of it that fostered sectarian development. First, he notes that the tripartite leadership structure in ancient Israel (i.e., king, priest, and prophet) did not remain intact after Babylon conquered Judah.<sup>56</sup> The cohesiveness of this three-part leadership structure, which, Talmon claims, brought stability and balance to Monarchic Israel, was broken. The chaos that accompanied the loss of the royal office and the removal of the priests resulted in a greater prominence of the prophetic office and in an intensified dream

---

<sup>54</sup> Blenkinsopp, “A Jewish Sect,” 19.

<sup>55</sup> Blenkinsopp, “A Jewish Sect,” 20. Cf. Schiffman, “Jewish Sectarianism,” 4. Furthermore, if we had any records of other Jewish groups of this period, they too may well be seen to possess certain sectarian markings.

<sup>56</sup> Talmon, “The Emergence,” 591-592, 593-594.

of the future reestablishment of the temple and sacrificial cult, thus establishing a context ripe with sectarian possibilities.<sup>57</sup>

Second, he also cites the shift in the physical whereabouts of the Jewish people from monocentricity to pluricentricity (i.e., from entirely within the geographically and politically unified borders of Judah and Israel in the Monarchic period to the multi-communal and multi-national settings of Jewish existence during the Babylonian exile) as an additional socioreligious factor that cultivated sectarian ferment.<sup>58</sup> Talmon notes that the Judeans, who were relocated into this “new” diaspora setting within Babylon, now were forced to take on measures to avoid (large-scale) assimilation and preserve their national (as well as religious) identity over against the foreign peoples and structures that surrounded them. In the midst of a natural development in their own communal identity, which would be almost inevitable (to some degree) for a group in a foreign environment, these efforts at preservation enabled them to retain aspects that they thought to be foundational to their own identity.

Yet, as Talmon observes, this critical emphasis upon and/or need for self-definition and preservation of identity did not diminish once the exiles returned to the land after Cyrus’ edict.<sup>59</sup> Even though they had returned to the land of Judah and, thus, were no longer immersed in a “hostile” pagan environment (at least not to the

---

<sup>57</sup> Talmon, “The Emergence,” 593 notes that, later, “the ideal of ‘royalty,’ in the configuration of the ‘anointed’ shoot of the house of David (cf. Isa 42:1-3 with 11:1-5), gained strength and became the embodiment of a restoration—hope and ideology.”

<sup>58</sup> See Talmon, “The Emergence,” 591-593, 594-597.

<sup>59</sup> Talmon, “The Emergence,” 600.

degree they would have faced in Babylon), the drive for self-definition and exclusivity remained vibrant. Without a pervasive foreign element against which to define themselves, and in light of the seeming vacuum of established leadership within the Jewish communities around the time of the restoration, efforts at self-definition and exclusivity turned inward. Now the exiles began to define themselves over against other Jews and, thus, internal diversification within Judaism was set in motion. The tenor of these

internal boundary lines between one faction [within Judaism] and the other proved to be no less rigid than those which had separated and continued to separate all Israelites from the ‘other nations.’<sup>60</sup>

Though the geographical and situational contexts had changed drastically in the return of the Jewish community from exile, the mechanisms of self-preservation and/or self-definition that were put in place during that time remained active and the people remained vigilant in enacting and accentuating them.

In conclusion, though some questions may remain regarding the causal connection that Talmon posits between the change in the leadership structure in the Monarchic period and the subsequent emergence of sectarian characteristics, his second observation seems to be almost matter-of-fact. His latter point is actually a set of empirical observations regarding identity preservation and self-definition of the Judean community during exile and restoration. Talmon observes the following: (1) while in exile, the Jewish community there put mechanisms into place in order to preserve their identity over against the Babylonians; (2) upon exiting Babylon and

---

<sup>60</sup> Talmon, “The Emergence,” 602.

returning to Judah, the same Jewish community retained this emphasis upon self-definition but, now, did so primarily over against other Jews and not Gentiles; and (3) the degree of emphasis placed on these efforts at self-definition were of roughly the same rigor in each of the locations. Ultimately, as these contentions are based almost entirely on the simple collecting and recounting of “empirical” data, they seem (largely) incontrovertible. Therefore, in line with Talmon’s findings, we can conclude the following: the return of the exiles from Babylon provides the primary and initial contextual environment for internal diversification within Judaism and, thus, the appearance of sectarian markings. Additionally, with the advantage of historical “foresight,” it is evident that these germinal sectarian characteristics later would blossom and prove to be an extremely (if not the single most) influential marking of Judaism down through the remainder of the Second Temple period.

## Chapter Six

### The Development of Sectarianism in Late Second Temple Judaism

As Judaism moved beyond the Persian era in the Second Temple period, the prominence of its sectarian character became amplified.<sup>1</sup> Levine notes that, though our sources do not reflect any formal development of sects or sectarianism around the time of the restoration, the picture changes dramatically with the rise of the Hasmoneans.<sup>2</sup> The sectarian markings seen within the nascent Jewish community upon their return to the land (as identified in the previous chapter) now had become readily identifiable characteristics of a number of late Second Temple Jewish groups (e.g., Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and those who lived at Qumran).<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the ideologies and/or structures of these latter groups also reflected hardened

---

<sup>1</sup> Baumgarten, Flourishing of Jewish Sects, 42-44 notes that while membership in the various Jewish parties *up to* the destruction of the temple (including Pharisees, Essenes, the community at Qumran, early Christians, and some aristocratic Jerusalem Sadducees) was approximately 12,000, the total population of Jews in Palestine was somewhere between 500,000 and two million. Cf. Albert I. Baumgarten, "Ancient Jewish Sectarianism," Judaism 47 (1998) 387. Even though these groups collectively made up only a fraction of the total population, we can still talk about their distinct influence on Judaism because these persons would have been the economic, social, and educational elite. These persons would have been the ones who established protocol and structures that the bulk of the Jewish population would follow.

<sup>2</sup> See Lee I. A. Levine, "The Age of Hellenism: Alexander the Great and the Rise and Fall of the Hasmonean Kingdom," in Ancient Israel: A Short History from Abraham to the Roman Destruction of the Temple, ed. Hershel Shanks (London: SPCK, 1989) 198 and Talmon, "The Emergence," 604-605.

<sup>3</sup> Note that I am not attempting to make here a comprehensive statement about the historical unity or disunity between the Essenes and those at Qumran. My differentiation of the two is based simply on my desire to highlight various sectarian traits within them. Thus, examining them as separate and distinct groups provides a greater pool of evidence from which to understand sectarianism at this time. Ultimately, though, whether the Essenes and the community behind the Dead Sea Scrolls are one and the same group, or whether they are separate and distinct communities, they (in either option) stand as examples of the larger phenomenon of Jewish sectarianism in this period, and, thus, prime objects of research.

sectarian commitments.<sup>4</sup> In short, internal diversification within Judaism had accelerated and deepened.

With this advancement, the embryonic terminology of “markings” and “characteristics,” which were appropriate descriptors of the germinal sectarian character of Judaism in the Persian period, no longer adequately (or accurately) reflect the firmly established nature and prominent position of the sectarian constituent within Jewish identity.<sup>5</sup> New modifiers are needed that better reflect the internal social changes that had occurred within Judaism. Once we reach the Hasmonean era, we can (and must) speak of developed “sects,” as well as a distinct and relatively widespread “sectarianism.” The sectarian character of Judaism was visible now on a large-scale.

In the remainder of this chapter, then, I will highlight this proliferation and hardening of sectarianism in the late Second Temple period. Again, I am undertaking such a study to see if certain dynamics within late Second Temple sectarianism bear a phenomenological resemblance to the early Christian contexts of

---

<sup>4</sup> I will highlight two extreme expressions of this hardening of sectarianism below through an examination of the *Psalms of Solomon* and the *Habakkuk Pesher*.

<sup>5</sup> While some have attempted to establish connections between the situation in Judah under Persian rule and these sects of the later Second Temple period, this is tenuous at best. For some who have attempted to make such a connection, see Aage Bentzen, “Priesterschaft und Laien in der jüdischen Gemeinde des fünften Jahrhunderts,” *AfO* 6 (1930/31) 280-286; Otto Plöger, *Theocracy and Eschatology* (Richmond: John Knox, 1962); Ulrich Kellerman, *Nehemia: Quellen, Überlieferung und Geschichte* (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1967); Odil Steck, “Das Problem theologischer Strömungen in nachexilischer Zeit,” *EvT* 28 (1968) 445-458; Morton Smith, *Palestinian Parties and Politics That Shaped the Old Testament* (New York: Columbia University, 1971); and Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*. Blenkinsopp, “A Jewish Sect,” 6 notes that “these attempts generally involve the plotting of a trajectory with respect to conflict between contrasting ideologies and parties leading to an eventual point of rupture and schism.” However, no unbroken chain of development can be traced between groups within these periods of Jewish history. Yet, it is still likely that at least some of the sectarian markings of early Second Temple Judaism became more fully manifested within various Jewish groups as the period went on.

internal deviance that are noted in chapters three and four—to see if these specific dynamics of internal social conflict might be visible prior to the first-century.

### The Proliferation of Sects in the Hasmonean Era<sup>6</sup>

It is somewhat a commonplace in the sociology of sects to note that sects are a perennial possibility within at least some (i.e., monotheistic) religious traditions.<sup>7</sup>

They are not abnormal socio-religious phenomena. The appearance of Jewish sects in the late Second Temple period, then, also would not seem to require any unique explanation. However, Baumgarten notes a variation in Jewish sects of this era. He notes that sects not only appeared in the late Second Temple period, but they *flourished*. In Baumgarten's words,

even if sects are chronic [to a religious tradition or society], it is only rarely in religious experience that sectarianism comes to dominate a society, to the extent it did in Second Temple Judaism, as evidenced by the excursuses Josephus wrote. The phenomenon may in fact be endemic, but its capture of the leading role in a culture is restricted to relatively rare moments.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> In this section, I rely heavily on Baumgarten, Flourishing of Jewish Sects, as he is the first scholar to attempt an explanation for *why* Jewish sects flourished in the Hasmonean period. Others have investigated sectarianism in this era before [e.g., see the bibliography in Emil Schürer, The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ, vol. II, rev. and ed. Geza Vermes, *et. al.* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1979) 381-382, 555-558], but none has attempted to explain why there is such a proliferation of sects specifically in this period. For a distillation of Baumgarten's book, see his article, "Ancient Jewish Sectarianism," 387-403.

<sup>7</sup> A working definition of "sect" that is being assumed here is the following: a group that is claiming exclusive truth over against all the rest of the tradition in which it is found. By deduction, then, it can be assumed that "sects" can occur only within religious traditions that are based on exclusive claims to truth. It is only within these types of traditions that an exclusive claim to truth would make any sense (e.g., exclusive truth claims do not stem from syncretistic religious traditions because they are, by definition, inclusive rather than exclusive). Therefore, though some sociologists of religion/sects would claim that sects can occur within any religious tradition, Rudolph, "Heresy: An Overview," 269-275 rightly notes that only the monotheistic religious traditions provide a framework that stimulates the formation of exclusivist claims necessary for the formation of sects. Additionally, Baumgarten's (and others') claim is that within these monotheistic religious traditions, sect formation is always a possibility, due to the exclusivist claims to truth on which they are founded. Cf. Rodney Stark and William Bainbridge, The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival and Cult Formation (Berkeley: U. California Press, 1985) 114.

<sup>8</sup> Baumgarten, Flourishing of Jewish Sects, 16.

The shift from the mere presence of sects in a given religion or society to their proliferation and predominance is a special circumstance that Baumgarten deems to require special attention and explanation.<sup>9</sup>

Dividing between the restored Jewish community and the Samaritans (i.e., groups that reflect early sectarian markings) on the one side, and the Christians, Fourth Philosophy, and the Zealots (i.e., sects that appeared in the first century C.E., after Jewish sectarianism already was established) on the other, Baumgarten concentrates on the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and the Qumran community. He notes that, though we may see reflections of these groups in other groups from the Persian or Hellenistic periods, the point where we see them all really come onto the scene is right around the rise of the Hasmoneans, beginning with Jonathan's rise to the high priesthood in 152 B.C.E.<sup>10</sup> Baumgarten is not the first to note independence under the Hasmoneans as the context in which Jewish sectarianism thrived.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Baumgarten, Flourishing of Jewish Sects, 17-18 notes that the ultimate task is to explain what it was about the social, political, and religious realities of late Second Temple Judaism that led to the flourishing of sectarianism.

<sup>10</sup> Baumgarten, Flourishing of Jewish Sects, 20 notes that Josephus' (*A.J.* 13.171-173) first mention of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes is at the time of Jonathan (152-142 B.C.E.), which would place the beginnings of these movements in the aftermath of the Hasmonean assumption of the high priesthood. Though the initial stages of the revolt against the foreign power (i.e., the Seleucids) was focused on the restoration of traditional Jewish worship in Jerusalem and staving off persecution at the hands of Antiochus and other "foreigners," the goals sought after were heightened under the leadership of Jonathan. He sought to rally the nationalism of the Jews in a push for total independence from foreign rule. Lester L. Grabbe, An Introduction to First-century Judaism: Jewish Religion and History in the Second Temple Period (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996) 11 notes that "whatever their initial reasons for fighting, they had now developed a desire to secure independence for Judah as a nation once more. This was a bold dream, for Judah had not been independent for many centuries. For many Jews this was an absurd notion and support for the Maccabees dropped drastically."

<sup>11</sup> See also Blenkinsopp, "Interpretation and the Tendency," 20-22; Talmon, "The Emergence," 604-605; Isaiah Gafni, "The Historical Background," in Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocalyptic, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus, CRINT II, ed. Michael E.

However, he is the first to offer an interpretation of why sectarianism flourished at precisely this time and in this context.

In his effort to provide an explanation for this phenomenon, Baumgarten concentrates specifically on what independence would have meant for Jewish society at that time and what changes necessarily would have followed.<sup>12</sup> However, he first notes the previous condition of Judaism. Jewish autonomy under foreign rule had been the norm ever since the Persian period. In fact, Isaiah Gafni notes that “one of the most striking features of Second Temple history is the fact that most Jews, not only in the Diaspora but in Palestine as well, never experienced complete Jewish sovereignty.”<sup>13</sup> Baumgarten adds: “under this system, Jewish religious leadership was established by the imperial ruler, and empowered by him to regulate the lives of the Jews on behalf of the ruler, according to Jewish law.”<sup>14</sup>

Such a system (especially one that was longstanding) is bound to favor certain groups to the exclusion or muffling of others. Furthermore, the group(s) in leadership largely could determine the agenda, bringing certain issues to the forefront (likely ones that they had a keen interest in) and leaving others aside, or even ignoring them altogether. Those groups not in power had few options open to them. Even if a group lobbied the imperial ruler for change, it was unlikely to modify the state of affairs, as the prime interest of the ruler was stability. The foreign despot

---

Stone (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984) 12; Levine, “The Age of Hellenism,” 198; and Cohen, From the Maccabees, 143.

<sup>12</sup> In his chapter six, entitled “Independence and Its Consequences” (188-195), Baumgarten takes up this specific issue in detail.

<sup>13</sup> Gafni, “The Historical Background,” 2.

<sup>14</sup> Baumgarten, The Flourishing of Jewish Sects, 189.

had little interest in and even less understanding of Jewish religious matters. Ultimately, save revolution, Jewish groups had little ability to alter significantly the *status quo*.<sup>15</sup>

Yet, “with the emergence of the Hasmonean state, the political circumstances of the Jewish people altered radically.”<sup>16</sup> Primary among these changes was the shift in the locus of power from a foreign to a local ruler.<sup>17</sup> Leading parties and issues no longer were determined by currying the favor of the imperial despot. Now it was the Jewish groups themselves who were the ones with the authority to determine who would be in leadership, what issues would be of prime importance, and even who would have the authoritative voice to address such questions and issues. Baumgarten contends that

the possibility of change once independence was achieved paved the way for greater insistence, for greater intransigence, that things must be done in accordance with the agenda offered by one’s group and endorsed by its leaders. In other words, one of the consequences of achieving independence was that it provided one more impulse for groups to attempt to realize their platforms.<sup>18</sup>

In short, it was the factor of independence from foreign rule that not only allowed the competing ideas of Jewish groups to come to the forefront, but fostered and even mandated such an occurrence.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Baumgarten, The Flourishing of Jewish Sects, 191 notes that “lack of power and the foreign locus of ultimate responsibility, led to impotence to alter affairs. The latter encouraged a certain degree of toleration of the fact that things were not being done as one would like, even if that tolerance was one born out of an inability to change the circumstances.”

<sup>16</sup> Levine, “The Age of Hellenism,” 186.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Levine, “The Age of Hellenism,” 186-187, 194-197.

<sup>18</sup> Baumgarten, The Flourishing of Jewish Sects, 191-192.

<sup>19</sup> Baumgarten, The Flourishing of Jewish Sects, 57-58 notes that “the Jewish sects who are the subject of this book were alternate responses to the issues raised by events culminating in the mid

Furthermore, the lack of any precedent for how this should be done (i.e., providing structure for an independent Jewish state), as well as the issue of who should be involved in such endeavors, would have brought on a number of different responses from various groups. Certainly, many groups had ideas of how the state of Judah should be governed, how the economy should be structured, what structure society should take, and, especially, how the temple should be run (and by whom). Additionally, this new state also had land and military issues to address. Jews now had the opportunity to expand their territorial lands to reflect those of their ancestors but would have to do so through force. These issues, as well as others, would have arisen with the establishment of national independence. In short, the success of the Maccabees in establishing a Jewish state free from the imposition of foreign rule, created a secure atmosphere that allowed and encouraged the advancement of ideological positions and platforms, designed to address some of the very real issues that these Jews faced.

Independence had further implications for Jewish life. Baumgarten takes much effort to demonstrate that along with the “new” freedom gained from independence came other rapid social changes. He notes that with the establishment of the Hasmonean state came the spread of literacy, a move toward urbanization, and the rise of millennial or eschatological hopes, all of which contributed to the ferment of sectarianism.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, Baumgarten notes the alteration that independence

---

second-century BCE, from the encounter with Hellenism to the decrees of Antiochus IV, reaching their climax in the successful rebellion against those decrees and the achievement of political independence.”

<sup>20</sup> These issues are treated in chapters 3-5 of Baumgarten’s book, respectively. Furthermore, he (47-51) provides a helpful composite social description of sectarians during this time.

made to Judaism's encounter with Hellenism as another factor in the rise of sectarianism. Though Judah had won its independence from foreign rule, many aspects of Greek culture remained integrated in various aspects of Jewish life.<sup>21</sup> As the Hellenistic reform supported by Antiochus IV, along with his further acts of religious persecution, led to extreme outrage amongst the Jews (at least in some groups) and was a prime impetus behind the revolution itself, Baumgarten notes that with the triumph over the pagans and the onset of Jewish autonomy came a common hope that the walls between Jew and non-Jew would be raised high once again.<sup>22</sup> Many Jews who had experienced not only foreign rule but also the desecration of the temple and cessation of the worshipping cult at the hands of the Greeks yearned for a return to the days when "Israel" was set apart from the nations, as God's unique

---

<sup>21</sup> For those who see Hellenism as having a quite profound and pervasive influence on Judaism, see Elias Bickerman, From Ezra to the Last of the Maccabees: Foundations of Post-Biblical Judaism (New York: Schocken, 1962); *idem.*, The God of the Maccabees: Studies on the Meaning and Origin of the Maccabean Revolt, trans. Horst R. Moehring (Leiden: Brill, 1979); Martin Hengel, Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period, vol. I, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981) 310-314; *idem.*, Jews, Greeks, and Barbarians: Aspects of the Hellenization of Judaism in the pre-Christian Period (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980); *idem.*, "Qumran and Hellenism," in Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls, eds. John J. Collins and Robert A. Kugler (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 46-56; and John J. Collins, "Jewish Apocalyptic Against Its Hellenistic Near Eastern Environment," BASOR 220 (1975) 27-36. On the other side, some of those who hold a more minimalist position on the issue are Louis Feldman, Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justin (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1993); Victor Tcherikover, Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews, trans. Shimon Applebaum (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1959) 152-174; Fergus Millar, "Background to the Maccabean Revolution: Reflections on Martin Hengel's 'Judaism and Hellenism,'" JJS 29 (1978) 1-21; Samuel Sandmel, "Hellenism and Judaism," in Great Confrontations in Jewish History, eds. Stanley Wagner and Allen Breck (Denver: Center for Jewish Studies, U. of Denver, 1977) 21-38; and Paul Hanson, "Jewish Apocalyptic Against Its Near Eastern Environment," RB 78 (1971) 31-58. For a summary and criticism of Hengel's and his critics' (e.g., Tcherikover) main theses, see the very useful chapter entitled "Jews and Hellenization" in Lester L. Grabbe, Judaism From Cyrus to Hadrian: Volume One: The Persian and Greek Periods (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 147-170. Ultimately, Cohen, From the Maccabees, 37 surmises the situation well by saying, "'to Hellenize or not to Hellenize' was not a question the Jews of antiquity had to answer. They were given no choice. The questions that confronted them were 'how?' and 'how far?'"

<sup>22</sup> Baumgarten, The Flourishing of Jewish Sects, 86.

chosen people and national independence provided a potential context in which these long-held desires could be actualized.

Yet, these expectations, regarding the re-establishment of boundaries around Judaism over against the pagans, did not find their fulfillment in the Hasmonean state. Baumgarten notes an increasing discontent and agitation at the continuance and even welcoming of Hellenistic ways of life into Judaism and the Jewish state.<sup>23</sup> Even more disconcerting for some Jews was the fact that the Hasmonean leaders, the ones who led the fight for religious freedom, were the same people who now were at times understood to be compromising Jewish identity by amalgamating it too much with Hellenistic culture. Therefore, for some Jews, great hope and expectation that came alongside national independence turned into disillusionment.

However, the desires of many Jews to erect boundary markers did not dissipate; they merely changed their referent. Baumgarten notes that the unhappiness of some of the Jerusalem elites at the continued intermingling of Hellenism and Judaism by the Hasmonean leaders provoked them (i.e., the Jerusalem elites) “to turn inwards, separating themselves off from a [Jewish] society which they felt had gone astray.”<sup>24</sup> This internal dissension would have emerged initially as differences of opinion on various matters, such as halakic issues, scriptural interpretation, or the level of interaction Judaism should have with the pagan world. However, as issues

---

<sup>23</sup> A vivid example of the continued Hellenistic influence on Judaism after independence can be seen in its integral connection to the high priesthood in Jerusalem. Jason, who gained his position as high priest as a result of a bribe offered to Antiochus, enacted a massive ‘Hellenistic reform,’ which included drawing up a list of citizens of Jerusalem, building a *gymnasium*, and forming an *ephebate* list, in short, making Jerusalem a Greek *polis*. On this ‘Hellenistic reform,’ see Tcherikover, Hellenistic Civilization, 52-174. A similar influence can be seen in Menelaus’ rise to the position. The very means of securing the high priesthood highlights the continued Hellenistic influence on (independent) Judaism.

rose in prominence and became more contentious, these opinions would have hardened into firm positions, eventually resulting in the formation of distinct groups.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, in something akin to (but much more developed than) the restored Jewish community, internal diversification ensued and the formation of distinct sects was underway. The securing of independence for the Hasmonean state provided an environment that allowed and fostered continued construction of internal boundary markers. Ultimately, these sects proliferated to the point that they dominated Jewish society at that time, establishing a widespread sectarianism that would last until the destruction of the temple (c. 70 C.E.).

### The Hardening of Sectarianism

The Hasmonean (and on into the Roman) period within late Second Temple Judaism hosted not only a proliferation of Jewish sects, but also a hardening of the sectarian characteristics that typified them. The germinal sectarian markings that could be observed within the restored Jewish community now had congealed, becoming distinct traits that were at the center of these late Second Temple sectarian groups.<sup>26</sup> In the remainder of this chapter, then, I will attempt to highlight this second aspect of the development of sectarianism in the late Second Temple period, namely the hardening of sectarian commitments and outlook. Here, I will not simply highlight

---

<sup>24</sup> Baumgarten, The Flourishing of Jewish Sects, 113.

<sup>25</sup> Each step in this process would have been accompanied by the creation, clarification, and/or addition of boundary markers that would refine a given group's identity.

<sup>26</sup> In addition to tallying the increase in numbers (i.e., the proliferation of sects noted in the previous section), the flourishing of Jewish sects contemporaneous with and following the establishment of the Hasmonean state also can be measured by assessing the comparative development that took place within their respective sectarian identities.

the range of sectarian features present within the most prominent Jewish groups of the era (e.g., Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and those who lived at Qumran), a task that already has been performed by others.<sup>27</sup> Rather, I have selected two writings (the *Psalms of Solomon* and the *Habakkuk Peshar*) as case studies for assessing the depths of Jewish sectarian commitment of the time. Here I will assess what these writings reveal about the respective groups that produced and possessed them. Though I realize that a study of the sectarian character reflected in this selection of late Second Temple Jewish literature cannot be used as an accurate portrayal of all Jewish groups of the era, it can serve as an indicator of the depths that sectarianism could reach within Jewish life.<sup>28</sup>

#### THE *PSALMS OF SOLOMON*

The *Psalms of Solomon* are a collection of 18 non-canonical, Jewish psalms that (individually) were composed in the first century B.C.E.<sup>29</sup> In light of this date of

---

<sup>27</sup> See Günter Stemberger, *Jewish Contemporaries of Jesus: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes*, trans. Alan W. Mahnke (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995); Anthony J. Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society: A Sociological Approach* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1988); and Gary G. Porton, "Sects and Sectarianism During the Period of the Second Temple: The Case of the Sadducees," in *The Solomon Goldman Lectures: Perspectives in Jewish Learning*, vol. IV, ed. N. Stampfer (Chicago: Spertus College of Judaica Press, 1985) 119-134.

<sup>28</sup> The varieties of Judaism at this time are numerous and, thus, the scholar is warned against offering too many generalizing statements regarding the era, especially when the pool of literature from which to draw is so diverse. However, my goal in this section is much more modest and localized. I aim simply to gain a picture of how deep sectarian practices and commitments ran in at least some Jewish groups of the period. In all, I am interested most in the strand(s) of Judaism in which sectarian ferment, as seen in their practices of exclusivism, ran deep. It is my initial contention that these two documents provide windows into such settings.

<sup>29</sup> It should be noted, however, that the collection (in its extant form) is not found until the third or fourth century C.E. For a general introduction to the *Psalms of Solomon*, see R. B. Wright, "Psalms of Solomon: A New Translation and Introduction," in *OTP*, vol. II, ed. James H. Charlesworth (New York: Doubleday, 1985) 639-670; Joseph L. Trafton, "Solomon, Psalms of," in *ABD*, vol. VI, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 115-117; Michael D. Lattke, "Psalms of Solomon," in *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, eds. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter

composition and some of the characteristics of the group (seemingly) reflected in the writings, scholars commonly located the *Psalms of Solomon* as a production of Pharisees, with Sadducees as the ones who (primarily) were being opposed.<sup>30</sup> However, as scholars have delved into the basis for such connections and explored linkages with other first-century Jewish groups, they consistently have called for a retreat from that position.<sup>31</sup> Based on his and other studies, Robert Wright surmises that “it seems reasonable to suggest that the traditional identification [of the *Psalms of Solomon*] with the Pharisees must be seriously questioned if not discarded.”<sup>32</sup>

In light of the decreasing specificity regarding the precise communal origins of the *Psalms of Solomon*, some have stepped back to a broader but more accurate conclusion, which sees them as a production of some (unknown) first-century Jewish

---

(Downers Grove: IVP, 2000) 853-857; David Flusser, “Psalms, Hymns and Prayers,” in Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus, CRINT II, ed. Michael E. Stone (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984) 573-574; and Joseph L. Trafton, “The *Psalms of Solomon* in Recent Research,” JSP 12 (1994) 3-19.

<sup>30</sup> The previous surety of the connection between the *Psalms of Solomon* and the Pharisees is reflected in the title of an English edition of them by H. E. Ryle and M. R. James, Psalms of the Pharisees, Commonly Called the Psalms of Solomon (Cambridge: CUP, 1891). For a summary of the features that lead some to posit a connection between the *Psalms of Solomon* and the Pharisees, see Robert Wright, “The Psalms of Solomon, The Pharisees, and the Essenes,” in International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies and the Society of Biblical Literature Pseudepigrapha Seminar, Septuagint and Cognate Studies 2, ed. Robert A. Kraft (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1972) 136-147, especially 137-139. Additionally, for a list of those who support the Pharisaic origins of the *Psalms of Solomon*, see the list (and assessment) compiled by Trafton, “The *Psalms of Solomon* in Recent Research,” 7, who specifically highlights J. Schüpphaus, Die Psalmen Salomos: Ein Zeugnis Jerusalemer Theologie und Frömmigkeit in der Mitte des vorchristlichen Jahrhunderts, ALGHJ, vol. VII (Leiden: Brill, 1977) as a supporter of such a stance.

<sup>31</sup> This call for greater caution regarding the precise origins of the *Psalms of Solomon* largely was a product of the increasing connections being identified between them and various Qumran texts. An example of this type of study can be seen in Jerry O’Dell, “The Religious Background of the *Psalms of Solomon* (Re-evaluated in the Light of Qumran Texts),” RevQ 3 (1961) 241-257. Cf. Trafton, “The Psalms of Solomon in Recent Research,” 7.

<sup>32</sup> Wright, “The Psalms of Solomon, the Pharisees, and the Essenes,” 146.

party (possibly centered around Jerusalem)<sup>33</sup> that has an anti-Hasmonean bent.<sup>34</sup>

Building upon this move toward a more general understanding of the group behind the *Psalms of Solomon*, I aim to highlight the sectarian character of the group, as reflected in the psalms themselves, in an effort to capture a picture of the depths of sectarian ferment at the time. As in the previous chapter, I will utilize Bryan Wilson's characteristics of religious sects to aid in this effort.<sup>35</sup>

1. *Separate and Distinct Identity.* With the possible exception of the vivid historical allusions, the most striking feature of the *Psalms of Solomon* is the consistent contrasting of "the righteous" and the "sinners." In many of the psalms (with the exception of *Pss. Sol.* 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 18) an effort by the group behind the writings to dichotomize themselves as over against those who they oppose is evident. One of the best examples of this is in *Psalms of Solomon* 3, where the qualities of "the righteous" are extolled in verses 3-8 and are followed

---

<sup>33</sup> Wright, "The *Psalms of Solomon*: A New Translation and Introduction," 641-642 notes that the provenance of the writings is most certainly within Palestine and strong evidence exists for origins within Jerusalem itself. Cf. Mikael Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous: A Comparative Study of the *Psalms of Solomon* and Paul's Letters*, ConBNT 26 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1995) 14 and Kenneth Atkinson, "Toward a Redating of the *Psalms of Solomon*: Implications for Understanding the *Sitz im Leben* of an Unknown Jewish Sect," *JSP* 17 (1998) 107.

<sup>34</sup> Anti-Hasmonean sentiment was not limited to the Pharisees within first-century Judaism. Many have noted that the Qumran community expressed this same attitude and disfavor for them, which is one of the main reasons that prohibits the *Psalms of Solomon* from being associated only with the Pharisees.

<sup>35</sup> It is important to note from the outset that Robert Hann, "The Community of the Pious: The Social Setting of the *Psalms of Solomon*," *SR* 17 (1988) 169-189 undertakes a similar project to the one I will assume below. He utilizes the work of John Gager, specifically his *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1975), as a vehicle by which to assess the millenarian characteristics of the sect behind the *Psalms of Solomon*. While our tasks are procedurally similar, they differ in at least a couple of ways. First, I am looking at the sectarian characteristics of the group behind the *Psalms of Solomon*, which is broader in scope than Hann's millenarian focus. Second, the sociological apparatuses that are being utilized differ. In the eyes of many, Bryan Wilson's work on religious sects has built upon and improved previous efforts (including Gager's) at assessing this type of social grouping and, thus, stands as a superior means toward achieving a broad sectarian picture of the group.

immediately by characteristics of “the sinner” (v. 9-12a). This psalm relates that “the righteous” “remember the Lord all the time” (v. 3), “desire to be in the Lord’s presence” (v. 4), “constantly searches his house to remove unintentional sins” (v. 7), and “shall rise up to eternal life” (12a). In opposition, “the sinner” “stumbles and curses his life” (v. 9), “adds sin upon sin” (v. 10), has a serious fall and “will not get back up” (v. 10), and has an eternal destruction (v. 11).<sup>36</sup>

P. N. Franklyn, in an essay on the eschatological focus of the *Psalms of Solomon*, identifies this “extremely obvious if not overworked polarization between the pious [i.e., “the righteous”] and godless [i.e., “the sinners”]” as a primary theme in the writings.<sup>37</sup> Here, “the righteous” (3:3, 4-7, 11; 4:8; 9:7; 10:3; 13:6-7, 11; 14:9; 15:6; 16:15), also referred to as “the devout” (2:36; 4:1, 6, 8; 8:23, 34; 9:3; 10:6; 12:4, 6; 13:10, 12; 14:3, 10; 15:7; 17:16), are pitted against “the sinner.”<sup>38</sup> In social terms, a strong “we—they” mentality is reflected within this strategy.<sup>39</sup> The group behind the *Psalms of Solomon* (i.e., the group that assumes the position of “the righteous”) is making a concerted effort to establish its own identity through contrast. They are attempting to separate and distinguish themselves from a number of other persons and/or groups whom they consider to be “the sinners.”

---

<sup>36</sup> On “the righteous” and “the sinner” in *Pss. Sol.* 3, see Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous*, 36-43.

<sup>37</sup> P. N. Franklyn, “The Cultic and Pious Climax of Eschatology in the *Psalms of Solomon*,” *JSJ* 18 (1987) 8.

<sup>38</sup> On the various titles used as synonyms for “the righteous,” see Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous*, 131-136.

<sup>39</sup> Trafton, “Solomon, Psalms of,” 116 notes that “such a perceived dichotomy within Israel itself suggests that the Psalms are the product of a Jewish party or sect.”

Mikael Winninge, in a relatively recent study that compares the *Psalms of Solomon* and Paul's letters, notes that there are multiple groups encapsulated within the title "sinners" in the *Psalms of Solomon*.<sup>40</sup> In some psalms non-Jews, such as Pompey (2:1-2; 17:11, 13) and the more general reference "Gentiles"/"Romans" (1:1; 2:19; 7:3; 13:3; 17:24), are indicated by "sinner" or like epithets. However, the title is not reserved only for those outside the bounds of Judaism. Some fellow Jews, such as the ones demarcated by "the inhabitants of Jerusalem" (8:20; cf. 17:20), "leaders of the country" (8:16-17, 20; 17:12), and "sons of Jerusalem" (2:3), also are ascribed such titles. In still other instances, which reflect the predominance of the usage of this category, some "sinners" are identified in a much more vague manner—merely by the use of ἀμαρτωλός itself (e.g., 3:9-12a). Winninge notes the malleability of this final category of "sinners" in highlighting that it can include "both Jews and Gentiles, both men and women, both individual sinners and an unidentifiable collective."<sup>41</sup> In all, the group behind the *Psalms of Solomon* has utilized the title "sinner" as a means by which to characterize many of those (Jew and non-Jew alike) whom are literally or figuratively not of the membership.

---

<sup>40</sup> Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous*, 125-134. Additionally, Winninge (3) notes that ἀμαρτωλός occurs 35 times in the *Psalms of Solomon*, highlighting not only its abundance but also the importance of the term/concept to the tenor of the writings themselves. Cf. Wright, "Psalms of Solomon: A New Translation and Introduction," 642.

<sup>41</sup> Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous*, 129. Some who sit in the Sanhedrin but were cruel (*Pss. Sol.* 4:1-3) and quoted the Law deceitfully (4:8), as well as some of the Hasmonean leaders (*Pss. Sol.* 4) are examples of this category. These and others are characterized primarily by their greed, seduction, and deceit. Flusser, "Psalms, Hymns and Prayers," 573 attributes the not naming of persons and political parties to the influence of "contemporary apocalyptic trends." Like examples can be seen in the use of "Jezebel" and "Balaam," as well as other polemical rhetoric, in the book of Revelation. See the discussion of these titles within chapter four.

Reflecting upon the impact of this effort at social polarization in the *Psalms of Solomon*, Atkinson notes that there are ~~not~~ hardly any groups of persons who are left unscathed.<sup>42</sup> We see here a group that stands in diametric opposition to these “sinners” and which expresses its own self-definition in contrasts to them. An initial expression of a sectarian identity is evident in the group’s efforts to distinguish and separate itself from the foreigners/outsideers (i.e., Romans) who have come in and conquered them. Yet, this sectarian feature is evident even more so in the group’s internal efforts at distinction (i.e., the setting of themselves over against other Jews who they see as either having colluded explicitly with the Romans or implicitly allowed them to dominate with such ease). Thus, the sectarian-like outlook can be seen on both the micro (i.e., within Judaism) and macro (i.e., the rest of the world) levels, which highlights its pervasiveness within the thinking of the group and yields a partial picture of the depths to which sectarian commitments and identity could run in this era.

2. “*Remnant*” *Mentality*. Building upon these sectarian notions of distinction and separation, Winnige notes that “the community behind the psalms clearly demarcates itself from several fellow Jews, implying a certain degree of intolerance.”<sup>43</sup> The accusations leveled at these other Jews reveal the gulf that the group perceives to exist between themselves and these “sinners.”<sup>44</sup> Foremost

---

<sup>42</sup> Atkinson, “Toward a Redating,” 110-111.

<sup>43</sup> Winnige, *Sinners and the Righteous*, 5.

<sup>44</sup> I will focus solely on the accusations made by the group against other Jews because those are the ones that best reveal the mentality of the group. The places where other Jews seem to be in focus are *Pss. Sol.* 2:3-13; 3:9-12a; 4; 8:11-17; and 12. The remaining psalms either (1) have Gentiles/Romans in focus or (2) are so vague and non-descript that the group under objection cannot be identified with any certainty.

among these are the claims that these Jews (1) promote lawlessness even from their positions of leadership (e.g., 4:1), (2) have colluded with the foreigners/Romans, even facilitating their entrance and conquering of Jerusalem (8:16-17), and as a result of this previous commitment (3) have allowed the Temple and Jerusalem cultus to be defiled and profaned (1:8; 2:3; 8:12-13). In sum, we see here an indictment of at least some (allegedly) hypocritical political leaders, highlighting again the strong anti-Hasmonean bent mentioned earlier in this chapter.<sup>45</sup>

Even more telling of the stance taken by the group is the language used against these Jewish leaders, which is seen in its most vivid form in *Psalms of Solomon* 4. Here, the author releases what amounts to a character assessment (i.e., assassination) on these other Jews. It is claimed that they are “excessive in words and appearance” (4:2), guilty of illicit sexual conduct (4:4, 5), liars/deceivers (4:4, 10, 11), destroyers of households (4:5, 9, 11, 12), agitators (4:12), and arrogant (4:24).<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, the expressed hope that these Jewish leaders experience a life of pain, poverty, and anxiety (4:14), have their sleep taken away from them (4:15-16), have the work of their hands fail (4:16), have their flesh scattered by wild animals (4:19), have their eyes pecked out by crows (4:20), and that they be lonely and childless in old age (4:18), further emphasizes

---

<sup>45</sup> Though it may be a bit too tenuous a thesis to hold with textual evidence, Hann, “Community of the Pious,” 178 infers (especially in light of *Pss. Sol.* 4) that some of those being opposed by the group behind the psalms are other members (likely now considered as former members) of the group itself.

<sup>46</sup> Elsewhere they directly or indirectly are characterized as criminals, slanderers, and wicked (*Pss. Sol.* 12).

the chasm that the group perceives to exist between itself and these persons.<sup>47</sup>

Finally, though much of this type of characterization largely can be chalked-up to rhetorical flair (i.e., it is not meant to give necessarily an accurate description of their behavior as much as it is designed to characterize them negatively), the “intense and shockingly vicious”<sup>48</sup> language captures the intensity of the opposition to these Jewish leaders—a degree of opposition that seemingly matches up with the groups’ mentality of opposition.<sup>49</sup>

Conversely, the group behind the psalms sees itself in diametric opposition to these other Jews. They (i.e., the group behind the psalms) are the ones who have not forsaken God in the midst of these foreigners. The language that they choose in self-description reflects this type of self-understanding. In counterdistinction to these (Jewish) “sinners,” the group asserts itself not only as “the righteous” and “the devout,”<sup>50</sup> as noted above, but also implicitly or explicitly as “Israel”

---

<sup>47</sup> Hann, “Community of the Pious,” 174 observes that “in typical fashion the isolation of this sect is blamed on those thought to have expelled them from participation in the larger society. It is likely, however, that their isolation is self-imposed as well, as 17:18 [16] suggests: ‘They that loved the synagogues of the pious fled from them, as sparrows fly from their nest.’”

<sup>48</sup> Wright, “*Psalms of Solomon: A New Translation and Introduction*,” 655 n. b.

<sup>49</sup> Hann, “Community of the Pious,” 178 notes that it is “most unlikely” that all of these accusations indicate precise behavior of these other Jews as it most assuredly would have lead to expulsion from whatever group they were a part of, whether their own or another. In light of the social and rhetorical functions of some polemical language, it is likely that these accusations largely are intended to defame and degrade these other Jews rather than offer a simple descriptive account of their behavior. On this, see chapter two and the discussion of stigmatization within the sociology of deviance. Therefore, Hann (178) concludes that “it is not necessary that the less strict sectaries actually committed the deeds of which they are accused. Once their relative laxity has been equated with hypocrisy, the remaining features of the dialectic are brought into play: if they are ‘hypocrites’ (4:2-3, 7 [6]), they must also be ‘rich’ and ‘evil’ (4:3, 4-5), and, eventually, ‘damned’ (4:16-25 [14-22]).”

<sup>50</sup> Winnige, *Sinners and the Righteous*, 131 identifies these two titles as the “standard designations” for the group throughout most of the psalms.

(9:8; 10:5-8; 11:1-9; 17:45; 18:1),<sup>51</sup> “those who fear God/the Lord” (2:33; 3:12; 4:23; 5:18; 6:5; 12:4; 13:12; 15:13),<sup>52</sup> “those who call upon the Lord” (9:6), and those who have “proven your name right” (8:26; cf. 2:15; 3:3; 4:8; 8:23; 9:2). These self-descriptions all lead to a characterization of the group as the one that is in proper relationship to God.

Furthering this type of self-conception, Winninge notes that

besides the frequently occurring *Ισραηλ*, several other designations also concern the covenantal status of the devout, e.g., *λαός* (10:6; 17:26), *ὄν ἠγάπησας* (9:8), *φυλαὶ λαοῦ ἡγιασμένου* (17:26, 43); *Ἰακωβ* (7:10; 15:1); *τὸ σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ* (9:9; 18:3), and *παῖς σου* (17:21).<sup>53</sup>

These terms/phrases indicate that the group sees itself as the ones enacting and keeping covenant with God. In a very real sense, then, the group understands itself to be the ones that remain in covenant with God, even in the midst of such dire circumstances. Lastly, I would point to the pervasiveness of the above noted “remnant identity” terminology within the psalms as a signal of the degree to which this type of self-understanding was ingrained within the group, identifying another pervasive sectarian characteristic in this group.

3. *Legitimation*. The set of circumstances (that most scholars see as) eliciting the composition of (at least many of) the *Psalms of Solomon* was the invasion of

---

<sup>51</sup> On the assumption of this title, Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous*, 131 notes that “the devout obviously believe that they are adequate members of Israel, as the identification between *ἡμεῖς* and *Ισραηλ* shows,” especially in 9:8 and 17:45.

<sup>52</sup> In one instance, those being opposed are noted as ones who have not “feared God” (4:21).

<sup>53</sup> Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous*, 131.

Jerusalem by the Romans under the leadership of Pompey in 63 B.C.E.<sup>54</sup> The Jews behind the psalms, therefore, are writing in the context of foreign domination but with the memory of independence under the Hasmoneans still before them. The forced reversion to foreign rule over Judea (as part of a vast Roman empire) likely would not have sat well with many Jews. It especially would have been daunting to those who opposed any sort of collaboration with Gentiles in the first place, for “this gentile occupation [i.e., the Romans] is worse than the native regime [i.e., the Hasmoneans] it displaced, introducing foreign cultic and social practices which corrupt many citizens.”<sup>55</sup>

For these Jews (and others) the introduction of this “new” foreign power not only caused physical and political problems but also ideological difficulties.

Wright states that

the *Psalms of Solomon* is literature of crisis. But it is more than an alien army invading the homeland; it is one of harsh reality invading a traditional theology. For when Pompey’s soldiers entered Jerusalem and trampled across the Temple compound, it was the ancient promises that they breached and the inviolable covenant they trampled.<sup>56</sup>

How can the group behind the psalms, for example, explain to the membership the fact that God has allowed foreigners to invade Jerusalem, destroy the Temple,

---

<sup>54</sup> The above circumstances are presented as the context for the individual composition of the psalms but not necessarily for the collection as a whole. See Wright, “*Psalms of Solomon: A New Translation and Introduction*,” 640-643 for a full discussion of date, provenance, and historical importance of the psalms. Additionally, see Atkinson, “Toward a Redating,” 95 n. 1 for a list of those who connect the psalms to the time of Pompey. It should be noted, however, that Atkinson offers an alternative date, claiming that the psalms result from a time period spanning from 66-37 B.C.E. The fact that the psalms reflect (including being written over) a span of time is largely incontrovertible due to the fact that the corpus details the overrun of Jerusalem by the Romans and gives details on the death of Pompey (see *Pss. Sol.* 1; 2; 8; 17).

<sup>55</sup> Wright, “*Psalms of Solomon: A New Translation and Introduction*,” 639.

<sup>56</sup> Wright, “*Psalms of Solomon: A New Translation and Introduction*,” 643.

and profane the worshipping cult?<sup>57</sup> To state it in more contemporary terms, how was this group going to reconcile these recent events in history, which so threatened (if not quashed) its traditional practices and beliefs, with the ancient tradition of their fathers regarding God's supremacy over all things?<sup>58</sup> In many senses, this question was the one that was most pressing and vital for the people's continued self-understanding and self-expression as the people of God.

In light of this social setting, it is evident that all of the psalms (or at least all of those composed by this time, if following Atkinson) are an attempt to address the sort of ideological issues noted above. We see here embedded in the very intention of the psalms a sustained and desperate effort to provide some logic by which to make sense of the situation at hand; to legitimate their belief in God and themselves as God's chosen people. Therefore, the Roman invasion and conquering of Jerusalem was not understood as a removal of God's favor from them, or even as God's punishment directed at them. Rather, it was digested as divine punishment directed at those Jews who were corrupting Jewish institutions and practices via their collaboration with foreigners (2:6-13; 8:8-22), while "the devout of God are like innocent lambs among them" (8:23). In like fashion, the group behind the psalms absorbed the current hardships and circumstances not as

---

<sup>57</sup> The theme of theodicy (2:1, 15-18; 3:3-5; 4:8; 8:3, 23-26; 9:2) that runs throughout much of the psalms should highlight the ideological dimension of the crisis at hand for these Jews.

<sup>58</sup> Trafton, "Solomon, Psalms of," 116 keenly states that "the *Psalms of Solomon* reflect the struggle Jews underwent as they attempted to reconcile a debacle at the hands of a foreign conqueror with the belief that Israel was God's chosen people." An analogous dilemma likely was pressing for Jews who experienced the invasion from and exile by the Babylonians. How can they relate the historical atrocities before them to their practice and belief? The ideological difficulty, for those who experienced exile at the hands of the Babylonians, can be seen vividly in the transition in thought between 2 Chron 36:21 and 22.

divine punishment directed toward them but as discipline (10:1-4; 14:1; 16:13-15), which the Lord reserves solely for the righteous.

The pinnacle of this effort at ideological justification may be seen where the group reads itself directly into the covenant God made with Abraham regarding his descendants (9:8-11). Here the group cites that “you [i.e., God] chose the descendants of Abraham above all the nations, and you put your name upon *us*” (9:9). Even more pointed, it is claimed that “you [i.e., God] made a covenant with your ancestors concerning *us*” (9:10) and that “*we* are the people whom you have loved” (9:8). The positioning of themselves as the ones who are the direct referent of God’s promise to Abraham, and thus the inheritors of God’s promises, highlights not only the remnant mentality of the group but also a concerted effort by them to explain their current circumstances. Objectively speaking, they are a minority group within Judaism which has set itself over against much of the rest of society; this is certainly not the prominent position God’s chosen people should seem to occupy. Yet, through this re-contextualizing of God’s covenant with Abraham to include and even to be intended precisely for them, the group is better able to establish a response to the trying circumstances. Ultimately, what is reflected here and throughout the *Psalms of Solomon* is a group that is trying to provide a self-explanation for its identity as the people of God, which is an act of legitimation. Along with the previous two traits, the sectarian distinctive of

“legitimation” is one that pervades the psalms, reflecting a concerted agenda of the group behind them.<sup>59</sup>

4. *Rites of Entrance.* This fourth feature of religious sects is a very difficult one to assess with respect to the group behind the *Psalms of Solomon*. In light of the three sectarian traits discussed so far, it is not far fetched at all to assume that this group too would have some sort of entrance requirements. However, within the extant literature, no such initial tests of merit are expressed. The most cogent explanation for this lack may be found in the literary genre and intention of the writings.

As noted in the title of these writings, we are dealing with psalms, which have their own specific social and literary functions. In a redaction-critical analysis of the *Psalms of Solomon*, Schüpphaus argues that the nucleus of them (*Pss. Sol.* 1; 2; 4; 5:5-7; 8; 9; 11; 12; 17) originated as synagogal prayers in the aftermath of Pompey’s conquest of Jerusalem.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, it is not insignificant to note that in the *Psalms of Solomon* we are presented, essentially, with a component of synagogue liturgy. When this fact is taken in account, the reason for the lack of expressed entrance rites becomes more apparent. One (regularly) would not expect to find a group’s constitutional document or order within liturgical material.

---

<sup>59</sup> The eschatological hope and expectation that God would send a messiah to save them from their current woes also serves as legitimating devices for this Jewish group. However, since that is bound up with expectations of the end of time, I will leave it until the discussion of the final distinctive of sects noted by Bryan Wilson (i.e., “Eschatological Hope”).

<sup>60</sup> Schüpphaus, *Die Psalmen Salomos*, 138-153. Cf. Trafton, “The *Psalms of Solomon* in Recent Research,” 6. Schüpphaus’ assertion as to the locus of origin of the psalms within the synagogue liturgy has not been challenged expressly in subsequent scholarship. Rather, it has garnered consistent

The writings from Qumran are instructive at this point. The group that went out into the region of the Dead Sea also composed and/or collected liturgical texts, which were used in some sort of public worship and/or private devotion.<sup>61</sup> However, they also deemed it necessary to set out an order of the community (i.e., *The Community Rule*, 1QS) in a separate and distinct document and genre, which formed part of the group's constitution. The foundations of the community were not expressed in liturgical documents likely because they were not the appropriate medium to do so. Analogously, the lack of entrance requirements within these liturgical psalms should not be seen necessarily as an oddity but as a feature fitting with the intention of the literature. Ultimately, then, though we know that other Jewish contemporaries of the group behind the *Psalms of Solomon* had specific rites of entrance,<sup>62</sup> we are not privy to any such explicit or even implicit initial tests of merit with respect to this group and, thus, cannot make any firm conclusion regarding this sectarian feature.

5. *Imposition of Order.* The above comments regarding the sectarian characteristic of "entrance rites," and the group behind the *Psalms of Solomon*, have application here as well. Since the writings are a liturgical (as opposed to a constitutional) document, then we should not expect necessarily to find in them expressed norms of the group. In line with this, we find no such list of

---

support. In support of this notion, see for example S. Holm-Nielsen, "Psalmen Salomos," in *Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit*, JSRZ 4.2 (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1977) 51-112.

<sup>61</sup> A number of the hymnic and liturgical materials would fit within to this description, such as the Thanksgiving Psalms (1QH) and the Benedictions (1QSb).

<sup>62</sup> The Essenes, in Josephus' description of them (*B.J.* 2.8.7.137-142), stand out as a prime example here. Their three year probationary period, as well as the strict rules that are mandated during this period, certainly qualify as initial tests of merit or entrance requirements.

communal rules or boundary markers in these psalms. However, in distinction from the topic of “entry rites,” which are not present expressly in the writings, it would be inaccurate to claim that the norms of the group are in no way visible within the psalms. Quite on the contrary, the group’s consistent polarization of themselves as over against their opponents (both Jewish and Gentile) highlights a number of qualities/traits that it holds in high regard.<sup>63</sup>

Hann, in his analysis of the social setting of the *Psalms of Solomon*, observes that the “binary opposites” (a phrase he borrows from Gager) used to polarize those being opposed (especially the Jewish ones) are expressed primarily in moral or ethical terms.<sup>64</sup> Hann continues, “once matters of morality have been conceived in such rigorous terms, the ethics of the sect must be defined in opposition to the behaviour of those of the outside.”<sup>65</sup> With this in mind, it is not surprising then to find that moral and ethical traits desired by the group behind the psalms seemingly were formed in direct opposition to the behavior/acts of “the sinners.”

An instance of this can be seen by examining those traits that the group extols in *Pss. Sol.* 16:7-11 in light of the accusations made against “the sinner” in *Psalms of Solomon* 4. Notice the following couplets that are formed:

---

<sup>63</sup> Even though an inductively compiled list of traits/characteristics that a group deems meritorious does not constitute, necessarily, an expressed declaration of the communal order (assuming there is one), it does provide a window into some sort of expectations that the group held for its adherents, if not for the maintenance of membership. Therefore, in the absence of an explicit list of rules for the community, and in light of working with liturgical documents, the noted traits/qualities can be seen to function in a similar capacity, expressing at least in part some norms of the group.

<sup>64</sup> Hann, “Community of the Pious,” 178 surmises that “in the moral perspective of the sectaries, there can be no middle ground.”

<sup>65</sup> Hann, “Community of the Pious,” 178.

- (1) the call of God to the “righteous one” is to be restrained from sordid sin (16:7a), while the “sinner” is noted as being guilty of a variety of sins of intemperance (4:3);
- (2) the “righteous” person desires not to be deceived by every “evil” or “criminal” woman (16:7b-8), while “the sinner” is guilty of having his “eyes on every woman indiscriminately” and his eyes speak “to every woman of illicit affairs” (4:4, 5);
- (3) the “righteous” ask God “to direct the works of their hands” (16:9a), while “the sinner” is destined to “fail disgracefully in all the work of his hands” (4:16);
- (4) the “righteous one” asks for God to protect his “tongue and lips with words of truth” (16:10), while the sinner is “excessive” and “harsh” in words, which also are “deceitful” (4:2, 9b; cf. 4:11b); and
- (5) the “righteous one” asks God to “put grumbling and discouragement in persecution” far from him (16:11a), while the sinner is destined never to be satisfied (4:13) and to have physical persecution overwhelm him (see the list of items in 4:14-22).

Similar to the composite of polarities used by the group to declare its identity, these couplets or set of dichotomies can be seen as the expression of group norms via the mode of contrast. In fact, the element of contrast is so strong and direct, it is difficult to assess if the group sought after these qualities because of an explicit desire for them or, rather, simply because they are a composite of moral and ethical qualities that are in direct opposition to “the sinners.” In light of the above-noted sectarian characteristics of the group, I certainly would not discount the latter. The oppositional stance taken by the group against “the sinners” led the group to reject everything about these opponents and, conversely, identify a set of behavioral characteristics that stand in stark contrast to them. Finally, the rigidity of the group’s expression of its norms (at least in places) adds to the building picture of a group that strongly exemplifies sectarian ideals and characteristics.

6. *Eschatological Hope*. As noted previously, the crisis that had befallen the Jews with Rome's/Pompey's invasion of Jerusalem was one not only of physical and religious dimensions but of an ideological one as well. The primary way in which the Jews behind the *Psalms of Solomon* still found legitimacy in identifying themselves as the people of God was through an intense focus on eschatological hope.<sup>66</sup> Its answer to the crisis was apocalyptic messianism.<sup>67</sup> The coming of the messiah (whether currently or at the end of time) would vindicate them, reversing the current oppressive political and religious circumstances.<sup>68</sup> Wright states that they [i.e., the group behind the *Psalms of Solomon*]

heap verbal abuse on their enemies (4:1f, 6, 14-20) and predict revenge when they return to power under the messiah (12:6; 17:22-25). But with no realistic hope to secure political control, they accept the current difficulties as God's discipline (14:1; 16:11), confident that their fortunes will be reversed, if not in the present age then certainly in the age to come (2:34f).<sup>69</sup>

---

<sup>66</sup> Franklyn, "The Cultic and the Pious," 8-15 observes that the psalms in the corpus can be divided into individual and national themes, including eschatology. According to him, the group behind the psalms holds an eschatological outlook on both of these levels. Franklyn (14) notes, "on both sides of the line between individual and national psalms there has been a progressive, psalm by psalm, climax in the specification of eschatology for the community. The individual pious ones expect eternal life, rooted forever in the memory of their heirs. The nation expects a Davidic messiah to restore them to righteous superiority over the heathen enemies." Though the individual eschatological focus is not unimportant, I will concentrate on highlighting the group's nationalistic conception of eschatology as it provides a better picture of its sectarian character. Cf. Trafton, "The *Psalms of Solomon* in Recent Research," 8-10.

<sup>67</sup> Franklyn, "The Cultic and the Pious," 14-15 surmises that "it seems certain that these psalms were nurtured by a community of pious apocalypticists rather than by some lone individual opponent to the impure practices of the temple cult." Cf. Wright, "*Psalms of Solomon: A New Translation and Introduction*," 642.

<sup>68</sup> Trafton, "The *Psalms of Solomon* in Recent Research," 8-10 surveys scholarly opinion on whether the messianism exhibited in the psalms is more of a restorative or an apocalyptic eschatology. More broadly speaking, Flusser, "Psalms, Hymns and Prayers," 574 emphasizes that "the *Psalms of Solomon* are important evidence for the Jewish eschatological hopes of the time."

<sup>69</sup> Wright, "*Psalms of Solomon: A New Translation and Introduction*," 643.

In line with this, the group's polarizing efforts extend beyond the contemporary setting to an eschatological one.

Just as the group behind the psalms (i.e., "the righteous") has set itself over against, seemingly, much of the world's inhabitants (i.e., "the sinners"), so too it will be in the messianic age. Upon the coming of the messiah, "sinners" will receive their inheritance of Hades, darkness, and destruction (17:21-25; 14:9-10; 15:10, 12-13; 16:2, 5), which will be forever (2:34; 3:11; cf. 14:9-10). Alternatively, the "righteous" "will never be disturbed by evil; the flame of fire and anger against the unrighteous shall not touch him" (15:4). The group holds fast to the claim that its members "will not be troubled at the end of time" (8:33) and that God's favor (3:12), pleasure (8:33), happiness (10:8; 14:10), and salvation (10:8; 15:6) will rest on them forever (cf. 14:3-4). Ultimately, in this very detailed account of Jewish messianic expectation, the group behind the *Psalms of Solomon* is able to express and cling to a hope, which secures its identity in the midst of circumstances that attest otherwise. The level at which this type of eschatological expectation pervades the psalms seemingly provides a reflection not only of the intensity of the situation of the Jews under the Romans but also the degree to which they had recoiled into themselves, yet another prominent sectarian characteristic of the group.

Though the characteristics selected above do not give a complete picture of the group behind the *Psalms of Solomon*, they do contribute to at least one prominent aspect of its identity, namely a sectarian-like dimension. In the above survey, we have a window into a group's perception of the historical, political, and religious

circumstances that surround them, as well as where they and other contemporary groups stand in relationship to them.

The combination of the intrusion of imperial Rome into the era of Jewish independence and, at least the perception, of Hasmonean support and/or aid of this transition greatly disturbed this group of Jews. Their response to these “enemies” was not one of engagement, at least in a concrete sense. Rather, they turned inward. They, simultaneously, seemed to have recoiled from the world around them but also engaged the circumstances and groups in an ideological sense. They idealized their world by placing themselves in the position of the “righteous,” relegating those whom they opposed to the category of “sinners.” It is not only the Gentiles who were “sinners” but also some fellow Jews, adding an internal dimension to the “conflict.” The language and categories reserved for these “sinners” is stark, abundant, and polarizing, leaving no doubt as to how the group understood them—they were destined for destruction, whether in the present or the future age.

Alternatively, the group behind the *Psalms of Solomon* assumed the position and titles of the “righteous.” They legitimated their current circumstances of oppression (and the threat imposed by them) by interpreting the Roman invasion as punishment for those Jews who were complicit with the transition of power, but only as “discipline” for those who were devout. This current “wrong” would be righted upon God’s eschatological intervention via the messiah. Until the coming of that time, the group would continue to stand in opposition to much of the rest of society in many ways, including the behavioral norms held in common. Ultimately, we see here a picture of a group where the characteristic of exclusivity almost has become

idealized. The group has imposed and/or emphasized its exclusivity at almost every turn, expressing a well-constituted sectarian mentality and make-up (in light of the contemporary social analysis of sects used above).

As has been noted by some, the *Psalms of Solomon* stand as a witness to the rich diversity within late Second Temple Judaism.<sup>70</sup> In specific, the psalms reveal characteristics of the vigorous sectarianism that was even more constitutive of other groups of the era. When held up against the returning Jewish community at the beginning of the second Jewish commonwealth, this group in almost every category surveyed above (save entry rites, which we have no access to within this group) stands out as markedly sectarian. We are privy here to not simply sectarian markings, but to evidence of a mentality that has characterized much of the community itself. What emerged as sectarian traits in the early part of the period have congealed into a nucleus that stands at the core of this late Second Temple group, which in conjunction with the proliferation of Jewish sects, testifies to a hardening of the sectarian ideal at the time.

---

<sup>70</sup> See Trafton, "Solomon, Psalms of," 116 and Atkinson, "Toward a Redating," 112. Additionally, many (see Lattke, "Psalms of Solomon," 853) have noted that the *Psalms of Solomon* are of great value for comparing and contrasting with early Christianity.

THE *HABAKKUK PESHER*<sup>71</sup>

Of the many scrolls found within the caves in the region of the Dead Sea, the commentary on Habakkuk is one that has received a great deal of scholarly attention and scrutiny.<sup>72</sup> Part of the explanation for such particular interest in this writing is a historical one: the *Habakkuk Peshar* was one of the first pesharim to be published and, therefore, garnered much early attention from scholars.<sup>73</sup> However, chronological priority in discovery, by itself, does not explain the sustained interest. It is largely the communal dynamics, which are hinted at in the document, that have

---

<sup>71</sup> Of the sectarian literature from Qumran, I have chosen to investigate only the *Habakkuk Peshar* for a couple of reasons. First, it captures (or, at least, hints at) various examples of social conflict pertinent to the identity of the group. I realize, however, that my investigation of such social conflict will lead me into other sectarian documents, such as the *Damascus Document* or the other pesharim that mention like personalities. The second reason for selecting only this single writing from the sectarian literature of Qumran relates to the economy of space. To undertake a study of the sectarian commitments and expression of the group within the entire corpus of sectarian literature from Qumran would be much too large a task to accomplish here. Alternatively, I have chosen 1QpHab to act as an additional case study in my examination of the depths of late Second Temple Jewish sectarianism, realizing that it encapsulates only a segment of the sectarian expression in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Lastly, unless otherwise noted, I will utilize the translation and text as found in Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 10-21.

<sup>72</sup> For comprehensive studies on the *Habakkuk Peshar*, see M. Horgan, *Pesharim: Qumran Interpretations of Biblical Books* (Washington D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association, 1979); B. Nitzan, *Peshar Habakkuk: A Scroll from the Wilderness of Judea (1QpHab). Text, Introduction, and Commentary* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1986); and William H. Brownlee, *The Midrash Peshar of Habakkuk: Text, Translation, Exposition with an Introduction*, SBLMS 24 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979). Cf. Lim, *Holy Scripture*, whose wider scope provides additional insight into the tenor of 1QpHab. Lim's work also provides a bibliography on the *Habakkuk Peshar* that updates the other previous works.

<sup>73</sup> See Devorah Dimant, "Qumran Sectarian Literature," in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus*, ed. Michael E. Stone, CRINT II (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984) 508. It is held that the composition of the writing was around 50 B.C.E. However, on a comment regarding all the pesharim, Dimant (489) notes that "though the actual copies of the pesharim are relatively late, the material they expound may go back to the beginnings of the sect. We must assume, then, either a literary or an oral transmission which is lost. Taking into account all this data, we must conclude that the Pesharim commit to writing exegetical traditions covering several generations, and that the dating of the manuscripts cannot be taken as their date of composition." Even if the writings do not go back to "the beginning" of the sect, as Dimant posits, we at least can assume that though the manuscript is dated around 50 B.C.E., it at times refers to previous activities and occurrences within some part of the history of the group.

so captivated scholars. Much time, thought, and space have been allocated to the historical location of the various personalities or figures that appear in the commentary, most prominent among them being the Teacher of Righteousness, the Man of the Lie, the Wicked Priest, and the *Kittim*.<sup>74</sup>

In this sense, the following investigation diverges from this scholarly trend on the *Habakkuk Peshar*. Here, I am less concerned with the precise historical identities of these figures or even how such assertions contribute toward an understanding of the history of the Dead Sea community. My project stands at a greater level of abstraction. In line with the previous analysis of the *Psalms of Solomon*, I intend to focus primarily on the dynamics of social interaction (which includes conflict) and social formation exhibited within the writing in an effort to gauge the sectarian

---

Finally, as some have noted, one must be realistic about how much precise historical data ultimately can be gleaned from the quite general references made in the pesharim.

<sup>74</sup> Of these four figures, the “Wicked Priest” has received by far the most attention, variously being associated with one or all of six different high priests. Prominent scholarship related to the historical identity of the “Wicked Priest” include the following: William H. Brownlee, “The Wicked Priest, the Man of Lies, and the Righteous Teacher—the Problem of Identity,” *JQR* 73 (1982) 3-9; B. E. Thiering, “Once More the Wicked Priest,” *JBL* 97 (1978) 191-205; A. S. van der Woude, “Wicked Priest or Wicked Priests?: Reflections on the Identification of the Wicked Priest in the Habakkuk Commentary,” *JJS* 33 (1982) 349-359; Timothy H. Lim, “The Wicked Priests of the Groningen Hypothesis,” *JBL* 112 (1993) 415-425; and *idem.*, “Wicked Priest,” in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, vol. 2, eds. Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam (Oxford: OUP, 2000) 973-976. The historical identity of the *Kittim* also has not gone unnoticed. Noteworthy within this area of scholarship is Timothy H. Lim, “Kittim,” in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, vol. 1, eds. Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam (Oxford: OUP, 2000) 469-471 and George J. Brooke, “The *Kittim* in the Qumran Pesharim,” in *Images of Empire*, ed. Loveday Alexander, JSOTSup 122 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1991) 135-159. Cf. Devorah Dimant, “Pesharim, Qumran,” in *ABD*, vol. 5, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 246. Though fewer options have been posited for the precise identity of the *Kittim*, scholarly consensus sees them as the Romans. A minority of scholars, however, hold that the *Kittim* are the Seleucids. For one of the first works to posit the *Kittim* as the Seleucids, see H. H. Rowley, “The *Kittim* and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *PEQ* 88 (1956) 95-97. The identity of the other two figures (i.e., the Teacher of Righteousness and the Man of the Lie), as John J. Collins, “The Origins of the Qumran Community: A Review of the Evidence,” in *To Touch the Text: Biblical and Related Studies in Honor of Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S. J.*, eds. Maurya P. Horgan and Paul J. Kobelski (New York: Crossroad, 1989) 178 notes, “remains enigmatic and will probably continue to remain so, unless new evidence is found.” Finally, on the role of the pesharim in reconstructing the history of the community, see especially Phillip R. Callaway, *The History of the Qumran Community: An Investigation*, JSPSup 3 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1988) 135-171.

commitments and outlook of the group(s) that possessed the writing.<sup>75</sup> Again, I will employ Wilson's work on religious sects as a *modus operandi* for this analysis.

1. *Separate and Distinct Identity.* As noted previously in this chapter, the commentary on Habakkuk revolves around four central figures: the Teacher of Righteousness, the *Kittim*, the Wicked Priest, and the Man of the Lie. Each of these personalities, while possibly signifying cryptically one or more historical personages, represents a person and/or a group that stand in various social locations with respect to the group behind the writing. The first of these figures, namely the Teacher of Righteousness, certainly is referenced as a human figure, which is evident in him (1) being rebuked in "the House of Absalom" and not being aided against "the Man of the Lie" (5:9-11), (2) having "wickedness" done to him by the "Wicked Priest" (9:9-12), and (3) being pursued by the "Wicked Priest" in festival time during the Day of Atonement, while he (and his followers) were fasting on the sabbath of their rest (11:4-8).<sup>76</sup> However, the Teacher also has been provided special access to things divine. He is the one "to whom God has made known all the

---

<sup>75</sup> Since the writing had an internal destination (i.e., it seems to have been intended for use only within the group), I specifically am interested in what part it played in the formation and shaping of the identity of the group. In short, I am asking: what does the *Habakkuk Peshar* reveal to us about the identity, commitments, and outlook of the group(s) that possessed it?

<sup>76</sup> The final item in this list, i.e., the reference to the Wicked Priest pursuing the Teacher on the Day of Atonement, not only provides some existential details that highlight the Teacher as a human figure; as has been noted by many, it also denotes the fact that the Teacher (and his followers) abide by a different calendar than other Jews, which explains why and/or how the Wicked Priest could even pursue him on such a day. Some have noted this varied calendar as a feature that prominently depicts the sectarian mentality and outlook of the Teacher and his group. Cf. James C. Vanderkam, *Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Measuring Time* (New York: Routledge, 1998); Sacha Stern, "Qumran Calendars: Theory and Practice," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Historical Context*, ed. Timothy H. Lim (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000) 179-186; and S. Talmon, "The Calendar Reckoning of the Sect from the Judean Desert," *ScrHier* 4 (1965) 166-167.

mysteries of the words of his servants, the prophets” (7:4-5).<sup>77</sup> Even more reverentially, his words are identified as being from “the mouth of God” (2:2-3).

For his followers, the Teacher of Righteousness provided (in a positive sense) a composite identity. In an interpretation of Hab 2:4b, those in the House of Judah who are observing the Law are said to be set free from judgment specifically “on account of their toil and loyalty to the Teacher of Righteousness” (7:17-8:3).<sup>78</sup> Loyalty to the Teacher is here the litmus test for gaining divine approval. The group seems not only to position the Teacher as a unique, divinely inspired figure, but also as the one who encapsulates their own self-identity.<sup>79</sup> In short, the pesherist intentionally has linked the identity of the group directly to the Teacher of Righteousness. As the Teacher found

---

<sup>77</sup> Dimant, “Qumran Sectarian Literature,” 507-508 notes that it is these “mysteries of God” that have been imparted to the prophets and which concern the entire sequence of history, from creation to the eschaton. Dimant (508) continues, therefore, “the study and exposition of the prophets acquired an utmost importance for the sectaries, for they contained the clue to their own situation. But as prophecies are enigmatic, just like the mysteries of God themselves, they can be understood only with the aid of a divinely inspired interpretation, i.e., by the Teacher of Righteousness. In this way, both the contents of the *Pesharim* and their exegetical methods acquire a status of a divinely inspired message, i.e., their authority is divine, just like the prophets’ words themselves.” Lastly, this line of reasoning finds support in 2:7-10 where the “priest” (i.e., the Teacher of Righteousness) is declared as the one whom God has placed in the community “to foretell the fulfillment of all the words of his servants, the prophets, by means of whom God has declared all that is going to happen to his people Israel.”

<sup>78</sup> In another instance, we see that God has given the Wicked Priest and those of his council into the hands of their enemies as a punishment “for having acted wickedly against his elect” (12:9-12). Though it has been argued that “his elect” refers only to the Teacher himself (e.g., Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Essays on the Semitic Background of the New Testament* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1974) 152), Brownlee, *The Midrash Pesher*, 157 notes that “this is not unambiguously so, since the word ‘elect’ could also include ‘the men of his council’” [i.e., those followers of the Teacher of Righteousness]. In short, we may catch a glimpse here of the purposeful intermingling of the Teacher’s identity with the group (including the pesherist), identifying them both as the elect of God. See also the plural reference in the “chosen ones” or “elect” in 5:4.

<sup>79</sup> The followers of the Teacher, too, are referenced only cryptically as “the men of truth” and the doers of the Torah (7:10-14; 8:1-3).

divine favor to speak the words of God, so too the group (in as much as they follow the Teacher) bears the same type of identity, namely as those who have been approved of by God.

The identity of the group also is cast in another way within the document, namely via the contrast with other personalities. In similarity to the *Psalms of Solomon*, the group behind the *Habakkuk Peshar* expresses its own identity in counterdistinction to various other groups or persons (i.e., the *Kittim*, the Wicked Priest, and the Man of the Lie). I will turn to each of these in order to highlight the separate and distinct identity that the persons behind the commentary are attempting to assert over against these other groups or persons.

“One of the contemporary events which made a deep impression on the author of the peshar was the approach and attack of a terrible people, the *Kittim*.”<sup>80</sup> In the *Habakkuk Peshar* the *Kittim* consistently are identified as a military force.<sup>81</sup> The battle terminology and imagery used to demarcate them highlights various aspects of their military prowess. Their strength or might is emphasized as being “swift and powerful in battle” (2:12-13), their coming “to raze the earth” (4:13), and the fact that they “devour all the nations like an eagle, insatiable” (3:11-12). Likewise, the vastness of their reach is marked through other phrases, such as they “go across the earth to take possession of

---

<sup>80</sup> Dimant, “Pesharim, Qumran,” 246. On the relationship between a “historical” event and it being recorded, Brownlee, “The Wicked Priest,” 2 notes that references made to the *Kittim* in the biblical commentaries from Qumran consistently are in the present or future (i.e., the Hebrew imperfect). Therefore, Dimant’s comment that the invasion by the *Kittim* is a (relatively) contemporary event with the recording of the commentary gains further credence.

dwellings not theirs” (2:15-16) and they “surround them [i.e., those who they are conquering] with a huge army to capture them” (4:7).<sup>82</sup> Finally, the ruthlessness of their mission is evident through the charge that they “cause many to die by the edge of the sword, youths, adults and old people, women and children; not even children at the breast will they pity” (6:10-12). The “fear and dread” that they cause “on all the peoples” (3:4-5) highlights the implicit theme in the document that the *Kittim* have no earthly equal and, thus, are unstoppable.<sup>83</sup>

The social location of the *Kittim*, according to the members of the Qumran sect, is not only outside of their own group but also external to Judaism itself.<sup>84</sup> The identification of the *Kittim* with the Chaldeans (in an interpretation of Hab 1:6) is telling regarding the make-up of the group. Though this comparison does not contribute much toward an understanding of the historical identity of the *Kittim*, it does further the impression that they are foreigners.<sup>85</sup> They are ones who “do not believe in the precepts of God”

---

<sup>81</sup> Within 1QpHab, the *Kittim* appear at 2:10-5:5; 5:12-6:12; and 8:13-9:7.

<sup>82</sup> Though the end of column three has become too corrupted to know for sure, the interpretation of Hab 1:9 (i.e., “and he gathers captives like sand”), likely was applied to the *Kittim*, highlighting once again their military size.

<sup>83</sup> The audacity expressed by the leaders of the *Kittim*, which again highlights their military superiority, is seen in the account that they “deride the powerful,” “despise honored men,” “jeer at kings and princes,” and “sneer at a huge army” (4:1-3).

<sup>84</sup> This would include the historical location of the *Kittim* as either the Romans or the Seleucids, since both of them were “foreigners.” However, from the perspective of Jews in the late first century B.C.E. (i.e., the time from when the only extant copy was produced), the dominant foreign military power would have been Rome.

<sup>85</sup> Timothy H. Lim, “The Qumran Scrolls, Multilingualism and Biblical Interpretation,” in Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls, eds., John J. Collins and Robert A. Kugler, *Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 62 notes that “the Qumran pesharim (with the sole exception of 4QpNah) have been described as an interpretation from ‘code to code,’ that is, from

(2:14-15) and their actions betray them as an idolatrous people (6:3-5). Therefore, akin to the *Psalms of Solomon*, the group behind the writing has experienced and/or is experiencing the effects of foreign domination.

However, in distinction from the *Psalms of Solomon*, the ideological question of how the group is to reconcile their own position of divine favor with this foreign domination is not an issue that currently seems to be before them. In fact, lack of understanding regarding the current circumstances does not seem to surface at any point. On the contrary, the document reflects a confident outlook on the contemporary situation, where the physical demolition of nations and rulers at the hands of the *Kittim* is understood as just desserts for the wickedness of those who dwelt there (4:8-9).<sup>86</sup> Yet, this destruction is not final. Though the *Kittim* have their role in enacting divine punishment upon humanity, God will not allow them to enact judgment. The judgment over all peoples will be placed “in the hand of his chosen ones” (5:4), a position the group likely saw itself fulfilling.<sup>87</sup> The *Kittim*, then, are understood as functionaries within God’s purposes, thus “solving” (or averting) the ideological question for the group.<sup>88</sup> Ultimately, the group

---

biblical code to sectarian code. It is a form of commentary that is directed towards those who are in the know.” The internal destination and function of the coded language in 1QpHab, to which Lim refers, highlight the closed-ended or sectarian intentions of the writing.

<sup>86</sup> Though this comment would have application to all those nations conquered by the *Kittim*, the wickedness of fellow Jews may be most prominent in the group’s hope for judgment (cf. 5:3-6).

<sup>87</sup> Brownlee, *The Midrash Peshar*, 87 notes that 5:4 portrays a “solely punitive concept” of judgment and that the plural reference (i.e., a group not an individual) in “his elect” is bolstered by the fact that a chosen community is seen to enact judgment in Isa 42:1.

<sup>88</sup> Ultimately, even though we do not see an explicit opposition of the *Kittim* by the group behind the commentary, the latter certainly do not view them in an inherently favorable light. Rather, it can be assumed safely that the group looks on them as the lawless (i.e., ones who do not follow the ways of

behind the commentary had no need to position themselves over against the *Kittim* in the divine hierarchy because the latter had no position in that structure to begin with. Yet, they were sure to distinguish themselves from the *Kittim* in divine function (i.e., regarding judgment) so as not to leave any doubt about their own supremacy.

In addition to the *Kittim*, the group behind the Habakkuk commentary sets itself up over against two other personages. In difference from this foreign military power, the other two (i.e., the Wicked Priest and the Man of the Lie) stand within the bounds of Judaism. The Wicked Priest is the first of the four main personalities inserted in the writing. Straight away in column 1, two figures are introduced as part of the text from Habakkuk (1:4bc), where “the evildoer” accosts “the upright man” (1:12). The interpretation that the writer gives to this text is to identify the former as “the Wicked Priest” and the latter as “the Teacher of Righteousness” (1:13). Timothy Lim’s observations that interpretation in the pesharim often moves from “code to code” and that it is “directed towards those who are in the know,” find application here.<sup>89</sup> The very nondescript figures from Habakkuk (i.e., “the evildoer” and “the upright man”) only become slightly less cryptic when paired with contemporary figures (i.e., “the Wicked Priest” and “the Teacher of Righteousness”). It is likely that any knowledge of possible historical identities behind these idealized types, then, would be limited to those

---

God). The only redeeming value of the *Kittim* in the eyes of the group behind the writing is that they providentially were chosen to enact God’s purposes.

<sup>89</sup> Lim, “The Qumran Scrolls,” 62. Cf. Brooke, “The Kittim,” 134.

persons already within the group that follows the Teacher (i.e., those who are “in the know”).<sup>90</sup>

In terms of identity formation and/or maintenance, an adversarial relationship between the Wicked Priest and the Teacher of Righteousness (including their respective followers) is established from the very beginning, which sets a tone for the writing. The group behind the writing is making an effort to distinguish itself from those who would be considered “followers” of the Wicked Priest. They are attempting to forge or enforce an identity for themselves by emphasizing the vast (ideological and other) distance between themselves and the followers of the Wicked Priest.

This ideological stance taken by the group is enhanced further in the writing through a pejorative characterization of the activities and destiny of the Wicked Priest. All of the activities and details concerning the Wicked Priest, which are recorded in the commentary, highlight this type of portrayal. The writing identifies the figure as one who “ruled over Israel” (8:9-10), which leads to the assertion that the person(s) being referred to was at one time the high priest.<sup>91</sup> However, though loyalty characterized the beginning of the Wicked Priest’s tenure (8:9), he also is accused of becoming “proud” (8:10) and doing wickedness to the Teacher of Righteousness and his

---

<sup>90</sup> The closed ended, internal function of the writing itself, strongly hints at the sectarian character of the writing, as well as the group possessing it.

<sup>91</sup> Van der Woude, “Wicked Priest or Wicked Priests?,” 349 notes that though scholarly opinion varies greatly on the historical identity of the Wicked Priest, even whether it is referring to one or more persons, “at least there is agreement on one point: the Wicked Priest was a high priest in Jerusalem.” For the purposes of this study, I do not intend to delve further into possibilities regarding the precise historical identity of this figure.

followers at a number of turns (9:9-10).<sup>92</sup> Additionally, the figure is accused of deserting God and betraying God's precepts (8:10, 16-17), defiling the sanctuary of God (12:8-9; cf. 8:13), plundering the poor (12:10), and seizing public money (8:12), culminating in the Priest's pursuit of the Teacher on a festal day (i.e., the Day of Atonement according the Qumran sectarian calendar) in order to "consume" him (10:5). Yet, even more telling of the group's attitude toward the Wicked Priest is the contention that the figure "did not circumcise the foreskin of his heart" (11:13)—i.e., he had not set himself apart for God even though he was in the highest office within Judaism. Finally, in good condemnatory fashion, the commentary recounts knowledge of God's reservation of the Wicked Priest for destruction, which will take place at the hands of the *Kittim* (9:4-7, 9-12).<sup>93</sup> Those who followed the Wicked Priest, too, will be liable to the same fate (5:5-6).<sup>94</sup> Ultimately, it becomes quite evident that the group behind the *Habakkuk Pesher* urgently

---

<sup>92</sup> The only "positive" remark that the commentary relays regarding the Wicked Priest is this detail that he was "loyal" at the beginning of his office. The remainder of the assessment of the figure falls entirely on the negative or pejorative side, prominently highlighting who it is that the group behind the commentary is not to follow and what they are not to be about.

<sup>93</sup> The basis for this destruction is due specifically to the Priest's wickedness against "his elect" (9:10-12), which was noted previously as referencing at least the Teacher of Righteousness if not also those who were his followers, and this destruction will be brought upon him in direct recompense for what he did to the poor (12:2-3). A vivid expression of this judgment is found in the assertion that God will "proclaim him guilty and will punish him with sulphurous fire" before all the nations (10:5).

<sup>94</sup> Those who are to be pronounced guilty in 5:5-6 are referred to as "all the evildoers of his people." Since "evildoers" (עֲשֵׂי רָעָה) here is in the plural, those being pronounced guilty would have to be a collective (i.e., it could not refer only to the Wicked Priest), who is referenced by עֲשֵׂי רָעָה in 1:13.

desires to demarcate and enforce (if not enlarge) the chasm between themselves and the Wicked Priest, including his followers.<sup>95</sup>

Though the group behind the *Habakkuk Pesher* stands in opposition (directly or indirectly) to each of the two above-noted groups (i.e., the *Kittim* and the Wicked Priest), it is important not to lose sight of the social distance at which each of these stands from the group behind the commentary. The social distance has shrunk with each of the first two groups presented above. The first one (i.e., the *Kittim*) had allegiance neither to the group itself nor to Judaism in general. The second one (i.e., those referenced under the “Wicked Priest”) stood within the bounds of Judaism (in an objective assessment) but, as is inferred in the group’s assessment of them, did not have membership within the group itself.<sup>96</sup> The final personage mentioned in the commentary, the Man of the Lie, too, fits within this pattern of diminishing social distance.<sup>97</sup> This figure stands surely within the bounds of Judaism, which is evident in several of the accusations made against the Man of the Lie (and the followers of the figure).

The allegations that he (1) “rejected the Law” when he opposed the Teacher before the House of Absalom (5:9-12)<sup>98</sup> and that he and his followers

---

<sup>95</sup> Since the document appears to have been written solely for internal usage, it is logical then to assume that it was intended to have primary impact on the borders of the community that possessed it.

<sup>96</sup> See Dimant, “Pesharim, Qumran,” 245-246.

<sup>97</sup> The Man of the Lie appears within 1QpHab at 2:1-10; 5:8-12; 10:9-13 (as the Spreader of the Lie); and 10:17-11:1.

<sup>98</sup> Though some understand “the House of Absalom” to be a reference to an actual political party at the time (i.e., one that assumed the name “the House of Absalom”), it may be read more profitably as an attempt to caricature the group in question by drawing an allusion to Absalom, who would act as an

(2) did not keep/broke “the covenant” with God (2:2-6) make sense only as inner-Jewish charges. Additionally, the figure is charged with “leading astray” many (10:9), which would have most direct application to an audience composed only of Jews, since “leading astray” in the mind of the Teacher and/or the group behind the commentary would mean away from Judaism in general and their own teachings in specific. Along the same line, the labeling of some followers of the Man of the Lie as “traitors” (2:1ff) too hints at a location of them within Judaism, as the title makes little sense otherwise.

However, in distinction from the Wicked Priest, who also stands within the bounds of Judaism, the social location of the Man of the Lie (including the followers of the figure) seems to be in closer proximity to the followers of the Teacher of Righteousness (and the group behind the commentary).<sup>99</sup> The introduction of the “relationship” between the Teacher of Righteousness and the Man of the Lie (as seen in the *Habakkuk Peshar*) indicates, simply, that the traitors with the Man of the Lie do not believe that

---

identity marker for those who, in their silence, do not oppose injustice. On this type of reading, see J. L. Teicher, “The Habakkuk Scroll,” *JJS* 5 (1954) 47-59 and Brownlee, *The Midrash Peshar*, 92. Cf. Gert Jeremias, *Der Lehrer der Gerichtigkeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1963) 86 and David Noel Freedman, “The ‘House of Absalom’ in the Habakkuk Scroll,” *BASOR* 114 (1949) 11-12.

<sup>99</sup> Though some have asserted that the Wicked Priest and the Man of the Lie should be seen as one and the same figures, there are good reasons to see them as distinct personages. Both are opposed by the Teacher of Righteousness but the accusations against them differ. The Wicked Priest is accused of, among other things, defiling the sanctuary (12:8-9) and the Man of the Lie is not. Alternatively, the Man of the Lie is said to have opposed the Teacher of Righteousness directly (5:8-12) and built a community under his leadership (10:9-13). In short, the evidence from the text (both 1QpHab and beyond) does not enable us to draw the conclusion that these two were one and the same figures. If anything, the evidence from the text calls for the exact opposite conclusion. Cf. Jeremias, *Der Lehrer*, 79-126. Finally, for a survey of the various hypotheses regarding the historical identity of the Man of the Lie, see Collins, “The Origins,” 172-173. Collins (178) concludes, though, that the identity of the figure remains enigmatic.

the words of the Teacher are from the mouth of God (2:1-3). At issue, then, seems to be the content of the message/teaching being touted by the Teacher of Righteousness, as well as the authority by which it is being disseminated. On this, the Man of the Lie and the Teacher of Righteousness stand in opposition.

The account of their confrontation in 5:8-12 is telling in this regard.<sup>100</sup>

Though it is difficult to conclude with surety whether the Teacher was bringing the Man of the Lie before this council, or vice versa, it is quite evident that the message/teaching and authority of these two were both being tried.<sup>101</sup> As preserved in the *Habakkuk Pesher*, it is clear that the Man of the Lie gained the support of the council (in either an active or passive sense) and that the Teacher was “rebuked” (5:10) before them.<sup>102</sup> Again, what impact this event had on the followers of each of these figures is difficult (if not impossible) to assess. However, its preservation within the text does warrant the following conclusion: the Man of the Lie and the Teacher of Righteousness, at least at one time, stood as competing charismatic leaders,

---

<sup>100</sup> On this passage, see Brownlee, *The Midrash Pesher*, 91-98.

<sup>101</sup> Jeremias, *Der Lehrer*, 86-87 sees them both originating in the same community. However, H. Stegemann, *Die Entstehung der Qumrangemeinde* (Bonn: privately published, 1971) 204-226 argued that the Teacher of Righteousness originally was part of a community led by the Man of the Lie. It is interesting that both of these arguments rely primarily upon an interpretation of 5:8-12. Ultimately, the vital point that I am attempting to demonstrate relates not to who originated the charges but, rather, with the importance of the conflict that ensued. This incident appears to have been a critical one in the development of the group that followed the Teacher. In many ways, it seems to have introduced (or at least furthered) the sectarian formation of the group.

<sup>102</sup> Contra Collins, “The Origins,” 173-174, I do not understand the failure of the “House of Absalom” to aid the Teacher of Righteousness to be a “neutral” act. In the thinking of the group, it appears that, by doing nothing, they were not remaining neutral but choosing sides. The disappointment expressed by the Teacher, then, was genuine in that he hoped for (but not necessarily expected) their support in

who likely came to vie for adherents from the same pool of persons.<sup>103</sup>

Ultimately, the evident differentiation between these two figures in the *Habakkuk Peshar* leaves little doubt that the group behind the writing sees itself entirely separate and distinct from the Man of the Lie and his followers.<sup>104</sup>

When looking back on the relationship between the Teacher of Righteousness and the three other primary personalities in the *Habakkuk Peshar*, a quite intentional effort at group self-definition is visible. The group behind the commentary has chosen to wrap up its identity within the Teacher of Righteousness. Therefore, as the Teacher is differentiated from these other personages within the writing, the group possessing the document too is able to give shape to its own separate and distinct identity. Like the group behind the *Psalms of Solomon*, this group not only expresses the sectarian trait of denoting a separate and distinct identity within its own communal or national bounds. It takes the ideal to an extreme, making efforts to segregate and demarcate itself from both outsiders and insiders (to Judaism) alike. The sectarian claim of the group is that its identity as those approved of by God is unique among all the others of the world.

---

the midst of the conflict. Their “sin,” therefore, was not one of commission but one of omission. Their silence at this injustice made them akin to Absalom.

<sup>103</sup> Therefore, it is safe to come down alongside Brownlee, *The Midrash Peshar*, 169, who argues that the Man of the Lie “must be a man of religious authority among the Jews.”

<sup>104</sup> The entirely negative perception of the Man of the Lie is seen further in the many accusations that are brought against him in 10:9-13: he has lead astray/misdirected many, built a useless city with blood, erected a community via deceit, wore out many with useless work, and teaches acts of deceit.

2. “*Remnant*” *Mentality*. The effort of the group behind the *Habakkuk Pesher* at shaping its own identity was not only a reactionary endeavor. In addition to highlighting themselves as being separate and distinct from the *Kittim*, the Wicked Priest, the Man of the Lie, and their followers, the group also expresses its identity in positive terms. In the commentary we see the group allude to themselves as “his [i.e., God’s] chosen ones” (5:4) and the “men of truth” (7:10).<sup>105</sup> The exclusivity within each of these titles is apparent from the outset. Standing as God’s chosen ones implies that there are others who are not in such a position, introducing a hierarchy within divine favor. Likewise, “the men of truth” seems to be so demarcated in order to distinguish them from others who do not follow in such ways. As a result, some implicit dichotomies are created that trumpet the group’s self-understanding as being unique, even among fellow Jews.

The exclusiveness inherent within the group’s self-perception is evident even further within the duties, privileges, and commendations that accompany these two titles. The “chosen ones” of God are demarcated as such because they (1) have kept God’s commandments in their hardship (5:5-6) and (2) have not “run after the desire of their eyes in the era of wickedness” (5:7-8). In short, they have preserved themselves amidst a perverse generation that ignores the commands of God. Additionally, the

---

<sup>105</sup> Additionally, as noted above, “his elect” (9:12) may well have reference beyond the Teacher of Righteousness, serving as a title that would include the entire community as its referent. Also, it should be noted that the group behind the commentary nowhere explicitly connects itself with any of these titles. The writing leaves the connection between the group and the titles at a more implicit, but certainly at not a less effectual level. The reader is led to draw the conclusion that the group intends these to be self-designations. The group sees itself as those who are remaining faithful to God.

“chosen ones” are afforded (by God) the supremely unique function of placing judgment over all the peoples (5:4). It is not the militarily mighty *Kittim* who will bring God’s judgment. Rather, God has reserved a select group to enact his purposes; an elite group whose behavior and loyalty have gained them the right to be the singular conduit for divine judgment.<sup>106</sup> Those behind the commentary likely saw themselves as being just that elite group.

In like fashion, “the men of truth” are modified further as those (1) who observe the Law (7:11) and (2) “whose hands will not desert the service of truth when the final age is extended beyond them” (7:11-12). The prediction within the commentary is that when the end of the age has seemed to have been delayed, many will forsake the Law and or the service of God. In opposition, “the men of truth” are ones who will show themselves approved by God via their steadfastness in observance and service. It is they alone who will continue to practice their ancestral rites, assured that the mystery of God’s sovereignty will at some time vindicate them.

In all, the *Habakkuk Peshar* reveals a group that understands itself to be in a unique position with respect to the divine. Their preservation of themselves in the midst of wickedness and continued obedience in service

---

<sup>106</sup> Another example of this elitist mentality as it is related to the theme of judgment, can be observed in 8:1-3. Here “the house of Judah” is set in opposition to “the house of judgment.” The interpretation is that those who are observing the Law in the house of Judah will be set free from the house of judgment, specifically due to their loyalty to the Teacher of Righteousness. Since those who follow the Teacher of Righteousness (i.e., the House of Judah) would be (only) members of the sectarian group, all others (i.e., non-members) would be relegated to the house of judgment. The notion that the members of the group would avoid the judgment that all others (Jew and Gentile)

and practice (in their own estimation) have placed them in such a standing, namely as the sole remnant dedicated to God. They do not see themselves as existing alongside others who stand approved by God but uniquely as the ones who continue in what God desires of them. Their reward for such continued behavior and devotion too will be unique. The elitist mentality expressed in this type of self-understanding corroborates the sectarian bent of the group. Divine favor ceases at its borders.

3. *Legitimation*. These efforts at identity formation (i.e., the refinement of the group's identity through positive and negative means) serve a very important internal social function. The further delineation of the group's identity likely would have helped to solidify the membership by either gaining a rededication of the members' allegiance or the (self-)removal of individuals from the community. However, the program of identity formation and group cohesion within the writing does not cease at this point. In a number of places in the commentary, a concerted effort is made to bolster or legitimate the unique identity of the group presented thus far, in an additional labor to stabilize itself and crush opposition from within or without.

Of the three most prominent ways in which religious sects attempt to legitimate their own position and/or teaching, as noted by Bryan Wilson, two can be observed within the *Habakkuk Peshar*.<sup>107</sup> The first of these modes,

---

would experience highlights the singularity of its self-perception. The group sees itself as having no peer within the favor of God.

<sup>107</sup> In a statement also cited in chapter five of this thesis, Wilson, *Religious Sects*, 28 notes that the ideology of a given religious sect may be legitimated by "the superior revelation of a charismatic leader, it may be a re-interpretation of sacred writings, or it may be an idea that revelation will be given to the truly faithful."

namely the superior revelation of a charismatic leader, stands at the base of the *Habakkuk Pesher* and the community that is behind it. The foundational premise upon which the writing and community are constituted is the notion that the Teacher of Righteousness has been chosen uniquely by God. Ulfgard notes that

his [i.e., the Teacher's] role for the community is emphasized by recounting events in which he was involved and by describing important characteristics of his personality. All this serves to highlight his authority and legitimacy as God's instrument.<sup>108</sup>

Column 7 underscores, quite explicitly, this conception of the leader: the Teacher of Righteousness is the one "to whom God has made known all the mysteries of the words of his servants, the prophets" (7:4).<sup>109</sup> The Teacher, then, is not merely a mouthpiece of God, like the prophets. Rather, he is the one to whom all mysteries have been revealed, even those that the prophets were not privileged to know. The authority attributed to the Teacher of Righteousness here is unique in the Jewish post-biblical literature. Dimant observes that

only pseudepigraphic writings may present a somewhat similar attitude. However, they claim divine inspiration by attributing their contents to a revered legendary personage in the past, not to a historical figure as do the Pescharim.<sup>110</sup>

Thus, the authority attributed to and possessed by the Teacher is supreme.

---

<sup>108</sup> Håkan Ulfgard, "The Teacher of Righteousness, the History of the Qumran Community, and Our Understanding of the Jesus Movement: Texts, Theories and Trajectories," in *Qumran Between the Old and New Testaments*, JSOTSup 290, eds. Frederick H. Cryer and Thomas L. Thompson (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998) 327.

<sup>109</sup> Dimant, "Qumran Sectarian Literature," 492 notes that the fact that the teachings were divulged to the community (through the Teacher of Righteousness) via divine revelation, "thus render the community elect and just by its very nature."

In corollary, the Teacher speaks the words of God (2:2-3). Though some may not have considered the words of the Teacher to be from the divine, it is quite apparent that his followers revered them as such.<sup>111</sup> As a result, the person and message of the Teacher likely became entrenched within the community as the (i.e., single) source of authority. He was the charismatic leader *par excellence*. Most within the group would not have dared to question or challenge his teaching, for the authority structures present in the community dictated that to stand over against the Teacher was to stand in opposition to God.

The divinely sanctioned authority of the Teacher of Righteousness also bears a relationship with the genre of the document itself. The pesher method of interpretation employed by the writer itself seems to contain within it a legitimatory thrust.<sup>112</sup> The pesher method of interpretation reflects an attempt to interpret current circumstances in light of a religious text, in this case Habakkuk. Here the pesherist worked systematically through the first two chapters of Habakkuk, alternating between the recitation of biblical text and the particular interpretation regarding current events, circumstances, and

---

<sup>110</sup> Dimant, "Qumran Sectarian Literature, 508.

<sup>111</sup> We are told that "the traitors with the Man of the Lie" did not believe that the Teacher of Righteousness' words were from the mouth of God (2:1-3). While it legitimately may be debated whether or not the Teacher did in fact speak with divine authority, we certainly can see that his followers understood his words to carry this type of ultimate authority by their condemnation of those who did not hold such a high view of the Teacher.

<sup>112</sup> Though the one (or ones) who originally penned the commentary cannot be known with surety, it seems comparatively more clear that the pesher method (i.e., the interpretive move or transference from biblical text to current situation or context) may well have derived from the Teacher of Righteousness. The Teacher was an individual who (among at least his followers) possessed the divine authority to sanction (i.e., give credibility to or legitimate) such a bold interpretive maneuver.

persons.<sup>113</sup> Though the exegesis is controlled by linguistic and other elements within the biblical text itself, it hardly can be denied that the interest of the author lies in how that impacts his own context.<sup>114</sup>

In this case, the biblical text from Habakkuk continually yields support for the position and teaching of the Teacher of Righteousness over against the numerous adversaries. Even trying circumstances are re-interpreted through this type of (re-)reading of the scripture.<sup>115</sup> In all, the Teacher's direct connection with God places him in a unique position within divine authority. Therefore, his words are not able to be challenged (because they are God's), and his interpretation is automatically God's directive for the community, including his reinterpretation of the circumstances surrounding the group. In terms of legitimation, a very closed system is established. The unrivaled position of the community, with respect to all others, is secured by the unique position of the Teacher of Righteousness in connection to the

---

<sup>113</sup> On the peshar method of interpretation, see Horgan, *Pesharim: Qumran Interpretations of Biblical Books*; George J. Brooke, "Qumran Peshar: Towards a Redefinition of a Genre," *RevQ* 19 (1979-81) 490-491; and Ida Fröhlich, "Le genre littéraire des pesharim de Qumrân," *RevQ* 12 (1985-1987) 383-384.

<sup>114</sup> I realize that in the peshar method the primary text is the mechanism that drives (or at least delimits) the possibilities in the interpretation. However, I think it would be naïve to contend that an ideological element is not at work in the commentary. The polarizing efforts of the writer are clear from the beginning. Furthermore, it is likely that the group then expects this type of interpretation to impact its social life, namely its need to stay separated and clear from any who follow in the path of the Wicked Priest. The method itself, in conjunction with the divinely held authority of the Teacher, combine to form an effective stabilizing tool for the group.

<sup>115</sup> An example of this can be seen in the *Kittim*. Instead of seeing them as a menacing military force that could bring the community to its destruction (which, objectively speaking, must well have been the case), the Teacher declares them to be an instrument of God specifically sent to enact destruction upon sinful Jews (4:9, 17-5:1). While this sentiment may have been felt by many, it was the Teacher of Righteousness alone who had the position of divine authority to attempt to make such a claim valid and accepted by the community. Also, it should be noted that an authoritative interpretation or re-reading of sacred texts is a second prominent legitimatory strategy among religious sects, as noted by Bryan Wilson.

divine. The internal function of all this is the creation of further internal cohesion in the group, thus secluding itself ideologically even more so from those outside.<sup>116</sup> The legitimization of their own penchant for continual internal group self-definition reflects a furtherance of the building picture of the group's sectarian focus and composition.

4-5. *Rites of Entrance and Imposition of Order.* These two sectarian traits are being treated in tandem here due to the fact that the *Habakkuk Peshar* largely is silent on these issues. The commentary does identify the source to which the devotion and labor of the community should be directed (i.e., to the Teacher of Righteousness in 8:2-3), but no specifics are given regarding what shape that devotion should take. However, since communal entrance and order are of prime importance within several other of the Qumran documents, it would obscure their importance to the community simply to bypass them at this point.

The community possessed two main "rules" (i.e., collections of various rules, regulations, and religious instructions) that were meant to regulate internal communal life, namely the *Rule of the Community* and the second part of the *Damascus Document*.<sup>117</sup> Each of these sources contains numerous guidelines and specifications for the orderly existence of the community; too many to examine in particular detail here. Therefore, I intend to assess them from a broader, more abstract perspective. I am

---

<sup>116</sup> The ideological and physical seclusion of the group from other Jews (as well as Gentiles) mirror each other in their degree of intensity.

interested here in measuring how the composition and possession of two different documents solely for the purpose of communal regulation characterizes the group that possesses them.

Though many different Jewish groups in the Second Temple period (as well as in other eras) regulated communal behavior through the implementation of various norms, the Qumran community stands out as peculiar. Dimant observes that “the literary genre of rule is unknown in Jewish literature outside Qumran.”<sup>118</sup> No other group explicated its own communal regulations in such a detailed and comprehensive manner, so as to constitute a distinct literary genre. Broadly speaking, these rules from Qumran relate a very meticulous and prolonged period of examination for entrance into the community, having many intermediate steps along this multi-year process (1QS 6:13-23; cf. 1:11-2:10; 5:7-11).<sup>119</sup> Likewise, once the individual gained access into the community, further mandates were placed upon him with respect to items such as possessions (1QS 1:11; 6:18-20). If the stated requirements of the community were not adhered to, then a

---

<sup>117</sup> Rules are usually indicated by the term *serekh* (סֶרֶךְ), which has become a technical term for a set of rules.

<sup>118</sup> Dimant, “Qumran Sectarian Literature,” 490. Dimant, however, does note that the rule resembles the regulations of various societies in the Hellenistic world.

<sup>119</sup> 1QS 6:13-23 yields directives for a two year admission process, while Josephus attests to a three year procedure. The seeming discrepancy here may be due simply to the fact that 1QS may pick up after the first year mentioned by Josephus, during which the candidate must remain outside of the community altogether. While the accounts of admission procedures from Josephus and 1QS do contain some other minor discrepancies, John J. Collins, “Essenes,” in *ABD*, vol. II, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 623 notes that the general similarity of the two remains impressive, “especially since we have no parallels for such a multiyear process of admission elsewhere in ancient Judaism.” In relation to the running of the Qumran community, then, it is not only the possession of a unique type of communal regulation document (i.e., the rule) that sets it apart.

meticulously detailed penal code commanded that the individual either be denied entrance into the community altogether or that he be placed on probation for a given period of time (1QS 6:24-7:25).<sup>120</sup> In all, the detail of the community's admission procedure, code of conduct, and penal code is striking and reflects the care that the group took to maintain its internal structure and, ultimately, its purity.

Even though this is a broad and general characterization of very specifically articulated sets of rules, the contribution toward a further understanding of the group is evident. The group was concerned supremely with the preservation of its membership and standards. One would not only have to remove himself or herself from any form of known civilization to attempt to enter the community, but also adhere to rigorous sets of standards, which kept the community strictly segregated from the impure and sinful world beyond the sect (CD 6:14-15). In addition to the physical removal of themselves from populated areas of Judah, these rules stand as one of the clearest markers of the sectarian character of the group. Furthermore, the unparalleled phenomenon of rules within Second Temple Judaism attests not merely to sectarian tendencies within the group, but demonstrates in concrete form an extreme in distinct sectarian formation that has occurred during the history of the sect.

---

The intensity and duration of the stated admission procedure also is found in no other Jewish group from the time.

<sup>120</sup> The painstaking detail that went into the order of the community can be observed in that each of the great number of offenses that are cited in the penal code carries with it its own specific type and duration of punishment.

6. *Eschatological Hope.* The *Habakkuk Peshar* reflects a keen interest in the end of time. In fact, Brooke notes that one of the prime reasons that the commentaries were written was “to demonstrate that the period in which the author and his readership lived has indeed an eschatological character.”<sup>121</sup> The relatively clear ideological picture of the end times that is painted in the *Habakkuk Peshar* begins with a specific understanding of the canonical prophets. The interpretation that the pesherist gives to Habakkuk 2:3 is that “the final age will be extended and go beyond all that the prophets have to say, because the mysteries of God are wonderful” (7:7-8). The writer’s/community’s conception of the prophets’ level of divine understanding can be described as positive but limited. The prophets convey a divine truth concerning the end of time and the Great Day of the Lord, however, the prophets’ understanding of their own utterance was limited, as reflected in the beginning of column seven: “God told Habakkuk to write what was going to happen to the last generation, but he did not let him know the consummation of the era” (7:1-2; cf. 2:8-10). The prophets, then, prophesied with authority regarding what was to come but simply were unaware of when that period was to be consummated, due to the fact that their revelation from God was incomplete.

The timing of the end remained an enigma to all those following the prophets, until the arrival of the Teacher of Righteousness, the central figure

---

<sup>121</sup> Brooke, “The Kittim,” 158.

in the constitution of the community.<sup>122</sup> As noted above, the commentary signifies the prominence of the Teacher of Righteousness largely through a comparison between him and the prophets. The Teacher is the (only) one “to whom God has made known all the mysteries of the words of his servants, the prophets” (7:4-5). What had been obscured partially in the prophets’ revelation of the end of time has been made plain to the Teacher through divine revelation. The Teacher is the singular individual who can envision what the prophets were unaware of, namely the timing of the end. Therefore, it is the Teacher of Righteousness who stands as the ultimate authority on the final things. Furthermore, he declares that it will be only the “men of truth” (i.e., a self-designation for his followers) who will not be shaken by a seeming extension of the final age and who will be the inheritors of the things to come due to their continued observance of the law, service of the truth, and loyalty to the Teacher himself (7:10-14). In light of the above analysis of sectarian traits evidenced within the *Habakkuk Pesher*, it is not surprising to find here yet another instance where the Teacher of Righteousness and his followers are being singled out as those who do and will stand approved by God as over against all others.

---

<sup>122</sup> John Collins, “The Expectation of the End in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature, eds. Craig A. Evans and Peter W. Flint (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 82-83 notes regarding the *Habakkuk Pesher* that “the prolongation of the end time is not merely a theoretical possibility. It is the experience of the community, for which the author seeks an explanation in the prophetic text.” At the very least, the community has a need to provide explanation for the circumstances that surround them, implying that some type of threat was being posed to its identity and/or ideology. Cf. Dimant, “Qumran Sectarian Literature,” 507-508.

John Collins, in an essay concerning the expectation of the end in the Dead Sea Scrolls, notes that common in the community's view of the end was (1) a period of testing, (2) an emphasis upon destruction and judgment that puts an end to wickedness, and (3) a deliverance of the faithful.<sup>123</sup> Each of these can be observed within the commentary on Habakkuk. It appears as if, when the commentary originally was composed, the author/community understood itself to be existing already within the final age, specifically within the period of testing.<sup>124</sup> Just as the Teacher of Righteousness experienced persecution at the hands of "traitors with the Man of the Lie" (2:1-2), his followers were to experience opposition from "the traitors of the new covenant," who "did not believe in the covenant of God and dishonored his holy name" (2:3-4).

The behavior and actions of these "traitors" is seen as a test for the group behind the commentary. Though we are unaware of any external sanctions that may be enacted against them for resistance, its inner-communal function is evident. If individuals wish to maintain membership within the elect community, they must not comply with the behavior, actions, and expectations of those outsiders. The present period, however, is not the completion of the final age. Both of the sets of "traitors" mentioned above

---

<sup>123</sup> Collins, "The Expectation of the End," 74-90.

<sup>124</sup> See George Brooke, Exegesis at Qumran: 4QFlorilegium in Its Jewish Context, JSOTSup 29 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1985) 206-209 and Annette Steudel, "אזרית הימים in the Texts from Qumran," RevQ 16 (1993) 226-231. Additionally, 9:6-7 ("in the last days their [i.e., the priests in Jerusalem] riches and their loot will be given into the hands of the *Kittim*), along with the presence of the foreign military power (i.e., the *Kittim*), signals for the group an entrance into (or possibly continuation of) this final age.

proleptically anticipate a final faction, “the traitors of the last days,” who will violate the covenant and not listen to the words of the Teacher of Righteousness concerning the final things (2:5-10).

In all, then, the writing seems to attest to a beginning of this final age, as seen in the presence of opposition, along with a prediction of a culmination of this opposition at a future time. Regardless of the temporal location of the opposition, the group clearly sees itself as in an age of testing, which will not cease for a time and which will have direct ramifications pertaining to its continued identity as the elect.<sup>125</sup>

The commentary on Habakkuk also attests to judgment and destruction as part of the final age. In at least two places, the phrase “the day of judgment” (12:14; 13:2-3) is employed to signal this aspect of the period. Additionally, though not much physical description is provided regarding the place of destruction, twice it is associated with fire (10:5, 13), a common image used to represent eschatological destruction. However, most telling for the identity of the group behind the commentary is seeing who is (and who is not) assigned to such a fate. All of the “enemies” (except the *Kittim* because they simply served the purposes of God) of the Teacher and his followers are sentenced to eschatological destruction. The Wicked Priest will be proclaimed guilty in the midst of the many nations and punished with “sulphurous fire” (10:5), at least in part due to his acting wickedly against the

---

<sup>125</sup> The current testing of the community seems to stem not only from followers of the Man of the Lie (i.e., other Jews) but also from the *Kittim* (i.e., non-Jews), as their military presence and destruction

elect (9:11-12). Likewise, the Spreader of the Lie, along with “those who derided and insulted God’s chosen will go to the punishment of fire” (10:13).<sup>126</sup> Ultimately, the lack of variation in the description of the punishment of these two “enemies,” along with the reliance upon the common judgment motif of fire, captures the force within the writing: all those who stand apart from the community behind the commentary are destined for judgment and destruction.

On the other hand, while the opponents of the group will receive no mercy at the day of judgment, the followers of the Teacher of Righteousness will not be subject to eschatological punishment at all. Column 8 relates that “God will free [them] from the house of judgment on account of their toil and their loyalty to the Teacher of Righteousness” (8:1-3). Divine favor and protection will rest upon them in direct response to their following of the Teacher, God’s chosen agent. In all, we see the creation of a “we—they” dichotomy that is typical of the ideology within the writing. We (i.e., the members of the group behind the commentary) will be preserved in the final age, while they (i.e., all those outside the group) will experience a fate of eschatological destruction.<sup>127</sup>

---

has forced the group to re-envision why God has allowed such disaster to come upon his people and land.

<sup>126</sup> Additionally, though it does not identify them as headed toward the inferno, we see another example where destruction is predicted to come upon “all the worshippers of idols” and “the wicked” (13:3-4).

<sup>127</sup> Dimant, “Pesharim, Qumran,” 246 observes that “the external and internal conflicts of the Teacher and his followers were seen by the peshar as signs of the approaching eschatological era and the End of Days (7:7-14). The Qumranites believed that the day of final judgment was imminent, and hoped to see their wicked opponents punished and their own faithfulness to the true way of the Torah rewarded.”

Much of the sectarian thought culminates in the group's eschatological hope. Though the present circumstances may seem at odds with the sectarian claims and identity of the group, specifically regarding its singular connection to the divine, the eschatological era, which has been inaugurated in their midst, will set all things aright. The group's identity as those approved by God will be clear once its enemies are vanquished and it is vindicated. The sectarian thought here is so entrenched within the group that it re-reads its current situational circumstances in light of an eschatological righting of fortunes (which already has begun for them). The elect status of the group will show itself forth if not in the present, then in the (near) future.

Like the *Psalms of Solomon*, the *Habakkuk Peshar* provides a window into the ideology of an additional group in the late Second Temple period.<sup>128</sup> From this document, we see evidence of a group that is attempting to solidify its own identity in the midst of the surrounding circumstances. Primary amongst these circumstances are the presence and destruction being enacted by the foreign military aggressor, signified only as the *Kittim*, and the impure acts and behavior of fellow Jews, noted as the "Wicked Priest" and the "Man of the Lie." Yet, within the writing, no evidence is yielded concerning a physical engagement of any type. Rather, in response to these situational circumstances, the group seemed to have recoiled into itself, which can be seen in both the physical and ideological seclusion of the group membership.

---

<sup>128</sup> Though selecting only the commentary on Habakkuk here yields only a partial picture of the Qumran community, it captures well various aspects of the group dynamics and thought that are evident in various other documents within the sectarian literature from Qumran.

Here we see that the group also has bound itself to the communal founding figure, namely the Teacher of Righteousness, taking on his identity as its own. Therefore, just as the Teacher was the one who was chosen by God to speak (and understand) God's words, so the community (i.e., his followers) understood itself to be the elect of God. Furthermore, as the Teacher stood divinely approved in the midst of his "enemies" in the writing (i.e., the Wicked Priest and the Man of the Lie), even when experiencing persecution, so too the group will be vindicated by God if not now, then in the eschatological age, which was being inaugurated in its midst.

Though no physical conflict on the part of this elect community is recounted, the writing leaves no doubt that it was imperative for the group behind the writing to be seen as separate and distinct from these other personalities. These others were not a part of "the remnant." Their actions and, specifically, lack of loyalty to the Teacher of Righteousness not only put them beyond the pale of the group, but also destined them for eschatological destruction. Divine favor not only fostered confidence for the group in the present, even in the midst of the presence and destruction brought on by the foreign military power (i.e., the *Kittim*). It also emboldened the group to see only itself as bypassing judgment in the final age. If the present did not highlight their unique status within God's favor, then they would be shown approved at the end of time when all those outside of the group would receive eschatological judgment and punishment in the sulphurous fire.

When all of these characteristics have been compiled, a quite complete sectarian profile emerges. Seizing upon the uniqueness of the Teacher of Righteousness, the group in every way seeks to express its uniqueness as compared

to all others, resembling an extreme in sectarian thought and formation. As Sanders succinctly states, “the Qumran community was an extremist sect.”<sup>129</sup> When compared with the restored Jewish community at the beginning of the second Jewish commonwealth, the distinctly sectarian character of this group stands out in brilliance. A sectarian ideology has pervaded the entire Qumran community, including its thinking, actions, and hopes. Again, at this point, we are no longer able to label this type of formation with “sectarian markings,” which was appropriate earlier in the period. Rather, along with the multiplication of sects within the late Second Temple period came a deepening of sectarian commitments, as seen in the group from Qumran surveyed above.

### Conclusion

The survey of sectarianism in the above pages allows the following conclusions and/or observations. (1) Sectarian formation was a prominent feature within Judaism of the Second Temple period. (2) Broadly speaking, a development in sectarian formation within Jewish groups can be observed between the onset of the Second Jewish commonwealth and the Hasmonean and Roman periods.<sup>130</sup> This development is visible first in the comparative proliferation of Jewish groups during this time span. The explosion of relatively distinct Jewish groups during the Hasmonean period is seen, at least by Baumgarten, as evidence for sectarian development. Yet,

---

<sup>129</sup> E. P. Sanders, “The Dead Sea Sect and Other Jews: Commonalities, Overlaps and Differences,” in The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Historical Context, ed. Timothy H. Lim (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000) 42.

<sup>130</sup> Though this is largely a non-contentious statement, it is difficult to find scholarship that attempts to document this type of comparative development.

even more telling regarding this development may be the increased presence and prominence of traits within these groups that reflect hardened or further-entrenched sectarian commitments and outlook. It is not simply that there was an increase in groups, but that these groups looked even more sectarian. (3) Contiguous with the development of sectarianism during this time came a rise in exclusivism within at least some of the most extreme of these groups. Inherent to the notion of “sect,” itself, is the idea of “exclusivity.” In the groups behind the respective documents surveyed above, we were able to observe some of the depths to which this exclusivity could reach. These two writings (to different degrees) reflect vivid examples of Second Temple Jewish groups that express a sectarian identities through an exclusivity in practice, expression, thought, and ideology.<sup>131</sup>

Finally, (4) the dynamics of conflict evident within these two examples of hardened sectarian commitments and expression bear strong phenomenological similarities to the first-century dynamics of social conflict noted in chapters three and four. Both are situations of conflict that are internal to the group/community. Also, both settings reflect concerted efforts at legitimation. In each of the cases, the author is attempting to ward off some deviance or threat from within. Though we cannot be very specific on the substance of the “problem” in the late Second Temple contexts, it is readily apparent that there was an explicit need to secure the allegiance of the group, implying something or someone else might draw them away. Additionally, the tactics employed by the authors in both settings had a strong rhetorical edge to

---

<sup>131</sup> Again, though all Jewish sects of this era cannot be characterized by such extreme exclusivity, these groups provide valuable examples of Jewish groups that stand at the pole of extreme sectarianism.

them. In a number of places the authors negatively label those being opposed to stigmatize them in the eyes of the membership, in an effort to secure the allegiance of the group members.

In all, though the two contexts have some characteristics that are unique to the respective settings (thus, we do not have identical phenomena here), the overlap in the phenomenological characteristics is instructive for the purpose of the thesis. These noted similarities highlight the fact that the dynamic of internal social conflict, which was cited as the context out of which the Christian notion of heresy first emerged, is not unique to the first-century. Like settings can be seen in certain late Second Temple sectarian contexts. Again, this observation does not warrant any identification of heresy in this period. It simply highlights the fact that the context out of which the Christian notion of heresy emerged is one that is visible in some strands of Judaism, which likely informed to some degree the first-century Christian contexts of deviance.

## Chapter Seven

### **Αἵρεσις and the Emergence of the Conceptual Category of Heresy in Early Christianity**

The thesis up to this point has been synchronic in nature. The broad progression of the work has included an analysis of three different time periods. The onset of the thesis identified briefly the reality and presence of heresy as seen in the second-century of the Common Era. Since it is relatively unobjectionable to locate the presence of heresy in this period, no argument is made or needed to substantiate such a claim. “Heresy” is a quite fully-formed concept by the middle of the second-century, as seen in the expansive treatises that were composed on the subject, though it certainly continues to concretize conceptually in the following centuries.<sup>1</sup>

The second time period analyzed in the thesis is the first-century C.E. or, more precisely, certain sub-sections of the last half of that century. Here, I have selected two documents (i.e., Galatians and parts of Revelation 2-3) as case studies for examining the dynamic of internal social conflict out of which these (and other) Christian writings emerged. These situations of internal social conflict, I contend, reflect the initial context out of which the notion of Christian heresy emerged.

The third component within the thesis thus far is related to Second Temple Judaism. In chapter 6, I appealed to two documents that originated around the first-century B.C.E. in an effort to demonstrate that the social dynamics of conflict found

---

<sup>1</sup> Allain Le Boulluec in his seminal work [La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque II<sup>e</sup>-III<sup>e</sup> siècles, vols. I-II. Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1985] finds heresy to be so fully formed that he cites the middle of the second-century (with Justin) to be the onset of heresiology (i.e., the formal study of

within the sectarianism behind them share a number of similarities with the first-century situations of internal social conflict surveyed above. Therefore, I noted that the dynamics of internal social conflict, which have been identified in chapter two, can be observed not only in the first-century but also in the late Second Temple period. These two periods (i.e., the first-century and late Second Temple Judaism) contained a similar social dynamic, namely one of internal social conflict, yet no linear influence is readily apparent.

Again, up to this point, the thesis has progressed synchronically. It has drawn upon these three broad periods of time in a counter-chronological order. However, now I will make a shift in focus. I will attempt to provide a diachronic presentation of the emergence of the Christian notion of heresy. I contend that the above evidence from the three noted periods, when held up together, helps elucidate how and out of what context the notion of Christian heresy initially emerged. To aid this aim of diachronically tracking the emergence of the Christian notion of heresy, I will examine the New Testament evidence of the term ἄρρεσις.<sup>2</sup>

---

heresy). Therefore, we can assume that the idea of “heresy” must have taken shape prior to it being the subject of sustained thought and writing.

<sup>2</sup> It is important here to note that ἄρρεσις and “heresy” are distinguishable objects of study. The former, being a term, is addressed primarily via linguistic analysis. The latter is a conceptual category and, thus, calls for a different mode(s) of inquiry (e.g., theological, historical, or, in the case of this study, sociological). In all, then, it is right to see the two as distinguishable objects of research. Yet, at the same time, I would contend that they bear a relationship and importance to one another. In fact, as a foundation for this chapter, I contend that the early Christian evidence of ἄρρεσις helps elucidate

## The New Testament Evidence of Ἀἵρεσις

The Greek term Ἀἵρεσις has had a long history in early Christian usage. From the first quarter of the second-century and forward, it was the primary term used to designate “heresy.”<sup>3</sup> As the grand heresiological writers of the second, third, and fourth centuries penned their massive treatises against all heresies, Ἀἵρεσις grew in prominence and its technical status hardened, almost exclusively coming to denote “heresy.”<sup>4</sup> However, Ἀἵρεσις did not always denote “heresy.” In fact, prior to some instances in early Christianity, the term never carried or conveyed even a negative connotation, let alone denoted the phenomenon of heresy.

In classical Greek, Ἀἵρεσις meant primarily “choice” and was used in a value-neutral manner.<sup>5</sup> Later, with the rise of Hellenism, Ἀἵρεσις was used to

---

the importance of the dynamic of internal social conflict within the overall emergence of the Christian notion of heresy.

<sup>3</sup> Heinrich Schlier, “Ἀἵρεσις,” in *TDNT*, vol. I, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) 183 notes that in its use by Ignatius (*Eph.* 6.2; *Trall.* 6.1) and Justin (*Dial.* 51.2) “the term has already become technical” in its meaning as “heresy.” Cf. Simon, “From Greek *Hairesis*,” 110 and *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, “heresy,” ed. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone (Oxford: Oxford U. Press, 1997) 758.

<sup>4</sup> Of the early heresiological treatises, see Tertullian’s *Praescription Against the Heretics* and Irenaeus’ *Against Heresies*. It should be noted that the term also was utilized, within the second-century and beyond, in instances where it did not denote “heresy” and retained one of its earlier meanings. See, for example, Origen’s *Contra Celsum* 3.12, where it is used in reference to the various schools within Christianity.

<sup>5</sup> Schlier, “Ἀἵρεσις,” 180-181 notes that the term could also denote “seizure” (e.g., of a city), as seen in *Hdt. Hist.* 4.1 and *Idom. Hist.* 9.3, or even “resolve” or “enterprise” (i.e., “an effort directed to a goal”), which can be observed in *Polyb. Hist.* 2.61.9. Yet, the predominant usage of Ἀἵρεσις in classical Greek was in its capacity as “choice” (see, for example, Pindar *Nemean* 10.82; Plato *Tht.* 196c; and *Soph.* 245b). Furthermore, in line with this interpretive trajectory of the term, Simon, “From Greek *Hairesis*,” 104 notes that “the term in its original sense carried no value judgment. It simply meant, according to its etymology, ‘choice’.”

denote a “school,” “party,” or an “opinion” (i.e., a way of thinking).<sup>6</sup> Here it had come to denote a “voluntary association” or even the set of opinions or beliefs that made the voluntary association distinctive.<sup>7</sup> This term often was used when distinguishing among the various Greek philosophical schools or among the tenets that these schools held.<sup>8</sup> Yet, even here the term did not carry a negative or derogatory aspect. Ἄρρεσις simply was the mechanism used to distinguish between various groups of a certain kind. Ultimately, in a summary of the usage of ἄρρεσις in pre-Christian Greek literature, Von Staden concludes that “*hairesis* does not have any intrinsically pejorative overtones.”<sup>9</sup>

The usage of the term in both Josephus and Philo largely is in the same vein as the classical Greek designation of “party” or “school.” Josephus often utilizes the term in designation of the great currents of thought and practice (i.e., parties) among the Jews of his own time.<sup>10</sup> The fact that Josephus, elsewhere, does not hide his personal preference for the Essenes and Pharisees and, yet, still utilizes the same

---

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Dionys. Hal. *Antiq. Rom.* 4.30.1; 5.70.5; 8.13.3; *Comp. Verb.* 19.67, 73; Diod. Sic. *Bib. Hist.* 2.29.6; 10.10.1; 12.66.2; and Von Staden, “*Hairesis* and Heresy,” 76-100 for the usage of the term in the pre-Galen (i.e., prior to the second-century C.E.) medical literature. For additional examples of this type of usage of ἄρρεσις, see Schlier, “ἄρρεσις,” 181.

<sup>7</sup> See Le Boulluec, *La notion*, 41-51.

<sup>8</sup> For this usage of the term, see Polyb. *Hist.* 5.93.8; Dionys. Hal. *Ep. Amm.* 1.7; *Comp. Verb.* 2; and Chrysippus Stoicus *D. L.* 7.191. Cf. Desjardins, “Bauer and Beyond,” 73.

<sup>9</sup> Von Staden, “*Hairesis* and Heresy,” 81. Rudolph, “Heresy: An Overview,” 270 adds “neither in Greek nor in Hellenistic Jewish usage does the word have a negative, derogatory sense.” Cf. F. X. Lawlor, “Heresy,” in *NCE*, vol. VI (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967) 1069.

<sup>10</sup> Josephus’ usage of the term to identify the prominent Jewish sects or parties is visible in *B.J.* 2.118, 122, 137, 162; *A.J.* 13.171, 288, 293; 15.5; 20.199; *Vita* 10, 12, 191, 197. Cf. Simon, “From Greek *Hairesis*,” 105. It should be noted, however, that Josephus also utilizes the term to denote “capture”/“seizure” (*A.J.* 1.170; 7.160; 10.79, 247; 12.363; 13.121-122, 233; *B.J.* 7.326) and “choice” (*B.J.* 1.199; *A.J.* 6.7; 7.321, 322).

term to designate all of the leading Jewish groups of the time (including also the Sadducees and Zealots), reflects his non-pejorative and non-derogatory usage of ἄρρεσις. It did not connote an unapproved group but, at this point, simply a distinct group within the Judaism of the day.

Philo, at times, also uses the term in description of various groups.<sup>11</sup> In visualizing Judaism primarily through the lens of Hellenism and Hellenistic society, Philo borrowed the Greek philosophical schools usage of ἄρρεσις to so distinguish and categorize groups within Judaism. With such a reliance upon this Greek or Hellenistic sense(s) of the term, it is readily apparent that Philo's usage continues in the neutral, or at least non-negative manner.

Upon reviewing the pre-Christian usage of ἄρρεσις, one feature stands out. While ἄρρεσις, at times, may have been used in the context of an unfavorable opinion of another school or group, or even in reference to an unfortunate or poor choice, the term itself was never the mechanism by which that pejorative association was conveyed.<sup>12</sup> It is not until the early Christian usage of the term that it begins itself to carry a pejorative meaning and, ultimately, comes to denote "heresy."

---

<sup>11</sup> Philo's use of the term in this manner is visible in *Plant.* 151. Cf. *Contempl.* 29. Though, it should be noted that the great predominance of Philo's usage of the term is in the classical Greek sense of "choice" (*Congr.* 110, 130), especially relating to a choice between virtue over vice (e.g., *Prob.* 83; *Her.* 241; *Cher.* 31; *Post.* 78; *Plant.* 45).

<sup>12</sup> Simon, "From Greek *Hairesis*," 110 notes that he knows of no text where ἄρρεσις is used as a label for an opponent or an opponent's teaching that is deemed to be erroneous. Furthermore, both Simon (111-112) and Norbert Brox, "Häresie," in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, vol. 13 (Stuttgart: Hierseman, 1984) 256-257 cite Sextus Empiricus' *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* 1.16 as an example where ἄρρεσις is even a sought after term. Yet, this does not nullify the reality that members of the various Greek philosophical schools often entered into lively debate with members of other schools. We even have an example where two members of the same philosophical group are heaping all kinds of abuse on one another (see Lucius, *Eunuchus* 1-2). However, it should be noted

Establishing the chronological fact that the negatively loaded association of the term was gained within its early Christian usage is simple. However, identifying exactly when this seeming innovation in the use of ἄρρεσις occurred presents a greater challenge. Yet, since identifying the point at which ἄρρεσις assumes a pejorative or derogatory connotation promises to be illuminating for understanding the emergence of the idea of heresy within early Christianity, I will analyze the New Testament evidence of the term in an attempt to highlight its various interpretive trajectories. Here I will track and examine the progressive accretion of pejorative dimensions to the term, and, ultimately, attempt to identify when it first comes to assume the technical status of “heresy” (i.e., as it is seen and understood in the second-century and beyond).<sup>13</sup>

### Ἀρρεσις in Acts

The Greek term ἄρρεσις occurs thirteen times in Christian literature prior to Justin. The largest cluster of these citations (six times) can be found within the book of Acts (5:17; 15:5; 24:5; 26:5; 28:22). Here, the term is used to describe various groups. In Acts 5:17 and 15:5, the author identifies the ἄρρεσις τῶν Σαδδουκαίων and the

---

that (1) this text is part of a satirical account of a competition for one of the chairs in philosophy at Athens, (2) the passage itself cites this instance to be out of the norm as “followers of philosophy...ought, even if it should be something of importance, to settle their complaints peaceably among themselves” (1.3), and (3) ἄρρεσις does not come up in this text.

<sup>13</sup> In the following presentation of ἄρρεσις, I do not intend to argue for a strict chronological development in its meaning. While it may be possible to do so, the often problematic issue of dating may obscure the results. Instead, I will attempt to identify the interpretive trajectories found in the NT evidence of the term.

αἵρεσις τῶν Φαρισαίων, respectively. Furthermore, under accusations by the Jews, Paul defends himself before King Agrippa in 26:5, contending that all the Jews should know that “according to the strictest αἵρεσιν of our religion I lived, a Φαρισαῖος.” In each of these three cases, αἵρεσις is used in a “neutral sense”<sup>14</sup> to describe a party (i.e., Sadducees or Pharisees) within Judaism. The term itself does not convey any value assessment of the Sadducees or Pharisees here. It simply identifies them as distinct groups or parties within the Judaism of the time. Therefore, “party” or “group” best captures the contextual meaning here.<sup>15</sup>

While the above occurrences of αἵρεσις in the book of Acts all are used in description of either the Sadducees or Pharisees, the remaining three instances (i.e., Acts 24:5, 14; 28:22) are descriptors of earliest Christianity. However, the term “is

---

<sup>14</sup> Hans Conzelmann, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Hermenia, trans. James Lirmburg, A. Thomas Kraabel, and Donald H. Juel, eds. Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R. Matthews (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 40, 116. Conzelmann (40) also notes that “αἵρεσις...went through a development from the neutral usage which we find here to a more specific meaning.”

<sup>15</sup> While most scholars acknowledge the neutral usage of the term in this context, some have opted for the translation “sect.” “Sect” often carries a pejorative connotation in contemporary usage that is not found in these contexts and, thus, might obscure the neutrality of these references. Therefore, I contend that it does not capture the contextual meaning as well as the term “party” or “group.” Finally, it is interesting to see how various commentators have translated αἵρεσις, in these cases and throughout the book of Acts. James D. G. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Epworth Commentaries (Peterborough: Epworth Press, 1996) translates every occurrence of the term in Acts as “sect.” However, most other commentators alternate their translation of the term. Munck translates 5:17 and 15:5 as “party” but, without explanation, opts for “sect” in all other instances. Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) utilizes the triple option of “sect”/“party”/“school” for each case, and even hints at its possible use as “heresy.” Finally, Johnson uses “school” for 5:17, “party” for 15:5, “sect” for 24:5; 26:5; 28:22, and “heresy” for 24:14, providing no reasoning for his oscillation in translation. I aim to maintain greater interpretive consistency for αἵρεσις within Acts or, at least, provide credible warrant for any variation in the translation of the term.

not used by Christians with reference to their own community.”<sup>16</sup> Rather, “it was non-Christian Jews who called them an ἄρρεσις.”<sup>17</sup> The interpretive crux in these verses is visible in the following question: what exactly was ἄρρεσις, in the Jewish testimony, intended to convey about these early Christians?

In chapter 24, three accusations are brought against Paul. He is (1) a “pestilent fellow” and “an agitator amongst the Jews,” (2) a ringleader of the Ναζωραίων ἀιρέσεως, and (3) a desecrator of the temple. Each part of this three-fold indictment reflects an effort by Tertullus to disparage Paul before Felix and, hopefully, lead to his arrest or death. The first of these charges reflects an attempt to associate Paul with many who stirred up strife. The final charge is brought against Paul to imply that he had done something to warrant the death penalty. Finally, Bruce highlights the middle charge as an attempt to associate “him [i.e., Paul] with a messianic movement, and was calculated to arouse suspicion in a Roman official who knew how much trouble had lately been caused by political messianism and who might not distinguish between political and purely religious messianism.”<sup>18</sup>

If Bruce is accurate in his assessment (and I contend he is), then the next logical question (with respect to the second accusation) is: which term would have indicted Paul as this type of messianic leader? I would argue that it was

---

<sup>16</sup> F. F. Bruce, The Acts of the Apostles: Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary, third edition (Leicester: Apollos, 1990) 476.

<sup>17</sup> Bruce, Acts of the Apostles, 479. See also Witherington, Acts of the Apostles, 711.

Ναζωραίων, and not αἰρέσεως, which would have marked Paul in this way. The former term carries the messianic implications for Paul, not the latter.<sup>19</sup> The function of αἰρέσεως in 24:5 remains consistent with its previous usage in Acts, namely as a neutral descriptor. Paul is the leader of the *party* of the Nazoreans.

An acknowledgement of the above function of αἰρέσεως in 24:5 sets the stage for understanding its function in 24:14. Here, Paul rejects αἵρεσις, which was a Jewish descriptor of early Christianity, in favor of ἡ ὁδός. The basis for Paul's choice seems to be that "the Way was evidently the term favored by the Christians themselves."<sup>20</sup> "The critical difference [i.e., between αἵρεσις and τὴν ὁδόν] is the messianic claim to represent a legitimate (indeed, the authentic) form of Judaism."<sup>21</sup>

Paul's choice of terminology reveals this assertion. Thus, 24:14 could be emphasized as follows: though they (i.e., the Jews) say we are only an αἵρεσις or a "party" (i.e., one amongst many), we are actually *the only* party within Judaism that is the actual fulfillment of Israel.<sup>22</sup> Paul does not decry the Jewish application of

<sup>18</sup> Bruce, Acts of the Apostles, 476.

<sup>19</sup> Witherington, Acts of the Apostles, 708 contends that "the term αἰρέσεως here could be translated as sect or party (cf. 28:22), but it seems to begin to have its later pejorative sense of a 'heresy.'" I would reject Witherington's assessment of this verse based on the above argument.

<sup>20</sup> Bruce, Acts of the Apostles, 479. Luke Timothy Johnson, The Acts of the Apostles, Sacra Pagina, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5 (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1992) 412 notes that "if haireisis is the outsider designation for the messianists, 'the way' (hodos) is the insider designation." Cf. Witherington, Acts of the Apostles, 711.

<sup>21</sup> Johnson, Acts of the Apostles, 413.

<sup>22</sup> On this line of interpretation, see also C. K. Barrett, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles II, ICC, eds. J. A. Emerton, C. E. B. Cranfield, and G. N. Stanton (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998) 1104.

ἄρῃσις to early Christianity because the term itself is a “contemptuous designation”<sup>23</sup> or that it implies a “heresy.”<sup>24</sup> Rather, he rejects the term because it is too general. It does not reflect, in Paul’s estimation, the unique status of early Christianity amongst the many parties within Judaism. Therefore, I contend that this instance of ἄρῃσις reflects a continuation of the interpretive trajectory already observed within Acts, namely as “party” or “group.”

In the final occurrence of the term in Acts (i.e., 28:22), Paul is giving an account of his arrest before the Jewish leaders in Rome (as seen in Acts 24). Upon recounting his innocence of any crime against “our people” or “the customs of our ancestors” (28:17), the Jewish leaders acknowledge that they have received no “letters from Judea” or personal “reports” of evil concerning Paul (28:21). Therefore, they inquire about Paul’s knowledge of this ἄρῃσις, which has been spoken against everywhere (28:22). Yet, we are not told anything about the content of Paul’s response to them, other than that he spent an entire day trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and the Prophets.

It is visible, however, that the use of ἄρῃσις here reinforces quite an important commentary in Acts concerning the position of early Christianity within first-century Judaism. Johnson notes that “once more, Luke’s choice of language [i.e., his use of ἄρῃσις] places the messianic movement within the controversies of

---

<sup>23</sup> Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 199. Additionally, contra Desjardins, “Bauer and Beyond,” 74, the context does not “demand the translation ‘a non-legitimate sect or cult’.” It merely identifies them as a group or party (or in Desjardins’ terms, a “sect” or “cult”), without any evaluative implications.

first-century Judaism concerning the authentic realization of ‘Israel’ as the ‘people of God,’ in which the Christian voice was only one among many.”<sup>25</sup> This being on the lips of first-century Jews conveys the notion that even Jewish testimony acknowledges early Christianity to be a “party” within Judaism. While Paul makes an exclusive claim in 24:14, namely that “the Way” is more than simply an ἄρρεσις, it still is evident that ἄρρεσις (here in 28:22) denotes a “party” or “group” and that it does not itself carry any negative or pejorative aspects.

In summary, Luke uses ἄρρεσις six times in Acts. Two instances are Luke’s descriptors of the Sadducees (5:17) or Pharisees (15:5); one is Paul’s description of the Pharisees (26:5); and the other three are Luke’s account of Jewish testimony concerning early Christianity (24:5, 14; 28:22). Each of these instances of ἄρρεσις is used to identify the given group as a “party” within first-century Judaism, reflecting a neutral usage of the term found often in the Greek philosophical schools, as well as in the writings of Philo and Josephus.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, one must look elsewhere in the early Christian usage of ἄρρεσις to locate the first instance when it begins to assume pejorative characteristics and comes to demarcate “heresy.”

---

<sup>24</sup> See Witherington, *Acts of the Apostles*, 711 for his assessment of the term meaning “heresy” in this context.

<sup>25</sup> Johnson, *Acts of the Apostles*, 470.

<sup>26</sup> Schlier, “ἄρρεσις,” 182 notes that “the usage [of ἄρρεσις] in Acts corresponds exactly to that of Josephus and the earlier Rabbis....In these passages the term has the neutral flavour of ‘school’.” Cf. Simon, “From Greek *Hairesis*,” 105 and Von Staden, “*Hairesis* and Heresy,” 96-97.

## Αἵρεσις in Galatians

A form of the Greek term αἵρεσις also can be found in three of the letters attributed to Paul (1 Cor 11:19; Gal 5:20; and Tit 3:10). Each of these three instances reflect *intra-muros* contexts in early Christianity. In Galatians, αἵρέσεις occurs in a long paraenetic section (5:13-6:10), which is composed roughly of three main discourses: (1) Christian freedom and love (5:13-15), (2) living in the spirit versus living in the flesh (5:16-26), and (3) direct ethical exhortation to the Galatians (6:1-10).<sup>27</sup> Yet, since αἵρέσεις appears only in the middle discourse (i.e., in Gal 5:20), I will focus primarily on Paul's discussion of the flesh and the spirit in 5:16-26.

A large portion of Paul's discourse on the flesh and the spirit is composed of two catalogues or lists, one of vices (5:19-21) and one of virtues (5:22-23). Vice and virtue lists were quite popular forms of ethical teaching in much of the ancient world, including early Christianity.<sup>28</sup> On the employment of these lists, Betz notes that "without much difficulty they could be adapted to the various philosophical and

---

<sup>27</sup> Barclay, "Mirror-Reading," 87 surmises that each of these discourses contributes to Paul's intention of demonstrating that walking in the Spirit is a sufficient alternative to living under the law (5:14, 18, 23; 6.2).

<sup>28</sup> Longenecker, *Galatians*, 252 notes that "catalogues of virtues and vices, while originating among the Greeks, had permeated the ancient world before the NT was written and so became a common form in the ethical teaching of Greeks, Romans, Jews, and Christians alike." For Greek and Roman uses of these lists, see Longenecker, *Galatians*, 249-250. For Jewish examples, see Longenecker, *Galatians*, 251; Dunn, *Galatians*, 302; and Betz, *Galatians*, 282. Betz also notes that, though these lists were quite common in hellenistic Judaism, they are absent from the OT literature. Finally, for examples of other vice and/or virtue lists in early Christian literature, see Mark 7:21-22; Rom 1:29-31; 13:13; 1 Cor 5:9-13; 6:9-11; 2 Cor 12:20; Eph 4:17-19; 5:3-5; Col 3:5-8; 1 Thess 4:3-6; 1 Tim 1:9-10; 2 Tim 3:2-5; 1 Clem. 35:5; Did. 5:1-2; and Barn. 20:1-2.

religious schools of thought.”<sup>29</sup> In short, the very malleability of the form contributed to its broad usage. The primary importance of these catalogues, therefore, does not lie in an assessment of their form but in their function. Schweizer, in his study of vice lists in the New Testament, contends that they “emphasize sins against the common life in the brotherhood”; and that their function is not to “distinguish an outstanding group of high moral standards from the abominable immorality of the world” but “to show the church how much this world is still living in its midst.”<sup>30</sup> In other words, these lists often were used as a means by which an author could bring the particular sins of a people before them.

The vice list in Galatians 5:19-21 fits well within the above description of ethical catalogues. Contra Longenecker and Betz but in line with Dunn, it can be observed that Paul’s list of fifteen items here is not chaotic or entirely without order.<sup>31</sup> Rather, it is a diverse but carefully patterned list that is intended to elicit the assent of his readers through the broad presentation of items in the catalogue.<sup>32</sup> The

---

<sup>29</sup> Betz, *Galatians*, 282. For secondary literature on NT vice and/or virtue lists see Burton S. Easton, “New Testament Ethical Lists,” *JBL* 51 (1932) 1-12; Erhard Kamlah, *Die Form der katalogischen Paränese im Neuen Testament*, WUNT 7 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1964); Johannes Thomas, “Formgesetze des Begriffskatalogs im Neuen Testament,” *TZ* 24 (1968) 15-28; M. Jack Suggs, “The Christian Two Way Tradition: Its Antiquity, Form, and Function,” in *Studies in the New Testament and Early Christian Literature: Essays in Honor of A. P. Wikgren*, NovTSup, ed. D. E. Aune, vol. 33 (Leiden: Brill, 1972) 60-74; and Eduard Schweizer, “Traditional Ethical Patterns in the Pauline and post-Pauline Letters and Their Development,” in *Text and Interpretation: Studies in the New Testament Presented to Matthew Black*, eds. Ernest Best and Robert McL. Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1979) 207.

<sup>30</sup> Schweizer, “Traditional Ethical Patterns,” 207. For the order of this arrangement of Schweizer’s statements, see F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 247.

<sup>31</sup> Longenecker, *Galatians*, 253-254 and Betz, *Galatians*, 282 contend that Paul’s list in Gal 5:19-21 is without order.

<sup>32</sup> While I would contend that Gal 5:19-21 contains a pattern or order, I do not agree that it is a highly stylized passage, as argued by J. B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians: A Revised Text*

first three items in this vice list, *πορνεία*,<sup>33</sup> *ἀκαθαρσία*,<sup>34</sup> and *ἀσέλγεια*,<sup>35</sup> each reference sexual immorality and/or sensuality. The reason for beginning with this group of terms may well be connected to the pervasiveness of sexual perversion within the Greco-Roman environment from which the Galatians came and in which they still live.<sup>36</sup> These recently converted Galatians readily would have recognized these as taboo in their new context (i.e., Christianity).

The next two items in the list, *εἰδωλολατρία*<sup>37</sup> and *φαρμακεία*<sup>38</sup>, also stand out as prominent vices, as they were prohibitions central to maintaining the

---

with *Introduction, Notes, and Dissertations* (London: MacMillan, 1902) 211-212. Of vice lists in general, Dunn, *Galatians*, 302 states that “the degree of diversity in these lists indicates that it was the pattern which was common more than the content; but also that Paul in particular probably attempted to make his catalogue on each occasion appropriate to his readers’ situation.”

<sup>33</sup> *πορνεία* connotes unlawful sexual intercourse, or more explicitly, prostitution, unchastity, or fornication. The strict Jewish condemnation on the subject is reflected in some NT instances of the term: Matt 5:32; Mark 7:21; Acts 15:20, 29; 1 Cor. 5:1; 6:13, 18; and 2 Cor 12:21. Cf. Friedrich Hauck, “*πορνεία*,” in *TDNT*, vol. VI, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968) 579-595.

<sup>34</sup> *ἀκαθαρσία* generally indicates some type of uncleanness, which often required rectification via the cult. But the term also can be used in a moral sense, especially in close connection to sexual immorality (see 2 Cor 12:21; Eph 5:3; and Col 3:5). Cf. Friedrich Hauck, “*ἀκάθαρτος, ἀκαθαρσία*,” in *TDNT*, vol. III, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965) 427-431.

<sup>35</sup> The broad meaning of *ἀσέλγεια* is “insolence.” However, it also can connote “sexual excess” (Wis 14:26; Rom 13:13; 1 Pet 4:3; and 2 Pet 2:7). Cf. Otto Bauernfeind, “*ἀσέλγεια*,” in *TDNT*, vol. I, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) 490.

<sup>36</sup> See Guthrie, *Galatians*, 137.

<sup>37</sup> Friedrich Büchsel, “*εἰδωλολατρία*,” in *TDNT*, vol. II, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) 380 notes that the term denotes “a gross sin.” Furthermore, its prominence as a vice can be seen in its occurrence in many other NT vice lists (e.g., 1 Cor 5:10; 6:9; 10:7, 14; Col 3:5; Eph 5:5; 1 Pet 4:3; Rev 21:8; 22:15).

<sup>38</sup> *Φαρμακεία* too occurs in other early Christian vice lists, such as Barn. 20.1 and Did. 5.1, noting a common recognition of it as a sin/vice.

distinctiveness of Christian and Jewish identity.<sup>39</sup> Likewise, in the final three items (φθόνοι, μέθαι, and κῶμοι)<sup>40</sup> Paul again employs terms that are common to other vice lists and, thus, they likely would have been understood widely as being “fleshly” in nature. In recounting eight terms that would be held widely as examples of vices, Paul likely has gained quick assent from the Galatian congregations. There was little, if any, doubt that these eight terms demarcated widely known vices.

However, in the midst of these commonly acknowledged works of the flesh, Paul enumerates seven terms that are unified thematically.<sup>41</sup> They all relate to the theme of division. Again, it is not the individual terms that are of prime importance in this sub-section. Paul does not intend to convey that each term in the list indicates a distinct vice present amongst the Galatians. Rather, it is their collective force that is of primary significance. Dunn contends that these items “were probably intended to strike nearer home, as characterizing more closely their own situation or the danger in which they stood” and that διχοστασίαι and ἀίρέσεις

are the two words which stand out in the list as most unusual in comparison with other vice-catalogues. The implication again is clear, that Paul saw these as dangers particularly confronting the Galatian churches. His concern, we may say, was that the factionalism which disfigured late second-Temple Judaism might be imported into the new movement by the activities of the other missionaries.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> See Dunn, *Galatians*, 304.

<sup>40</sup> Each of these three terms also appears in various lists of vices within the NT: (1) φθόνος in Rom 1:29; 1 Tim 6:4; and 1 Pet 2:1; cf. Matt 27:18; Mark 15:10; Phil 1:15; (2) μέθη in Rom 13:13; cf. Luke 21:34; and (3) κῶμος in Rom 13:13 and 1 Pet 4:3. Additionally, it is noted in BAGD, 461 that in the NT, as well as in Philo, κῶμος is used “only in a bad sense—excessive feasting.”

<sup>41</sup> These seven terms are: ἐχθραί, ἔρις, ζήλος, θυμοί, ἐριθείαι, διχοστασίαι, and ἀίρέσεις.

<sup>42</sup> Dunn, *Galatians*, 304-305.

This set of seven terms collectively represents an attempt by Paul to place the present problem of divisions directly before the churches in Galatia. By surrounding this group of terms with a multitude of others that identify commonly held vices, it is Paul's hope that the Galatians would be quick to see the present divisions as being a vice on par with the others (e.g., sexual perversion, licentiousness, and carousing).

The issue of how to interpret ἀἰρέσεις within the context of Galatians 5:19-21 still remains to be addressed. The surrounding context (i.e., the vice list) in which ἀἰρέσεις occurs in Paul's letter to the Galatians prohibits it from being understood in the neutral manner that is seen in its usage in the book of Acts (and elsewhere). It cannot be said to refer simply to various distinct groups, schools, or parties. In this context, Paul employs the term within a set of seven terms that reflect a negative assessment of the social behavior existing among the Galatians. A distinct pejorative association is conveyed in this term (as well as the other six in the set).<sup>43</sup> In short, whether Paul was the first to use the term in this manner or whether he borrowed it from another source/author, we are able to observe here a new interpretive trajectory of ἀἵρεσις. It now is able to convey a pejorative assessment in its referential capacity, as it comes to mean "divisions." Though it does not yet demarcate "heresy" (as will be seen later in the Christian movement), a distinctive shift in the meaning of the term has occurred.

## Αἵρεσις in 1 Corinthians

In 1 Corinthians, αἵρέσεις appears in a pericope where Paul criticizes the Corinthians regarding certain behavior in their practice of assembly (11:19). Up to this point in the letter,

the trend of Paul's thought is the following: the long series of admonitions, including the answer to the questions of the Corinthians which also had the character of an admonition, is interrupted for a moment by the treatment of a case which gave occasion for praise. But Paul cannot continue in this vein for he knows that not everything the church does is worthy of praise.<sup>44</sup>

Paul's critique of the Corinthians in 11:17, "you come together not for the good but for the worse," exemplifies this contention. In other words, Paul's charge is that the Corinthians "are not better but worse off for having met."<sup>45</sup>

His bone of contention is with their behavior, specifically when they assemble ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ<sup>46</sup> (11:18) for the Lord's Supper (11:20). Paul, evidently, has received news that leads him to believe that there are σχίσματα among the Corinthians during their practice of the Lord's Supper and he believes it at least "in

---

<sup>43</sup> Simon, "From Greek *Hairesis*," 109 notes, of the occurrence of the term here in Gal 5:20, "the pejorative coloring...is clear." Cf. Desjardins, "Bauer and Beyond," 74.

<sup>44</sup> F. W. Grosheide, Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953) 264.

<sup>45</sup> C. K. Barrett, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Black's New Testament Commentaries (London: A & C Black, 1971) 260.

<sup>46</sup> For a discussion of this phrase, see Barrett, First Epistle to the Corinthians, 259 and Hans Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Hermenia, ed. George W. MacRae, trans. James W. Leitch (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975) 192.

part” (11:18).<sup>47</sup> Following this acknowledgement of the *σχίσματα*, Paul then states: “it is also necessary for *αἰρέσεις* to be among you in order that those who are approved may be made manifest from among you” (5:20). Here, the critical interpretive questions are: (1) what is the nature of this problem in Corinth and (2) how do *σχίσματα* and *αἰρέσεις* relate to the problem, as well as each other.

The problem that Paul identifies in the latter portion of 1 Corinthians 11 is that divisions are occurring when the Corinthians gather for a meal and a celebration of the Lord’s Supper. These divisions were based not on loyalties to various charismatic leaders, as in 1:10. Rather, they were divisions along economic lines.<sup>48</sup> The rich and poor members in the Corinthian congregations lived in relative isolation from one another. This is evident in the account of the current meal practice in Corinth.

The accepted practice was to bring separate meals to the common place, but they [i.e., the rich] were starting to eat before others arrived so that there was no common supper and no sharing. Since some of the members were very

---

<sup>47</sup> The source of this news is unknown to the reader. Whether it be from Chloe’s people (1:11) or “others” (17:17), it is important to note that it concerns divisive or schismatic behavior among the Corinthians.

<sup>48</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 537 convincingly notes four primary reasons why the divisions here in 11:17-34 are not the same ones in view in 1:10-4:21. They are based on (1) the nature of the basic definition/description of the divisions, (2) the presence or lack of an anti-Pauline sentiment, (3) the social locations or contexts of the divisions, and (4) the lack of coherence of “and I partly believe it,” (in 11:18), with the context in 1:10-4:21. Further, Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 857 contends that the divisions in 1:10 are external ones, in that they “reflect tensions between different ethos of different house groups.” Yet, here in this context, he notes that “the very house meeting itself reflects splits between the socially advantaged and the socially disadvantaged. They are ‘internal’ even within a single gathered meeting.”

poor, they did not have enough to eat and were hungry after supper while the prosperous were sated, some beyond propriety.<sup>49</sup>

Furthermore, it is likely that the wealthier members of the congregation were supplying not only their own food but also bringing extra provisions for the poor.<sup>50</sup> Yet, these additional provisions also were being consumed, either partially or entirely, by the rich prior to the arrival of the poor. In the midst of the most communal of early Christian activities, the self-centered practice of the rich was perpetuating the divisions between themselves and the poor members. Ultimately, the primary reason for Paul's displeasure is "not that the Corinthians are profaning a holy rite, but that they are fragmenting a holy society."<sup>51</sup>

In the above context, *σχίσματα* and *αἰρέσεις* both are descriptors that Paul affixes to the situation in Corinth. However, it should be noted that neither of these terms is applied directly to the marginal behavior of the rich. They both describe the social behavior of the Corinthians that was a result of the actions of the rich.

Furthermore, while the two terms are descriptively similar in Paul's usage, in that they both connote a pejorative view of social behavior and groupings in Corinth, he seems to assign a functionally unique quality to *αἰρέσεις*. Paul contends that, in

---

<sup>49</sup> William F. Orr and James Arthur Walther, *1 Corinthians*, AB, eds. William F. Albright and David Noel Freedman, vol. 32 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1976) 270.

<sup>50</sup> Leon Morris, *First Corinthians*, revised edition, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, ed. Leon Morris (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) 156-157.

<sup>51</sup> Orr and Walther, *1 Corinthians*, 269. Grosheide, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 267 notes that this behavior "was a violation of the character of a love feast."

the midst of the σχίσματα in Corinth, it is necessary for ἀιρέσεις to occur in order to reveal the ones who are genuine.<sup>52</sup> Thus, ἀιρέσεις or factions are not only an inevitable result of divisions, but they are also an eschatological pointer which identifies those who are approved and, consequently, those who are not.<sup>53</sup> Paul's use of ἀιρέσεις here would note the approved status of the poor, as well as negatively marking the rich in Corinth as those who are not approved, both in the current situation and eschatologically.

Even though ἀιρέσεις here reflects a degree of positive value in its functional capacity, the term itself does not assume any such inherent characteristics. I would contend that Paul does not hold ἀιρέσεις in an inherently positive light. He merely notes the inevitability of a separation of the approved from the unapproved when divisions occur.<sup>54</sup> The occurrence of the term here, then, does not reflect the value-free association of the term, as seen in the book of Acts, but the pejorative-based sense (seen in Galatians) that should be understood and translated as “divisions.”<sup>55</sup> Yet, it still has not come to denote “heresy.”<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup> Though there has been much discussion on how Paul can (seemingly) hold divisions to be negative and positive, many do not make much of the use of two different terms here in 1 Corinthians 11:18-19. Agreeably, it is very difficult to identify any distinct qualities that are inherent to the senses of these two terms. The prime study on these words (and this context) is Henning Paulsen, “Schisma und Häresie: Untersuchungen zu 1Kor 11, 18. 19,” *ZTK* 79 (1982) 180-211. Cf. Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 858-860.

<sup>53</sup> Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 538-539 emphasizes the eschatological (in addition to the sociological) significance of these divisions, which he takes to be “a reflection of Paul's ‘already/not yet’ eschatological perspective.” Cf. Schlier, “ἀιρέσεις,” 183.

<sup>54</sup> See Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 539.

<sup>55</sup> See Desjardins, “Bauer and Beyond,” 74.

## Αἵρεσις in Titus

The final occurrence of the term in the letters attributed to Paul is found in its adjectival form in Titus 3:10. Here αἵρετικόν, a *hapax legomenon* in the New Testament, is employed in primary modification of ἄνθρωπον.<sup>57</sup> The central question for the present linguistic inquiry is: in what precise way does αἵρετικόν modify ἄνθρωπον? What feature of this individual (or set of individuals) is being highlighted through the employment of the former term? Before this set of questions can be answered, a brief characterization of the setting of the letter is in order.

Titus, though quite short in length, is a letter that contains flashes of the author's white-hot emotion.<sup>58</sup> The author describes those being opposed as “rebellious people, idle talkers, and deceivers” (1:10), and contends “that they must be silenced” (1:11). Furthermore, he (1) characterizes them as “liars,” “vicious brutes,” and “lazy gluttons” (1:12), (2) contends that they have corrupt minds and consciences (1:15), and (3) summarizes his evaluation of them by declaring that they

---

<sup>56</sup> See Simon, “From Greek *Hairesis*,” 109.

<sup>57</sup> While the precise grammatical form may vary from its other occurrences within the NT (i.e., it is in adjectival form here but occurs as a noun elsewhere in the NT), this example remains a vital witness in the evolution of αἵρεσις and, thus, must be considered here.

<sup>58</sup> The author employs diverse categories of terminology in his assault. He draws upon: (1) stock terminology of defamation, as seen in his use of ζητήσεις, γενεαλογία, ἔρεις, and μάχας in 3:9, each of which is attested elsewhere as vices, especially ἔρεις, which is found in numerous vice lists (Rom 1:29; 13:13; 1 Cor 3:3; 2 Cor 12:20; Gal 5:20; and 1 Tim 6:4. Cf. 1 Cor 1:11 and Phil 1:15); (2) a disparaging quote from the Greek poet Epimenides (1:12); and (3) his own unique verbiage, as Ματαιολόγοι and φρεναπάται (1:10) are found only here in the NT and ἀνυπότακτοι (1:10) is found twice within Titus (see also 1:6). In short, the variety of sources within the author's polemic indicates the severity which he attached to the threat posed by the opponents, if not the actual seriousness of the situation itself.

are “detestable, disobedient [and] unfit for any good work” (1:16). We are not provided many details on this situation of conflict from 1:10-16, save that the opposition carries a Jewish flavor<sup>59</sup> and the disagreement is an internal one.<sup>60</sup> It appears that a group of Cretan Christians connected to Pauline traditions is struggling against the contention(s) of some Jewish Christians (1:10).

For additional comments by the author on the opponents or the situation of conflict reflected in the letter, one must proceed past the comparatively lengthy section of ethical exhortation (2:1-3:8) to 3:9-11.<sup>61</sup> In these three verses, the author highlights a context of division, which can be seen in the four terms used in 3:9: ζητήσεις, γενεαλογίας, ἔρεις, and μάχας. These verses, however, do not appear simply to provide general instructions for regulating behavior. The orderly regulation provided in 3:10, “to have nothing to do with an ἀίρετικὸν ἄνθρωπον after a first and second admonition,” implies that the recipients of the letter were experiencing such behavior or such a situation, which likely was related to the contingent situation that elicited the letter. This admonition seems to reflect a threat to the unity of the body there in Crete (at least in the estimation of the author).

---

<sup>59</sup> It appears that discussions related to the validity and/or necessity of law observance thwarts the Christian community in Crete (3:9), which is seen in the author’s reference to those of the “circumcision” (1:10) and the admonition to the readers not to pay attention to “Jewish myths” (1:14).

<sup>60</sup> The internal aspect of the situation is highlighted through some further observations: (1) these Jewish Christians have access to other Christians in order to teach them (1:11), (2) the author says that these persons “confess (ὁμολογοῦσιν) to know God” (1:16), and (3) the author instructs the readers not to banish these opponents but, hopefully, to admonish them back into faith (1:13; 3:10).

<sup>61</sup> J. N. D. Kelley, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Black’s New Testament Commentaries, ed. Henry Chadwick (London: A & C Black, 1963) 255 notes that “the verse [i.e., Titus 3:9] gives us a few more, though all too meager, details to supplement the tantalizingly vague picture” we see in 1:10-16.

For the purposes of the present study, it is now necessary to assess how αἰρετικὸν should be characterized in this instance. The primary contextual environment (i.e., 3:9-11) connects αἰρετικὸν ἄνθρωπον (1) to the four terms in 3:9 that are common vices related to the theme of divisions, (2) to the admonition to give the individual two warnings before cutting off any connection with him/her, and (3) to the modifiers ἐξέστραπται (“perverted”) and ἁμαρτάνει (“sins”). In light of these three associations, it is blatantly obvious that αἰρετικὸν here is imbued with a clear pejorative force. In other words, it matches up with the interpretive trajectory seen in its other Pauline instances.

However, the variation of its usage here, as compared to its occurrences in Galatians 5:20 and 1 Corinthians 11:19, should not be overlooked too hastily. First, here in Titus the term is associated directly with an individual or set of individuals. In this case, αἵρεσις has shifted from being a descriptor of the social divisions that result from the marginal behavior (i.e., as seen in Galatians and 1 Corinthians), to being a descriptor of the persons themselves who are enacting the marginal behavior. The term functions here, then, not simply as a pejorative descriptor, but more emphatically as a label that characterizes negatively a specific individual. Thus, αἰρετικὸν not only retains the pejorative association that it took on in the other Pauline instances of the word, but furthers them by applying the pejorative aspect to a specific individual, based on his/her behavior.

Second, the usage of the term here in Titus coincides with evidence of an emerging disciplinary order designed to deal with such persons. Though we do not know if the author is the first to establish this guideline or if he is reiterating an already instituted order, its presence here reflects an increased level of institutionalization within the church (especially, when compared with Galatians and 1 Corinthians).<sup>62</sup> The presence of such a disciplinary order reflects an increased awareness of and guarding against these persons and their behavior.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, the term not only reflects something negative but someone who must be separated from and denounced. In short, this type of individual is becoming more widely recognized due to his/her behavior, which assumes a broader understanding of the threat the person posed to the unity of the body.

For these two reasons (and others), the meaning and translation of the term appears to be “on the edge between ‘factious’ [or “divisive”] and ‘heretical.’”<sup>64</sup> The type of behavior being spoken against by the author of Titus resembles the divisiveness seen in the previous Pauline occurrences, hence the inclination to understand and translate it as “divisive” here. However, since the term now is used in reference to an individual and is connected to a developing order of discipline, it

---

<sup>62</sup> On the progressive institutionalization of the church in the NT period, see MacDonald, The Pauline Churches.

<sup>63</sup> Simon, “From Greek *Hairesis*,” 109 notes that “here the initiative to break with the church does not proceed from this ‘wayward sinner’ but from the ecclesiastical authority; there seems to be some form of excommunication but it is motivated primarily by a moral or disciplinary failing.”

<sup>64</sup> J. L. Houlden, The Pastoral Epistles: I and II Timothy, Titus, New Testament Commentaries, eds. Howard Clark Kee and Dennis Nineham (London: SCM, 1989) 155.

hints at denoting “heresy.”<sup>65</sup> Many resist this latter translation, though, since the marginality in question is behavioral and not doctrinal and because it is thought that speaking of heresy in this period is anachronistic due to the lack of an established orthodoxy.<sup>66</sup> Though I would contend that there are some valid responses that could be marshaled against these objections, I too in the end lean slightly toward understanding ἀίρετικόν as “divisive” or “factious,” and not yet as “heretical” here. Therefore, I still would identify this usage of the term as being in continuity with the pejoratively-based interpretive trajectory of the term seen in its Pauline usage. However, I also would note that it is a significant development within that trajectory, as it reflects a more pronounced pejorative sense, which is a germinal indicator of the term emerging into its meaning as “heresy.”<sup>67</sup>

### Αίρεσις in 2 Peter

The final canonical occurrence of the Greek term ἀίρεσις can be found in 2 Peter (2:1). Here it occurs in the first verse of the author’s most direct effort to combat the teaching of the false prophets (i.e., chapter two). Specifically, the term is found in

---

<sup>65</sup> Schlier, “ἀίρεσις,” 184 takes this instance of the term as being used in its later technical sense, namely as an “adherent of a heresy.”

<sup>66</sup> It should be noted that these objections are based on the ecclesiastical understanding of “heresy.” As such, “heresy” could only be used in reference to a variance in doctrine or belief (not just behavior) that was established firmly and accepted widely (i.e., an orthodoxy).

<sup>67</sup> See Simon, “From Greek *Hairesis*,” 109.

the “topic sentence” for the subsequent polemic, as it highlights the ideas that will be treated later on in the chapter.<sup>68</sup>

Within the first three verses of chapter two there are several bits of information that in some way modify ἀιρέσεις and, thus, are valuable indicators of the proper interpretation of the term here. The context highlights that these ἀιρέσεις: (1) are characterized as “destructive” (ἀπώλεια), (2) stem directly from the false teachers, (3) are being brought in secretly, maliciously, or in some other underhanded way (παρεισάξουσιν),<sup>69</sup> (4) include a denial of “the Master who bought them,” (5) will cause the false teachers to bring swift destruction (ταχινην ἀπώλειαν) upon themselves, (6) will still have many who follow them, and (7) will be a part of how the false teachers malign the way of truth. These seven modifying characteristics of ἀιρέσεις leave little doubt that the term is not a favorable one for the author. It is not here a neutral modifier of a group of people and, thus, does not fit with the interpretive trajectory of the term as is observed in the book of Acts. Additionally, since each of these modifying features (with the possible exception of number six) carries an explicit negative perspective or tone, it clearly bears the pejorative aspect peculiar to the interpretive trajectory of the term evident in Galatians and 1 Corinthians.

---

<sup>68</sup> I have borrowed the phrase “topic sentence” from Jerome H. Neyrey, The Form and Background of the Polemic in 2 Peter (Unpublished dissertation: Yale University, 1977) 186-187. He goes on to perform a closer examination of the connections between the ideas introduced in 2:1-3 and their later discussion in the chapter.

<sup>69</sup> See Charles Bigg, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1901) 271; J. N. D. Kelley, A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and

Yet, I would contend that, as with its occurrence in Titus, the contextual environment within 2 Peter hints at a new dimension(s) of the usage of the term.<sup>70</sup> Most prominent among these contextual features is the fact that the term now is being used in reference not only to “wrong” behavior (as seen in Titus) but also to “wrong” belief. The author notes that included within these αἱρέσεις is the fact that some are denying Christ and his salvific efficacy (2:1), which is a clear reference to a belief that the author of 2 Peter considers to be in error. It is not that the author of 2 Peter did not perceive any error in practice within the congregations. It is clear that he has concern with both belief and practice at various points in the epistle. Yet for the first time in its early Christian usage, αἱρέσις has come to demarcate (at least the perception of) error in (a central) belief. Though a new (pejorative) aspect can be observed in the Pauline evidence of the term, it is not until its occurrence here in 2 Peter that it comes to demarcate belief that is perceived to be erroneous, which is a hallmark of the later Christian conception and application of heresy (in its ecclesiastical definition).

Moreover, additional factors highlight the new functional dimension of αἱρέσεις here in 2 Peter 2:1. First, the fact that those who disseminated such teaching are characterized as “false-teachers” (ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι in 2:1) clearly reflects a belief that was deemed (by the author of 2 Peter) to be false. The author

---

of Jude, Black’s New Testament Commentaries, ed. Henry Chadwick (London: A & C Black, 1969) 327; and Neyrey, The Form and Background of the Polemic in 2 Peter, 190.

<sup>70</sup> It should be noted that, as compared with the other occurrences of αἱρέσις within the NT, 2 Peter provides the fullest and most detailed contextual environment for interpreting the term, which is evidenced by the above list of modifying characteristics.

leaves the reader little doubt as to the veracity of the teaching/belief in question. It is false and has been introduced into the congregations in a secret or malicious fashion.<sup>71</sup>

Additionally, one should not overlook the response that the author instructs the believers to give to such an individual, as well as the characterization of his/her fate. In Titus, we observed that the readers are admonished to give the ἀίρετικόν man two warnings before taking any action against him/her (3:10). Yet it is interesting that when we turn to 2 Peter, no such delay is called for. The readers are not only not instructed to attempt to bring the individual(s) back into the fold, but they also are not provided any “warning system” or church order that dictates how to handle such individuals and their beliefs. I would contend that it is wrong to conclude (from this) that no such ecclesiastical or communal order existed at the time, for we see a great deal of formation occurring within the Christianity of the time (e.g., that which is seen in the Pastoral Epistles). Rather, I would argue that the lack of such instructions reflects the author’s awareness of the heightening of the threat that these ἀίρέσεις posed to the Christian community there. In short, the severity of the exigence to the distinct identity of the Christian congregations dictated that any such order be shelved (at least in this case) in favor of immediate action.

The gravity of the fate of these false teachers, who are introducing the ἀίρέσεις, is great. Again, in Titus the readers are instructed to cut off contact with

---

<sup>71</sup> See BAGD, 624 for this characterization of παρεισάγω.

a *αίρετικόν* man. Yet, when we reach 2 Peter the author calls for no such social actions but strongly emphasizes that these persons are destined for destruction.<sup>72</sup> *Απώλεια* is employed by the author to characterize the opponents' *αίρέσεις* (2:1), the type of punishment that they will bring upon themselves (2:1), and the fate that awaits them, having been pronounced long ago (2:3), namely eschatological judgment and destruction. As seen here (and elsewhere in the New Testament), *ἀπώλεια* signifies a destruction that is punishment for the wicked.<sup>73</sup> In short, due to the *αίρέσεις* of these individuals, they are destined not simply for social isolation but for eschatological damnation, as a severe and permanent punishment.

In all, the above features highlight a context that is markedly distinct from any of the previous contexts in which the term occurs. Not only is the term applied in 2 Peter to a specific offense (as well as individuals), that offense includes error in belief that is foundational to the Christian community (i.e., Jesus' ability to forgive sins and, thus, offer salvation). Furthermore, the intensity of the response and punishment indicated by the author reflects a heightening of the awareness of what is being dealt with here. It is not here simply a matter of church order or communal harmony. Rather, the level of intolerance within the response of the author indicates that he understands the norm being protected to be of vital importance to the continued existence and distinctiveness of the community. Due to this new setting, I

---

<sup>72</sup> I assess the author's use of the destruction imagery in Troy A. Miller, "Dogs, Adulterers, and the Way of Balaam: The Forms and Socio-Rhetorical Function of Polemical Rhetoric in 2 Peter," *IBS* 22 (2000) 134-135.

<sup>73</sup> See BAGD, 103 and Phil 1:28; 3:19.

would contend that ἄρρεσις has assumed a new interpretive trajectory. I contend that this is the first instance where ἄρρεσις comes to denote a deviance in belief that stands in opposition to a central tenet of the emerging Christian movement (i.e., the belief in Jesus' ability to forgive sins and offer salvation).<sup>74</sup> In short, it is the first instance where ἄρρεσις comes to denote "heresy" and should be translated as such.<sup>75</sup>

Upon review of the evidence of ἄρρεσις in the New Testament, we see the following three main interpretive trajectories: (1) a neutral usage of the term, as seen in the book of Acts, that was used to identify distinct groups or parties; (2) a pejorative usage of the term, as seen in Galatians, 1 Corinthians, and Titus, that marked divisive social behavior within the body of believers; and (3) a heightened pejorative or even defamatory usage of the term, as seen in 2 Peter, that was employed as a label to demarcate errant or wrong beliefs about things central to Christian identity (i.e., "heresy").<sup>76</sup>

---

<sup>74</sup> Though I would not contend that a firm orthodoxy had been established by the time of 2 Peter, I would argue that there are signs of a developing orthodoxy, as seen in the various early catholic features of the letter.

<sup>75</sup> See, e.g., Desjardins, "Bauer and Beyond," 74 and Rudolph, "Heresy: An Overview," 270.

<sup>76</sup> It is important to make clear that, though the term clearly is used in a pejorative sense in some of the occurrences within the NT, and though its meaning as "heresy" comes to dominate the usage of the term in the second-century and beyond, it does not do so to the exclusion of the other sense(s) of the term. See, e.g., *Acts of Philip* 15; *Clement Strom.* 7.15.89; 7.92.3; Origen, *C. Cels.* 3.13; and a discussion of these type of texts in Von Staden, "*Hairesis* and Heresy," 96-98 and Brox, "Häresie," 256-259. The historical reality is that the neutral sense of the term, within its earliest Christian usage, faded into the background. Yet, linguistically speaking ἄρρεσις did not lose this sense. Its usage merely declined in favor of this other highly pejorative sense (i.e., as heresy).

The claim that αἵρεσις came to demarcate heresy within the New Testament literature, specifically at 2 Peter 2:1, is not a highly controversial or contentious one. In fact, many who have undertaken studies of the term have noted its occurrence in 2 Peter as an early example of its usage as “heresy,” with its occurrences in the letters of Ignatius (*Eph.* 6.2; *Trall.* 6.1) as being roughly contemporaneous.<sup>77</sup> Yet, though various studies have attempted to explain when αἵρεσις came to demarcate “heresy,” as I have done above, none has endeavored to provide an explanation for how or why this (interesting) evolution of the term took place. In focusing on the historical questions (i.e., “when”) related to the emergence of the term, some foundational issues related to general linguistic theory (i.e., “why” and “how”) have been overlooked.

In an effort to address these neglected issues, I will make two, more general inquiries related to general linguistic theory: (1) how, or in what basic ways, do words undergo change in meaning (this essentially is a question of paradigms for change in the meaning of words)? and (2) what type of factors contribute to, or even provide the impetus for, such change? In an effort to address these questions and ultimately explain how they might contribute to our understanding of αἵρεσις and the emergence of the notion of heresy in early Christianity, I now will turn to linguistic theory in general and semantics in specific.

---

<sup>77</sup> See, e.g., Simon, “From Greek *Hairesis*,” 109-110.

## Αἰρεσις and Semantic Change

The sub-section of general linguistic theory that is devoted to the study of words and their meanings is “semantics.” This discipline addresses some of the most foundational questions in linguistic theory such as, what is the relationship between words and meaning? And (similarly) how is it that words come to convey meaning? Additionally and more directly pertinent to the present study, the field of semantics includes the study of how the meaning of a word changes. As the meaning of a word is composed of both its sense (i.e., the “literal meaning” of a word) and its association (i.e., the perception ascribed to a term), a change in meaning can occur in either or both of these aspects.<sup>78</sup> Below, I will consider common ways in which each of these two aspects of word meaning commonly undergoes change.

In general, three basic paradigms for change in the sense of a word have come to prominence within the field of linguistics: generalization, specialization, and transfer of meaning.<sup>79</sup> When the sense of a word expands to include more referents than it had previously, “generalization” is the label applied to the type of change. In

---

<sup>78</sup> On these two aspects of a word, see Thomas Pyles and John Algeo, The Origins and Development of the English Language, third edition (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982) 242.

<sup>79</sup> See Pyles and Algeo, The Origins and Development, 242-247. Though Pyles and Algeo have focused their work almost exclusively on the English language, their presentation is modeled after theory that is not limited to English. On these three paradigms of change in the sense of a word as seen in general linguistic theory, see also Adrian Akmajian, Richard A. Demers, and Robert M. Harnish, Linguistics: An Introduction to Language and Communication (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1981) 212; Victoria Fromkin and Robert Rodman, An Introduction to Language (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1974) 207; and Kirsten Malmkjær, “Historical Linguistics,” in The Linguistics Encyclopedia, ed. Kirsten Malmkjær (New York: Routledge, 1991) 206. However, due to the greater clarity of presentation by Pyles and Algeo, I will refer primarily to their work in order to elucidate this aspect of semantics. Lastly, since I will be recounting theory from linguistics and semantics that is common within the discipline, I will not provide notation for every individual point. Rather, I refer the reader to the resources noted above, which are the sources on which the following presentation is based.

this case, the number of features (that were previously) distinctive to the given word shrinks and, thus, its scope is expanded. A common example used in introductory texts to highlight the linguistic phenomenon of generalization, is that of “tail.” In previous usage of the term, it referred specifically to “a hairy caudal appendage, as of a horse.” Yet, as time passed, the characteristic of “hairiness” became less distinctive of the term so that it began to be used in reference to any “caudal appendage” (hairy or not), which is its sense, for example, in its modern English usage.

A second type of change in the sense of a word is “specialization,” which describes the case where a word constricts to include fewer referents than it had previously. This type of change in meaning is the exact opposite of generalization. Here, the number of features distinctive to the given word increases, thus limiting its referential scope. A common example used to highlight this category is the word “hound,” which at one time was a linguistic equivalent to “dog.” Yet, over the years, the idea of “hunting” became added to the term (i.e., “hound”). As a result, “hound” came to identify not dogs in general, but came to denote a specific type of dog, namely a hunting dog. Linguistically speaking, the scope of “hound” was restricted and, thus, the sense of the term had undergone “specialization.”

A third paradigm for how the sense of a word may change is referred to as “transfer of meaning.” This category is broader than the previous two, in that it can include a number of other types of changes. When the sense of a word expands to include a quite different set of referents than it had previously, the “transfer of

meaning” label is affixed to it. Here, the alteration of the sense of the term does not occur within the general parameters in which it originally was understood (as seen in generalization and specialization).<sup>80</sup> In “transfer of meaning” a new set of referential distinctives is added to the current set, and often the former is markedly unrelated to the latter. An example of this can be seen in the terms “long” and “short.” These two terms originated as spatial markers, referring to length. However, as time passed, the words began to be used in other spheres, such as time. The shift of these terms from one set of referents (e.g., demarcation of length) to another (i.e., demarcation of time) represents an alteration in the sense of the terms.

Other common examples of this category are drawn from metaphorical expressions. The phrase “the foot of the hill” represents a metaphorical usage of the term “foot,” which formerly was used only in reference to a part of the body. Now, though, it has come to mark the base or foundation of other items (e.g., a hill). Again, a new set of referents has been ascribed to the word and, thus, it reflects the “transfer of meaning” paradigm change in the sense of the term.

---

<sup>80</sup> Both generalization and specialization refer to specific changes that occur within the general parameters of the original sense of a word. Turning back to the previously noted examples, “tail” did not come to be used, for example, of an appendage protruding from the facial region (i.e., a nose). It still was used in reference to a caudal appendage, even though it was no longer necessary for it to be a hairy one. Likewise, “hound” did not come to be used (for example) of a cat or a horse. It retained its reference to the same type of animal (namely a dog), even though it now referenced only one type of that animal rather than the whole species. These examples reflect distinct changes in the sense of a word but ones that remained within the same general confines in which the word originated. The type of change that occurs in the “transfer of meaning” category is one that is characterized by the taking on of a distinctly new set of referents.

In addition to a change in sense or literal meaning, a word also may undergo a change in its association, of which there are two types.<sup>81</sup> A word may come to be held in lower esteem, prominence, or value than it previously elicited, or it may rise (comparatively) in these same areas. The former paradigm is referred to as “pejoration.” An example of this type of change in association is evident in the noun “censure.” An early meaning of the term simply was “opinion.” However, over the course of time, it began to take on the idea specifically of “a bad opinion.”<sup>82</sup> Likewise, “criticism” previously lacked the pejorative association often ascribed to the term in its modern popular usage.

On the other hand, “amelioration” is the label that represents the opposite paradigm. The comparative rise in the association of a given word is exemplified well in the term “knight.” Formerly, the term meant “servant.” Yet, in its more modern usage the term has shed this servile connotation and has come to serve as a special and exalted title.

In light of this discussion of semantics and change in meaning, we are now able to turn our attention back to ἀῤρεσις in an effort to characterize the manner in which it has undergone a change in meaning. As to the association of the term, it obviously has undergone pejoration. The meaning of the term in classical Greek was

---

<sup>81</sup> Again, my discussion of the association aspect of semantic change is borrowed largely from Pyles and Algeo, The Origins and Development, 247-248 but can be observed in other works on general linguistics.

<sup>82</sup> It may be observed that the change in the meaning of the noun “censure” not only exemplifies pejoration but also specialization, in that it refers not to all opinions but specifically and only to ones that are held to be bad. Yet, since the change in the meaning of the word is best and most fully explained by the change in association, pejoration stands as an apt description of it.

distinctly neutral, most often demarcating a “choice” or “group.” Yet, in its New Testament usage, even before it comes to demarcate “heresy,” it takes on a markedly negative or pejorative association (as seen in the Pauline evidence of the term). This association then is magnified in its usage in 2 Peter, where it is a pejorative label applied to the belief(s) of another group that was considered to be false.

The question of whether or not the sense of ἄρρεσις also has undergone a change is not quite as unambiguous. We quickly can rule out generalization, though. Ἀρρεσις does not have a wider or expanded scope of reference in its later versus its earlier usage. Furthermore, though the term moves from being a descriptor of any given group (in one of its classical Greek meanings) to a descriptor of only those persons deemed to be in error (which would seem to reflect a type of specialization), this alteration is best represented by the pejoration paradigm related to the term’s association.<sup>83</sup> That leaves the “transfer of meaning” category. Does ἄρρεσις undergo a distinct shift in its set of referents within the New Testament evidence?

It should be noted that we do observe a variation in the precise object to which ἄρρεσις is affixed. In classical Greek the term is used in description of a group, especially philosophical groups that held distinct tenets. Though ἄρρεσις is applied in a very similar (if not identical) manner in some of its New Testament occurrences (i.e., referring to distinct groups in Acts), it also comes to demarcate an individual (Titus 3:10), a specific type of negative social behavior (Gal 5:20; 1 Cor

---

<sup>83</sup> See the previous note in this chapter on the word “censure,” which reflects a similar type of semantic change.

11:19), and a specific tenet or belief (2 Pet 2:1). The application of the term to an individual (Tit 3:10) represents only a minor variation from its former demarcation of a group. Formerly it identified a collective, and here it is used of an individual.<sup>84</sup> Again, this variation does not reflect a significant shift in the sense of the term.

Additionally, the application of ἀίρεσις to a specific belief (2 Pet 2:1) mirrors its classical usage as a term that distinguished philosophical groups that held to specific lines of thought. In 2 Peter, what distinguishes this individual from the rest is that he/she holds to a specific belief (i.e., “denying the master who bought them”), which is deemed by the author to be contrary to the foundations of the group. In short, the person is being distinguished based upon the beliefs that he/she holds—a usage of ἀίρεσις that reflects an already established sense of the term.

Finally, the use of ἀίρεσις to describe a type of social behavior (Gal 5:20 and 1 Cor 11:19) may well come closest to identifying a new sense of the term. However, I would contend that the divisions so noted by these two instances of the term are not too dissimilar to how the classical sense of ἀίρεσις was used to distinguish or divide between Greek philosophical groups. Even though ἀίρεσις, here in Galatians and 1 Corinthians, was being used to convey a pejorative association to the behavior of these groups, the sense of the word still remained connected to the demarcation of groups (cf. the use of the term in Philo, Josephus,

---

<sup>84</sup> The general note of instruction that surrounds the term here in Titus (i.e., it is to be taken as a general principle for maintenance of internal order), may well diminish the emphasis upon an individual as over against a group. It could be applied over and over to as many persons who needed this type of censure.

classical Greek literature, and Acts). In all, then, I would contend that in its New Testament occurrences the sense of ἄρπεις has not changed from what it meant previously. There has not been a distinct enough shift in its set of referents to warrant such a judgment. The change in the meaning of the term is isolated to the pejorative association it assumed during the New Testament period.

Now that I have assessed the manner in which ἄρπεις underwent a change in meaning, I will attempt to offer a basis for why this change in the association of the term occurred. Here, I again will rely upon various aspects of linguistic theory, namely historical linguistics and sociolinguistics.<sup>85</sup> When approaching the question of why a word undergoes a change in meaning or even what forces or factors contribute to such a change, it should be noted that a comprehensive answer is not always possible.<sup>86</sup> Word change often is induced by a combination of forces and factors, some of which are not readily identifiable. However, if we shift the dynamic of the question to inquire if we can evaluate the relative importance of *a single* force

---

<sup>85</sup> For an introduction to “historical linguistics,” see Malmkjær, “Historical Linguistics,” 189-218, and for “sociolinguistics,” see William Labov, Sociolinguistic Patterns (Oxford: Blackwell, 1972) and Joyce O. Hertzler, A Sociology of Language (New York: Random House, 1965).

<sup>86</sup> On the speculative nature of identifying why words change in meaning, see Fromkin and Rodman, An Introduction to Language, 210. Some may even highlight further the speculative nature of such an endeavor based on the axioms of linguistics that all language changes over time and that language is in a continual process of change. See Malmkjær, “Historical Linguistics,” 195 and Fromkin and Rodman, An Introduction to Language, 191. They note that all words communicate only when the surrounding culture agrees to ascribe a certain set of characteristics to a given word. This “agreement” has the potential of being (and often is) altered by every new generation, if not even within a given generation. In response to such a characterization, we first must concede that a comprehensive list of factors influential to the change of meaning in ἄρπεις, or most any other term, likely is beyond our (and anyone’s) grasp. However, all is not despair. We certainly are able to assess whether a single (or even limited set of) force or factor was influential in a word’s change in meaning. Furthermore, as is noted below, since social factors and forces play a vital (possibly the most vital) role in semantic change, it seems even more probable that we ought to be able to assess the relative

or factor with respect to the change in meaning of a specific term, the probability of success increases greatly due to the more isolated nature of the examination.

Furthermore, I would contend that the prospect of gauging the importance of a given force or factor on the change in meaning for a specific word increases dramatically when we turn to social dimensions. It is a noted axiom of linguistics not only that language is a social phenomenon but that “linguistic and social factors are interrelated in language change.”<sup>87</sup> The two have a reciprocal type of relationship. Language has been observed to influence social life, a theory often referred to as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. Yet, social forces and factors also have been cited as prime factors behind the evolution of language and, in relation to the question currently at hand, behind the change in meaning of words. Emphasizing the vital importance of social forces in semantic change, Labov states that “it now seems clear that one cannot make any major advance towards understanding the mechanism of linguistic change without serious study of the social factors which motivate linguistic evolution.”<sup>88</sup>

In light of these observations from linguistics and sociolinguistics, I will turn my attention toward the social factors that may have been influential in the semantic

---

importance (or unimportance) of a specific social force/factor within the change of meaning of a given word.

<sup>87</sup> Malmkjær, “Historical Linguistics,” 195. Additionally, Hans Heinrich Hock, “Causation in Language Change,” in *International Encyclopedia of Linguistics*, vol. 1, ed. William Bright (New York: Oxford U. Press, 1992) 230 emphasizes the fact that “the causes and directions of change are not predictable through purely linguistic scenarios.”

<sup>88</sup> Labov, *Sociolinguistic Patterns*, 252. Hock, “Causation in Language Change,” 230 notes Labov’s work in the 1960s as being foundational in identifying social factors as the basis for much linguistic change.

change of ἄρρεσις. I will attempt to demonstrate that the dynamic of internal social conflict, as seen in at least one strand of late Second Temple Judaism and much of first-century Christianity, was a significant factor in the change of meaning (in association) of ἄρρεσις within the New Testament and that this social dynamic served as the context out of which the early Christian notion of heresy initially emerged.

### The New Testament Evidence of Ἀρρεσις and the Emergence of the Early Christian Concept of Heresy

As implied at a previous point in this chapter, it is my contention that the New Testament evidence of the Greek term ἄρρεσις is instructive for tracking the emergence of the idea of heresy in early Christianity. The various ways in which ἄρρεσις was used in the New Testament period demarcate critical junctures not only in the evolution of the term but also in the emergence of the concept of heresy itself. Yet, the linguistic evidence of ἄρρεσις, by itself, lacks the capacity to explain how the concept of heresy (or even the term) emerged. It is impotent in its ability to identify what forces or factors were vital in, and possibly even caused, the evolution of the term and conceptual category from one interpretive trajectory to another. This is precisely the point, I contend, where the location, tracking, and analysis of the dynamic of internal social conflict (noted in chapters 3-6)

complements the linguistic analysis of ἄρρεσις in attempting to identify how and from what context the early Christian notion of heresy initially emerged.

In the evidence of ἄρρεσις in the book of Acts, we may have the earliest extant Christian usage of the term. In each instance of the term within the book, it reflects the standard way in which Jewish groups or parties (here, the Sadducees, Pharisees, and early Christians) were identified with Greek conceptual categories (i.e., as an ἄρρεσις). Also, we see a consistent emphasis (by Luke) in the usage of the term in Acts, namely that early Christianity was a group on the landscape of first-century Judaism. Barrett encapsulates the importance of the usage of ἄρρεσις in Acts, with respect to the perception first-century Roman Jews had of Christianity, by surmising that

it would mean that the Roman Jews still thought of Christianity as one sect, with its own interpretation of Jewish principles, within Judaism; this indeed is the way in which it is on the whole presented in Acts, though it is presented as a form of Judaism with open access to Gentiles.<sup>89</sup>

The strong similarities between how ἄρρεσις is used in the book of Acts and previous Jewish usage of the term, elevates the likelihood that Acts accurately preserves (at least in its usage of ἄρρεσις) early sentiment of Roman Jews concerning Christianity.<sup>90</sup> By deduction, then, we would be on even firmer ground

---

<sup>89</sup> Barrett, Acts of the Apostles II, 1242.

<sup>90</sup> We are hard pressed to assign a specific date to when this testimony arose. A few observations, though, might narrow the span. First, it obviously would have to represent some point after the resurrection of Jesus and some point before the writings of Paul, where the term is demonstrably pejorative in its meaning. Second, it would seem to reference a period prior to the growing recognition of distinct differences between these Nazoreans and the other Jewish groups/parties; in other words, before we can see much evidence of the partings of the ways. Though this does not

to cite these instances in Acts as the earliest Christian employment of the term.<sup>91</sup> At this stage, however, the neutral association of the term provides no basis upon which to identify the emergence of the notion of heresy.<sup>92</sup> This is not to say (necessarily) that there were no forces or factors already at work that later would have an impact on the emergence of the idea of heresy. There simply is no evidence of such things yet.

As we move chronologically forward, the next instances of the term that we meet are ones from two of the earlier letters of Paul, namely Galatians and 1 Corinthians.<sup>93</sup> As noted earlier in this chapter, we encounter here a distinct shift in the association of the term; one that reflects the pejoration paradigm of general semantic change. In short, ἄρπεις has taken on in these instances a negative or

---

enable us to mark a precise date regarding this testimony, I would assume it to be in the 30s or early 40s.

<sup>91</sup> It is important to note that the thesis does not rest upon this assumption about ἄρπεις in Acts. If the usage of ἄρπεις in Acts reflects Luke's assessment of the groups, more so than the earlier Jewish testimony, then we have an instance where the neutral usage or association of the term carried on in some level of prominence. In fact, we do see ἄρπεις used in a neutral manner even after the term has taken on a very technical status (i.e., as "heresy") in the mid-second century and beyond. Yet, in all, I find it difficult to conceive of Luke employing such a term if he was aware of its pejorative association, as it would convey a very different set of implications about the groups he uses it in reference to. Therefore, I would conclude that either (1) the term in Acts is a genuine reflection of common Jewish usage of the term (which is built upon the hellenistic usage) concerning the groups/parties within first-century Judaism, as well as the early Christian movement, or (2) Luke later affixed the term to such groups without any knowledge of the negative association that it was beginning to take on. Though evidence for distinguishing between these two options is slim, I would favor the former over the latter option based on the arguments presented here.

<sup>92</sup> Even if these instances of ἄρπεις are later (i.e., after Paul) descriptors of Luke that are placed onto the lips of the Jews, the term is still used in a neutral manner and, thus, does not provide any indication of an emerging pejorative association of the term nor the emergence of the concept of heresy in early Christianity.

<sup>93</sup> I am identifying a date for both of these letters as being within the early to mid 50s. Again, since I am working with the broad progression of a term and a conceptual category, I do not find it necessary to argue for specific dates within that range, but rather to leave it in this more general sense.

even pejorative association that had not been conveyed in any previous (extant) usage. Therefore, we see here an (linguistic) innovation in Paul's use of the term.

The critical question, then, is, what forces or factors might have contributed to or stand as an impetus for this change in the meaning (i.e., association) of ἄρπεις? In other words: what was it that informed Paul's employment of the term here in the early to middle 50s, which would have contributed to it taking on a negative/pejorative association? As the linguistic evidence of ἄρπεις affords little aid in addressing these questions, I offer the dynamic of internal social conflict as a (partial but prominent) answer. In specific, I contend that the first-century situations of internal conflict within Christianity, which bear a number of phenomenological similarities to certain strains of the sectarian dynamics within late Second Temple Judaism, stand as a likely context out of which the negative association of ἄρπεις emerged.<sup>94</sup>

One need only hold the phenomenological characteristics of "religious sects" and early Christian settings of internal deviance side-by-side to begin to see some similarities.<sup>95</sup> At the outset, it is apparent that both are internal phenomena. The

---

<sup>94</sup> It is of vital importance to note from the outset of this argument that I am not positing a direct link or influence between any one sect within Second Temple Judaism and Paul (or John, or any other Christian writer for that matter). Rather, I seek to highlight an indirect link between the two; namely that the first-century situations of internal social conflict are illustrative of and similar to certain sectarian dynamics within the late Second Temple period. Therefore, the argument that I am making is not one based on direct causation but on indirect illustration. The common phenomenological features of these two noted social settings at some point may provide the basis for demonstrating a direct influence from one to another, but I do not attempt to conclude so in this thesis.

<sup>95</sup> I have in view here the phenomenological typologies of "religious sects" (taken from the work of Bryan Wilson) that was employed in chapters 5-6 and "heresy" as seen in chapter two. I will attempt

distance that a religious sect attempts to create between itself and other like groups is due largely to the fact that they all stem from the same parent group/religion. Reflected in this is a type of internal struggle where each group attempts to fashion for itself an identity that is separate and distinct from the others. Each one attempts to position itself as the elite and claims to be the rightful successor of the parent religion. We see this characteristic evidenced quite blatantly within the *Habakkuk Peshar* and *Psalms of Solomon*. In both cases, we find a Jewish group that holds (all) other Jewish sects to be deficient, misguided, and/or corrupted in various ways. Therefore, they lay claim to being the only rightful heir or remnant of Israel. In short, religious sects and sectarianism make sense only within (i.e., internal to) a single religious tradition.

In similarity, early Christian settings of deviance too have a distinct internal component to them. Even in Galatians, where Paul stands in direct opposition to other itinerant missionaries and the message they teach, those being opposed by Paul are indicated in a number of places as being insiders to the Christian movement.<sup>96</sup> Likewise, even though the author of Revelation brings a very strong and polemical characterization of those who he is opposing in Ephesus, Pergamum, and Thyatira, he too intimates that they are in some way internal to the Christian movement.<sup>97</sup> In short, the internal dynamic within these first-century settings seems to be reflective

---

to accentuate the similarities between these two phenomenological categories by returning to some of the texts to which they each were applied.

<sup>96</sup> For indicators that those who Paul is opposing are insiders to the Christian movement, as well as to the current Christian body in Galatia, see my analysis of this aspect within chapter three.

<sup>97</sup> For indicators that those who John is opposing are insiders to the Christian movement, see my analysis within chapter four.

of the same within religious sects and sectarianism. Just as the sectarian groups behind the *Habakkuk Peshar* and the *Psalms of Solomon* strove to position themselves as the elite, as over against other Jewish sects, so too Paul and John sought to champion their own brand of the gospel message over against others who advocated another version of it. Even though the religious traditions in which these “battles” went on varied, both settings reflect a markedly similar dynamic of internal social conflict.

A second similarity between the social phenomena of “sects” and early Christian settings of deviance is the element of threat, which often was perceived to be injurious or destructive to the distinct identity of the given group. With respect to the two Jewish sectarian groups surveyed within chapter six, it is apparent that they both perceive that too much assimilation is occurring (or has occurred) between the Jerusalem elites and the Greek imperial regime. Evidence that they perceived this as a threat is reflected in their extremely harsh denunciation of those being opposed and, in the case of the Dead Sea Community, the physical removal of themselves from the area. Their perception of the actions and stances taken by the Jewish leaders/leading groups within Jerusalem, with respect to the Greek leaders, culture, and religious practice, was a catalyst in the sectarian entrenchment of these two Jewish groups.

Paul and John share a like perception of those against whom they stand in opposition. These persons pose a threat to the gospel of Christ, as well as to Paul and John’s own authority within their respective regions. In both cases, the Christian

authors respond with much vigor and vitality to these perceived threats in order to secure (or, possibly, re-establish) not only their own respective positions of authority but also the gospel which they uphold.<sup>98</sup> For these epistles or proclamations (in the case of Revelation 2-3), this perceived threat stands as a primary impetus for the writing of the document itself. In both the Second Temple and early Christian settings, (perceived) threats to the unique and singular identity of the group stand as an impetus for a defensive response (i.e., acts that were taken in an effort to secure the distinct identity of the given group and/or position).<sup>99</sup> Sectarianism and early Christian settings of deviance are phenomena that are involved intimately with the process of identity maintenance in response to a threat.

Additional affinities between these two phenomena can be seen in the responses that the authors provide to the (perceived) threat. To say that each of the four texts surveyed within this thesis (i.e., Galatians, Revelation 2-3, *Psalms of Solomon*, and *Habakkuk Peshar*) are highly polemical may well understate the character of these documents. As noted previously, the internal dimension of the social conflict did not cause restraint within the responses of the given authors.

---

<sup>98</sup> A variation in this dynamic between the Second Temple Jewish and early Christian settings is that in the latter we see persons attempting to win over or reestablish themselves with a given body of people. Paul is trying to convince/persuade the Galatians to abide in his gospel and forsake the same of the other teachers. Likewise, John is not writing directly to those who he opposes, but to the believers within the various churches in an effort to expose the “true identity” of these other teachers and, ultimately, retain the allegiance of the believers. With respect to the Jewish sects, though, the threat being made is a shade different. It is not one where a sect may lose all or many of its followers to another individual/group. Though some issue of allegiance (i.e., transfer or maintenance of “membership”) may be at issue, it is not as up front and as dire as it is in the Christian contexts. This variation, though, does not necessarily identify the threats as being of a different degree or level. Rather, they are merely of a different setting.

<sup>99</sup> In both cases, the writings surveyed reveal efforts to create or strengthen norms or boundaries of the group in an effort to fend off the perceived threat.

Rather, this aspect of the dynamic seemed to have emboldened them further to haul out a number of labels and pejorative characterizations of those being opposed.

In the Second Temple sectarian texts, those being opposed are characterized by an array of titles that are meant to be not simply descriptive evaluations of them but, rather, prescriptive assessments of how they, their practices, and/or their character ought to be understood. In the early Christian texts from chapters 3-4, the authors employ various labels in a very similar manner. Though the precise terms/titles chosen varied between the Second Temple and early Christian contexts, the intent behind their employment did not. Socially speaking, they were meant to stigmatize those being opposed, which in turn (likely) would raise the prominence of the messages championed by the authors. In short, we see in this an extension of identity (or world) maintenance.

A final similarity is that of “legitimation.” Central to the constitutive identity of a religious sect is engagement in legitimacy acts or ideological justification. The sect must convince its membership that it actually is the sole conduit of divine blessing. The two Jewish groups noted in the thesis appeal to various means of legitimation, such as their method of interpreting scripture, placing themselves at the forefront of covenants previously made between God and Israel, charismatic leadership, and other bases. All of these items reflect an effort to solidify the words and the divine foundation of the group. Legitimation also is central to the various settings of internal deviance found within early Christianity. Even more so in these cases, the authors (Paul and John) find it necessary to provide ideological

justification for why they and their message should be followed as the one approved by God. They too appeal to an array of bases in an attempt to establish such a justification. Again, though the precise sources that are appealed to by the early Christian authors vary from those of the late Second Temple writers, the function is consistent. The responses given by the authors necessitated legitimation.

These similarities between the phenomena of “religious sects” and “heresy” highlight the fact that these situations of internal deviance within early Christianity bear a resemblance to at least one strand of sectarian dynamics within late Second Temple Judaism.<sup>100</sup> In other words, the nature of the conflict, as well as the type of response given, within these early Christian settings are phenomenologically illustrative of those found in at least one strand of late Second Temple Jewish sectarianism; so much so that it provides warrant for seeing a connection between them.

In these late Second Temple contexts we have two Jewish groups that are ingrained fully within a system of sectarianism that dominated their society. Within this context, I would highlight the groups behind the *Psalms of Solomon* and the *Habakkuk Peshar* as examples of a heightened sectarian commitment and expression. Though some might wonder if “sect” is an apt description of some Jewish groups of the time (e.g., Pharisees), based on the fact that they did not openly vie against the other groups for supremacy or claim to be the sole remnant of Israel, there is no

---

<sup>100</sup> I do not contend that these two phenomena are identical. The features of “rites of entrance,” “imposition of order,” and “eschatological hope” that are distinctive to religious sects are not a central part of the social phenomenon of heresy. Even with these variations in mind, the similarities between

doubt with these two.<sup>101</sup> The intensity of the sectarian expression captured within these two documents is not simply part of rhetorical maneuverings. I would contend that this extreme sectarian expression highlights the group's perception that they were the only (i.e., exclusive) true Jews. Furthermore, if they had the means and/or ability to do so, it seems clear that these groups would have vanquished all others, including other Jews. In short, reflected in these instances is not a tolerance of other Jewish groups but a stern and direct intolerance of them.

Returning to the question posed just prior to my comparison of religious sects and the social phenomenon of heresy, I see this dynamic of internal conflict, which is found within at least one strand of late Second Temple Jewish sectarianism, as the social factor or force that informed Paul's assignment of a negative/pejorative association to ἄρρεσις.<sup>102</sup> The change in sense of the term (i.e., pejoration) likely is connected to the ongoing dynamic of internal social conflict in early Christianity and late Second Temple Judaism. The latter social factor influenced the former linguistic alteration.

---

the two at a phenomenological level, warrant a consideration of some type of closer association between the two.

<sup>101</sup> Shaye J. D. Cohen, "The Significance of Yavneh: Pharisees, Rabbis, and the End of Jewish Sectarianism," *HUCA* 55 (1984) 30-31, notes why some challenge the "sect" label for the Pharisees. But, he (as well as I) find a firm basis for still using the moniker for them and other Jewish groups of the time.

<sup>102</sup> It is interesting to note that though the term is used of various Jewish sectarian groups within the period, it is never employed by any of the groups themselves. Jewish usage of the term is limited to two persons (i.e., Philo and Josephus), who both are attempting to make sense of the sects by means of Greek conceptual categories. Their characterization of these groups, then, is never from the "inside" but the "outside" (i.e., they are focused almost entirely on making descriptive sense of the Jewish groups based on Greek conceptual categories). This external, objective position of Philo and Josephus to the groups in question does not resonate with Paul's situation. Paul finds himself embroiled in a context of internal social conflict (in Galatians and 1 Corinthians) and employs the term with respect to the divisions that are ensuing in these places.

With the phenomenological similarities between sectarianism and the situations of internal deviance in Christianity in mind, I would locate the negative association that Paul attributes to these divisions as stemming from his general awareness of the impact that sects and sectarianism had (and was having) on the Judaism of the recent past, as well as on Paul's own day. These divisions or ἀιρέσεις that were occurring within the Galatian and Corinthian congregations are by no means tolerable for Paul. They are a vice and a work of the flesh, as seen in the term's occurrence in the vice list of Galatians 5:19-21. Furthermore, they fly in the face of Paul's message of unity that pervades the first letter to the Corinthians. As Dunn noted, Paul's concern appears to have been that "the factionalism which disfigured late second-Temple Judaism might be imported into the new movement."<sup>103</sup> To such a notion, Paul stands in direct opposition. Divisions can play no part in the emerging Christian movement. Therefore, ἀιρέσεις are outside Paul's conception of the gospel and body of believers, highlighting the term's assumption of its negative or pejorative association here in these two occurrences.

A critical point in the emergence of the Christian idea of heresy is evident within this new dimension of ἀιρέσεις. The category of heresy still had not yet come to the forefront at this time in the Christian movement; it was not yet a fully formed concept. However, with the onset of this negative association of ἀιρέσεις we can begin to see the conceptual framework build for such an exclusionary category of thought as "heresy."

---

<sup>103</sup> Dunn, Galatians, 305.

From this point, we see what seems to be a logical progression in the use of ἄρρεσις. As we move to the last quarter of the first-century, the term (as found in Titus 3:10) is applied not to the type of social behavior that Paul deemed to be negative but to persons who purport such behavior. These persons, in turn, come now to be characterized by this negative meaning of the term. Yet, though the alteration to the term itself is not much of note linguistically, it does highlight another significant point in the emergence of the Christian conceptual category of heresy. “Heresy,” in its ecclesiastical sense, is applied to specific beliefs and/or the persons/groups who hold those beliefs. Up to this point, we have no extant Christian evidence of the term where it is being applied to a specific belief or person. Here, though we see a man characterized with the adjectival form of the term (i.e., ἀίρετικὸν) based upon something within his behavior. Even though the ecclesiastical understanding of heresy is not connected primarily to behavioral issues but to ones of belief or doctrine, I would contend that the application of ἀίρετικὸν to this man still represents an important point in the emergence of the conceptual category of heresy. Not only have divisions come to be held by some (or many?) in the Christian movement as being intolerable, and thus negative, but we also can see that those who cause those divisions (i.e., who are divisive) are held (at least now) in the same pejorative light. Both will not be tolerated within the growing and forming Christian movement.<sup>104</sup> The conceptual category of heresy can be seen to be taking shape, but it has not yet assumed the full form it takes on later.

---

<sup>104</sup> It is not by chance that the more we see the Christian movement take distinct shape, as it moves

Near the end of the first-century or even somewhere on into the first part of the second-century, we see the term employed again in 2 Peter. Here we see another distinctive shift in the usage of ἄρρεσις. Its usage here retains the negative association seen in Paul's employment of the term, as well as the further specificity in application that is found in its usage in Titus. Additionally, the term now becomes applied to a specific belief that an individual holds. In this instance in 2 Peter it is not used solely in description of a type of social behavior. It is employed to characterize pejoratively those persons who believe and teach such things. In short, it has become a disparaging label to set apart these persons as "false-teachers." Along with this shift in the term, a fuller representation of the conceptual category of heresy is formed. Its application to a belief perceived to be deviant from some norm of the Christian movement, clearly anticipates the later ecclesiastical rendering of the term and conceptual category of heresy. Though the notion may well not be widespread at this point, the evidence of ἄρρεσις within 2 Peter allows us to mark the onset of the Christian idea of heresy.

It is blatant, even to the casual observer, that the idea of "heresy" (in the ecclesiastical sense) takes root and proliferates in its usage within the mid to late second-century and beyond. During this time we see massive treatises written which take the conceptual category of heresy and begin to apply it as a label to a multitude

---

chronologically forward, the notion of heresy (i.e., deviation from an established belief or forming "orthodoxy") forms further. As noted in chapter two, the two developed as two aspects of one process. As belief hardened, deviations from it became more clearly highlighted, which in turn further hardened the beliefs of the group. This process, as it goes on for a period of time, ultimately begins to form an orthodoxy. However, in this reciprocal relationship noted between orthodoxy and heresy, neither one is ever completely fixed; they constantly are developing in relationship to one another.

of groups deemed to be outside of the pale of some canon of belief. What had its onset within the setting of 2 Peter (i.e., the conceptual category of heresy) flourished later amidst hardening beliefs. The further establishment of the notion of heresy occurred so quickly from its onset in the late first-century/early second-century that by the time of Justin in the mid second-century, scholars begin to talk about “heresiology” (i.e., the systematic study and application of the conceptual category of heresy).<sup>105</sup>

Yet, the beginning of heresiology in the second-century identifies the concretization of the early Christian concept of heresy and not its emergent stage(s). In order for something or some topic to become an object of sustained thought and systematic study, it must first (i.e., previously) come into conceptual existence. The New Testament evidence of ἄρρεσις indicates that the early Christian concept of “heresy” already had formed by the time we reach the end of the first-century, as seen in 2 Peter 2:1, and continued to harden beyond that point. Yet, the linguistic evidence of ἄρρεσις also testifies to the fact that this pejorative usage of the term, which helps identify the already formed conceptual category of heresy, did not arise in a vacuum. We see a clear pejorative meaning conveyed in the Pauline evidence of the term (i.e., Gal 3:20; 1 Cor 11:19; Tit 3:10). It is in these three contexts of internal social conflict where we see the term lose its neutrality, gain a negative flavor, and become a foundation for the term’s later meaning as “heresy.”

---

<sup>105</sup> On the development of heresiology beginning with Justin, see Le Boulluec’s La notion d’hérésie dans la littérature grecque II<sup>e</sup>-III<sup>e</sup> siècles.

As I have argued throughout the thesis, this dynamic of internal social conflict is the key to understanding the context out of which the conceptual category of heresy initially emerged. It is in this type of context (as described in chapter two) that ἄρπεις comes to take on a negative association. Furthermore, it is from this type of context that the early Christian notion of heresy first emerged. What began as internal divisions within the middle part of the first-century, later came to be labeled as unacceptable (i.e., “heresy”), as early Christian beliefs took more distinct shape. I would contend that the intensity with which (for example) Paul or the author of the book of Revelation, as well as the respective communities behind the *Psalms of Solomon* and the *Habakkuk Peshar*, rebut and/or reject the ideas, teachings, beliefs, and/or practices of other “insiders” is not different in degree from the later heresiological writers. The distinction between the two is more directly related to the institutionalization (or lack of it) from which they write. The New Testament writers and late Second Temple communities did not have the weight of institutionalized authority to back up their claims, as do the later heresiological writers in early Christianity. The latter have a developing orthodoxy to bolster their mandate.

Yet, it would be going too far to see these earlier contexts of internal conflict as unrelated to the study of the notion of early Christian heresy. In these contexts of internal social conflict we see a type of dynamic (i.e., the type of internal social conflict noted in chapter two) that later comes to have a codified label (i.e., ἄρπεις as “heresy”) that becomes associated with it (in many instances). Therefore, these

earlier contexts are not only not different from the later heresiological settings in the degree of opposition reflected in the respective writings, but they also bear strong phenomenological similarities (as highlighted in chapters 3-4, as well as chapter six), which further bolsters the claim that the two are interconnected in the emergence of the early Christian concept of heresy. Ultimately, though the later institutionalization of the church and the further hardening of orthodoxy did play a role in the concretizing or formalization of the notion of heresy within early Christianity, it was the dynamic of internal social conflict, both within its late Second Temple Jewish and first-century Christian contexts, that played the initial formative role in the emergence of the early Christian conceptual category of heresy.

## Chapter Eight

### Conclusions and Contributions

I have attempted to demonstrate in this thesis that the early Christian conceptual category of heresy initially emerged from first-century Christian contexts of internal deviance, which in turn are illustrative of some late Second Temple sectarian settings. Though the institutionalization of orthodoxy in the second-century and beyond played a role in formalizing “heresy” into a doctrinal and literary concept, this is not the context from which the idea first emerged. The exclusiveness inherent to much of early Christian and late Second Temple sectarian practice and belief, especially in their responses to internal dissidence, eventually gave rise to the notion of heresy, which is itself an exclusive response to internal dissent. In short, it has been my contention that these responses to internal dissension in the first-century and late Second Temple period stand as the formative environment from which the early Christian idea of heresy initially emerged—they provided the conceptual framework that fostered the later onset of the conceptual category of heresy in early Christianity.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will identify various contributions and/or implications that stem from the thesis. One of the primary contributions is the more comprehensive characterization of the concept of heresy itself. While endeavoring to articulate a social understanding of the phenomenon of heresy, which is itself a contribution to the study of the topic, a vibrant and dynamic conceptual category became visible. “Heresy” is not simply an objective category that remains static in its usage. Rather, it is a concept that gains precise characterization only in association with its given environmental variables (i.e., the circumstances and details

of the situation of conflict into which the charge is inserted). Seen in this light, any given charge of heresy is best studied first from within its own particular contextual environment.

Furthermore, this understanding of heresy highlights the fact that a charge (of heresy) can be brought against a wide variety of beliefs and/or practices. What legitimately is “heresy” is not defined by the external but the internal. “Heresy” is defined subjectively via the norms of a particular community or group. This does not mean that groups or communities cannot or will not share a similar perspective on whether or not a given practice, belief, or doctrine is heretical. It simply identifies the reality that each individual group or community makes a decision (in an active or passive manner) regarding whether or not it wishes to share in another’s perspective on what is or is not heresy. I would contend that even when greater unanimity arose in early Christianity on what practices, beliefs, and doctrines were heretical, it was not that the conceptual category of heresy itself had become more objectively defined. In this setting, each group or community still had to decide whether or not something was heretical. A prime factor that contributed to this greater consensus on what was (and was not) heresy, in my estimation, was the growing institutionalization and centralization of ecclesiastical authority. In short, the more the Christian movement moved toward hierarchy in ecclesiastical authority, the more homogenous views became on what was considered heresy due to the fact that it was *coming from the top*.

This re-characterization of the concept of heresy also bears an importance for the scholarly study of early Christian heresy. Studies on early Christian heresies

and/or heretics too often have proceeded prematurely by possessing only a partial conceptual understanding of the topic itself. As with almost all other topics or subjects, a clear conceptual picture of the vital terms, ideas, or categories is a necessary prerequisite for their usage or application in a specific historical, social, literary, or other context. The study of early Christian heresy is no exception. A clear understanding of the nature of the conceptual category of “heresy” is a necessary requirement for any study of specific heresies and/or heretics in early Christianity.

Yet, as noted in chapter two, the notion of heresy itself has received very little attention in Biblical and Christian origins research (as well as in the social-sciences). An additional implication of the thesis, therefore, is a call to evaluate the conclusions of other studies on early Christian heresies and/or heretics in light of the fuller conceptual picture of the idea of heresy presented here. For example, Bauer’s issue of whether orthodoxy or heresy was the original and earliest manifestation of the Christian movement within specific geographical locations, is seen to be an anachronistic usage of “heresy” (as well as “orthodoxy”) in light of the conception of heresy presented in the thesis.<sup>1</sup> The social conception of heresy resists assigning chronological priority to either category. It highlights the reality that the notions of “heresy” and “orthodoxy” came into early Christian thought and language in conjunction with one another in a reciprocal type of relationship. Some sort of group ideals were necessary as a foundation upon which to resist and reject various

---

<sup>1</sup> See Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, xxi-xxii. Bauer’s assumption appears to have been that these categories (i.e., “heresy” and “orthodoxy”) were defined clearly at the time under scrutiny.

practices, ideas, and/or beliefs that threatened the community. However, it is likely that very early on many of the group ideals were not a conscious part of the community's make-up and it was the threatening practice, idea, or belief itself that played a vital role in the formation of the given communal ideal. In all, attempting to assign chronological priority to either heresy or orthodoxy ignores the nature of the concepts themselves and is thus an effort in futility.

However, the thesis by no means reconfigures the entire landscape of the scholarly study of heresy. Returning to Bauer's work, his notion that earliest Christianity was composed of competing trajectories coheres well with the conceptualization of heresy presented in the thesis (even though his other contention, that each of these trajectories were equally acceptable, may not be tenable).<sup>2</sup> The dynamics of internal social conflict seen in first-century Christianity point to the reality that no one group had absolute control over others—no one group was yet “the orthodox.” Additionally, his contention that these competing trajectories led to a hardening of beliefs (i.e., an orthodoxy) parallels my claim that the early Christian conceptual category of heresy emerged out of these settings of internal social conflict. In all, Bauer's work is an example of the level of revision called for by the conclusions and contents of this thesis. His anachronistic use of “heresy” (which others previously have identified) calls not only for greater precision in the use of the term/concept but also for a refinement in the types of questions being asked. Yet, his perspective on early Christian formation of beliefs and social identity already fits well with this more comprehensive understanding of the notion of heresy.

A final contribution of the thesis is the connection it asserts between early Christianity and its Jewish environment. This area of Christian origins research already is well-established and, thus, the thesis merely adds one more link between the two. One of the implicit aims of the thesis was to highlight the fact that the level of exclusivism expressed within the early Christian settings of internal deviance was illustrative of the same in the late Second Temple sectarian contexts. Though I have not attempted to argue for a causative relationship from the latter to the former, the similarities are too great to ignore the connection between the two. The monotheistic underpinnings shared by groups in these two contexts seems to have informed their common type of response to internal dissension. It was this common resistance and rejection of internal dissidence that appears to have been a factor in the evolution of the pejorative sense of ἄρρεσις. Though the term originated in a Greek environment and retained a neutral connotation, the exclusiveness visible within at least one strand of late Second Temple sectarianism and within situations of internal deviance in early Christianity fostered the emergence of the pejorative and then defamatory senses of the word. In short, the similar type of responses to internal opposition in these early Christian and late Second Temple contexts reflects that the two share a similar conception of social identity and even hints at the influence of Jewish sectarian practice on the emergence of the early Christian conceptual category of heresy.

---

<sup>2</sup> See Bauer, Orthodoxy and Heresy, xxi-xxii.

## Bibliography

- Ackroyd, Peter R. Exile and Restoration: A Study on Hebrew Thought in the Sixth Century BC. Old Testament Library (London: SCM, 1968).
- Ahlström, Gösta. The History of Ancient Palestine from the Paleolithic Period to Alexander's Conquest. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplements 146 (Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1993).
- Akmajian, Adrian, Richard A. Demers, and Robert M. Harnish. Linguistics: An Introduction to Language and Communication. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1981.
- Albrecht, Stan L., Bruce A. Chadwick, and David S. Alcorn. "Religiosity and Deviance: Application of an Attitude-Behavior Contingent Consistency Model." Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 16 (1977) 263-274.
- Appelbaum, S. "The Legal Status of the Jewish Communities in the Diaspora." In The Jewish People in the First Century: Historical Geography, Political History, Social, Cultural, and Religious Life and Institutions, editors S. Safrai and M. Stern, *Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum I* (Assen: Van Gorcum & Comp. B. V., 1974) 420-463.
- Atkinson, Kenneth. "Toward a Redating of the *Psalms of Solomon*: Implications for Understanding the *Sitz im Leben* of an Unknown Jewish Sect." Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha 17 (1998) 95-112.
- Aune, David E. "The Form and Function of the Proclamations to the Seven Churches (Revelation 2-3)." New Testament Studies 36 (1990) 182-204.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Orthodoxy in First Century Judaism?: A Response to N. J. McEleney." Journal for the Study of Judaism 7 (1976) 1-10.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Revelation. Word Biblical Commentary, volume 52A, editors David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker. Dallas: Word, 1997.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Social Matrix of the Apocalypse of John." Biblical Research 26 (1981) 16-32.
- Bainbridge, William Sims. "Religious Ecology of Deviance." American Sociological Review 54 (1989) 288-295.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Sociology of Religious Movements. New York: Routledge, 1997.

- Barclay, John M. G. "Deviance and Apostasy: Some Applications of Deviance Theory to First-century Judaism and Christianity." In Modelling Early Christianity: Social-scientific Studies of the New Testament in its Context, editor Philip F. Esler (London: Routledge, 1995) 114-127.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Mirror-Reading A Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test Case." Journal for the Study of the New Testament 31 (1987) 73-93.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Obedying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians. Studies of the New Testament and Its World, editor John Riches. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Who Was Considered an Apostate in the Jewish Diaspora?." In Tolerance and Intolerance in Early Judaism and Christianity, editors Graham N. Stanton and Guy Stroumsa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 80-98.
- Barclay, John and John Sweet, editors. Early Christian Thought in its Jewish Context. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Barker, Eileen, editor. New Religious Movements: A Perspective for Understanding Society. Studies in Religion and Society 3. New York: Edwin Mellen, 1982.
- Barker, Patrick G. "Allegory and Typology in Galatians 4:21-31." St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly 38 (1994) 193-209.
- Barrett, C. K. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles I-II. International Critical Commentary, editors J. A. Emerton, C. E. B. Cranfield, and G. N. Stanton. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians. Black's New Testament Commentaries. London: A & C Black, 1971.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Essays on Paul. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "What Minorities?." Studia Theologica 49 (1995) 1-10.
- Barstad, Hans M. The Myth of the Empty Land: A Study in the History and Archaeology of Judah during the 'Exilic' Period. Symbolae osloenses 28 (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1996).
- Bartlet, J. V. "Heresy." In A Dictionary of the Bible: Dealing with its Language, Literature, and Contents Including the Biblical Theology, volume II, editor James Hastings (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1902) 351.
- Bauckham, Richard J. Jude, 2 Peter. Word Biblical Commentary, volume 50,

editors David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker. Waco: Word, 1983.

Bauer, Walter, *et. al.* A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature. Second edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

\_\_\_\_\_. Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity. Translation of Second German edition [Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum. Beiträge zur historischen Theologie, volume 10. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1934], editor and supplementer Georg Strecker, translators and supplementers Robert Kraft and Gerhard Krodel. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971.

Bauernfeind, Otto. “ἁσέλγεια.” In Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, volume I, editor Gerhard Kittel, translator Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) 490.

\_\_\_\_\_. “τρέχω.” In Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, volume VIII, editor Gerhard Kittel, translator Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) 226-233.

Baumbach, G. “ἀίρετικός.” In Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, volume I, editors Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990) 40.

Baumgarten, Albert I. “Ancient Jewish Sectarianism.” Judaism 47 (1998) 387-403.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Flourishing of Jewish Sects in the Maccabean Era: An Interpretation. Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplements 55, editors John J. Collins and Florentino García Martínez. Leiden: Brill, 1997.

Beale, G. K. The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text. New International Greek Testament Commentary, editors I. Howard Marshall and Donald Hagner. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.

\_\_\_\_\_. John’s Use of the Old Testament in Revelation. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplements, volume 166, editor Stanley E. Porter. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.

Beasley-Murray, George R. The Book of Revelation. New Century Bible. London: Oliphants, 1974.

Becker, Howard S. Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance. Second edition. New York: The Free Press, 1973.

Becking, Bob. “Ezra’s Re-enactment of the Exile.” In Leading Captivity Captive: ‘The Exile’ as History and Ideology, editor Lester L. Grabbe. Journal for the

Study of the Old Testament Supplements 278 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998) 40-61.

Beetham, David. The Legitimation of Power. Issues in Political Theory, editors Peter Jones and Albert Weale. London: MacMillan, 1991.

Bell, A. J. "The Date of John's Apocalypse: The Evidence of Some Roman Historians Reconsidered." New Testament Studies 25 (1978) 93-102.

Ben-Yehuda, Nachman. Deviance and Moral Boundaries: Witchcraft, the Occult, Science Fiction, Deviant Sciences and Scientists. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985.

Bentzen, Aage. "Priesterschaft und Laien in der jüdischen Gemeinde des fünften Jahrhunderts." Archiv für Orientforschung 6 (1930/31) 280-286.

Berger, K. "Apostelbrief und apostolische Rede: Zum Formular frühchristlicher Briefe." Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 65 (1974) 190-231.

Berger, Peter L. The Social Reality of Religion [published as The Sacred Canopy in the United States]. London: Faber and Faber, 1969.

Berger, Peter and Thomas Luckman. The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge. Middlesex: Penguin, 1979.

Best, Ernest. "Paul's Apostolic Authority—?" Journal for the Study of the New Testament 27 (1986) 3-25.

Betz, Hans Dieter. "Häresie: New Testament." In Theologische Realenzyklopädie, volume XIV, editor Gerhard Müller (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1985) 313-318.

\_\_\_\_\_. Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia. Hermenia. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Heresy and Orthodoxy in the NT." In Anchor Bible Dictionary, volume 3, editor David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 144-147.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Orthodoxy and Heresy in Primitive Christianity: Some Critical Remarks on Georg Strecker's Republication of Walter Bauer's *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum*." Interpretation 19 (1965) 299-311.

Bickerman, Elias J. "The Edict of Cyrus in Ezra 1." Journal of Biblical Literature 65 (1946) 249-275.

\_\_\_\_\_. From Ezra to the Last of the Maccabees: Foundations of Post-Biblical

Judaism. New York: Schocken, 1962.

\_\_\_\_\_. The God of the Maccabees: Studies on the Meaning and Origin of the Maccabean Revolt, translator Horst R. Moehring. Leiden: Brill, 1979.

Bigg, Charles. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude. International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1901.

Blasi, Anthony J. "Sociology of Early Christianity—By Way of Introduction." Sociology of Religion 58 (1997) 299-303.

Blenkinsopp, Joseph. "A Jewish Sect of the Persian Period." Catholic Biblical Quarterly 52 (1990) 5-20.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Interpretation and the Tendency to Sectarianism: An Aspect of Second Temple History." In Jewish and Christian Self-Definition: Aspects of Judaism in the Graeco-Roman Period, volume II, editors E. P. Sanders, A. I. Baumgarten, and Alan Mendelson (London: SCM, 1981) 1-26.

Bloomquist, L. Gregory. The Function of Suffering in Philippians. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplements 78, editor Stanley E. Porter. Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1993.

Bockmuehl, Markus. "The Noachide commandments and New Testament Ethics." Revue biblique 102 (1995) 72-101.

Borgen, Peder. "Polemic in the Book of Revelation." In Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity: Issues of Polemic and Faith, editors Craig A. Evans and Donald A. Hagner (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993) 199-211.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Some Hebrew and Pagan Features in Philo's and Paul's Interpretation of Hagar and Ishmael." In The New Testament and Hellenistic Judaism, editors Peder Borgen and Søren Giversen (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997) 151-164.

\_\_\_\_\_. "'Yes,' 'No,' 'How Far?': The Participation of Jews and Christians in Pagan Cults." In Paul in His Hellenistic Context, editor Troels Engberg-Pedersen (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995) 30-59.

Bousset, Wilhelm. Die Offenbarung Johannis. Sixth edition. H. A. W. Meyer, Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament, volume 16. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1906.

Bright, John. A History of Israel. Third edition. London: SCM, 1980.

- Brinkerhoff, Merlin B. and Kathryn L. Burke. "Disaffiliation: Some Notes on 'Falling From the Faith'." Sociological Analysis 41 (1980) 41-54.
- Brinsmead, Bernard Hungerford. Galatians—Dialogical Response to Opponents. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series, volume 65, editor William Baird. Chico: Scholars Press, 1982.
- Brooke, George J. Exegesis at Qumran: 4QFlorilegium in Its Jewish Context. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplements 29. Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1985.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The *Kittim* in the Qumran Pesharim." In Images of Empire, editor Loveday Alexander, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplements 122 (Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1991) 135-159.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Qumran Peshar: Towards a Redefinition of a Genre." Revue de Qumran 19 (1979-81) 483-503.
- Brownlee, William H. The Midrash Peshar of Habakkuk: Text, Translation, Exposition with an Introduction. Society of Biblical Literature Manuscript Series 24. Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Wicked Priest, the Man of Lies, and the Righteous Teacher—the Problem of Identity." Jewish Quarterly Review 73 (1982) 3-9.
- Brox, Norbert. "Häresie." In Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum, volume 13 (Stuttgart: Hierseman, 1984) 256-259.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Nikolaos und Nikolaiten." Vigiliae christianae 19 (1965) 23-30.
- Bruce, F. F. The Acts of the Apostles: Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary. Third edition. Leicester: Apollos, 1990.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982.
- Brueggemann, Walter. Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997.
- Büchsel, Friedrich. "ἄλλος." In Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, volume I, editor Gerhard Kittel, translator Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) 264-267.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "εἰδωλολατρία." In Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, volume II, editor Gerhard Kittel, translator Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand

- Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) 375-380.
- Buck, C. H. "The Date of Galatians." Journal of Biblical Literature 70 (1951) 113-122.
- Buckley, G. A. "Heresy, Sin of." In New Catholic Encyclopedia, volume VI (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967) 1069-1070.
- Burton, Ernest De Witt. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians. International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1921.
- Bustenay, Oded. "Judah and the Exile." In Israelite and Judaeon History, editors John H. Hayes and J. Maxwell Miller (London: SCM, 1977) 435-488.
- Caird, G. B. The Revelation of St. John the Divine. Black's New Testament Commentary. London: A & C Black, 1966.
- Callaway, Phillip R. The History of the Qumran Community: An Investigation. Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplements 3. Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1988.
- Carey, Greg. Elusive Apocalypse: Reading Authority in the Revelation to John. Studies in American Biblical Hermeneutics, volume 15. Macon: Mercer University Press, 1999.
- Carley, Kathleen. "A Theory of Group Stability." American Sociological Review 56 (1991) 331-354.
- Carroll, Robert P. "The Myth of the Empty Land." In Ideological Criticism of Biblical Texts, editors D. Jobling and Tina Pippin. Semeia 59 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992) 72-93.
- Castelli, Elizabeth A. Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power. Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation. Louisville: WJKP, 1991.
- Charles, R. H. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John, volume I. International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1920.
- Chilton, Bruce and Jacob Neusner. Judaism in the New Testament: Practices and Beliefs. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Cipriani, Roberto. "The Sociology of Legitimation: An Introduction." Current Sociology 35 (1987) 1-20.

Clinard, Marshall B. and Robert F. Meier. Sociology of Deviant Behavior. Sixth edition. New York: Rinehart and Winston, 1985.

Cohen, Shaye J. D. From the Maccabees to the Mishnah. Library of Early Christianity, editor Wayne A. Meeks. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Significance of Yavneh: Pharisees, Rabbis, and the End of Jewish Sectarianism." Hebrew Union College Annual 55 (1984) 27-53.

\_\_\_\_\_. "'Those Who Say They Are Jews and Are Not': How Do You Know a Jew in Antiquity When You See One?." In Diasporas in Antiquity, editors Shaye J. D. Cohen and Ernest S. Frerichs. Brown Judaic Studies, volume 288, editors Ernest S. Frerichs, Shaye J. D. Cohen, and Calvin Goldscheider (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993) 1-45.

\_\_\_\_\_. "A Virgin Defiled: Some Rabbinic and Christian Views on the Origins of Heresy." Union Seminary Quarterly Review 36 (1980) 1-11.

Cohen, Shaye J. D. and Ernest S. Frerichs. Diasporas in Antiquity. Brown Judaic Studies, volume 288. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993.

Cole, R. Alan. The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, editor R. V. G. Tasker. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965.

Collins, Adela Yarbro. Crisis and Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypse. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Insiders and Outsiders in the Book of Revelation and Its Social Context." In 'To See Ourselves as Others See Us': Christians, Jews, 'Others' in Late Antiquity, editors Jacob Neusner and Ernest S. Frerichs (Chico: Scholars Press, 1985) 203-216.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Vilification and Self-Definition in the Book of Revelation." Harvard Theological Review 79 (1986) 308-320.

Collins, John J. "Essenes." In Anchor Bible Dictionary, volume II, editor David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 619-626.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Expectation of the End in the Dead Sea Scrolls." In Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls. Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature, editors Craig A. Evans and Peter W. Flint (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 74-90.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Jewish Apocalyptic Against Its Hellenistic Near Eastern Environment." Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research 220 (1975) 27-36.

- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Origins of the Qumran Community: A Review of the Evidence." In To Touch the Text: Biblical and Related Studies in Honor of Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S. J., editors Maurya P. Horgan and Paul J. Kobelski (New York: Crossroad, 1989) 159-178.
- The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, editor Gordon Marshall. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Conzelmann, Hans. 1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians. Hermenia, editor George W. MacRae, translator James W. Leitch. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975.
- \_\_\_\_\_. A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles. Hermenia, translators James Lirnburg, A. Thomas Kraabel, and Donald H. Juel, editors Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R. Matthews. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987.
- Cook, David. "The Prescript as Programme in Galatians." Journal of Theological Studies 43 (1992) 511-519.
- Coser, Lewis. The Functions of Social Conflict. Glencoe: Free Press, 1956.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Some Functions of Deviant Behavior and Normative Flexibility." American Journal of Sociology 68 (1962) 172-181.
- Dauids, Adelbert. "Irrtum und Häresie." Kairos 15 (1973) 165-187.
- Davies, Philip R. "The 'Damascus' Sect and Judaism." In Pursuing the Text: Studies in Honor of Ben Zion Wacholder on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplements 184, editors John C. Reeves and John Kampen (Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1994) 70-84.
- \_\_\_\_\_. In Search of 'Ancient Israel'. Second edition. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplements 148. Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Hasidim in the Maccabean Period." Journal of Jewish Studies 28 (1977) 127-140.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Ideology of the Temple in the Damascus Document." Journal of Jewish Studies 33 (1982) 287-301.
- Day, Peggy L. An Adversary in Heaven: Satan in the Hebrew Bible. Harvard Semitic Monographs, volume 43, editor Frank Moore Cross. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988.

- De Vos, Craig Steven. Church and Community Conflicts: The Relationships of the Thessalonian, Corinthian, and Philippian Churches with Their Wider Civic Communities. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series, volume 168. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999.
- Delling, Gerhard. “βασκαίνω.” In Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, volume I, editor Gerhard Kittel, translator Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) 594-595.
- Desjardins, Michel. “Bauer and Beyond: On Recent Scholarly Discussions of Αἵρεσις in the Early Christian Era.” Second Century 8 (1991) 65-82.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “The Portrayal of the Dissidents in 2 Peter and Jude: Does it Tell Us More About the ‘Godly’ than the ‘Ungodly’?” Journal for the Study of the New Testament 30 (1987) 89-102.
- DeVries, C. E. “Paul’s ‘Cutting’ Remarks about a Race: Galatians 5:1-12.” In Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation, festschrift for M. C. Tenney, editor Gerald F. Hawthorne (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 115-120.
- Dimant, Devorah. “Pesharim, Qumran.” In Anchor Bible Dictionary, volume 5, editor David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 244-251.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Qumran Sectarian Literature.” In Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus, Compendia rerum iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum II, editor Michael E. Stone (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984) 483-550.
- Dittes, James E. “Typing the Typologies: Some Parallels in the Career of Church-Sect and Intrinsic-Extrinsic.” Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 10 (1971) 375-383.
- Donaldson, T. L. “Moses Typology and the Sectarian Nature of Early Christian Anti-Judaism: A Study in Acts 7.” Journal for the Study of the New Testament 12 (1981) 27-52.
- Downes, David and Paul Rock. Understanding Deviance: A Guide to the Sociology of Crime and Rule-breaking. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988.
- Du Toit, Andrie. “Vilification as a Pragmatic Device in Early Christian Epistolography.” Biblica 75 (1994) 403-412.
- Duff, Paul B. “‘I Will Give to Each of You as Your Works Deserve’: Witchcraft Accusations and the Fiery-eyed Son of God in Rev 2.18-23.” New Testament Studies 43 (1997) 116-133.

- Dunn, James D. G. The Acts of the Apostles. Epworth Commentaries. Peterborough: Epworth Press, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Echoes of Intra-Jewish Polemic in Paul's Letter to the Galatians." Journal of Biblical Literature 112 (1993) 459-477.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Epistle to the Galatians. Black's New Testament Commentaries, editor Henry Chadwick. London: A & C Black, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament. Second edition. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Once More—Gal 1.18: ἱστορησαὶ Κηφᾶν In Reply to Otfried Hofius." Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 76 (1985) 138-139.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Partings of the Ways Between Christianity and Judaism and their Significance for the Character of Christianity. London: SCM, 1991.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Relationship Between Paul and Jerusalem According to Galatians 1 and 2." New Testament Studies 28 (1982) 461-478.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977.
- Durkheim, Émile. The Division of Labor in Society, translator George Simpson. Glencoe: Free Press, 1964.
- Easton, Burton S. "New Testament Ethical Lists." Journal of Biblical Literature 51 (1932) 1-12.
- Ehrman, Bart D. The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Elliott, Gregory C., Herbert L. Ziegler, Barbara M. Altman, and Deborah Scott. "Understanding Stigma: Dimensions of Deviance and Coping." Deviant Behavior 3 (1982) 275-300.
- Elliott, John H. "Peter, Second Epistle Of." In Anchor Bible Dictionary, volume 5, editor David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 282-287.
- Elliot, J. K. "The Use of ἕτερος in the New Testament." Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 60 (1969) 140-141.

- Ellis, E. Earle. "Paul and His Opponents: Trends in Research." In Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults: Early Christianity: Studies for Morton Smith at Sixty. Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity, volume 1, editor Jacob Neusner (Leiden: Brill, 1975) 264-298.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Paul's Use of the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981.
- Elze, Martin. "Häresie und Einheit der Kirche im 2. Jahrhundert." Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche 71 (1974) 389-409.
- Enroth, Anne-Marit. "The Hearing Formula in the Book of Revelation." New Testament Studies 36 (1990) 598-608.
- Erikson, Kai T. "Notes on the Sociology of Deviance." In The Other Side: Perspective on Deviance, editor Howard S. Becker (New York: The Free Press, 1964) 9-21.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Wayward Puritans: A Study in the Sociology of Deviance. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1966.
- Esler, Philip Francis. Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 57, editor G. N. Stanton. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Review of The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: Interests and Ideology from 1 Corinthians to 1 Clement, by David G. Horrell. Journal of Theological Studies 49 (1998) 253-260.
- Evans, Craig A. and Donald A. Hagner, editors. Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity: Issues of Polemic and Faith. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993.
- Fee, Gordon D. The First Epistle to the Corinthians. New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.
- Feldman, Louis. Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justin. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Ferrarotti, Franco. "Legitimation, Representation and Power." Current Sociology 35 (1987) 21-27.
- Finkel, Asher. "Yavneh's Liturgy and Early Christianity." Journal of Ecumenical Studies 18 (1981) 231-250.
- Fiorenza, Elisabeth Schüssler. The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment.

Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985.

- \_\_\_\_\_. Revelation: Vision of a Just World. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991.
- Fitzgerald, J. T. Cracks in an Earthen Vessel: An Examination of the Catalogues of Hardships in the Corinthian Correspondence. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series, volume 99. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988.
- Fitzmyer, Joseph A. Essays on the Semitic Background of the New Testament. Missoula: Scholars Press, 1974.
- Flusser, David. "Psalms, Hymns and Prayers." In Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus. Compendia rerum iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum II, editor Michael E. Stone (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984) 573-574.
- Forkman, Göran. The Limits of the Religious Community: Expulsions From the Religious Community Within the Qumran Sect, Within Rabbinic Judaism, and Within Primitive Christianity. Coniectanea Biblica, New Testament Series, volume 5. Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1972.
- Fornberg, Tord. An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society: A Study of 2 Peter. Coniectanea biblica, New Testament, volume 9. Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1977.
- Fowl, Stephen. "Who Can Read Abraham's Story?: Allegory and Interpretive Power in Galatians." Journal for the Study of the New Testament 55 (1994) 77-95.
- Franklyn, P. N. "The Cultic and Pious Climax of Eschatology in the *Psalms of Solomon*." Journal for the Study of Judaism 18 (1987) 1-17.
- Fraser, John. "Legitimacy and Political Processes." Current Sociology 35 (1987) 119-126.
- Freedman, David Noel. "The 'House of Absalom' in the Habakkuk Scroll." Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research 114 (1949) 11-12.
- Freyne, Sean. "Vilifying the Other and Defining the Self: Matthew's and John's Anti-Jewish Polemic in Focus." In "To See Ourselves as Others See Us": Christians, Jews, and "Others" in Late Antiquity, editors Jacob Neusner and Ernest S. Frerichs. Scholars Press Studies in the Humanities, editor Caroline McCracken-Flesher (Chico: Scholars Press, 1985) 117-143.
- Friedrich, Gerhard. "εὐαγγέλιον." In Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, volume II, editor Gerhard Kittel, translator Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) 707-737.

- Fröhlich, Ida. "Le genre littéraire des pesharim de Qumrân." Revue de Qumran 12 (1985-1987) 383-398.
- Fromkin, Victoria and Robert Rodman. An Introduction to Language. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1974.
- Gafni, Isaiah. "The Historical Background." In Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocalyptic, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus. Compendia rerum iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum II, editor Michael E. Stone (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984) 1-31.
- Gager, John G. Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1975.
- Gardiner, E. N. Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955.
- Garfinkel, Harold. "Conditions of Successful Degradation Ceremonies." American Journal of Sociology 61 (1956) 420-424.
- Garrett, Susan R. "The God of this World and the Affliction of Paul, 2 Cor 4:1-12." In Greeks, Romans, and Christians, festschrift for A. Malherbe, editor David L. Balch, *et al.* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1990) 99-117.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Temptations of Jesus in Mark's Gospel. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Gaventa, Beverly R. "Galatians 1 and 2: Autobiography as Paradigm." Novum Testamentum 28 (1986) 309-326.
- Gerhardsson, Birger. "Die christologischen Aussagen in den Sendschreiben." In Theologie aus dem Norden, editor A. Fuchs (Linz, Austria: Plöchl, Freistadt, 1977) 142-166.
- Gianotto, C. "Heresiologists." In Encyclopedia of the Early Church, volume 1, editor Angelo Di Berardino, translator Adrian Walford (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 1992) 375-376.
- Gill, Robin. Theology and Sociology: A Reader. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1987.
- Goddard, A. J. and S. A. Cummins. "Ill or Ill-Treated?: Conflict and Persecution as the Context of Paul's Original Ministry in Galatia (Galatians 4.12-20)." Journal for the Study of the New Testament 52 (1993) 93-126.
- Goffman, Erving. Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity. New

York: Penguin, 1963.

Goguel, M. "Les Nicolaites." Revue de l'histoire des religions 115 (1937) 5-36.

Goldstein, Jonathan. "Jewish Acceptance and Rejection of Hellenism." In Jewish and Christian Self Definition, volume II, editors E. P. Sanders, A. I. Baumgarten, and Alan Mendelson (London: SCM, 1981) 64-87.

Goode, Erich. "Some Critical Observations on the Church-Sect Dimension." Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 6 (1967) 69-77.

Goppelt, Leonhard. "The Plurality of New Testament Theologies and the Unity of the Gospel as an Ecumenical Problem." In The Gospel and Unity, editor Vilmos Vajta (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1971) 106-130.

Grabbe, Lester L. An Introduction to First-century Judaism: Jewish Religion and History in the Second Temple Period. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Israel's Historical Reality after the Exile." In The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic and Post-Exilic Times, editors Bob Becking and Marjo C. A. Korpel (Leiden: Brill, 1999) 9-32.

\_\_\_\_\_. Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian, volumes I-II. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992.

Grant, Robert M. Heresy and Criticism: The Search for Authenticity in Early Christian Literature. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993.

\_\_\_\_\_. Jesus After the Gospels: The Christ of the Second Century. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990.

\_\_\_\_\_. Review of La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque II<sup>e</sup>-III<sup>e</sup> siècles, volumes I-II, by Allain Le Boulluec. Church History 55 (1986) 505-506.

Green, William Scott. "Otherness Within: Towards a Theory of Difference in Rabbinic Judaism." In "To See Ourselves as Others See Us": Christians, Jews, and "Others" in Late Antiquity, editors Jacob Neusner and Ernest S. Frerichs. Scholars Press Studies in the Humanities, editor Caroline McCracken-Flesher (Chico: Scholars Press, 1985) 49-69.

Greene, John T. "Balaam: Prophet, Diviner, and Priest in Selected Ancient Israelite and Hellenistic Jewish Sources." In Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers, editor David J. Lull (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989) 57-106.

Greenslade, S. L. Schism in the Early Church. London: SCM, 1953.

- Grosheide, F. W. Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953.
- Grossi, V. "Heresy-Heretic." In Encyclopedia of the Early Church, editor Angelo Di Berardino, translator Adrian Walford, volume 1 (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 1992) 376-377.
- Gunther, John J. St. Paul's Opponents and Their Background: A Study of Apocalyptic and Jewish Sectarian Teachings. Novum Testamentum Supplements, volume XXXV. Leiden: Brill, 1973.
- Gustafson, Paul. "UO-US-PS-PO: A Restatement of Troeltsch's Church-Sect Typology." Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 6 (1967) 64-68.
- Guthrie, Donald. Galatians. New Century Bible. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973.
- Habermas, Jurgen. Legitimation Crisis. London: Heinemann, 1976.
- Hackett, Jo Ann. "Balaam." In Anchor Bible Dictionary, volume I, editor David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 569-572.
- Hafemann, Scott J. "Suffering." In Dictionary of Paul and His Letters, editors Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1993) 919-921.
- Hann, Robert. "The Community of the Pious: The Social Setting of the *Psalms of Solomon*." Studies in Religion 17 (1988) 169-189.
- Hansen, G. W. Abraham in Galatians: Epistolary and Rhetorical Contexts. Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1989.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Galatians, Letter to the." In Dictionary of Paul and His Letters, editors Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1993) 323-334.
- Hanson, Paul D. The Dawn of Apocalyptic. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Jewish Apocalyptic Against Its Near Eastern Environment." Revue biblique 78 (1971) 31-58.
- Harland, Philip A. "Honouring the Emperor or Assailing the Beast: Participation in Civic Life Among Associations (Jewish, Christian and Other) in Asia Minor and the Apocalypse of John." Journal for the Study of the New Testament 77 (2000) 99-121.

- Harnack, Adolph Von. "The Sect of the Nicolaitans and Nicolaus, the Deacon in Jerusalem." Journal of Religion 3 (1923) 413-422.
- Harrington, Daniel J. "The Reception of Walter Bauer's *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* During the Last Decade." Harvard Theological Review 73 (1980) 289-298.
- Harris, Gerald. "The Beginnings of Church Discipline: 1 Corinthians 5." New Testament Studies 37 (1991) 1-21.
- Hauck, Friedrich. "ἀκάθαρτος, ἀκαθαρσία." In Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, volume III, editor Gerhard Kittel, translator Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965) 427-431.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "πορνεία." In Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, volume VI, editor Gerhard Kittel, translator Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968) 579-595.
- Harvey, Van A. and Marie Augusta Neal. "Religious Faith and the Sociology of Knowledge: The Unburdening of Peter Berger." Religious Studies Review 5 (1979) 1-10.
- Hawkin, David J. "A Reflective Look at the Recent Debate on Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity." Église et Théologie 7 (1976) 367-378.
- Hawkins, John Gale. The Opponents of Paul in Galatia. Ph.D. Dissertation. Yale University, 1971.
- Heiligenthal, R. "Wer waren die 'Nikolaiten'? Ein Beitrag zur Theologiegeschichte des frühen Christentums." Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 82 (1991) 133-137.
- Hemer, Colin J. The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplements 11. Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1986.
- Hengel, Martin. Jews, Greeks, and Barbarians: Aspects of the Hellenization of Judaism in the pre-Christian Period. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period, volumes I-II, translator John Bowden. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Qumran and Hellenism." In Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls, editors John J. Collins and Robert A. Kugler (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 46-56.

- Hertzler, Joyce O. A Sociology of Language. New York: Random House, 1965.
- Hock, Hans Heinrich. "Causation in Language Change." In International Encyclopedia of Linguistics, volume 1, editor William Bright (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) 228-231.
- Hoglund, Kenneth G. Achaemenid Imperial Administration in Syria-Palestine and the Missions of Ezra and Nehemiah. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 125. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992.
- Holm-Nielsen, S. "Psalmen Salomos." In Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit. Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit 4.2 (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1977) 51-112.
- Holmberg, Bengt. Paul and Power: The Structure of Authority in the Primitive Church as Reflected in the Pauline Epistles. Coniectanea biblica, New Testament, volume 11. Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1978.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Sociology and the New Testament: An Appraisal. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990.
- Hooker, Morna. "Were There False Teachers in Colossae?" In Christ and Spirit in the New Testament, editors Barnabas Lindars and Stephen S. Smalley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973) 315-331.
- Horbury, William. "The Benediction of the *Minim* and Early Jewish-Christian Controversy." Journal of Theological Studies 33 (1982) 19-61.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Extirpation and Excommunication." Vetus Testamentum 35 (1985) 13-38.
- Horgan, M. Pesharim: Qumran Interpretations of Biblical Books. Washington D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association, 1979.
- Horrell, David. The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: Interests and Ideology from 1 Corinthians to 1 Clement. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996.
- Houlden, J. L. The Pastoral Epistles: I and II Timothy, Titus. New Testament Commentaries, editors Howard Clark Kee and Dennis Nineham. London: SCM, 1989.
- Howard, George. Paul: Crisis in Galatia: A Study in Early Christian Theology. Second edition. Society for New Testament Studies Manuscripts, volume 35, editor G. N. Stanton. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Hultgren, Arland J. The Rise of Normative Christianity. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994.

Hurtado, Larry W. At the Origins of Christian Worship: The Context and Character of Earliest Christ Devotion. Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Jerusalem Collection and the Book of Galatians." Journal for the Study of the New Testament 5 (1979) 46-62.

\_\_\_\_\_. One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism. Second edition. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998.

Isser, Stanley Jerome. The Dositheans: A Samaritan Sect in Late Antiquity. Studies in Judaism in Late Intiquity, editor Jacob Neusner. Leiden: Brill, 1976.

Izzo, Alberto. "Legitimation and Society: A Critical Review." Current Sociology 35 (1987) 41-56.

Jeremias, Gert. Der Lehrer der Gerechtigkeit. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1963.

Jewett, Robert. "The Agitators and the Galatian Congregation." New Testament Studies 17 (1971) 198-212.

\_\_\_\_\_. A Chronology of Paul's Life. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979.

Johnson, Benton. "A Critical Appraisal of the Church-Sect Typology." American Sociological Review 22 (1957) 88-92.

\_\_\_\_\_. "On Church and Sect." American Sociological Review 28 (1963) 539-549.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Church and Sect Revisited." Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 10 (1971) 124-137.

Johnson, Lee A. "Satan Talk in Corinth: The Rhetoric of Conflict." Biblical Theology Bulletin 29 (1999) 145-155.

Johnson, Luke Timothy. The Acts of the Apostles. Sacra Pagina, volume 5, editor Daniel J. Harrington. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1992.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The New Testament's Anti-Jewish Slander and the Conventions of Ancient Polemic." Journal of Biblical Literature 108 (1989) 419-441.

\_\_\_\_\_. Religious Experience in Earliest Christianity: A Missing Dimension in New Testament Studies. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998.

- Kamlah, Erhard. Die Form der katalogischen Paränese im Neuen Testament. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, volume 7. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1964.
- Karris, R. J. "The Background and Significance of the Polemic of the Pastoral Epistles." Journal of Biblical Literature 92 (1973) 549–64.
- Käsemann, Ernst. "The Canon of the New Testament and the Unity of the Church." In Essays on New Testament Themes. Studies in Biblical Theology, volume 41, translator W. J. Montague (London: SCM, 1964) 95-107.
- Katz, Jack. "Deviance, Charisma, and Rule-Defined Behavior." Social Problems 20 (1973) 186-202.
- Kee, Howard Clark. Who Are the People of God: Early Christian Models of Community. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.
- Kellerman, Ulrich. Nehemia: Quellen, Überlieferung und Geschichte. Berlin: Töpelmann, 1967.
- Kelley, J. N. D. A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude. Black's New Testament Commentaries, editor Henry Chadwick. London: A & C Black, 1969.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Pastoral Epistles. Black's New Testament Commentaries, editor Henry Chadwick. London: A & C Black, 1963.
- Kilpatrick, George D. "Galatians 1:18 ΙΣΤΟΡΗΣΑΙ ΚΗΦΑΝ." In New Testament Essays: Studies in Memory of T. W. Manson (Manchester: Manchester University, 1959) 144-149.
- Kirby, John T. "The Rhetorical Situations of Revelation 1-3." New Testament Studies 34 (1988) 197-207.
- Kitsuse, John I. "Societal Reaction to Deviant Behavior: Problems of Theory and Method." In The Other Side: Perspectives on Deviance, editor Howard S. Becker (New York: The Free Press, 1964) 87-102.
- Klauck, H-J. "Das Sendschreiben nach Pergamon und der Kaiserkult in der Johannesoffenbarung." Biblica 73 (1992) 153-182.
- Kleinknecht, K. T. Der leidende Gerechtfertigte. Die alttestamentlich-jüdische Tradition vom 'leidenden Gerechten' und ihre Rezeption bei Paulus. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, band II, volume 13. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1984.

Kluger, Rivkah Schärf. Satan in the Old Testament. Studies in Jungian Thought, translator Hildegard Nagel. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1967.

Koester, Helmut. “ΓΝΩΜΑΙ ΔΙΑΦΟΡΟΙ: The Origin and Nature of Diversification in the History of Early Christianity.” In Orthodoxy, Heresy, and Schism in Early Christianity. Studies in Early Christianity, volume 4 (New York: Garland, 1993) 197-236 [=James M. Robinson and Helmut Koester. In Trajectories through Early Christianity (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971) 114-157].

\_\_\_\_\_. “Häretiker im Urchristentum.” In Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, volume III (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1959) 17-21.

\_\_\_\_\_. “The Theological Aspects of Primitive Christian Heresy.” In The Future of Our Religious Past: Essays in Honour of Rudolph Bultmann, editor James M. Robinson (London: SCM, 1971) 65-83.

Kruse, Colin G. “The Price Paid for a Ministry Among Gentiles: Paul’s Persecution at the Hands of the Jews.” In Worship, Theology, and Ministry in the Early Church: Essays in Honor of Ralph P. Martin, editors Michael J. Wilkins and Terence Paige (Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1992) 260-272.

Kuhrt, Amélie. “The Cyrus Cylinder and Achaemenid Imperial Rule.” Journal for the Study of the Old Testament 25 (1983) 83-97.

Kurtz, Lester R. “The Politics of Heresy.” American Journal of Sociology 88 (1983) 1085-1115.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Politics of Heresy: The Modernist Crisis in Roman Catholicism. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.

Labov, William. Sociolinguistic Patterns. Oxford: Blackwell, 1972.

Ladd, George Eldon. A Commentary on the Revelation of John. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972.

Lategan, B. “Is Paul Defending His Apostleship in Galatians?: The Function of Galatians 1.11-12 and 2.19-20 in the Development of Paul’s Argument.” New Testament Studies 34 (1988) 411-430.

Lattke, Michael D. “Psalms of Solomon.” In Dictionary of New Testament Background, editors Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000) 853-857.

- Lawlor, F. X. "Heresy." In New Catholic Encyclopedia, volume VI (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967) 1069-1070.
- Le Boulluec, Allain. La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque II<sup>e</sup>-III<sup>e</sup> siècles, volumes I-II. Paris:Études Agustiniennes, 1985.
- Leighton, Christopher M. "Contending with a Polemical Tradition: The Rhetorical Art of Christian Self-Definition." Religious Education 31 (1996) 529-538.
- Lemert, Edwin M. Human Deviance, Social Problems, and Social Control. Prentice-Hall Sociology Series, editor Neil J. Smelser. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1972.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Social Pathology: A Systematic Approach to the Theory of Sociopathic Behavior. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1951.
- Levenson, Jon D. "Is There a Counterpart in the Hebrew Bible to New Testament Antisemitism?." Journal of Ecumenical Studies 22 (1985) 242-260.
- Levine, Lee I. A. "The Age of Hellenism: Alexander the Great and the Rise and Fall of the Hasmonean Kingdom." In Ancient Israel: A Short History from Abraham to the Roman Destruction of the Temple, editor Hershel Shanks (London: SPCK, 1989) 231-264.
- Lieu, Judith M. Image and Reality: The Jews in the World of the Christians in the Second Century. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996.
- Lightfoot, J. B. Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians: A Revised Text with Introduction, Notes, and Dissertations. London: MacMillan, 1902.
- Lightfoot, J. B. and J. R. Harmer, translators. The Apostolic Fathers. Second edition, editor and revisor Michael W. Holmes. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992.
- Lightstone, Jack N. "Whence the Rabbis? From Coherent Description to Fragmented Reconstructions." Studies in Religion 26 (1997) 275-295.
- Lim, Timothy H. Holy Scripture in the Qumran Commentaries and Pauline Letters. Oxford: Clarendon, 1997.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Kittim." In Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls, volume 1, editors Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 469-471.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Qumran Scrolls, Multilingualism and Biblical Interpretation." In Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls, editors John J. Collins and Robert A. Kugler. Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature (Grand

Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 57-73.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Wicked Priest." In Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls, volume 2, editors Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 973-976.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Wicked Priests of the Groningen Hypothesis." Journal of Biblical Literature 112 (1993) 415-425.

Lofland, John. Deviance and Identity. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969.

Lohmeyer, E. Die Offenbarung des Johannes. Second edition. Tübingen: Mohr, 1953.

Lohse, Eduard. "Synagogue of Satan and Church of God: Jews and Christians in the Book of Revelation." Svensk exegetisk årsbok 58 (1993) 105-123.

Longenecker, Richard N. Galatians. Word Biblical Commentary, volume 41, editors David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker. Dallas: Word, 1990.

Luckman, Thomas. "Comments on Legitimation." Current Sociology 35 (1987) 109-117.

Lüdemann, Gerd. Heretics: The Other Side of Early Christianity. Translator John Bowden. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1996.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Successors of Pre-70 Jerusalem Christianity: A Critical Evaluation of the Pella-Tradition." In Jewish and Christian Self-Definition, volume I, editor E. P. Sanders (London: SCM, 1980) 161-173.

Lull, David. The Spirit in Galatia. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series, volume 49. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1980.

Lütgert, Wilhelm. Gesetz und Geist: eine Untersuchung zur Vorgeschichte des Galaterbriefes. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1919.

Lyman, J. Rebecca. Review of La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque II<sup>e</sup>-III<sup>e</sup> siècles, volumes I-II, by Allain Le Boulluec. Anglican Theological Review 69 (1987) 396-398.

Lyons, George. Pauline Autobiography: Toward a New Understanding. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series, volume 73. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985.

MacDonald, Margaret Y. The Pauline Churches: A Socio-historical Study of Institutionalization in the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline Writings. Society for

New Testament Studies Monograph Series 60, editor G. N. Stanton.  
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

MacKay, W. M. "Another Look at the Nicolaitans." Evangelical Quarterly 45 (1973) 111-115.

Malina, Bruce J. and Jerome H. Neyrey. Calling Jesus Names: The Social Value of Labels in Matthew. Sonoma: Polebridge, 1988.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Conflict in Luke-Acts: Labelling and Deviance Theory." In The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation, editor Jerome H. Neyrey (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991) 97-122.

Malmkjær, Kirsten. "Historical Linguistics." In The Linguistics Encyclopedia, editor Kirsten Malmkjær (New York: Routledge, 1991) 189-218.

Marshall, I. Howard. "Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earlier Christianity." Themelios 2 (1976) 5-14.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Orthodoxy and Heresy: Walter Bauer and the Valentinians." Vigiliae Christianae 33 (1979) 118-130.

Martin, Dale B. Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990.

Martínez, Florentino García and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, editors. The Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition, volumes I-II. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.

Martyn, J. Louis. Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary. Anchor Bible, volume 33A, editors William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freedman. New York: Doubleday, 1997.

\_\_\_\_\_. "A Law-Observant Mission to Gentiles: The Background of Galatians." Scottish Journal of Theology 38 (1985) 307-324.

Massa, Mark. "On the Uses of Heresy: Leonard Feeney, Mary Douglas, and the Notre Dame Football Team." Harvard Theological Review 84 (1991) 325-341.

McEleney, Neil J. "Orthodoxy in Judaism of the First Christian Century." Journal for the Study of Judaism 4 (1973) 19-42.

McPherson, J. Miller, Pamela A. Popielarz, and Sonja Drobnic. "Social Networks and Organizational Dynamics." American Sociological Review 57 (1992) 153-170.

- Meeks, Wayne A. "Breaking Away: Three New Testament Pictures of Christianity's Separation from the Jewish Communities." In "To See Ourselves as Others See Us": Christians, Jews, and "Others" in Late Antiquity, editors Jacob Neusner and Ernest S. Frerichs. Scholars Press Studies in the Humanities, editor Caroline McCracken-Flesher (Chico: Scholars Press, 1985) 93-115.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Man From Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism." Journal of Biblical Literature 91 (1972) 44-72.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "'Since Then You Would Need to Go Out of the World': Group Boundaries in Pauline Christianity." In Critical History and Biblical Faith: New Testament Perspectives, editor Thomas J. Ryan (Ann Arbor: Edward Brothers, Inc., 1979) 4-29.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Toward a Social Description of Pauline Christianity." In Approaches to Ancient Judaism II. Brown Judaic Studies, volume 9, editor William Scott Green (Ann Arbor: McNaughton & Gunn, 1980) 27-41.
- Meyer, Ben F. "Self-Definition in Early Christianity." In Colloquy—Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture (Berkeley: The Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture, 1980) 1-13.
- Meyer, Paul W. "The Holy Spirit in the Pauline Letters." Interpretation 33 (1979) 3-18.
- Millar, Fergus. "Background to the Maccabean Revolution: Reflections on Martin Hengel's 'Judaism and Hellenism.'" Journal of Jewish Studies 29 (1978) 1-21.
- Miller, Donald E. "Sectarianism and Secularization: The Work of Bryan Wilson." Religious Studies Review 5 (1970) 161-174.
- Miller, Troy A. "Dogs, Adulterers, and the Way of Balaam: The Forms and Socio-Rhetorical Function of Polemical Rhetoric in 2 Peter." Irish Biblical Studies 22 (2000) 123-144, 182-191.
- Mödritzer, Helmut. Stigma und Charisma im Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt. Zur Soziologie des Urchristentums. Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus, volume 28. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht, 1994.
- Morris, Leon. First Corinthians. Revised edition. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, editor Leon Morris. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988.
- Mounce, Robert H. The Book of Revelation. New International Commentary on the

- New Testament, editor F. F. Bruce. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977.
- Moyise, Steve. The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplements 115, editor Stanley E. Porter. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995.
- Munck, Johannes. The Acts of the Apostles. Anchor Bible, volume 31, revised by William F. Albright and C. S. Mann. Garden City: Doubleday, 1967.
- Neusner, Jacob. "The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism." Journal of the American Academy of Religion 43 (1975) 15-26.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Judaism in the Matrix of Christianity. South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism, volume 08. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991.
- Neusner, Jacob and Ernest S. Frerichs eds. "To See Ourselves as Others See Us": Christians, Jews, and "Others" in Late Antiquity. Scholars Press Studies in the Humanities, ed., Caroline McCracken-Flesher. Chico: Scholars Press, 1985.
- Neusner, Jacob, Ernest S. Frerichs, and Nahum M. Sarna, editors, From Ancient Israel to Modern Judaism: Intellect in Quest of Understanding, volume I: Essays in Honor of Marvin Fox. Brown Judaic Studies, volume 159. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989.
- Newton, Derek. Deity and Diet: The Dilemma of Sacrificial Food at Corinth. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplements 169, editor Stanley E. Porter. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.
- Neyrey, Jerome H. "Bewitched in Galatia: Paul and Cultural Anthropology." Catholic Biblical Quarterly 50 (1988) 72-100.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Form and Background of the Polemic in 2 Peter." Journal of Biblical Literature 99 (1980) 407-431.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Form and Background of the Polemic in 2 Peter. Unpublished dissertation: Yale University, 1977.
- Nickelsburg, George W. E. "Revealed Wisdom as a Criterion for Inclusion and Exclusion: From Jewish Sectarianism to Early Christianity." In "To See Ourselves as Others See Us": Christians, Jews, and "Others" in Late Antiquity, editors Jacob Neusner and Ernest S. Frerichs. Scholars Press Studies in the Humanities, editor Caroline McCracken-Flesher (Chico: Scholars Press, 1985) 73-91.
- Niebuhr, H. Richard. The Social Sources of Denominationalism. New York: Henry

Holt and Company, 1929.

Nitzan, B. *Pesher Habakkuk: A Scroll from the Wilderness of Judea (1QpHab). Text, Introduction, and Commentary.* Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1986.

Nordholt, G. “Ἀἰρέομαι.” In *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, volume 1, editor Colin Brown (Exeter: Paternoster, 1975) 533-535.

Norris, Frederick W. “Ignatius, Polycarp, and 1 Clement: Walter Bauer Reconsidered.” In *Orthodoxy, Heresy, and Schism in Early Christianity. Studies in Early Christianity*, volume 4 (New York: Garland, 1993) 237-258.

O’Dell, Jerry. “The Religious Background of the *Psalms of Solomon* (Re-evaluated in the Light of Qumran Texts).” *Revue de Qumran* 3 (1961) 241-257.

O’Neill, John C. “‘For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia’ (Galatians 4.25).” In *The Old Testament in the New Testament: Essays in Honour of J. L. North. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplements* 189, editor Steve Moyise (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000) 208-217.

Ogilvie, R. M. *The Romans and Their Gods in the Age of Augustus.* New York: Norton & Co., 1969.

Orr, William F. and James Arthur Walther. *1 Corinthians.* Anchor Bible, volume 32, editors William F. Albright and David Noel Freedman. Garden City: Doubleday, 1976.

*The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, editors F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

*The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion*, editors R. J. Weblowsky and Geogrey Wigoder. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Pagels, Elaine. *The Gnostic Gospels.* New York: Random House, 1979.

Paige, T. “Holy Spirit.” In *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, editors Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1993) 404-413.

Paulsen, Henning. “Schisma und Häresie: Untersuchungen zu 1 Kor 11, 18. 19.” *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 79 (1982) 180-211.

Pfohl, Steven J. *Images of Deviance and Social Control: A Sociological History.* Second edition. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994.

- Phillips, Charles Robert. "The Sociology of Religious Knowledge in the Roman Empire to A. D. 284." In Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der Neueren Forschung, band II 16.3, editor Wolfgang Haase (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1986) 2677-2773.
- Pietersen, Lloyd. "Despicable Deviants: Labelling Theory and the Polemic of the Pastorals." Sociology of Religion 58 (1997) 343-352.
- Pilch, John J. "Lying and Deceit in the Letters to the Seven Churches: Perspectives from Cultural Anthropology." Biblical Theology Bulletin 22 (1992) 126-135.
- Pippin, Tina. "'And I Will Strike Her Children Dead': Death and the Deconstruction of Social Location." In Reading From This Place I: Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in the United States, editors Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995) 191-198.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Jezebel Re-Vamped." Semeia 69/70 (1995) 221-233.
- Plöger, Otto. Theocracy and Eschatology. Richmond: John Knox, 1962.
- Polaski, Sandra Hack. Paul and the Discourse of Power. Gender, Culture, Theory, volume 8, editor J. Cheryl Exum. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999.
- Porton, Gary G. "Sects and Sectarianism During the Period of the Second Temple: The Case of the Sadducees." In The Solomon Goldman Lectures: Perspectives in Jewish Learning, volume IV, editor N. Stampfer (Chicago: Spertus College of Judaica Press, 1985) 119-134.
- Purvis, James D. "Exile and Return: From the Babylonian Destruction to the Reconstruction of the Jewish State." In Ancient Israel: From Abraham to the Roman Destruction of the Temple. Revised and expanded edition, editor Hershel Shanks (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1999) 201-229.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Samaritan Problem: A Case Study in Jewish Sectarianism in the Roman Era." In Traditions in Transformation: Turning Points in Biblical Faith, editors Baruch Halpern and Jon D. Levenson (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1981) 323-350.
- Pyles, Thomas and John Algeo. The Origins and Development of the English Language, third edition. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982.
- Räsänen, Heikki. "The Clash Between Christian Styles of Life in the Book of Revelation." Studia theologica 49 (1995) 151-166.

- Richter, Philip. "Social-Scientific Criticism of the New Testament: An Appraisal and Extended Example." In Approaches to New Testament Study, editors Stanley E. Porter and David Tombs. *Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 120*, editor Stanley E. Porter (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 266-309.
- Ring, Nancy C. "Heresy." In The New Dictionary of Theology, editors Joseph A. Komonchak, Mary Collins, and Dermot A. Lane (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1987) 459-462.
- Robbins, Vernon K. The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society, and Ideology. New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Robinson, J. A. T. Redating the New Testament. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976.
- Robinson, James M. and Helmut Koester. Trajectories through Early Christianity. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971.
- Robinson, Thomas A. The Bauer Thesis Examined: The Geography of Heresy in the Early Christian Church. *Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 11*. Lewiston: Mellen, 1988.
- Rofé, Alexander. "Isaiah 66:1-4: Judean Sects in the Persian Period as Viewed by Trito-Isaiah." In Biblical and Related Studies Presented to Samuel Iwry, editors Ann Kort and Scott Morschauer (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1985) 205-217.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Onset of Sects in Postexilic Judaism: Neglected Evidence from the Septuagint, Trito-Isaiah, Ben Sira, and Malachi." In The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism: Essays in Tribute to Howard Clark Kee, editors Jacob Neusner, *et. al.* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988) 39-49.
- Rogers, J. W. and M. D. Buffalo, "Fighting Back: Nine Modes of Adaptation to a Deviant Label." Social Problems 22 (1974) 101-118.
- Roloff, Jürgen. Die Offenbarung des Johannes. Zücher Bibelkommentare New Testament, volume 18. Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1987.
- Ropes, James H. The Singular Problem of the Epistle to the Galatians. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929.
- Rowland, Christopher. The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity. New York: Crossroad, 1982.
- Rowley, H. H. "The Kittim and the Dead Sea Scrolls." Palestine Exploration Quarterly 88 (1956) 92-109.

- Royalty, Robert M. The Streets of Heaven: An Ideology of Wealth in the Apocalypse of John. Macon: Mercer University Press, 1998.
- Rudolph, Kurt. "Heresy: An Overview." In The Encyclopedia of Religion, editor Mircea Eliade, volume 6 (New York: MacMillan, 1987) 269-275.
- Russell, Jeffrey Burton. The Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity. London: Cornell University Press, 1977.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Heresy: Christian Concepts." In The Encyclopedia of Religion, editor Mircea Eliade, volume 6 (New York: MacMillan, 1987) 276-279.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Satan: The Early Christian Tradition. London: Cornell University Press, 1981.
- Ryle, H. E. and M. R. James. Psalms of the Pharisees, Commonly Called the Psalms of Solomon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1891.
- Saldarini, Anthony J. "The Gospel of Matthew and Jewish-Christian Conflict." In Social History of the Matthean Community: Cross-disciplinary Approaches, editor David L. Balch (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) 38-61.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community. Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism, editors William Scott Green and Calvin Goldscheider. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society: A Sociological Approach. Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1988.
- Sanders, E. P. "The Dead Sea Sect and Other Jews: Commonalities, Overlaps and Differences." In The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Historical Context, editor Timothy H. Lim (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000) 7-43.
- Sanders, E. P., *et al.*, editors, Jewish and Christian Self-Definition, volumes I-III. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980-82.
- Sanders, Jack T. "Paul Between Jews and Gentiles in Corinth." Journal for the Study of the New Testament 65 (1997) 67-83.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Schismatics, Sectarians, Dissidents, Deviants. London: SCM, 1993.
- Sandmel, Samuel. "Hellenism and Judaism." In Great Confrontations in Jewish History, editors Stanley Wagner and Allen Breck (Denver: Center for Jewish Studies, University of Denver, 1977) 21-38.

- Schiffman, Lawrence H. "Jewish Sectarianism in Second Temple Times." In Great Schisms in Jewish History, editors Raphael Jospe and Stanley M. Wagner (New York: Center for Judaic Studies/KTAV, 1981) 1-46.
- Schlier, Heinrich. "ἄρπεις." In Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, volume I, editor Gerhard Kittel, translator Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) 180-184.
- Schlueter, Carol J. Filling up the Measure: Polemical Hyperbole in 1 Thessalonians 2.14-16. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 98. Somerset: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1994.
- Schmithals, Walter. "Die Heretiker in Galatien." Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 47 (1956) 25-67 [revised English translation: "The Heretics in Galatia." In Paul and the Gnostics, translator John E. Steeley (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971) 13-64].
- Schoedel, William R. Ignatius of Antioch: A Commentary on the Letter of Ignatius of Antioch. Hermeneia, editor Helmut Koester. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985.
- Schüpphaus, J. Die Psalmen Salomos: Ein Zeugnis Jerusalemer Theologie und Frömmigkeit in der Mitte des vorchristlichen Jahrhunderts. Arbeiten zur Literatur und Geschichte des hellenistischen Judentums, volume VII. Leiden: Brill, 1977.
- Schur, Edwin M. Labeling Deviant Behavior: Its Sociological Implications. New York: Harper and Row, 1971.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Politics of Deviance: Stigma Contests and the Uses of Power. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1980.
- Schürer, Emil. The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ, volume II, reviser and editor Geza Vermes, *et. al.* Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1979.
- Schütz, John Howard. Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority. Society for New Testament Studies Manuscripts, volume 26. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.
- Schweizer, Eduard, "Traditional Ethical Patterns in the Pauline and post-Pauline Letters and Their Development." In Text and Interpretation: Studies in the New Testament Presented to Matthew Black, editors Ernest Best and Robert McL. Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) 195-209.
- Scobie, Charles H. H. "Local References in the Letters to the Seven Churches." New Testament Studies 39 (1993) 606-624.

- Scroggs, Robin. "The Earliest Christian Communities as Sectarian Movement." In Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults: Early Christianity: Studies for Morton Smith at Sixty, volume II, editor Jacob Neusner. Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity 12 (Leiden: Brill, 1975) 1-23.
- Segal, Alan F. The Other Judaisms of Late Antiquity. Brown Judaic Studies, volume 127, editor Jacob Neusner. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports About Christianity and Gnosticism. Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity 25. Leiden: Brill, 1977.
- Shea, William H. "The Covenantal Form of the Letters to the Seven Churches." Andrews University Seminary Studies 21 (1983) 71-84.
- Siker, Jeffrey S. Disinheriting the Jews: Abraham in Early Christian Controversy. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991.
- Silberstein, Laurence J. and Robert L. Cohn, editors. The Other in Jewish Thought and History: Constructions of Jewish Culture and Identity. New York: New York University Press, 1994.
- Silva, Moises. "Old Testament in Paul." In Dictionary of Paul and His Letters, editors Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1993) 630-642.
- Silver, Daniel Jeremy. "Min." In Encyclopedia Judaica, volume 12 (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1971) columns 1-3.
- Simon, Marcel. "The Apostolic Decree and Its Setting in the Ancient Church." Bulletin of the John Rylands Library 52 (1970) 437-460.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "From Greek Hairesis to Christian Heresy." In Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition: In Honorem of Robert M. Grant, editors William R. Schoedel and Robert L. Wilken. Théologie Historique 54 (Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1979) 101-116.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Jewish Sects at the Time of Jesus, translator James H. Farley. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967.
- Smallwood, E. Mary. The Jews Under Roman Rule: From Pompey to Diocletian. Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity, volume XX, editor Jacob Neusner. Leiden: Brill, 1976.
- Smith, Daniel L. The Religion of the Landless: The Sociology of the Babylonian Exile. Bloomington: Meyer-Stone, 1990.

- Smith, D. Moody. "The Pauline Literature." In It is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture: Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars, SSF, editors D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 265-291.
- Smith, Jonathon Z. "Towards Interpreting Demonic Powers in Hellenistic and Roman Antiquity." Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt 2.16.1 (1978) 425-439.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "What a Difference a Difference Makes." In "To See Ourselves as Others See Us": Christians, Jews, and "Others" in Late Antiquity, editors Jacob Neusner and Ernest S. Frerichs. Scholars Press Studies in the Humanities, editor Caroline McCracken-Flesher (Chico: Scholars Press, 1985) 3-48.
- Smith, Morton. "The Dead Sea Sect in Relation to Ancient Judaism." New Testament Studies 7 (1961) 347-360.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Palestinian Parties and Politics That Shaped the Old Testament. New York: Columbia University, 1971.
- Smith-Christopher, Daniel L. "Reassessing the Historical and Sociological Impact of the Babylonian Exile (597/587-539 BCE)." In Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, & Christian Conceptions, editor James M. Scott. Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplements 56, editor John J. Collins (Leiden: Brill, 1997) 7-36.
- Snyder, Barbara W. "Triple-Form and Space/Time Transitions: Literary Structuring Devices in the Apocalypse." Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers 30 (1991) 440-450.
- Staden, Heinrich Von. "Hairesis and Heresy: The Case of the *haireseis iatrikai*." In Jewish and Christian Self-Definition: in the Graeco-Roman World, volume III, editors Ben F. Meyer and E. P. Sanders (London: SCM, 1982) 76-100.
- Stanley, C.D. Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles. Society for New Testament Studies Manuscripts, volume 69. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Stanton, Graham N. "Aspects of Early Christian-Jewish Polemic and Apologetic." New Testament Studies 31 (1985) 377-392.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Jesus of Nazareth: A Magician and a False Prophet Who Deceived God's People." In Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ: Essays on the Historical Jesus and New Testament Christology, editors Joel B. Green and Max Turner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994) 164-180.

- Stark, Rodney. "How New Religions Succeed: A Theoretical Model." In The Future of New Religious Movements, editors David G. Bromiley and Phillip E. Hammond (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1987) 11-29.
- Stark, Rodney and William Bainbridge. The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival and Cult Formation. Berkeley: University California Press, 1985.
- Stark, Werner. Sectarian Religion. The Sociology of Religion: A Study of Christendom, volume II. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967.
- Stearns, J. B. Studies of the Dream as a Technical Device in Latin Epic and Drama. Lancaster: Lancaster Press, 1927.
- Steck, Odil. "Das Problem theologischer Strömungen in nachexilischer Zeit." Evangelische Theologie 28 (1968) 445-458.
- Stegemann, H. Die Entstehung der Qumrangemeinde. Bonn: privately published, 1971.
- Stemberger, Günter. Jewish Contemporaries of Jesus: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, translator Alan W. Mahnke. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995.
- Stern, Sacha. Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings. Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums, volume XXIII, editors Martin Hengel, *et. al.* Leiden: Brill, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Qumran Calendars: Theory and Practice." In The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Historical Context, editor Timothy H. Lim (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000) 179-186.
- Still, Todd D. Conflict at Thessalonica: A Pauline Church and its Neighbours. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplements 183. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999.
- Stowers, Stanley Kent. "The Social Sciences and the Study of Early Christianity." In Approaches to Ancient Judaism V: Studies in Judaism and Its Greco-Roman Context. Brown Judaic Studies, volume 32, editor William Scott Green. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985) 149-181.
- Strecker, Georg. "A Report on the New Edition of Walter Bauer's *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum*," The Journal of Bible and Religion 33 (1965) 53-56.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Walter Bauer: Exeget, Philologe, und Historiker; zum 100 Geburtstag am 8/8/1977." Novum Testamentum 20 (1978) 75-80.

- Stuckenbruck, Loren T. Angel Veneration and Christology: A Study in Early Judaism and the Christology of the Apocalypse of John. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament II, volume 70. Tübingen: Mohr, 1995.
- Suchar, Charles S. Social Deviance: Perspectives and Prospects. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1978.
- Suggs, M. Jack. "The Christian Two Way Tradition: Its Antiquity, Form, and Function." In Studies in the New Testament and Early Christian Literature: Essays in Honor of A. P. Wikgren, Novum Testamentum Supplements, volume 33, editor D. E. Aune (Leiden: Brill, 1972) 60-74.
- Sunney, Jerry L. Identifying Paul's Opponents: The Question of Method in 2 Corinthians. Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1990.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Servants of Satan," "False Brothers" and Other Opponents of Paul. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplements 188, editor Stanley E. Porter. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999.
- Sweet, J. P. M. Revelation. Westminster Pelican Commentaries. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1979.
- Taylor, Miriam S. Anti-Judaism & Early Christian Identity: A Critique of the Scholarly Consensus. Studia Post-Biblica, volume 46, editor David S. Katz. Leiden: Brill, 1995.
- Talmon, Shemaryahu. "The Calendar Reckoning of the Sect from the Judean Desert." Scripta hierosolymitana 4 (1965) 162-199.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Emergence of Jewish Sectarianism in the Early Second Temple Period." In Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honour of Frank Moore Cross, editors Patrick D. Miller, Paul D. Hanson, and S. Dean McBride (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 587-614.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Internal Diversification of Judaism in the Early Second Temple Period." In Jewish Civilization in the Hellenistic-Roman Period. Journal for the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series, volume 10. (Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Press, 1991) 16-42.
- Tcherikover, Victor. Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews, translator Shimon Applebaum. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1959.
- Teicher, J. L. "The Habakkuk Scroll." Journal of Jewish Studies 5 (1954) 47-59.

- Theissen, Gerd. The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth, editor and translator John H. Schütz. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982.
- Thiering, B. E. "Once More the Wicked Priest." Journal of Biblical Literature 97 (1978) 191-205.
- Thiselton, Anthony C. The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.
- Thomas, Johannes. "Formgesetze des Begriffskatalogs im Neuen Testament." Theologische Zeitschrift 24 (1968) 15-28.
- Thompson, Leonard L. The Book of Revelation: Apocalypse and Empire. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Literary Unity of the Book of Revelation." In Mappings of the Biblical Terrain: The Bible as Text [= Bucknell Review 33/2], editors V. L. Tollers and J. Maier (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1990) 347-363.
- Trafton, Joseph L. "The *Psalms of Solomon* in Recent Research." Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha 12 (1994) 3-19.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Solomon, Psalms of." In Anchor Bible Dictionary, volume VI, editor David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 115-117.
- Troeltsch, Ernst. The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, translator O. Wyon. New York: MacMillan, 1931.
- Turner, H. E. W. The Pattern of Christian Truth: A Study in the Relations Between Orthodoxy and Heresy in the Early Church. London: A. R. Mowbray & Co., 1954.
- Tyson, J. B. "Paul's Opponents in Galatia." Novum Testamentum 10 (1968) 241-254.
- Ulfgard, Håkan. "The Teacher of Righteousness, the History of the Qumran Community, and Our Understanding of the Jesus Movement: Texts, Theories and Trajectories." In Qumran Between the Old and New Testaments. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplements 290, editors Frederick H. Cryer and Thomas L. Thompson. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.
- Vanderkam, James C. Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Measuring Time. New York: Routledge, 1998.

- Vermes, Geza. "The Decalogue and the Minim." In In Memoriam Paul Kahle, editors Matthew Black and Georg Fohrer. Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, volume 103, editor Georg Fohrer (Berlin: Alfred Töplemann, 1968) 232-240.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Story of Balaam—The Scriptural Origin of Haggadah." In Geza Vermes. Scripture and Tradition in Judaism. Studia postbiblica, volume 4 (Leiden: Brill, 1961) 127-177.
- Vos, L. A. Synoptic Traditions in the Apocalypse. Kampen: Kok, 1965.
- Vrcan, Srdjan. "A Different Historical Perspective on Legitimation." Current Sociology 35 (1987) 127-134.
- Wallis, Roy, editor. Sectarianism: Analyses of Religious and Non-Religious Sects. London: Peter Own Limited, 1975.
- Warren, Carol A. B. "Destigmatization of Identity: From Deviant to Charismatic." Qualitative Sociology 3.1 (1980) 59-72.
- Watson, Duane F. "Nicolaitans." In Anchor Bible Dictionary, volume IV, editor David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 1106-1107.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Invention, Arrangement, and Style: Rhetorical Criticism of Jude and 2 Peter. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series, volume 104, editor Charles Talbert. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988.
- Watson, Francis. Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: A Sociological Approach. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 56, editor G. N. Stanton. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Weber, Max. The Sociology of Religion, translator Ephraim Fischoff. London: Methuen, 1965.
- Weinberg, J. P. The Citizen—Temple Community. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplements 151. Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1992.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Demographische Notizen zur Geschichte der nachexilischen Gemeinde in Juda." Klio 54 (1972) 45-99.
- Weinberg, S. S. "Post-Exilic Palestine: An Archaeological Report." Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities 4 (1971) 78-97.
- Weiss, Johannes. Earliest Christianity: A History of the Period A.D. 30-150, volume II. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1937.

- Welch, Michael R. "Analyzing Religious Sects: An Empirical Examination of Wilson's Sect Typology." Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 16 (1977) 125-139.
- Wilken, Robert L. "Diversity and Unity in Early Christianity." Second Century 1 (1981) 101-110.
- Williamson, H. G. M. Israel in the Book of Chronicles. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.
- Wilson, Bryan R. Magic & the Millennium: A Sociological Study of Religious Movements of Protest among Tribal and Third-World Peoples. London: Heinemann, 1973.
- \_\_\_\_\_, editor. Patterns of Sectarianism: Organisation and Ideology in Social and Religious Movements. Heinemann Books on Sociology, editor Donald Gunn MacRae. London: Heinemann, 1967.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Religious Sects: A Sociological Study. London: World University Library, 1970.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Social Dimensions of Sectarianism: Sects and New Religious Movements in Contemporary Society. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.
- Wilson, J. Christian. "The Problem of the Domitianic Date of Revelation." New Testament Studies 39 (1993) 587-605.
- Wilson, Robert McL. "Gnostics in Galatia?." In Studia Evangelica IV, TU 102, editor F. L. Cross (Berlin: Akademie, 1968) 358-367.
- Wilson, Stephen G. "The Apostate Minority." Studia Theologica 49 (1995) 201-211.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Related Strangers: Jews and Christians 70-170 C.E.. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995.
- Windisch, Hans. "ζύμη." In Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, volume II, editor Gerhard Kittel, translator Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) 902-906.
- Winninge, Mikael. Sinners and the Righteous: A Comparative Study of the Psalms of Solomon and Paul's Letters. Coniectanea biblica: New Testament Series, volume 26. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1995.
- Witherington III, Ben. The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary.

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

\_\_\_\_\_. Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Not So Idle Thoughts About EIDOLOTHUTON." Tyndale Bulletin 44 (1993) 237-254.

Woude, A. S. van der. "Wicked Priest or Wicked Priests?: Reflections on the Identification of the Wicked Priest in the Habakkuk Commentary." Journal of Jewish Studies 33 (1982) 349-359.

Wright, R. B. "*Psalms of Solomon: A New Translation and Introduction.*" In Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, volume II, editor James H. Charlesworth (New York: Doubleday, 1985) 639-670.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Psalms of Solomon, The Pharisees, and the Essenes." In International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies and the Society of Biblical Literature Pseudepigrapha Seminar. Septuagint and Cognate Studies 2, editor Robert A. Kraft (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1972) 136-147.

Yee, Gale A. "Jezebel." In Anchor Bible Dictionary, volume III, editor David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 848-849.

Young, T. Cuyler. "Cyrus." In Anchor Bible Dictionary, volume I, editor David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 1231-1232.

Zimmerman, H. "Christus und die Kirche in den Sendschreiben der Apokalypse." In Unio Christianorum: Festschrift Jaeger (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1962) 183-194.

Zito, George V. "Toward a Sociology of Heresy." Sociological Analysis 44 (1983) 123-130.