

INTRODUCTION

Lightless Shadows

Symmetry of Good and Evil in Early Jewish Demonology

In recent years there has been a renewed interest in the study of the symmetrical patterns found in early Jewish apocalyptic literature.¹ In this literature protological and eschatological times seem to be understood as periods that mirror each other. One instance of this symmetry of protology and eschatology can be found in the early Jewish pseudepigraphon known to us as the *Book of Jubilees*. Scholars have previously noted that in the *Book of Jubilees* *Endzeit* appears to be mirroring *Urzeit*. One of the researchers remarks that

Jubilees affirms a rigorous temporal symmetry. All human history from creation to new creation is foreordained by God and inscribed in the heavenly tablets, which, in turn, are revealed through angelic mediation to Moses on Mt. Sinai, just as they were revealed to Enoch before him. In this presentation, historical patterns are adduced to confirm divine providence over earthly events. A striking example of this is found in the correspondence between *Endzeit* and *Urzeit*. In *Jubilees*, as in other apocalyptic literature, God intends the world ultimately to conform to his original intention for the creation. But *Jubilees* goes even further by implying a nearly complete recapitulation, that is that the *Endzeit* or restoration would almost exactly mirror the *Urzeit* or patriarchal period.²

Another example of the temporal symmetry of apocalyptic protology and eschatology is found in an early Jewish apocalyptic text known to us as 2 (*Slavonic*) *Enoch*. There the disintegration of the primordial aeon of light in the beginning of creation is symmetrically juxtaposed with the aeon's eschatological restoration at the end of time. According to the Slavonic

apocalypse, after the final judgment, when the spatial and temporal order will collapse, all the righteous of the world will be incorporated into a single luminous aeon. The description of this final aeon reveals some striking similarities with the features of the primordial aeon of light portrayed earlier as the foundation of the created order.³ The eschatological restoration affects not only the peculiar order of the protological events that become reinstated at the end of time but also the destiny of some primeval heroes who are predestined to assume new eschatological functions. One such character is the seventh antediluvian patriarch Enoch, a central witness of the protological corruption of the earth by the deeds of the Watchers who is also depicted in the Slavonic apocalypse as the first fruit of the eschatological aeon of light. The presence of the important primordial witness at the pivotal apex of the *Endzeit* does not appear to be coincidental. In this temporal “symmetrical” perspective it is often understood that the protological figures, prominent in the *Urzeit*, including Adam, Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and other primordial patriarchs and prophets, will become eschatological witnesses by assuming various roles at the end of the time. Jewish apocalyptic writings therefore often offer a plethora of eschatological characters posing as conceptual “reincarnations” of familiar protological exemplars who explicitly and implicitly display the particular features of their primordial counterparts. Christian apocalyptic materials are also cognizant of this typological symmetry of protological and eschatological heroes. Thus, early Christian writers often attempt to envision Jesus as the new Adam or the new Moses—the one who returns humankind to its original prelapsarian condition or brings a new covenant.⁴

The striking symmetry discernable in Jewish and Christian apocalyptic writings reveals many complex and often perplexing dimensions. Thus, the symmetrical perspective found in pseudepigraphical texts appears to shape not only the “horizontal,” temporal, dynamics but also the “vertical,” spatial, dimension of the apocalyptic worldview with its peculiar imagery of the heavenly and earthly realms. Reflecting on this spatial symmetry in the *Book of Jubilees* and other early Jewish apocalyptic writings, James Scott observes that they affirm “not only a temporal symmetry between *Urzeit* and *Endzeit*, but also, secondly, a special symmetry between heaven and earth.”⁵ These distinctive correspondences between the earthly and heavenly realities are well known. In the apocalyptic texts such correlations are especially evident in the peculiar parallelism between heavenly and earthly cultic settings that are often depicted as mirroring each other. In this worldview, the earthy sanctuaries, their sacerdotal content, and even their cultic servants, are envisioned as the entities that are predestined to be faithful imitators of their celestial counterparts. In this peculiar perspective even the etiology of these sacerdotal rituals and settings is intimately connected with the

stories of their origination after the patterns of the heavenly cultic prototypes.⁶ Further, the authenticity and effectiveness of the earthly sacerdotal establishments are then portrayed as being constantly tested on their faithful correspondence to the ultimate heavenly patterns according to which they were initially formed. As Scott rightly observes, “[T]he goal of history . . . is that the cultus will be ‘on earth as in heaven.’”⁷

Indeed, in apocalyptic accounts visionaries are often depicted as either beholding or traveling to the heavenly versions of terrestrial sanctuaries, especially in times when the earthly shrines become physically destroyed or polluted and thus no longer able to fulfill their cultic responsibilities.⁸ Yet the symmetrical correspondences between the heavenly and earthly realms do not seem to be reduced solely to the cultic dimension but appear to affect the whole fabric of the apocalyptic enterprise, including the heart of its personal eschatology—the transformation of a seer. In this respect another crucial element that reaffirms the existence of the spatial symmetry is the concept of the heavenly counterpart of the apocalyptic visionary. The origin of this idea in Jewish lore can be traced to some pseudepigraphical writings of the late Second Temple period, including the *Book of Jubilees* where the angel of the presence⁹ is envisioned as the heavenly counterpart of Moses.¹⁰

Scholars have previously noted that Enochic materials are also cognizant of this tradition about the heavenly twin of the seer. Thus, the idea about the heavenly counterpart of the visionary appears to be present in one of the later booklets of *1 (Ethiopic) Enoch*—the *Book of the Similitudes*. It has been previously observed that the *Similitudes* seem to entertain the idea of the heavenly double of a visionary when it identifies Enoch with the Son of Man.¹¹ Students of Enochic traditions have long been puzzled by the idea that the Son of Man, who in the previous chapters of the *Similitudes* is distinguished from Enoch, becomes suddenly identified with the patriarch in *1 Enoch* 71. James VanderKam suggests that this puzzle can be explained by the Jewish notion, attested in several ancient Jewish texts, that a creature of flesh and blood could have a heavenly double or counterpart.¹² As an example, VanderKam points to Jacob traditions¹³ in which the patriarch’s “features are engraved on high.”¹⁴ It is significant that in both Enochic and Jacobite traditions the theme of the heavenly counterpart is often conflated with the imagery of the angels of the presence—the feature that also reaffirms the spatial symmetry between the heavenly and earthly realms.



Although the main thrust of the spatial symmetry found in apocalyptic literature is often expressed through the formula “on earth as in heaven,” the aforementioned spatial correspondence appears to influence not only the

human, earthly abode—the realm believed to be sustained by its faithful mirroring of the celestial realities—but also the demonic quarters of the underworld that also strive to imitate for their own, nefarious purposes the features of the heavenly world.

Jewish and Christian apocalyptic writings provide a plethora of illustrations for this often strange and perplexing parallelism of heavenly and infernal dimensions in which demonic creatures try to reflect and mirror not only the features of angelic characters but even the attributes of the deity himself.

One of the important examples of this paradoxal correspondence between divine and demonic figures can be found in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, where the antagonist of the story, the fallen angel Azazel, is portrayed as a possessor of his own “glory” or *kavod*, the attribute that is reserved almost exclusively for the depiction of the deity in apocalyptic accounts. The demon’s possession of such an unusual theophanic feature is not an isolated incident but part of the broader ideological tendency of the Slavonic apocalypse, which unveils the paradoxal symmetry of the good and evil realms.¹⁵ Most striking example of this symmetry is found in chapter 23, where Abraham receives a vision of the protological scene portraying the demon’s corruption of the protoplasts. In this disclosure the hero of the faith beholds Azazel situated in the midst of Adam and Eve under the Tree of Life. Scholars have previously suggested that Azazel may attempt here to mimic the divine presence often represented in sacerdotal settings as the intertwined cherubic couple in the Holy of Holies by offering his own, now corrupted and demonic version of the sacred union.¹⁶

As has been noted above, the symmetry of *Urzeit* and *Endzeit* and the symmetrical correspondences of realms deeply affect the profiles of various characters of the stories, revealing the paradoxal mirroring of protological and eschatological heroes as well as a remarkable parallelism between earthly and celestial counterparts. It has also been shown that even negative characters of the apocalyptic stories are part of this mirroring dynamic. Thus, in Jewish and Christian apocalyptic materials protological opponents, similar to primordial patriarchs and prophets, often appear at the end of time in their new eschatological capacity. As our study has already demonstrated, the antagonists are also affected by the spatial dynamics of the apocalyptic story as they try to mimic the attributes of celestial beings.

Yet the persuasive nature of the temporal and spatial symmetry found in the pseudepigraphical narratives also seems to be responsible for another type of symmetrical correlation that often manifests itself in the paradoxal mirroring of the roles and attributes of the protagonists and antagonists of apocalyptic stories. This type of correspondence can be seen as a sort of inverse symmetry, where the antagonist or protagonist of the story literally

takes the place of his opponent by acquiring the peculiar attributes and conditions of his counterpart.

It is well known that in Jewish apocalyptic writings some exalted heroes, including protological patriarchs and prophets, are often depicted as traveling to the upper realms where they are granted knowledge of heavenly phenomena and a vision of the divine Chariot—the pivotal visionary encounter laden with profound transformational opportunities that often leads to the metamorphosis of a seer into an angelic or even divine being. It is intriguing that in some apocalyptic accounts, this symbolism of transformation is applied not only to the “heroes” of the apocalyptic stories but also their eschatological opponents who also undergo their own paradoxical metamorphoses.¹⁷

Moreover, in the course of these transformations, the peculiar attributes and offices of the protagonists or antagonists become mysteriously imitated in the newly acquired offices and roles of their respective opponents. Thus, for example, in the *Book of the Watchers*, the fallen angels, the former participants in the heavenly liturgy, are depicted as abandoning their place in heavenly worship and descending to earth to assume the marital roles of humans, while their righteous human counterpart, the patriarch Enoch, ascends to heaven to become a sacerdotal servant in the heavenly Temple. The exchange between the hero and his negative counterpart(s) is clearly discernable here, as both parties are depicted as mirroring each other in their mutual exchange of offices, roles, attributes, and even wardrobes. The last feature of the transformation is particularly noteworthy since the theme of transferring the garment of the demoted angelic antagonist to an exalted human protagonist plays a very important role in Jewish apocalyptic literature. Thus, for example, in Enochic literature the seventh antediluvian patriarch receives glorious angelic attire¹⁸ while the fallen angels are donning the human ontological “garments.”¹⁹

In the Adamic lore one can also find this inverse symmetrical correspondence when one learns that the first humans received their unique status, manifested in the luminous garments, as a result of the demotion of an exalted angelic being who fell out of divine favor. In these traditions the protoplast takes the place, glory, and garments of the demoted angelic antagonist. One of the early examples of this tradition can be found in the *Primary Adam Books*, where the removal of Satan²⁰ from his special glorious place is placed in conceptual juxtaposition with the creation and exaltation of Adam.²¹ Moreover, the demotion of the antagonist is accompanied not only by vacation of the exalted place, which is required for the apotheosis of a new hero, but also, and more importantly, by purification or catharsis. In this sacerdotal perspective the demoted figures are often envisioned as cosmic scapegoats who take upon themselves the “soiled garments” of their

human opponents by carrying their sins into the remote abode of their exile. Scholars often see in such cathartic routines a reflection of one of the fundamental cultic dynamics manifested in the Yom Kippur ordinance where the entrance of the human celebrant into the divine abode, represented by the Holy of Holies, is juxtaposed with the removal of human sins into the wilderness by means of the scapegoat.

This apocalyptic reinterpretation of the Yom Kippur imagery appears to play an important role in the symmetrical conceptual framework of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* where the angel Yahoel informs Abraham that he will receive the angelic garment of Azazel while the demon will take upon himself the “garment” of the patriarch’s sins. In this inverse symmetrical framework, both parties are depicted as simultaneously exchanging each other’s attributes since the transference of the celestial garment to the patriarch coincides with the angel’s testimony that Abraham’s sins are transferred to Azazel.²² As has already been noted, a similar development is discernable in the demonological settings of the Adamic tradition where the protoplast’s exaltation in the angelic community mirrors Satan’s demotion from celestial citizenship.²³



Our short excursus into symmetrical correspondences between the antagonists and protagonists of apocalyptic stories has shown that these symmetrical correlations often revolve around two enigmatic figures who exercised formative influence on early Jewish demonology—the demoted angelic beings known to us as Azazel and Satan.²⁴

While in later Jewish and Christian materials the stories of both paradigmatic antagonists are often conflated and even confused, their respective origins can be traced to two distinctive and often competing mythologies of evil—Adamic and Enochic, one of which was tied to the mishap of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and the other to the fall of angels in the antediluvian period.²⁵

Thus, Adamic tradition traces the source of evil to Satan’s transgression and the fall of Adam and Eve in Eden, a trend that explains the reason for Satan’s demotion by his refusal to obey God’s command to venerate the protoplast. In contrast, the early Enochic tradition bases its understanding of the origin of evil on the story of the fallen Watchers led by Azazel.

It is also intriguing that while in the beginning of their conceptual journeys Azazel and Satan are posited as representatives of two distinctive and often rival trends tied to the distinctive etiologies of corruption, in later Jewish and Christian demonological lore both antagonists are able to enter each other’s respective stories in new conceptual capacities. In these

later traditions Satanael is often depicted as the leader of the fallen angels while his conceptual rival Azazel is portrayed as a seducer of Adam and Eve.

The current collection of essays examines the symmetrical patterns of early Jewish demonology that are often manifested in the antagonists' imitation of the attributes of various heavenly beings, including principal angels and even the deity himself. The study will pay special attention to the sacerdotal dimension of these demonological developments and show that the peculiar transformations of the adversaries often have a cultic significance as they become unfolded in the midst of the priestly and liturgical settings of the Jewish tradition, including the Yom Kippur ceremony.

The second aspect of the study will include investigation of the mutual conceptual interactions between the Azazel and Satanael traditions in course of which the distinctive features or attributes of one antagonist become transferred to the character of the rival mythology of evil.

The discussion treats the aforementioned issues in six essays, three of which are devoted to the figure of Azazel and three others to the figure of Satanael, also known in the Slavonic pseudepigrapha under the name Satanail. This structure of the volume provides an equal amount of attention to both demonological trends.

The first essay of the collection, entitled "‘The Likeness of Heaven’: *Kavod* of Azazel in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*," explores one of Azazel's most enigmatic practices, his attempt to imitate the divine manifestation situated between two cherubim in the Holy of Holies. The study underlines the cultic aspect of this demonic transformation. Although the study mainly focuses on the motifs found in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, an early Jewish apocalyptic text preserved in Slavonic, it treats the Azazel tradition in its historical and interpretive complexity through a broad variety of Jewish materials.

The second essay, "Eschatological Yom Kippur in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*: The Scapegoat Ritual," continues to examine the sacerdotal dimension of the Azazel figure, namely his role as a celestial scapegoat. Already in the Bible the infamous scapegoat bearing the name Azazel is envisioned as an important sacerdotal servant on whom the heavy load of Israel's sins is bestowed during the annual Yom Kippur ceremony. The *Apocalypse of Abraham*, however, portrays Azazel not merely as a sacrificial animal but as a fallen angelic being who takes upon himself the burden of Abraham's sins, which allows the hero of the faith to enter the celestial Holy of Holies. The study suggests that the *Apocalypse of Abraham* portrays an eschatological reenactment of the Yom Kippur ritual.

The third essay of the collection, entitled "The Garment of Azazel in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*," probes further the cultic dimension of Jewish demonology by concentrating on the tradition of Azazel's angelic garment, which in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* is transferred to the patriarch. It

appears that this endowment of Abraham with the celestial garment before his entrance into the celestial Holy of Holies betrays distinctive sacerdotal connections as it appears to be related to the traditions about the attire the high priest wore upon his entrance into the Holy of Holies. This essay also deals extensively with a parallel tradition about Satan's angelic garment found in the *Primary Adam Books* where Satan's garment of glory is also transferred to a human recipient. Analysis of this paralleled tradition provides an important conceptual bridge to the second part of the volume, which includes three essays dealing with the Satanael tradition. The essays of the second part of the volume are organized to show the development of the Satanael lore in its historical perspective. Thus, one of these essays deals with *2 Enoch*, a text written before 70 CE, another essay discusses the Satan tradition in the Gospel of Matthew written around 70 CE, and the final essay examines *3 Baruch* written in the second/third century CE.

The fourth essay of the volume (the first in the second section), entitled "The Watchers of Satanael: The Fallen Angels Traditions in *2 (Slavonic) Enoch*," deals with the intriguing development inside the Satanael tradition in which this demonic character acquires several peculiar roles of his conceptual rival Azazel, being now depicted as the leader of the fallen Watchers. This development shows the remarkable fluidity of the two mythologies of evil in which the features of one antagonist are often emulated by the main character of the rival trend.

The fifth essay, "Satan and the Visionary: Apocalyptic Roles of the Adversary in the Temptation Narrative of the Gospel of Matthew," deals with Satan's unusual roles and actions during his temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. The study shows that while tempting Jesus Satan assumes several peculiar roles of the transporting and interpreting angel (a psychopomp and an *angelus interpres*), the offices well known from Jewish apocalyptic stories. Moreover, Satan's request for veneration invokes some features of the theophanic accounts where such services are delivered exclusively either to the deity or his anthropomorphic icon, the protoplast.

The sixth essay, "The Flooded Arboretums: The Garden Traditions in the Slavonic Version of *3 Baruch* and the *Book of Giants*" again deals with the interaction between the two mythologies of evil in which some features of the fallen Watchers' demonological template are transferred to Satanael.

One can see that both parts of the volume are interconnected through the thorough exploration of the dialogue between the Satanael and Azazel traditions, the conceptual development that played a crucial formative role in shaping early Jewish demonology.