

Paul's Apocalyptic Theology in Romans 8:19-22

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New Testament scholars frequently claim that Paul's theology in Rom. 8:19-22 was strongly influenced by Jewish apocalyptic thought. J. Christiaan Beker argues that the coherent core of Paul's theology in all his letters is the apocalyptic triumph of God: "the hope in the dawning victory of God and the imminent redemption of the created order, which he has inaugurated in Christ."¹ Beker sees Rom. 8:19-22 as one of Paul's clearest confessions of the apocalyptic triumph of God. The apocalyptic theology of this passage also has been acknowledged by numerous scholars who do not accept the general premise that Paul's theology is rooted in Jewish apocalyptic thought.² Although the genre of this passage is not an apocalypse, the worldview, theology and many expressions are very similar to those found in Second Temple Jewish apocalyptic writings. Modern apocalyptic researchers distinguish between "apocalypse" as a literary genre and "apocalyptic eschatology" as a religious perspective.³ Unfortunately, many researchers describe this passage as "apocalyptic" without clearly indicating in what sense they are using the term.

In fact there are several streams of thought within Jewish apocalyptic literature, which vary in their view of the extent and cause of the corruption of the material creation in this age and the hope for its future redemption. Contrary to popular thought, most Second Temple Jewish apocalyptic writings are not world-denying, but they view the material world as damaged by human and angelic sin. Many look forward not to the destruction of the world, but to its eschatological deliverance from the damage caused by sin.

Romans 8:19-22 follows that stream of apocalyptic thought that looks forward to the permanent eschatological transformation of the present creation, the removal of the damage caused by sin, and the perfection of creation to share the glory and freedom of the glorified children of God.

Overview of Romans 8:19-22

¹⁹For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²²For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.
(Rom. 8:19-22, NASB)

Rom. 8:19-22 discusses the present suffering of the natural world due to the Fall. Although the natural world is not itself fallen or disobedient to God, Adam's sin brought the created order into bondage to death, decay, corruption (φθορᾶ) and futility (ματαιότης). The background for this passage is Gen. 3:17-19, which describes the curse on the ground due to the original human sin.⁴ Only God could subject creation to futility while providing a hope for its future redemption (v. 20, ἐφ' ἐλπίδι).⁵ In Rom. 5:12-19, Paul explains that Adam's Fall brought sin and death to humanity. In Rom. 8:20-22 Paul extends the impact of the Fall to the natural world.

The effect of Adam's sin on nature is connected with the human dominion over nature (Gen. 1:26-28). Since Adam was accountable to God to rule the earth and to tend the garden, his sin affected the natural world for which he was responsible.⁶ The natural world became frustrated in its purposes and can no longer be all it was created to be.

Yet Paul describes this suffering of the natural world in the context of great eschatological hope both for believers and the natural world: The suffering of creation is like birth pangs leading to a glorious new world, rather than the death pangs of a dying creation (v. 22).⁷ Creation awaits eagerly "the revealing of the sons of God" (v. 19), because at that time the natural world will be set free (ἐλευθερωθήσεται) from corruption and will be transformed to share in "the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (v. 21). The redemption that Christ brings will have cosmic consequences: At the second coming of Christ when the people of God are glorified (v. 19), the natural order will be restored to its proper operation, so that it may fulfill the purpose for which it was created.

When Paul uses "creation" (κτίσις) in this passage he is referring to the natural world.⁸ Although κτίσις can refer to all that is created or individual human or animal creatures,⁹ the exact meaning is more limited in context. Even though Paul refers to "all creation" (πάντα ἢ κτίσις, v. 22),¹⁰ this is not decisive, since several LXX passages use this phrase to refer to a particular class of creature.¹¹ In Rom. 8:19-22 several aspects of the created order are incompatible with the context:

(1) Unfallen angels have not been subjected to futility or corruption (vv. 20-21), either due to human sin or their own actions.

(2) Demons will not be redeemed (v. 21) and they do not long for the revealing of the sons of God (v. 19).¹²

(3) Heaven has not been subjected to futility or decay (vv. 20-21).¹³

(4) Unbelievers¹⁴ so the verse does not clarify the use of this word.}} do not eagerly await the revealing of the children of God (v. 19)¹⁵ nor will all unbelievers be delivered from the consequences of sin (v. 21).¹⁶

(5) Although the previous section discusses the suffering and glory of Christians (vv. 17-18)¹⁷ and Paul sometimes uses κτίσις to refer to believers,¹⁸ Rom. 8:19-23 frequently contrasts believers and κτίσις. V. 23 contrasts believers with κτίσις (“Not only so, but we ourselves also”, οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτοὶ): Believers groan (v. 23) in a similar way to the rest of creation (v. 22). The creation eagerly awaits the revealing of the sons of God (v. 19) and will benefit from the eschatological glory of believers (v. 21).¹⁹

When these categories of created things are excluded, what remains is the subhuman material creation, or roughly the equivalent of the modern term “nature.”²⁰ The LXX also uses κτίσις (Wis. 2:6; 16:24) and πάντα ἢ κτίσις (Tob. 8:5; Wis. 19:6; Sir. 43:25). similarly in several places.²¹

The natural world is personified in Rom. 8:19-22 much like in the OT, which frequently describes various aspects of nature with emotions, intellect and will.²² Even though the descriptions of nature are figurative in Rom. 8:19-22, the suffering of the natural world due to human sin should not be demythologized or anthropologized. The present suffering of creation is very real, and God will bring this suffering to an end when Christ returns.

Thus this passage focuses on two major themes: (1) the present corruption of the subhuman creation as a result of the Fall of Adam; and (2) the eschatological redemption of creation, which will deliver it from corruption and will transform it to freedom and glory.

The Importance of the Corruption and Redemption of Creation in Apocalyptic Theology

Although there is great diversity in Jewish apocalyptic literature, the corruption of the created order due to sin is central to the apocalyptic perspective. Collins points out that “the underlying problem of all the apocalypses [is that] this world is out of joint, one must look beyond it for a solution.” Although some historical apocalypses attribute this state of affairs to political factors, more often it is the result of the sin of fallen angels or humans (in both historical and personal apocalypses).²³

Most lists of apocalyptic features stress dualism and a two-age theology. There is a sharp distinction between this present evil world or age, which is corrupted by sin, and the glory of the future perfect world or age of righteousness. The pessimism about this present evil age is due to a profound sense of the widespread impact of sin.²⁴

An important eschatological hope in the apocalyptic writings is for the radical transformation of the creation through God’s intervention. Although apocalyptic thought is pessimistic about the world in this age, it is hopeful about the future transformation of the world.²⁵ Collins finds the theme of the cosmic transformation and the renewal of the whole world in twelve out of the fifteen Jewish apocalypses he examines. “The eschatological solution involves either a cosmic transformation that fundamentally alters this world, or an otherworldly afterlife.”²⁶ Most other lists of apocalyptic features also stress the cosmic dimensions of apocalyptic hope, when the powers of evil will be brought to an end, the present earthly conditions will be overthrown, and a new, paradisaical world order will be instituted.²⁷ The expectation of a bodily resurrection also implies a positive future for the material creation.

The Corruption of Creation in Jewish Apocalypses and Romans 8:19-22

Despite the fact that nature was created by God and is under God’s control, most Jewish apocalyptic writings stress that creation has been corrupted by sin. As a result, some aspects of nature do not operate as God originally intended. The material creation is not inherently evil, but it has been corrupted by the sins of humans and fallen angels.

1. The Impact of Sin on the Natural World

There are three streams of thought in Jewish apocalyptic writings about the impact of sin on the natural world: (1) The natural world has been severely corrupted by sin (BW 6-16; AA; 1 En. Noah; 4 Ez.).²⁸ (2) Creation operates consistently and obeys God's laws (BW 1-5; BP 1; AB, except 80; BD 83-84; Ep. En.). (3) Creation generally operates consistently, but there is a limited corruption of creation, either in some parts of the natural world (BW 17-36; Jub.; 2 Bar.; Ap. Mos./LAE) or at certain times, such as prior to the Flood (BP 3; 2 En.) or in the last days (AB 80; Jub.; 2 Bar.).²⁹

Jewish apocalyptic writings frequently say that human sin "defiles," "spoils" or "pollutes" the earth itself (e.g. Jub. 4:23, 25; 5:3; 6:2; 7:33; 16:5-6; 23:16-21; 50:5; 4 Ez. 9:19-20; 2 Bar. 44:9). 4 Ezra says that the Fall of Adam profoundly corrupted all of creation and caused everything to be subject to death (3:7; 7:15). It infected all human beings with an evil nature (3:21-22; 4:30-31; 7:118), so that now all people sin (3:21-22). 4 Ezra 7:11-12 says,

I made the world for their sake, and when Adam transgressed my statutes, what had been made was judged. And so the entrances of this world were made narrow and sorrowful and toilsome; they are few and evil, full of dangers and involved in great hardships.³⁰

When Adam sinned, the created world was judged. The creation in general ("what had been made") and not simply humanity was profoundly changed.³¹ As a result this life is full of hardship, suffering, sorrow and vain experiences (vv. 12-13; cf. v. 96).³² This alludes to Gen. 3:17-19, which describes the hardship of this life that was part of the curse from the Fall.³³ The world suffers due to the Fall of Adam because God created the world for the sake of humanity (7:11), particularly Israel (6:55, 59).³⁴ There is a close solidarity between humankind and the world, in part because human beings were created from the dust of the earth (7:62, 116; cf. 5:48), but also because of the dominion of humanity over the creation. Human dominion covers not simply the animal world (6:53-54), as in Gen. 1, but even the heavenly bodies (6:45-46).³⁵ Adam was to be "ruler over all the world which you had made" (6:54). Thus when humanity fell into sin, the creation over which humanity was responsible suffered as well (7:11).

1 Enoch 6-11 is perhaps the oldest portion of 1 Enoch and dates from the 3rd century B.C.³⁶ This portion of the Book of Watchers (BW, 1 Enoch 1-36) interprets Genesis 6 to say that creation was corrupted due to the sin of fallen angels ("watchers") and their evil offspring ("giants"), who were born from the union of fallen angels with human women in the pre-Flood era. Although the origin of sin is traced to fallen angels rather than Adam, the result is the same: creation is damaged due to sin. "The whole earth has been corrupted" by the sinful actions and teachings of the fallen angels (10:8, cf. 7, 20). As a result the world is not as God originally created it and is in need of "healing" (10:7). The defiled earth itself cries out to God for release from the sin done against it. "The earth brought an accusation against the oppressors" (7:6; cf. 9:2).³⁷ This is similar to Paul's personification of creation in Rom. 8: "the whole creation groans and suffers" (Rom 8:22) and "the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God" (v. 19), when it will be "set free from its slavery to corruption" (v. 21).³⁸ Several later apocalypses draw on this Watcher theme and say that the Watchers and their offspring "corrupted" or "defiled" the earth (e.g. 1 En. 106:17; 2 En. 18:4 L).

Rom. 8:19-22 affirms the corruption of creation due to sin, which corresponds to the apocalyptic view that sin has corrupted the earth. The Fall of humanity had severe cosmic consequences. Creation was "subjected to futility" and is now "enslaved to corruption," death and decay (vv. 20-21). The corruption of creation is an ongoing characteristic of this age (v. 22, "until now") and is not simply restricted to a time of cosmic disasters near the end of the age or prior to the Flood, in contrast to the third stream of apocalyptic thought described above.

2. The Cause of the Corruption of Creation

In the Jewish apocalyptic writings there are two competing theories as to the cause of the corruption of creation: (1) human sin (BW 17-36; AA; AB 80; Jub.; BP; 2 En.; 4 Ez.; 2 Bar.; Ap. Mos./LAE); and (2) the sin of the fallen angels or "Watchers" (BW 6-16, 17-36; AA; AB 80; 1 En. Noah; Jub.; BP). (3) Some works refer to both human sin and angelic sin as an explanation for the corruption of creation (BW 17-36; AA; AB 80; Jub.; BP 3). When taken alone (as in 1 Enoch 6-11), the fallen Watcher viewpoint largely absolves humanity of responsibility for the origin of sin and the corruption in this age. Yet it still establishes a strong cause-effect relationship between sin and the corruption of the natural world.³⁹

There are several aspects of human sin that bring damage to the natural world: (1) the Fall of humanity (Jub.; 4 Ez.; 2 Bar.; Ap. Mos./LAE); (2) widespread evil in the pre-Flood generation (Jub.; BP 3; 2 En.); (3) ongoing human sin throughout history (BW 6-16; AB 80; 4 Ez.; 2 Bar.); and (4) the increase in sin that will occur at the end of this age (AB 80; Jub.; 4 Ez.; 2 Bar.).⁴⁰ Many of the writings combine several of these causes (AB 80: ongoing, eschatological; Jub.: all four; 4 Ez.: Fall, ongoing, eschatological; 2 Bar.: Fall, ongoing, eschatological). The general principle throughout these Jewish apocalyptic materials is that times of increasing sin bring increased disruption to the cosmic order.

Paul agrees with the Jewish apocalyptic perspective that there are cosmic consequences of sin. Paul traces the corruption of creation to the Fall of humanity. Rom. 8:19-22 is consistent with that stream of Jewish apocalyptic materials that emphasizes human responsibility for the corruption of the world, rather than blaming it on fallen angels. Rom. 8:19-22 contains numerous allusions to the divine curse in response to the Fall (Gen. 3:15-19). The Fall had cosmic consequences, including enslaving creation to death and decay and subjecting it to futility. Although Rom. 1:18-3:20 emphasizes the ongoing sinfulness of the human race, Rom. 8:19-22 traces the corruption of creation to its starting point in the Fall (v. 20). This is consistent with Paul's teaching in Rom. 5:12-19 that death was introduced to the human race through Adam's transgression. Furthermore, the corruption of creation is not an eschatological state associated with a widespread increase in human evil, but a general characteristic of the period from the Fall to the Second Coming. Like those Jewish apocalyptic writings that refer to the Fall as the cause of the corruption of creation, Rom. 8:19-22 teaches that corruption within creation is an ongoing characteristic of life in this world.

3. Aspects of the Corruption of Creation

In the Jewish apocalyptic writings, the corruption of creation due to sin commonly involves several changes in the natural world:

(1) Most frequently, sin brings to the world corruption, disease, death, decay, suffering and sorrow (Jub.; 4 Ez.; 2 Bar.; BP 3; Ap. Mos./LAE). These features characterize life throughout this age (e.g. 2 Bar. 15:8; 21:19; 55:5-6). In most apocalyptic writings, death becomes a part of the cycle of nature and human experience. However, in Jub. and 2 Bar. the normal human lifespan also is shortened because of the Fall (Jub. 4:30; 23:12; 2 Bar. 17:3; 56:6).

(2) Sin leads to the futility or vanity of life in this age due to the problems of life (4 Ez.; 2 Bar. Ap. Mos./LAE). Labor is futile since hardship and failure are inevitable (Ap. Mos./LAE). 2 Bar. 83:10-22, for example, says that even the best things in this life, such as beauty, youth, strength, wealth and happiness, are subject to limitations and will eventually pass away in death (cf. 2 Bar. 44:9-10; 48:2).

(3) Sin also brings about major disruptions in the orderly operation of the natural world (Jub.; 4 Ez.; 2 Bar.; Ap. Mos./LAE). Animals changed their behavior after the Fall (Jub.; Ap. Mos./LAE). The earth itself was corrupted by the Fall (Jub.; 4 Ez.; Ap. Mos./LAE) or the sin of the Watchers (BW 6-16; 1 En. Noah; Jub.). As a result of increasing eschatological sin, Jubilees says "the land itself will be corrupted on account of all their deeds, and there will be no seed of the vine, and there will be no oil because of their works are entirely faithless" (Jub. 23:18). Cosmic irregularities occur during times of extensive sin, such as during the pre-Flood era (BW 6-16; BW 17-36; 1 En. Noah; Jub.; 2 En.; BP 3) and in the last days (AB 80; Jub.; 4 Ez.; 2 Bar.). These cosmic changes include aberrations in the patterns of heavenly luminaries, earthquakes, widespread crop failure, plagues, birth defects and disturbances among animals.

Some of these changes in the natural world are based on Gen. 3:16-19: the pain of women in childbearing (Jub. 3:24; Apoc. Mos. 25:1-3); the curse on the ground, requiring hard labor to grow crops (Jub. 3:25; 4:28; Apoc. Mos. 24:1-3); and, death as the certain human fate (Jub. 4:3; 4 Ez. 3:7; 7:15; LAE 26:2; Apoc. Mos. 14:2; 28:3).⁴¹

However, many Apocalyptic writings also go beyond Genesis 3 in describing the results of the Fall. All of human life in this age is marked by vanity and suffering such as plagues, physical injuries, sickness, famine, and unpleasant weather (Jub. 23:12-15; 4 Ez. 7:12-13; LAE 34:2; Apoc. Mos. 8:2). The nature of animals changed after the Fall (Apoc. Mos. 11:3), so they began to rebel against humans (Apoc. Mos. 24:4; 26) and they lost the ability to speak (Jub. 3:28; 12:25-26).⁴²

Jubilees 23:13-14 describes the increasing futility of life due to the deterioration of the world from human sin:

... plague came upon plague, and wound upon wound, and affliction upon affliction, and evil report upon evil report, and sickness upon sickness, and every evil judgment of this sort one upon another: sickness, and

downfall, and sleet, and hail, and frost, and fever, and chills, and stupor, and famine, and death And all of this will come in the evil generation which sins in the land.

4 Ezra says that this world and the present age are corrupt (e.g. 4:11; 6:28; 7:15, 31, 48, 61-63, 96, 111, 113, 115; 9:19-20).⁴³ Corruption in Jewish apocalyptic literature includes both physical and moral dimensions: (1) Corruption means that the world and everything in it is subject to death (7:15, 48, 61-63, 96, 115). Life in this corruptible world involves suffering, toil, hardship, sorrow and futility (7:11-14, 96; 4:27). By contrast, heaven and the coming new world are incorruptible (4:11; 7:113-114) and all who live there will be immortal (7:13). (2) The corruption of the world also refers to moral deterioration, sinful indulgence and unbelief (7:48, 111-113; 9:19; cf. 4:11; 7:62).⁴⁴ which suggests that they are closely related ideas.⁴⁵ 4 Ez. 7:48: “An evil heart has grown up in us, which has alienated us from God, and has brought us into corruption and the ways of death, and has shown us the paths of perdition and removed us far from life”. The “ways of death” refers primarily to sin, which leads to spiritual death or perdition and alienation from God (cf. 7:92).}} These two dimensions of corruption are generally closely linked, so that when there is moral corruption, physical corruption generally follows (e.g. 4 Ez. 4:11; 7:62; cf. 6:28; 7:111-114). The corrupt ways of humanity have spoiled the good earth (4 Ez. 9:19-20). Due to the sinful corruption of the world by humanity, the full glory that God intended for the world does not reside in the present world, but is reserved for the new world (4 Ez. 7:112).

Rom. 8:19-22 is in general agreement with these apocalyptic motifs, although Paul does not unpack the aspects of the corruption of creation to the same degree as the Jewish apocalyptic writings. He simply describes the present state of creation in two general ways: Creation is (1) enslaved to corruption (v. 20), and it is (2) subjected to futility or vanity (v. 19). Rom. 8:19-22 has no detailed descriptions of the nature of the corruption and futility of creation.⁴⁶

The meaning of corruption and futility in Rom. 8:19-22 is clarified against a background of Jewish apocalyptic literature. Corruption involves the pattern of death and decay that characterizes the natural world since the Fall. As in Jewish apocalypses, in the NT “corruption” (φθορά) has a moral dimension (widespread evil) as well as a physical dimension (death, decay, disease and suffering) that are linked together.⁴⁷ In Rom. 8:21, φθορά refers to death and decay⁴⁸ and perhaps by implication to the transitoriness of life (cf. 1 Cor. 15:42, 50).⁴⁹ However, just as the Jewish apocalyptic writings link the moral and physical dimensions of corruption, Paul says creation is in bondage (δουλεία) to corruption due to the curse on the ground from the Fall (Gen. 3:19).

Paul also speaks of the futility to which creation is subjected. Much like the Jewish apocalyptic writings, in Rom. 8:19-22 futility carries the implications of God’s curse on the ground based on Gen. 3:17-18, as well as the futility of life apart from God as described in Ecclesiastes. As in the Jewish apocalyptic materials, this futility is closely related to the corruption of creation, so that the natural world is subjected to an apparently meaningless pattern of death and struggle for existence.

There is nothing in Rom. 8:19-22, however, that is comparable to the detailed description of cosmic disorder found in many Jewish apocalyptic works. Paul does not describe any disturbances in the heavenly luminaries nor any changes in the animal world. This is consistent with the generalized discussion of the corruption and futility of creation in this passage.

The Redemption of Creation in Jewish Apocalypses and Romans 8:19-22

In Jewish apocalypses the corollary of the present corruption of the world due to sin is the expectation that God will one day redeem the world and make all things perfect again.

1. The Hope of the Eschatological Redemption of Creation

In most Jewish apocalyptic writings, the redemption of creation is an important and frequent theme (BW 6-16; 17-36; AB; AA; AW; 1 En. Noah; Jub.; 2 En.; BP 1-3; 4 Ez.; 2 Bar.; Ap. Mos./LAE). God does not plan to leave his creation in its present damaged state. A new age is coming in which the natural world will be redeemed and transformed to a state of great glory.

God will reverse the cosmic damage caused by the sins of the Watchers and humans.⁵⁰ God will “give life to the earth which the angels have corrupted” (1 En. 10:7). In 1 Enoch 10-11, the description of abundant blessings after God has reversed the damage caused by the Watchers goes beyond the post-Flood period to include the eschatological blessings of the new age after the final Judgment.⁵¹ Similarly, after human sin is judged, God “shall transform the

earth and make it a blessing” (1 En. 45:5 (BP); cf. 2 En. 65:8-10; 4 Ez. 8:53-54; 2 Bar. 73:2-3, 6-7).

Paul has the same perspective in Rom. 8:19-22. The redemption that Christ brings is not simply for humanity, but also has cosmic consequences. The present futility of nature will be removed so that it fulfills the purpose for which it was created. The theme of hope for the future of creation runs strongly through the passage. Even when God subjected creation to futility as a judicial act in response to the Fall of humanity, he gave creation the hope that this condition would be reversed in the future (vv. 20-21). This alludes to the promise that the serpent would ultimately be crushed, which God gave along with the curse after the Fall (Gen. 3:15).

2. The Relationship Between the Old and the New Creations

There are two major streams of thought within the Jewish apocalyptic writings about the relationship between the present creation and the future creation: (1) God will create a new creation, i.e. a new heaven and a new earth (AB; AW; Jub.; BP; 4 Ez.; 2 Bar.); or (2) God will renew the present creation to become even more glorious (BW 1-5, 6-16; BP; 4 Ez.; 2 Bar.). Some works combine both ideas without resolving the tension (Jub.; BP; 4 Ez.; 2 Bar.), although usually one idea dominates.⁵² In all of these works there is a concern for the ultimate redemption of the natural world, rather than the expectation of its permanent destruction. The primary focus is on the character of the changes in nature rather than how God will bring them about.⁵³

Writings that refer to a new creation tend to refer to the end of the present world in terms of its destruction (AW?; 2 En.; 4 Ez.; 2 Bar.). Usually there is an eschatological cataclysm at the end of this age, with cosmic disasters and radical changes in the normal operation of nature (BW 1-5; BD 83-84; 2 En.; 4 Ez.; 2 Bar.).

Yet not all of the Jewish apocalyptic writings refer to the destruction of this world and the creation of a new world. An equal number refer to the transformation of the present creation and stress the continuity between the present and the future creation.

Several motifs stress the continuity of the new and old creation: (1) This world, including nature, will be transformed and perfected, rather than destroyed and recreated (BW 1-5, 6-16; Jub.; 4 Ez.; 2 Bar.; BP 2). (2) God will reverse the damage that the Fall, the sin of the Watchers, and ongoing human sin have brought to the created order (BW 6-16; Jub.; 4 Ez.; 2 Bar.; BP 3). (3) There is continuity between Eden and the future Paradise (BW 17-36; AB; 2 En. 4 Ez.; 2 Bar.; Ap. Mos./LAE; BP 3). (4) The present earth will be restored to its perfect pre-Fall condition (AA; 2 En.; 4 Ez.?) or it will be transformed to an even greater state (BW 6-16).

Even when the language of the “end of the world” is used, in some apocalypses it refers to a transition to the new age, rather than the destruction of the present created order (e.g. 4 Ez. 6:25). Sometimes “new creation” refers to the renewal and cleansing of creation rather than the destruction of the present world and the creation of a new one (4 Ez 6:13-28; 7:30-32; 2 Bar 32:1-6).⁵⁴ Jub. 1:29 defines “new creation” as the time when “heaven and earth and all their creatures shall be renewed.” Generally it is not the corruptible world that is destroyed, but the corruptible aspects of the world, which are part of the old age.

Rom. 8:19-22 is consistent with that stream of Jewish apocalyptic thought that looks forward to a renovation of the present creation. There is nothing in this passage that suggests the destruction of the world and the creation of a new world. Creation has “hope” and “awaits eagerly” the future changes (vv. 19-20), which would be unlikely if the world is going to be destroyed and recreated. The present creation will be delivered from its slavery to corruption and futility and it will be set free to share in the glory of the glorified children of God (v. 21). Thus creation will be able to fulfill the purposes for which it was created, but which were blocked by the damage that human sin brought to the created order.

Rom. 8:19-22 looks forward to the eschatological glory of creation. Even though the present plight of creation is due to the Fall, the redemption of creation will not involve a return to the pre-Fall Paradise, but rather creation will gain more than it lost due to the Fall. The natural world will share in the greater glory of the resurrected and glorified children of God.

3. Eschatological Changes in the Natural World

Many Jewish apocalyptic writings describe the eschatological changes in the operation of the natural world. When sin is removed, the damage to the natural world due to the Fall, ongoing human sin and the sin of the Watchers will be reversed. There will be no more corruption or futility.

Jewish Apocalypses describe several major types of eschatological changes that will take place in nature:

(1) Death will cease (2 En. 65:8-10; BP: 1 En. 45:4-5; 69:26-29; 4 Ez. 6:25-28; 7:113; 8:53-54; 2 Bar. 73:2-3, 7), or at least the human lifespan will be substantially lengthened (Jub. 23:26-28, a thousand years). There will be no more corruption in the future world. (2) Suffering, pain, and disease will end, including the pain of childbirth (BW: 1 En. 10:22; 2 En. 65:8-10; BP: 1 En. 45:4-5; 69:26-29; 4 Ez. 6:25-28; 7:13, 113; 8:53-54; 2 Bar. 73:2-3, 7). “The earth shall be cleansed from all pollution, and from all sin, and from all plague, and from all suffering” (1 En. 10:22)⁵⁵ (3) Human bodies will be resurrected and transformed into great glory (2 Bar. 15:8; 48:49; 51:3, 5). (4) The earth will be transformed (Jub. 1:29; 4:26; 50:5; 2 Bar. 32:1-6). (5) Plants will become superproductive, yielding many times their normal fruit without painful human labor, which is a reversal of the curse on the ground due to the Fall (BW: 1 En. 10:17-22; 26:1; 27:1; 28:1-3; AA; 2 En. 8:2-7; 2 Bar. 29:3-8; 74:1). (6) Wild animals will become tame and obedient to human beings and will no longer harm them (Jub. 1:29; 2 En. 58:4-6; 2 Bar. 73:6). (7) The heavenly luminaries will become significantly brighter and perfectly consistent in their movements (AW; Jub. 1:29; 19:25).⁵⁶

One fundamental difference between Rom. 8:19-22 and the Jewish apocalyptic writings is that Rom. 8:19-22 does not describe in detail the future changes in the transformed creation. Nevertheless, this passage refers to most of the basic categories of changes described above: (1) Creation will be set free from slavery to corruption, which includes death and decay (v. 21). Paul’s statement encompasses in a concise fashion the types of changes spelled out in the Jewish apocalyptic writings (items 1 and 2 above). (2) There will be an end to the futility that is a result of the cycle of death, decay and corruption (v. 20). The natural world will be able to achieve the purpose for which it was created, but which it could not achieve due to human sin. (items 1-3 above). (3) The natural world will be transformed into great glory (v. 21). Although Rom. 8:19-22 does not describe the transformed glory of creation in detail, the concept may be similar to the Jewish apocalyptic expectations of a glorified cosmos and superproductive plants (items 4, 5, 7 and perhaps 6). (4) Creation will enjoy freedom when corruption ends and it shares the eschatological glory of the children of God (item 2). (5) The bodily resurrection of believers is an aspect of the redemption of the material world that is mentioned in v. 23 (item 3).

4. The Redemption of Creation and the Eschatological Destiny of the People of God

In the Jewish apocalyptic writings, the redemption of creation is associated with the eschatological righteousness of the people of God, just as the corruption of creation is associated with sin. The natural world will only be glorified when humanity becomes perfectly righteous and obedient to God’s will. After evil people are sent to eternal punishment and only the righteous dwell on the earth, the whole created order will function harmoniously (AW; Jub.; BP 2; 4 Ez.; 2 Bar.; Ap. Mos./LAE). This will occur either (1) in a temporary earthly golden age (AW: 1 En. 91:13; Jub. 1:28-29; 23:24-30; 4 Ez. 7:29; 2 Bar. 29:3-8; 73:1-5),⁵⁷ or (2) in the eternal state of the righteous after the Judgment (BW: 1 En. 10:25-32; AW: 1 En. 91:16; 4 Ez. 7:31-33, 95; 2 Bar. 44:12-15; 48:50). Nature can only function as God intends when humanity lives as God intends, because of the solidarity between humanity and nature and because of the human dominion over the natural order.

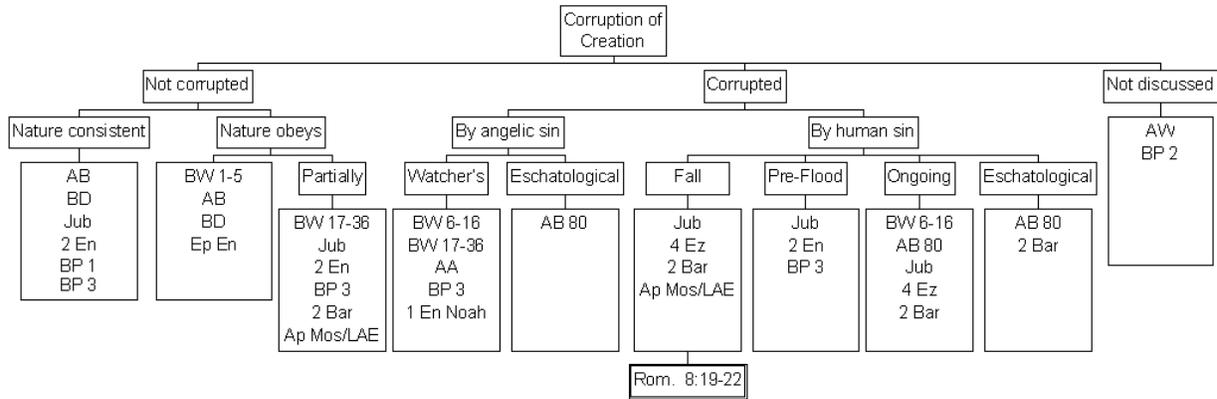
For example, right after 1 En. 10 describes the superproductivity of nature after the Judgment, he says God will “cleanse the earth from all injustice, . . . defilement, . . . oppression, and . . . sin” (1 En. 10:20). The author then describes in the same breath the elimination of sin and the effects sin had on nature: “All the children of the people will become righteous . . . and the earth will be cleansed from all pollution [i.e. moral defilement], and from all sin, and from all plague, and from all suffering” (1 En. 10:21-22).⁵⁸ 2 Bar 73:1-7 similarly describes a long list of human sins that will be removed in the future age (v. 4-5) along with a list of changes in nature that includes elimination of disease, tribulation and pain in childbirth, along with subjection of animals to humans (vv. 3, 6-7).

Rom. 8:19-22 has a similar perspective. Creation looks forward to “the revealing of the sons of God,” because when they appear in eschatological glory, then the creation itself will be delivered from its futility and corruption. Creation will share in “the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (v. 21). Both Paul and the Jewish apocalyptic writers presuppose a solidarity between humanity and the natural world. When humanity is redeemed, the material world over which humanity has dominion also will become what God intends it to be.

Conclusion

The diversity of the Jewish apocalyptic writings shows that it is not enough simply to label the theology of Rom. 8:19-22 as “apocalyptic”. These writings represent several distinct streams of thought, all of which are “apocalyptic” in perspective.

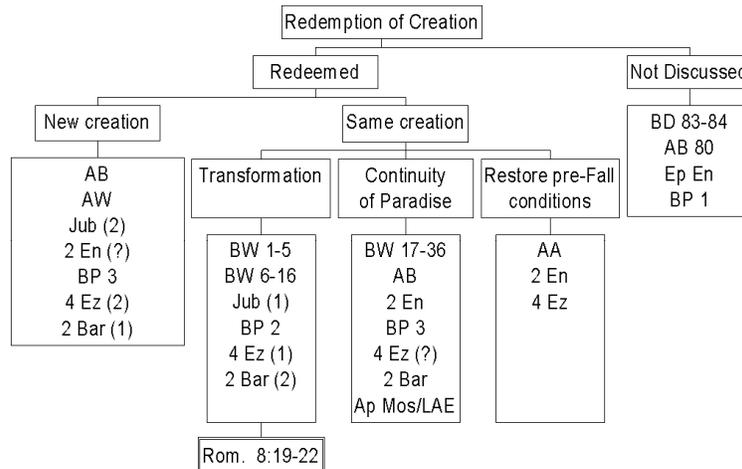
There is a tension in many Jewish apocalyptic writings between the creation as under God's control and the creation as damaged by sin. Although a few writings stress the perfection and consistent operation of the natural world, the majority describe creation as corrupted by sin. Rom. 8:19-22 follows that majority stream of Jewish apocalyptic writings that stresses that creation has been corrupted by sin and subjected to futility.



Jewish apocalyptic writings are divided concerning the cause of the corruption of creation. The source of the corruption of creation may be the sins of the fallen Watchers, human sins, or both. Among those works that focus on human sins, the corruption may either be due to the Fall, ongoing human sins throughout history, or eschatological human sins. Rom. 8:19-22 focuses on the damage that the Fall of humanity brought to the created order.

The majority of Jewish apocalyptic writings look forward to an eschatological redemption of creation. Some anticipate a new creation, while others expect the transformation of the present creation – either to its pre-Fall condition or to a perfect state that exceeds what it lost due to sin. A temporary, earthly golden age with a perfected natural world is also found in many of these works.

In Rom. 8:19-22 Paul follows that stream of apocalyptic thought that looks forward to the transformation of the existing creation, the removal of the damage of sin and the perfection of creation to share the glory and freedom of the glorified children of God. However, Paul does not describe the exact eschatological changes to the natural world, in contrast to the vivid descriptions found in many Jewish apocalyptic writings.



Paul's theology in Rom. 8:19-22 is an apocalyptic explanation for the present state of creation and promises hope for its future redemption. His perspective is similar to that stream of Jewish apocalyptic thought that believes that the Fall of Adam corrupted the world and that looks forward to the eschatological transformation and perfection of creation through a decisive divine act.

¹J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle. The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), ix.

²E.g. the Romans commentaries by Käsemann, Fitzmyer, Sanday and Headlam, Barrett, Lambrecht, and Dunn, and many others.

³Paul D. Hanson, "Apocalyptic, Genre," in *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. Supplement.*, ed. G. A. Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), 2930. An apocalyptic perspective can be found in literature as diverse as narrative, midrash, testaments and sibylline oracles. Barr says, "When we use the term apocalyptic we generally have in mind content and point of view rather than simply form: we think of a set of ideas and attitudes, which find typical expression in the apocalypse form more strictly so called but which are also found over a much wider range of literature." (James Barr, "Jewish Apocalyptic in Recent Scholarly Study," *BJRL* 58 (1975): 18)

⁴John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, ed. F. F. Bruce (Grand Rapids, Mi.: Eerdmans, 1959), 330; cf. Eric C. Rust, *Nature and Man in Biblical Thought* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1953), 2345.

⁵The term ὑποτάσσω suggests an authoritative action, which is not suitable for Satan, Adam or humanity. C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1975), 413). Cf. ; Edmund Hill, "The Construction of Three Passages From St. Paul," *CBQ* 23 (1961): 297.

⁶G. W. H. Lampe, "The New Testament Doctrine of Ktisis," *SJT* 17 (1964): 458.

⁷Murray, 305.

⁸For a detailed argument for κτίσις as the natural world, see Harry Alan Hahne, "The Corruption and Redemption of Creation. An Exegetical Study of Romans 8:19-22 in Light of Jewish Apocalyptic Literature" (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1997), 353-61.

⁹Κτίσις can mean (1) "the sum total of everything created" (BDAG; Mk. 10:6; 13:19; Col. 1:15, 23?; Heb. 9:11; 2 Pet. 3:4; Rev. 3:14, possibly the verbal meaning); (2) an individual creature or created thing, either (2a) humans and animals (Rom. 1:25, cf. v. 23), or (2b) any type of created thing (Rom. 8:39; Heb. 4:13); (3) humankind in a collective sense (Mk. 16:15; possibly Col. 1:23); (4) new human creatures created by the transforming work of God through the new birth, which is like a second creation (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal 6:15); (5) a verbal sense to refer to "the act of creation" (Rom. 1:20; Gal. 6:15, the new creation of God in transforming a believer); (6) an authoritative institution or government created by people (1 Pet. 2:13).

¹⁰Nelson says, "Paul's reference in Romans 8:19 is probably the widest possible, without intention to exclude any category." Joseph Lee Nelson, Jr., "The Groaning of Creation: An Exegetical Study of Romans 8:18-27" (ThD Dissertation, Union Theological Seminary of Virginia, 1969), 192, cf. 253; cf. John G. Gibbs, "Pauline Cosmic Christology and Ecological Crisis," *JBL* 90 (1971): 471. Most commentators, however, find it difficult to maintain the universal view consistently, and so tend to drift toward the cosmic view. Nelson, for example, contradicts his generally universal position when he comments on v. 20, "because of the presence of the expression οὐχ ἐκούσα the creation in this reference should probably be limited to the non-human order" (p. 195). Similarly Gibbs says "ἡ κτίσις undoubtedly refers to the whole creation," yet later he appears to distinguish "creation" from humanity: "There is a solidarity between man and creation, so that the creation suffers under the pain of man's Fall" (pp. 471-472).

¹¹In both the LXX and the NT, the expression "all creation" (πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις) sometimes refers only to a part of the creation of a certain class. It can be limited to animals (Tob. 8:15; Wis. 19:6 (ὅλη ἡ κτίσις); Sir. 43:25) or

humankind (Mk. 16:15; Col. 1:23; Sir. 49:16, ὑπὲρ πάντων ζῴων ἐν τῇ κτίσει). These expressions sometimes indicate comprehensiveness within the scope of the creation that is in focus.

¹²The subjection of demons to the consequences of sin was because of their own disobedience, so “not according to their own will” would not be appropriate (v. 20).

¹³William S. Plumer, *Commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph, 1870), 404-05.

¹⁴Hommel argues for unbelievers on the basis of the similarity between Rom. 1:21 and Rom. 8:20. In Rom. 1:21 the Gentiles became futile in their thinking because of their refusal to honor God. (Hildebrecht Hommel, "Das Harren der Kreatur," in *Schöpfer und Erhalter. Studien zum Problem Christentum und Antike*, ed. Hildebrecht Hommel (Lettner: Berlin, 1956), 19) In Rom. 1:21, however, κτίσις is not used,

¹⁵Murray, 302.

¹⁶The NT use of κόσμος would fit this view better than κτίσις, since it is often used in the NT to refer to the world of unbelievers (; Cranfield, *Romans*, 411). Nelson, *Groaning*, 149-51, has an illuminating discussion of the similarities and differences of κόσμος and κτίσις. “Whereas κόσμος participates in the sin and is characterized by it, and thus in its estrangement from God can only be transitory, the κτίσις is said by Paul to be under a subjection for which it is not responsible; to which it submitted in hope; and from which it expects to be delivered” (Ibid., 151).

¹⁷A few scholars believe Paul has believers in mind here: ; Hommel, 7-23. Reumann and Hommel (p. 101) believe that Paul used an apocalyptic fragment that originally referred to the world awaiting transformation. Paul, however, changes the meaning to refer to believers awaiting the glory that is “not yet” for them (cf. John G. Gager, "Functional Diversity in Paul's Use of End-Time Language," *JBL* 89 (1970): 337).

¹⁸2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15. Although on the surface Heb. 4:13, appears to use κτίσις in reference to people, it actually applies to humanity a general principle about the accountability of all creatures to God.

¹⁹; Murray, 302.

²⁰E.g. K. F. A. Fritzsche, *Pauli ad Romanos epistola* (Halle: Gebauer, 1836-1843), 151. Also Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 6th ed., trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), 306-08, but in Karl Barth, *A Shorter Commentary on Romans* (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1959), 99, he says κτίσις is mainly humanity.

²¹The LXX also can use κτίσις of individual creatures in the natural world (Tob. 8:15; Sir. 43:25).

²²Both OT and Jewish apocalypses personify nature in similar ways: Cry of pain and sorrow due to sin: Gen. 4:11; Isa. 24:4, 7; Jer. 4:28; 12:4. Joy: Ps. 65:12f; 98:4, 7-9; Isa. 14:7-8; 1 Enoch 7:6; 9:2; 87:1; 88:2; 4 Ezra 6:14-16; 7:55-56; 8:2-3; 10:9; 11:46; 12:43; Apoc. Mos. 29:14; fear in God's presence: Ps. 77:16; 97:4-5; 114:3-8; fear about eschatological disasters: 1 Enoch 1:6; 4 Ezra 6:14-16; joy when the righteous are in the messianic kingdom: Isa. 55:12; consciousness, intellectual understanding: Isa. 1:2; cf. Lk. 19:40 (stones cry out Jesus' identity); hope of eschatological deliverance: 4 Ezra 11:46; obedience to God: 1 Enoch 5:2-3; 75:2; 101:6-7; 2 Bar. 21:4; 48:8-10, 46. The OT also refers to the suffering of the natural world due to human sin (Gen. 3:17; Isa. 24:4-7; 33:9; Jer. 4:4, 11, 26-28) and the transformation of nature in a future golden age of righteousness (Isa. 11:6-9; 65:17-25; 66:22-23). For an extensive discussion of the Jewish apocalyptic passages, cf. Hahne, *Corruption and Redemption*, 340-45.

²³John J. Collins, "The Jewish Apocalypses," *Semeia* 14 (1979): 27.

²⁴These features are in most lists, e.g. ; Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 136. Wayne Meeks stresses a three-fold dualism as the defining characteristic of apocalyptic: (1) cosmic: heaven and earth; (2) temporal: this age and the age to come; and, (3) social: sons of light and sons of darkness (Wayne A. Meeks, "Social Functions of Apocalyptic Language in Pauline Christianity," in *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East. Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Apocalypticism Uppsala, August 12-17, 1979*, ed. David Hellholm, 2nd ed. (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1989), 171-80).

²⁵Cf. ; Allan D. Galloway, *The Cosmic Christ* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951), 13-18, contrary to Wilhelm Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums im späthellenistischen Zeitalter*, 4th ed., ed. Hugo Gressmann (Berlin: Reuter and Reichard, 1906; reprint, Tübingen: Mohr, 1966), 581, whose is typical of those who believe that apocalyptic is pessimistic about the future of the world.

²⁶Collins, "Jewish Apocalypses", 27-28. In his list of features, he also mentions the judgment of the world, i.e. the natural elements (4 of 15 apocalypses), bodily resurrection (5 apocalypses) and eschatological upheavals that disturb the order of nature (10 apocalypses). The latter also could be related to the corruption of creation.

²⁷Vielhauer stresses the universalism of apocalyptic thought and its cosmic hope (Vielhauer, 581-607). In Koch's list of distinctive features of apocalyptic literature, five of these eight features relate to the redemption of creation: (1) the urgent expectation of the impending overthrow of earthly conditions; (2) the End as a cosmic catastrophe; (3) a new salvation arises, paradisaic in character; (4) transition from disaster to final redemption by the act of God, in which the Kingdom of God will become visible on earth; and, (5) the catchword "glory" describing final state of affairs in heaven and earth (Koch, *Rediscovery*, 28-33). Morris lists six of eleven characteristics that relate to the cosmic transformation: (1) God will intervene to bring in a new age; (2) a coming crisis will shake the foundations of the world and its present system; (3) the triumph of God, who will bring this present evil world to a cataclysmic end and establish a better state of affairs; (4) dualism stresses the new age/world; (5) mediation: focuses on a new era bringing an end to the whole present system; (6) historical perspective: history is a timetable showing how close men are to the ultimate event when the powers of evil are brought to an end (Morris, *Apocalyptic*, 34-37).

²⁸Due to the wide range of dates of sections of 1 Enoch, various sections are treated separately. AA=Animal Apocalypse (second dream vision in 1 Enoch Book 4); AB=Astronomical Book (1 Enoch Book 3); AW=Apocalypse of Weeks in 1 Enoch Book 5; BD=Book of Dreams (1 Enoch Book 4); BP=Book of Parables (1 Enoch Book 2, sometimes followed by the parable number); BW=Book of Watchers (1 Enoch Book 1); Ep. En.=Epistle of Enoch in 1 Enoch Book 5; En. Noah=Book of Noah in 1 En. Book 5.

²⁹There is a tension between two ideas in Jewish apocalyptic theology: (1) the natural world is under God's control and therefore operates consistently; and (2) this world is corrupted and out of order because of humanity's sin. Even those apocalyptic writings that stress the consistent (even mechanical) operation of nature acknowledge that there are times when the natural world deviates from its consistent operation due to the impact of increased and widespread sin, such as the pre-Flood era and the last days. This shows the close connection between sin and disruptions in the operation of nature in Jewish apocalyptic theology.

³⁰Unless otherwise stated, translations of Jewish apocalypses are taken from James H. Charlesworth, ed. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985).

³¹G. H. Box, "4 Ezra," in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, ed. R. H. Charles (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), 2:580, says "the world, after Adam's sin was not longer the good world as it had been originally created by the hand of God." Cf. W. O. E. Oesterley, *II Esdras (The Ezra Apocalypse)* (London: Methuen, 1933), 65 ("the Creation, . . . the whole physical world"); Michael E. Stone, *A Commentary on the Book of Fourth Ezra*, Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible, ed. Frank Moore Cross (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 198 ("a far-reaching change of all creation for the worse"). Contrast Jacob M. Myers, *I & II Esdras*, The Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), 252, who argues that it was not the world created by God

that became cursed, but “another world” brought about due to Adam’s violations of God’s commands. As a result salvation was removed from this world and transferred to the future coming age.

³²The Latin and Syriac say in v. 12 that the “entrances” of this world have become narrow and painful (cf. v. 13 on the greater world). Most modern scholars prefer the Ethiopic text, which uses “ways.” The verse does not mean that the entrance into this world is difficult but that the path of life in this world is full of sorrow. The Ethiopic and Syriac probably view this life as a path that must be traversed to enter the next life. See ; Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 198; contrast Myers, *I & II Esdras*, 231.

³³R. J. Coggins and Michael A. Knibb, *The First and Second Books of Esdras*, The Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 162.

³⁴In Ezra’s appeal to God, he assumes that the world was created for the sake of Israel, God’s chosen people (6:54-55). In his response (7:11), the angel agrees but also extends the responsibility for the world to the whole human race as represented by Adam. The concept that the world was created for Israel also occurs frequently in Rabbinic literature (Louis Ginzberg, vol. 5, *The legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1909-1938), 67-68; e.g. Batte Midrashot I, 44; Shir. 2.2; 7.3; Tan. B. IV, 5; Tehellim 109, 465; Makiri on Ps. 47, 262; cf. 2 Bar. 14, 17; Ass. Mos. 1:12).

³⁵John R. Levison, *Portraits of Adam in Early Judaism From Sirach to 2 Baruch* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988), 120-21.

³⁶; J. T. Milik, ed., *The Books of Enoch. Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), 28. The Book of Watchers consists of three major sections (ch. 1-5, 6-16, 17-36), each probably written by different authors. The oldest section of BW is probably 6-11, which is itself a collection of traditions that may date from the 4th century B.C. (George W. E. Nickelsburg, "Enoch, Levi, and Peter: Recipients of Revelation in Upper Galilee," *JBL* 100 (1981): 575)

³⁷The Greek ἐντυγχάνω means “to converse with” or “meet,” often “to make a complaint, petition or appeal.” There are examples from the 2nd century B.C. papyri where the word is used with κατά (as here) meaning to make a complaint against someone. Cf. 9:3: “the souls of people are *putting their case* before you.” Otto Bauernfeind, “@Tugca'nw, Entugca'nw, Huperentugca'nw, Enteuxis@,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids, Mi.: Eerdmans, 1964-1978), 8:8:242-43.

³⁸The concept that the earth is defiled by sin is rooted in biblical references to the defilement of the land of promise due to the sins of its inhabitants (e.g. Lev. 18:25-28; Jer. 2:7; Num. 35:33-34; Deut. 24:4). Adolf Büchler, *Studies in Sin and Atonement in the Rabbinic Literature of the First Century*, Jews' College Publications, no. 11 (London: Oxford University Press, 1928), 279.

³⁹The one exception to this connection between sin and the corruption of creation, is the theory in 4 Ezra that the advanced state of the earth has led to the moral and physical decay in the world. However, this is a secondary feature even in 4 Ezra, which primarily emphasizes the impact of the Fall and ongoing human wickedness on this age.

⁴⁰The Fall of humanity (e.g. Jub. 3:24-25; 4:3, 28; 4 Ez. 3:7; 7:11, 15; 2 Bar. 56:5-6; Ap. Mos. 14:2; 28:3 24:1-3; 25:1-3; LAE 26:2); widespread evil in the pre-Flood generation (e.g. Jub, 5:3; 6:2; 1 En. 69 (BP); 2 En. 34:1-3; 70:5-7); ongoing human sin throughout history (e.g. AB 80; 4 Ez.; 7:48, 118-121; 9:20; 2 Bar. 44:9; 73:3-5); and the increase in sin that will occur at the end of this age (e.g. AB 80; Jub. 23:16-21; 4 Ez. 14:10-17; 2 Bar.).

⁴¹Jubilees interprets the promise that Adam would die in the day he sinned primarily in terms of physical death, rather than spiritual death. Since a thousand years are as one day in the eyes of God, when Adam died 70 years short

of 1000 years of age, he effectively died in the same “day” in which he sinned (4:30).

⁴²Prior to the Fall, all animals and humans spoke a common language (Jub. 3:28), apparently Hebrew (12:25-26). Cf. Josephus, *Antiquities*, 1.1.4, 50; Philo *Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesis* 1.32. Ap. Mos. 10-12 still has animals speaking later in Adam's life. W. R. Morfill, *The Books of the Secrets of Enoch*, ed. R. H. Charles (Oxford: Clarendon, 1896), 73-74, shows that many Greek writers ascribed rational thought to animals. Ancient Jewish writers generally believed the language of creation to be Hebrew (e.g. Targum on Gen. 11:1; Ber. Rabba 18, 31; Cedrenus 1:22). Cf. R. H. Charles, *The Book of Jubilees or the Little Genesis*, Translations of Early Documents (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1927), 28.

⁴³The Latin adjective *corruptus* and the cognate nouns *corruptio* and *corruptela* occur frequently. The adjective probably translated φθαρτός, the cognate adjective related to the noun φθορός (“corruption”) used in Rom. 8:21. (Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 85-86)

⁴⁴4 Ez. 7:111: “Corruption has increased and unrighteousness has multiplied.” “Corruption” and “unrighteousness” are in poetic parallelism, which suggests that they are closely related ideas. (Ibid., 251.) 4 Ez. 7:48: “An evil heart has grown up in us, which has alienated us from God, and has brought us into corruption and the ways of death, and has shown us the paths of perdition and removed us far from life”. The “ways of death” refers primarily to sin, which leads to spiritual death or perdition and alienation from God (cf. 7:92).

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶It is possible that Paul assumes that his readers understand the meaning of corruption and futility, because the apocalypses were so widely read.

⁴⁷Death, decay and destruction: Gal. 6:8; 2 Pet. 2:12; moral corruption and evil: 1 Pet. 1:4; 2:19. Günther Harder, “Φθείρω,” TDNT 9.102-4. Even when φθορά is used in the sense of death, in the NT a moral connotation underlies it (e.g. Gal. 6:8, sowing sin results in destruction; 2 Pet. 2:12, evil creatures will be destroyed). Even the sense of the perishability of the body in 1 Cor. 15:42, 50 has the connotation of being unsuitable for heavenly dwelling, because the earthly body has “dishonor” and “weakness” (v. 43), and lacks heavenly “glory” (vv. 40-41, 43). There is also a third derivative sense of “that which is perishable” or “corruptibility,” in the sense of being subject to death (1 Cor. 15:42, 50).

⁴⁸Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 509. Fitzmyer extends it to include “not only perishability and putrefaction, but also powerlessness, lack of beauty, vitality, and strength that characterize creation's present condition.”

⁴⁹; Rust, 234. In Paul's writings, the noun φθορά is never used in the sense of moral corruption. However, the cognate verb φθείρω sometimes means “corrupt morally” (1 Cor. 15:33; Eph 4:22), “deceive” (2 Cor. 11:3) or “cheat” (2 Cor. 7:2). The consistent use of the noun in a non-moral sense in Paul's writings supports the interpretation of φθορά as death and decay rather than moral evil. This is reinforced by the fact that in this verse κτίσις refers to the non-human material world, which is not capable of moral evil.

⁵⁰This theme is so pervasive that even some Apocalyptic writings that do not refer to the corruption of creation refer to a new creation (e.g. AB).

⁵¹Hahne, *Corruption and Redemption*, 154-56.

⁵²In Jub. and 4 Ez. the transformation of the present creation dominates, whereas in 2 Bar. the new creation motif dominates.

⁵³For a detailed discussion of the diverse views of the redemption of creation in various Jewish apocalyptic

works, see Hahne, "Corruption and Redemption," 139-345.

⁵⁴Ibid., 270.

⁵⁵"Pollution" (Isaac's translation in OTP) refers to moral defilement, not environmental damage.

⁵⁶These descriptions of the transformed creation expand further the hope for the new heavens and earth promised in Is. 11:6-10; 60; 65-66.

⁵⁷This may either be a messianic kingdom or a kingdom in which God reigns on earth.

⁵⁸Even though the cause of corruption in BW is the sin of the Watchers, the redemption of creation is associated with human righteousness. This shows how intertwined human sin is with fate of nature in apocalyptic thought.