

THE MESSIANIC EXPECTATIONS AT THE TIME OF JESUS

Literary terms:

Apocrypha
↓
scripture-like books accepted
as inspired by R.C. Church.

Pseudopigrapha
↓
scripture-like books not
accepted as inspired by anyone.

5 Categories of these books:

- 1) Additions to Biblical books - added to what is already written.
Ex. Esther, Daniel.
- 2) Historical books - good history but not inspired for doctrine.
Ex. I & II Maccabees.
- 3) Tales with Morals - as Job in Bible.
Ex. Tobit, Judith.
- 4) Wisdom books - as Proverbs, Eccl. in Bible.
Ex. Ecclésiasticus (Ben-Sira)
- 5) The Apocalypses (revelations) - all pretended to be revelations of God's plans to a human being in advance. Biblical model: Daniel (not Is., Ezek.).

Source material for messianic concepts which filled the heads of Jesus Christ's contemporaries:

Organization of a typical apocalypse:

Intro - God is shown speaking to a great figure of the past.
Ex. Enoch, Ezra, Moses, patriarchs, Baruch, Solomon
"Seal up the vision, for it is for a time far future"
(included to justify its not being "revealed" till now).

Body - "SPS" - historical events "of the future" (written "after the fact") in highly symbolic terms.

Conclusion - general wrap-up of the end of age in non-specific terms (because author doesn't know past his own time)

A Look at Selections from Apocalyptic Literature

1) What signals the "end time?"

- Oppressive rule by 4th beast (IV Ezra, pg. 5, line 65).
"Great Tribulation" pg. 2, line 35
- Heavenly Signs, pg. 10, line 27
- Oppression of Israel, pg. 9, line 9,22
- Physical oppression, time of war, safety for Israel, pg. 11,
lines 42-47

2) How (by whom) are the elect delivered?

- Lion (Messiah) IV Ezra
- God (The Father) Assump. of Moses, pg. 9
- Messiah II Baruch, pg. 11, line 47
- Messiah (Son of David) Ps. of Solomon, pg. 12, line 1
- Son of Man - supernatural, preexistent being,
Ezra, pg. 6, lines 5,19
Enoch, pg. 15, line 10

Note the contradiction - who is the deliverer?
Some say Father, some say Son, some both.
(Bible doesn't disagree!)

3) Who are the elect?

- Israel (Evil = Gentiles) Ps. of Solomon, pg. 3, line 12,16
II Baruch, pg. 9, line 3,9
Moses, pg. 9, line 22

Why this hate of Gentiles?

- Promises of Abraham, struggles of Hellenization,
- Prophecies of Israel's exaltation.

[There's no admission that righteous Gentiles exist -
it's a "we & them" situation caused by the times.

- Righteous (Evil = Wicked people) Enoch, pg. 15, lines 15, 36-7

Gentiles not excluded!

4) What is the reward/punishment?

Reward

- Abundant physical existence
- Spiritual existence

Punishment

- Eternal torment of wicked
- Death of wicked

So many ideas - how did people organize them?

Construct 2 scenarios:

1. Physical

End of Days brought by physical oppression
Lifted by physical Messiah
Elect = Israel, sometimes Gentiles
Reward = abundant physical existence

2. Spiritual

Period of persecution & apostasy
Deliverer = God or Son of Man=(pre-existent, supernatural being).
Judgement = eternal torment or destruction (wicked)
eternal life, new heavens & earth (righteous)

By IV Ezra, the 2 had been combined - physical 1st, then spiritual deliverance would take place.

In Jesus' time, people couldn't conceive of Son of Man being physical and spiritual being. They thought Messiah = physical deliverer from Rome, Son of Man = Supernatural, preexistent being (recall HP's shock, Mark 14:61-2 when Jesus claims to be both.) *

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