

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. Ecclèsiaisticus (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,
Prophesies 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.)