

RECENT STUDIES IN OLD TESTAMENT ESCHATOLOGY AND APOCALYPTIC

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If one of the marks of apocalyptic is the periodizing of history,¹ then modern historians are surely the true descendants of the apocalyptists. For what is more characteristic of modern history writing than its attempt to isolate periods and ages? This same instinct is seen with regard to the topic under consideration here. It cannot be doubted that we have experienced a resurgence of interest in apocalyptic and with it a concern for its connection with OT eschatology. If this is so, we ask, when precisely did such a resurgence begin? Equally importantly, we wish to know what it was that sparked the resurgence.

Klaus Koch has no reticence in dating the beginning of this renewed interest in a most precise fashion. It began, he says, with Ernst Käsemann's address in 1959 in which he announced that "apocalyptic is the mother of Christian theology."² Undoubtedly such a pronouncement came as a shock to German scholars nurtured on a Bultmannian denial of any connection between a Christian eschatology and a Jewish apocalyptic. Nor could such a statement be lightly dismissed, coming as it did on the heels of Wolfhart Pannenberg's lecture in which he enunciated his now-famous philosophy of history that saw apocalyptic understanding as an essential link in the development of genuinely historical understanding.³

Without doubting the importance of Käsemann and Pannenberg, especially for German-speaking scholars, one can still raise a question as to whether the "present age" dawned quite so precipitately as Koch suggests. As he recognizes,⁴ H. H. Rowley had already in 1944 offered a mediating view from Bultmann's that had found wide acceptance in the English-speaking world.⁵ In 1952 a similar position was expressed by S. B. Frost.⁶ In 1957 G. E. Ladd also posed the connection.⁷

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¹D. Gowan, *Bridge Between the Testaments* (2nd ed.; Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1980) 449.

²E. Käsemann, "The Beginnings of Christian Theology," *JTC* 6 (1969) 40; K. Koch, *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic* (tr. M. Kohl; Naperville, Ill.: Allenson, 1972) 14; cf. also E. F. Tupper, "The Revival of Apocalyptic in Biblical and Theological Studies," *RevExp* 72 (1975) 279.

³W. Pannenberg, "Redemptive Event and History," *Basic Questions in Theology* (tr. S. C. Guthrie, Jr.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970), 1. 15-80.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 51-53.

⁵H. H. Rowley, *The Relevance of Apocalyptic* (New York: Association, 1944, rev. ed. 1963).

⁶S. B. Frost, *Old Testament Apocalyptic* (London: Epworth, 1952).

⁷G. E. Ladd, "Why Not Prophecy-Apocalyptic?", *JBL* 76 (1957) 192-200.

Nor was this recognition of the significance of apocalyptic confined to English speakers. Otto Plöger's investigation of the relationship of prophecy to apocalyptic had already appeared in 1959,⁸ and von Rad's comments about the rootage of apocalyptic in wisdom, while primarily negative, still constitute more attention given than, for example, in Eichrodt.⁹

Thus Käsemann and Pannenberg did not inaugurate a movement. Rather, they were a part of one. To be sure, their formulations probably crystallized the thoughts of many others and gave the movement new impetus. But it is of greater significance, I think, to ask what conditions gave rise to and continue to fuel the movement. D. S. Russell has correctly suggested that it is the nature of the events of our time that accounts for the interest of both scholars and lay people in the end times.¹⁰ Faced with events that make "life as usual" impossible, yet believing there must be more than merely interior meaning to existence, men and women have been forced to turn to a philosophy of history that will incorporate and transcend those events.¹¹ It is in this sense that Koch's suggestion seems somewhat superficial. Käsemann and Pannenberg gave visibility and point to the larger movement of which they were a part. They did not create it.¹²

As noted above, the relation of apocalyptic and eschatology has been a matter of major concern in recent studies. Was apocalyptic an unfortunate byroad away from the prophets?¹³ Was it a linear descendant, although unfortunate?¹⁴ Was it an appropriate and necessary development of the prophetic vision?¹⁵ Intrinsic to all of this is the uncertainty as to what actually distinguishes eschatology from apocalyptic. Is apocalyptic a literary form or a world view? Margaret Barker points out that Daniel is frequently used as a starting point from which to characterize apocalyptic, yet when the list of characteristics is complete Daniel lacks most of them.¹⁶ Paul Hanson suggests that the critical point lies in whether the vision of the future can be integrated with the events of ordinary life or whether that vision requires a more or less complete break with ordinary history.¹⁷ Yet his ability to find such distinctions in Biblical literature depends on a rather tenuous reinterpretation and restructuring of that literature. Barker suggests that the very thing that normative Judaism accepted about Daniel and rejected in the

⁸O. Ploeger, *Theocracy and Eschatology* (tr. S. Rudman; Oxford: Blackwell, 1968).

⁹G. von Rad, *Theology of the Old Testament* (tr. D. M. G. Stalker; New York: Harper, 1965), 2. 301-315.

¹⁰D. S. Russell, *Apocalyptic: Ancient and Modern* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978) 5. Cf. also Koch, *Rediscovery*, 51, for a comment on the timing of the appearance of Rowley's book.

¹¹So, for instance, Augustine's *City of God*.

¹²Thus they certainly were not responsible for the phenomenal interest in Hal Lindsay's books.

¹³Von Rad, *Theology*. Cf. also his *Wisdom in Israel* (tr. J. D. Martin; New York: Abingdon, 1972), especially the excursus on "The Divine Determination of Times," pp. 263-283.

¹⁴R. P. Carroll, "Second Isaiah and the Failure of Prophecy," *ST* 32 (1978) 125.

¹⁵Pannenberg, "Redemptive," 23.

¹⁶M. Barker, "Slippery Words III. Apocalyptic," *ExpTim* 89 (1977-78) 325.

¹⁷P. Hanson, "Apocalyptic," *IDBSup* (ed. K. Crim; New York: Abingdon, 1975) 32.

apocalyptic writers was the apocalyptic eschatology, by which she apparently means the apocalyptic writers' denial of God's activity in ordinary history.¹⁸ On that basis there is no apocalyptic in the Bible.

If there is a trend observable in all this, it is certainly in the direction of a logical connection between prophecy and apocalyptic. The only serious attempt to root apocalyptic elsewhere in the past twenty years was made by von Rad in his positing of wisdom as the originating source. Yet the complete lack of any future orientation in wisdom literature has crippled this suggestion from the outset. In fact, as Peter von der Osten Sacken has argued, it may be that both apocalyptic and the late forms of wisdom are dependent on the prophets' vision of God as both Lord of history and Creator of nature.¹⁹ Be that as it may (and one feels with Barker that it is no more appropriate to derive all of intertestamental Judaism from prophecy than it was to derive none of it²⁰), it seems clear that von Rad's suggestion has not been found tenable.

While Jürgen Moltmann did not make a major issue of proving that apocalyptic came from the prophets, nonetheless his *Theology of Hope* did much to define such a derivation and make it credible. It may well be that his arguments were the more convincing because he was not attempting to prove a case on that point. What he did was to insist that the entire OT was eschatological in that it looked to the fulfillment of greater and greater promises.²¹ If that point is correct, as I think it is, then the apocalypticist's basic orientation, although on a different level than the prophet's, is still of the same order. Furthermore when Moltmann describes later (eschatological) prophecy as marked by a refusal to lose hope in God in the face of his judgments and instead a projection of that hope out to the ultimate bounds of existence,²² he again shows that apocalyptic is not doing something completely different from prophecy. In fact, "in apocalyptic the whole cosmos becomes interpreted in the light of truth learned from God's revelation in Israel's history."²³ In the end Moltmann's conviction that apocalyptic is a legitimate extension of prophecy brings him to the point of insisting that their vision is correct: All of history is under God's no, and the only hope is in a future of God that will be radically discontinuous with present reality.²⁴

Moltmann's connection of prophecy and apocalyptic, however, is somewhat too easy. If it may be accepted that the two ways of looking at the world have the same starting point and share a similar concern, there are still significant discon-

¹⁸Barker, "Slippery."

¹⁹P. von der Osten Sacken, *Die Apokalypitik in ihrem Verhältnis zu Prophetie und Weisheit* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1969) 60.

²⁰Barker, "Slippery"; cf. also Tupper, "Revival," 284. For recent contributions to the discussion see W. Zimmerli, *Old Testament Theology in Outline* (tr. D. Green; Atlanta: John Knox, 1978) 35; J. Z. Smith, *Wisdom and Apocalyptic: Map is Not Territory. Studies in the History of Religions* (SJLA 23; Leiden: Brill, 1978) 67-87.

²¹J. Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (tr. J. W. Leitch; New York: Harper, 1965) 124, 126.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 132.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 137.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 229; cf. also Koch, *Rediscovery*, 108; Tupper, "Revival," 300.

tinuities between them.²⁵ In the early 1970s three different kinds of synthetic study appeared, each of which underlined this same point. Klaus Koch's work already referred to surveyed the literature and concluded, among other things, that "the era of the easy theory of the prophetic connection will one day come to an end."²⁶ Leon Morris summarized the main features of apocalyptic and, in so doing, noted the distinctions from prophecy at point after point.²⁷

The most comprehensive of the three studies is that of Walter Schmithals.²⁸ In his chapter on the relationship of OT and apocalyptic he systematically notes points of agreement and then moves on to point out what are to him fundamental differences. Among the commonalities he notes are: the same understanding of existence (historical); the same concept of God (Lord of history); the same view of humanity (historical possibility); the same conceptualization of time (linear progression toward a goal).²⁹ These are fundamental similarities, but they are also exceedingly general as becomes obvious when Schmithals begins to list the distinctions. First of all is the apocalyptic writers' own sense of discontinuity with the past. They are bearers of a completely new revelation that has not even been thought of in the OT witnesses.³⁰ Coupled with this is the radical pessimism about this eon. There is no sense in which this creation will be cleansed and redeemed (contra Rom 8:19-23). And since there is nothing good about this age there is no historical responsibility and no salvation in history. Historical activity is thus replaced by historical knowledge concerning the meaning and outcome of historical events.³¹ Schmithals sums up his findings succinctly:

Apocalyptic thinks historically in principle . . . but it despairs of history itself In the apocalypticist's conviction that he stands at the end of history there is expressed therefore the hopeful, joyous assurance that history is coming to its end—an attitude utterly impossible for the Old Testament.³²

Schmithals' statement, however, raises concern that he has said too much. First of all, he makes it appear that the OT knows nothing of any salvation beyond historical salvation. And secondly, he implies (and later makes explicit) that apocalyptic is a decline, a retreat from the insights of prophecy.³³ Both of these points of view are open to serious modification.

In the first place, Schmithals can only limit the OT to salvation within history

²⁵As already maintained by Rowley, *Relevance* (1963) 15. Cf. also D. S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964) 91.

²⁶Koch, *Rediscovery*, 130.

²⁷L. Morris, *Apocalyptic* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972) 31, 34, 42, 60, 63, etc.

²⁸W. Schmithals, *The Apocalyptic Movement, Introduction and Interpretation* (tr. J. E. Steely; New York: Abingdon, 1975).

²⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 73-77.

³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 70.

³¹*Ibid.*, pp. 80-82.

³²*Ibid.*, p. 88.

³³*Ibid.*, p. 132.

by denying that post-exilic prophecy is consistent with the "Old Testament."³⁴ One can only marvel at such a *tour de force*. But it is not possible merely to dismiss data that undercuts one's conclusions. By what right does Schmithals exclude parts of the canonical OT from the OT? In fact some features in the OT writings exhibit more of a transition than Schmithals seems willing to recognize. Fohrer mentions several of these transitional features in his analysis of Isaiah 40-55: a distinction between the old and new ages, the belief in the imminent change from the old to the new, the desire to escape history, and the belief that salvation will become eternal with the dawn of this new age.³⁵ Without automatically agreeing with the details of the phrasing, we can accept the broad outlines of Fohrer's observations. To suggest that genuinely OT thought knows nothing of a salvation that extends beyond ordinary history is insupportable.

This raises the further question: Is OT prophetic teaching so thoroughly wedded to a salvation within history that any thought of salvation extending beyond history must be seen as a decline leading to eventual death? Schmithals is by no means alone in such an assertion. Von Rad believed that prophecy died with Ezra,³⁶ whereas Cross saw its demise along with kingship in Zerubbabel.³⁷ R. P. Carroll sees the end as being implicit in, of all places, "II Isaiah," whom others have called the greatest of the prophets. Nevertheless Carroll argues that it contains "grandiose predictions" couched in "empty rhetoric" that fail miserably.³⁸

Once more it appears that the descriptions are too small for the phenomena. Was prophecy really limited to a restrictively narrow view of salvation and existence? Have not scholars overemphasized the historical aspect of Hebrew religion? Undoubtedly the OT's recognition of the significance of this world as the arena of God's self-revelation is of great importance. However, to say that this is all they recognized and that any extension beyond our history is a departure from the faith looks suspiciously dependent on a modern view of reality with its bifurcation between history and meaning. In this respect Moltmann's interpretation of the nature of the prophetic movement seems much more true to the totality of the data. By what right are Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi labelled less "prophetic" than Amos or Hosea? On the other hand, note the visionary language of Habakkuk 3 or Joel 3 or Jeremiah 31 or Ezekiel 36-38. Shall these be called "grandiose predictions" and "empty rhetoric"? No simple isolation of the historical from the extra-historical can be made. The prophets knew a God who, although revealed in the cosmos, yet transcended the cosmos. Thus although his salvation was demonstrated and explained in terms of human historical experience, it became increasingly clear that that experience was finally inadequate to reveal the whole scope of God's salvific intent. This is not an escape from history or a denial of the lessons learned from it. Rather, eschatological prophecy is a projection of

³⁴Ibid., pp. 79-80.

³⁵G. Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York: Abingdon, 1968) 383.

³⁶Von Rad, *Theology*, 2, 297.

³⁷F. M. Cross, "New Directions in the Study of Apocalyptic," *JTC* 6 (1969) 157-165.

³⁸Carroll, "Second Isaiah," 126. From the intensity of the language used one cannot but feel that Carroll derives a certain perverse pleasure from debunking what virtually all other critics have called a masterpiece.

those lessons—an extension of them—onto a broader plane.³⁹ Thus Malachi is not a denial of historical responsibility. Rather, it argues that salvation within history is but a part of God's ultimate plan (e.g. 2:17-3:7).

At this point the contributions of Frank Cross take on special significance.⁴⁰ For he has argued that the eschatological vision led to apocalyptic through eschatological prophecy's reintroduction of myth into the mainstream of Hebrew thought.⁴¹ According to this thesis the exilic and postexilic prophets, faced with the failure of salvation in history, appropriated the various myths of creation and of the divine warrior that had been latent in Israel but somewhat suppressed. They did this, he argues, in order to transfer their hope from the disappointing historical plane to the cosmic plane, where it was not subject to disproof.⁴² Whether this suggestion is supportable or not will be treated below. Nonetheless its impact through Cross' students has been notable, at least in America. The most well-known of these is Paul Hanson's *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*⁴³ where Hanson proposes that the origins of apocalyptic are to be found in the immediate postexilic community as represented by "III Isaiah," Haggai and Zechariah. The causes of these origins are to be found in "II Isaiah's" eschatological vision that utilized mythical motifs in such a way that a group of visionary followers grew up who were opposed to the rebuilding of the temple being carried out by the followers of Ezekiel. As the realists became more and more powerful, the visionaries retreated more and more into an apocalyptic hope. As seen in Ezra and the Chronicler, however, the realists' triumph was eventually so complete that the visionary group died out. But its particular vision was preserved in the books mentioned above so that it resurfaced on a national scale in the dark days of the Seleucids and the Hasmoneans.

Another of Cross' students, W. R. Millar, brings the same outlook to the study of Isaiah 24-27 and arrives at much the same results although he does not make as much of the supposed sociological conflict as does Hanson. He concludes that the chapters stem from the period immediately following the exile and represent a new openness to mythic themes in response to the crises of the times.⁴⁴

Thus, in America at least, the most influential opinion is that the apocalyptic vision grows directly out of the prophetic eschatology. In Hanson's words:

As historical and social conditions made it increasingly difficult to identify contemporary individuals and structures with divine agents and end-time realities, as the elect increasingly were deprived of power within social and religious institutions and as the vision of ancient myth began to offer world-weary individuals a means of

³⁹So H. D. Preuss, *Jahweglaube und Zukunftserwartung* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1968), esp. 205-214.

⁴⁰In addition to "New Directions" cited above (n 37) see also "The Divine Warrior in Israel's Early Cult," *Biblical Motifs* (ed. A. Altman; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1966) 11-30; "The Song of the Sea and Canaanite Myth," *JTC* 5 (1968) 1-25.

⁴¹Cross, "Directions," 165 n 3.

⁴²So for example in *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1973) 344-346; cf. also R. P. Carroll, *When Prophecy Failed* (New York: Seabury, 1979) 215-218.

⁴³P. D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975).

⁴⁴W. Millar, *Isaiah 24-27 and the Origin of Apocalyptic* (HSM 11; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars, 1976). For differences with Hanson on the date assigned see n 62 below.

resolving the tension between brilliant hopes and bleak realities, the perspective of prophetic eschatology yielded to that of apocalyptic eschatology.⁴⁵

As valuable as these insights are, however, in their demonstration that the eschatological and apocalyptic visions are not incompatible, the way in which the connection is established bristles with difficulties. Because this position bids fair to become a new synthesis⁴⁶ the remainder of this paper will be devoted to a somewhat detailed consideration of these difficulties, which include: (1) an over-emphasis upon the later prophets' use of mythical sources; (2) an unwarranted application of the cosmic warrior motif; (3) overconfidence in typologies of development, both literary and sociological; (4) rearrangement of the text with little or no consideration of possible alternative arrangements or explanations; and (5) heavy dependence on hypothetical reconstructions of Israelite society and history.

Hanson and Millar are by no means alone in asserting that the later prophets depended on mythical motifs to expand the concept of God from the too-narrow association with mundane history it had received at the hand of the pre-exilic prophets.⁴⁷ However, for these authors this assertion becomes a linchpin in their argument that the antihistorical bias of the apocalypticists has its origins in the prophets. But the linchpin is very fragile, for the unmistakable references to the ancient Near Eastern myths are few and far between and none of them appears in anything but a radically altered form. In fact the way in which they are altered is to bring them out of the cosmic, mythic dimension. For instance, Leviathan in Job is no cosmic monster at all but a figure from within creation that is easily brought under control by God.⁴⁸ To be sure, this is not God acting in human history. But neither is it saying, as the creation myths do, that meaning is found in struggles taking place outside of the created order, predetermining what takes place within that order. Even more to the point are Isa 27:1; 51:9-10, where the prophet makes it plain that the meaning of the conflict with the serpent is to be found within Israel's history, in the crossing of the Red Sea and in his coming deliverance from Babylon.⁴⁹ There is thus every reason to assume that these accounts are being used in a literary way and not in any sense as an affirmation of their value as a way of thinking. In particular the appropriation of mythical thinking is incomprehensible in a prophet like Isaiah who attacks idolatry as he does with such vehemence.

Furthermore by what right do we say that these scattered allusions to myth are a postexilic phenomenon? Recent study in the poetry of Job suggest that the book shows features consistent with Israel's earliest poetry, not its latest.⁵⁰ The

⁴⁵Hanson, "Apocalyptic," 30.

⁴⁶Cf. the highly commendatory review of R. E. Brown, *CBQ* 38 (1976) 389-390. European reviews were more cautious, but still essentially positive.

⁴⁷Cf. S. Mowinkel, *He That Cometh* (tr. G. W. Anderson; New York: Abingdon, 1951) 52-95; S. B. Frost, "Eschatology and Myth," *VT* 2 (1952) 70-80; R. P. Carroll, "Second Isaiah," 124.

⁴⁸Cross, "New Directions," 162.

⁴⁹Cf. Ps 74:12-14 for this same point of view. For a more lengthy discussion of this idea see my "The Myth of the Dragon and Old Testament Faith," *EvQ* 49 (1977) 163-172.

⁵⁰D. A. Robertson, *Linguistic Evidence in Dating Early Hebrew Poetry* (SBLDS 3; Missoula: Scholars, 1972).

late dating of Isaiah 24-27 has distinctly circular features about it. It is dated according to the appearance of certain "late" elements in it, and then these elements are proven late by their appearance in the "Isaianic apocalypse." R. J. Coggins' comment on this point is especially apropos:

The "supra-historical" element appears to me to be present in every section of the book of Isaiah and though we may be more aware of it in some sections than in others, I am very doubtful whether a kind of table can be drawn up to show that the historical sense gradually faded and some other presentation of reality took its place. 2:2-5 and 4:2-6 provide sufficient illustration of this from the first part of the book.⁵¹

It must also be said, despite the massive body of scholarly opinion to the contrary, that it is still true that the supposed postexilic date of Isaiah 40-66 is only hypothetical. Thus the reference to Rahab in Isa 51:9, like the reference to Leviathan in 27:1, is not necessarily postexilic. Both may come from a period well before the exile. In fact none of the specific allusions to myths comes from any of the three undoubtedly postexilic authors. All the examples of this "reappropriation of myth" come from passages whose date is open to serious question.

To sum up this point the evidence, far from supporting a broad-scale return to the thought patterns of myth among postexilic prophets, shows that throughout Israel's history—but especially from the monarchy onward—there were scattered allusions in her literature to what were the dominant literary works of the day. In none of these is there a flight from this world of time and space into a world of timeless reality. Rather, the linguistic forms of myth are used to underscore the same point that all the canonical literature makes: It is in this world that God is to be known—no other.

It will be said, however, that it is not so much these few specific allusions that demonstrate the use of myth as it is the more general appropriation of certain motifs and genres. An example of this is the cosmic warrior motif. Here it is said that the later prophets utilize this vehicle to represent God's ultimate conquest of evil.⁵² It is said that the presence of the motif can be recognized by the appearance of the structural elements that have been derived from the Canaanite Baal and Anat cycle: threat, war, victory, feast.⁵³ The extreme generality of such a structure is obvious. Clearly the presence of these four elements in an account can say very little about the genre of a piece or even of its intent. Furthermore the central truth of the Baal and Anat cycle is that the struggle is played out among deities on a cosmic stage. But Yahweh's struggles, if it is right to call them that, are with recalcitrant humans on an explicitly spatio-temporal stage. Nevertheless both Hanson and Millar, following Cross, find the cosmic warrior motif present in the OT and with increasing prominence in prophetic eschatology.⁵⁴ But an examination of the materials they cite raises grave doubts about the applicability of the idea, not to mention questions about its being present at all where they pro-

⁵¹R. J. Coggins, "The Problem of Isaiah 24-27," *ExpTim* 90 (1978-79) 332.

⁵²F. Cross, "Divine," 11-30.

⁵³Millar, *Isaiah*, 71.

⁵⁴Hanson, *Dawn*, 98; Millar, *Isaiah*, 71 ff.

fess to find it.⁵⁵

No one would contest that Yahweh is depicted as a warrior at various places in the OT. But that is just the point. He is depicted throughout as a warrior. There is no greater incidence of this in the later prophets than in the earlier. To assert that every representation of him as such indicates a borrowing of the Canaanite motif, especially when his warfare is of another nature (over ethical breaches) and on another plane (the spatio-temporal), is to find too much.

Hanson cites several psalms in which the cosmic warrior motif appears.⁵⁶ Yet when they are examined the elements of the motif are very difficult to find. An example is Psalm 9. Here the psalmist asserts that although he has been surrounded by enemies God has, from his throne, issued a righteous judgment against them. There is no threat to God, no march to battle, no struggle with cosmic forces, no triumphal return and no feast of celebration. Nor is Psalm 9 atypical. In fact the one striking feature of most of these psalms is their statement that God has not left his throne.

Millar's use of the motif is equally questionable. He argues that it is central to Isaiah 24-27 and furthermore finds there traces of a ritual procession in which the divine warrior's victory was re-enacted.⁵⁷ While this aspect was not new, having been a part of the royal cult, its application to the broad sweep of history by the prophet opened the door for apocalyptic to enter. Yet when Millar looks for the specific elements to the motif, which as already noted are exceedingly general, he cannot find them at several points, and where he professes to find them they are obscure at best. So in his six main segments the elements of threat and feast are missing in four. In the two where they supposedly appear they are either insignificant or questionable.⁵⁸ For instance it is very difficult to see anything of feast in 27:2-6, which merely speaks of the rejuvenated land. It is also difficult to see how one tricolon of a verse—27:1c—qualifies as a major thematic element, that of victory, as Millar is forced to apply it.

As stated above there is no doubt that Yahweh is depicted as a warrior throughout the OT. Nor is there any question that his victory over sin and evil is given the broadest dimensions in the prophets in particular. I do not see much evidence, however, that Baal's warriorship heavily influenced the Hebrew conception or that "late" prophecy, through an increased use of the motif, created an openness for the ahistorical stance of apocalyptic.⁵⁹

Millar and Hanson base much of their argument to have discovered the process by which apocalyptic grew out of late prophecy on a methodology that Hanson calls "contextual-typological." Through the application of a particular style

⁵⁵Note that while Carroll broadly agrees with Hanson and Cross on the prophetic use of myth (n 47 above) he has grave misgivings about some of the particular usages ("Twilight of Prophecy or Dawn of Apocalyptic," *JSOT* 14 [1978] 18) as does M. Delcor, *Bib* 57 (1976) 578.

⁵⁶Hanson, *Dawn*, 305-308. Pss 2, 8, 24, 29, 46, 48, 65, 68, 76, 77, 89, 97, 98, 104, 106, 110.

⁵⁷Millar, *Isaiah*, 82-90, following Cross, "Divine," 24-27.

⁵⁸Millar, *Isaiah*, 70-71.

⁵⁹Hanson (*Dawn*, 185) regards Isa 66:15-16 as containing mythical war language, but such language also appears in Psalm 104, which many relate to Akhenaten's sun hymn of the fourteenth century B.C.

of prosodic analysis and of an evolutionary pattern of social conflict they profess to be able to put the various portions of the postexilic prophets into their original order. It perhaps comes as no surprise that the canonical order bears no resemblance to their proposal for the original order. It is somewhat more surprising that their proposals, especially those of Hanson, do not much resemble those of other scholars. This in itself provokes some questions about the reliability of the proposed method.

The method of prosodic analysis utilized is the syllable-count approach proposed by Cross and Freedman.⁶⁰ Without doubt this method has considerable merit and holds out the hope of leading us beyond the impasse to which other forms of metrical analysis have brought us. At the same time it is apparent, given the method's need like that of earlier ones to depend on emendations *metri causa*, that the problems of Hebrew meter are not yet solved. Nonetheless, utilizing this approach the authors claim to be able to distinguish documents from as little as thirty years apart on the basis of their prosody.⁶¹ Furthermore this analysis of prosodic development is carried on in isolation. No real comparison is made with other examples of Hebrew poetry outside of the texts being examined. Thus with blithe certainty the authors restructure the text on their discovery of a "more baroque" style, when that baroque quality may be nothing more than the increase of one or two syllables in a colon.⁶² Without broader testing of such an hypothesis little confidence can be placed in it, certainly not the confidence Millar and Hanson repose in it. Its uncertainty can be seen in the fact that Hanson's analysis leads him to date Isaiah 24-27 late in the prosodic development while Millar's causes him to date the main portion of the section early in that development.⁶³ This suggests that the analysis of the prosody is in fact imprecise enough to support whichever point of view one's understanding of the content leads him to. Several reviewers, especially those from Europe, have expressed special reserve about this aspect of these studies.⁶⁴ Coggins' comment is typical:

In view of our extremely limited knowledge of Hebrew language and literature, it seems to reconstruct a development on gravely inadequate bases. . . . They must not be given more weight than they will bear.⁶⁵

It is particularly characteristic of Hanson that he brings certain sociological assumptions to bear on the text. At least one reviewer was unable to refrain from pointing out that the two groups he posits, the priestly realists and the anti-institutional visionaries, have remarkable analogues in the groupings of the 1960s when Hanson's research was done.⁶⁶ Furthermore it is not at all certain that

⁶⁰For a handy introduction to this system see D. Stuart, *Studies in Early Hebrew Meter* (HSM 13; Missoula: Scholars, 1976).

⁶¹Hanson, *Dawn*, 60.

⁶²*Ibid.*, p. 118.

⁶³Millar, *Isaiah*, 117; Hanson, *Dawn*, 313-314.

⁶⁴So I. Willi-Plein, *VT* 29 (1979) 123; R. Tournay, *RB* 83 (1976) 151-152; P. R. Ackroyd, *Int* 30 (1976) 413.

⁶⁵Coggins, "Problem," 332.

⁶⁶Carroll, "Twilight," 26-27

Weber's and Mannheim's programmatic views on class struggle can be imported into the Near East of 2500 years ago.⁶⁷ The fact that Isaiah 56-66 must be completely restructured, not only from the canon but from the views of other scholars, in order to support the hypothesis suggests the serious possibility that history has been forced onto a Procrustean bed of sociological theory.

In fact the polemic that appears in Isaiah 56-66 is no more indicative of a struggle between the "establishment" and the dispossessed than is that which appears in other parts of Scripture, including Isaiah 1-39. In typically crusty fashion R. P. Carroll goes so far as to suggest that "mud-slinging" was essential to the creation of the Biblical tradition.⁶⁸ Without going so far as that, one may still recognize that long before the supposed visionary followers of "II Isaiah" appeared on the scene, serious charges flew back and forth between prophet and priest, prophet and prophet, prophet and king (Isaiah 1 and 7; Hosea 4; Jeremiah 7 and 28). Nor were these charges merely addressed to sinful individuals. They also included groups and classes (Amos 5 and 6; Isaiah 3). Thus the presence of an intense polemic in the latter chapters of Isaiah does not require the hypothesis of a group of the dispossessed to explain it.⁶⁹

But apart from the fact that such a group is not necessary to explain the polemical features of the text, what is the likelihood that some such group did exist? Given the present order of the text, there seems very little likelihood. To be sure, the division of the nation into the righteous and the unrighteous is an important element of Isaiah 40-66, but so is it an important element in chaps. 1-12. Furthermore the supposed conflict between the teachings of Ezekiel and those of Isaiah 40-66 is overdrawn. Both documents stress the helplessness of persons to save themselves (Isa 40:27-31; Ezek 36:16-32); both stress the necessity of God's spirit giving life to the nation in free grace (Isa 59:15-21; Ezek 37:1-15); both stress the emptiness of merely cultic righteousness (Isa 58:1-9; Ezek 7:20-8:18). What Hanson apparently cannot grant, any more than can Hal Lindsay, is the probability that Ezekiel used the temple section as an extended metaphor to teach the certainty of the restoration and the return of God's people to a sanctified relation to him. Nor can he grant that Isaiah's opposition to the cult is not opposition to cult per se but to manipulative cult, which believes that cultic behavior of any sort guarantees right standing with God. It is here that he would have been helped if he could have considered Isaiah as a unitary document. When chaps. 40-66 are put in context with chaps. 1-39 it becomes obvious that no anticultic bias may be placed on the latter chapters. They are saying that the restoration of the mountain of the house of the Lord (2:2) will guarantee nothing unless that restoration is accompanied by renewed commitment to justice and righteousness on the part of the restored people. But that is hardly a uniquely postexilic insight. So also with other ideas that Hanson labels as new and as part of the realist/visionary struggle: Had he considered the canonical shape of Isaiah he might have evaluated these differently, for in the total context of the book they appear in a different light. This failure to address the present structure of Isaiah has another ramification in that it leaves unexplained how it is that the supposed conflict that was so

⁶⁷Hanson, *Dawn*, 21.

⁶⁸Carroll, "Twilight," 19.

⁶⁹Willi-Plein, VT 29 (1979) 124-125.

important to the rise of the apocalyptic vision became so completely submerged into the larger syntheses of the present book. This is especially problematic if the visionary group who created chaps. 56-66 is responsible for the present shape of the book. If not, must we suppose that the triumphant realists have put the book in its present form? But in that case, what of the supposed apocalyptic vision that was so strong as to carry across two hundred years?

In summary, the work of Hanson and Millar fails because it rests too heavily on hypotheses that are unproven.⁷⁰ It is not clear that the later prophets utilized myth, especially the myth of the cosmic warrior, in extensive ways. Neither is it evident that there was a visionary anticultic group in postexilic Judaism that saw itself as the dispossessed in the face of a priestly hierocracy. The prosodic analysis by which the history of these groups can be plotted is much too subtle to justify the results claimed. The result is that even those writers sympathetic to the school find its claims to have established a direct connection between prophecy and apocalyptic to be exaggerated.⁷¹ Even if it be granted that the visions of Zechariah have an apocalyptic flavor they are still far from being an example of apocalyptic literature. As J. G. Gammie points out, there are too many additional features in apocalyptic for which the Cross school's hypotheses cannot account.⁷² Or as Carroll puts it, "late prophecy contributed a stance that was a necessary condition, but not a sufficient condition, for the development of a full-grown apocalyptic consciousness."⁷³ In the years between 425 and 175, over which Hanson glosses all too easily,⁷⁴ some critical influences apparently entered the mix—influences that moved the apocalypses of the second century outside the limits of OT faith. Thus it appears that no straight line can be drawn between Zechariah and Enoch.⁷⁵ There is a breach not only in time but in thought. Is that breach not in the fact that even Daniel, like Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, sees God revealed in history—although at its culmination—whereas the apocalypticists see nothing of God in history except the promised suspension of history? That, as Schmithals would say, is utterly foreign to the OT.

As is evident, study of apocalyptic during the last three decades has centered on the question of the connection between prophecy and apocalyptic. Has there been no connection at all, with von Rad, or has there been a direct connection, with Cross and his students? As is frequently the case the middle way seems best.

The fact that apocalyptic in its narrowest sense rejects the idea that God is at work in current history while retaining the conviction that human events have no meaning apart from the ultimate purposes of God raises the question as to whether it is more appropriate to call apocalyptic a development from or a muta-

⁷⁰Coggins, "Problem," 332.

⁷¹J. G. Gammie, *JBL* 95 (1976) 654; W. Roth, "Between Tradition and Expectation: The Origin and Role of Biblical Apocalyptic," *Exploration* 4 (1978) 10.

⁷²Gammie, *JBL* 95 (1976), who cites H. P. Mueller's *Ursprünge und Strukturen Alttestamentlicher Eschatologie* (Berlin: Alfred Topelmann, 1969) as a good discussion of elements omitted by Hanson. Schmithals (*Apocalyptic*, 138) had the same criticism of Ploeger.

⁷³Carroll, "Twilight," 31.

⁷⁴Hanson, "Apocalyptic," 33.

⁷⁵So Carroll, "Twilight," 30; Willi-Plein, *VT* 29 (1979) 126-127.

tion of Biblical prophecy. If it is the logical development one would expect the earlier stage to fall by the wayside. In fact this does not happen, for the NT, while clearly availing itself of the expanded imagery and thought forms of apocalyptic, equally clearly retains a point of view fully consonant with OT prophecy: God is at work in a creation essentially good, intending to bring that creation to a final consummation at the end of time. This consonance between the OT and NT points of view suggests that the apocalyptic view did not replace the prophetic one but rather existed beside it, enriching and expanding it but never supplanting it.